

Teenage girls in dystopian literature

Business



Katniss, Tris, and Cassandra all have one thing in common, they are all female protagonists from modern dystopian novels. In the past few years, modern dystopian literature has become increasingly popular and so has the use of teenage girls as the protagonist. There has also been a drastic change in modern teenage girls beliefs.

The correlation between the two has been studied and accepted by multiple people. In modern dystopian literature, teenage girls are portrayed as strong protagonists because of modern girls' beliefs that they can make a difference and because of the author's desire to appeal and relate to teenage audiences. Girls in dystopian literature are depicted with masculine traits in order to show how they're strong and independent. In Nadine Brandes article, she describes the difference between girls in modern dystopian literature and in other types of literature by stating, " These heroines go against the stereotypes that have grown about girls being overly-emotional, needy, romance obsessed and helpless." (Magister J. Vukadinovic) In other literature, girls or women are usually depicted as the angel, the lover, the mother, etc.

and, the only role the mother plays in other novels is to give birth to the hero or heroine!(Christina M. Kimsley)However, as described in the quotation above, girls in modern dystopian literature are not depicted like they typically are in other genres. These girls are depicted as strong and independent; these heroines fight for what they want and work hard to reach their goals. The normal characteristics of girl protagonists in dystopian literature include being a survivalist, holding back emotions, and rebelling against society.(Nadine Brandes) A study was conducted on the <https://assignbuster.com/teenage-girls-in-dystopian-literature/>

characteristics of male and females in modern dystopian literature and the results showed that 56% of the time, characters show masculine traits rather than feminine traits.

Instead of girls being a sidekick or love interest, heroines in modern dystopian literature show characteristics like assertiveness and aggressiveness. (Linda Holmes) This chart shows how characters in dystopian novels are evolving and changing for the better! Girls in these books and literature pieces make an impact on the world. In one particular modern dystopian novel called, *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen (the novel's heroine) shows a multitude of typical male dominant traits while her lover Peeta shows multiple feminine traits! (Debra Donston-Miller) For example, Peeta encourages Katniss to open up about her feelings while Katniss is more reserved and doesn't share her feelings often. It's almost if the typical roles for female and male in this novel have been swapped. This defiance of the typical stereotype for heroines is extraordinary and truly showcases how these female protagonists. Heroines in modern dystopian literature are depicted with masculine traits to show their strength and independence.

Modern girl's beliefs reflect the actions and characteristics of female protagonists. According to one article, "The to-do list for the decade between ages 10 and 20 includes separating from your parents, finding your place among your peers at school (and) beginning to make decisions about your future." (Kandra Polatis) This quotation shows how girls want to know they belong in the world, that they have a place. Dystopian literature tells these girls that it's OK to be different, or not have a place yet. This quotation also shows how girls want to have independence. This is one of the reasons <https://assignbuster.com/teenage-girls-in-dystopian-literature/>

that female protagonists in modern dystopian literature are the ones saving everybody! These female protagonists fight their own battles and are very independent.

For example, Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games*, shows her characteristic of independence immensely! Katniss not only fights for what she believes in but instead she leads the fight for what she believes in! Katniss and other female protagonists in dystopian literature send a message to girl readers that it's OK to be different and have different beliefs as long as you stick by them and fight for them. (Debra Donston-Miller) Teens have been brought into a world that is constantly on the edge of catastrophe which causes them to want to fix/ change the world they live in for the better. (Kandra Polatis) Modern day teenagers have been brought into a world with wars, terrorist threats, etc. However, teenagers know and understand this this will be their future and their children's future if they don't change it. Similarly, in modern dystopian literature, many heroines live in a broken world that they end up changing. Cassandra (the female protagonist from the dystopian novel *Matched* by Allie Condie) is a great example of this.

People in her world are punished for the wrong doing of their parents, grandparents, etc. These people don't even get a chance at redemption! On top of that, people in her world are also killed at the age of 80 to keep the population at a sustainable number. Cassandra lives in a broken world and she becomes determined to fix and goes to extreme lengths to do so! Modern girl's beliefs impact how female protagonists are portrayed in modern dystopian literature. Authors of dystopian literature make the <https://assignbuster.com/teenage-girls-in-dystopian-literature/>

protagonists have similar problems that teens would have in order to help these books relate to a teenage audience. One article talks about is the pressure of teens in real life and how they are shown in dystopian literature.

The author says, " I think the pressure on young adults to define themselves has increased, and it's starting earlier and earlier in life."(Debra Donston-Miller) In real life teenagers are constantly under pressure from their parents, peers, teachers, and even themselves! The pressure ranges from things like pressure to get good grades, pressure to decide who you are, or even pressure to do something great. Female dystopian protagonists are also always under pressure. Tris, the heroine in the dystopian novel *Divergent*, has to choose what she's going to be and act like for the rest of her life when she is only a teenager! The Artifice, a website containing multiple articles, has an article that helps give some insight on how teenagers can relate to modern dystopian literature because of how the female protagonists are given uncertain futures. " Theo James, who plays one of the main characters in the " *Divergent*" film, thinks it's because young people are uncertain about the future of our world.

"(The Rising Popularity in Dystopian Literature) The world today is full of uncertain futures and events. When our parents were teenagers, they knew they would have a job when they were older, they'd be able to get into college, etc. However, modern teenagers aren't guaranteed a good job or acceptance into a good college. Teens today must work especially hard for what they want. Working hard for what you want and having uncertain futures is also a theme that runs through modern dystopian literature.

Female protagonist in dystopian literature like Katniss Everdeen, have to fight in order to guarantee their future.

Katniss, for example, is not guaranteed food every night so she goes and hunts for it herself. In order to relate to teenagers, the problems authors created for their protagonists are similar to problems teens face today. In order to relate to teenage readers, girl protagonists are more common because girls read more than boys. Nadine Brandes states in her article that statistics show girls read more than boys, so in order to appeal to the larger audience, authors create more female protagonists as opposed to male protagonists. Girls around the world usually have a stereotype of not being as intelligent as men or are weaker than men. Today, however, studies show that girls make up most of the percentage of novel readers and readers of dystopian literature.

Authors want to sell their pieces of work to as many people as possible. Since girls are usually the readers of the dystopian literature, authors write female protagonists in order to relate and appeal to a larger audience. According to one study 42% of girls believe they're excellent at reading while only 36% of boys believe they're excellent at reading. Girls today are intelligent and enjoy learning. (Values of Americans) This intelligence also instills confidence amongst girls.

In the study mentioned above, done with kids ages 18 and under, it was proven that more girls believe they are excellent at reading as opposed to the number of boys who believe they are excellent at reading. Protagonists in modern dystopian literature are depicted as intelligent females because

there is a larger number of girls who read modern dystopian literature and they want to be depicted as intelligent and courageous. These girls want intelligent female characters to reflect the characteristics of modern teenage girls! Intelligent female protagonist are popular amongst modern dystopian literature because girls make up the larger number of the people who read modern dystopian literature and because these girls who read the books want girls to be depicted as intelligent. Dystopian literature has been around for a very long time, but recently, strong female leads have been incorporated into multiple novels and other pieces of literature in this genre. This is because modern teenage girls don't just want to be stereotyped as the weak love interest, they want more.

Girls today want females to be depicted as strong and independent in dystopian literature in order to reflect their current beliefs. Teenage girls are depicted as strong female protagonists in modern dystopian literature in order to showcase the beliefs of modern teenage girls and because of the author's desire to appeal and relate to teenage audiences.