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The Dystopian Impulse in James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* (2009): The Intersectionality between Order and Chaos

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Dedication

This dissertation is profoundly dedicated to my precious parents Mr. Bederina Mohammed and Mrs. Meddah Souad who have loved me unconditionally and raised me to become the ambitious smart woman that I am today.

I equally dedicate this dissertation to my fiancé whose support and help assisted me to proceed with this research. I thank him for believing in me and reminding me of my strength and capacity to achieve the hardest tasks in life including the persecution of this work.

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Abstract

The present work explores the inclusion of dystopian elements in addition to the projection of both themes of order and chaos in James Dashner's work *The Maze Runner*. The novel recorded the practices of totalitarianism as well as the depiction of a chaotic world where control was the central key. Consequently, *The Maze Runner* highlighted a variety of components that are pertinent to dystopian writings namely the will to control, the nightmarish setting, the dehumanizing milieu, and the themes of fear and bravery. Control was viewed through the hegemonic practices of WICKED that designed a terrifying maze as a way to dehumanize the boys. This control evoked, as a result, fear within them and created the urgent need for bravery as a way to escape the Maze. This research focuses, equally, on the depiction of Order and Chaos within the heart of the literary work. Order, was presented through the ability of the Gladers to create an organized society and a set of rules; whereas chaos was represented in all what contradicted to this order. The work attempts, accordingly, to create an intersectionality that links the two themes to each other in order to show that they cannot be separated. The intersectionality was consequently established on the basis that the Gladers could not keep order and as a result, they embraced chaos by breaking the rules and chaos in return affected the calm atmosphere of the Glade and deteriorated it.

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General Introduction

The popularity of postmodern dystopian fiction has increased over the few past years. As a genre, it has gained massive attention mainly among young adult readers. A part of what makes dystopian texts enormously intriguing and favored is the fact that they are written in teenagers' perspectives where the protagonists rebel against a totalitarian regime that holds power. This whole idea of challenging and standing up against an authority is something appealing for the readers due to the fact that it holds rebellious thoughts that stimulate the reader's sense of adventure. Besides the idea of rebellion, the plots of such writings are set in the future to hold a semiotic meaning of the possibility that our future might become similar to that of the books. This pushes the reader, consequently, to start thinking of possible scenarios of these events taking place in the real world. All that said, the reasons behind the outburst of dystopian literature may vary; however, its popularity remains the same whether represented in a written form or as a film.

As the main focus of this research, *The Maze Runner* by the American writer James Dashner highlights the dystopian concept mainly through the conceptions of power and control. The idea of control in the novel is shown through two of the most important themes which are order and chaos. Order, on one hand, is used paradoxically. In other words, order should be a choice and should represent stability and calm whereas in the case of *The Maze Runner*, it represents the hegemony of the creators instead. Chaos, on the other hand, is used as a call for freedom. That is to say that it is taken as a means to deteriorate the established order, and consequently, to escape the state of being controlled. On that premise, order versus chaos is then a focal point in the

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course of events in the novel which pushes one to wonder if there is an intersectionality between the two themes under the wide umbrella of dystopia.

Besides the main problematic of this dissertation which is identifying the relationship between order and chaos, the research also raises and attempts to answer the following sub-questions:

- 1- To what extent did the novel succeed in representing the dystopian concept?
- 2- How were order and stability shown in *The Maze Runner*?
- 3- What turned the established order into chaos?
- 4- What actions set the totalitarian government of WICKED¹ a paste?

In an attempt to provide an answer to the questions raised previously, the research is then guided by the following hypothesis:

- 1- *The Maze Runner* successfully represents many aspects of dystopian literature including the will to control, the dehumanizing milieu, the nightmarish setting, and many others.
- 2- Order was shown in the novel through the ability of the Gladers² to cope up with the rules imposed by the government and also through the successful establishment of a job hierarchy and other living conditions.
- 3- The necessity to become detached from the rule makers and escape the Maze trilogy was what turned the established order into chaos.
- 4- The government of WICKED sets the perfect representation of totalitarianism³ in the fact that it seeks to control every aspect of the characters' lives including memory, feelings, and freedom.

¹ An abbreviation for World In Catastrophe: Killzone experiment Department

² People who inhabit the Glade

³ a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.

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This research aims at shedding light on the representation of dystopian elements in the work of James Dashner and at creating a link that combines both themes of order and chaos. In addition to the long-term objectives, the research has the following sub-objectives:

- 1- To arrive to an understanding of the importance of order within a society.
- 2- To highlight the severe consequences of attempting to rise up against an authority.
- 3- To expose the paradoxical nature of the government of WICKED.
- 4- To show that embracing chaos is sometimes an opportunity, not a threat.

The significance of this research lies in creating a link between two of the most important themes in the novel, the thing that has been given little importance at the expense of other elements in the work. This study is also significant in the fact that it sheds light on a contemporary novel that not many academic studies were conducted upon and the role of this research constitutes in being an academic source that future researchers can benefit from.

The motivations behind the choice of this topic are represented in:

- 1- The relevance of some dystopian aspects such as technological control in the world today.
- 2- The increasing popularity and demand on works that feature dystopia.
- 3- The recognition of *The Maze Runner* series as one of the bestselling books among young adult readers.

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Dystopian writings have received a massive attention and have been the ground for many conducted researches and studies. Its popularity arose due to the fact that many authors such as Huxley and Orwell adapted the dystopian genre in their writings and have tackled themes relevant to it including order and chaos. The aim of this literature review is to explain the two variables of order and chaos on the light of previous studies and to review the depiction of nature and society in dystopian writings.

In a thesis entitled “Emerging Themes in Dystopian Literature: The Development of Undergraduate Course,” Ryan paraphrases Basu, Broad, and Hintz’s words, explaining that dystopian societies are depicted as dehumanizing ones in which control is imposed to create a sense of necessity. Additionally, Ryan visualizes that people in these societies are bounded to an authoritarian regime that applies control through both the use of drugs and substances that alert the mind (9). According to what has been mentioned, the inhabited worlds of dystopian writings are then given a bad connotation due to the fact that they portray the plight of controlled and dehumanized people that are unconsciously being manipulated with.

In a similar vein, Tahier in her thesis “An Ecocritical Analysis of Nature and Culture in *The Maze Runner* Trilogy by James Dashner” describes the dystopian nature in the novel as being threatening and unsafe due to the difficulty of living in it. The same nature, however, is safe in the eyes of Thomas and the other characters compared to the danger that exists outside the Glade (23-24). The nature in *The Maze Runner*, likewise the rest of dystopian societies, is also an obstacle in the characters’ journey towards freedom. It reduces them to the most difficult living conditions where they have to fight in order to survive. The same nature is, however, viewed by the characters differently than the readers. Though it is harsh, but to them, it is at least a protection from the outer danger.

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In addition to this, Greenman in his article “The Importance of Order” emphasizes on the necessity of order in a society as it establishes a sense of belonging and represents one’s personality, culture, and ambitions. Through this, it is noted that order is then of a great importance to human beings’ because it is one of the pillars that shape their identity and link them to the society to which they belong.

Additionally, in Clancy’s article “Your Brain is on the Brink of Chaos: Neurological Evidence for Chaos in The Nervous System is Growing,” the complementary relationship between chaos and order is highlighted. She explains in this concern that the person’s brain is different than computers because it uses both order and chaos in a balanced manner in order to function. This shows that an intersectionality between both chaos and order does exist in the sense that they both complement each other and that our brain as human beings needs a mixture of the two in order to work properly.

It is necessary to note that while all the above studies have presented valuable information concerning dystopia and its themes of order and chaos in general, the intersectionality between the two and in the novel of *The Maze Runner*, specifically, was neglected.

This research will depend on the use of the qualitative and the descriptive approaches by making use of the data collected from the novel as a primary source in order to analyse and evaluate it critically. The philosophical research, which is considered as a subdivision of this approach will also be used to outline the reference theories of Charles Darwin, Thomas Hobbes, and Sigmund Freud because these three theories are more relevant to *The Maze Runner* than others.

This dissertation is composed of three chapters. The first chapter will be based on the theoretical backgrounding of the study in which dystopia will be defined and

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followed through the course of history with exemplifications from different novels. The second chapter will analyse to what extent did *The Maze Runner* manage to represent elements that are common to dystopian literature; whereas the third chapter will be devoted to analyse the two themes of Order and Chaos and study the intersectionality between them.

Chapter One: Theorizing Dystopian Literature and Writings

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Introduction

As a narrative, dystopia has been embedded in many works of literature ever since the term was first coined. Different novelists started adapting it as a literary genre in order to cope up with its popularity and at the same time to raise awareness of the dangers and risks of utilitarian utopianism. Subsequently, dystopia has emerged primarily in order to criticize utopian fiction and expose the practices of hegemony and totalitarianism. This critique constitutes in the fact that perfect societies are far from being reached and whenever human beings attempt to reach perfectibility, they fail. Surprisingly, dystopia has many of the same characteristics as utopia. One of these Characteristics lies in that they are both imaginary places; however, the distinction between the two is whether the work suggests a bad or a positive approach to the utopian ideals. With that have been said, dystopian works are then important because not only do they have a message, but they also entertain the readers.

I-1 Defining Dystopia

Due to its increasing popularity throughout history, Dystopia has been the platform to many written works. This popularity comes as a result of the readers' fascination of the themes tackled in dystopian writings. Themes such as danger, control, chaos and many others are of a great importance to the audience simply because they create an atmosphere of mystery and suspense and make the plot unpredictable. As a consequence of this demand, different writers centered their works on the dystopian notion; therefore, creating many definitions that differ according to each writer.

In this regard, Hintz and Ostry, in their book *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*, believe that dystopia stands for a place in which supremacy

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is given to the wrong people, a place where all attempts of amelioration are out of control (3). This means that dystopia is characterized by having an authoritative regime on top of all people. This regime gives itself the absolute power, and as a result, allows itself to run people's lives and control them the way it wishes.

In a similar context, Sargent uses the term dystopia in order to refer to a place that an author visualizes to the reader as a world worse than theirs. This place does have time and space limitations; however, it does not exist (9). What Sargent tries to say is that dystopia likewise utopia is an imaginary place visioned as being characterized by misery, fear, and most importantly control. Moreover, the conceived image concerning this horrific place evokes certain conception for the readers in which they feel that the world they inhabit is much better and safer than that of books.

In addition to the preceding definitions of Dystopia, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines dystopia as: "a modern term invented as opposite of *Utopia, and applied to an alarming unpleasant imaginary world, usually of the projected future" (Baldick 74). In this view, Baldick then defines dystopia on the basis of utopia. In other words, utopia is an ideal place, whereas dystopia is the total opposite. It is the depiction of an ugly and a chaotic world, a world that does not belong to the present but, instead, to the future. Moreover, this world of the projected future comes as a result of the loss of values in the modern era. Movements such as skepticism¹ and the idea of reviewing the established values pushed people to comprehend the blemishes within their beliefs. Consequently, people started reviewing and at the same time projecting the future instead of thinking of the present where morals and values have vanished. Additionally, It is also viewed that dystopia is commonly connected to modern works mainly those that feature the genre of science fiction. The emphasis on science fiction is a result of its

¹ a sceptical attitude; doubt as to the truth of something.

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relation to the projection of the future. They are interrelated in the fact that they both revolve around the outer space and the creation of new societies totally detached from the inhabited ones. In addition to this, Baldick envisions that there are many publications that illustrate the concept of dystopia among which there are H.G.Well's *The Time machine* (1895), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and *Riddley Walker* (1980) by Russell Hoban (74).

Based on the definitions that have been mentioned previously, dystopian literature is then defined as a literature that opposes to utopian beliefs and criticizes political forces in power. This critique is done by unveiling the paradoxical nature and flaws of the systems of totalitarianism (Booker 187). As stated above, utopian beliefs are then contradictory to dystopian ones providing that these beliefs are characterized by perfection and they symbolize humans' dreams and hopes of happiness and success whereas dystopia is the total opposite. This contradiction creates then a literature that mirrors a nightmarish future where oppression and misery are overpowering. Furthermore, this oppression comes as a result of the prevalence of a totalitarian regime that controls every aspect of peoples' lives. Such a totalitarian regime, as Booker has explained, is paradoxical in nature due to the fact that it justifies its control and oppression with good intentions, whereas this control and oppression evoke nothing but human misery (187). In this concern, Booker highlights this idea further in his book entitled *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research guide* where he refers to dystopian Literature as a

Literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thoughts, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of the existing social conditions or political systems, either through critical examination of the

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utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based on through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. (187)

Accordingly, Booker emphasizes on the existing contradictory relationship between both utopian and dystopian literature as explained previously. He also represents the dystopian literature as being a literature that criticizes social or political ills of an oppressed society and exposes its imperfections.

I-2 The Shift from Utopia to Dystopia

After the publication of Thomas More's work *Utopia* in the 16th century, the modern term utopia became highly associated with perfect worlds. In his work, More depicted a self-contained society in which its inhabitants lived happily and peacefully with one another (Miéville). Consequently, the word utopia started being used to denote an ideal place.

More's description of the ideal world paved the way for a huge wave of new thoughts which were influential in the works and lives of many Writers. Utopias became as a result, very appealing due to the fact that they portray a world that everyone aspires to live in, a world characterized by its peacefulness and happiness. In a response to this popularity, several authors focused, in their works, on exploring themes related to utopia such as the embodiment of technology and science in utopian worlds. Accordingly, some of the notable books that represented this idea are Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward*, *Ecotopia* by Ernest Callenbah, and *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (Miéville).

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In addition to the original meaning that the term utopia has, it became associated with a different one in the modern time. Utopia turned from being the representation of peoples' dreams and hopes into being a sad reality. In other words, focusing on reaching a paradise like world led to the infringement of the basic rights of people. Furthermore, the word utopia lost its original meaning because people had a dream that technology will be able to improve the living conditions and solve the problems that the world suffers from such as diseases and hunger; however, technology failed to turn these dreams into reality and became, instead, a way to control people. As a consequence, utopia started to shift from its original meaning and turned to be partially like dystopia.

I-3 Dystopia: Origins and Roots

Through the annals of history, it has been widely debated whether dystopia is a genre that belongs to the modern era or to what precedes modernity. Despite the fact that the term dystopia came to be widely spread in the modern time, its origins go further than that. The term was first used in a public speech in 1868 by John Stuart Mill (Mill 249). In this speech, Mill addressed The House of Commons saying that "It is, perhaps, too complimentary to call them utopians, they ought rather to be called dystopians, or caco-topians" (249). Moreover, John Stuart Mill was trying to convey the idea that every society is subjected to failure, including the so called utopian. Even such a perfect society according to him has its flaws. Hence, Mill was criticizing the policy of the government by pointing to the fact that its development and economy were influenced to a great deal by certain laws and factors that are out of humans' reach (Ashley). Consequently, the word dystopia was then first put in use in order to describe the unpleasant status of the government's policies. Mill used the term to signify the opposite of the already existing word utopia that was presented by Sir Thomas More in

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his work *Utopia* in 1516 (Ashley). Hence, the word dystopia was created with reference to the work of Thomas More in order to hold a negative connotation that opposes to the world which More presented in his book .

I-4 Notable Works of Dystopian Literature

As the popularity of dystopia grew wider, it emerged consequently as a known genre in the light of its relevance to readers' life and its resemblance to the world of today. Due to this popularity and emergence, many authors began to feature this genre and adapt it in their writings. As a result of this turnout, many works came into existence including works that represented the traditional dystopian view and others that represented the current one.

The emergence of dystopia in literature gave birth to many classical works that embedded different themes such as oppression and control. Among these works there is *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. In this novel, the author exposes the practices of power and oppression against the individuals of the society. The book represents the dystopian concept in the fact that it includes a totalitarian government that controls every aspect of its people's lives. This control whether done through surveillance, torture, or restrictions, evokes both kinds of torture: the physical and the mental one. The physical torture on one hand can be represented through violent methods among which there is beating, the use of electricity, injection of drugs, and many other ways. The mental torture, however, constitutes in the use of psychological fears such as phobias (Orwell).

In contrast to Orwell's idea of power, Aldous Huxley applies a different kind of control in his book *Brave New World*. This control is not imposed through fear, but rather through pleasure. Instead of controlling by means of constant surveillance and

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torture, Huxley embraces the idea of control on people by making them happy. This happiness comes with the absence of mind and the presence of sexual desires. In other words, Huxley normalizes the idea of consuming the subsequences that alert the mind such as drugs and encourages sexual affairs to keep people happy to the degree that they will not be able to realize their subjugation (Huxley).

What could be said at this level is that dystopia was referred into in many works; however, each writer approached it differently and this clarifies the contrast between dystopia of George Orwell and that of Aldous Huxley. In addition to these works, several other works followed the footsteps of these authors namely: *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Running Man*, *The Giver*, and many others.

It is worth noting that dystopia was also embedded in many modern works; however, within the modern era it was envisioned within another perspective in contrast to the traditional one. The dystopian genre grew to be even more popular in the modern time due to its association with science fiction providing that both dystopian writings and science fiction project the future. Moreover, as the world grew more developed, technology did too and several inventions began to take place. With this development, the products of dystopian works started setting their stories in advanced futuristic worlds. Subsequently, books began to cross path with the newly advanced aspects of the world creating science fiction as the ultimate result.

Accordingly, the interplay between science fiction and dystopia became widely spread and as a result, was adopted by many writers including Philip K. Dick. His work *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* makes a prominent example of dystopian works that embody science fiction because it contains a mixture of both elements. Science fiction is shown through the embodiment of technology in the heart of the literary work.

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This technology is represented by androids that are created to look identically like human beings. The androids eventually go out of control and begin to shape a threat to the human existence. Consequently, getting rid of them becomes a priority and in order to do so, the main character Rick starts a journey of killing. The process of killing is then what sets the dystopian concept a paste and with its association with robots and fictional events, the work becomes a work that combines both science fiction and dystopia (Dick).

In a similar vein, Anthony Burgess's *A Clock Work Orange* elaborates the same mixture of science fiction and dystopia. The story is purely science fictional in the fact that it takes place in a futuristic world governed by machines instead of human beings. The process of adaption in a world run by creatures that are alien to human kind is not an easy task, but rather a task of survival. This task highlights one of the most important themes in dystopian writings which is survival and as a result, Anthony's work becomes then a work that links both elements of dystopia and science fiction (Burgess).

In addition to the popularity that dystopian literature gained in the past and modern era, it grew to become even more popular in the present time due to its interconnection with young adult readers. In other words, authors are seeking readership and as a result, their works are written according to the feedback from the readers. The readers, as the center focus of the authors, show interest nowadays in works of young adults' fiction that feature dystopia. Such works are appealing to them because they spot light on young protagonists' journey of discovery and survival. A journey where they defy the world and fight the oppression projected. This simply means that according to the readers, the story itself is the focal point whereas other aspects of the book, such as the characters and the setting of the novel, do not matter as much as the plot does (Young).

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Young reinforces the popularity of dystopian fiction and the importance of the story at the expense of other elements. In her article in the *Guardians* newspaper, she wrote: “Teenagers like to read dystopian fiction because it is exciting. It all comes down to the story. The story comes first, and the setting – extraordinary though it may be – is of secondary importance.” This simply means that dystopian writings are exciting due to their thematic elaboration that teenagers are mesmerized with. Also, these writings are interesting to them because the story itself is taking them from the inhabited world to a more imaginary and fictitious one. Furthermore, a great deal of importance and significance is given to the events themselves because the text became unbounded by time and place. This means that the setting and the other elements are no longer the focal point providing that dystopian writings do not have a specific place or time to belong to and that is why the attention shifted from place and background to the story itself.

I-5 Theories Pertinent to Dystopia:

Literary theories have formed the basis of literary criticism and literature in general. Their importance lies in the fact that they change the readers’ view towards literature as well as the way they read and interpret it. Some of these theories are commonly connected to dystopian writings namely: Darwinism, theories of Thomas Hobbes and Sigmund Freud along with many others. These theories are the most likely to be used while analyzing dystopian writings because they help in uncovering the true face of dystopian societies and dystopian literature in general.

Dystopian novels depict stories of oppressed, miserable, and controlled societies. The lack of freedom along with living in these dehumanizing environments reduces humans to turn into animal like in order to survive. This reduction exposes the real

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nature of human beings as Thomas Hobbes has described it to be “Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” (96). Therefore, the nature of human beings is always given a negative connotation and associated with self-centeredness and egoism. This nature is described to be selfish because people only think of themselves when they sense the slightest sign of danger. It is also brutish providing that people’s instincts push them to do the worst things just to survive such as killing or sacrificing. In short, the nature of human beings is dependent on the circumstances; hence, the more it is reduced to danger, the more brutish it becomes (Freud 96).

In addition to Thomas Hobbes’ belief, Charles Darwin’s theory of the Survival of the Fittest also perfectly fits the dystopian concept. Every character’s journey in dystopian societies is a journey of survival and only those who are strong enough to adapt and cope up with the changes and risks will be able to actually survive if necessary, at the expense of others (Darwin, 23). Darwin emphasizes on this idea in his book *On the Origins of Species* where he says: “One general law, leading to the advancement of all organic beings, namely, multiply, vary, let the strongest live and the weakest die” (109). To put it differently, The settings of dystopian stories are often jungle like and according to the law of jungles, only the strongest can achieve the task of survival and ,in most times, the smartest too whereas the weak ones are left to be doomed and that what Charles Darwin attempted to demonstrate (Darwin 109).

As a platform to Darwin and Hobbes’ theories, dystopian novels represent both ideas of survival and brutality in the fact that such works create a link that bounds the human nature to the task of survival. This link is shown in the idea that one cannot exist without the other. That is to say that survival triggers the brute inside human beings and the brute in return, does not appear unless it is put in a position where danger exists. In other words, the need to survive provokes brutality and vice versa. Suzanne Collin’s

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work *The Hunger Games* sets a prominent example of this idea providing that it follows the journey of an ultimate survival. The candidates in the novel are put under a severe trilogy called *The Hunger Games* where they have to kill in order to stay alive. Consequently, the candidates' urge to survive unleashes their brutish side and pushes them to commit the nastiest crimes in favor of surviving. Likewise *The Hunger Games*, James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* is set in a dystopian society where teenagers are used as test subjects. These teenagers are exposed to a great danger and as a result, they are obliged to fight in order to survive.

Another important theory pertinent to dystopia is that of Sigmund Freud concerning the Conscious and the Subconscious mind. Freud's theory is interconnected to dystopian writings because dystopian societies require survival, and in survival, the instinct is the controlling part of the mind. Accordingly, Freud believes that, in the mind, there exists three parts: the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind is characterized by awareness, in other words, human beings are aware of what they are doing. This part of the mind entails emotions, thoughts, and things that humans are aware of (Freud 14).

In addition to the conscious mind, the preconscious or subconscious mind contains things that humans are not aware of, but these things can easily turn into consciousness. In other words, one cannot recall or remember a particular event; however this event is stored within the subconscious mind and can be remembered later on (61).

By contrast to the conscious mind, the unconscious mind represents the human instincts, those that he was born with and cannot control. The unconscious mind, known as the Id, functions when one is reduced to dehumanizing situations in which he has to survive (170). The instinct is, therefore, characterized by egoism and self-centeredness

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because it pushes one to think only of his interest without taking into account the existence of others or the consequences of his actions. In dystopian societies, this part of the mind dominates more than the two others; therefore, people who are driven by their instincts may kill, burn, and even torture without deliberate thinking.

I-6 The Elements of Dystopian Writings

To say that a work belongs to dystopian literature, it is not necessary to associate this work directly with a terrifying world. Dystopian stories are not as simple as that, but rather, they go beyond it. So, to know what forms the foundations of a dystopian writing, there are several criteria to shed light on.

I-6-1- The Will to Control

Dystopian works are a portrayal of a world in which the inhabitants are under severe control. This control is imposed usually by a regime that views itself as the center of the universe and as a result, acts in accordance to that. The governments subject people to extreme living conditions in which every aspect of their lives becomes under constant surveillance and watch. Moreover, control is not only imposed through the governmental aspect, but it has many levels namely: religious, political, and technological control. What all these levels have in common is that they all take away the freedom of the individuals (Burbage).

I-6-2- The Dehumanizing Milieu

The will to control provokes another aspect of dystopian literature which is the dehumanizing milieu. The milieu of the dystopian societies is humiliating providing that it forbids people to enjoy their simplest rights in life as human beings. Their dehumanized state takes away any possibility to have a private life away from the

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constant surveillance or to enjoy things in life like the rest of mankind. Simply, they are treated with inferiority to the degree that they are classified as less than humans (Barilleaux).

I-6-3-The Nightmarish Setting

One thing that separates dystopian books from other works of literature is the setting. Unlike the typical settings of many novels, dystopian literature is characterized by a dynamic and an unfamiliar setting such as a maze or an arena. This space which is pertinent to dystopia is most of the time not in favor of the characters but, rather, in favor of the creators or governments. In other words, the setting might try to kill the characters or prevent them from escaping because in dystopian stories, the setting is the antagonist of the characters.

I-6-4-The Intriguing Themes

In addition to the setting, dystopian novels follow a variety of themes that are common to dystopian literature. Such themes are popular because they draw on emotional reactions and keep the reader in a state of a constant want for more. Among these themes, there are the themes of survival, fear, and rebellion. The theme of survival comes as a result of the control imposed by governments and of the miserable living conditions where people do whatever it takes to preserve their own lives. Fear also is a state in which most people are put as a result of the traumatization of totalitarianism. This fear fades gradually with the advancement of the events in the novel and turn eventually into rebellion. The latter represents also one of the important themes tackled in dystopian novels because to stand against any oppression or control, one must rebel and break the rules. In addition to these themes, there exist two others that form the basis of this dissertation which are order and chaos. These themes are the pillar of

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dystopian writings because they go hand in hand with dystopia. In other words, in every dystopian novel, there is an imposed order and whenever there is a tendency to violate this order, chaos is the result (Ashley).

I-6-5- Post Apocalyptic Fiction

The line between Post-apocalyptic fiction and dystopian literature is still blurred as some might view them as being different from each other whereas others might look at them as being related. The distinction between the two for some lies in the fact that post-apocalyptic fiction is a conflict of man and nature whereas in dystopian works, the conflict is between man and society. This belief is certainly correct; however, it does not change the fact that dystopian works can embody the two conflicts at once. Post-apocalyptic fiction is characterized by having a rigged society which was destroyed as a result of human intervention or of natural forces. Since this kind of fiction highlights the idea of the characters' survival in a collapsed environment, it is one way or another linked to dystopian literature because this task of survival is one of elements that separate dystopia from other genres (Thompson).

Conclusion

In brief, dystopia was defined and approached differently by many writers due to its rising popularity since it first coined as a term. Its roots go back to 1868 when it was first used by John Stuart Mill to denote a world that is far from being perfect. After the spread of this term, many authors raced to adapt dystopia in their works including Anthony Burges, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and many others. In these works, dystopia was used to mirror what it is like to live under the shadow of totalitarianism and submit to being controlled. Other works tackled relatively the same ideas, but took a different direction that separates the traditional view of dystopia from the current one.

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Whereas novels such as *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Brave New world* focused on the hegemonic practices of the governments, modern and contemporary works focused instead on fiction and science. In addition to this, philosophical theories took the dystopian literature into another level as they have contributed in setting the grounds for critical analysis and have enabled the readers to look at literature and interpret it differently. Besides the theories of literary criticism, dystopian writings share many elements in common that are considered as the criteria to judge whether a work does belong to the dystopian genre or not. Among these elements, we find the will to control, the dehumanizing milieu, and the nightmarish setting as well as some common themes such as fear and survival.

Chapter Two: The Maze Runner: A Dystopian reading

Introduction

The massive outburst of dystopian trends in the current time brought forth many popular works into existence. Among these works, there is *The Maze Runner* written by James Dashner. This work followed the footsteps of Suzan Collins' novel *The Hunger Games* and succeeded to outstand as a book with a big popularity and a huge fan base. A porch of this popularity goes back to the fact that the novel has succeeded to meet the needs and answer the calls of dystopian readers. The readers admire dystopian science fiction providing that it reflects the effects of technological advancement in the world. Also, they are attracted to unique, dangerous and broken settings along with mysterious events that contain a mixture of both romance and drama. Not only this, but readers find themselves leaning more towards stories that are centralized around the idea of the "chosen one". In other words, people enjoy seeing the impact of one individual on the whole society (Dickson). *The Maze Runner*, similarly, wraps up all these elements providing that it revolves around science fiction and the use of technology such as surveillance cameras, automatic doors, and machine-like monsters. It also represents the collapsed setting because it takes place in a destroyed world where most of people live in wastelands. Furthermore, it highlights the idea of the chosen individual due to the fact that the main character Thomas is the one who changes things the minute he arrives. With all of these combined, *The Maze Runner*, then, represents the typical dystopian novel that features science fiction.

II-1- The Impulse of Dystopian Elements in *The Maze Runner*

Like many works of dystopian literature, *The Maze Runner* broadens the conception of dystopian ideologies and explores a variety of elements as well as themes

that form the pillars of dystopian writings. The story is centralized around a group of teenage boys who are entrapped in a place called the Glade. This place is surrounded by extremely high walls that separate them from a dangerous Maze. Consequently, the journey of the boys begins in attempt to survive in an unknown place.

II-1-1 The Conception of Control Over the Gladers

The creators of the Maze, also known as the government of WICKED, initiated the practices of hegemony and developed a sense of superiority in order to achieve a powerful status. This superiority gave them the right to mark their dominance and as a result, control the lives of the Gladers. The control is done and seen in the novel through many aspects among which there is:

II-1-1-1 The Technological Control

Technology in *The Maze Runner* is an important aspect by which WICKED controlled the boys in the Glade. First, this control is achieved by making the Gladers dependent on the presence of technology. The latter is represented by an elevator-like box with automatic doors. The function of this Box is providing the boys with the necessary supplies in order to live including food and clothes that are sent by the creators once every week. The importance of the Box lies in the fact that the Gladers cannot live without the supplies within it and they are, as a result, in a great need of technology. In order to illustrate this idea, one of the Gladers, Alby, explains the function of the Box saying: “This here’s the Box. Once a month we get a Newbie like you, never fails. Once a week, we get supplies, clothes, some food. Don’t need a lot – pretty much run ourselves in the Glade” (Dashner 42). In this quote, Alby’s aim was to

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emphasize the importance of the box in the lives of the boys inside the Glade because without the weekly supplies from the box, they will have nothing to live on and as a result, they will be doomed.

In addition to this, WICKED uses technology for another purpose which is surveillance. The surveillance is done by the use of electronic insects called the Beetle Blades that are put as a means to watch the movements of the Gladers and then report them to the creators. To put it differently, these machines are used as cameras in order to capture everything inside and outside the Glade. Moreover, the boys are, surprisingly, aware that they are being watched and are doing nothing in this concern. This awareness is highlighted in Alby's words: "A beetle blade. It is how they watch us" (64). Consequently, beetle blades are then machines created for the purpose of spying on the boys and helping the creators to see every move they make.

Similar to the Beetle Blades, the creators designed another metallic creature named the Griever. The Grievers are electronic creatures that are under the control of WICKED. Their function, however, is not to spy but rather to terrify and possibly kill anyone who attempts to enter the Maze. Dashner describes the Grievers in the novel saying: "The creature was a horrific mix of animal and machine, and seemed to realize it was being observed, seemed to know what lay inside the walls of the Glade, seemed to want to get inside and feast on human flesh" (39). According to what has been described, these monsters are then created for the purpose of guarding the Maze and preventing the Gladers from making any attempt of escaping by terrifying them.

Another element of technological control was presented through the automatic doors of the entries of the Maze. These doors close every night at the same exact time as

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if there is a sort of a timer according to which these doors close. The automatic doors are seen as a means of control because they keep the Gladers stuck inside the Glade and prevent them from entering the Maze and as a result, finding a way out. This idea was further highlighted in the novel: “Thomas looked around one more time, the *feel* of the place completely different now that all the walls were solid with no way out. He tried to imagine the purpose of such a thing, and he didn’t know which guess was worse—that they were being sealed *in* or that they were being protected from something *out there*” (29). This explains that the Maze doors are automatically set to close at the same time in order to stop the Gladers from entering the maze and to prevent the Grievors from attacking them.

In addition to this, the Maze is divided into eight sections and each section has walls that change every night differently. The pattern of these movements repeats itself once every month in order to form a code by which the Maze can be escaped. The Maze is therefore contradictory in the sense that it closes its walls to prevent the Gladers from escaping but at the same time, it gives them a code that can help them to find a way out. Alby explains these movements to Thomas complaining: “Two years we’ve tried to solve this thing, no luck. Shuckin’ walls move out there at night just as much as these here walls” (45).

II-1-1-2 The Mental Control:

WICKED does not only control the Gladers technologically, but mentally too. It implies mind control through two important elements. First, the creators apply mental dominance by depriving the Gladers from their memories. The minute the boys wake up

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in the lift¹, they find themselves unable to remember anything except the dark and cold atmosphere they are in. The boys could neither remember their names nor how their lives were like, their minds were blank. This is illustrated in the novel where it is mentioned that Thomas “didn’t know where he came from, or how he’d got into the dark lift, or who his parents were. He didn’t even know his last name” (2). Subsequently, Dashner portrays the mind of Thomas, likewise the mind of the rest of the Gladers, as empty from all the memories that a human being can have, including his last name.

Furthermore, the memory wipe was not the only way by which the creators implemented control, but they applied it by giving them their memories back too. To put it differently, when one of the Gladers gets stung by a Griever, he goes through a process called “The Changing²” where he sees flashbacks of his life and consequently, remembers everything. WICKED planned to do this in order to traumatize the boys and make them feel safe inside the Glade. This is because, among their retrieved memories, they recall that the outer world was destroyed and is now full of danger. This fear of the outer world, which reveals another element of dystopia, makes the Gladers in a need to stay in the Glade where safety is provided rather than going out and face death. In this concern, Minho expresses his frustration on not having a perfect life inside the Glade, but at the same time expresses his gratitude for at least having safety, food, and a protection from the Grievers (206). In parallel to Newts’ relief concerning living in the Glade, Alby also expresses his fear from the outer world saying: “Seen it. Seen everything. Where we came from, who you are. Who the *girl* is. I remember the Flare”

¹ A metal box centered in the Glade through which the supplies are sent.

² A state of painful unconsciousness that happens after a person is stung by a Griever.

(171). In this quotation, it is shown that after being stung, Alby retrieved his memories and could remember all what he has forgotten. Also, he is not happy about getting his memory back, but is rather traumatized. The trauma that took over Alby was due to the fact that he remembered the Flare³ that has spread among most of the population in the world outside.

II-1-1-3 The Governmental Control

In addition to the preceding types of control, the governmental control sums them all up because it is the government that applies both technological and mental control. The governmental control is represented in the novel through the government of WICKED. It sets totalitarianism a paste because it controls the Gladers from all sides giving them no privacy, no choice and most importantly, no control over their destiny. Furthermore, in opposition to its hegemonic tendencies, WICKED viewed itself as having good intentions behind entrapping the Gladers. These intentions were justified by the government's need to find a cure for the Flare and save humanity. For this purpose, it gathered a group of immune and non- immune boys to test their brain cells and find out why the brains of these subjects could fight the virus of the Flare.

Although the reasons behind their actions were good, the means by which they attempted to achieve their goals were bad and this exposes the paradoxical nature of WICKED. The means that they have used were inhumane providing that they involuntarily tortured the boys, took the boys away from their families, and erased the memories they had. All these actions violate their rights as human beings and confirm that the creators set a perfect example of totalitarianism.

³ A virus that slowly eats away the brain and turn its victims to bloodthirsty humans.

II-1-2 The Nightmarish and the Broken Setting

Unlike the settings of novels that are not central to dystopia, the setting of dystopian literature is different because it is characterized by being unique. *The Maze Runner*'s setting is similarly unique because it is a setting that distinguishes the novel from other novels. In the novel, there are two settings, one is the Glade where the boys live and the other is the outside world. What these two settings have in common is that none of them is totally safe.

The external world is characterized by emptiness in the sense that it is destroyed. In other words, the world outside the Glade was ravaged by Solar Flares⁴ and consequently, it turned into burned wastelands inhabited by contagious people carrying the virus of the Flare; Whereas the inside world inside is surrounded by a gigantic terrifying Maze. The surroundings of this Maze are full of danger because they carry deadly monsters inside. This Maze, then, exposes the Gladers to every possible danger and threatens their lives rather than protecting them. The Glade is also no different because though it keeps them safe, it at the same time imprisons them. Thomas, in this regard, says: "We live inside a place that seems to have no way out, surrounded by bloodthirsty monster- guards. Doesn't that sound like a prison to you?" (62-63). Thomas was complaining about how this place is exposing them to danger rather than saving them and at the same he also was expressing his hopelessness of considering this place a place to live where in fact, it is no different than a prison.

II-1-3 The Dehumanization of the Gladers

⁴ A sudden temporary outburst of energy from a small area of the sun's surface.

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It is true that the creators provided the Gladers with a place to live in, food to eat from and people to be with; however, they imprisoned them in a place in which they are given no privacy or rights like the rest of human beings. This idea is further elaborated in the theme of privacy versus dehumanization. Privacy, as a basic right, was taken away from the boys through constant surveillance. Since they are being watched by the creators through the Beetle Blades, the Gladers find no comfort in doing things that require privacy such as going to the bathroom, taking a shower, changing their clothes or telling secrets. Everything that they do is being seen by the creators and as result, they are being dehumanized. Also, this dehumanization is seen in the fact that they were used as test subjects and this reduces them to turn into animals-like because testing is usually associated with animals and not humans. Furthermore, the tattoo that the boys had in the back of their necks says “PROPERTY OF WICKED” which is dehumanizing even more providing that no person is a property but is instead a human being.

II-1-4 The Inclusion of Dystopian Themes

Besides the prevalence of control, the ragged society and the dehumanization of the characters, *The Maze Runner* continues to present elements that are central to dystopia which are the themes of fear and bravery.

II-1-4-1 The Theme of Fear

Like any other dystopian novel, fear is one of the most important themes to be tackled in *The Maze Runner*. James Dashner implements this theme in the novel in the fact that there is a lot to develop fear of. First of all, the Newbies⁵ who arrived to the

⁵ A new comer in the Glade.

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Glade, including Thomas, were afraid when they were first sent in the box. The cold and dark atmosphere inside the Lift terrifies the newcomers because they have no idea where they are or to where they are being sent. This theme of fear is represented by Thomas's experience inside the box where it is described: "Thomas backed into the corner once again, folded his arms and shivered, and the fear returned. He felt a worrying in his chest, as if his heart wanted to escape to flee his body (3). Besides the fear of the Box, the characters also developed fear from the scary machinery monsters inside the Maze. The Grievers are described to be horrific and the Gladers fear them because of that. Thomas shows this kind of fear in his first encounter with the Grievers where Dashner explains:

But nothing sent chills up and down Thomas's spine like the haunted, deathly moans that somehow escaped the creature when it sat still, like the sound of dying men on a battlefield. Seeing it all now—the beast matched with sounds—Thomas couldn't think of any nightmare that could equal this hideous thing coming towards him (125).

In addition to the Grievers, another aspect of fear was shown in the unknown surroundings of the place as well as the unknown destiny of the boys. Most of the characters, if not all, lived in fear when they first came to the Glade and continued to live in it because their destiny was unknown. Alby, however, sees this fear as something natural among all human beings and he explains to Thomas: "If you ain't scared, you ain't human. Act any different and I'd throw you off the Cliff because it'd mean you're a psycho" (9). Alby was trying to show that there is no shame of being scared,

especially in situations that require fear and the situation that they were put into is no different.

II-1-4-2 The Theme of Bravery

In addition to fear, bravery is also a theme that is common in dystopian novels, providing that all the protagonists are characterized by being brave and courageous. The theme of bravery is shown in the novel through the main character Thomas. All along the novel, Thomas was the hero that all the Gladers aspire to be. He showed not only physical bravery, but moral courage too. Thomas displayed the physical bravery when he sacrificed himself to help Minho and Alby after being stuck inside the Maze. This is illustrated in the novel in the following quote: “Thomas knew he had no choice. He *moved*. Forward. He squeezed past the connecting rods at the last second and stepped into the Maze” (110). Thomas bravery constituted in the fact that he helped others, knowing that he could be possibly killed by doing what he did. In addition to this, Thomas showed moral courage in deteriorating the order and motivating the Gladers to embrace change. He finally succeeded in doing this by convincing the boys to follow him to the Maze in order to escape. Alby also showed courage in sacrificing himself on the expense of the safety of the rest where he threw himself in the middle of a group of Grievors in order to distract them while the Gladers run away (330).

II-1-5 The Maze Runner as a Post-Apocalyptic Novel

Despite the fact that the novel belongs to dystopian fiction, it also represents an element pertinent to post-apocalyptic fiction which is the setting. Since the central focus of post-apocalyptic fiction is on the collapsed setting, *The Maze Runner* presents a

setting that is similar to that. The novel takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where everything was destroyed because of the Sun Flares. The solar storms burned the lands and turned them into wastelands full of sand and ashes called The Scorch. *The Maze Runner* does not describe in details the previous idea, but rather, it alludes to it and pave the way for this idea to be further discussed in details in James Dashner's following book *The Scorch Trials*.

II-1-6 Theories Related to Dystopia

The Maze Runner makes use of the existing theories of criticism in order to analyze the characters and link the results of this analysis to dystopia. One of the theories that can be applied in the novel is the theory of Charles Darwin concerning the survival of the fittest. The novel presents this idea in the fact that everything revolves around survival. First, this idea was highlighted when Thomas first entered the Maze in order to save his friends from being killed. He consequently put himself through a journey where he had to survive a night inside the Maze and avoid death. His ability to think cleverly and adapt to the changes inside the Maze led him eventually to stay safe and rescue, as a result his friends. Survival is not only shown through Thomas, but also through the rest of the characters because the aim of putting them inside the Glade was to see whether they can avoid danger and survive and it turns out that some of them eventually were. The best proof of this assumption is seen in the last pages of the book where the Gladers enter the Maze and escape it successfully despite the obstacles.

In addition to survival, Thomas Hobbes' view of the nature of humans as being brutal can be also seen through some of the characters in the novel. A perfect representation of this idea is seen in the banishment of Ben. In order to preserve their

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lives, the rest of the Gladers had to banish Ben by sending him inside the Maze to be eaten by the Grievers. The reason behind which they did this was that Ben attempted to kill Thomas and if he was kept alive, he could possibly kill the others, too.

In addition to the preceding theories, Freud's idea of the Unconscious and Subconscious mind is also applied in the novel. This idea is seen highly through the characters that went through the changing namely: Ben and Alby. During the process of The Change, they become unaware of what they are doing or saying because the poison they were injected with causes hallucinations and leads, consequently to the absence of consciousness. Also, the Subconscious mind was also presented in the action of memories erasing. The characters find themselves unable to remember so many things about themselves and families and as a result, they think that they have forgotten everything; however, their memories were soon brought to consciousness when they were stung.

Conclusion

The Maze Runner proves its efficiency as a dystopian novel by successfully representing many elements that are related to dystopian fiction. It first highlights the idea of control through three main aspects: technology, mental domination, and governmental practices. What all these types of control share in common is that they all dehumanize the Gladers and deprive them from their freedom. In addition to control, the novel portrays a unique setting represented in the Maze. This maze has deadly monsters inside it and is described to be dangerous and life threatening and as a result, it is considered as one of the settings that allude to dystopia. Moreover, the dehumanization of the Gladers highlights another aspect of dystopian literature. The

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boys inside the Glade were treated with inferiority and imprisoned in order to be used as test subjects by a totalitarian regime. This totalitarianism evokes, as a result, another element of dystopia which is the theme of fear. This fear was the prevailing theme providing that it was embodied through many characters including Thomas. In addition to fear, bravery was also a prominent theme in the novel providing that most of the characters shifted from the state of fear to the state of being brave. Other element that represented dystopia are the post-apocalyptic setting and the presence of the theories of Charles Darwin, Thomas Hobbes and Sigmund Freud. The novel with its representation of many dystopian elements consequently proves why it is qualified to be called a dystopian novel that has a huge popularity among young adults and readers in general.

Chapter Three: the Intersectionality between Order and Chaos

Chapter III: Order and Chaos and the Intersectionality between Them.

Introduction

As two of the most important themes in dystopian writings, Order and Chaos form the basis upon which *The Maze Runner* was written. All along the novel, the author emphasizes two essential things: the existing tension between the two themes of order and chaos along with their importance. The tension is viewed through the characters' inability to determine whether to maintain order and form a society characterized by self-sustainment or to embrace change and escape the Maze. Whether this or that, the characters find themselves in the necessity of the two because they need order in order to live and chaos in order to escape. Due to the fact that this tension creates an internal conflict inside the characters' minds, Order and Chaos are then one way or another related whether as complementary to each other or the opposite.

III-1- The Projection of Order

A part of the Maze trilogy was to make sure that the boys in the Glade were able to create an organized society if they were left alone or not and the result was that they certainly were. They created order and maintained it in many ways including:

III-1-1 The Creation of a Hierarchy of Jobs

All along the years spent in the Glade, the boys succeeded to a great extent in turning the place from a messy place to an ordered one. The society that they have created was characterized by being self-sustaining due to the fact that they were able to fulfill their own needs without the help of others. These needs were the result of the

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increasing population within the Glade. Consequently, the boys had to create a sequence of jobs through which they can rely on themselves and at the same time provide the necessary requirements for the rest of the Gladers.

The hierarchy of occupations they have established was seen in the division of tasks among the Gladers where each one was assigned to do the work that he is good at the most. Consequently, the following jobs were the ultimate result. On top of the jobs inside the Glade there is the leader. The leader comes above all the other Gladers because he is the one in charge of making decisions and creating rules in order to keep stability inside the Glade and prevent any possible sign of obedience. The role of the leader in the novel is described to be taken by Alby. Next to the leader, comes The Second in Command. This role is taken in the novel by Newt who is the one who replaces Alby in case of his absence. The tasks that come along with this position are identical to those of the main leader except that one is superior to the other. The keepers also cover a good percentage of the workers inside the place. They are the leaders of each job and their work constitutes in guiding the workers for each job and calling for gatherings whenever there is something wrong.

In addition the previously mentioned jobs of leadership, the Gladers created other jobs to fulfill their daily needs and requirements. These jobs start with the Runners who are assigned to serve the purpose of exploring the Maze on a daily basis in order to find a way out. They are characterized by being the fastest and the strongest among the Gladers because their work is challenging and requires a lot of patience. Moreover, the Med-Jacks also occupy an important task which is providing medical care for those who get injured or sick. Next to the Med-jacks come both of the Cooks and Slicers. Their

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tasks are interrelated in the fact that the Slicers are the ones who raise animals and slaughter them; whereas, the task of the Cook, like the name entails, is to cook those slaughtered animals and turn them into everyday meals for the boys. Also, the Builders and the Slopers are two of the most occupied jobs of the Glade. The Builders on one hand are concerned with works of construction inside the Glade such as buildings or different items that help the Gladers in carrying things and moving them around the place. The Slopers, on the other hand, represent the Gladers that are not good at any of the existing works and as a result, they are assigned to do the works of cleaning.

The establishments of these jobs in addition to many others prove to what extent the Gladers have succeeded in forming an ordered life regardless of their young age and of the obstacles that they have faced since the minute they were first entrapped in this unknown place with an unknown destiny.

III-1-2 Rules and Punishments

In order to preserve order and keep stability in the Glade, the leaders established a set of rules that need to be strictly followed and with these rules, came punishments. The purpose behind setting up these regulations was to safeguard the place and prevent any possible disobedience. The first rule constitutes in preventing any violent practices towards other Gladers because in the case of any, the attacker will be thrown in jail or banished inside the Maze. This punishment was applied in the novel when Ben tried to kill Thomas. Accordingly, Alby spoke: “Ben of the builders, you’ve been sentenced to banishment for the attempted murder of Thomas the Newbie. The keepers have spoken, and their work ain’t changing. And you ain’t coming back. Ever” (Dashner, 91). Chuck also says on this concern: “He’s being banished. Tonight, for trying to kill you” (86).

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The objective of creating this rule was to keep the Gladers safe and united far from harming each other.

Another rule prohibits the Gladers, except the Runners, from entering the Maze in order to preserve the lives of the boys and protect them from being killed by the Grievers. Alby reinforces this idea in his warning in the book: “Ain’t nobody – nobody – allowed in the Maze except the Runners” (46). Furthermore, the prohibition of entering the Box Hole was another rule. The Gladers were strictly prohibited from trying to jump inside the whole trying to find a way out because in their attempt to escape, they will be cut into half. The idea is shown in the novel through the carved words on one of the Graves: “Let this half-shank be a warning to all: you can’t escape through the Box Hole” (68). The purpose of these words lie in scaring the Gladers so that they won’t go anywhere near the whole and risk their lives.

An additional rule asserts that no Newbie can go up to the Homestead when another person is going through The Changing. The result of breaking this rule will ultimately be nightmares of traumatic images of the person seen in the process of The Change. Gally highlights this idea in the book where he explains: “Newbies aren’t allowed to see someone who’s.... taken. Newt and Alby won’t allow it” (17). The last rule is reflected in punishing who talks badly about a keeper in his absence. If any Glader was caught doing that, he will have to spend the next two weeks working for each keeper in the Glade. The novel represents this punishment in the following quote: “You’ll spend the next two weeks working one day apice for our different job Keepers” (43). This rule teaches the Gladers to learn how to respect the leaders and respect each other.

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All the previous rules and punishments that Alby and the other leaders have created and kept since they came to the Glade reflects how successful the boys were in proving their leadership skill and how hard they have worked in order to arrive to the point of keeping everyone obedient to the rules.

III- 2- Order: A choice or an Obligation

It is complicated to determine whether order was a choice or an obligation because it was, somehow, a mixture of the two. Order was a choice in the sense that the Gladers decided to create jobs and work with their own willing. In other words, the creators never obliged them to do these tasks, but they did it because they felt the need to do so. Moreover, the boys have chosen to occupy jobs due to the fact that they wanted to organize themselves and organize their life inside the Glade. Additionally, the increasing number of the Gladers through time, created the necessity to start growing food and raising animals because the food that was sent in the Box was never enough to feed them properly. As a result, the Gladers assigned Cooks and Slicers in order to do this task. Also, the Gladers started growing in number and the buildings inside the Glade were too tight in order to fill all of them, so the job of the Builders was created as a result in order to expand territories and make the Glade a wide place that fits everybody.

Besides this, the assignment of Leaders and Runners was also something that the Gladers have chosen. They knew that their stay in the Glade would last for a long time and consequently, they wanted to make this life organized by assigning someone to guide them. Their efforts in creating a self-sustaining society have paid off and Dashner highlights this where he describes Thomas' fascination of the Glade: "As he explored

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the area, he realized more and more how well the Gladers kept up the place, how clean it was. He was impressed by how organized they must be, how hard they all must work. He could only imagine how truly horrific a place like this could be if everyone went lazy and stupid” (66).

In contrast to being a choice, order was also an obligation in some cases. The first case was the case of the Maze into which the characters were forbidden to go. The Gladers did not enter the Maze not because they didn't want to, but because they were obliged to do that. To say it differently, they feared what lied inside the surroundings of the Maze and consequently, they did not dare to step inside it. Also, order was not a choice in the idea that the Gladers were not allowed to think of rebellion. That is to say that they knew that if they attempted to violate the calm atmosphere, there would be harsh consequences from the creators and as a result, following the rules was something inevitable.

III-3 The Importance of Order

To the Gladers, maintaining order was one of the main reasons that made them become the way they are now: united and close. Consequently, order has a huge importance to them because this order gave them hope, regularity, and a meaning to their lives inside the Glade. Without order, the shocking reality of the situation they were in would affect them psychologically and would make them eventually turn against each other. So, order gave them the chance to become a family instead of fighting each other. Newt highlights this idea where he talks to Thomas about the importance of this order:

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Our whole existence depends on things working....Order. You say that bloody word over and over in your shuck head. Reason we're all sane around here is 'cause we work our butts off and maintain order. Order's the reason we put Ben out – can't very well have loonies runnin' around tryin' to Kill people, now can we? Order. Last thing we need is you screwin' that up (65).

In this quote, Newt is emphasizing on the necessity of maintaining order because it is it that has kept them safe and stable along all the years they lived in the Glade. He also refers to the fact that he and the rest of the Gladers worked hard in order to turn the Glade into the organized place that is now and they cannot allow someone to just come and ruin what they have achieved all along these years.

III-4- The Road to Chaos

After accepting being under control for a long period of time, the Gladers finally came to realize that it is about time that they start changing things around the Glade. The reason behind changing their minds was Thomas providing that he could convince the rest of the Gladers that they should no longer submit to the control of the creators, but should instead work together in order to find a way out of this place. Thomas as the “chosen one” initiated the process of changing by breaking the number one important rule which is going inside the Maze. In an attempt to save his friends Newt and Alby, Thomas enters the Maze before the doors close and spends the night in there. By the end of the night, he and Newt discover something that has never been noticed before by the Runners which is the Grievers' Hole. This hole after being

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examined by Thomas and Newt turns out to be the place where the Grievors come out from and possibly, the place through which they can escape. This, consequently, motivates Thomas along with the rest of the Glades to break the order and embrace chaos as a way to get out of the Glade.

III-5- The representations of Chaos

In a similar vein to order, Chaos is another theme that outstands in *The Maze Runner*. As a theme, it was represented through many elements and events in the novel mainly those elements that contradict with order.

III-5-1 The Maze and the Grievors

First of all, the Maze paradoxically represents both order and chaos. It symbolizes order in the fact that it closes its doors every night, reflecting by this order and routine; however, it also is an element of chaos because it has no specific order. It changes every night and as a result it is chaotic. Moreover, it contrasts with the Glade in the fact that the latter is characterized by being an ordered society whereas the Maze is the opposite. In addition to this, The Grievors are another symbol of chaos because they contradict with the Glade too. They are characterized by being brutal, dangerous and having no mercy or order and as a result, they represent a part of chaos.

III-5-2 The Deterioration of Order

Chaos is not only presented through symbols from the novel such as the Maze and the Grievors, but it is also shown through important events that are considered as the

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turning point. The first event sets off by sending a girl named Teresa to the Glade. This is considered to be chaotic because the creators never send something in the Box except the daily supplies and most importantly, they never send girls to the place. As if sending a girl was not enough to traumatize the Gladers, the creators send a note with the girl. This note says that she's the last one ever and this is considered to be a disruption of order because this note meant that there will be no more Newbies and a result, there will be no more things to be sent in the Box. Furthermore, after the girl's coming, changes continue to happen.

Another event that represents chaos is seen in the novel in the change of the Maze's main doors. As a daily routine, the openings of the Maze were set to be closed at night in order to protect the Gladers from what lies inside the Maze; however, this no longer stayed the case. The doors stopped being sealed at night and as a result, the boys were exposed to a great danger. This danger paves the way for another element of chaos which is the Grievers. As a consequence of the open doors of the Maze, the Grievers invaded the Glade and started attacking and killing the Gladers, one per night. What is chaotic about that is that the monsters were never inside the Glade before and they have never killed a Glader, but rather, they just stung them. What all these events have in common is that they all are unusual because they have never happened before and once they started happening, things turn upside down.

III-6- Chaos: A Change or a Response

Likewise order, chaos was also put into question whether it was embraced as a way to change things or as a response from the creators for breaking order. The answer is that it was the two of them. Firstly, chaos is seen as being a way for liberation

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because the Gladers had control over their choices and as a result, they violated the rules in order to save themselves. This was illustrated in the novel when the Gladers started planning for the process of escaping. Although they had mixed feelings of fear and excitement, the one thing that they were sure of is that they were ready to begin change and embrace chaos without deliberate thinking. The following quote explains this idea: “After two years of being treated like mice, tonight we’re making a stand. Tonight we’re taking the fight back to the creators, no matter what we have to get through to get there. Tonight the Grievers better be scared” (324). In addition to the other Gladers, Thomas also represents change because he was the first one to initiate it. In the novel, the idea is highlighted when Thomas first arrives to the Glade. Despite the fact that the other boys warned him of the potential consequences of trying to make a change, he breaks the rules and enters the Maze in an attempt to find answers.

In contrast to being a choice, chaos was a response from WICKED as well. When the creators sensed the slightest sign of rebellion, they began interfering. Their responses were reflected in a series of events. First, they blocked the Maze doors and spread panic among the Gladers. Then, they programmed the Grievers to kill the boys and unleashed them at night time. This is viewed as chaos because the Grievers were before programmed to only sting the non-Runners who enter the Maze and not kill them; However, WICKED changed its procedures and started the journey of blood shedding because at this point, the lives of the Gladers no longer became important to them. Moreover, it is true that chaos was the primer source of the begging of troubles inside the Glade, but if it was not for it, the Gladers would not be free from the subjugation of the creators.

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III-7- The Intersectionality between Order and Chaos

As it was highlighted since the beginning of this chapter, a great tension exists between the Gladers' necessity to keep an ordered society and their want to embrace change in order to get their freedom. Consequently, Order and chaos were associated with each other since the beginning due to the fact they represent two of the most important themes tackled in the novel. The relationship between the two is then complementary because both order and chaos complete each other and at the same time, they affect one another. In other words, there is a cause effect relation between the two because order triggers chaos and chaos in return disrupts order.

The novel similarly presents this relationship in the fact that is centred on how order was represented and then disrupted by chaos. The things that established the sense of order for the gladers moved from being in their favour to becoming against them. One prominent example is the Maze. Despite the fact that it is a dangerous place, the Maze had never attempted to hurt the Gladers, but rather it protected them. The reason why it seals itself shut every night is to stop the Grievers from going anywhere near the boys; consequently, the Maze symbolizes order. However, this order was soon disrupted by the chaos that some Gladers have made. In other words, when the rules inside the Glade started to be violated instead of being followed, the Maze turned from a protector into an enemy. This then highlights how chaos affects order and destroys it.

On the other hand, order is also linked to chaos in the fact that no order can be maintained forever because people always aspire for change and this aspiration leads them to chaos. The idea was presented in the novel in the characters' embracement for change. That is to say that though the society that the Gladers have created was like

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home, it never satisfied them. The Gladers needed change providing that they were bored of following the same ordered routine every day inside the Glade and consequently, they embraced chaos by going into the Maze and finding a way out. This idea illustrates that chaos does not have to be always viewed negatively, but in some cases, it should be seen as a chance by which people can achieve what they aspire for. All these elements wrapped up show that order and chaos can never stand on their own but they should rather be associated with each other because the link between them is inseparable.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is a foregone conclusion that both of order and chaos are the main focus in *The Maze Runner*. In fact, all the events of the story revolve around the two of them. Order as one aspect, was successfully established and maintained by the Gladers following different ways. First, they were ordered in the sense that they have succeeded in creating a hierarchy of jobs to occupy themselves and cover the needs of the Gladers. Also, order was shown in their ability to cope up with the rules and the punishments that they have created. Furthermore, this order was envisioned with two perspectives: as being a choice and an obligation. It was a choice in the fact that the Gladers had control over most of the things in the Glade such as the creation of jobs and rules; however, order was forced when it is looked at as a way of control, in other words, some actions such as entering the Maze are viewed as a means of control because they were established by the creators and not the boys. In addition to all of this, order is considered to be of a vital importance to the Gladers because it gave their lives a meaning and hope and most importantly, it kept them safe.

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In contrast to order, chaos was seen in both of the Maze and the Grievors as being a symbol that contradicts with order. Not only this, but there were certain events through which chaos was seen among these events there is the arrival of a girl in the lift and the radical change of the Maze and the Grievors' behaviour. Chaos was also put into question whether it was something chosen by the Gladers or a response from the creators. The answer asserts that chaos was in the fact a mixture of the two. The Gladers broke the rules voluntarily and the creators responded in return chaotically.

All these combined show that order and chaos are indeed related and as a result, an intersectionality between the two is created. This intersectionality is represented in the fact that both order and chaos affect each other equally and though they are two different themes, *The Maze runner* combined them in order to look like one.

General Conclusion

In this research, dystopia was followed since its emergence as a term to the present time. The starting point of this work was defining the term taking into consideration the different views of different writers. Then, dystopia was further defined on the basis of utopia, in other words, if utopia was coined to symbolize people's aspiration of an ideal world, dystopia was used to denote the opposite. The research then proceeds to analyze how the utopian ideals failed in achieving peoples' goals and dreams and turned instead to totalitarianism. Dystopia was then applied to works of literature and was divided into two views: the traditional and the current one. Works such as *Nineteen Eighty Four* and *Brave New World* were the platform to the traditional dystopia view that represented the totalitarian practices of the governments on the rest of the society; however, the current view was envisioned differently as it was highly linked to fictitious events and young protagonists rather than focusing on the government. Furthermore, the research continues to explore the basis of dystopian writings which are presented in the conception of both control and dehumanization along with the horrific setting and the themes that are pertinent to dystopia.

The research proceeds then to apply the previously mentioned element of dystopia on James Dashner's work *The Maze Runner*. The novel successfully presented a variety of these elements in the fact that it focused on the use of control as a means of dehumanization. This control was embodied in three main types. The first type constitutes in the technological control which was applied by the government of WICKED. This control was viewed in the use of both the Griever and the Beetle Blades that were the eyes through which the creatures watched the movements inside the Glade. In addition to technology, the governmental control was also seen in the novel through the hegemonic practices of WICKED. This control was not only done

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technologically, but mentally too. The creators implied psychological control via erasing the Gladers' memories and depriving them from knowing different details about themselves and the outer world. Besides control, the novel contains a similar setting to that of dystopian literature since it takes place inside a gigantic Maze inhabited by monsters. The two previously mentioned elements of dystopia paved the way to another one which is the dehumanization. Because of the control and the scary surroundings, the Gladers are deprived from their simplest rights as humans such as privacy, love, and freedom. This control evokes also other aspects related to dystopia such as fear and bravery.

Prior to what has been mentioned, the theories of Charles Darwin, Thomas Hobbes, and Sigmund Freud are also presented in *The Maze Runner* in order to give a sense to the existing features of dystopia. Darwinism was applied to highlight the idea of survival on which the characters had to fight obstacles such as the Maze and Grievers in order to survive. Conversely, human nature that Hobbes has described to be brutish, was seen in the novel in the thirst of the characters to survive at the expense of others. It is also worth pointing that Sigmund Freud's idea of the Unconscious and Subconscious mind was illustrated in the dominance of the instinct on the characters' mind in their journey of survival and in their retrieving of memories that were stored in the Preconscious mind.

The analysis in this research does not only concentrate on the presence of dystopian elements in *The Maze Runner*, but it takes into account how did the Gladers managed to create a self-sustaining society too. This society was created due to order which was represented by the Gladers successfulness in establishing a hierarchy of jobs and a set of rules and punishments. The purpose of this order lies in its ability to keep them safe and united and as result, order was of a great importance to them. However,

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the dire need, that the Gladers felt to start making changes in order to be free, turned this order into chaos. This chaos was seen in return in the disruption of calm within the Glade and in the changing of the course of events by the end of the novel. Throughout this, it is noted that Order and Chaos are prominent in the *The Maze Runner* and as a result, one might sustain that there is intersectionality between the two. This intersectionality, nonetheless, is represented in the cause-effect relationship that the two themes have. In other words, order evokes chaos and chaos disrupts order and deteriorates it. To conclude with, the findings that this research arrived at answer the questions prompted in the introduction and confirm the hypothesis, as it attests the objectives it tries to pursue.

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Appendix A: Biography of the Author



James Smith Dashner

Novelist

Born: November 26, 1972 (age 46)

Nationality: American

Website: jamesdashner.com

Dashner was born in Austell, Georgia on November 26, 1972. He attended Brigham Young University where he studied accounting but also decided to try his hand at writing, having been an avid reader since childhood. After several attempts, Dashner eventually created the character of Jimmy Fincher. Dashner would expand his story into an outline and eventually produce four books in a series, collectively known as The Jimmy Fincher Saga. After repeated rejections from publishers, Dashner's manuscript was well received by Cedar Fort and his writing career began to take form.

After completion of the four books in the Fincher series, Dashner began another planned trilogy: The Maze Runner. Like the previous saga, this series would again focus on a young boy in a perilous situation. Reviews of The Maze Runner were positive, with many comparing the series to the wildly popular The Hunger Games series. Dashner has also completed a prequel to the series, The Kill Order. Dashner has stated that this series is heavily influenced by William Golding's The Lord of the Flies and Orson Scott Card's Ender's Game.

Appendix B: Synopsis of the Work

Thomas wakes up in a metal elevator that brings him to a place called *the Glade*. He has no memory of who he is or how he got there. He gradually discovers that the Glade is run by two boys: Alby, the leader, and Newt, the second-in-charge, who both maintain order by enforcing simple but effective rules. The elevator box surfaces from under the ground every week supplying new food, tools, medicine, and sometimes weapons. Every month a new boy with no memory of anything but his first name finds himself in that elevator box. The Glade is surrounded by a square of 4 mile-high walls made of concrete. Outside the walls is the Maze, a labyrinth of high concrete walls covered in ivy that changes every day. The Maze houses strange, lethal creatures known as Grievors. Grievors are described as amorphous monsters of metal and flesh. The Gladers are trying to stay alive as well as "solve" the Maze by running through it as fast as they can while tracking movements of the walls and trying to find an exit to escape.

One day after Thomas' arrival, a girl named Teresa is delivered through the elevator into the Glade with a note saying "She's the last one. Ever." It implies that there will be no more children sent into the Glade. The girl subsequently lapses into a coma. When Thomas comes to visit her, he recognizes her, but cannot remember her name until he hears her voice telepathically in his mind telling him her name. Teresa wakes up and tells Thomas that they knew each other before they were sent into the Glade, and reveals that they could communicate telepathically.

Her arrival triggers a series of changes to life in the Glade: People start acting strangely, the sun disappears, the weekly deliveries of supplies stop coming, and the doors of the Maze stay open at night, which allows the Grievors to enter the Glade and hunt the children. Thomas, however, figures out the walls of the Maze aren't moving for no purpose,

but their movements are actually a code. Through this code, the boys succeed to go inside the Maze and escape, as a result, the trilogy.

Résumé

Le présent travail explore l'inclusion d'éléments dystopiques en plus de la projection des deux thèmes de l'ordre et du chaos dans l'œuvre de James Dashner, *The Maze Runner*. Le roman enregistre les pratiques du totalitarisme ainsi que la description d'un monde chaotique où le contrôle est la clé centrale. En conséquence, *The Maze Runner* met en évidence divers éléments pertinents pour la littérature dystopique, à savoir la volonté de contrôler, le cadre cauchemardesque, le milieu déshumanisant, les thèmes de la peur et du courage, entre autres. Cette recherche porte également sur la représentation de l'ordre et du chaos au cœur de la littérature. L'ordre a été présenté à travers la capacité des Gladers à créer une société organisée, tandis-que le chaos était tout ce qui était en contradiction avec cet ordre. Le travail tente donc de créer une intersection qui relie les deux thèmes afin de montrer qu'ils ne peuvent pas être séparés. L'intersectionnalité est par conséquent établie sur la base du fait que l'ordre ne peut pas être maintenu et conduit donc au chaos, ce dernier en retour affecte l'ordre et le détériore.

ملخص

يهدف هذا العمل الى استكشاف العناصر التي تمثل عالم ديستوبيا في رواية جايمس داشنر المسماة "Maze Runner" وبالأخص عنصري النظام والفوضى. تعكس الرواية ممارسات الاستبداد وذلك بوصف عالم فوضوي تسود فيه السيطرة كعنصر أساسي وبناء على ذلك، تعد رواية جايمس داشنر رواية تسلط الضوء على مجموعة متنوعة من العناصر التي لها علاقة بعالم ديستوبيا وتتمثل هاته العناصر في الرغبة في السيطرة والوسط اللإنساني بالإضافة الى كل من موضوعي الخوف والشجاعة وغيرهما. يركز هذا البحث ايضا بشكل متساوي على تصوير النظام والفوضى في قلب الرواية وذلك من خلال الربط بينهما. يتمثل النظام من جهة في قدرة شخصيات الرواية على انشاء مجتمع منظم من كل النواحي، في حين أن الفوضى تتمثل في كل ما يتناقض مع هذا النظام. يحاول هذا البحث ، بناءً على ما سبق، إنشاء صلة تربط بين كل من النظام والفوضى لإظهار أنه لا يمكن الفصل بينهما وبالتالي يتم تأسيس هاته الصلة اعتمادا على فكرة أنه لا يمكن الحفاظ على النظام ونتيجة لذلك، تسود الفوضى التي بدورها هي ايضا تؤثر على النظام وتدهوره.