

Politics of Body in Young Adult Narratives

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of
Tribhuvan University in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in

ENGLISH

By

Hukum Thapa

TU Reg. No. 1529-85

Ph.D. Reg. No. 236/074

Tribhuvan University

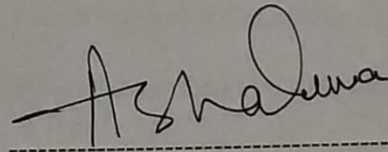
Kathmandu, Nepal

February 2023

Letter of Recommendation

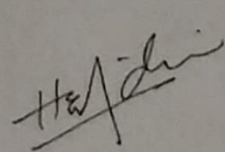
We certify that this dissertation entitled **Politics of Body in Young Adult Narratives** was prepared by Hukum Thapa under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**.

Dissertation Committee



Prof. Anand Sharma, PhD

Supervisor



Assoc. Prof. Hari Ram Adhikari, PhD

Co- Supervisor

Date: Feb. 22, 2023



TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Office of the Dean

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Ref. No.:.....



APPROVAL LETTER

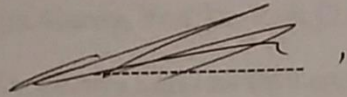
This dissertation entitled "Politics of Body in Young Adult Narratives" was submitted by Hukum Thapa for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**. I hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore been accepted it for the degree.

Prof. Kushum Shakya, PhD
Dean and Chairperson
Research Committee

Date: *March 15, 2023*

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind of other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.



Hukum Thapa

Date: Feb 22, 2023

Acknowledgements

I take an opportunity to offer my sincere gratitude to my supervisor and co-supervisor Professor Dr. Anand Sharma and Associate Professor Dr. Hari Ram Adhikari respectively for their constant scholarly and insightful instruction and invaluable guidance during the preparation of this dissertation. Their supervision provides a roadmap to bring this research in this shape.

I would like to thank to the Head of the Central Department of English Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota, Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Prof. Dr. Ram Chandra Paudel, Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa and Prof. Dr. Dhruva Karki for their concrete feedback and counsels in the course of completion of this dissertation. Similarly, all the teaching faculty at the Central Department of English deserve special thank for their direct and indirect inspiration. Equally, I am thankful to all my colleagues of R.R. Campus, Kathmandu for their constructive and pragmatic inputs to finalize my dissertation.

My Special thanks go to the Dean, Prof. Dr. Kushum Shakya, the Assistant Deans Prof. Dr. Dubi Nanda Dhakal and Prof. Dr. Tara Prasad Bhusal, and the staff, Bijay Ghimire, Krishna Karki, Samrit Tandukar and others at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for their administrative and technical supports.

Above all, I thank my family members for their patience and backing in the course of completion of this dissertation. I acknowledge all my relatives, well-wishers and friends for their inspiration and suggestion to complete this dissertation.

Hukum Thapa

February 2023

Abstract

The present dissertation analyzes the Politics of the Body in Young Adult (YA) Narratives in *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones, and *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins applying young adult perspectives. It explores the issues of politics, scrutinizes the reasons for depiction, and analyzes the representation of the young adult body in the selected narratives. This study argues that Young Adult narratives portray different types of politics of the body: abjection of the body, celebration of the body, fantasization of the body, and abuse of the body. It also contends that young adults' vibrant and attractive bodies are agencies of power to confront and interact with society, adults, and adjust to the circumstances they face while growing up. Furthermore, the body functions as a catalyst in Young Adult narratives to pursue their intents. They abject, celebrate, fantasize, and abuse their body to achieve their freedom, identity, and maturity.

This dissertation largely integrates the critical insights of Roberta S. Trites, Karen Coats, Julia Kristeva, Beth Younger, Pamela S. Gates et al., Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, and Clinton Sanders et al. as theoretical parameters to analyze the selected texts. It employs Trites' notion of the body as a cultural site to unearth the hidden treasure of individual and society and as an agency to acquire social, economic, and sexual power. Coats' perception of adolescence as a liminal state and abjection and fantasizing about the body; Kristeva's abjection viewpoint; Younger's standpoint of politics of sexuality; Pamela's fantasization of the body; Butler's celebration of the body; Foucault's celebration and abuse of the body; and Sanders et

al.'s outlook of celebration of the body are considered to scrutinize the primary texts and justify the arguments.

With these theoretical precepts, this dissertation has researched J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974), Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), Sanya Sones' *What My Mother Doesn't Know* (2001) and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). The dissertation examines the abjection of the body in *The Chocolate War* and *The Catcher in the Rye*; celebration of the body in *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Chocolate War*, *The Giver*, *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, and *Mockingjay*; fantasization of the body in *What My Mother Doesn't Know*, *The Giver*, *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Chocolate War*; and abuse of the body in *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, *Mockingjay*, *The Chocolate War* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. Among these texts, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Chocolate War*, and *The Giver* primarily focus on the politics of the male body whereas *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, *Mockingjay*, and *What My Mother does not Know* fundamentally emphasize on the politics of the female body.

This dissertation argues that young adults abject, celebrate, fantasize, and abuse their bodies to gain their freedom, identity, and maturity. The young adult body stays as a site of dual politics. Sometimes, young adults themselves politicize their bodies and sometimes adults politicize the young adult bodies. This dissertation proposes that both ways of politicization of the young adult bodies are relevant to gain their freedom, maturity, and identity. The dissertation concludes that the young adult bodies manifest different kinds of politics and projections: means of power, change, conflict, and solution. The narratives extensively show the exploits of young adults to project vibrant and attractive images so as to expand the social horizon and

readership of young adults, establish them in academia, the public, and integrate them into the different strata of society. The academia has not received substantial research related to the body and young adults in a single frame yet. So, this research attempts to create a space where this area can be explored to benefit academia and society.

Lastly, the present study opens up new vistas in the discourse of the politics of the body. It embeds a new understanding of the use and misuse of the young adult body, and encourages comparative study of the experiences of the young adults of America with those of the rest of the world. It knocks on the door of policymakers, academics, and societies to develop new thoughts on young adults. Further, it expects to provoke other researchers to study the politics of the body, comprising not only young adults but also other demographics from diverse topographies.

Table of Contents

Contents	Page No.
Chapter I: Constructing Young Adulthood (YA) as a Conceptual Category	1
Overture of the Study	
Defining Adolescent, Teenager, Juvenile, Youth and Young Adult	
Significance of Physical and Cognitive Development of Children and Young Adults	
Concerns of Young Adults	
Young Adult Literature: An Overview	
Statement of Problem	
Research Questions	
Hypothesis	
Objectives of the study	
Delimitations	
Significance of the study	
Research Methodology	
Chapter II: Review of Literature	66
Body in Literature: Reviews on Historical Perspectives	
Body in Young Adult Literature: Reviews on Theoretical perspectives	
Selected Texts: Critical Reception	
Literature Reviews on <i>The Hunger Games Series</i>	
Critical Reception on <i>The Catcher in The Rye</i>	

Reviews on *The Chocolate War*

Literature Reviews on *The Giver*

Critical Reception on *What My Mother Doesn't Know*

Research Gap: Conclusion and Implication

Chapter III: Abjection of Body in *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The*

Chocolate War 114

Abjection of Body

Quest for Freedom, Identity and Maturity

Abjection of Body as a Catalyst

Chapter IV: Fantasization of the Body in *What My Mother Doesn't Know*,

The Giver, *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Chocolate War* 139

Fantasizing about the Young Adult Body

Fantasized Body as a Source of Freedom, Identity and Maturity

Chapter V: Celebration of Body in *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Chocolate War*,

The Giver and *The Hunger Games Series* 162

Celebration of Body

Body Celebration as an Agency

Chapter VI: Abuse of Body in *The Hunger Games* series, *The Chocolate War* and

The Catcher in the Rye 183

Abuse of Body

A Pursuit of Control, Identity and Freedom from the Abuse of Body

Chapter VII: Conclusion: 220

Young Adult Body: Agency of Freedom, Identity and Maturity

Works Cited 235