Annotated Bibliography
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Note: This Annotated Bibliography presents sources for the following essay, "An Increasingly Liberal Youth?: Political Ideologies in Young Adult Dystopian Literature." Here Engle synthesizes the research to consider how sources relate to each other and proposes ways she might enter this particular "academic conversation." In the essay, she creates an argument based on her research that demonstrates the meaning or significance of a particular pop-culture phenomenon.

Source 1

Ames, M. (2013). Engaging "apolitical" adolescents: Analyzing the popularity and educational potential of dystopian literature post-9/11. *The High School Journal, 97*(1), 3-20. Retrieved from http://soe.unc.edu/hsj/

In her article "Engaging 'Apolitical' Adolescents: Analyzing the Popularity and Educational Potential of Dystopian Literature Post-9/11," Melissa Ames argues that teenagers today are becoming increasingly political as evidenced by their fascination with young adult dystopian novels which reflect the fear-based climate of post-9/11 society. While many have argued that young adults are becoming less engaged in the political process, Ames believes that the rising popularity of young adult dystopian novels is a result of teenagers becoming more interested with the social issues underlying the political process. Ames begins her article by describing levels of political engagement of young adults both in the past and present, as well as providing historical examples of young adult novels and what themes they convey. Ames then gives a substantive analysis of the political and social issues examined in some of the prominent young adult novels of the post-9/11 era, such as *The Hunger Games* and *Little Brother*. Although the novels all provide critical commentary on different social and political problems, such as technological advancements and oppressive governments, Ames creates continuity among the novels by pointing out how they all illustrate prominent post-9/11 fears. Although Ames cites prominent political and historical researchers published in academic journals, such as Sander and Putnum, one of the most compelling parts of Ames's piece is her use of direct quotations from the young adult novels she analyzes. These direct quotations provide credibility to her argument because the reader is able to reference passages from the novels and make his or her own decision about the passage's message before reading Ames's opinion on the piece. This article could be extremely useful to both provide a framework of the argument that young adults gravitate to books that reflect the fear-based nature of the post-9/11 world and to get an idea of which books to analyze in my own research. Although this article provides exceptional analysis of political and social themes found in current young adult novels, it does not provide the same level of in-depth analysis of historical young adult novels. Ames only provides a list of historical young adult novels and recounts some of the history of these novels

without providing an analysis of their political and social themes. However, this limitation of the article could provide me with a way to insert myself into the conversation by giving my own analysis of the themes in historical young adult literature that reflect the political climate of the era.

Source 2

Clemente, B. (2012). Panem in America. In M. P. Pharr & L. A. Clark (Eds.), *Of bread blood and* The Hunger Games (pp. 20-29). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

In the introduction of the anthology *Of Bread, Blood and* The Hunger Games, the editors of the anthology, Pharr and Clark argue that the novel *The Hunger Games* is an important piece of young adult literature that provides a platform for both adolescents and adults to think critically about issues facing American culture, such as political and economic changes, gender relations, and government surveillance. In the introduction to the anthology, Pharr and Clark make a compelling argument justifying why *The Hunger Games* should be inserted into the realm of conversation on literary criticism. In the first chapter of the anthology, "Panem in America," the author, Clemente, comments on the political parallels between the fictional society of Panem in the novels and contemporary American society. Clements argues that Panem reflects American society in many ways: there is disparity and inequality between the upper and lower classes, a conflict reflecting the struggle between democracy and Communism, and leaders that are bordering on exercising too much control over surveillance and media. Since there is not a wealth of prior research on the political climate of the fictional society of Panem, Clemente relies heavily upon "outside the box sources," such as political economist Matt Tabbi to make claims about Panem. Clements extends Tabbi's observations about American economy and applies them to the economic and political situation in Panem in order to reveal the parallels between contemporary America and Panem. Clemente's chapter is useful in outlining major parallels between American society and Panem. I could expand upon these parallels in my research paper and comment on what political ideology these parallels convey to children. The limits of Clements's chapter are that it only applies to *The Hunger Games* and would not apply to other young adult novels that I analyze. However, this limitation would provide me with an opportunity to enter the conversation and perform my own original analysis of the major political and economic themes found in other young adult dystopia novels.

Source 3

Condon, M., & Holleque, M. (2013). Entering politics: General self-efficacy and voting behavior among young people. *Political Psychology, 34*(2), 167-181. doi: 10.1111/pops.12019

In their article "Entering Politics: General Self-efficacy and Voting Behavior Among Young People," Condon and Holleque respond to past research indicating that general self-efficacy, or one's belief that they will be successful, influences voting behaviors. Condon and Holleque argue that the traditional political science indicators of voting behavior, internal and external efficacy, are ineffective; instead, general self-efficacy should be considered a major factor influencing voting habits. The authors extend this past research by conducting a study of voting habits of young adults, which determines that general self-efficacy increases the likelihood of a young adult voting by 12% and that the effect is largest among those from a low socioeconomic background. Condon and Holleque base their argument and research off of Lane, a prominent political scientist who developed the general self-efficacy theory as a predictor of voter turnout as an addition to the traditional predictors of internal and external efficacy. Condon and Holleque base their argument off of statistical analysis of American National Election Study and Pearlin Mastery Index data. The conclusion of this study is that young people with a higher belief that they are a success (a higher level of general self-efficacy) are more likely to vote in their first election. I can use this research in my research paper by claiming that characters in young adult fiction influence children's levels of general self-efficacy, and thus, political behaviors Since the heroines of these novels are characters with strong morals and political activity, they may influence higher levels of general self-efficacy in teenagers, in turn increasing political activity among teens. The limits of this article are that it only provides an explanation for one factor (socioeconomic status) that affects general self-efficacy. It would be useful if I knew how pop culture and the media influences general self-efficacy in teenagers.

Source 4

Farmer, B. P. (2006). *American Political Ideologies.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

In his book *American Political Ideologies*, Brian Farmer recognizes the absence of chapters devoted to political ideologies in political science textbooks and the importance of ideologies to the political process and decides to outline the main schools of thought for the dominant political ideologies in contemporary American society. In his chapter on traditional conservatism, Farmer argues that the main ideological beliefs that contemporary conservatives have are a negative view of human nature and those in power, a wish to return to a better time in history, and a skepticism of human nature resulting in a need for

government surveillance. In his chapter on contemporary liberalism, Farmer argues that the main beliefs that characterize a liberal ideology are viewing government as a solution to inequality produced by the free market, characterizing each person as equal to one another, and protection of the good of the entire community rather than the individual. To characterize each political ideology, Farmer relies heavily upon historical examples of ideology influencing politics such as the New Deal and the Cold War. In each chapter, Farmer uses both contemporary political scientists and historical political scientists such as Plato. This book is useful for my research paper because it provides me with a concrete definition of liberal and conservative that I can use to judge the ideologies conveyed by young adult novels. One limit of this book is that Farmer does not conduct research of his own to determine which specific age groups are more likely to belong to which ideology. It would be useful for me to know if young adults are more likely to be influenced by a certain ideology so that I could determine if young adult novels reflect this dominant ideology.

Source 5

Lempke, C. (2012). *Adding more "diss" to dystopia: The new manifestation of dystopia and dystopian (anti)heroes in postmodern graphic novels and adolescent literature.* [Retrieved](#) from Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (1531237)

In the introduction to her thesis, Celsete Lempke introduces the reoccurring theme of historical dystopian novels that the *topoi*, or world in which the story occurs, is the focus of the story and often is more important than characterization. Lempke notices a reversal in current dystopian novels where characterization often trumps world building and argues that critics should not condemn, but embrace this new trend. In the first chapter of her thesis, Lempke uses the novel *1984* by George Orwell to illustrate how the political and social structure of the world far outweighs characterization. Lempke references specific instances in the text where the description of the setting or governmental structure overpowers the characterization of both the protagonist, Winston, and of secondary characters, and of instances where the setting ultimately leads to the demise of these characters. In chapter three of her thesis, Lempke uses the novels *Pygmy, The Hunger Games,* and *Watchmen* to analyze the shift from a focus on *topoi* to a focus on character development, especially by making characters antiheros. Lempke also comments on the interesting phenomenon where instead of the conventional conclusion—a grim ending of past dystopian novels where characters and conquered by the overwhelming might of their society— protagonists of these current dystopian novels overpower and fight back against the oppressive government depicted in the society. Along with referencing three dystopian novels, Lempke also references prominent scholar Foucault and extends his principle of creating a "heterotopic" or individual identity from the government to young adult dystopia novels. I could use this source in my paper

to provide context to the changing trends in young adult dystopian literature and also as a means of assessing the characters in the three novels I analyze for their antihero tendencies and whether they are relatable to young teenagers. One limit of this source is that while it examines three current dystopian novels, it only examines one historical novel, which makes me question whether the focus on *topoi* was actually so prevalent in past dystopian literature or only in a select few novels such as *1984*.

Source 6

Wolk, S. (2009). Reading for a better world: Teaching for social responsibility with young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(8), 664-673. doi: 0.1598/JAAL.52.8.2

In this article, Steven Wolk argues that literature is an essential and underappreciated tool that aids in fostering ideas of social responsibility in young adults. Wolk found that young adults are becoming increasingly disillusioned with politics and learning in general and believes that teaching young adult novels in the classroom will aid in increasing interest in the political and learning processes. After introducing the importance of young adult novels in creating a stimulating and engaging learning environment, Wolk presents some of the ways young adult literature can promote ideas of social responsibility in young adults. These novels convey important themes of social responsibility such as ideas about the government, environment, social justice, war, and multiculturalism. Teaching these thought provoking novels in the classroom will allow adolescents to think more critically and generate possible solutions to important issues facing contemporary American society. In addition to referencing ethnographic studies on young adults and reading habits conducted by researchers such as Smith and Wilhelm, Wolk also provides references to young adult novels that exemplify certain aspects of social responsibility such as multiculturalism or environmentalism. I can use this article in my research paper to extend Condon and Holleque's ideas on the effects of general self-efficacy on young adults to young adults novels. Specifically, I would argue that young adult dystopian novels instill ideas of social responsibility in teens, in turn increasing general self- efficacy and teen political activity. A limit of this source would be that it does not conduct empirical research to determine the effectiveness teaching social responsibility through young adult novels in the classroom. Wolk does not prove quantitatively that there is an association between teaching young adult novels in the classroom and increased social responsibility behaviors such as interest in politics or global affairs.

Proposal and Synthesis

My research for my second annotated bibliography assignment focuses mainly on two possible themes conveyed to teenagers through young adult literature: political ideologies and political behavior. Along with focusing on the political implications of young adult dystopian literature, my research also focuses on specific texts within the genre and how they reflect and portray political ideologies and behaviors to teenagers. Specifically, my research focuses on defining political ideologies and their roles in young adult literature, determining to how young adult literature influences political behavior in children, and chronicling the changes from past to present young adult novels.

To start, one aspect of my research focuses on political ideologies and how they are reflected in young adult dystopia literature. Farmer's book *American Political Ideologies* sets the basis for the definitions of the "liberal" and "conservative" ideologies that are portrayed in young adult novels. The chapter "Panem in America," by Clemente in *Of Bread, Blood, and* The Hunger Games*, amplifies Farmer's definition of political ideologies by applying them to the novel *The Hunger Games*. Clemente argues that *The Hunger Games* represents liberal ideologies because the protagonist leads a rebellion of the poor against the rich in order to achieve a more equal society. Clements and Farmer's thinking converge because Farmer argues that achieving equality is a major aspect of the liberal ideology, and Clemente recognizes this quality in the rebellion in *The Hunger Games* and argues that it reflects a liberal ideology. Another source that amplifies Farmer's definition of ideologies to young adult novels and converges with Farmer's definition is the article "Engaging Apolitical Adolescents: Analyzing the Popularity and Educational Potential of Dystopian Literature Post-9/11" by Melissa Ames. Ames amplifies and converges with Farmer's definition of liberal ideologies by commenting that post-9/11 dystopian literature reflects the fears of those with a liberal ideology. For example, Ames provides examples of young adult dystopia literature that reflect society's fear of government surveillance, which Farmer argues is a core principle of contemporary liberalism. Along with focusing on the specific ideologies conveyed by young adult novels, my outside of the box research also focused on political behavior in youths and how young adult novels can amplify greater political behavior in youths.

Furthermore, my research focused on how young adult dystopia novels can cause adolescents to be more politically active. In her article, Ames argues that young adult dystopia novels reflect teenager's growing interest in both the political process and in major social issues. Social issues such as environmental degradation are prevalent in popular young adult novels, indicating that teenagers are becoming more interested in these topics and the politics surrounding them. Condon and Holleque argue in their article "Entering Politics: General Self-efficacy and Voting Behavior Among Young People" that it is not ideology but an adolescent's psychological feelings of self-worth and success, also called general self-efficacy, that influence whether or not an adolescent will vote or

participate in the political process. The authors present their findings that as general self-efficacy increases, a teenager's likelihood of voting also increases by 12%. Moreover, in Wolk's article "Reading for a Better World: Teaching for Social Responsibility with Young Adult Literature," the author argues that teaching young adult novels in the classroom can foster political activism and social responsibility in young adults since these novels reflect important themes such as environmentalism, multiculturalism, and issues of war and surveillance. Finally, in Lempke's dissertation comparing characteristics of historical and present day dystopian novels, Lempke argues that the trend in current young adult dystopian literature towards heavier characterization instead of world building has led characters to be more developed and morally ambiguous. This "anti-hero" characterization is often more relatable to teenagers because teens often face dilemmas where the correct answer is not clear and they are sometimes forced to make poor decisions. Adolescent readers' ability to identify with these characters increases their general self-efficacy levels since they have someone to relate to who experiences the same problems they go through. Condon and Holleque would argue that this rise in general-self efficacy would, in turn, lead young adults to become more politically active.

The final aspect of my research focuses on the evolution of young adult dystopian novels from the past to the present. Ames and Lempke's articles both comment on the differences between historical and current young adult dystopian novels, but have different perspectives on the core differences. Ames argues that young adult novels have evolved from two different fear-based landscapes. These novels used to reflect the fears attributed to the Cold War through themes of stalemates and the destructive nature of nuclear weapons. Now, Ames argues the young adult dystopian novels reflect the new fears associated with 9/11, including increased surveillance and government infringement on personal privacy. While Ames focuses on important historical events causing the shift between past and present young adult novels, Lempke focuses on the literary devices used to illustrate the shift between literature during the two time periods. Lempke argues that in the past, young adult dystopian novels had a heightened focus on the setting and less of a focus on characterization of characters. Now there is a trend in these novels to focus on characterization to make the characters more relatable to the young audience's struggle to make decisions and adjust to the new challenges associated with high school.

Given the research I have conducted thus far, I think that I can enter the conversation on young adult dystopian novels by analyzing the political ideologies reflected in these novels and how they may increase teenagers' level of activity in the political process. There has been extensive research done on young adult novels and what moral and social messages they convey to teenagers, but I see an opportunity in the conversation to comment on whether these novels endorse political action and a liberal or conservative ideology to children. I will

go about determining whether young adult dystopia novels convey a specific political ideology to children by analyzing three popular novels: *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *The 5ᵗʰ Wave*. I chose these three novels because they have distinctive political and social undertones reflected both in the fictional society and by the protagonist. I also chose them because they all come from different years (2008, 2011, and 2013 respectively) and will therefore allow me to assess whether the ideologies portrayed by these novels have changed over time. I will use Farmer's definition of conservative and liberal ideologies to assess whether these novels convey a specific ideology as being desirable over the other.

While my research on young adult dystopian novels has enhanced my knowledge of common underlying political and social themes associated with these novels, I still have many questions concerning the young adults who read them. To start, I still need to do further research on how young adults are affected by the print media. Farmer claims that the media is an agent of political socialization, but I still wonder how much influence the media has on young adult's socialization. Since young adults live in a more digitally connected world heavily influenced by the media, has the media become a larger agent of political socialization than it was for young adults in the past? Is the media now a larger agent of socialization than family members or peers? To answer these questions, I will have to research the effects of media on adolescent behavior and socialization. I will focus specifically on the effects of fictional print media on socialization and try to find quantitative rather that qualitative data. Moreover, I still have questions on what the political and voting behaviors of young adults are. While my research thus far has proven that young adults are becoming more increasingly involved in the political process, I do not have any of the concrete data from the government on voting behaviors of young adults. I will need to research the voting rates of young adults (aged 18-26, the target audience for young adult novels). I also still wonder if young adults are more likely to identify with a certain political ideology. If they do, it would be interesting to examine whether young adult dystopian novels reflect or contradict this dominant ideology. I will conduct more research on the political party young adults are more likely to identify with and then incorporate this research into my examination of the three young adult novels I have chosen to analyze.

In my research paper, I will first forward Farmer's research on political ideologies by borrowing Farmer's definition of liberal and conservative as my basis for judging whether a novel conveys liberal or conservative ideas. I will also extend Condon and Holleque's research on general self-efficacy of adolescents being influenced by socioeconomic status and claim that young adult dystopia novels also influence self-efficacy levels in young adults. I will argue that young adult dystopian novels portray strong protagonists who have high self-efficacy, which therefore influences young adults to follow in their footsteps and develop high self-efficacy. Since higher self-efficacy levels in adolescents makes them more likely to vote, I will argue that by influencing self-efficacy, young adult

novels influence adolescents to participate in the political process. Furthermore, I will forward Clemente's research on the political themes present in *The Hunger Games* by illustrating some of his ideas in the section of my paper focusing on the political ideology conveyed by *The Hunger Games*. I will also illustrate Wolk's research on the benefits of teaching social responsibility through young adult literature in the section of my paper devoted to how young adult literature causes teenagers to question the society they live in and how to make it a better place. Finally, in the literature review section of my paper where I provide historical context into the development of young adult novels over time, I will illustrate Lempke's observations that young adult dystopian novels have become increasingly concerned with characterization instead of setting.

Moving forward in this assignment, I will conduct further research to answer my questions posed earlier on the political behavior exhibited by young adults. I will also closely examine the three novels I have chosen to analyze in my research paper for instances where the author appears to directly support or denounce a certain political ideology. I will also look for instances in these novels where the protagonist encourages moral development in teenagers through behavior that is relatable to teens. These instances will show me whether young adult dystopian novels encourage higher levels of general self-efficacy in children, consequently increasing political behavior. In my research paper, I hope to answer the questions: "What political ideology do young adult dystopia novels endorse?" and "Have these ideologies changed over time?" In answering these questions, I hope to add to the conversation of young adult dystopian novels and expand past the current research, which equates these novels with moral development, by commenting on the relationship between these novels and political development.