

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has been expanding and increasing; in terms of the field, the genre, the forms, and many more aspects over the time. This expansion creates new, diverse, and unique fields, genres, and forms. For example, the emergence of the young adult category in novels. The term “young adult” was first commonly used in the late 1960s, and with the expansion of the term “young adult” itself, the growing number of the “young adult” population group, and the expansion of literatures, (Cart, 2008) stated that *“as a result of these newly expansive terms, the numbers of books being published for this audience have similarly increased, perhaps by as much as 25 percent, based on the number of titles being reviewed by a leading journal.”* Thus, literature, specifically its young adult categories, is worthy of discourse as it is aligned with the humanities and its issues, specifically in matters of problems or topics that interest the young adult population.

In the 2000s and thereafter, the release of young adult books has massively increased. With the popular titles and series such as the Divergent series, the Maze Runner series, and the Hunger Games series, the popularity of the young adult novels began to enrich the young adult literature with diverse genres. The excitement of these young adult novel series has also sparked many adaptations into a movie or movie series. One of the popular series is the Hunger Games series,

which grows even bigger to become a media franchise. The first Hunger Games movie was released in 2012, which took a bigger hit, leading to the release of the movie adaptations for the second and third novels.

The Hunger Games novel and movie series have been around from 2008 to 2015, with three novels and four movie adaptations. The story centers around Katniss Everdeen, the female main character of the series, and her journey throughout the Hunger Games as she volunteered to replace her sister. Unknowingly to Katniss, this life-changing decision eventually leads to a revolution that sparked from her gestures in the game. The series' genres, as listed on IMDb website, are: teen adventure, sci-fi, dystopian, survival, action, and more related terms. Though unlisted, the Hunger Games also had romance as its extras that slowly built up throughout the series.

There are main themes in the Hunger Games series. Themes like power, dominance, oppression, segregation, war, and other political themes are explored. Just as the genre itself had thriller listed on, The Hunger Games contains the presence of violence, injuries and blood, mature themes, survival, fighting scenes, dark atmosphere, and intense scenes. The IMDb website also listed partial nudity, the presence of alcohol, drug, and smoking mentions—all involving teens.

These themes, as is obvious, are also closely related to the events happening in reality. The Hunger Games expresses the many instances of power, be it the one that moves people into goodness or the opposite ways. The power that oppresses the marginalized people, the violence and war that surround the history of human

nature, were expressed in a closer and more relatable way to the young adult. The discourse of power has been going on for a long time, and often in relation with the discourse of control.

The audience sees the horrors of these themes unfolding with an understandable and light way of thinking, as Katniss portrays the mind of a teenager in an oppressive country. In an interview with David Levithan (Levithan & Collins, 2018), Suzanne, as the author of the Hunger Games series, mentioned that, *“Yes, I was flipping through the channels one night between reality television programs and actual footage of the Iraq War, when the idea came to me,”* which explains the close relation of themes in the Hunger Games series to the happening situation.

After 12 years of the trilogy's completion, Suzanne Collins finally released another series in relation to the Hunger Games trilogy. In 2020, Collins released “The Ballad of the Songbirds and Snakes” as one of the prequels to the Hunger Games trilogy series. It sets at the 10th Hunger Games, which sets the day back to 64 years before the Hunger Games series takes place. In 2025, Collins released a second prequel to the trilogy, titled “The Sunrise on the Reaping,” which sets the time at the 50th Hunger Games, 24 years before the 74th Hunger Games, where the trilogy takes place. Interestingly, in these timelines, Panem (the country in which the Hunger Games are held) has been developing and advancing in many aspects. Technology, culture, education, and the presence of authoritarian power have changed, in line with many aspects of Panem society.

The main themes presented in the prequels are similar, especially with the settings of “The Ballad of the Songbirds and Snakes,” which takes place in year 10 after Panem (the country in which the Hunger Games are held) had ended the war between the rebels and the government. The Hunger Games was proposed to be a show to “honor” the blood of the people who had died during the war, ever since the war ended. In the 10th year of the Hunger Games, the games were not as popular as the 74th Games (the time setting of when the original trilogy takes place). The story follows Coriolanus Snow as the protagonist, who himself is a child of a regressed family in the capital of Panem, the Capitol. Snow is a student in the Capitol’s academy, which is filled with the children of people in power and the privileged. Snow then became the canon antagonist in the original series. He originally mentored the tributes in the 10th Games, which became the start of his story in the first prequel.

The second prequel follows Haymitch Abernathy, a participant from District 12, as the protagonist. Haymitch joined the 50th Games with Maysilee Donner, the female tribute from District 12. The 50th Games were different as Panem commemorates a Quarter Quell every 25 years of the Hunger Games. As time passed, the games were quite popular at the time. This prequel also marked the relationship between Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker in the original trilogy (after the late Seneca Crane), who is in charge of the revolution plan in the original series, and Haymitch. Haymitch became the mentor of Katniss and Peeta (the future tributes in the 74th Games) from District 12, as he turned out to be the victor of the 50th Games.

From the first prequel, “The Ballad of the Songbirds and Snakes,” it is known that Snow managed to improve the Hunger Games and created a lasting impact on the whole country. His encounters with many figures gave different insights and points of view, especially about power and control. His biggest influence came from Dr. Volumnia Gaul, who was his tutor in the academy that took him under her personal training. This influence affected how Snow climbed to his position and eventually became the president, with his negative beliefs about power and control. He is also at the hand of Haymitch’s tragic stories as he had been the president of the country for several years when the 50th Games were held.

The prequels and the trilogy itself emphasize the presence of power and how it reinforces surveillance. There are many encounters of power in both of the trilogy and the imbalance that affect the relationship or the interaction between the characters. With the power imbalance, one at the upper hand can have more control over the other as they have more resources and apparatus to support their position and their control towards the mass.

As power and control are intertwined, the two also affect the applications of Panopticism in the Panem society throughout the years. The advancement of technology creates a difference in the force of power and perhaps, the disciplinary authority and Panopticism concept application in Panem society, especially in Panem’s district distinction. There have been many articles and journals studying Panem’s power dynamic, especially in the concept of surveillance, be it between the authorities and the people, or between the people themselves. The two newly

released prequels of Panem take an older and further timeline, and there must be differences in the aspects of power exercises and surveillance of the country. While the trilogy takes one linear, close timeline of two years, the two prequels help to show how power and Panopticism (a surveillance concept) have changed over a long period of time.

Panopticism originally came from Jeremy Bentham's book (1791) titled "Panopticon; or the Inspection-House" which had been drafted as a series of letters in 1787. Foucault (1980) took an interest and cited this in his book, "The Eye of Power". In the transcript of an interview between Foucault, Michelle Perrot, and Jean-Pierre Barou, he mentioned, *"And indeed what Bentham proposed to the doctors, penologists, industrialists, and educators was just what they had been looking for. He invented a technology of power designed to solve the problems of surveillance,"* (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1972-1977, 1980, p. 148), where he gives credit to Bentham as the inventor of the Panopticon.

With the Panopticon, Foucault (1980) shifted the focus of the emergence of the Panopticon from the penalty and punishment system to a disciplinary surveillance, as cited in EBSCO (Ruth, 2024). According to Foucault (1980), punishment has evolved from the focus on the criminal's behaviour and self to the overall surveillance of the people. With the Panopticon, everyone is being monitored and surveilled at any time, with no exceptions. The surveillance and training are not always repressive; they can come from ideological institutions such

as schools. The constant surveillance trains people to be obedient, creating easily controlled bodies. Foucault (1980) mentioned these bodies as the “docile body,” which is easily controlled to be useful and productive. In relation to this, Foucault (1980) suggested that power is productive as it creates the potential of both useful and obedient bodies in the latent. While it started as a punishment for the criminal, it is applied to many occurrences in today’s events. Previous studies have shown many instances of research about the disciplinary authority and the Panopticism concept in the Hunger Games trilogy.

Çapoğlu (2024) acknowledged the occurrence of hegemony in the Hunger Games original trilogy. Using Gramsci’s theoretical framework of hegemony, the powerful state (ruling group) creates an illusion of reality to limit the people’s ability to question it, which will result in submission. The Capitol enforced the viewing of the games, the “historical broadcasts”, and, in addition, the public execution. Çapoğlu (2024) also discussed the power that the Capitol exercised through the media and technology. Thus, as mentioned by Çapoğlu (2024), the ruling group would excessively try to hide and suppress any symbolic remarks of the opposite ideology. The people of Panem have to live with the dominance and the surveillance inflicted by the state.

Denison (2014) mentioned that society has been policing each own bodies in many ways. This aligned with the concept of Panopticism, as everyone is visible and under constant surveillance, while Denison commented specifically on women, as the main female character of the original series is a woman. Denison (2014) also

commented on the concept of docile bodies being brought by Collins, remarking that Katniss, as the main female character, is entitled to perform gender and beauty on the screen, creating the sense of submission to the generalised standard.

Furthermore, Denison (2014) stated that the concept of the Panopticon is not merely used in the television show *The Hunger Games*, but also in the districts. Denison (2014) pointed out the “separate Panopticon” of the torture that the President inflicted on the people to make them submit, and to make this torture visible to everyone. It creates fear among people, giving the President the ability to assert power, which affects how people exercise the President’s power by themselves. The President exercises his power in every part of the country, maintaining great power over the citizens, even the privileged ones in the Capitol. This is an example of the training and routines that created docile bodies, giving up their political rights to the people in power.

Connors (2025), in his article, quoted from Lyon (1994) regarding surveillance: “*To participate in modern society is to be under electronic surveillance,*” (Lyon, 1994, p. 4) as people constantly live under the shadow of surveillance ingrained in easily accessible gadgets like cell phones, computers, or even the actual surveillance camera, such as CCTVs. Connors (2025) used Foucault’s theory of gaze as disciplinary mechanisms (1995) and Michel de Certeau’s discussions (1984) about how people use tactics to resist oppression. With de Certeau’s critics (1984), Connors (2025) elaborated that the *Hunger Games* original trilogy notices the potential of adolescents’ resistance to the gaze and other

disciplinary mechanisms. Connors (2025) also adapted Mann et al.'s (2003) term of "sousveillance", which refers to the ways people resist, block, and 'counter-surveil' the supervision.

Connors (2025) expressed his agreement with Flanagan (2014) regarding "participatory surveillance," which refers to the voluntary submission of the surveilled subject, implying the presence of a docile body that was accustomed to surveillance. As previously mentioned, the power that is exercised is not applied in a clear and violent way. Instead, it is exercised through the subtler but pervasive attempt. This is what Foucault means by disciplinary power, making surveillance one of the practices to exercise this model of power. The institution of the subject that exercises it will be referred to as the disciplinary authority. These factors already combine the variables of power, surveillance, and the advancement of technology in correlation with each other.

Günenç (2022) noted the Capitol's manipulation to compel people to support their surveillance. It is elaborated that The Capitol uses natural resources to develop technology that will be used against the districts (Günenç, 2022, p. 1092). The Capitol highlights the sake of community concerns; for example, collecting resources in the name of community development, such as technological advancements, which can be used to control individuals over themselves, supporting the possible correlation between technological advancement and the power and surveillance of the people. Günenç (2022) also disclosed the administration system that is supported by technological advancement; for

example, the presence of an electrical fence as a border of the districts. As previously conducted study by Connors (2025), Günenç (2022) also spoke of how the Capitol controls media, with an addition of his mentions regarding coercive power, such as the army. Therefore, with the combination of mass media control, a powerful army, and advanced technology, the Capitol can exercise its power over the people as a totalitarian government.

Aligned with the use of technology and the hands of scientists, Eralan (2017) discussed how technology is being used in the Hunger Games arena and the districts. An interesting point by Eralan is about how the Capitol presents itself as a supporter of its obedient citizens (Eralan, 2017, p. 43). With the deceiving persuasion of how victors are being treated and how the obedient districts are intended to be more prosperous than not, the Capitol manipulated people on the districts, set them to be more obedient by default. Eralan (2017) also remarked that “surveillance provides social control over citizens’ behaviour” (Eralan, 2017, p. 44), implicitly hinting at the ‘docile bodies’ at the effect of the surveillance.

Along with Eralan’s point (2017), Amero (2024) noticed that the Capitol used their high technology to summon constant challenges and surveillance to the tributes in the arena. Amero (2024) also pointed out the construction of mass media that correlates with the surveillance of the female main character, who had to act and entertain while being in a life-and-death situation during the games. While the tributes are busy trying to survive, the spectators or the audience place a bet, focus on the killing counts, and act as if the killing festive is merely entertainment. The

advancement of the Capitol's technology in the 74th Games has also allowed the Capitol to create mutants with the use of the tribute remnants and their past characteristics. Amero (2024) remarked that technology also serves as a parameter of class division. The games were deemed entertainment for the higher classes, while they became a gamble with a lose-lose situation for the lower classes, especially the tributes from poor districts.

With the release of the two prequels to the trilogy that are set on a different, older timeline, there may be differences in the exercise of power within the prequel timelines. Timelines, as described across many sources on the web, are the time arrangements of literary works. This factor is one of the important variables, other than the advancement of technology. As the different time settings take place in a connected timeline, there may be a difference regarding the disciplinary authority, as it may be supported by the corresponding technological advancements in its time settings; therefore, increasing the chance of differences in its exercise of power, specifically the surveillance.

1.2 Research Question

1. How does the Panopticism (surveillance) and disciplinary institutions presented in the Hunger Games prequel series?
2. How does the time settings and its corresponding advancement in technology affect the Panopticism (surveillance) in the Hunger Games prequel series?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

1. To examine how the Panopticism (surveillance) and disciplinary institutions are presented in the Hunger Games prequel series.
2. To uncover how the time settings and its corresponding advancement in technology affect the Panopticism (surveillance) in the Hunger Games prequel series.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The research follows the two main protagonists from each prequel novel and their power-related encounters, along with the possible mentions of the technology advancement used in expressing power dominance or control. The data that is going to be examined in this study is the intrinsic elements of the two prequel novels, specifically the mentions of: time and place settings, disciplinary institutions, power-related encounters, the mention of technology and inventions, and the surveillance concept itself. The concept of the Panopticon, which is quoted by Foucault from Jeremy Bentham, is used as the theory of analysis, with the addition of the time settings and the technological advancement in the corresponding time settings as the variables.

1.5 Significance of the Research

There have been numerous studies of power and Panopticism surrounding the Hunger Games franchise. While aiming to answer the two research questions, this study also contributes to the prolonged, rich studies of power and its relational discourses, particularly around the Hunger Games franchise discourses. Along with

the additional variable of time settings and its respective advancement in technology, this study adds to the previous research on power and the Panopticism concept. It may help in understanding today's possible event of surveillance and its correlation to the advanced technology and gadgets, in an attempt to raise awareness of the possibility of surveillance within society. As the Hunger Games original trilogy series exhibits the technological advancement that has yet to be seen in reality (meaning that the progression of the technology is significant throughout the prequel and the original trilogy), this study may also benefit future studies of technological advancements and their effects on power-related aspects, especially in surveillance studies.

1.6 State of The Art

The objective of the study is to examine the presence and potential differences in disciplinary institutions, as well as the Panopticism (surveillance), in relation to the advancement of technology within the 40-year gap in Panem. Aforementioned studies have covered these concepts in the recent, advanced society of Panem (the country where the Hunger Games takes place). It is important to trace back the relation of power and technology throughout the years of the Hunger Games prequels, as it had created a big gap in technological advancement and the surveillance itself, creating an astonishing application of power and surveillance in the Hunger Games original trilogy. Thus, the study aims to find out how the advancement of technology in the corresponding time settings affects the Panopticism concept in a country. These variables are yet to be covered in the previous studies, making this gap worthy of study.

With all the factors above, this study advances a novelty by exploring the time gap between the two prequels and its relation to the Panopticism concept in the Hunger Games prequel series. The focus of this study is to figure out the effects of time settings and the advancement of technology on the corresponding time settings to the Panopticism (surveillance), which gives a new paradigm to analyse the exercise and practice of power that is being represented in young adult fiction series.

1.7 Research Limitations

This research focuses on the surveillance and the disciplinary institutions between the two novels. The theory that is being used is Foucault's theory of Panopticon, which makes the research focuses on the presence of surveillance, the disciplinary power and institutions, power-related encounters between characters, and any additional topics that support the main issues of the research. Thus, this research is under the scope of power discourse, limiting the research to the subject of surveillance and disciplinary institutions. Moreover, the detailed classification and data-related information will be explained in Chapter IV.