



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Mohamed Khider - Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
Department of foreign Languages
English Division

Master Dissertation

Investigating Dystopian Denominators and Their Manifestation in Veronica Roth's
***Divergent Trilogy* and Hajime Isayama's *Attack on Titan* (Manga)**

Submitted by :

Dhikra MIMOUNI

A dissertation submitted to the Department of English Language as a Partial Fulfillment for the
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization

Board of Examiners :

Mr. Lamdjed EL-HAMEL	Dr.	University of Biskra	Supervisor
Mr. Yasser SEDRATI	MAA.	University of Biskra	Chair
Mrs. Mimouna HADDAD	MAA.	University of Biskra	Examiner
Mrs. Meriem DJAALAL	MAA.	University of Biskra	Examiner

Academic year: 2022-2023

Dedication

'Dedicate Your Heart!' is the motto of the military in the manga of *Attack on Titan*. Just like the soldiers who dedicate their hearts to save humanity from titans, researchers dedicate their hearts to write dissertations that aim to serve humanity in terms of providing more knowledge and allowing further research. Thus, first and foremost, I want to dedicate my work to every researcher that is willing to dedicate her/his heart to whatever research s/he is conducting.

Needless to say, I dedicate my work to my precious family, my parents and siblings, who supported me and tolerated my talkative and irritating self throughout the whole process of writing this dissertation. Also, to my academic family, teachers and friends, who encouraged me to do the best I can and be creative and *'Divergent'*.

Acknowledgment

Above all, I would like to express my greatest gratitude and thanks to Allah, the Almighty and most gracious, for granting me the capability, intellect, and opportunity to conduct a research and write this dissertation.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. El HAMEL Lamdjed, for his constant support and encouragement; as well as, his approval and embracement of his candidates' ideas, whether they were silly, eccentric, or challenging. Equally, I express my thanks to the jury members who sacrificed their time to make presenting and examining this dissertation possible.

Naturally, and just as importantly, I am most thankful and much obliged to every family member of mine who comforted me during times of hesitation and anxiety and who even motivated me to do the maximum effort in writing this dissertation. Also, I give special thanks to my academic family of both classmates and teachers who helped in building my knowledge, ideas, and even my own present self.

Table of Content

Dedication	II
Acknowledgment	III
Table of Content	IV
List of Figures	VI
Abstract	VII
General Introduction	1
1 Chapter One: Theoretical Background	7
Introduction	8
1.1 Definition of Dystopia.....	9
1.1.1 Dystopia and Science Fiction.....	13
1.2 Manga as an Expressive Medium.....	16
1.3 Multimodal vs. Monomodal Discourse	22
1.4 Deconstruction Theory.....	24
Conclusion.....	29
2 Chapter two: Comparative View on the Manifestation of Dystopia in Both the Manga and the Trilogy.....	31
Introduction	32
2.1 <i>Divergent</i> through the Dystopian Perspective.....	32
2.2 <i>Attack on Titan</i> through the Dystopian Perspective	39
2.3 Dystopian Vision on the Similar Markers in the Trilogy and in the Manga.....	44

2.3.1	The Fence and the Walls: Knowledge / Ignorance	44
2.3.2	The Factions and the Divisions: Freedom / Control	48
2.3.3	The Protagonists and Relationships: Love / Ethics.....	51
2.4	The Portrayal of Science Fiction in Both Works	55
2.4.1	Science Fiction Markers in the <i>Divergent</i> Trilogy	55
2.4.2	Science Fiction Markers in the <i>Attack on Titan</i> Manga.....	57
	Conclusion.....	59
3	Chapter Three: Contrastive View on the Manifestation of Dystopia in Both the Manga and the Trilogy.....	61
	Introduction	62
3.1	The Contrasting Development of the Works' Dystopian Plots.....	62
3.1.1	The Walls and the Fence.....	62
3.1.2	The Ending.....	66
3.2	Dystopian Characterization	70
3.2.1	Titan and Divergent: Power / Powerlessness.....	71
3.2.2	Beatrice Prior and Eren Yeager: Hero / Villain	76
	Conclusion.....	83
	General Conclusion.....	85
	Works Cited	88
	ملخص	93

List of Figures

Figure 1 Attack on Titan Manga Cover	21
Figure 2 Manga Panels and Gutters. From <i>Attack on Titan: The World That the Girl Saw</i> 22-23.....	21
Figure 3 Manga Elements. From <i>Attack on Titan: The World That the Girl Saw</i> 20-21	22
Figure 4 Eren Realizing that Marley is Similar to Eldia. From <i>Attack on Titan: the Rumbling</i> 10-11	47
Figure 5 Eren Inheriting his Father's Memories. From <i>Attack on Titan: Sin</i> 32-34.....	47
Figure 6 Eren's View of Freedom. From <i>Attack on Titan: the Rumbling</i> 41.....	50
Figure 7 Eren's View of Freedom. From <i>Attack on Titan: The Rumbling</i> 42-45	50
Figure 8 Yumir Getting the Power of the Shining Centipede. From <i>Attack on Titan: From you, 2000 Years Ago</i> 12-13	58
Figure 9 Eren Sacrificing His Life to Eliminate Titans From Earth. From <i>Attack on Titan: Towards the Tree on that Hill</i> 25-25.....	67
Figure 10 Eren Realizing His Powerlessness Because He was Unable to Activate His Powers to Save One of His People From a Titan. From <i>Attack on Titan: Scream</i> 19-20.....	75
Figure 11 Eren Trying to Convince Eldians that He is a Human Just Like Them. From <i>Attack on Titan: Where's the Left Arm</i> 23-29.....	76
Figure 12 the Survey Corps' Wings of Freedom. From <i>Attack on Titan: Primitive Desire</i> 43-44.....	80
Figure 13 shift of focalization from Eldians to Marlians, with the character Falco Grice. From <i>Attack on Titan: The Other Side of the Ocean</i> 5-7.....	82

Abstract

In the recent decades, dystopian fiction has been getting more attention from readers and analysts alike. This is mainly because of this literary genre's nature that reflects the human reality. This research aims to explain the nature of this genre and to highlight how a work of fiction can be classified as dystopian, regardless of whether it has a monomodal or a multimodal form. *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga are dystopian works of fiction that have similar nature but different forms. In fact, the purpose of this research is mainly to answer the questions: what are the dystopian denominators that lie within the literary elements, i.e. plot, setting, and characters, of both selected works? As well as, which binary oppositions, those of Derridian deconstruction theory, support both works' dystopian nature? Of course, the study covers different binary oppositions including that of freedom and control, love and ethics, hero and villain...etc. The nature of this study is mainly qualitative based on descriptive and analytical methods. The study adopts the deconstructionist approach which allows the researcher to decipher both works' discourses, as well as the binaries lying within them, in regard to the portrayal of dystopia. The collected data, from both primary and secondary sources, is analyzed and interpreted from the lenses of dystopian fiction along with its frame and manifestations. Finally, the main conclusion that this research draws is the distinct manifestation of dystopia in the selected works; as well as, the distinct relation between the medium of manga and literature, which is greatly supported by the literary elements that this medium includes.

Key words: Dystopian fiction, binary oppositions, manga, multimodality, science fiction.

General Introduction

Literature is an indispensable field of knowledge that concerns human life in general. It mostly deals with the human experience, and it discusses both the complexity and beauty of this experience. Also, what makes literature even more important is its interdisciplinary nature where every field of knowledge is linked, one way or another, to literature and literary studies. Philosophy, art, politics, and even science and technology are all fields linked to literature which give the latter its multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature. Indeed, literature and literary studies develop with the development of humanity. Any change or transformation in the style of life of humans leads to change in literature. For instance, the continuous development of human experience and creativity helped literature to widen its scope from monomodality into multimodality.

Throughout history, written literature was not much accessible to anyone from any social background. Since most common people were illiterate, mainly because of wars and poverty, reading books was more of a luxury to those people, except for those from high society. This led the authors of previous centuries, mainly English authors of 15th and 16th centuries, to put a major focus on a distinct type of literature which is not monomodal, i.e. relies on only one mode of expression, but multimodal, i.e. relies on multiple modes. This distinct type of literature is called drama. The latter is considered to be the first and earliest multimodal literary genre that was accessible to the audience, whether they were literate or not. Including only writing as a mode of expression made it impossible for the common people to have a taste of literature, so including different modes in drama, like gestures and sounds for example, helped in making literature reach the ears, eyes, and hearts of everyone from all social backgrounds.

As a matter of fact, multimodality in literature did not stop at drama, for the further humanity develops the more varied literature becomes. To be more specific, art has always been linked to literature, but the rise of the graphic novels helped in making literature more

engaged with arts. Literature became more visual in terms of including different paintings and illustrations in various literary works. Comics, or Japanese manga in specific, are a serialized genre of graphic novels that are gaining more fame every passing day. This was possible thanks to the raise of technology and the use of internet which helped the comic books to get more attention from the public because they were easily accessible. Also, for the young readers, like children and teenagers for example, reading a story with illustrations and dialogues, i.e. multimodal, is way more interesting than reading a classic novel. In fact, some classic literary works were made into mangas in order to make the young reader eager to read them.

Just as it was aforementioned, literature is based on human experience, so the different emotions humans feel or the profound questions they ask are all included in literature. This idea explains how the different literary genres, like mystery, romance, thriller, and fantasy for example, are interrelated, and how reader might experience more than one emotion in a literary work just like in reality. In fact, the same goes for comics, which follow literature in its elements, because the reader can find multiple genres in one comic book. Since there are countless literary genres, this dissertation sheds light mainly on the interrelation between science fiction and dystopian fiction and how these genres, especially dystopia, can reflect human reality. In fact, both mentioned genres are considered to be contemporary because they both focus, in most cases, on development of science and technology and how human life is affected by this development. The case study of this dissertation, the *Divergent* trilogy and the *Attack on Titan* manga, is an example of the existence of different genres in one work, which will be further explained in this dissertation's chapters.

It might be true that literary genres are interrelated; however, every genre has its own distinct characteristics. Dystopian fiction, for one, has distinct denominators that lie within the literary elements of dystopian works. Such denominators are what classify a work of

fiction as dystopian; of course this concerns both monomodal and multimodal works. These denominators were generated by analysts who traced such denominators in different dystopian works which are now considered to be the progenitors of this literary genre, like G. Orwell's *1984* and A. Huxley's *Brave New World* for example. Thus, in order to categorize any fictional work as dystopian, one must trace a number of the denominators of this genre in the selected work. This will be the main study of this dissertation where the two selected works of different forms are to be analyzed to investigate the dystopian nature lying behind their literary elements.

This dissertation is based mainly on analyzing the primary source, i.e. trilogy and the manga; however, it also includes some secondary sources that help in explaining the different nature of monomodal and multimodal texts; also, some resources that help in investigating the dystopian genre in different works of fiction. In addition, the dystopian nature of both works is examined through the lenses of deconstruction theory. The latter is a theory introduced by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, and it covers different concepts and ideas which mainly serve as a critique to the Western philosophical tradition. The deconstruction theory is generally used as a type of reading where texts are analyzed from a different stand point from that of the western philosophy. The main concepts that the theory aims to deconstruct are mainly Metaphysics of Presence, Logocentrism and Phonocentrism, and Binary Oppositions. This dissertation puts the major focus on deconstructing the binary oppositions that lie within both the trilogy and the manga.

Many literary analysts use the deconstruction theory to analyze and deconstruct some major ideas in literary works. However, deconstruction theory was not much applied on dystopian fiction, so finding resources on the analyses of both *Divergent* and *Attack on Titan* using the deconstruction theory can be a challenging task for the researcher. Instead, in this dissertation, the study of both works was possible thanks to the books and articles that

explain this theory and help the researcher to apply it in his/her case study. In her book, *The Language of Dystopia*, J. Norledge examines multiple canonical dystopian novels and explains the nature of the dystopian genre. The same goes for L. M. Demerjian who collected a number of articles on dystopia in her book *The Age of Dystopia*. Both books helped in the analysis of dystopia in this dissertation, and they were used as guides throughout the process of research.

In addition, for the deconstruction theory, the works of G. Kakoliris, mainly his article “Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction of Western Metaphysics: The Early Years”, provide an explanation and analysis to Derrida’s theory and ideas which were used as a reference when analyzing the case study of this dissertation. The works of Derrida himself, like his book *Of Grammatology*, were also used as a reference to understand the theory and apply it on the selected works. In addition to those aforementioned works, some other works that discuss the multimodal nature of manga and the difference between monomodality and multimodality were also used as a reference. The master thesis of C. W. Huang discusses the multimodal nature of manga and how this new medium has become a prominent visual narrative in the world of literature. All these works were studied and used to support and prove the validity of this dissertation’s arguments.

The first chapter of this dissertation provides a further explanation to the nature of this research. It represents the background of the research where the form of the selected works, the dystopian genre, and even the deconstruction theory are all discussed and explained. The second chapter analyzes the dystopian denominators in the works’ literary elements, and it investigates the similarities shared between *Divergent* and *Attack on Titan* in terms of their dystopian nature. Also, the second chapter uncovers the similar binary opposites that lie within the trilogy and the manga, and it demonstrates how such binaries are deconstructed in both works. The dissertation’s last chapter, in contrast to its second chapter, investigates the

points of divergence between the selected works, and it highlights the different demonstration of some profound binaries that build the plot of both *Divergent* and *Attack on Titan*. Moreover, the third chapter discusses the heterogeneous endings of both works, and how such difference motivate the reader and analyst alike to contemplate and analyze such works.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

Introduction

Literature is a vast field of knowledge that touches the human experience and tries to explore and express such experience through different themes and genres. Literary works develop with the development of the human life. This is mainly to keep pace with the human experience in all times and in varied spaces. Dystopia for one is a literary genre that emerged in the recent centuries, even though the concept existed way before. This genre was given its shape and characteristics by some canonical literary works which are now considered to be the progenitors of dystopian fiction. Literary genres, as a matter of fact, are interrelated. Studying certain genres would give the scholars a sense of similarity. To be more specific, dystopian genre itself is very close to another fiction genre that is known as science fiction. There are numerous literary works that cover both genres in their literary elements. However, no literary genre is identical to another, for each one has its own characteristics and manifestation despite the similarities it shares with other genres.

As a matter of fact, literature is an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that is growing with the growth of the world. Literature is, also, interrelated with other arts, sciences, and philosophies which gives it other dimensions to explore. The multimodal dimension is no exception. Comics, for instance, and more specifically manga has a relation to literature and the former developed more thanks to the latter. This first chapter will further explore the aforementioned subjects starting with the dystopian genre, or tradition, and its origins. Also, some comparison will be made between the dystopian fiction and science fiction. In addition, the chapter will include an overview on manga, as an expressive medium with a multimodal nature. Lastly, the chapter will also define and describe the Derridian deconstruction theory with its major concepts of *différance* and binary opposition, and how the latter will be used in the analysis of the selected works of this thesis.

1.1 Definition of Dystopia

Before defining ‘dystopia’ as a concept and exploring its aspects as a literary genre, one must define its origins first. The term was coined by the English philosopher John Stuart Mill in the second half of the 19th century as a response to the concept of ‘utopia’. The latter is a concept introduced in 16th century by an English philosopher called Thomas More who wrote a book entitled *Utopia* in 1516 (Gale 2). In his book, More presented a quasi-perfect world in which he portrayed the society, with its political and social system, as peaceful, fair, and equal. It was a world void of any negative aspects or destructive ideas. For More, the idea of utopia was just a solution to change the hideous reality mankind was witnessing, even though the work was more of a satire. Reaching the peak of socialism and democracy has to be the real endeavor of Men instead of feudalism and tyranny. This idea forms the core of the concept of utopia. It holds an optimistic view, which is almost paradisiacal, to the world of politics in specific and to the human nature in general.

Naturally, the concept of utopia had received criticism for its overly positive view to reality. Even if it was only a suggested solution to an existing problem, it was very farfetched. So, it is unlikely for utopia to be considered as a real solution. This was the reason behind the emergence of the concept of Dystopia. It is important to mention that both concepts are Greek. While utopia literally means “no-place”, Dystopia means “bad-place”. This is why the concepts are not considered as antonyms, but they are entirely different. In fact, the opposite of dystopia is ‘eutopia’ which means “good-place”. Thus, to understand the relation between dystopia and utopia, we must refer to the quote provided by Jessica Norledge in her book *the language of dystopia*. Jessica quoted what Peter Stockwell, the English linguist, has stated. Stockwell said: “[D]ystopia is not the opposite of utopia. The contrary of utopia (no place) is our reality (this place); dystopia is a displacement of our reality” (2). Also, Stockwell explained how dystopian fiction is categorized as “extensions of

our base-reality, closely related to it or caricatures of it, rather than being disjunctive alternatives” (2). In other words, the main difference between utopia and dystopia is that the latter is closely linked to reality more than the former. Dystopia portrays a futuristic vision of the world where destruction and darkness prevails. It is by all means pessimistic and negative, for it shows the hideous side of humans and how it will eventually lead to their demise.

Dystopia, as a concept, emerged in the late 19th century, coined in 1868, and continued to manifest in different literary works until the dystopian genre was created. In fact, dystopian works of fiction can be traced to the 18th century with the novel *Gulliver's travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift. This novel was one of the early dystopian works and also a satire to the English people in specific and to humanity in general. Swift presented the scientists, the politicians, and even the animals in unexpected ways. The author even made the humans servants to the animals in one of the parts of the novel. This work is dystopian because it digs deep into the human nature and explores the reality in which this nature manifests (Pospisil 7). Moving from the 18th to the 19th century, this century witnessed more dystopian works that contributed to the making of the dystopian tradition. Some of these works are *Erewhon* (1872) by Samuel butler which covered themes like religion, evolution, and machines; as well as, *The Time Machine* (1895) by H. G. Wells that spoke about time traveling in a dystopian and science-fictional setting. Reaching the 20th century, dystopian fiction kept evolving especially with some canonical works like *Brave New World* (1931-32) by Aldous Huxley and *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) by George Orwell that helped in polishing the genre even more (Gale 3-4).

With the canonical works of Huxley, Orwell, Bradbury, and other dystopian authors, the manifestation of the dystopian themes has become clearer and more familiar. Moreover, with the rise of the Young-Adult (YA) novels in the 21st century, the application of dystopia

widened and got even more interwoven with science-fiction genre. Veronica Roth's *Divergent trilogy* (2011-2013) along with Suzanne Collins' *the Hunger Games trilogy* (2008-2010) can be an example to YA novels that have a dystopian nature. Both works draw their plot and setting on dystopian tradition, and they cover themes like violence, betrayal, unity, and war which are purely dystopian. Equally important, the new medium of comics and graphic novels also covered the dystopian themes that can be traced in many contemporary works like *Attack on Titan* (2009-2021) by Hajime Isayama and *Maus* (1980-1991) by Art Spiegelman. The last two mentioned works are multimodal, not monomodal like novels or poetry, and they cover similar themes that are entirely dystopian. So, putting all the aforementioned works into consideration, dystopian fiction can be said to be the literary genre that covers apocalyptic themes with a distinct focus on the dark side of the human nature.

Throughout the recent decades, dystopia, being a literary theme and genre, has shaped its own aspects and manifestations that came to be known as the dystopian tradition. The latter refers to the ideas and themes that most dystopian works cover. The first theme that is mostly covered is destruction. Dystopian fiction uses a quasi-apocalyptic setting in which the main characters strive to uncover the truth about themselves and about their surroundings and reality. Great number of the dystopian novels is set in a world that witnessed a massive destruction war that put the humankind close to extinction. The contemporary YA novels and comics are no different. Taking Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy or Roth's *Divergent* trilogy or even Isayama's *Attack on Titan* manga as examples would show how humanity is leading itself to annihilation because of its corrupted nature. The theme of destruction in dystopian fiction is an umbrella under which many sub-themes manifest; we mention mainly war, genocide, violence, and exploitation.

Another important theme covered in dystopian fiction is the great technological and scientific achievements. Dystopian plot often revolves around the main characters and their constant attempts to overcome the control and manipulation caused by technology and science. This theme highlights the real reasons behind developing technology that are far from being for the good of humanity. Since technology is associated with manipulation and control, dystopian fiction portrays how much darkness awaits humans in the future due to the massive technological and scientific achievements. From *Divergent's* perspective, the manipulation can be tracked through the use of simulations in the story, and also how each faction is in charge of some type of simulation to prevent the people within the faction from straying. For instance, the Erudite faction is in charge of the 'death' simulation. Also, since they are the 'intelligent' faction, it can be interpreted as the intelligence, i.e. technology and science, being the first reason behind the death of the people in the story. In fact, even from *Attack on Titan's* perspective, technology played a role in the story. The war between the Marleyans and the Eldians was of a great disadvantage to the Eldians because of the latter's lack in terms of technology and knowledge. Concisely, science and technology shapes the majority of dystopian works, and it contributes in building the bridge between dystopian fiction and science fiction.

There are countless other themes that dystopian fiction covers, but the ones we find most are the themes of history, politics, and religion. First, history is found in dystopian fiction even though the dystopian setting is, most of the time, futuristic. The reason is simply because dystopia explores the human experience and tries to predict the future of humanity based on its past, i.e. history, just as the proverb says: "Without the past, there is no future". Second, dystopia focuses on political systems and how they reveal the ambitious and greedy nature of the humans. That is because politics is what shapes societies, and dystopia tends to highlight the notions of social unity and community in those societies. Third, the theme of

religion can be traced in some canonical dystopian works, such as *the Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, where we find dogmatic religious principles forced on the people by the system and no one is allowed to disagree with those principles (Chylikova 12-15). The three themes are often studied separately, but they can be studied in relation to each other.

Throughout the recent centuries, dystopia has evolved to become an independent literary genre with distinct aspects, especially thematic aspects. From classic literary works to modern ones and even multimodal works, dystopia has appeared in different canonical works that helped in shaping the genre and giving it its contemporary identity. In fact, dystopia covers a variety of themes, some of which will be studied in this dissertation, and it has some similarities with other literary genres, especially science fiction.

1.1.1 Dystopia and Science Fiction

Literature, as a distinct field of humanities, deals with the human experience and its internal and external struggles. This makes the literary genres, such as horror, comedy, and melodrama, interrelated because they share similar objectives of projecting human reality. The only difference between these genres is found in the methods each one applies, be it in form or content. Dystopia and science fiction are no different. Both latter genres aim at portraying an alternative reality where the future of humanity is destroyed by humans' own hands. In fact, the aim is not the only thing shared between dystopian fiction and science fiction, and this made many readers confused about whether dystopia was just a theme in science fiction or a whole genre of its own. Scholars, just like the readers, were intrigued by this relationship, so they started to conduct some researches on both genres to see the connection between them and draw the points of both similarity and divergence.

The point that should be made clear is that dystopia and science fiction are two different literary genres with distinct literary elements. Dystopia is often linked to science fiction as a sub-genre; however, dystopia is a concept that existed since antiquity and evolved

to become an independent literary genre, so, it should not be confused with science fiction even though both genres have multiple points in common. Science fiction was analyzed by scholars, and its emergence was traced back to the early 19th century. Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* is considered to be the first science fictional work in the history of literature (Nithya 209). *Frankenstein* tackles the story of a scientist who tries to create life using only science. However, at some certain point in the story, the scientist's creation got out of his control and became a threat to his own life. This idea of science becoming a threat to life, that of humans or other beings, is what science fiction mostly covers.

Science fiction emerged in the 19th century, but it witnessed its peak in the 20th century, specifically after the world wars. The hideous events that humans witnessed in the world wars, especially the Second World War, left them with a great trauma because now humans are aware of what mankind can actually perform. Of course, this trauma was caused by the creation of the atomic bomb and the latter's continuous development to become even more destructive. Just like in dystopian fiction, we find the setting of science fiction to be a destroyed world that is almost void of any natural scenery. It is often caused by human war, but sometimes it is caused by something beyond human control, like a comet hitting the earth for example (Nithya 207-214).

Science fiction shares some canonical works with dystopian fiction. *Brave New World* (1931-32) by Aldous Huxley and *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) by George Orwell are an example of science fiction works that are also dystopian. Even though it is inevitable to link dystopia with science fiction given the amount of literary works they share, it is important to clarify the main difference between both genres which resides in the plot itself. On the one hand, and as mentioned before, dystopian fiction covers stories of protagonists who strive to uncover the truth that is hidden from them, and this happens on future earth which becomes a destroyed world. Also, the themes that dystopia generally include are politics and religion

more than science. On the other hand, science fiction plot covers stories of protagonists who witness great scientific development and strive to preserve their human nature in an artificial world. Science fictional stories may also be about the human struggle with an outsider force like a comet or an alien invasion, and these stories do not take place on earth alone but in space as well. The themes found in science fiction genre are primarily scientific development and the dominance of artificial intelligence. Actually, both science fiction and dystopian fiction share similar themes, but the difference between them lies in their distinct emphasis.

The protagonists of dystopian fiction and science fiction make another point of similarity. Dystopian protagonists are usually rebellious and are against the status quo. In fact, they often become an outcast in their societies because of their questioning of the social and political systems; they are the characters that are aware of the abnormality of these systems. In dystopian stories, the characters' curiosity is viewed as a sin by the higher-ups, or ruling class. So, even if a person is just innocently curious about simple matters or events, he will eventually be threatened to stop or simply will get killed.

Just like the dystopian protagonists, the science fiction protagonists are often portrayed as having a strong sense of morality and loyalty, and they are characterized by their stubbornness and curiosity. Science fiction protagonist is usually someone attentive with good intellectual skills that enable him/her to notice the small changes that are taking place in his/her surrounding. So, in general, both dystopian fiction and science fiction have a protagonist that is not always heroic. The protagonist has flaws that are covered by his fellowship, be it friends or family. These characteristics are selected to make the readers able to relate to the protagonists and be able to understand their choices and actions (Fields).

Literary genres tend to have a connection with each other because they all deal with the human experience. Some of these genres are confused with each another because of the number of similarities they share. Dystopian fiction and science fiction are a good example of

such confusion. Indeed, these two genres share a lot of similarities in terms of their characteristics which make it hard, for readers and scholars alike, to differentiate between them. The similarities are found in the themes, the characters, and sometimes even in the setting; however, the genres are in no way identical. Science fiction, just like the name states, shifts the majority of the attention to science and technology, and it tends to be speculative and close to fantasy. Whereas in dystopian fiction, the emphasis is put more on the society, with its communities and social and political systems, and it tends to be closer to reality with less resemblance to fantasy.

1.2 Manga as an Expressive Medium

Art and literature have been continuously evolving and adapting to the rapid changes that the world has been witnessing. In fact, each country has adopted a type of both art and literature that reflects its culture and identity; however, the dominance of western culture and tradition cannot be denied. Most of the international works follow the pattern of the western artistic and literary tradition. Despite the fact that the west is hegemonic in terms of artistic and literary production, there are some countries that produced and introduced new expressive mediums that reflect their culture, tradition, and even language. One of these mediums is *Manga* 漫画, and it literally means whimsical pictures, which is defined in English as simply ‘Japanese comics’ (Ingulsrud and Allen 23).

Before exploring the term manga, we must first explain what an expressive medium means. First, the term expressive refers to the characteristic of expression which means to communicate and convey feelings and emotions (one’s mood) (Power Thesaurus). In art, expressive means “exploring shape, pattern and colour in an abstract way. The artistic style captures the viewer with emotion and intrigue” (Cameron). Second, the term medium refers to “[a] means or instrumentality for storing or communicating information” (Power Thesaurus). In art, the term medium is defined differently depending on the context, the art,

and the school of thought. The general definition is “According to the Oxford English Dictionary, from an artistic point of view ‘Medium’ refers to ‘any raw material or mode of expression used in an artistic or creative activity’. Generally speaking, it is the ‘mode of expression’ used to create an artwork. Whether we are talking about painting, drawing, sculpting, printing or writing – the means the artist employs is the ‘Medium’” (Zanello). In other words, a medium can mean both the tools used to make the artistic piece, for example paper, watercolors, or wood; as well as, the artistic format used to express the ideas and emotions, for example poetry, painting, or sculpture. To sum up, the definition of an expressive medium, in manga’s context, is simply the artistic format through which emotions, thoughts, and themes are expressed.

The manga studies that were undertaken by scholars are mostly about the nature of this medium. The term ‘medium’ itself was put into question to see whether it fits the nature of manga or not. In a study done by a Chinese scholar called Cheng-Wen Huang, both terms of comics and manga were investigated to see whether they were a ‘medium’ or a ‘genre’. Huang explained how a medium is larger than genre because the latter falls under the umbrella of the former. He used the example of the medium of books and how they manifest different genres like poetry and prose, and the example of the television as a medium through which different show genres are presented like documentaries and movies (Huang 31-32).

Huang states that according to linguists, like Professor G. Kress and Professor T. V. Leeuwen, “a medium is developed specifically for the recording and/or distribution of semiotic products and events” (32). He adds that “no matter what the content is or what modes are used in creating the text, the properties of the medium will not change” (32). In other words, the signs that are used to express an idea do not affect the medium through which this idea is presented. For instance, the quality of books is not affected by whether the content was poetry or prose, and the same thing can be said about the television and its

shows. This leads us to the idea that the 'medium' of comics, or 'manga' in specific, is not affected by the distinct signs it uses to present its content.

In spite of what have been mentioned, the relationship between manga and literature should not be neglected. It might be true that manga is an expressive medium that is more linked to art than literature, even though some scholars nullified such terminology saying manga is a multimodal ensemble instead; however, the expansion of this medium is greatly indebted to the works of literature. In their book, *Reading Japan Cool* (2009), J. E. Ingulsrud and K. Allen highlight the importance of manga in Japan through a study that was conducted in early 2000s. This study was undertaken by Japanese scholars for the purpose of discovering the reasons behind the gradual degradation in terms of Japanese literacy after it was considerably high. The scholars noticed the low rate of access to school libraries and public ones alike, so the ministry of education decided to change the types of books that were presented in those libraries and make them varied instead. The plan succeeded in raising readership in Japan, but, to their surprise, the type of books that was mostly accessed in libraries was manga. The latter was especially read by adolescents and high school students (69-87).

Furthermore, many classical literary works, like those of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Jane Austen, were adopted and made into manga. These manga adaptations helped in enriching the literary background of students and adults alike. Also, in Japan, the literary works are written in *Kanji* 漢字 which means that those who are not able to read the Chinese characters will not be able to read books. However, manga was different because it included the four characters of the Japanese language, mainly Hiragana, which made it accessible to all levels of readers, from elite to average. So, whether calling manga a medium or calling it a genre is something problematic. Instead, scholars started to search for the interrelation between manga and literature, especially in Japanese context, and

try to discover the influence each one has on the other, literature with its content and manga with its form.

Manga in Japan is centuries old, for Japan has a history of pictorial art and illustrated scripts. Japan was highly influenced by China because the print culture started in China during the 8th century, and Japan adopted it. Japanese literature was already rich at the time, but its richness is strongly linked to China because the Japanese language characters themselves are Chinese, the *Kanji* characters. In fact, the Japanese language has adopted other language characters that have a Japanese identity which are called *Hiragana* ひらがな and *Katakana* カタカナ. So, in general, the Japanese Manga is written in all four characters with the fourth being the *Romaji* ローマ字, the Roman letters. Basically, manga is diverse in terms of form and content and uses different signs to express ideas. This is one of the reasons why scholars are studying this medium and trying to classify it and give its artistic and literary value.

Actually, manga, just like the literary works, explores different themes and presents varied contents. In fact, manga strictly categorizes the targeted audience depending on its content. There are many categories, or genres, in manga, but the most known ones are shoujo 少女 (for girls), shounen 少年 (for boys), josei 女性 (for women), seinen 青年 (for men), and kodomo 子供 (for children). These categories make it easier for manga readers to find the type that is suited for their age and preference. Even for parents who are concerned about the content of such works, they just have to pick the children's manga for their kids. It is important to mention that manga, with all its genres, has helped in raising Japan's literacy percentage.

It should be also noted that the influence of manga is not limited to Japan. Countless number of manga productions have spread to other countries in Asia and moved even further to the other continents until it reached America. In the 20th century, a Japanese mangaka, i.e.

a manga writer, named Osamu Tezuka, now called the father of manga, helped in increasing manga readership with his canonical work of *Treasure Island* that was based on the classic novel of the same name written by Robert Louis Stevenson. Also, his other shounen mangas like *Astro Boy* (1952-1968) and *Kimba the White Lion* (1950-1954) were of equal importance. Each one of these three mangas, along with many others, was adapted into animated series, which made them known internationally.

In fact, Disney was inspired by Tezuka's work and that is evident in the Disney movie *the Lion King* (1994) in which Simba's story was of great similarity to Kimba's. As it was previously mentioned, manga production can be traced centuries back. In the 18th century Japan, there was what the Japanese people now call 'Edo no Komikku', which means Edo period comics, or 'esôshi' as they used to call it back then. This era was the starting point of the making of the Japanese manga that we know today, with the poet Santo Kyuden being the main figure of the era. The 18th century was the beginning of multimodality in Japanese arts because they started to include scripts within drawings, unlike in China where scripts were separated from the drawing and were put on the margins instead (Stewart 619-620). In fact, there are some studies which claimed that manga can be traced even more back to the 12th and 13th century with what is known as the 'Chōjū-Jinbutsu-Giga' 鳥獸人物戯画, or Animal-person Caricatures. This is said to be the first manga ever created in Japanese history, and it served mainly for political and journalistic purposes more than entertainment (Yasuka). After all these centuries, manga evolved tremendously thanks to the modern figures of Rakuten Kitazawa, the founding father and the first mangaka that made manga international, and Osamu Tezuka whose works were adapted into animation and got even more international fame.

Since manga is being analyzed as a case of this study, it is of equal importance to mention the distinct form of this medium along with its components. Manga is generally

published first in magazines and then in paperback, and it is released chapter by chapter on a weekly or a monthly basis. Osamu Tezuka said, about the process of making manga, “I don’t consider them pictures... in reality I am not drawing, I am writing a story with a unique type of symbols” (Schodt 26). Those symbols are manga’s own language and style, and it is Tezuka’s manga style that is generally used in manga making. This style consists of pages and panels that are read from right to left, and there are spaces between the panels that are called gutters which are used to separate scenes or indicate a time skip (see figure 2). Not only the panels are read from right to left, but also the manga itself is read from the back to the front (see figure 1), just like in Arabic books (Cohn 4-6).



Figure 1 Attack on Titan Manga Cover

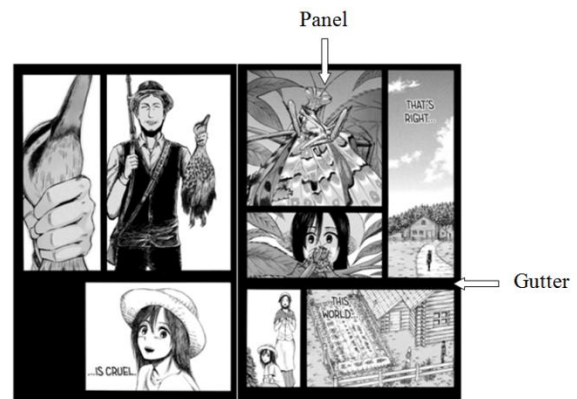


Figure 2 Manga Panels and Gutters. From *Attack on Titan: The World That the Girl Saw* 22-23.

Moreover, manga includes some other elements that serve in storytelling or in delivering information and details. First, there are the speech bubbles and thought bubbles. The former is used in oral conversation between characters, while the latter is used when a character is thinking and not speaking out loud, sometimes there are no bubbles included in thinking or in narrating (see figure 3). Second, there is the use of onomatopoeias in the pages to express sounds and voices (see figure 3). Last but not least, there is the caption that provides information about a scene or a character (see figure 3).

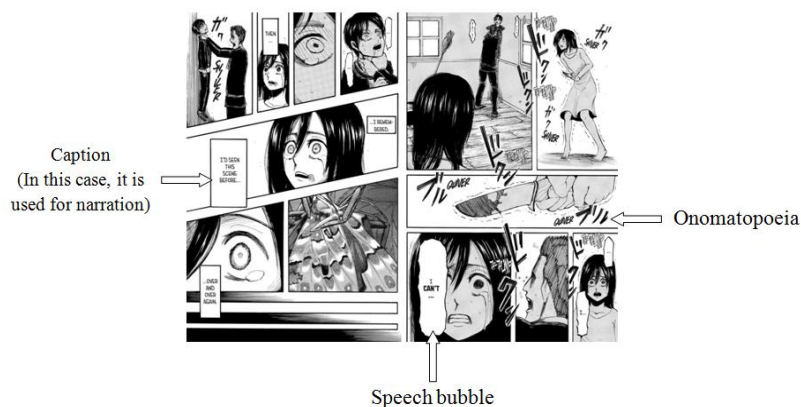


Figure 3 Manga Elements. From *Attack on Titan: The World That the Girl Saw* 20-21

1.3 Multimodal vs. Monomodal Discourse

Written discourse, or literature in a narrow sense, has a history that goes back to the middle ages and even to antiquity. It has witnessed different eras with different shapes and ideas until it reached the contemporary era. In the past, the semiotic landscape of discourse, or literature, was characterized as being ‘monomodal’, i.e. it includes only the written mode of expression. However, the discourse of today is no longer characterized by only monomodality in which the interpretation is based on the written text, like poetry and novels, but also by multimodality where other modes, i.e. images, sounds, and gestures, are included and are equally interpreted, like in comics and movies.

Cheng-Wen Huang argues in his thesis on multimodality and social semiotics that the technology and modernity has brought about many different modes of expression and discourse. The contemporary era helped in developing the Saussurian semiotics to social semiotics, especially with the works of the linguist M. A. K Halliday, where the text is no longer viewed as the only means of expression. Huang states: “This semiotic shift is not only bringing about more means of communication but it is also changing our expectations of writing” (14). He adds: “The written mode no longer only serves the purpose of relaying a

particular message but has been transformed into a ‘visual meaning-making source’” (14). In other words, multimodality goes hand in hand with social semiotics because the former refers to the works that have multidimensional nature, not limited to the linguistic dimension, and the latter focuses on the study of such works by exploring these different dimensions and their relation to the social, historical, and cultural background of the text.

The rise of Multimodality came with the rise of technology. The development of the audio-visual technology in early 1900s, especially the invention of the tape, gave linguists a chance to explore language in other forms and not only on paper. The study of speech compared to writing was difficult in the past because the linguists did not have the means to conduct a thorough research on the subject. Linguists had to interview and listen to speakers without being able to record them and be able to repeat the conversation again for the analyses (O’Halloran and Smith 3). However, with the rise of technology things have started to change. Linguistics started to spread to more social studies rather than just corpus-based studies. This led to a shift of focus towards multimodal text studies where scholars of different fields of research, especially artists and linguists, did not limit their analyses to language structure.

The focus shifted mainly thanks to the works of the British linguist M. A. K. Halliday who introduced the social semiotics field of research. Halliday advocates the idea that texts are socially influenced, and this influence can be extracted through the social signs that are expressed in these texts. The focus of his studies was on language functions which can be best explored in multimodal texts rather than monomodal ones. Obviously, a new type of research requires new method of analysis. For the multimodal texts, linguists pioneered some approaches to multimodal text analysis. The most known linguists that contributed to these analyses are Gunther Kress, Theo Van Leeuwen, and Michael O’Toole. The three linguists

worked on establishing a generalized social semiotics, but the difference between them lies in their research aims and approaches (O'Halloran and Smith 4-11).

Of course, multimodality, along with its analysis, did not stop with linguistics, but it spread to other fields of knowledge including literature. The works of literature, especially poems and novels, are monomodal, and the only genre that existed for centuries with a multimodal nature is drama. The latter is produced using one mode of expression, which is the written text, but it is performed as a play with actors who use gestures and express emotions along with their dialogues. Additionally, the rise of technology and media gave literature another dimensions to explore. From comics to movies to web novels, literature and literary theories started to engage with the different multimodal works. Furthermore, the multimodal analysis itself, in return, is used to analyze literary works like those with illustrations, with both texts and images. To sum up, both monomodal and multimodal discourses are equally interesting subjects of investigation. Also, with the continuous development of theories and analyses, studying such subjects, especially in their relation to each other, became more possible and more innovative.

1.4 Deconstruction Theory

Jacque Derrida, a French philosopher, is the main figure in the theory of deconstruction. This theory, in fact, has many facets and includes different figures; however, this dissertation will be focusing mostly on Derrida's ideas and contributions to the theory. In his article *Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction of Western Metaphysics: the Early Years*, Gerasimos Kakoliris, a Greek professor of philosophy, explained the reasons behind Derrida's selection for the word 'deconstruction'. Kakoliris states: "Derrida has declared that, when he initially introduced the word deconstruction in 1967, he aimed at the translation of Heidegger's terms *Destruktion* and *Abbau* (dismantling)". Then he adds: "The meaning, not of destruction or annihilation, but of dismantling, is also maintained in the Derridian term

“deconstruction”, in which, with the insertion of the syllable – con- in the term *Destruction*, the Heideggerian intention is better expressed” (9-10). In simple terms, Derrida, just like the German philosopher Heidegger, viewed that language is strongly tied to western metaphysics, or what Derrida calls “science of presence” (Derrida 19), and that is why it should be dismantled in order to be analyzed separately and more objectively.

Nevertheless, there was a point of difference between Derrida and Heidegger that Kakoliris highlighted. Heidegger believed that the strategy was to get rid of the western metaphysics entirely in order to avoid any type of influence. However, Derrida viewed that this strategy of overcoming metaphysics was inapplicable. Simply, language is shaped by metaphysics, and since the language is still used as it is, it would be impossible to get rid of such background. Another strategy was suggested, by some French philosophers, which aimed at ‘changing the terrain’. This strategy advocated the idea of creating new language ‘fashion’ by breaking the old one, or to simply drift away from the latter. However, Derrida criticized this strategy because the new ‘terrain’ that they aimed to create would still be on the ground of metaphysics. Instead, Derrida suggested the deconstruction strategy, or deconstructive reading, that would help in opposing the dominance of metaphysics. Kakilos explains:

The impossibility of a simple and unproblematic escape from metaphysics, compels us, according to Derrida, to abide within it, to a critical re-examination of its history, to a continuous rereading of it - a practice, which Derrida names “deconstruction”. Derrida undertakes to oppose the western metaphysical tradition within its own field, with its own weapons, but to operate through an extended and radicalized concept of writing that metaphysics cannot control; a writing which “no longer issues from *logos*” and which “inaugurates the destruction, not the demolition but the de-

sedimentation, the de-construction, of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos”. (11)

Thus, deconstruction is the most applicable strategy when it comes to studying a certain text and trying to interpret it without going back to its metaphysical nature, which will be eventually deconstructed.

A simple explanation of metaphysics can be given based on Derrida's book *Of Grammatology* (1967). Derrida states: “The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix [...] is the determination of being as *presence* in all senses of this word” (19). In other words, metaphysics is shaped by the binaries of *presence* and *absence* in its definitions of ideas or thoughts. Derrida put the main focus on the binary of speech and writing because in the western metaphysics speech is considered as the *presence* and writing as the *absence*, which is known as logocentrism and phonocentrism. Presence in this sense means “Essence, existence [...] consciousness, or conscious, God, man, and so forth” (19), while absence is just a ‘representation’ of presence.

In metaphysics of presence, one binary is always valued while the other is devalued. Derrida claimed that writing is as much important as speech, and not like what Aristotle and Saussure said about the matter. Aristotle said that “Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words” (Derrida 30). For Saussure, “Language does have an [...] oral tradition that is independent of writing” (30), and he adds: “Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first” (30). So, Derrida wants to deconstruct the western philosophy and history that is shaped by binaries. He also claimed that the signifier and signified are not ‘two faces of one and the same leaf’, with the leaf being the sign, like what Saussure advocated. Instead, there is no definite signified to the signifier, i.e. no definite meaning to the word, which he further explains in his concept *différance*.

Deconstruction theory is composed of different concepts that Derrida explained in his works, including his books *Of Grammatology* (1967) and *Writing and Difference* (1967). One of the main concepts that the theory is built upon is the concept of *différance*. The term was coined by Derrida, and it covers both the meanings of ‘difference’ and ‘deferral’, in the French language. Since Derrida’s main focus is on language and its illusive meaning, he introduced this term to explain the mechanisms through which language delivers the meaning. On the one hand, difference refers to how each signifier, i.e. the concrete form of the sign, is explained using other signifiers instead of being understood through its signified, i.e. the abstract image of the sign. For instance, to explain the signifier ‘table’, a person has to refer to how this signifier is different from other signifiers of ‘chair’, ‘closet’, ‘bed’, and so on. In fact, if someone is not familiar with the word table, he would not be able to get the signified without linking this signifier to other signifiers. So, to Derrida, the ‘signified’ can be hardly grasped and understood, instead people are left with chains of signifiers to explain the nature of things surrounding them (Boulegroune 3).

On the other hand, the term deferral refers to how meaning is ‘postponed’ in language. In other words, signifiers are used to explain one another not only in a synchronic way, like in difference, but also in a diachronic way. Since signifiers keep changing and evolving depending on the context, meaning is postponed, one must refer to the context using other signifiers to explain the meaning. For instance, the word ‘table’ alone may not be understood enough, so other signifiers like ‘wood’ table or ‘dinner’ table are needed to give a closer picture to the word. Basically, *différance* highlights the relationship, the vertical and the horizontal, between signifiers and how the latter’s explanation cannot be achieved by simply referring to their ambiguous signifieds. Simply, meaning is never complete or absolute (Phillips).

Another main concept that Derrida highlights is the binary opposition. This concept is commonly used in literary studies and it will be the main focus of this dissertation's analysis. Binary opposition is a theory introduced by Levi Strauss, the French anthropologist, in the 1900s. Strauss' theory emphasizes on the role of binary oppositions in the plot of both movies and books. He clarifies how this contrast system enriches the story and the people's reception of it. An example of these binary oppositions is good and evil. This latter is vastly used in literary works and in movies as well. Binary opposition reflects the western metaphysics where a binary is treated as presence while the other is treated as absence. In the case of good and evil, the good is the presence while the evil is the absence, i.e. good is valued as opposed to evil. This idea was what Derrida has criticized.

Derrida claimed that if absence, evil in this case, did not exist, then the presence, or good, would not have been given such position. In other words, both presence and absence are complementary, and no clear cut can be made between these binaries. For instance, the good is defined as the absence of evil, but what makes a person sure that what he knows about evil is the same with what other people know about it. The same thing can be said about the other binaries that are going to be focused on in this dissertation; these binaries include knowledge and ignorance, freedom and control, hero and villain...etc. Deconstructionists advocated the idea of deconstructing such binaries and changing the way texts have been interpreted based mainly on the western metaphysics. This can be done only through proving that such binaries are complementary and are not totally opposed to each other, so the researcher or the reader cannot make a clear separation between them and that can be understood more through the example of zombies that can neither be classified as dead nor alive.

Scholars classified Derridian deconstruction as post-structuralist theory mainly because of its deviation from structuralism. For one, Derrida viewed that the structuralist studies of

language were narrow in many facets since they followed the western metaphysics, like most of the theories of the 19th and early 20th centuries. For instance, Derrida believed that language was untrustworthy and illusive where meaning is fluid and ambiguous, while structuralists, along with formalists, believed that language was all about form and that meaning was singular because it is extracted from the singular form. By focusing on the form and studying its components, i.e. signs, the person will be able to grasp the meaning one way or another. Also, structuralists neglected the context in which the language is produced almost entirely in their analysis, which was very different compared to Derrida's analysis that puts context first.

To Derrida, the context provides some clues to the understanding and interpretation of language because without the context the language would become even more confusing. In addition, the structuralists favored the spoken language over the written one, for the reason that the former delivers accurate meaning compared to the latter. Speaking includes details like the person's voice, intonation, and breath, while writing is simply ink on paper, which is almost dead. Structuralism built the dichotomy of speech and writing along with other dichotomies where one side is valued more than the other. This was criticized by Derrida, along with the whole Western metaphysics, because to him language was a problem and a mystery, for it is illusive in nature, be it in its spoken form or written one.

Conclusion

Literary studies have been evolving throughout the centuries. Moreover, the recent centuries witnessed a growth in literature's interdisciplinarity. From focusing on written texts to art to multimodal texts, literary studies kept spreading to different fields, and this gave scholars the chance to explore new works of art and literature in terms of both their form and content. Dystopian fiction, for instance, have got a special attention from scholars since its emergence in the 20th century. Furthermore, dystopian fiction's similarity to science fiction

gave them other facets to investigate. This genre was not only applied in literature, with monomodal works like novels, but also in art, with multimodal works like comics.

This first chapter gave an overview on the dystopian genre, as well as its relation to science fiction genre. Also, it defined manga as an expressive medium and highlighted its relation to literature because the latter contributed to the growth of this medium. In addition, the Derridian deconstruction theory, along with its main concepts, was defined and explained. This theory is going to be the base of this dissertation's analysis; the analysis of the dystopian manifestation in both selected works will be supported by the deconstruction theory's binary oppositions that are going to be extracted from the works. The coming chapter will be covering this analysis, and it will investigate the similarity between both the trilogy and the manga.

**Chapter two: Comparative View on the Manifestation of
Dystopia in Both the Manga and the Trilogy**

Introduction

There are various denominators that can classify a work of fiction as a dystopian work. Like it was stated in the previous chapter, the denominators of the dystopian genre lie in the literary elements of the work, i.e. plot, setting, themes... etc. Both *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga are works of fiction that have dystopian denominators which classify them into the genre of dystopian fiction. Be it the plot, the themes, or even the characters, every literary element of both works serves as evidence to the dystopian nature of both the trilogy and the manga. In addition, the aspects of science fiction that can be traced throughout both stories are another element that supports the dystopian genre of the works and classifies them into the even broader genre of science fiction dystopia. This chapter will investigate the literary elements of both works and analyze how they shape the latter's dystopian nature. Also, the chapter will trace the binary oppositions that lie behind the major dystopian denominators and analyze how they help in shaping the works' plot. The aspects of science fiction found in each work will also be investigated; as well as, the way these science fiction aspects support the dystopian ones.

2.1 *Divergent* through the Dystopian Perspective

As it was aforementioned, dystopian denominators can be traced through the literary elements of the selected work. In the case of *Divergent* trilogy, dystopian tradition is evident in the themes applied, in the plot, in the setting, and even in the novel's ending where the main character, Beatrice, dies. All books of the trilogy are written in first-person narrator. *Divergent* (2011) and *insurgent* (2012) are narrated by the female protagonist Beatrice prior, and the last book of the trilogy, *Allegiant* (2013), is narrated by both Beatrice and Tobias Eaton; the latter is the male protagonist. In *Divergent*, the story begins with the day of the choosing ceremony in which every sixteen year-old selects the faction s/he belongs to depending on the aptitude test. The latter is a test in which every candidate is injected with a

type of a simulation serum that makes them go through different challenges to see their type of personality and the faction that is suited for them. There are five factions in total, which are Abnegation, Erudite, Candor, Amity, and Dauntless, and each faction's name reflects its most valued virtue, respectively, selflessness, intellect, honesty, kindness, and courage. This faction system was established inside the 'fence' after the end of a massive war for the purpose of preserving peace and harmony between the surviving populations. Also, those who fail the aptitude test end up being Factionless, and they live in poverty and away from the rest of the factions because they are unable to belong to any faction.

Both Beatrice and her brother, Caleb, go to this choosing ceremony not knowing whether they will be staying in their faction of origin, which is Abnegation, or leaving it. Beatrice took the aptitude test to see where she belongs because apparently she was not very selfless, and she admired those from the dauntless faction because they looked 'free', unlike those from abnegation who have to control themselves and their 'selfish' desires. To her surprise, the aptitude test was inconclusive because she is Divergent.

The term Divergent is used to refer to those people with a special brain chemistry that makes them able to belong to more than one faction. In the case of Beatrice, she has the aptitude for Abnegation, Erudite, and Dauntless. Unfortunately, the fact that a person is Divergent means his life can be in danger, which is an example of dystopian control. Tori Wu, the person who conducted the aptitude test on Beatrice, warned Beatrice about this issue because Tori's brother was killed for the sole purpose of being Divergent. Eventually, the female protagonist chooses to join Dauntless and leaves Abnegation. Beatrice ends up meeting in her new faction the male protagonist, Tobias Eaton or 'Four' as they nickname him, who turns out to be Divergent as well. Her adventure as Divergent starts to get bitter the more she discovers the truths behind the corrupted systems of the factions.

Throughout *Divergent* and *Insurgent*, Beatrice, or Tris as she renamed herself in *Dauntless*, keeps struggling because Erudite and Dauntless join powers to take control of the government by killing those from the abnegation faction, who were the ones controlling the government, and by killing the Divergent because they were seen as a threat to the balance of the faction system. By the end of *Insurgent*, the main characters discover that there is another population living outside the fence, thanks to a person named Edith Prior who reveals the truth, and that the fence itself was not created for security but rather for an experiment conducted by the people from the outside.

In *Allegiant*, Beatrice, along with her fellowship, decides to leave the fence to discover the truth lying behind it. This decision was hard especially after the conflict that happened between the factions that ended with the factionless taking full control over the people inside the fence. After the characters manage to escape, they receive welcoming from the people of the outside because those people were keeping watch over the factions to test the progress of their experiment, which means that the fence is a quasi-panopticon that makes the trilogy setting purely dystopian. This information came as a shock to the main characters who could not believe that their suffering was just for an experiment conducted by other humans.

Basically, the truth was that humans tried to make some genetic modifications to prevent any war or conflict in the future. They tried to create perfect humans who are neither aggressive nor hostile. Obviously, the experiment was not very successful, and it led instead to the birth of Genetically Damaged (GD) humans who were no less aggressive than before. In fact, the GD people have limited abilities that make them unable to fit in more than one faction, unlike those Genetically Pure (GP) people who are called Divergent inside the fence. So, the decision of the government was to create a fence and put the people of the experiment in it, and wait for the genetically pure people to be born. The people of the fence were injected with a serum that erases the memory, so that they cannot remember where they came

from or for what purpose they entered the fence. When Tris discovers the truth and with the help of her fellowship, she decides to destroy such systems where people are categorized based on their genes, be it the faction system or the GD/GP system.

The *Divergent* trilogy is full of dystopian denominators. The first denominator includes both the setting, which is a quasi-panoptic post-war world, and the plot that focuses on the corrupted social and political systems as well as the restricted information provided. For instance, when Beatrice was describing the Dauntless faction, she says: “their primary purpose is to guard the fence that surrounds our city. From what, I don’t know” (Roth, *Divergent* 8). This is evidence that people are not provided with any ‘unnecessary’ detail about their reality, or rather the people are easier to control if they are ignorant. This is why the government did not share knowledge or information with the people of the fence. Also, what makes the plot even more dystopian is how each faction is in control of a type of serum that insures that no one can get out of control. Candors, who value honesty, are in control of the truth serum, and they are the faction that legislates and executes laws. Any misbehavior or any dishonesty is faced with an injection of the truth serum that makes the person confess right away. It is the same case with the rest of the factions. Amity, abnegation, erudite, and dauntless are in control of the peace serum, the memory serum, the death serum, and the simulation serum respectively.

The second dystopian denominator that is evident in the trilogy lies in the themes included. Just as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, dystopian tradition is shaped by some major themes that the literary canonical works include. The first theme is the class system, the factions for instance, that is shaped by the control and dominance of one class, or faction, over the others. In the trilogy, the dominant faction is the Erudite, i.e. the faction of the intelligent people, and that dominance is possible thanks to the knowledge they have access to and the death serum which can be used to kill anyone that obstructs their way. In

fact, Erudite was supported by Dauntless, the faction of the people who protect the fence or, simply, the army. This coalition exacerbated the situation for the other factions, especially Abnegation.

The theme of class system is supported by the themes of death and destruction because, in a dystopian context, those who go against the status quo are doomed to either be destroyed, as a faction, or plainly get killed. This idea leads us to a sub-theme in the trilogy which is genocide. The clash between the different social systems in *Divergent* results in the murder of a whole faction, the Abnegation faction. In order to create a hegemonic system, the old social system has to be annihilated. This was what the Erudite believed to be the solution, and it eventually led to the killings of many innocent people from different factions and not only from Abnegation.

The theme of the loss of individuality is also evident in the novel. Be it in her faction of origin or in her faction of choice, Beatrice kept facing restrictions in terms of expressing herself or in terms of questioning her surroundings. This was evident from the very beginning of the first novel when Beatrice narrates: “There is one mirror in my house. It is behind a sliding panel in the hallway upstairs. Our faction allows me to stand in front of it on the second day of every third month, the day my mother cuts my hair” (*Divergent* 6). In Abnegation, the people are not allowed to see their reflection in the mirror for long because that would be a selfish activity to perform. No individuality is allowed, and any curiosity or questioning is considered self-indulging. When she feels curious, Beatrice says: “my curiosity is a mistake, a betrayal of Abnegation values” (*Divergent* 10). In fact, even when she transfers to Dauntless, Beatrice kept facing restrictions. For instance, the dauntless value bravery and courage, but any act of selflessness is considered cowardice and naivety. This made Beatrice struggle in her new faction as both a former Abnegation member and as Divergent.

The denial of free thought is one of the major dystopian themes that are found in most of the dystopian works. The *Divergent* trilogy is no different. One of the main obstacles that the female protagonist, Tris, faced is the restriction or the censorship of independent thought. In the trilogy, people are not allowed to question their reality, and they should not drift from the ignorant mainstream. When the truth about the fence was revealed, Tris narrates: “This is what Jeanine was willing to enslave minds and murder people for –to keep us all from knowing. To keep us all ignorant and safe and *inside the fence*” (Roth, *Insurgent* 170). Jeanine Matthews was the leader of the Erudite faction, and she is the person who was behind the killings of the Abnegation and the Divergent.

After killing Jeanine, The Dauntless found a file that helped them uncover the truth about the fence. This is one of the evidence of the dystopian world’s restriction of information, as well as a proof that anyone who tries to break such restriction is doomed to either kill or get killed. In his article on Dystopian themes, Devin Ryan listed some major aspects that shape the dystopian works, and he spoke about this theme saying: “Whether it is the government, a central police force, or overbearing rules imposed on the society, the oppressive force—or antagonist, which can be the society itself—is so strong that most people living in the given story have lost the ability to think for themselves” (7). This explains the nature of the dystopian reality in which ignorance is the social and political systems’ ultimate tool of control.

Another theme that denominates the dystopian nature of the trilogy is the fear of the outside world or the fear of the unknown in general. In *Divergent* and *Insurgent*, the characters were striving to find answers to their questions. However, by the end of *Insurgent* and the beginning of *Allegiant*, the characters got closer to answers and the fear of what is coming prevailed. Indeed, the fear that the government planted in their minds, concerning the outside, was hard to overcome. For Jeanine Matthews, hiding the truth was partly for the

purpose of keeping the people inside the fence 'safe'. Jeanine was not the only person who held such belief, for Beatrice confesses: "There is a part of me that understands" (*Insurgent* 170) when she learns Jeanine's motives. This portrays how deep the fear is planted in the minds of the people where even the Divergent who are supposed to have 'flexible minds' can become scared of the truth lying behind the fence.

Actually, even when the people try to get over their fear and face the truth, they get stopped by some external force, which is the government in most cases. When the Insurgents, who were against the existing system, tried to reveal the truth, they were treated as traitors instead of heroes. Beatrice exclaimed: "How is revealing the truth to our entire city an act of betrayal?" (Roth, *Allegiant* 10). The new government of the Factionless was as a totalitarian system as that of the Erudite. Just like what Beatrice says: "from one tyrant to another. That is the world we know, now" (*Allegiant* 14). This theme of the fear of the unknown along with the internal and external struggle against it and against its predators is one of the major themes that make up most of the dystopian works including this trilogy.

There are countless dystopian denominators that can be traced in the divergent trilogy. Every literary element is an evidence of the dystopian nature of this literary work. Be it the setting, the plot, the themes, and even the characters, the *Divergent* trilogy has various dystopian denominators that classify the work as a dystopian literary work. In fact, even the deconstructed binary oppositions that are found in the trilogy, such as the knowledge and ignorance binary, are commonly found in other dystopian canonical works which can be considered as another dystopian denominator. The same thing can be said about Isayama's *Attack on Titan*. This manga has a variety of dystopian denominators, some of which are similar to those in the trilogy, and different elements of the manga are used to demonstrate the dystopian nature of this work.

2.2 *Attack on Titan* through the Dystopian Perspective

Just like the monomodal literary works that are considered as dystopian in nature, the multimodal work of manga can be considered as dystopian if the same denominators are found within it. Isayama's manga *Attack on Titan*, for instance, is a dystopian work of fiction that contains various dystopian denominators, in which we find some resemblance to the *Divergent* trilogy. The manga is written in third-person narration; however, there is a shift in focalization in the last volumes of the manga where the people outside the walls become the focus of the story (Lyana 12).

The story of *Attack on Titan* starts with the main character, Eren Yeager, and his childhood friends, Mikasa Ackerman and Armin Arlert, when they witness the first attack of the titans, the human-like creators that eat humans for no apparent reason, after 100 years of peace inside the walls in the Paradis island. The first wall, Wall Maria, where the children reside was destroyed. Eren witnesses his mother getting eaten by a titan, and he declares that he is going to "destroy them! Every last one... of those animals... that's on this Earth!" (Isayama, *Attack on Titan: That Day* 34-35). After five years of the incident, the three characters, which are now 15 years-old, join the military for the purpose of joining the Survey Corps, the division that fights the titans outside the walls.

The story gets complicated when Eren gets eaten by a titan when he was trying to protect his friend Armin. To everyone's surprise, Eren survives that incident because he transforms into a titan. This puts everything upside-down because now people are not sure whether those titans are people like Eren or are just an enemy with an unknown identity, which makes the plot more dystopian with its ambiguity and lack of information. Moreover, when the Survey Corps were carrying their mission outside the walls, they encounter another 'intelligent' titan, one that can transform, and they discover that all the destructions and ambushes were actually committed by other humans in the bodies of titans. The story gets

clearer when the people outside the walls, and on the other side of the sea, appear. They are called Marlians, the people of Marley, and the ones inside the walls are called Eldians, the people of Eldia, and the separation between those people occurred after the Great Titan War that was caused by the Marlians, who manipulated the Eldians to fight each other with their titan powers, and ended with Marley taking seven intelligent titans from Eldia.

There are nine intelligent titans that are known as the descendents of Yumir, the founding Titan, or the descendents of the devil because Eldians are called devils for their ability of inheriting titan powers. Those titans are: the Founding Titan, the War Hammer Titan, the Colossal Titan, the Female Titan, the Jaw Titan, the Cart Titan, the Beast Titan, the Armored Titan, and the Attack Titan. Basically, to take their revenge on Eldia, Marley stole the titans' powers and made a selected few from the remaining Eldian population outside the walls, or the warriors as they call them, inherit these powers for generations. The process of inheritance is done by injecting an Eldian with a type of serum that enables him/her to transform into a non-intelligent titan. After that, the non-intelligent titan is given one of the nine titans to eat it, and the person will go back to his original form but with a loss of memory.

The person with a titan power will be able to live 13 years with the ability to transform into a titan, s/he has to inflict an injury on her/himself in order to transform. So, when the 13 years are almost over, s/he gets eaten by another non-intelligent titan and so on. The more the main characters discover about reality the more horrified they become, especially Eren. The latter got his powers from eating his father who was a runaway Eldian from the lands of Marley. Eren' father, Grisha Yeager, was in possession of two titans, the Founding Titan and the Attack Titan, and he gave his powers to his son in order to save him. Eventually, Eren decides to use his powers to take revenge on the Marlians that destroyed their walls and killed

their people. His plan was to annihilate every person beyond the sea, i.e. to perform an act of genocide.

Just as Nietzsche's quote goes: "Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself" (69), *Attack on Titan's* plot revolves around the same idea. The quote reflects the story of the manga in general, and Eren Yeager's, the protagonist's, personality and character in specific. The Eldians who were living in peace for years had to experience a sudden ambush that destroyed their homes and killed their families. To Eldians, Marlians were like the monsters that caused such an unfortunate experience with no clear or justifiable reason. However, the same happened to the Marlians after Eren discovered his powers and decided to perform the same actions on the people beyond the sea. This what makes the plot more dystopian because in most of the dystopian works the protagonists' experiences turn them into what they hate. The Irish author, George William Russell, says: "By intensity of hatred, nations create in themselves the characters they imagine in their enemies. Hence it is that all passionate conflicts result in the interchange of characteristics" (Utah). In other words, the same characteristics, or methods, of the enemy will be used as a weapon to fight them, but this will make the oppressed as much of an enemy as the oppressors themselves. This idea is applicable to both this dystopian manga and to our reality alike, for it explains how humans become what they fear first and then they end up becoming what they hate.

The first dystopian denominator lies in both the plot and the setting of *Attack on Titan*. The story starts with the year 850, after 5 years from the titans' attack on Wall Maria. For the setting, it is a post-world war era where the people live inside the walls and each wall is inhabited by a certain social class. There are three walls in the Paradis Island, and they are all named after the three daughters of Ymir, the founder. The first wall is Wall Maria, and it is inhabited by the common people. The second wall is Wall Rose, and this one is inhabited by

the working class. The third wall is Wall Sina, and it is the most protected wall because it is inhabited by the royal family and the aristocracy. Indeed, just like the trilogy, the manga's plot is supported by some major dystopian themes including the class system. In *Attack on Titan*, the common people are the ones who are least protected from the titans, unlike the aristocrats or the members of the royal family. As it was previously mentioned, the theme of class system is a major denominator of dystopian fiction, and it can be traced throughout the story of *Attack on Titan*.

As a matter of fact, along with the plot and setting, there is a number of themes in the manga that mark its dystopian nature. The major theme that should be mentioned is the theme of destruction, be it that of the environment or of the people. Destruction is a prominent theme in *Attack on Titan*, and it covers several sub-themes in the story like that of war, genocide, cannibalism, and death. The titans, who are the humans' greatest enemy, destroy whatever comes in their way and kill the humans without hesitation. However, unlike the non-intelligent titans who are known to act on instinct, or on order, the intelligent titans act entirely on will. So, the destructions and killings the Eldians have experienced are all caused by humans who are fully aware of their actions. This was what led to the genocide and the total destruction of Marley. Also, since the destruction can include both the environment and the people, the cannibalism performed in the story should not be neglected. Yumir the founder was eaten by her daughters when she died so that her powers would remain in this world. It was King Fritz who ordered his daughters to eat their mother, Yumir, and this cannibalism can be interpreted, from literature's perspective, as being the authoritative and totalitarian regime that cause its people to 'feed' on each other. In other words, the people of a totalitarian nation will, in most cases, keep fighting and murdering each other instead of unifying and getting rid of the tyrannical government (Guest 1-8).

Another theme that makes this manga dystopian is the theme of control. The latter comes in three forms in the story; the political, the social, and the religious. For political control, the government in *Attack on Titan* is ruled by a monarch, and the latter is just a symbolic figure, who turns out to be a non-royal figure, that is used by the politicians to control the people and the politics altogether. Even when Queen Historia, the real heir of the royal family, ascended the throne, the government along with its members of the aristocracy kept controlling the walls to guarantee the upper class's safety while putting others in the front lines to meet their end. Even after the military group of Yeagerists, the ones supporting Eren's plan of genocide, took over the politics, the tragedies and deaths kept occurring because of the clash between those who support Eren and those who do not. The same can be said about the social control in the story. Each wall has a different social class, and whenever a wall is destroyed its population tries to escape to the other walls. However, countless people died because they were not permitted to enter the other walls for the reason that the food supplies will not be enough for all and poverty will prevail. So, the aristocracies living in Wall Sina along with some of the bourgeoisies living in Wall Rose were the two social classes controlling the supplies and manipulating the walls' business and commerce.

For the religious control, the one we find in *Attack on Titan* is similar to the one we find in the works that are considered to be the progenitors of the dystopian tradition, like Atwood's *The Handmaid's tale* for example. The dogmatic religious principles imposed by the Wallists, the most powerful religious group in *Attack on Titan*, can be a clear dystopian denominator of religious control. This Wallist religious group worships the walls as their lord who protects them from their enemies. They view the walls as the most sacred and most divine protection for the humans. However, when one of the walls was cracking and a titan's face appeared from within the wall, this religious group did not seem to be surprised that the walls are actually made of titans. Instead, they tried to cover the titan's face to prevent the

people from knowing the truth. Basically, all the walls were made of millions of colossal titans, and this was King Fritz' plan to store some titan powers in order to use it in case a war was waged on his land. This religious control, which can be called dystopian religious conformity, was mainly for the purpose of making the people believe and even worship the walls. Of course, this plan was made in order to keep control over the people inside those walls and prevent them from leaving and discovering the truth lying outside.

Be it the trilogy or the manga, both works displayed multiple dystopian denominators that are found in most dystopian works. *Attack on Titan's* multimodal nature did not affect the manifestation of such tradition, and this is one of the reasons why scholars, especially linguists, consider manga to be part of literature. The plot, the setting, and also the thematic content of the manga are full of dystopian markers that make it inevitable to label this work as dystopian. In fact, many similarities are found between the trilogy and the manga, and this similarity is in terms of both the literary elements of both works and the binaries implied in their stories.

2.3 Dystopian Vision on the Similar Markers in the Trilogy and in the Manga

The dystopian works of fiction have particular markers that shape their nature. Since these works share similar nature, it is very likely to find common points in two different dystopian works. In the case of *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga, the works share numerous similar dystopian markers, or denominators, that are by no means superficial, i.e. not limited only to the works' plot. Instead, the similarity goes further reaching the dystopian ideology that the works are built upon, and this ideology is expressed through the binaries that lie behind the plot and give it its shape.

2.3.1 The Fence and the Walls: Knowledge / Ignorance

As it was explained before, both *Attack on Titan* and *Divergent* have a dystopian plot and setting where people live inside a wall or a fence and are ignorant of what lies beyond it.

If we examine this idea through literary symbolism we find that “A wall has two sides and two distinct concepts for the people on either side of it” (Jones). In other words, the people living inside the wall have a perspective that can be entirely different from the perspective of the people living outside it. In a dystopian setting, each side tends to consider itself to be the distinguished one who has a developed science that enables its people to gain knowledge. Also, each side believes that their people are the ones who are fully knowledgeable about human history and its reality, just like in the trilogy and the manga. However, this idea is not applicable to every character in the dystopian work, for the main character often tends to view him/herself as ignorant when it comes to the world and reality.

In her PhD thesis, Bouet said: “the wall is ideologically used to create a façade of security and protection, thus instating a physical, psychological line or border defining one’s identity and creating constrictions, repression and subjugation” (9). Bouet explained the difference between a utopian and a dystopian ideology, and how each one presents different views on the same concept. Unlike the utopian view of walls which tends to be about reaching goals or being hopeful, dystopian view of walls is more about control and constraint of humans and ideas. Still what makes this ideology even more dystopian is that neither side, outer or inner, is specified in this case, which means that this control and constraint can be on the people living inside the wall, or fence, or it can be on the people living outside of it. Here we reach the idea of the binary of knowledge and ignorance, which is found in both works, and how each binary cannot be linked to one side only, like linking knowledge to the outside and ignorance to the inside for example. Instead, the binary is deconstructed because both knowledge and ignorance, that of human history or of technology, exist in both sides of the walls and the fence.

Both the trilogy and the manga portray the lives of the people living inside the fence and the walls before portraying the lives of the people living outside. It is mainly because the

main characters of both works are from the inside, but both the main characters, Beatrice and Eren, have one parent that came from the outside, Beatrice's mother and Eren's father. This idea blurs the line between the inside and outside because there was no apparent difference in the nature of both sides as well as the nature of their people. Equally important, the idea of knowledge being outside and ignorance inside, as the main characters believed, is nullified once the people from the outside are introduced in the story. In both the trilogy and the manga, the people of the inside believed, for centuries, that the outside is 'dangerous', and the same case is with the people of the outside because the latter believed that failures or devils live inside the fence and the walls respectively.

In *Attack on Titan*, Reiner Braun, an Eldian living in Marley, is the one in possession of the Armored Titan. Reiner is sent to destroy Wall Maria along with two other Eldians, Annie Leonhart and Berthold Hoover, who are in possession of two intelligent titans, the Female Titan and the Colossal Titan. Those teenagers are sent to kill millions of people and are told by Marlians that the people living in Paradis Island are devils, so they need to be annihilated. However, when those three Eldians succeed in their mission of destroying the wall, they do not leave Eldia and they join the military to keep watch over the people inside the walls. To their surprise, they found that the people of Eldia were the same as the people of Marley, and this put all their prior knowledge into doubt. Consequently, Reiner became psychologically unstable because he could not bear the thought that he killed innocent humans and not devils.

In fact, even Eren when he left the walls and decided to annihilate Marley, he realized that the enemy is the same as him (see figures 4). Thus, we come to the conclusion that there was no reliable knowledge in the first place, and, in fact, Eldians were more knowledgeable about Titans and races, unlike what Marlians claimed, since the inheritance of a titan's power means inheriting its memory (see figure 5).



Figure 4 Eren Realizing that Marley is Similar to Eldia. From *Attack on Titan: the Rumbling* 10-11



Figure 5 Eren Inheriting his Father's Memories. From *Attack on Titan: Sin* 32-34

In *Divergent*, Beatrice, along with her company, decides to go outside and discover the promised world of freedom. The characters lived under the control of the factions, so they imagined a better situation when they leave the fence. However, the situation outside was as much disappointing as the one inside the fence because the war of the factions was just replaced by the war of the GDs and GPs. The case of *Attack on Titan* focused on the teenagers who thought they were knowledgeable, but they realized they were not. Whereas, the case of *Divergent* focused on Beatrice who believed to be ignorant but she turned out to

be Genetically Pure and not as ignorant as she thought she was compared to the people of the outside.

In both works, the main characters came to realize that both the life inside and outside the wall and the fence are not much developed as they used to believe, and also when they explored the outside both Beatrice and Eren became aware that this world is the same, in terms of social and political systems, no matter where you go because it is inhabited by humans after all. When she leaves the fence and the truth is shared with her and her friends, Beatrice says: “I feel like I am not hearing anything new” (*Allegiant* 73). This idea is what blurs the line between knowledge and ignorance in both cases which makes linking one binary to one side of the wall, or fence, almost impossible.

2.3.2 The Factions and the Divisions: Freedom / Control

The military system is given a special emphasis in both the manga and the trilogy, and both protagonists, Eren and Beatrice, become part of it, i.e. soldiers. In *Attack on Titan*, the political system is ruled by a monarch; however, the military holds most of the power of the government. The same thing can be said about *Divergent*. The political power is, supposedly, distributed equally between factions, but the Dauntless, the army, that were supported by the Erudite are the ones who control the weapons which means they control power. Both protagonists of both works were eager to join the military because they thought they can become free. Eren wanted to join the division who has the symbol of the Wings of Freedom, the Survey Corps, because they were the ones who go outside the walls and fight titans in the latter’s own domain. Also for Beatrice, she wanted to join Dauntless because it was the only ruthless faction who can do whatever it wants, and its members were powerful because they need to protect the fence. Unfortunately, when both protagonists join the military, they can no longer tell whether this situation can be called freedom, or it is just another form of control.

The case of Eren gets complicated when he discovers his powers as an intelligent titan, the Attack Titan. He is allowed to join the Survey Corps under the condition of being under strict surveillance by the Corps' commander, Erwin Smith, and the Corps' captain, Levi Ackerman. Eren's power can be of great help to the people of the walls, but it can also be of great danger to them. Thus, the Survey Corps is considered to be the most suitable military division for him, and he can fight titans using his titan power outside the walls. However, this did not make Eren's situation any better, for the more power he has, the more controlled he becomes. So, instead of the freedom he expected to experience, there was only political, social, and military control, instead. In fact, the Survey Corps are the division that risks the lives of the soldiers the most because their mission is to fight titans and not to work with the monarchy, like the Military Police Brigade for example, yet they are the least appreciated and the most controlled division of all the three military divisions. The reason is that the Survey Corps are the one rebellious division who tries to uncover the truth about the titans and change the status quo, and this division can become threatening to the walls' government.

The further the story goes the more blurred the concept of freedom becomes. Eren was motivated by Armin, his childhood friend, to try to pursue freedom and not to remain caged in the walls. Eren became almost obsessed with searching for freedom until it blinded his judgment and eventually led to his demise, and to the deaths of millions of people. To Eren, freedom simply meant to be able to travel the world and see its wonders, especially the sea. Eren says: "The burning water, the land of ice... anything will do. Anyone who saw those things... would be the freest person in the world" (*Attack on Titan: Primitive Desire* 29-30) (see figure 6).



Figure 6 Eren's View of Freedom. From *Attack on Titan: the Rumbling* 41

The sea was much emphasized in the story, yet instead of enjoying its beauty when he sees it, Eren decides to destroy whatever lies beyond it because that is his view of ‘freedom’ (see figures 7). This idea controlled the protagonist’s mind, and it made him commit genocide in order to grant his people, the Eldians, freedom. Thus, paradoxically, Eren was controlled by his own concept of freedom, and his character reflects the dystopian reality in general and human nature in specific.



Figure 7 Eren’s View of Freedom. From *Attack on Titan: The Rumbling* 42-45

The case of the trilogy is similar in terms of how the line between freedom and control is blurred, that if there was a line in the first place. When Beatrice joins Dauntless, she is faced with challenges that make her become stronger, and this strength makes Beatrice more

passionate to improve even more. Being Divergent in Dauntless was a hazardous situation for Beatrice, or Tris, because this ruthless faction is the one that receive much of the attention from the other factions, especially Erudite. Since the latter was planning a revolution, it needed power to impose its decisions on the rest of the factions. This revolution was possible when Dauntless joined hands with Erudite, and both factions became like the mind and body that hold the absolute power. To Tris, joining Dauntless was like the decision that set her 'free' from the old restrictions she lived in. she never hated Abnegation, but the latter was not the faction that fits her ambitious nature.

As much as Eren was disappointed by the corrupt military system, which restricts people rather than frees them, so was Tris who thought that the Dauntless looked 'free' then she discovered that they were far from the freedom she expected. Also, Tris was horrified by both the procedures the government system follows when dealing with the Dauntless, where they inject a simulation serum that makes the soldiers turn into puppets that follow order blindly, and by the killings of the Divergent the moment they are discovered. Unlike Eren, Beatrice was more rational when trying to pursuit freedom; she was not much obsessive. However, this did not make her situation any better from Eren's because she joined Dauntless and kept participating in revolutions in order to make the world a better place, and there were many lives sacrificed in those revolutions and her life ended up being one of them. Basically, both the manga and the trilogy confuse the reader by putting freedom and control in parallel, as if saying that freedom goes hand in hand with control. In other words, to know freedom one must know control, and any attempt to separate the two would be futile.

2.3.3 The Protagonists and Relationships: Love / Ethics

One of the major deconstructed binaries in literary works, along with the one of good vs. evil, is the binary of love vs. Ethics. The latter is mostly found in the romantic literary genre; however, it is also found in other literary genres, like dystopia, with a romantic sub-

plot like in the works of *Divergent* and *Attack on Titan*. Unlike *Divergent* who put much emphasis on the protagonists' romantic story, *Attack on Titan* did not emphasize much on romance but its role cannot be neglected, for it was the motive behind Eren's destructive plan. As a matter of fact, family, friends, and love interests altogether can be included in this binary. This is simply because human relations are complicated yet precious because they shape a person's life and decisions. In fact, throughout the works, both Eren and Beatrice face hardships in decision-making mainly because they were put in situations where they had to make sacrifices for their loved ones.

In *Attack on Titan*, there was a clash between love and Ethics. This is evident in Eren's reckless actions and decisions that lead to the deaths of countless people, and how these actions were motivated by his love for his people, family and friends in general and to his friend Mikasa Ackerman in specific. The manga did not put much emphasis on Eren's love story, but the more the story progresses, the clearer Eren's emotions become. For instance, when Eren decided to destroy Marley, both Mikasa and Armin tried to stop him from doing so because his decision was obviously unethical. Both his friends knew that Eren was kind and he just needed a better plan to stop him from committing mass murder. However, instead of being convinced by his friends' arguments, Eren started to criticize both Mikasa and Armin in a heartless way. Eren even told Mikasa, who was always there when he needed help, that she was a slave and not a warrior; Eren says: "I couldn't stand to look at a slave who followed orders without questions. Ever since... I was a kid. Mikasa. I've always hated you" (*Attack on Titan: Ignorance* 23-27). Eren interpreted Mikasa's actions as being drawn by her bloodline instead of her love for him. Yet judging by the way he hesitated to say that he hated her, he may not have been very clueless about her true intentions. This idea supports the deconstruction of the binary of love and Ethics because human relations transcend such binary.

Nietzsche says: “That which is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil” (iambobby). This quote adds further explanation to the story of *Attack on Titan* and this binary that lies behind it. Jacques Derrida himself pointed at the idea of sacrifice and its relation to love. He gave the example of the story of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) who had to make an unethical decision of sacrificing his beloved son. Derrida says: “As soon as I enter into a relation with the other, with the gaze, look, request, love, command, or call of the other, I know that I respond only by sacrificing ethics, that is, by sacrificing whatever obliges me to also respond, in the same way, in the same instant, to all others” (iambobby). Derrida viewed that ethics are suspended when love is required because the latter transgress all binaries, ideologies, and social values. This is widely applicable to *Attack on Titan*'s protagonist who used all of his powers to free his beloved homeland and its people from the titans and their power. Even though the means Eren used were not ethical; they were inhuman, he acted that way out of love for freedom and for humanity. This idea made the manga even more philosophical and psychological because it reflects our reality, which is a quasi-dystopian one, and it makes readers relate to the personalities and the decisions of the protagonists.

The *Divergent* trilogy may not be as twisted as *Attack on Titan* when it comes to the binary of love vs. ethics, but it shares some points in common with the manga. The trilogy protagonist, Beatrice Prior, has a major point in common with Eren Yeager which is sacrifice, be it of the self or of the others. Since she is Divergent, Beatrice is selfless, intelligent, and brave, and her character is appealing because she is not perfect. Beatrice joined dauntless, and she had to become strong in order to survive in that faction. Her struggle starts the moment she shot her friend, Will, in the head when he was under a simulation serum. Throughout the story, Beatrice's guilt does not subside; however, she no longer blames herself for protecting her own life or her mother's. The case of Beatrice is similar to Eren's in

the point that ethics are blurred when it comes to love. The sacrifice of a friend is hard, but the sacrifice of a mother is harder. The same thing can be said about strangers. To Eren, Marlians are strangers so sacrificing them for his people is not as hard as sacrificing his people instead. Beatrice kept facing similar situations where she had to measure the consequences before making a decision. Also, the strict rule of 'faction before blood' made her question many decisions to see if they serve her faction or just her blood. However, when she discovered that her parents have loved each other, Tris says: "my parents did love each other. Enough to forsake plans and factions. Enough to defy 'faction before blood.' Blood before faction— no, *love* before faction, always" (*Allegiant* 119). So, this explains how love can come before rules, faction, and even ethics.

It is hard to decide whether a person should follow his heart or his mind when he makes a decision. The binary of love and ethics covers the same idea. The theory of deconstruction advocates the idea that such philosophical concepts transcend binaries. In other words, there cannot be a line that separate love and ethics because that would be a superficial conceptualization, which is influenced by western metaphysics. The protagonists of the manga and the trilogy lead the reader to put the binary into question. Furthermore, both works had different characters, like Reiner Braun from the manga for example, that display their love from their perspective. The Marlians were no different than the Eldians when they waged war because both people tried to kill in order to protect. The friends of both protagonists supported them in some risky decisions, which made it hard to tell which characters are good and which ones are bad. Also, until the end of both works, with the death of both protagonists, it was still hard for readers to tell whether fighting for love should be put into question, or the ethics are the ones that should be questioned instead.

2.4 The Portrayal of Science Fiction in Both Works

As it was mentioned in the first chapter, dystopian fiction and science fiction have multiple points in common that make literary analysts often confuse one genre with the other. Indeed, the genres are similar and this led both authors of dystopian fiction and of science fiction to include some aspects, or denominators, of both genres in the same literary work. Actually, most recent dystopian works of fiction, especially Young-Adult fiction, have a science fictional nature as well, and these works are referred to as the science fiction dystopias (Lu). Both *Attack on Titan* and *Divergent*, as works of Young-Adult fiction, have some science fiction aspects that shape their dystopian science fictional nature. To be fair, the *Divergent* trilogy has more of science fictional nature than the manga of *Attack on Titan*. This is mainly because *Attack on Titan* is set in the year 850, which means that science was not much developed in that context. However, this does not nullify the idea that the manga has some science fiction markers. Both works have such markers that can be traced throughout their plots.

2.4.1 Science Fiction Markers in the *Divergent* Trilogy

The *Divergent* trilogy is full of science fiction aspects that support the work's dystopian plot. Science fiction, as defined in the first chapter, is characterized by the emphasis on the development of science and technology. The *Divergent* trilogy is no different. From chemical experiments to genetic engineering, the plot of the trilogy covers a biotechnological side that gives it a science fictional nature. To be more specific, the plot follows the story of the protagonists who were divided inside the fence and controlled by various serums, and who, even after leaving the fence, were divided by their genes. Thus, the serums, the Divergent, and even the GPs and GDs are all science fiction denominators in this dystopian work.

From the beginning of the story, the reader is introduced to a setting where people are divided based on their personal abilities, i.e. aptitudes, which allow them to choose the most

suitable faction. Also, in every faction, there is a serum that is used to keep things under control, and all of the serums are produced by the people of the outside to guarantee the progress of their experiment inside the fence. The use of serum in this case is both a dystopian and science fictional aspect that portrays how humans are controlled by science and technology without being aware of such control or being able to stop it. Arguably, science fiction is categorized as being “of the imagination rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature” (Roberts 1-2), whereas Dystopia is categorized as realist literature because “dystopian stories, films and serials themselves do not appear to inhabit some distant future, but the here and now” (Janoscik 16). In the past, analysts used to categorize science fiction as speculative because there was not much scientific development at that time, like the time of Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) for example. However, with the development of technology we are witnessing now, it is hardly possible to categorize such genre as ‘imaginative’ or ‘distant from reality’. Also, blending dystopia with science fiction gave the latter genre more realistic and relatable picture for both the contemporary reader and the analyst.

Another science fiction aspect found in the trilogy is the genetic engineering. The latter was done as an experiment by the people of the outside where they tried to alter human genes to produce better and more capable humans. The experiment was a failure because as David, one of the people who conducted the experiment outside, says: “The alterations had disastrous consequences. As it turns out, the attempt had resulted not in corrected genes, but in damaged ones” (*Allegiant* 73). This failure led to genetic discrimination where the Genetically Pure people, those with corrected genes, discriminate the Genetically Damaged people, the ones with damaged genes. Beatrice realizes that the factions were made because people had damaged genes that made them different and unable to live in one community. Beatrice says: “Every faction loses something when it gains a virtue: the Dauntless, brave but

cruel; the Erudite, intelligent but vain; the Amity, peaceful but passive; the Candor, honest but inconsiderate; the Abnegation, selfless but stifling” (*Allegiant* 74). The genetic engineering led to damaging human nature which is lacking but adaptive and imperfect but compassionate. After all, “Humanity has never been perfect” (*Allegiant* 74); humans are different, but they are equal.

Science fiction and dystopia have similar aspects, and this can be observed in the *Divergent* trilogy. The latter has multiple science fiction aspects that support its dystopian nature. The idea of Divergence itself, which refers to a person’s special brain chemistry, is relevant to science fiction in a large sense. Moreover, what critics consider as science fiction are the works which have a dominant scientific discourse, and *Divergent* can be applicable to that description. Indeed, science fiction cannot be limited to the simple definition of works having scientific discourse, yet that is what critics find in common in every work that is regarded as science fiction (Roberts 3-7). This definition is suitable for the trilogy, but that does not mean that works that have less scientific discourse cannot be categorized as science fiction, as we will see with the case of *Attack on Titan*.

2.4.2 Science Fiction Markers in the *Attack on Titan* Manga

The manga of *Attack on Titan* has a dystopian nature, and what made the manga more interesting is its historical setting that has a science fictional attribute. It should be noted that science fiction aspects are not limited to only technological and scientific development, for it also includes ideas like transformation, that of human bodies in the case of *Attack on Titan*, and genetic variance, like Eldians and Marlians for example. The manga, unlike the trilogy, does not emphasis much on science; however, the nature of its plot qualifies it to have a science fictional nature in addition to its dystopian one.

Actually, *Attack on Titan* covers some scientific ideas and technological ones. For instance, the vertical maneuvering equipments that were developed by Eldians to fight titans

can be classified as ‘technology’ in that context; as well as, the spinal fluid that Eldians are injected with to transform into titans which gives the plot a biotechnological facet. However, the focus will not be on these minor details, instead the focus will be on the work’s central idea which is the ability of a human to transform into a titan. In fact, similar ideas of transformation can be found in canonical science fiction works like Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* (1915) for example. Even though some critics claimed that this ‘arbitrary’ or ‘imaginative’ transformation, or shape-shifting, does not give this work the qualification of being called science fiction. The novel does not explain how the protagonist transformed into an insect; it just happens (Roberts 4). *Attack on Titan*, on the other hand, gives an explanation, although not very profound, on how the Eldians are able to transform into titans thanks to the Founder Yumir who gained this powers from an insectoid called the Shining Centipede (see figure 8).



**Figure 8 Yumir Getting the Power of the Shining Centipede. From *Attack on Titan*:
From you, 2000 Years Ago 12-13**

The idea of transformation is not the only science fiction aspect found in *Attack on Titan*, but there is also the aspect of genetic variance. The manga’s plot is highlighted by the powers the Eldians get when they inherit an intelligent titan; however, there is a special bloodline, called the Ackermans, which is powerful enough to be equal to a titan while still in

the body of a human. This bloodline is said to be special because of some genetic variance, which might be inherited or manipulated, that make any Ackerman able to awake his/her powers the moment s/he faces a life-threatening situation. The Ackerman clan is referred to by Marlians as “the byproducts of titan science” (*Attack on Titan: Midnight Train* 19). In addition, this bloodline is immune to any kind of mind manipulation done by titan power, which makes them hard to control thus dangerous to the government. Just like the trilogy with the Divergent, or the Genetically Pure, being able to withstand serums like simulation serum or truth serum, *Attack on Titan*'s Ackermans are able to resist the memory control performed by the powers of the Founding Titan.

Levi Ackerman's, the Survey Corps vice captain, great grandfather says: “the monarchy doesn't hate the Ackerman family. They fear us. The king fears the Ackermans because he can't control us” (*Attack on Titan: Dreams and Curses* 4). He adds: “the king's power to alter and erase memories of the past only works on members of this majority race. In other words, to complete his great work and eliminate history. The king must use other means to silence the minority bloodlines who are not affected by the power of the titans” (*Attack on Titan: Dreams and Curses* 6-7). This minority he talks about includes the Ackerman bloodline who gave up on their political powers to save their lives and their bloodline. Just like the Divergent who had to keep their identity a secret inside the fence, the Ackermans had to do the same thing inside the walls in order to protect themselves. This specific focus on genes gives the manga more science fiction characteristics. In fact, the titans, with their powers, the genetic variance, the new technology illustrated in the plot are all science fiction aspects that qualify the manga to be categorized as science fiction dystopia.

Conclusion

Dystopian tradition was created on the basis of some literary works that are considered to be the progenitors of the dystopian genre. These progenitors, like the ones mentioned in

the previous chapter, set out some major dystopian denominators that enable the analyst to categorize a work of fiction as dystopian. The *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga are dystopian works of fiction because a number of dystopian denominators can be traced throughout both works. The literary elements of both selected works along with the binary oppositions that are implied within them are what mark their dystopian nature. Indeed, having the same dystopian nature means sharing a number of common points, which is applicable to both dystopian fiction and science fiction. However, this does not mean that there are no major distinctions that can be found between the trilogy and the manga. This coming chapter will investigate the major differences between the *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga, and it will explore how their dystopian nature makes them heterogeneous.

**Chapter Three: Contrastive View on the Manifestation of
Dystopia in Both the Manga and the Trilogy**

Introduction

Dystopian works of fiction tend to share a number of characteristics that help in shaping their dystopian nature. This dissertation's case study is no different. Both *Attack on Titan* manga and *Divergent* trilogy share some dystopian denominators in different literary elements. However, this does not mean that the selected works are entirely alike, for many differences can be observed throughout both works. The plot development of the trilogy and of the manga makes up a major point of difference between the two works. Also, each work presents the reader with different sense of closure. Be it the problem of the walls and fence or the problem of Titan and Divergent, both *Attack on Titan* and *Divergent* provide heterogeneous solutions to these problems. Also, the reader and analyst would notice the distinct portrayal of some binary opposites that manifest within the plot and characterization of each work.

3.1 The Contrasting Development of the Works' Dystopian Plots

Throughout both works' plots, the manifestation of the dystopian genre is evident. In fact, the similarities shared by the trilogy and the manga are no less than the differences. Both stories start by introducing the protagonists and by portraying their unfortunate circumstances, and both plots end with the death, or the sacrifice, of the main character, Beatrice and Eren. However, the stories have a distinct manifestation of the dystopian plot's resolution and ending. For instance, the problem of the walls in *Attack on Titan* and the fence in *Divergent* is dealt with in entirely different ways. In addition, the peculiar ending of each work gives both readers and analysts the chance to contemplate and analyze the dystopian and realist nature of both the manga and the trilogy.

3.1.1 The Walls and the Fence

In *Attack on Titan*, the walls are treated like a sacred object that protects humanity from getting annihilated. The people living inside the walls, the people of Eldia, founded a

religious group called the Wallists who worship the walls as their God, and this portrays how highly the three walls are regarded by the Eldians. *Attack on Titan* puts more focus on the walls because the latter's destruction marked the start of the protagonist's tragedy. In his article on the closure in dystopia, J. S. Munoz said: "Dystopias offer us a world that, in its spoiled state, exposes imperfection and, therefore, room for change and improvement" (3). This can be applicable to the manga's dystopian plot where the protagonists', Eren's and the Survey Corps members', endeavor for change comes mainly from the hideous reality and destructed world that surround them.

The idea of 'change' or 'improvement' can be conceived differently depending on the dystopian work and its context. *Attack on titan*, for instance, has a historical context that fits the definition that: "Dystopias have been concerned from the very beginning with the relationship between, on one hand, narration and memory, and, on the other, history and memory" (Munoz 4). In simple terms, "we can imagine what is to come because we can narrate what has already occurred" (4). This idea gives a general definition to the nature of *Attack on Titan's* plot that narrates the history of the manga's fictional world and gives the reader a vision about its future. To be more specific, the walls in *Attack on Titan* were created because of the Eldian king's cowardice and fear. He built the walls using millions of colossal titans, and he threatened to use them if anyone intended to attack Eldia. Thus, this historical information, along with the Marlian attacks in the plot's present, gives an idea, or a vision, on how the future of the walls will be.

As a matter of fact, the walls end up being destroyed and the rumbling starts. Eren Yeager is the one who led the colossal titans and caused the rumbling, so he is the one who turned the king's threat into reality. 'Change' in the case of *Attack on Titan* revolves mainly around the protagonist, Eren, and the Survey Corps members including his friends, Mikasa and Armin. Change in this case refers to how these dystopian protagonists refuse to conform

to their society's or government's rules. In fact, "It's not that the protagonist wants to rebel, it's that he (or she) must rebel; it's an innate part of who he (or she) is" (Anthony). This describes the nature of the protagonist, Eren, in specific, and the manga's plot in general. Rebellion shapes the majority of *Attack on Titan*'s plot, for the struggle between Marley and Eldia started because the former rebelled on the latter and took some of its titan powers. Also, Marley kept getting greedy and wanted to take full control of all the Eldian titans which made Eren, who holds the power of three intelligent titans, rebel against Marley and destroy it.

Change can hardly be viewed as something positive in *Attack on Titan*. It might be true that the protagonist wanted to grant his motherland, Eldia, freedom; however, the concept of freedom itself was perceived differently by Eren. To him, freedom means being able to travel the world without being exposed to danger even if that can only be achieved at the cost of destroying a whole other country ("To the Other Side of the Wall"). Thus, to bring some change to the Eldians' situation, i.e. confinement, Marley had to be destroyed. This idea is purely realist and dystopian in the sense that nothing can be acquired without anything being lost. So, to acquire freedom one needs to sacrifice something else, and in *Attack on Titan* the sacrifice was the life of millions of Eldians and Marlians along with the life of the protagonist, Eren, himself.

Even though change is not very bright in *Attack on Titan*, its presence is, by all means, necessary for the plot's development and resolution. Certainly, in dystopian fiction, "opening up the possibility of change draws a path toward an end, toward closure, and as Frederic (2005) indicates in *Archaeologies of the Future*, this trait turns out to be an antidote against apathy and conformism" (Munoz 5). Unlike the Eldian king who fled to Paradis Island and left his people suffering in Marley, Eren decided to face Marley instead and save his people from the tyrannical rule on both Paradis island and Marley. Thus, change, although tragic, makes this dystopian protagonist, who is rebellious against the apathy of his society, the

savior of the Eldians and the one who led to the complete removal of the titans that are on Earth. Without this change, the dystopian plot would have lost its sense of closure.

Indeed, the endeavor for change shapes major of the dystopian works and draws the path to their closure; however, some dystopian works, like the *Divergent* trilogy, do not display a major change that gives a clear vision on the work's ending. Indeed, the trilogy's protagonist, Beatrice, has tried to change the status quo inside the fence because the faction system started to become oppressive. Also, when she left the fence, she kept trying to make some change concerning the system of the Genetically Pure and the Genetically Damaged (GPs and GDs). However, unlike Eren Yeager who was eager to unravel the truth to the Eldians who had their memories erased, Beatrice was willing to erase the memory of the members of the government in order to restore peace. So, to Beatrice, erasing memories is like a solution that can bring about a change, and it was not a way to make things even worse. Apparently, change in *Attack on Titan* contrasts change in *Divergent*, and this gives both dystopian works a distinct plot development and polar opposite solutions.

As it was previously mentioned, change is regarded differently depending on the dystopian works' plot and its context. *Attack on Titan*'s plot has a historical context in which nearly every problem is solved by wars. However, *Divergent*'s plot has a more futuristic context in which humanity tries to seek peace more than war. That is why the solution that Beatrice sought was erasing all the hatred, prejudice, and misjudgments that were planted in the government's memory outside the fence. In fact, even inside the fence, Beatrice's fellowship was willing to erase people's memory to turn over a new leaf with no factions or discrimination. This solution can look positive to the reader who wants peace and a happy ending for all; however, in reality, almost nothing changed in the trilogy's plot. Unlike in *Attack on Titan* where the walls were destroyed, in *Divergent* the fence was kept instead. In the trilogy, the protagonist tried to spread peace within the fence and outside of it without

much change to the setting. This is what makes ‘change’ and ‘improvement’ subjective and relative, thus different, depending on the studied dystopian work.

3.1.2 The Ending

The ending of the dystopian fiction works, in most cases, tend to provide a ray of hope for the reader. It is true that dystopia is an anti-utopian genre; however, this does not mean that no utopian trait is kept in the dystopian fiction. For instance, persistence of hope, as a theme, is found in utopian works as well as some canonical dystopian works, like M. Atwood’s *the handmaid tale* for example (Baccolini 520). Indeed, dystopia presents a pessimistic alternative to our reality. Nevertheless, just like what Raffaella Baccolini, a full professor at Bologna University, said in her article on critical dystopias, “it is only if we consider dystopia as a warning, that we as readers can hope to escape such a pessimistic future” (39). Thus, the dystopian fiction gives the reader an alternative reality, and it seeks to raise the reader’s awareness concerning how his/her future will be if s/he keeps being apathetic and conformist to the society’s corrupt status quo. This idea can be reflected on both the manga and the trilogy. Both works’ endings give the reader some hope, yet, again, the concept of ‘hope’ itself is presented differently depending on the work’s context.

In the book *the Age of Dystopia*, L. M. Demerjian states that: “The parallels between our real world and that of dystopian worlds become apparent; worlds might fall apart but, *if* we heed the warnings, there is hope for the future” (3). In other words, readers have been given a reason to hope within the dystopian fiction, with the latter being a warning to humanity in general. The manga of *Attack on Titan* is no different. While the context of the manga is historical, which is assumed to be thousand years old by some analysts, the ending provides the reader with some kind of hope that is mainly shaped by human sacrifice for the greater good. Eren Yeager, the manga’s protagonist, sought to destroy every remaining titan on Earth; however, the protagonist discovers that those titans are actually humans who were

sentenced, by Marlians, to live unconsciously as titans for eternity. Thus, the protagonist's mission was to kill those titans, or 'humans', who are constantly killing his people in Eldia and other people from different countries. When all hope seemed to be lost in the plot, Eren finally decides to transform all Eldians to Titans, so that by killing him, with his power of the Founding Titan, every titan will regain his human body and no titan will remain on Earth (see figure 9).



Figure 9 Eren Sacrificing His Life to Eliminate Titans From Earth. From *Attack on Titan: Towards the Tree on that Hill* 25-25

The plot of *Attack on Titan* presents hope in the light of human sacrifice. Dystopian fiction, along with science fiction, tends to present human nature in a pessimistic way. The social and political systems are corrupt, and humans are no longer as united as they used to be. This means that the individuality, which is a human trait, is lost in the form of 'unity' found in dystopian fiction. In other words, "in each dystopian novel, the individuality of each person is eradicated in favor of creating groups of people with shared characteristics" (Kalafut 33). Hence, "no person is unique, but they are unified with members of the community similar to them and together, they are bonded with something that separates them

from other groups” (33). Indeed, dystopian fiction, including *Attack on Titan*, presents humans as scattered communities with an aggressive and ignorant nature. Nevertheless, hope is still present in the dystopian plot through the representation of the humans’ constant questioning towards the status quo; as well as, the humans’ inner-conflict between the good and evil which purely represent the core of the human nature.

The last volume of *Attack on Titan* revolves around the war led by Eren and the colossal titans against Marley. This war, or rather Eren’s one-sided massacre, caused countless people to lose their lives. Eventually, Eren himself was beheaded by his childhood friend, Mikasa Ackerman. It might be hard for the reader to see any hope presented in the manga’s ending; however, hope in this plot and context is found in the protagonist himself. Eren became extremely powerful because he was in possession of three intelligent titans, and his Attack Titan has the ability to see some ‘memories’ of both the past and the future of the inheritors of this titan. Thus, at some point in the story, Eren knew that he was going to destroy Marley, and that his friends, along with the Survey Corps leaders and some Eldians, were going to reject his plan of genocide. Moreover, even when Eren saw the Marlians and discovered that they are people like him, he could not change the future and prevent the genocide. Instead of preventing the future, Eren decided to leave to the Eldians the freewill and the freedom of choice to do what they see fit even if the latter would mean killing him. Thus, the manga’s plot portrays an end where human’s freewill and freedom can be a source of hope for change. Also, it highlights the idea that even if the decisions are hard to make, at the very least, humans have the capacity and the freedom of making them.

In her essay on Dystopia, A. W. V. Mossner argued that “scholars and writers tend to agree that in the case of the young adult dystopian text, one cannot in fact do *without* at least a glimmer of hope” (70). Also, she adds: “The young reader expects—and needs—stories that are gripping but nevertheless offer at least a promise that a better world will be possible”

(70). This idea is applicable to the *Divergent* trilogy. It is important to mention that, unlike in the trilogy, change and hope in *Attack on Titan* was very clear and evident in the ending; the walls were destroyed and all the titans were eliminated. Even though the main character, Eren, died, along with many notable soldiers and civilians, the story needed such sacrifice to show the reader how some things are lost while others are gained. In fact, in the last volumes of the manga, Eren's character became more toxic and hard to deal with which gave his friends, Mikasa and Armin, a tough time in coping with him. So, the manga's ending illustrates how humans can get attached to harmful relationship or system without being aware that losing the person or getting rid of the system would lead to peace and prosperity.

The case of the trilogy is a little different from that of the manga. Both change and hope were somehow subtle at the end of the trilogy. By the end of *Allegiant*, Beatrice and her fellowship decide to erase the ruling class', the government's, memory so that they can get rid of the discrimination that is caused by the person's genes. By erasing the memory of these members of the government outside the fence, the characters can implant any idea they want and make the government follow it and believe in it. In fact, even inside the fence, the male protagonist, Tobias, was willing to erase the memories of the people in control of the government. However, Tobias discovers that he can 'talk things out' with their leader, which is his mother Evelyn, and make a peace treaty without having to erase anyone's memory.

On the one hand, change, as it was previously mentioned, is not radical in the trilogy. The fence was kept and the lifestyle, inside and outside the fence, did not witness a grand transformation. Hope, on the other hand, is present, but in a more utopian way. Just like what Mossner pointed in her essay saying: "Ruth Levitas argued in *the Concept of Utopia* (1990) that 'the essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire... for a better way of being'" (70). The ending of *Divergent* revolves around a similar idea. The desire for a better life is what shapes Beatrice's actions and drives her decisions. *Divergent* portrays how "bringing about a

better world is a political process driven by hope and desire—a process that never really ends” (71). That is why the ending of the *Divergent* trilogy, unlike the manga, does not seem to provide a clear closure or a particular resolution; instead it leaves its readers with some hope, or desire, for a better world brought about by the self-sacrifice of some brave humans, like Beatrice.

Dystopian fiction, especially that of recent decades, is characterized by the ending it provides for the reader that seek to give him/her some hope and push him/her toward change. Actually, “the presence of utopian hope does not necessarily mean a happy ending” (Baccolini 521), for the dystopian protagonist might lose his life or might submit to the corrupt system, like John from Huxley’s *Brave New World* for example. However, the awareness and knowledge the protagonist attains make the ending reasonable to the reader who can relate to the protagonist’s situation. Just like what Kalafut says about the dystopian and utopian endings: “Dystopias and utopias are polarized opposites; where one seeks a society that is as great as can be imagined, the other is a place where nothing could be worse” (37). Then she adds: “But the history of the words themselves demonstrates that society will not reach either polar opposite, regardless of how we try to reach a utopia or how close people fall to a dystopia” (37). Thus, the ending in dystopian works of fiction attempts to be realistic so that the reader would be able to relate to the fictional dystopian world and its characters, and in turn, he would try to cope with the actual dystopian world, i.e. reality.

3.2 Dystopian Characterization

Dystopian denominators manifest in the literary elements of the fictional work. Be it in a monomodal or in a multimodal text, literary elements, like the setting and themes for example, exist to give the story its shape and to help the reader to get the picture of the story’s context. For instance, characterization, as a literary element, is a main component in

any fictional work because it is what the reader relies on in the process of knowing the fictional work's characters and in understanding their actions.

In fact, "Characterization includes both descriptions of a character's physical attributes as well as the character's personality. The way that characters act, think, and speak also adds to their characterization" (*Characterization* 1). This means that characterization does not stop at the superficial attributes of a character; instead, it goes deep in the latter's personality and way of thinking. Thus, to understand a story, one must first understand its characters. The same idea is applicable to the dystopian fiction which, with its distinct characterization, allows the reader to relate and to empathize with the dystopian protagonist and other characters in the dystopian world.

3.2.1 Titan and Divergent: Power / Powerlessness

In both the trilogy and the manga, the characterization is composed mostly of 'dynamic' characters rather than 'static' ones. A dynamic character is the one who changes over time, for the better or the worse, due to the experiences and circumstances s/he has been going through. Whereas, static character is the one who does not change throughout the whole plot (*Characterization* 4). Evidently, both works' protagonists, Eren and Beatrice, are dynamic characters who have witnessed a character development in the story. The unfortunate circumstances that the two protagonists were put into made their character development almost inevitable; especially, since both of them discover that they have a special 'power' that makes them able to change their situation and save themselves and their people. This idea in specific makes both reader and analyst wonder whether this 'power' is indeed what helps the protagonists in achieving their goals and rebelling against the system, or if it was what hinders them from acting as themselves and makes them weak and powerless instead.

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the power of the intelligent titans and the Divergent genes are what made the protagonists more controlled than free. Both Eren and Beatrice were eager to join the military and become powerful and free; however, they both realized that freedom was very farfetched considering their situation. Eren joins the Survey Corps just like he dreamed, but the government kept him under strict surveillance. This led Eren to feel even more suffocated and his power became shackles on his ambition instead of wings. The same happened to Beatrice who wanted to know more about her abilities, but she discovers that more knowledge means more danger. Thus, she decides to hide her Divergence and to stop searching for answers, so that she neither stands out nor becomes a target.

The more both stories progress the more confusing the binary of power and powerlessness becomes. Thus, to get close to understanding this binary, one must first understand its components. In his book *Understanding Conflict and War*, R. J. Rummel introduced multiple definitions to the term 'power', and these definitions vary depending on the context in which this term is used. The definition that is suitable for the plot of the trilogy and the manga is the one he quoted from Rollo May, an American psychologist and author, saying: "Power is the ability to cause or prevent change" (2). This definition is similar to that of Stranger from Plato's *Sophist*. Stranger says: "Anything which possesses any sort of power to affect another, or to be affected by another, if only for a single moment, however trifling the cause and however slight the effect, has real existence; and I hold that the definition of being is simple power" (74). To put it more simply, power is the ability to make an effect on something or someone and bring about a change, be it in a positive or a negative manner. Therefore, this definition allows us to claim that both protagonists, Eren and Beatrice, have 'power' since they influenced some people and made some change.

Powerlessness, meanwhile, is defined by May as: "an almost complete lack of capacity to influence or affect other people in interpersonal relations" (2). In fact, May links

powerlessness with the inability to change the government or the society, and, to him, this lack of power is what drives people to be apathetic to change. Also, “the state of powerlessness [...] is the source of violence” (2), so not being able to change the situation can lead the people to become aggressive and violent instead of just being apathetic. In the trilogy and the manga, and just like the definition of power, the definition of powerlessness can be projected on the protagonists. Both Beatrice and Eren enter a state of powerlessness in multiple situations in the stories which led them to become even more rebellious and ruthless. Hence, both definitions of power and powerlessness are applicable to the character of Eren and Beatrice, and this is what deconstructs the binary of power and powerlessness where no clear line can be drawn between the two.

In the *Divergent* trilogy, power is not linked only to the Divergent, but also to those who hold weaponry or information. Indeed, like what Beatrice says: “whoever holds the gun holds the power” (*Allegiant* 13), and: “knowledge is power. Power to do evil, like Jeanine... or power to do good, like what we’re doing” (*Allegiant* 124). Beatrice was born in Abnegation where selflessness is the power of her faction; however, she transferred to Dauntless where power is to be able to hurt people. Also, Beatrice believed that her Divergence is power; she says: “when I found out I was Divergent, I thought of it as a secret power that no one else possessed, something that made me different, better, stronger” (*Allegiant* 104), but she discovers that her brain is just a little bit more adaptive compared to other humans. Moreover, Beatrice kept losing important people in her life, like her parents for example, which made her even more doubtful about her own power.

Nevertheless, Beatrice kept trying to gain power so that she can protect those close to her. She used her Divergence to control simulation and prove that technology can never beat humanity. Also, her ability as Divergent can bring about a change to the situation inside and outside the fence where the population of the compound started to see the population inside

the fence as mere experiment. Beatrice says: “What combats powerlessness? Power” (*Divergent* 158), and power here means to be able to influence one’s surrounding and be able to change their mindset. Unlike Beatrice who viewed that humanity has a hope for change and is able to be influenced, Eren did not have the same hopeful vision on humanity. To him, power means being able to live without threats. When he discovered his titan power, Eren believed that he was able to grant his people the power to live in peace; however, his power was viewed, by Eldians and Marlians alike, as a war-weapon instead of a power that can grant peace.

May highlights the idea that “a great deal of human life can be seen as the conflict between power on one side [...] and powerlessness on the other” (1). This is highly applicable to the manga’s protagonist, Eren, who keeps struggling between two extremes, power and powerlessness. Eren is the one in control of the Founding Titan, so, if he can manage to use his powers well, he can cause the rumbling and annihilate half of the humanity. Moreover, if he controls this power, he can stop the titans from eating humans by just ordering them. However, when Eren was in an utmost need for power, he was not able to activate it. He ended up losing his family and some of his friends, and he started to doubt whether he really had power seeing how powerless he was (see figure 10). Certainly, “the chief reason people refuse to confront the whole issue of power is that if they did, they would have to face their own powerlessness” (May 1). This is why Eren, and even Beatrice, keeps questioning whether he really has ‘power’ to make change and save his loved ones, or whether he was just a powerless teenager that got consumed by his own ambitions and dreams.



Figure 10 Eren Realizing His Powerlessness Because He was Unable to Activate His Powers to Save One of His People From a Titan. From *Attack on Titan*: Scream 19-20

As a Titan and a Divergent, both works' protagonists struggled to balance between their power and powerlessness. Indeed, as dystopian protagonists, both Eren and Beatrice face, at a young age, some hardships that make them doubt themselves and their abilities. Their characters, however, are different in terms of dealing with such doubt. Beatrice, for instance, embraces some of her shortcomings because she knows that even a Divergent is still just a 'human'. In contrast, Eren does not accept the idea of having shortcomings in the first place. In fact, in his first years as a titan inheritor, Eren tried to explain to Eldians that even with his titan power he was still just a 'human' like them (see figure 11); however, the Eldian's view of him as a weapon did not change. This made Eren believe that his titan power is what the Eldians need the most and not just another powerless human. Furthermore, since he later on gained the power of three intelligent titans, Eren became even more convinced that his power is mighty, and this made him deny the existence of powerlessness within him, which made his character even more contrasting to Beatrice's character.



Figure 11 Eren Trying to Convince Eldians that He is a Human Just Like Them. From *Attack on Titan: Where's the Left Arm 23-29*

3.2.2 Beatrice Prior and Eren Yeager: Hero / Villain

Like in other fiction genres, characterization in dystopian fiction is composed of different characters that build the dystopian plot. The protagonist, antagonist, and even side characters are all found in the dystopian works and they all have their distinct role and importance in the story. As a matter of fact, the focus will be mainly on the denominators of the dystopian protagonist. This focus is for the purpose of analyzing the personality and character of both Eren Yeager and Beatrice Prior, and also for investigating and deconstructing the binary of hero and villain in both protagonists' character.

Many literary analysts use both terms of 'hero' and 'protagonist' interchangeably; however, in dystopian fiction, the terms are used differently. Since the dystopian genre manifests in both modern and post-modern literary works, the dystopian protagonist is usually classified as an anti-hero instead of a hero. This is why both analyst and reader cannot assume that the dystopian protagonist would have the attributes of a Romantic hero.

Nevertheless, one might find some exceptions in dystopian works of fiction where the protagonist is classified as a 'hero'. As a matter of fact, the dystopian protagonists, of both canonical dystopian novels and Young-Adult novels, share some major distinct characteristics, which are also shared by Eren Yeager and Beatrice Prior. These major characteristics are: the protagonist's doubt towards the existing social and political systems, his/her struggle against the society's conformism and confinement, and his/her continuous endeavor for change that makes the reader empathize with such protagonist who is fighting in a world that reflects the reader's reality (Hamilton 2).

Actually, dystopian fiction aims at providing readers with an alternative future of a world similar to theirs. Dystopian fiction portrays the worst-case scenario of the future for the reader, so that the latter would have an idea on how the future will be if the present is not changed. The same thing can be said about the dystopian protagonist. Most dystopian authors choose an ordinary, sometimes even mediocre, person as their work's protagonist. This is mainly to make readers able to empathize with such person and be able to relate to his/her situation and decisions. Eren and Beatrice are no different. Indeed, both characters have some kind of 'special' aptitudes and abilities; however, their character is still lacking in many aspects, which make them somehow relatable. Also, both Eren and Beatrice have made difficult decisions and sacrifices that make classifying them into heroes or villains very difficult.

Just like the binary of good and evil that is found in countless literary works, the binary of hero and villain exist in various plots of different genres. Undeniably, humans are eternally in constant conflict between the good and evil within themselves (Razzetti). In this conflict, the victory of the good within one's self will make a 'hero', while the victory of the evil will make a 'villain'. This idea was adopted by many literary analysts, especially those who analyze the fiction of the Romantic era, yet it became hugely criticized by authors, thinkers,

and analysts because the idea of good and evil itself is complex (Poole 1-2). Just like Poole says in her article “Heroes vs. Villains”, “So who’s to say what is good and bad? The victor. He proved his might, so that must mean his way was the proper one, the ‘good’. What it all comes down to is chance; the hero and villain are two sides of the same coin” (1). Indeed, in our contemporary time, the victor is the hero no matter what motives or morals s/he has, and this victor is the one who gets to decide who the ‘villain’ is.

This binary of hero and villain became even more complicated to deconstruct with the works that cover the back-story of an evil character, like J. Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667) for example. Making the villain as the main character and covering some of his life circumstances and childhood traumas makes the reader unconsciously, or sometimes even consciously, side with this character and support his/her plans and crimes. Such plots of literary, or non-literary, works make it even harder for the analyst and reader alike to categorize the main character as a hero or a villain. The binary of hero and villain can be put under the umbrella of the binary of good and evil. Basically, the simple definition for a hero is being a ‘good’ person, who is innocent, kind, helpful, honest...etc, while the villain is an ‘evil’ person, who is wicked, cruel, sinful, deceitful...etc (Ring). Thus, deconstructing the binary of hero and villain leads to deconstructing the binary of good and evil.

Many thinkers, philosophers, and analysts tried to find an explanation to the relation between the good and evil. Poole, as an analyst, views good and evil as two sides of one coin, and that this idea is applicable to the hero and the villain as well. Derrida, as a philosopher and thinker, views the metaphysics of presence in general and binary oppositions in specific as something that should be deconstructed. This is mainly because such abstract concepts, like good and evil, are beyond human grasp, and it is neither possible to separate them nor to consider one more valuable than the other. In fact, deconstructionists, in general, tend to highlight the idea that if good makes angels and evil makes devils then what exactly makes

humans? It is simply the deconstruction of such binaries of good/evil, angel/devil, hero/villain that leads us to the conclusion that humans belong to neither side of any binary. Human nature transcends such binaries, and any attempt to classify a human as either good or evil is doomed to fail.

The deconstruction of the binary of hero and villain can be demonstrated through the protagonists of both the trilogy and the manga. Throughout both works, the protagonists face hardships that challenge their ethics and principles. Beatrice, for one, witnessed her friends getting controlled by simulations in the Dauntless faction, and she was the only one aware during this simulation because she is Divergent. Her friends, along with other Dauntless members, were ordered, by Erudite, to kill the Abnegation because the latter were seen as corrupt. So, Beatrice was in a situation where she has to either save her family in Abnegation or her friends in Dauntless. She ends up choosing her family and killing her friend, Will, who was about to shoot her mother, Natalie. This led Beatrice to feel immeasurable sense of guilt, and she started to perceive herself as a 'villain' who killed her own friend. Killing can never be justified because taking another's life is a selfish and evil act. Undoubtedly, it is true that killing is linked to evil, but feeling guilty is linked to good because humans feel guilty when they regret doing something that harms others.

Beatrice says after killing Will: "I am the one who killed him, I know it. I know it and the guilt strangles me and crushes me, so I have to forget it. I make myself forget it" (*Divergent* 198). This statement shows how humane Beatrice's character is, and it confuses the judgment of the reader and analyst in terms of the morality and ethics of Beatrice's decision. Equally important, in the trilogy, Beatrice hesitates for few seconds before killing her friend Will, but she ended up killing him because no other option seemed to be available. However, when Beatrice was facing the male protagonist, Tobias, who was threatening to kill her, while under a simulation, she says: "I can't kill him [...] I am sure that nothing is worth

killing him for” (*Divergent* 195). Beatrice was willing to sacrifice her life instead of shooting Tobias who was under a simulation and was completely controlled. So, for Beatrice, killing for family and dying for the loved ones is the true act of bravery and selflessness. Perhaps this is what makes her character somehow ‘heroic’ in the dystopian world where humanity loses its sense of sacrifice and courage.

More than Beatrice’s character, Eren’s character is even more complex and confusing in terms of whether he should be viewed as a hero or a villain. *Attack on Titan* manga’s first volumes, from 1st to 22nd volume, narrate how Eldians, who live inside the three walls on Paradis Island, are suffering from the titans roaming outside and hindering them from seeing the world beyond the walls. Eren, the dystopian manga’s protagonist, along with his friends, Armin and Mikasa, decides to join the Survey Corps, who wear the Wings of Freedom (see figure 12), so that he can see what exists beyond these three walls. Eren was full of hope and excitement when discussing the future plan of leaving the walls with his friends, but the more the tragic events of the story unfold the more depressed and pessimistic Eren’s character gets. The last volumes of the manga, from 23rd to 34th volume, narrate how Eren’s character took a turn for the worse. These volumes focus more on Marlians living beyond the ocean, and who are the archenemy of the Eldians. This change of focus confuses the reader even more on the nature of Eren Yeager’s character and his actions.



Figure 12 the Survey Corps' Wings of Freedom. From *Attack on Titan: Primitive Desire* 43-44

In her thesis, Lyana Investigates the shift of focalization in *Attack on Titan*, and how this affects the character of Eren Yeager. To make things clear, focalization is a term coined by Gerard Genette, a French literary theorist and critic, who founded the theory of focalization in a narrative. Genette “introduced the term ‘focalization’ as a replacement for ‘perspective’ and ‘point of view’. He considers it to be more or less synonymous with these terms describing it as a mere ‘reformulation’ [...] and general presentation of the standard idea of ‘point of view’” (Niederhoff 1). Actually, Genette clarifies that focalization does not refer to first-person narration because focalization exist in all narratives with all types of narration, even the omniscient. Instead, Genette “thinks of focalization in terms of knowledge and information. He thus defines it as ‘a restriction of field’” (Niederhoff 2). In simple terms, focalization is more about *who sees* rather than *who speaks*. Lyana used this theory to investigate the character of Eren in the manga.

As it was aforementioned, the first volumes of the manga differ from the last ones because the focalization shifts from the Eldians to the Marlians. Lyana focuses on this shift of focalization, and she analyzes Eren’s character using multiple theories including Heroism theory and Villain theory. Lyana says: “In chapter 1 to 90”, which means from 1st to 22nd volume, “the story starts with internal focalization of Eren Yeager” (43). Internal focalization means that the narrator knows just what the character knows; this type of focalization is mostly found in first-person narration. In fact *Attack on Titan* rarely shift the types of focalization from internal to either zero focalization, where the narrator knows more than the character, or external focalization, where the narrator knows less than the character. Thus, throughout the manga, the reader is presented only with what the character, or focalizer, knows.

Since the focalizer is Eren in the first volumes of the manga, he is portrayed as the only hope for Eldian people because of his titan powers. In fact, Eren is as ignorant as the Eldian

people inside the walls because all their Eldian ancestors had their memories erased by King Fritz centuries ago. Therefore, Eren was a passionate, altruistic, and determined person who was willing to give his all for the freedom of his people (Lyana 26-35). This made Eren the ‘hero’ of the Paradis Island, and the only hope for Eldians because their soldiers were continuously getting killed and the weapons, i.e. swords, were not much fatal. Actually, the Eldian King referred to the wielder of titan power, especially the Founding Titan’s power, as God, so Eren was highly regarded by Eldians as their hero and by some as their God. The reader of *Attack on Titan* is presented with Eren as the focalizer, so even the reader views Eren as Eldia’s hope. However, the moment the focalization shifts in the manga, from chapter 91 to 139, to another character from Marley named Falco Grice (see figure 13), Eren’s character changes drastically.



Figure 13 shift of focalization from Eldians to Marlians, with the character Falco Grice. From *Attack on Titan: The Other Side of the Ocean 5-7*

Falco is a young Eldian boy living in Marley, and he is a warrior candidate who trains to inherit one of the intelligent titans of Marley. This boy was used by Eren who was planning to destroy Marley from its inside, just like Marley did to Eldia. Thus, to Falco, and other Marlians, Eren is a malicious, cold-hearted, and an arrogant person who is willing to kill innocents just to satisfy his wrath, so they referred to him as Devil (Lyana 35-43). Hence, the reader is presented with another focalizer that is as much convincing as the previous one. This can be viewed as evidence on how *Attack on Titan* manga deconstructs the binary of hero and villain, as well as the binary of good and evil, and this leaves the reader and analyst with no clear answer to the nature of Eren Yeager's character.

Deconstructing the binary of hero and villain in both the manga and the trilogy is supported by the shift of focalization in both works. Just like *Attack on Titan* manga, the *Divergent* trilogy also shifts the focalization from the female protagonist, Beatrice Prior, to the male protagonist, Tobias Eaton. The first two books of the trilogy, *Divergent* and *Insurgent*, have Beatrice as the only focalizer. However, the last book, *Allegiant*, has both Beatrice and Tobias as focalizers. This helps the reader to see Beatrice's character more objectively. The first two books present Beatrice as brave, selfless, and smart character who is willing to sacrifice herself for the greater good. The last book, *Allegiant*, however, presents Beatrice, in Tobias' focalization, as somehow arrogant, stubborn, and immature character. This does not mean that Beatrice is a villain, but that does not make her character a hero either. All these details would inevitably lead both readers and analysts of both works to conduct a deconstructive reading to every binary opposition found in the plot, including the one of hero and villain.

Conclusion

The dystopian nature of both *Attack on Titan* and *Divergent* gives their plot and characterization various aspects that allow both readers and analysts to relate to these

dystopian worlds. This chapter highlighted the major differences between the manga and the trilogy, specifically concerning the plots and their ending, and concerning the works' protagonists. Each plot has a different resolution and a distinct closure. *Attack on Titan* ends with destroying the walls and eliminating all the titans, while *Divergent* ends with keeping the fence and erasing the ruling class' memory to restore peace. The same thing is for the protagonists, Eren and Beatrice, who sacrificed their lives to save their people. Despite the fact that some readers view Beatrice as a hero and Eren as a villain, categorizing both protagonists as either heroes or villains is still a debatable subject. Indeed, both dystopian works share a number of aspects, but the points of divergence are what make each of the two works outstanding and interestingly distinct.

General Conclusion

The *Divergent* trilogy and *Attack on Titan* manga have a dystopian nature that can be traced through their literary elements. This dystopian genre emerged in the 20th century, even though the concept of dystopia existed way before. The genre got more attention from the readers and analysts because of its nature that reflects reality. Despite the fact that both the trilogy and the manga are works of fiction, they both provide a sense of realism through their plot, setting, and even characters. This means that the reader and analyst might take both works more seriously, as catharsis for example, than just considering them as entertainment. Indeed, it is the nature of the dystopian genre that makes it intriguing and open to examination and investigation.

Dystopian fiction denominators that we know today have been generated by scholars and analysts. Those generated denominators made it possible for the dystopian tradition to be created and ameliorated throughout the recent decades. In fact, the process of generating the dystopian denominators was possible thanks to some canonical literary works that are now considered to be the progenitors of the dystopian genre, we mention mainly Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. The dystopian genre, as a matter of fact, did not stop at only literature, for it spread to art, cinema, and comics. This spread was possible thanks to the raise of technology and the development of internet which enabled the different literary genres to be applied on multimodal mediums rather than being applied only in monomodal ones.

It might be true that multimodality has existed in the field of literature for centuries, through the genre called drama; however, multimodality was by no means as developed as it is in the contemporary era. We take the example of comics, or Japanese manga in specific. This 'expressive medium', as was previously mentioned in this dissertation's chapters, is continuously spreading its influence in the global arena. This medium is highly regarded by the Japanese people, for it made a great contribution to the raise of literacy and to the spread

of literature in all of Japan. Countless canonical literary works, such as those of Shakespeare or Dostoyevsky for example, were made into mangas which made the common people more cultured and knowledgeable about literature and its various elements.

Naturally, since manga takes a great deal of its elements from literature, literary theories can be traced in the different works of this medium. Derrida's deconstruction theory, for one, is traced in the elements of *Attack on Titan* manga. Indeed, this theory is also traced in the *Divergent* trilogy, which makes both selected works similar in various aspects. To be more specific, Derrida's binary opposites, which contrast those of Strauss, are prominent in both selected works of this dissertation. From the binary of knowledge and ignorance to the one of freedom and control and even to the one of hero and villain, all these binaries manifest within the plot of both the trilogy and the manga, and they are what make the works both similar and different.

Literature, with its different elements and theories, influenced various fields and mediums including manga. The latter is by no means a newly discovered medium, for it existed in Japan for centuries. However, thanks to literature and its influence, this expressive medium got an even more profound content regardless of its distinct form. Various complex topics are discussed through the drawings and dialogues of manga panels, and this enabled the analyst to examine the content of manga using literary theories. Deconstruction's binary oppositions, for instance, can be traced in the manga of *Attack on Titan*. The binary of hero and villain is analyzed continuously by readers and analysts, especially with the character of Eren Yeager who deconstructs this binary completely. This dissertation's main purpose is analyzing two different works of fiction with different forms, so that it can clarify the distinct relationship that literature has with mediums like manga. Also, the purpose is to highlight the complex and profound content of multimodal works, which are no longer considered as mere entertainment for readers.

Works Cited

1. Primary sources:

Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*. Harper Collins, 2011.

—. *Insurgent*. Harper Collins, 2012.

—. *Allegiant*. Harper Collins, 2013.

Isayama, Hajime. *Attack on Titan*. New York, Kodansha, 2009-2021.

2. Secondary sources:

Anthony, Ashley. "Dystopian Protagonists and the Pursuit of Greatness." *Christ Pop Culture*, 05 Dec. 2016,

www.christandpopculture.com/dystopian-protagonists-pursuit-greatness/

Baccolini, Raffaella. *The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction*. The Modern Language Association of America, 2004.

Baccolini, Rafaella. *Ursula K. Le Guin's Critical Dystopias*. Salem Press,

www.salempress.com/Media/SalemPress/samples/dystopia_pgs.pdf

Bouet, Elsa D. *Hitting the Wall: Dystopian Metaphors of Ideology in Science Fiction*. 2013. The University of Edinburgh, PhD dissertation.

Boulegroune, Adel. "Text-oriented Literary Criticism: Deconstruction." *University of Biskra*, 2022.

Cameron, Angela. "Why Art is Important." *Angela Cameron*, 2023,

www.angelacameron.com/blogs/art/expressive-definition-in-art

Characterization and Types of Characters. Patkar Varde College,

www.patkarvardecollege.edu.in/studymaterialpdf/3FY_English_Unit%201_Sem%201

[English%20Opt.%20Concepts.pdf](http://www.patkarvardecollege.edu.in/studymaterialpdf/3FY_English_Unit%201_Sem%201_English%20Opt.%20Concepts.pdf) . Accessed 01 May 2023.

Chylikova, Jitka. *Divergent in the Content of Dystopian Prose*. 2019. University of Pardubice, Bachelor thesis.

Cohn, Neil. "Japanese Visual Language The Structure of Manga." 2007. file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/Japanese_Visual_Language_The_structure_of_manga.pdf . Accessed 03 March 2023.

Demerjian, Louisa M, editor. *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Corrected ed., The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

"Dystopian Literature." *Gale Student Resources in Context*, Gale, 2014, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CNVDFG049420542/SUIC?u=palmerridgehs&sid=SUIC&xid=5fa80cf9>. Accessed 12 Feb. 2023.

Fields, Jan. "Creating Science Fiction Characters: Don't Let the Genre Upstage Them." *Institute For Writers (IFW)*, 11 March 2021, www.instituteforwriters.com/creating-science-fiction-characters-dont-let-the-genre-upstage-them/

Guest, Kristen. "Introduction: Cannibalism and The Boundaries Of Identity." *SUNY Press*, https://sunypress.edu/content/download/450885/5481908/version/1/file/9780791450895_imported2_excerpt.pdf . Accessed 22 March 2023.

Hamilton. "What is a dystopia?" *English 10 Students*, Memphis Shelby County Schools, 2017, <https://schools.scsk12.org/cms/lib/TN50000520/Centricity/ModuleInstance/15341/English%2010-Dystopian%20Fiction%20Unit.pdf>

Huang, Cheng-Wen. *A Multimodal Social Semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Manga: A Metalanguage for Sequential Visual Narratives*. 2009. University of Cape Town, Master's dissertation.

Iambobbyy. "The Gift of Death: Love, Agency, and Transgressions Beyond Dualisms." 9 Jan.2011,

www.iambobbyy.com/2021/01/09/the-gift-of-death-love-agency-and-transgressions-beyond-dualisms/

Ingulsrud, John E., and Kate Allen. *Reading Japan Cool: Patterns of Manga Literacy and Discourse*. Lexington Books, 2010.

Janoscik, Vaclav. *Dystopian Realism*. Prague, Cursor Gallery, 09 Sept. 2020.

Jones, Christopher P. "The Symbolism of Walls." *Thinksheet*, 07 Sept. 2019, www.medium.com/thinksheet/the-symbolism-of-walls-bbb50f644bd8

Kakoliris, Gerasimos. "Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction of Western Metaphysics: The Early Years." *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy*, 2017, pp. 43-62.

Kalafut, Marlena G. "It's Not the End of the World: An Analysis of the Similarities in Dystopian Literature and Their Shared Reflection of the Innate Fears of Humanity." Olivet Nazarene University, ELAIA, Vol. 2, Article 7, 2019.

Lu, Mingyue. "Dystopian." *Book Genres*, Concordia International School Shanghai, 11 Feb. 2022,

<https://library.concordiashanghai.org/c.php?g=393530&p=3856654>

Lyana, J. D. Putra. *The Shift of Focalization and Its Effects on Eren Yeager's Heroism in Hajime Isayama's Attack on Titan*. 2022, Sanata Dharma University.

May, Rollo. *Power and Innocence*. University of Texas at Austin,

<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/25685/Power%20and%20Innocence%20by%20Rollo%20May.pdf?sequence=9&isAllowed=y> . Accessed 03 May 2023.

- Mossner, Alexa W. V. "Hope in Dark Times: Climate Change and the World Risk Society in Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries* 2015 and 2017." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, et al, Routledge, 2013.
- Munoz, Jordi Serrano. "Closure in Dystopia: Projecting Memories of the End of Crises in Speculative Fiction." *Memory Studies*, Nov. 2021, DOI: 10.1177/17506980211054340.
- Niederhoff, Burkhard. "Focalization." *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, edited by Hühn, Peter et al, Hamburg University, 2011.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Judith Norman, edited by R.P. Horstmann and Judith Norman, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Nithya, K. *Science Fiction and Dystopia*. International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities (IJELLH), India, 2016.
- Norledge, Jessica. *The Language of Dystopia*. Palgrave macmillan, Springer International Publishing, 2022, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-93103-2>.
- O'Halloran, Kay L., Bradley A. Smith. *Multimodal Text Analysis*. National University of Singapore, 2012.
- Phillips, John. "Différance." October 2006, <https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elljwp/differance.htm> . Accessed 28 February 2023.
- Plato. *The Dialogues of Plato: Sophist*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett, edited by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1871.
- Poole, Evan A. "Heroes vs. Villains." *Sierpinski's Square*, vol. 2, iss. 1, article 9, 2017, <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=siersquare>
- Pospisil, Jan. *the historical Development of Dystopian Literature*. 2016. Palacký University Olomouc , PhD dissertation.

- “Power definitions of Expressive medium.” *Power Thesaurus*,
www.powerthesaurus.org/expressive_medium/definitions. 18 Feb. 2023.
- Razzetti, Gustavo. “Is the Human Nature Good or Evil?”. *Fearless Culture*, 26 June 2019,
<https://www.fearlessculture.design/blog-posts/is-the-human-nature-good-or-evil>
- Ring, Marco. *Good vs. Evil. Binary Oppositions in Pure Form or Categories with Flowing Borders? A Deconstructive Analysis of the ‘Harry Potter’ Movies*. Seminar Paper, 2017.
- Roberts, Adam. *Science Fiction*. London, Routledge, 2000.
- Rummel, R. J. *Understanding Conflict and War*. Sage Publications, 1975-1981.
- Ryan, David. “Emerging Themes in Dystopian Literature: The Development of an Undergraduate Course.” *Honors Thesis*, Western Michigan University, 2014,
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/honors_theses/2466
- Schodt, Frederik L. *Dreamland Japan: Writing on Modern Manga*. Stone Bridge Press, 1996.
- Stewart, Ron. “Edo Period Comics – The World of Esôshi (Edo no Komikku – esôshi no sekai).” *International Journal of Comic Art (IJOCA)*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, pp. 618-621.
- Utah. “We Become That Which We Hate.” *The Rio Norte Line*, 22 Oct. 2022,
<https://therionorteline.com/2019/10/22/we-become-that-which-we-hate-2/>
- Yasuka. “Chōjū-Jinbutsu-Giga: the Very First Manga.” *KCP International*, Japanese Language School, 6 August 2020,
www.kcpinternational.com/2020/08/choju-jinbutsu-giga-first-manga/
- Zanello, Zoë Rivas. “‘Medium’: The Confusing and Overlapping Definitions in Art.” *Koness*, 17 April 2021,
www.kooness.com/posts/magazine/what-does-medium-mean-in-art

ملخص

في العقود الأخيرة، حظي الخيال الديستوبي باهتمام القراء والمحللين على حد سواء، وهذا يرجع بشكل أساسي إلى طبيعة هذا النوع الأدبي الذي يعكس واقع البشر. يهدف هذا البحث إلى شرح هذا النوع وتسلط الضوء على كيفية تصنيف عمل خيالي على أنه ديستوبي، بغض النظر عما إذا كان العمل ذو رمز تعبيرية واحد أو متعدد الرموز. ثلاثية دايفرجنت و مانغا هجوم العمالقة هي أعمال روائية ديستوبية لها طبيعة متشابهة لكنها تختلف في التصنيف. في الواقع، الغرض من هذا البحث هو تتبع مواصفات الديستوبيا التي تقع ضمن العناصر الأدبية لكل من الأعمال المختارة، بالإضافة إلى المعارضات الثنائية، تلك الخاصة بالنظرية التفكيكية للفيلسوف جاك دريدا، التي تدعم الطبيعة الديستوبية لكلا العاملين الروائيين. طبيعة هذه الدراسة هي بالأساس نوعية تعتمد على الأساليب الوصفية والتحليلية. تتبنى الدراسة الأسلوب التفكيكي الذي يسمح للباحث بفك رموز خطاب كل من العاملين وكذلك المعارضات الثنائية الموجودة ضمنهما فيما يتعلق بتصوير الديستوبيا. يتم من خلال عدسات الخيال الديستوبي، إلى جانب هيكله ومظاهره، تحليل وتفسير البيانات المجمعة، الأولية والثانوية، لهذا البحث. أخيراً، الاستنتاج الرئيسي الذي يستخلصه هذا البحث هو المظهر المتميز للديستوبيا في الأعمال المختارة وكذلك العلاقة المميزة بين وسيلة المانغا والأدب والتي تدعمها بشكل كبير العناصر الأدبية التي تتضمنها هذه الوسيلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخيال الديستوبي، المعارضات الثنائية، المانغا، تعدد الرموز التعبيرية، الخيال العلمي.