

## Quest in James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* Trilogy

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.34785/J014.2021.319>

Article Type: Original Article

Page Numbers: 5-19

Received: 1 September 2020

Accepted: 17 January 2021

### Abstract

Myths, as part of human's life since ancient times, continue to be depicted in novels, movies, and TV series with the advent of technology. The dystopian theme much favored in the book market receiving international attention and appreciation is present in a large number of novels for the adult and the adolescent. Dystopia, as a sub-genre of science fiction, has strongly affected young adult (YA) literature. *The Maze Runner* trilogy (2009-2011), written by James Dashner, is a popular dystopian fiction with almost all-male supporting heroes. In the present paper, quest in Dashner's trilogy is investigated in order to analyze the adventure in terms of Joseph Campbell's views of hero's journey, including the steps from the very first volume to the third in order to explore the archetype of journey in an adventure taking place in the future fictional world. Characters in this trilogy go through many difficulties to survive, and they pass through the rite of the passage each facing a crisis. A major conclusion the research arrives at is that there is more of an inner change in the young characters than an instant effect on their environment; however, they will be ready for the future.

### Keywords

Archetypal Hero; Dystopia; Identity; Journey; Speculative Fiction.

### 1. Introduction

Dystopian novel could not be solely considered as a postmodern genre. Some were published as early as the first half of the twentieth century. *We* by Yevgeni Zamyatin (1924), *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (1932), *Swastika Night* by Katharine Burdekin (1937), and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell (1949) are some examples of dystopia. It is considered as a sub-genre of speculative fiction. Abrams in defines dystopia in as "a fictional, very unpleasant place where present social, political, and technological threatening tendencies are

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depicted in a catastrophic future time" (328). In such novels, the apocalyptic element is focused in the recent few decades where characters seek survival for themselves and other human beings. Many scholars have written on the popularity of this genre for young adults:

With its capacity to frighten and warn, dystopian writing engages with pressing global concerns: liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming catastrophe, questions of identity, and the increasingly fragile boundaries between technology and the self. When directed at young readers, who are trying to understand the world and their place in it, these dystopian warnings are distilled into exciting adventures with gripping plots. (Basu et al. 1)

The popularity of these novels for the young adults has led to adapting them into film and TV series, which have received much praise and attention by adults and young adults. Garcia in the introduction of his book *Critical Foundations in Young Adult Literature, Challenging Genres*, considers *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer and *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins as the milestone in admiring YA literature both of which were adapted into popular films. In these novels, death, violence and apocalypse are accepted as norms and no longer as exceptions according to Bubiková (95). An apocalyptic story in which nature is destroyed after a catastrophe (epidemics, flood, earthquake or famine) is the most powerful metaphor that can be shown for depicting nature as it is now. This portrayal of nature plays a considerable role in this metaphor since it indicates that our destiny or the survival of the world depends on an imaginary crisis. The figurative concept of apocalypse is often perceived as the judgment day. The concept of apocalypse in the YA dystopian narratives is similar to this belief that the world will be ultimately destroyed by a natural phenomenon. Setyorini believes the stories in this genre usually narrate the life's conditions of the survivors of such a natural catastrophe. Post-apocalypse is actually considered as a sub-genre of science fiction usually describing a situation in which the human life on the Earth planet has been endangered after a known/unknown catastrophe, which changed the life of revenant population (111). Swartz contends that this sub-genre of speculative fiction has some correlations with biblical apocalyptic fictions and plays. Myth has played a role in this kind of novel as Parvaneh and Zaltash state that the footprint of myths can be observed in all times and places even in this technology era (96).

After the global popularity of *The Hunger Games* series, by Suzanne Collins, apocalyptic fiction has gained widespread acceptance becoming best-sellers. Addressing some of the factors influencing this popularity, Suzanne Collins states that "dystopia is about a group of people who have lived always in a war. This literature allows YAs to exercise their imaginations and thoughts about the

essence of evil and good. It also mirrors loss and violence" (qtd. in Corbett 21-22). Dystopia provides a chance for young adults to challenge and question the conditions dominating their world. Thus, they attract a wide range of audiences with different knowledge, backgrounds and interests.

## 2. Literature Review

Young, in "Why is dystopia so appealing?" exploring the popularity of these novels for young adults, argues that "there are a number of opinions, but the main drift seems to be that books set in either chaotic or strictly controlled societies mirror a teenager's life; at school, at home, with their peers and in the wider world. Let's call it the 'my own private dystopia' theory." YA dystopia is a pretty recent genre led almost by young female main characters gaining a great deal of attention. Since most of discussions emphasize depicting girls as the protagonists, Seymour attempted to argue the YA dystopian novels have begun to devote more space for male characters and show how well boys perform with the help of masculinity (627).

Alice Curry quotes Lawrence Buell arguing that "Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (285). The most influential pioneer to the contemporary environmental apocalypse is Malthus who contradicted the utopian predictions of the endless material and moral progress in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (10). Malthus was the first philosopher who claimed that social policy is ruled and guided by ecological needs. Accordingly, his theories of population were established upon the theories of natural selection of Charles Darwin and later, the emergence of ecology. Malthus has little hope that catastrophe can be avoided because the threat depicted is irreversible (23).

The popularity of dystopian fictions in the recent years is prominent and noticeable in book sales and cinema box offices. Mallan assumes that what happened on September 11 had a great impact on the world of literature, especially American literature (17). In spite of utopian concepts containing perfect societies imagined in the story, in a dystopian fiction there is plenty of terrifying perils and fears. Young adult dystopia includes different kinds of fictions where the young or teenage heroes/heroines face a mandatory adults-caused challenging situation. Apocalyptic literature has been described as a genre born out of crisis (Thompson 13). In line with this, the *Maze Runner* trilogy describes an environmental crisis, which is to be controlled with the help of the latest technologies provided by some nations of the world.

Ryan in his thesis first defines utopia, dystopia, dystopian literature, and dystopian trends in YA literature followed by reviews of modern dystopia-

oriented novels including *The Hunger Games*, *Ship Breaker*, *The Maze Runner*, *Matched*, and *Divergent*. Finally, he concludes that while the trends in YA dystopia-oriented literature are continuously changing and developing, the main themes remain the same. Along with the modern transformation of novels into films, teenagers are getting more and more exposed to these ideas in their everyday life even if they do not study hard.

Micu posits that entering and solving a maze is an act of bravery, which can discover the vague counterpart of seeking for redemption and self-evaluation (129). The first point which is worth mentioning is that we find ourselves in the middle of analyzing a series of issues which can end in defining and solving the quest. Second, what interests us is the way the maze is shown in the film. It could be sometimes in accordance with the old Greek legends or even against whatever people may know.

*The Maze Runner*, in particular, is appealing for YAs because it conveys the story of a group of teenagers who aim at taking down the authority. The characters in this trilogy go through hardships and difficulties, learning lessons of survival, which shape their personalities. In the present paper, the development of the protagonist, Thomas, is studied based on Joseph Campbell's monomyth of journey. To put it simply, the hero's journey is the pattern of unusual yet challenging human experiences. They may open new doors to understanding and knowledge of the hero. Campbell having compared legends and myths of different cultures from around the world proposed the idea of monomyth. Ultimately, the hero's journey he introduced was an all-inclusive metaphor for the inner journey everyone experiences in the real life (Voytilla and Vogler 1).

By examining Dashner's novel, Elliot argues the benefit of YA literature in order to heal trauma. He locates *The Maze Runner* in between of trauma and dystopian fiction, and posits that Dashner used trauma theory in order to stimulate sensitivity in the reader toward the introduced complexities of the situation (181). Paravano considers the advancement of teenager's knowledge in Dashner's trilogy and holds that each volume puts forward a different stage of obtaining knowledge through understanding the outside world and discovering personal/social identity (170). The three volumes of *Maze Runner* overlap with each other in dystopian-related thematic factors and all pursue the same path and goal until the hero's success in his adventure. On this basis, each volume is incomplete without the others and its analysis would not be inclusive. Thus,

according to Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, the following three main stages are observed in each volume:

- 1) Separation from the current situation (first volume);
- 2) Reaching a source of power (second volume); and
- 3) Return to newly-formed life with a different understanding (third volume).

Tahier, through an ecocritical analysis of Dashner's novel, concludes that nature is figuratively used as home, and the relationship between nature and culture results in advanced technology-directed abuse of nature in the inappropriate front of desert and city. Since most of such dystopias deal with the theme of total demolition of environment and the upcoming danger of destroying Earth, studies shed light more on the environment side rather than hero's journey as a stereotype in the present era where a YA can find his/her position in this turbulent world or even save the world (20-21).

In this paper, different stages of the journey in the trilogy, including *The Maze Runner* (2009), *The Scorch Trials* (2010), and *The Death Cure* (2011), are explored according to Campbell's pattern to demonstrate how the characters tackle each stage. Apocalyptic literature takes the form of a revelation of the end of history. Thomas wakes up in a metal lift remembering nothing but his name. Every week, food, drugs, tools and, at times, weapons are sent up; each month a new boy with no memory of his past except his name is sent to this place named Glade. The glade is surrounded by concrete, tall walls the outside of which there is a huge maze changing every day and covered by tendrils within which terrifying creatures live. A short while after Thomas's arrival, a girl with a note is sent stating that this is the last teenager to be sent. They have to decipher the maze in order to escape the glade. After many adventures and running away from the maze, they learn that the outside world has been burnt by solar glare and the remaining population has gone mad due to an epidemic. They are told that their group is immune to the disease and that they have been under surveillance all the time. If they leave, they will be in danger. This dystopian epic is scrutinizing the psyche of a teenage group and exploring what might happen in case of severe mental pressure (Paravano 165). Due to its success both as a novel and a film many scholars have written about this trilogy.

Analyzing the hero or archetype of the heroism ultimately leads one to ask what makes an ordinary human being to react as a hero. Why do not others respond the same way? According to Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, "The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom



something has been taken, or who feels there is something lacking in the normal experience available or permitted to the members of society. The person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover an elixir" (160).

### **3. Campbell's Concept of Monomyth**

Journey, according to Campbell, is the hero's adventure from the common world into an unknown, mystical region with plenty of supernatural wonders. In this journey, the hero encounters legendary forces, which finally and definitely lead to an unquestionable victory. The hero, then, comes back home with extra power to continue his life and help others to keep moving forward in a way that had been impossible before (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 28).

Campbell states that the journey has three major stages starting with departure, continuing with initiation and ending with return. Each stage has different steps to be tackled by the character. The adventure starts with the sense of hopelessness but the story shifts to promising attempts by the hero and his followers. No hero is depicted alone; every hero needs followers, friends, and, more importantly, a mentor to guide him and grant him power and wisdom (*The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 205-206). The stages of hero's journey do not take place in order as Campbell sets out since the characters do not live in a mythical world and are not, in fact, adults; they are teenagers who have to deal with adults-caused catastrophes.

## **4. The Hero's Journey in *The Maze Runner* Trilogy**

### **4.1. Call to Adventure**

Once a hero receives the call to adventure, the journey begins. This stage determines that the hero has been selected by destiny not by his own will to discover a mystery of an unknown world (Campbell, *The Hero's Journey* 58). As the story goes on, it is made clear that Thomas has been chosen to enter this maze, "Thomas knew he was a smart kid- he somehow felt it in his bones. He was supposed to be a runner. Why did he feel that so strongly?" (*The Maze Runner* 42). Yet he does not know more than that; with no memory, there is no identity.

Since the story begins with Thomas stuck in a dark box with lost memory (except for his name), it can be concluded that the adventure lacks the first stage (ordinary world). Whereas the reader usually feels and experiences the journey through the hero's lens, s/he must be able to relate to the hero. The first stage (ordinary world) provides the opportunity to identify the hero's problems, real life, desires, urges, drives, and incentives (Voytilla and Vogler 2).

However, Thomas's probable problems in his real life have already undergone a drastic change when he entered the Maze<sup>1</sup>. The story opens describing Thomas's situation,

He began his new life standing up, surrounded by cold darkness and stale, dusty air... He pulled his legs up tight against his body, hoping his eyes would soon adjust to the darkness. My name is Thomas, he thought. That was the only thing he could remember about his life. He didn't understand how this could be possible...and yet he didn't know where he came from, or how he'd gotten inside the dark lift. (*The Maze Runner* 6)

It is not clear what the world had been like before this maze was made or what the last name of Thomas is. There is no sign of the character's past life. Every story involves a central problem or question that disrupts the ordinary world and the hero enters the special world to find the solution and answer the question. This ultimately results in a balanced situation. However, in this trilogy, the characters ask more and more questions and find more and more challenging problems as the story goes on. They have to find the answers by themselves, solve the problems, and remove the obstacles to return home (the safe haven) (Voytilla and Vogler 3).

#### **4.2. Refusal of the Call**

With a vague past, Thomas is forced to start a journey. It can be said that this is not a Call to adventure; rather it is necessary to go ahead and get involved in this mandatory adventure. Thomas's refusal to this situation is in the form of explaining his anxiety, panic, and the terrifying heat running through his veins, "Thomas was hit with a wave of confusion, blistered with panic.... He wanted to scream, cry, throw up. Panic swelled inside him, almost too much to bear.... He shrank back against the bark and closed his eyes, wishing he could wake up from this terrible, terrible dream" (*The Maze Runner* 13-16).

#### **4.3. A Supernatural Help (Meeting the Mentor)**

There is no old man or dragon in this trilogy. However, at first, it seems that Thomas's leader in this mysterious environment is another boy called Newt, "Newt was taller than Alby, his hair was blond and cut long, cascading over his T-shirt. Veins stuck out of his muscled arms" (*The Maze Runner* 14); later on Dashner writes, "Newt, the guy who seemed to be second in command" (38). Newt is younger than Alby, the first boy who entered this maze and lived alone for one month before the arrival of another boy. Newt told Thomas what danger exists in the maze and showed him the Griever. In the absence of a mentor or old

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth mentioning that this trilogy lacks any information about the real life of characters. Instead, in the next book Dashner published in 2012, *The Kill Order*, followed by the fifth book in 2016, *The Fever Code*, the adventures before the creation of the Maze, reasons, and the manner of choosing characters are explained.

man, these teenagers guide and direct themselves and gain understanding gradually by the actions they take.

#### **4.4. Passing the First Threshold**

Thomas and Minho find an opening, which seems to be the end of the Maze. At the end of the first volume, the Gladers are rescued by unknown soldiers. Seemingly they are not sent from WICKED, the organization behind all this. Finally, they (The Gladers) know that they are only a few out of a million people tested, "As for you, all of you- you're just a few of millions orphaned. They tested thousands, chose you for the big one. The ultimate test. Everything you lived through was calculated and thought through" (*The Maze Runner* 331).

According to Campbell, in this stage, the hero leaves his familiar surroundings in crossing the first threshold and enters an unknown, dark place where danger waits for him. This takes place only by advancing beyond the bounds. For passing the first threshold, the hero(s) must believe that the boundaries should be passed over, either alive or in death, into a new zone of experience (*The Hero's Journey* 71-75). There is no way Thomas and the other characters can avoid this phase. It is here that they find a door at the end of the maze and understand that they like millions of other have been tested upon and they are under the control of WICKED.

#### **4.5. The Belly of the Whale**

The belly of the whale can be inferred in two ways: regarding the environment and regarding the Thomas's feelings. In this trilogy, many quotes indicate the bafflement of Thomas about the future plans, and situations. However, since 'the belly of the whale' most obviously takes place after passing the first threshold and entering a new place, his bafflement about the future right before starting the second phase of Trials has been taken into consideration as a sign of internal bewilderment, "His life felt like a black hole. He had no idea how he would muster the will to go on in the morning. To face whatever WICKED had in store for them. But he'd do it- if the only way to get back at his friends was to pass all their tests and trials, to survive, then so be it. So be it" (*The Scorch Trials* 66).

The new place Thomas and other Gladers are sent to is full of colors, beds, staff, and food. It is like a new life and safe place. Soon after the very first night, the Gladers wake up and see everything has altered. They find themselves in a black, hollow corridor with the brick walls covering the windows all over, 'He knew these dead people. They were the ones who'd rescued the Gladers. Just the day before" (*The Scorch Trials* 20). The symbolic 'belly of the whale' takes place for the second time when Thomas and his friends enter the desert, "it was a wasteland. In front of him, a flat pan of dry and lifeless earth stretched as far as



he could see. Not a single tree. Not a bush. No hills or valleys. Just an orange-yellow sea of dust and rocks" (*The Scorch Trials* 87).

#### **4.6. Meeting the Goddess**

There is no Divine Goddess in this story. There is almost no divine character or power from the very beginning to the end of their adventure. However, the most prominent and influential female characters are considered as the Goddesses. Accordingly, it can be said that in this trilogy, there are two Goddesses for Thomas, Teresa and Brenda. Meeting Teresa occurs almost after the third stage (meeting his mentors). Thomas and Teresa feel a sense of love toward each other, "Thomas, not wanting to meet their stares, concentrated on the girl; despite her paleness, she was really pretty. More than pretty. Beautiful. Silky hair, flawless skin, perfect lips, long legs. It made him sick to think that way about a dead girl, but he couldn't look away. He was surprised at having such a morbid thought" (*The Maze Runner* 56). Brenda enters the story in *The Scorch Trials*. Thomas feels he is drawn to her. Brenda is a beautiful, smart girl. Thomas gets confused in choosing Brenda or Teresa. He is stuck in a sort of love triangle.

#### **4.7. Woman as the Devil**

There is no real devil in this trilogy. The ugliest and apparently most catastrophic act done by a female protagonist which causes other characters hate her and see her as a devil, is when Teresa betrays the Gladers and joins WICKED.

#### **4.8. Reparation with the Father**

There is no father or mentor for Thomas and his friends. They think together, decide together, and act together. All the progress they make to reach WICKED headquarter is through group decision and cooperation. Therefore, this trilogy lacks this step. One of the features of such novels is that the teenage characters have to think, decide, and find the survival plan without any support from adults. They have to face the consequences of their decisions, sometimes ending to the death of group members.

#### **4.9. Apotheosis**

In this phase one character is praised very highly gaining a supernatural status. Thomas, indeed, has an extraordinary curiosity to know the truth, unfold the secrets, decode the codes, and an unlimited source of courage, which enables him to solve the Maze, "I can't believe it. Seriously. We made it through the whole night – never been done before" (*The Maze Runner* 130). These words are uttered by Minho who spent a whole night with Thomas to rescue Alby and kill three Grievors, an act, which had never been done before by any other Gladers during the years of living in the Glade. It shows the extraordinary influence of Thomas's

behavior and courage which turns to be of great help to the Runners. In addition, Dashner explicitly states that Thomas is considered a hero to some Gladers, "Some people thought he was some kind of hero...and some wished he didn't exist" (*The Maze Runner* 139).

#### **4.10. The Final Blessing**

Two situations exist in this stage: 1) the hero might face little oppositions, then he is considered a born hero; or 2) the hero encounters another trial. This indicates that he is just a typical hero. After passing the first threshold and entering a new environment, the Gladers are ordered by the Rat Man (this is how Minho calls him) to enter a wasteland with a town in distance (the Scorch city). They are told, "There are no rules. There are no guidelines. You have few supplies, and there's nothing to help you along the way. Go through the Flat Trans at the time indicated. Find open air. Go one hundred miles, directly north, to the safe haven. Make it or die" (*The Scorch Trials* 59-60).

#### **4.11. Refusal to Return**

At the end of the second volume, after Teresa's betrayal and recommending Thomas to join WICKED, he refuses to work for WICKED telling Teresa "Don't say another word. Just...leave me alone. And you can tell WICKED that I'm done playing their games. Tell them I'm done!" (*The Scorch Trials* 315). Thomas rebels against authority showing that he has gained an identity.

#### **4.12. The Mysterious Flight**

Flight, at this stage, does not function as the name shows. Flight means having an unearthly power. Thomas's extraordinary power, which is needed for WICKED in order to reach the cure, is his brain. Actually, as Doctor Wright claims, "We've been collecting and analyzing the patterns for years, and you've been the strongest by far in your reactions to the Variables ... We've known for a long time- and it was the highest priority to keep this from the subjects- that in the end we'd have to choose the best candidate for this last procedure" (*The Death Cure* 153).

#### **4.13. Rescue**

In *The Death Cure*, Gally introduces Charlotte Chiswell who used to be the lead engineer of an advanced-weaponry manufacturing company who supplies WICKED. As Gally explains,

Charlotte's figured out a way to render their weapons useless ... There's a common chip in every weapon they use, and she's spent the last several months trying to figure out a way to reprogram the things remotely- to jam them. She finally did it. It'll take a few hours once she starts, and a small device needs to be planted inside the building

for it to work, so our people who plan to hand over the Immunes will do the job. (*The Death Cure* 138)

#### **4.14. Passing the Threshold**

Here "the battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another," says Campbell (*The Hero's Journey* 238). As Lawrence claims, "... Everything I know about these people is rotten. They kidnap, torture, murder – do anything to get what they want" (*The Death Cure* 147).

#### **4.15. Master of the Two Realms**

At this stage, this is Thomas who decides where to go and which side of the battle to belong to, "In ten minutes he'd be knocking on the door of WICKED, asking for the first time, to be let in, not out ... Maybe the Rat Man was inside, watching, guessing that Thomas had finally come over to their side" (*The Death Cure* 149). Actually Thomas tries to avenge the death of Newt and Chuck, "... now, after all he'd been through, he stood at WICKED's threshold, there by his own choice. He reached out and knocked on the cold, dark glass in front of him. He could see nothing on the other side" (*The Death Cure* 149). As Doctor Christensen emphasizes, "I don't know how you could've made any other decision. The whole worlds on the verge of collapse, and you can help save it" (*The Death Cure* 151) that proves Thomas has gained maturity and knows his responsibility.

#### **4.16. Redemption (Freedom to Live)**

After the WICKED's headquarter is destroyed, the Gladers along with other survivors set foot in a world they were told did not exist anymore; a place very much like paradise, as Dashner describes Thomas's feeling. They finally could get their redemption and achieve peace,

When he set foot outside, he had to stop and stare. They'd come to a place he'd been told didn't exist anymore. Lush and green and full of vibrant life. He stood at the top of a hill above a field of tall grass and wildflowers. The two hundred or so people they'd rescued wandered the area, some of them actually running and jumping.

Paradise. They'd come to paradise. He could only hope that one day his heart would feel the joy of the place...a few hours later...the sun had almost dipped below the horizon, which appeared to be glowing with flames. It was one of the most amazing sights he'd ever witnessed. (*The Death Cure* 186)

In *The Maze Runner*, when Thomas is pulled from a metal box remembering almost nothing of his past, he is pushed into a new lifestyle in the Glade. Only teenage boys inhabit there. A Maze surrounds the Gladers' home, which has not been solved for years. After supplies are not sent any more, the machinery monsters – Grievors – attack them each night. Therefore, the only way to survive is solving the Maze. After the arrival of a female teenage – Teresa – they finally succeed to kill some monsters, find the hatch, and get out of the Maze.

In *The Scorch Trials*, we witness that solving the Maze was not the end of their problems. Thomas and a few of Gladers could escape the Maze but they find themselves in the middle of new bigger troubles. They have been infected by a virus known as the Flare, which is destroying the whole world. To find the cure, they have to pass the Scorch city. On their way, they have to fight against Cranks (the infected people) and pass dangerous, mortal exams. In *The Death Cure*, after solving the Maze, passing all exams, and crossing the Scorch city, it is shown that the WICKED is at the heart of their trials. WICKED offers a chance to retrieve their memories but Thomas and his friends – except Teresa – refuse to trust them. They think they know enough to survive and find the cure.

Gautam argues that in *The Maze Runner*, scientific optimism is challenged (3). Thomas and the other Gladers are the victims of mechanical monsters, their identity is lost and they are essentially deprived of their usual manhood. Gautam explores the cons and pros of innovations and advancement of technology along with science and its relationship with ecology (10-11). She believes that Dashner has challenged the idea that increasing technology advancement would make a better life for human beings and brings comfort to the world. In fact, science has ruined every value and ethical principles that the Gladers once believed in.

Regarding the fourth phase (passing the threshold), where the hero ultimately gains wisdom, Ackoff states that this is essential to understanding the difference between wisdom, knowledge, information, and data (89). Wisdom is a combination of ethically accepted values while thinking about what is genuinely true. According to Hart, wisdom is the mixture of all the previous steps as well as listening and the ability to take action at the appropriate time (16).

## **6. Conclusion**

Exploring this trilogy indicated that the different stages of Campbell's journey have almost been implemented in this work, including the first volume, *The Maze Runner*, the second, *The Scorch Trials*, and the last volume, *The Death Cure*. The novel manages to portray moral principles and ethical reactions by the characters amid technological advances and different educational means. Like many other dystopias with Young adult readers, there is a quest, which the characters have to undertake during, which they are faced with sacrifice, love, faith, and discipline. The chart-topping sale of these novels indicates not only their popularity but also the importance of myths among the teenagers and the young adults in the present era. The quest and journey in this trilogy may seem different from classical quests, yet most of the elements are in one way or the other portrayed and characters are involved. In contrast to classical journeys, boys in this novel are devoid of even their names and their past. It is through the

quest that they find an identity and readers identify with them. Going on a dangerous journey, the characters strive to fight death, help each other and take down the dictator or the sovereign. They regain their memories and their past. Environment and the issues of destruction of nature and possible annihilation of human kind are mostly the central features in this genre attracting the attention of young adults. It is worth mentioning that transforming these novels into film and TV series plays a prominent role in attracting young adults and directing their attention to environment and the issue of human survival on Earth and authors have films in the back of their mind when writing these stories.





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