

Malin Alkestrand:
*Mothers and Murderers. Adults' Oppression of Children and
Adolescents in Young Adult Dystopian Literature* (2021)
Svenska barnboksinstitutets skriftserie 155 (ISSN 0347-5387)

Upplaga för elektronisk publicering för forsknings-, utbildnings- och
biblioteksverksamhet och ej för kommersiella ändamål.

Publicerad med tillstånd från Makadam förlag.

Tryckt utgåva finns i bokhandeln: ISBN 978-91-7061-366-1

Makadam förlag, Göteborg & Stockholm

www.makadambok.se

Edition to be published electronically for research, educational and
library needs and not for commercial purposes.

Published by permission from Makadam Publishers.

A printed version is available through book stores: ISBN 978-91-7061-366-1

Makadam Publishers, Göteborg & Stockholm, Sweden

www.makadambok.se



MOTHERS AND MURDERERS



MOTHERS AND MURDERERS

*Adults' Oppression of Children and Adolescents
in Young Adult Dystopian Literature*

Malin Alkestrand

MAKADAM

MAKADAM PUBLISHERS
GOTHENBURG · STOCKHOLM
WWW.MAKADAMBOK.SE

Published with support from

Gunvor och Josef Anérs stiftelse/The Gunvor and Josef Anér Foundation
Magnus Bergvalls stiftelse/The Magnus Bergvall Foundation
Stiftelsen Konung Gustaf VI Adolfs fond för svensk kultur
The Långman Culture Foundation
The Åke Wiberg Foundation

Studies Published by the Swedish Institute for Children's Books 155

*Mothers and Murderers. Adults' Oppression of Children and Adolescents
in Young Adult Dystopian Literature*

© Malin Alkestrand & Makadam förlag 2021

© for illustrations, see p. 345

ISBN 978-91-7061-866-6 (pdf)

ISSN 0347-5387

This book is dedicated to Rigmor Geier, my grandmother. I miss you and I wish we could celebrate this book together, but I know you are smiling down on me from wherever you are!

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
INTRODUCTION	15
<i>Adolescent Killers and Mothers: Two Motifs in Young Adult Dystopian Literature</i>	24
<i>What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?</i>	26
<i>The Text Corpus: The Selection of Primary Texts</i>	33
<i>The Power Category of Age: Theoretical Framework</i>	37
<i>The Matrix of Domination: A Theoretical Tool for Analysing an Oppressive Society</i>	44
<i>Previous Research on Young Adult Dystopian Literature</i>	48
<i>The Design of the Study: Outline and Why it Looks the Way it Does</i>	62
TO KILL OR BE KILLED? ADOLESCENT KILLERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE	66
<i>Text Selection, Theoretical Framework and Chapter Structure</i>	68
<i>Adolescent Killers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview</i>	70
<i>Killing in Self-defence and to Protect Others: Red in Christina Henry's The Girl in Red</i>	95
<i>Being Turned into a Lethal Weapon: Juliette Ferrars in Tahereh Mafi's Shatter Me Series</i>	113
<i>Killing as a Profession: Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch in Shusterman's Arc of a Scythe Trilogy</i>	136
<i>Ideologies Tied to the Adolescent Killer Motif in the Three Series</i>	153
<i>Conclusion</i>	159
PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AT ALL COSTS: ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE	162
<i>Text Selection, Theoretical Framework and Chapter Structure</i>	166
<i>Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview</i>	169
<i>Protecting an Unborn Child: Lyda in the Pure Trilogy</i>	186

<i>Protecting a Magical Child: Shari Chopra in the Endgame Trilogy</i>	203
<i>Protecting Your Child in a Dystopian Sweden: Elin Holme</i>	213
<i>Ideologies Tied to the Adolescent Mother Motif in the Three Series</i>	227
<i>Conclusion</i>	232
ADOLESCENT KILLERS AND MOTHERS IN THE CURRICULUM: CLASSROOM EXPLORATION OF ADULT OPPRESSION OF THE YOUNG USING YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE	235
<i>Background and Chapter Structure</i>	237
<i>Young Adult Dystopian Literature in Education: An Overview of Previous Research</i>	240
<i>The Power of Literary Fiction: Critical Literacy, Narrative Imagination and Envisionment Building</i>	261
<i>Teaching Plans for the Young Adult Dystopian Works in the Six Case Studies</i>	272
<i>Conclusion</i>	301
MOTHERS AND MURDERERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE: CONCLUDING REMARKS	303
WORKS CITED	311
INDEX	337
PICTURE SOURCES	347
<i>Studies Published by the Swedish Institute for Children's Books</i>	349

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2020 was supposed to be the year that I finished the first complete draft of this book...

January 2020: A new virus is spreading in China and is starting to become a looming threat for Swedes like me. I begin writing one of the analysis chapters...

February 2020: The novel coronavirus is spreading outside of China too. I start hoarding essentials, because I have read so much dystopian literature for young adults (YA) that I realise this does not bode well. Just like Red, a character from Christina Henry's *The Girl in Red* (2019), which I analyse in this book, I use my knowledge of dystopian literature to prepare for a disaster.

March 2020: The coronavirus crisis has definitely reached Sweden. I begin to think that perhaps reality will be more spectacular than the dystopian visions I encounter in the YA books I study.

January 2021: I did finish the first complete draft of my book in 2020 but, over the year, the world became even more similar to the fiction I study. The YA dystopian project that I started working on immediately after I finished my doctoral thesis in 2016 gained a new dimension when I, a white, middle-class, cisgender, heterosexual, adult Westerner, found myself in the middle of a crisis for the first time ever. While my first reaction was something like full-blown panic—and in many ways still is, a whole year later—2020 has made me even more convinced that YA dystopian literature has some-

thing crucial to teach us about the world we live in, here and now.

Every book project is a collaboration. I have been blessed with the best support system throughout the whole process and especially during the challenging year of 2020.

First, I want to thank Makadam for publishing another of my books. I have always felt safe and welcome, knowing that you publish both great and beautiful books.

Second, I would like to thank everyone in the CHILL research network (the Centre for Childhood Research in Literature, Language and Learning) at Linnaeus University in Sweden. In 2016, when I started working at Linnaeus University, I was welcomed with open arms, both in a professional and a more personal sense. Ever since, CHILL has been a safe place for me to present my work and to ask for advice and ideas. I could not have had a better research network or better colleagues!

Third, I want to thank the Astrid Lindgren Foundation Solkatten and the Swedish Institute for Children's Books for giving me the opportunity to spend a month at the University of Cambridge in early 2017. During this time, I started writing the first pilot study for this monograph. My warmest thanks to everyone in Cambridge who made me feel so welcome and at home and a special thank you to Maria Nikolajeva, who introduced me to the research environment and supported me in the early stages of this project.

Fourth, I want to thank someone who made my time in Cambridge one of the most wonderful months of my life—Christopher Owen. Thank you for your never-ending support, for believing in me even when I do not, for always being just a message away and for all the late nights spent brainstorming about this and other projects. I would not have been the scholar I am today if I had not met you when I was first in Cambridge in 2015. I cannot wait to meet you again, in person, as soon as this is possible and safe!

Fifth, I want to thank two people without whom this book would have looked very different indeed: Maria Nilson and Peter Forsgren at Linnaeus University. You have both provided me with invaluable feedback, never-ending encouragement and much-needed dead-

lines(!). I can only hope that one day I will be able to give someone else the kind of support and feedback that you have given me. Life immediately after finishing a doctorate can be both confusing and a bit scary but, thanks to you, I have felt safe to explore the next stage of my scholarly development. Words cannot describe how grateful I am!

Sixth, I want to thank someone who helped me become interested in literature and academic writing in the first place: Annette Kanvret. Annette was my teacher in upper-secondary school and taught me the magic of writing and how to create coherent texts. Ever since, she has supported my academic development in various ways. Annette—it was such a valuable experience to be able to share the chapter on classroom applications with you and learn from your feedback. Academics are sometimes not very good at imagining exactly who we are writing for, but I had you in mind when I wrote the introduction to this study!

Seventh, I want to thank my family, my grandparents and all my friends. I am blessed with a family that supports me, whatever the project I decide to pursue. Thank you, mum, dad, Magnus and Max for always supporting me, through thick and thin. Thank you Hanna, for being my oldest friend and for reminding me how far I have come when I forget and focus too much on what I have to do next... and for all the chats, walks and cups of tea, of course.

Finally, I would like to thank three individuals who are always taking care of me! Uffe, you are the one who reminds me that life offers things other than sitting in front of the computer or reading yet another YA dystopian novel from that very large corpus. You know me better than anyone. I can be both my best self and my worst self with you, and I know that you will always be there for me. I hope everyone gets to experience this in their lives. The last two individuals on this thank-you list are not human, but they helped me get through 2020 without far too much panicking: our two cats, Freja and Leo. Thank you for taking care of me, for knowing when I need extra cuddles, for reminding me to take a break for grooming or snacks, and for staying close at a trying time when social distancing is a necessity.

I have joked about how your names should be on the cover of this book, but because cats know very well that there are more important things to life than academic achievement, I have included you in these acknowledgements instead.

Thank you, everyone!

A snowy Alvesta, 27 January 2021

Malin Alkestrand

What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again.

Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (2010), p. 453

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the first novel in American author Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010) was published. Also available as four feature movies (2012–2015), this trilogy is arguably the most famous dystopia for adolescent¹ readers published in the 21st century so far. It depicts a dystopian North America of the future, called Panem, which is strictly divided into the rich Capitol and the twelve poor districts. In the Capitol, there is a new fashion at fancy dinner parties for eating until you vomit, and then eating some more, while the people in the districts are starving. Children from the districts are forced to fight to the death in the so-called Hunger Games. Every year, two children, one boy and one girl, are selected from each district; only the one who defeats all their opponents survives the Games (Collins, *Hunger* 22). This extreme abuse of adults' power over innocent children functions as a reminder of the consequences of attempted rebellion against the Capitol's dystopian regime. During the Dark Days, when the then thirteen districts rebelled against the Capitol, twelve were defeated and District 13 was allegedly obliterated (*Hunger* 21–22).

Collins' trilogy highlights the purpose behind forcing innocent children to fight each other in the Hunger Games. This is explained

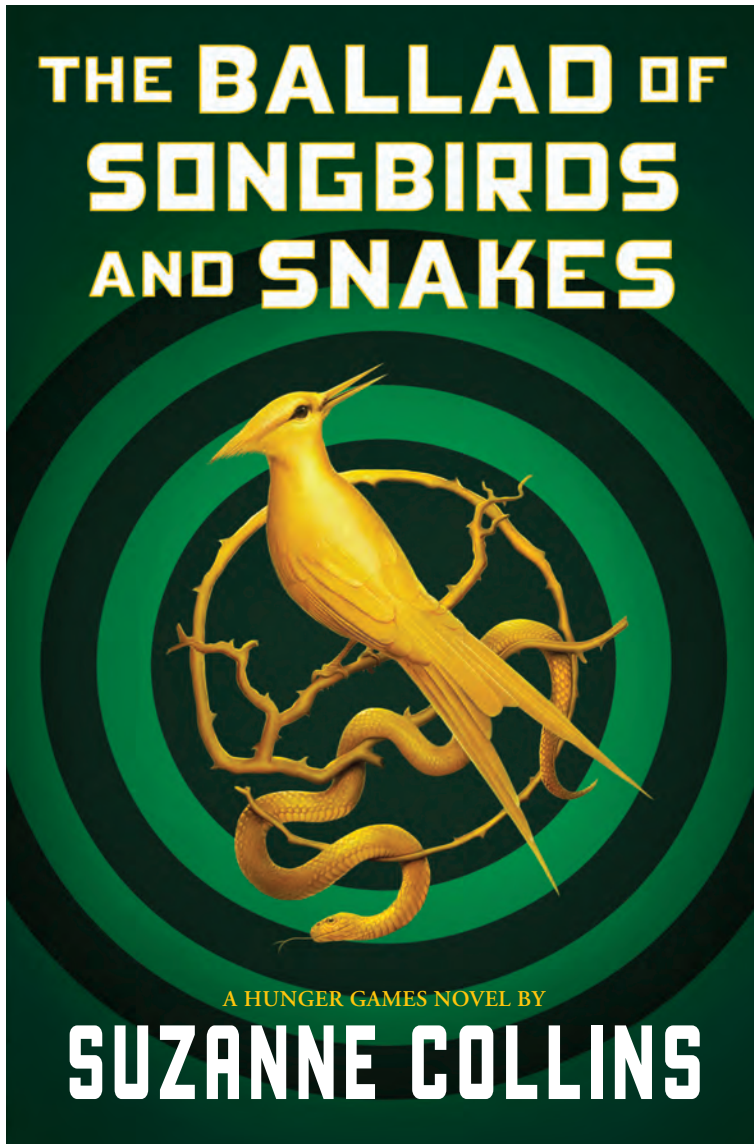
1. In this study, *adolescent* refers to individuals who are approximately thirteen to twenty-five years of age. For a discussion of this definition, see the section "What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?"

by the adolescent protagonist of the trilogy, Katniss Everdeen, seventy-four years after the first ever Hunger Games:

Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch—this is the Capitol’s way of reminding us how totally we are at their mercy. How little chance we would stand of surviving another rebellion. Whatever words they use, the real message is clear: ‘Look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there’s nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen.’ (*Hunger* 22)

Thus, the Capitol uses vulnerable children to make a statement about its omnipotence. The fact that the Games are televised and turned into entertainment (*Ibid.*), further underlines how the oppressive regime that rules Panem forces children to fight to the death, simply so it can show the districts who is in charge and why resistance is futile.

In 2020, twelve years after the publication of the first *Hunger Games* novel, Collins released the prequel, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*. The novel is set during the tenth anniversary of the first Hunger Games, which is sixty-four years before Katniss volunteers to take her sister Prim’s place in the Games. The prequel tells the story of Coriolanus Snow’s adolescence and his evolution from a rather likeable character into President Snow, who rules Panem with an iron fist and is responsible for the continuation of the Hunger Games. Also, the prequel further explores the motivations behind the Games. According to Coriolanus, Dr Gaul, who is responsible for making the Games a reality, is using the children’s innocence to make a statement about the nature of the districts’ inhabitants and why they need to be punished: “[I]f even the most innocent among us turn to killers in the Hunger Games, what does that say? That our essential nature is violent” (Collins, *Ballad* 515). In this sense, Coriolanus views “[t]he Hunger Games [as] a reminder of what monsters we [the inhabitants in the districts] are and how we need the Capitol to keep us from chaos” (*Ballad* 343). The logic behind the Games is thus that a televised



In The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes readers get to meet an adolescent President Snow and follow his path towards becoming a ruthless ruler of Panem.

battle to the death among innocent children will prove that the Capitol's governance is necessary and benefits the oppressed. With time, the Hunger Games have become a natural part of each year. Consequently, the power strategy of sacrificing the children of the districts to keep the adults in the districts compliant has been successful.

The Hunger Games is just one example of how contemporary young adult (YA) dystopian literature frequently depicts future societies in which young people are pitched against adults. In most YA dystopian literature, the adults are the enemy, or are at least a force working against the betterment of society, while the young generation represents the desire to create a new and better world through rebellion against the current regime. They sometimes become young politicians instead, and work for change from within the system. Adolescents are repeatedly put in situations where they must try to save both the world and themselves from corrupt adults, such as those responsible for the Hunger Games. The portrayal of the Games exemplifies a literary technique commonly used in YA dystopian literature: the investigation of the discrepancy between young people's and adults' access to power in non-fictional societies by exaggerating the power differences, thereby clarifying how adults sometimes abuse the power given to them due to their greater age.

In this study, I explore the power differences between children, adolescents and adults in a selection of one hundred contemporary Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian novels and one sequel in the form of a short story. My aims are: 1) to analyse how these power differences between children, adolescents and adults are articulated in the novels; 2) to clarify how other power categories, such as gender, sexuality, (dis)ability² and race, affect the power relationships

2. Merriam-Webster defines able-bodied as "having a sound strong body" ("able-bodied"), that is, the opposite of someone with a body that has a specific (dis)ability. As Robert McRuer argues, "[a]ble-bodiedness, even more than heterosexuality, still largely masquerades as a nonidentity, as the natural order of things" (1). I therefore put "dis" within parentheses to underline how the hegemonic ideal of what constitutes an able-bodied person leads to societal perceptions about disability. Therefore, "(dis)ability" highlights the need to view the concept of disability as just that – an ideological concept that reinforces the idea that some

between the children, the adolescents and the adults; and 3) to investigate how the exploration of power aspects in YA dystopian literature incorporates an *educational potential*, which can be utilised in the classroom when focusing on societal power structures, especially those linked to the power category of age.

My overall argument is that works of YA dystopian literature explore relationships of power between children, adolescents and adults in the real world by exaggerating them. In order to do this, they first establish an *allegorical* connection. By this I mean they draw parallels to the real-life oppression of young people. They then use the literary device of *hyperbole* to make these types of oppression clear, obvious and easier to critique. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a hyperbole is “[a] figure of speech consisting in exaggerated or extravagant statement, used to express strong feeling or produce a strong impression, and not intended to be understood literally” (“hyperbole”). In the case of YA dystopian literature, these exaggerations should be understood literally, albeit in the setting of a fictional, dystopian world. The exaggerations may consist of a tournament in which adolescents have to fight each other to the death, such as the Hunger Games, part of a dystopian world where adolescents are forced to become killers in order to survive attacks from evil adults or from a government that forces adolescents to reproduce against their will. By combining allegory and hyperbole, contemporary works of YA dystopian literature examine and critique the way in which adults abuse their power over children and adolescents. Consequently, they have educational potential, specifically in highlighting and problematising age-related power structures in a teaching context.

The concept of educational potential is defined and explored in depth in my doctoral thesis, *Magiska möjligheter: Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl och Cirkeln i skolans värdegrundsarbete* [Magical Possibilities: Using Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl and Cirkeln to Discuss Funda-

people are able-bodied and others are not, instead of seeing the people in question as able in a different sense. For an example of the use of this practice, see Cassandra Phillips’ article “Re-imagining the (Dis)Able Body” (2001).

mental Values in Schools] (2016) (Alkestrand, *Magiska* 67–87).³ In that study, I analyse the educational potential of fantasy literature in a Swedish school context, regarding democracy, human rights and multiculturalism. Terms like “educational potential” and “didactic potential” and their Swedish equivalents are frequently used in research and in student essays, but often without clear definitions. In both my thesis and this study, I define educational potential as the “*opportunities that literary fiction offers for problematising fundamental values* [my translation]” (Alkestrand, *Magiska* 70).⁴ The educational potential of a work of literary fiction therefore equals the potential learning processes about fundamental values that can arise from literary fiction, both inside and outside the classroom.

I want to underline that this potential is a possibility that can be activated when reading a specific literary work. The potential is not necessarily activated for all readers, or through a straightforward reading of the novel. Instead, I have defined four different situations in which this potential could be activated: during a solitary reading of the literary work; through a discussion of the literary work with other readers in a formal or informal setting; via tasks linked to the literary work in a classroom setting; and through the research process, when analysing the educational potential of a specific literary work (cf. Alkestrand, *Magiska* 71–75). Educational potential is thus not automatically transferred from the literary work to a specific reader.

I also want to emphasise that a single work of literary fiction can possess educational potential for several different topics at the same time. In this study, I focus on age-related power structures, so my scholarly attention is centred on the educational potential of this

3. In my thesis, I use the Swedish equivalent to “didactic potential”, but since the word “didactic” is often used in a pejorative sense in English, I have decided to use the word “educational potential” in this study instead.

For an English language article that summarises this discussion, see Malin Alkestrand, “Righteous Rebellion in Fantasy and Science Fiction for the Young: The Example of Harry Potter” (2014), pp. 110–112.

4. Swedish quotation: “*möjligheter att problematisera värdegrundsfrågor som skönlitteratur ger upphov till*”.

particular dimension in the primary texts of YA dystopian literature in my corpus. Other theoretical perspectives would highlight other potential learning processes. When guiding a specific reader towards the realisation of a YA dystopian text's potential to problematise age-related power structures in that dystopia and in that reader's own world, it is necessary to help them focus on this particular topic in their reading and to design associated tasks that will support the actualisation of this topic's educational potential.

At the same time, I want to point out that it is also important to give students room to explore other aspects of the literary work and to include the students' own interpretations in the teaching process. Otherwise, there is a risk that students do not feel that their opinions or experiences matter. To explore the educational potential of a particular YA dystopian text regarding age-related power structures is to choose one of many possible reading paths. Relating the reading experience to age-related power structures in non-fictional societies is necessary in order to highlight the educational potential of this particular topic.

The method I use when analysing the educational potential of a YA dystopian text is to identify which ideologies the text communicates about age-related power structures. Similar to Roberta Seelinger Trites, I define an ideology as a standpoint on different power relationships found in literary fiction, such as gender and race or, in this case, age (Trites, *Disturbing* 70, 77, 88–89). For example, an ideology found in my corpus is that it is amoral and wrong for a dystopian regime to oppress its young inhabitants in order to gain more power, which is the case in Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy.⁵

5. This application of the concept of "ideology" is narrower than the way in which capitalism is defined as a political ideology, for example. Trites makes a distinction between explicit ideologies, which the author is aware that the text communicates, and implicit ideologies, which are present in the text although the author has not deliberately included them. This distinction relies on authorial intention, which is impossible to access by solely analysing the final text. Therefore, it is not useful in my text-centred analysis of YA dystopian literature.

In my doctoral thesis, I discussed the distinction between explicit and implicit ideologies in depth, and presented an alternative way of distinguishing

This study devotes two chapters to an analysis of these works of YA dystopian literature and their ideologies as they relate to age-related power structures, and has one chapter that covers concrete teaching plans that aim to support the actualisation of their educational potential in the classroom. In this way, I combine a theoretical exploration of YA dystopian literature with suggestions for how to activate the educational potential of this topic in the classroom.

Table 1 lists all the primary texts included in my corpus.

Table 1: Primary Texts in the Corpus

Author(s)	Title	Publication year
Atwood, Margaret [proto-text]	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	1986
Baggott, Julianna	The <i>Pure</i> trilogy	2012–2014
	<i>Lyda</i> (short story)	2015
Blackman, Malorie	The <i>Noughts & Crosses</i> sequence	2001–2008
Bray, Libba	<i>Beauty Queens</i>	2011
Bracken, Alexandra	The <i>Darkest Minds</i> series	2012–2018
Collins, Suzanne	The <i>Hunger Games</i> trilogy	2008–2010
	<i>The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes</i> (prequel)	2020
Dashner, James	The <i>Maze Runner</i> series	2009–2016
Day, Anna	The <i>Fandom</i> duology	2018–2019

between the two (see Alkestrand, *Magiska* 97–102). In an English-language article, I describe this distinction as follows: “An explicit ideology denotes a clear message in the text, while an implicit ideology refers to less obvious ideologies that lie under the text’s surface” (Alkestrand, “Righteous” 112). I also discuss my view of Trites’ application of the concepts (see 110–113). In this study, however, I do not make the above distinction. Instead, I focus on what ideologies are communicated in the YA dystopian texts regarding adults’ oppression of adolescents, for example, not whether they are communicated more or less obviously. I consider this type of analysis more useful when a work of literary fiction is compared to a specific country’s curriculum. I also believe that the word “message” implies authorial intention, so I have decided to avoid it in this study.

Edfeldt, Lizette	<i>Brännmärkt</i> [Branded]	2017
Ewing, Amy	The <i>Lone City</i> trilogy	2014–2016
Frey, James, and Nils Johnson-Shelton	The <i>Endgame</i> trilogy	2014–2016
Grant, Michael	The <i>Gone</i> series	2008–2013
Henry, Christina	<i>The Girl in Red</i>	2019
Lowry, Lois	The <i>Giver</i> quartet	1993–2012
Lu, Marie	The <i>Legend</i> trilogy	2011–2013
Mafi, Tahereh	The <i>Shatter Me</i> series	2011–2020
Malley, Gemma	The <i>Declaration</i> trilogy	2007–2010
McCafferty, Megan	The <i>Bumped</i> duology	2011–2012
Melamed, Jennie	<i>Gather the Daughters</i>	2017
Morgan, Kass	The 100 series	2013–2016
Nordin, Sofia	<i>En sekund i taget</i> -serien [The One Second at a Time series]	2013–2017
O'Brien, Caragh	The <i>Birthmarked</i> series	2010–2012
O'Neill, Louise	<i>Only Ever Yours</i>	2014
Orwell, George [proto-text]	1984	1949
Reeve, Philip	The <i>Mortal Engines</i> quartet	2001–2006
Roth, Veronica	The <i>Divergent</i> trilogy	2011–2013
Roth, Veronica	The <i>Carve the Mark</i> duology	2017–2018
Shusterman, Neal	The <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy	2016–2019
Shusterman, Neal	The <i>Unwind</i> series	2007–2014
Söderberg, Marta	<i>Athena</i>	2015
Söderlund, Mats	<i>Ätlingarna</i> -trilogin [The Descendants trilogy]	2018–2020
Wahl, Mats	<i>Blodregns</i> -serien [The Blood Rain series]	2014–2017
Westerfeld, Scott	The <i>Uglies</i> series	2005–2007
Young, Moira	The <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy	2011–2014

Adolescent Killers and Mothers: Two Motifs in Young Adult Dystopian Literature

Thus far, scholars have primarily analysed the power relationship between adolescents and adults in YA dystopian literature through a focus on the protagonists'—predominately female protagonists'—rebellion against corrupt adult regimes and individuals. In *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (2016, first published in 2014), edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Amy L. Montz, this aspect of YA dystopian literature is examined from several different angles. The essay collection focuses on how adolescent girls rebel against dystopian regimes and become politicians in a new, more democratic regime or become political symbols of the rebellion (Day et al.). For example, Green-Barteet analyses Katniss' rebellion and refusal to conform to the oppressive society of Panem in *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

While research on this motif⁶ of young political leaders and political symbols has led to many insights about the adolescents' role in the overarching political struggles in YA dystopian literature, I have decided to focus on two other motifs in this study: the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother. Neither of these motifs has yet been analysed in depth and both are recurrent in Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature. They highlight the power relationships between children, adolescents and adults from different vantage points than those in the previous research on young political leaders and symbols. When adolescents are forced to kill, either because an adult institution forces them to or because that is the only way to stay alive in a dystopian society destroyed by the adult generation, the vulnerability of their position in relation to adults is illuminated, examined and critiqued. The same is true when adolescent mothers' children become pawns in the political struggles of the dystopian regime(s).

Both motifs are also used in contemporary YA dystopian litera-

6. I define a motif as “[a] particular subject for imaginative treatment, *esp.* an incident, situation, ethical problem, etc., embodying a central idea that informs a work” (The Oxford English Dictionary, “motif”).

ture to illustrate how a person's access to power is not just defined by their age, but also by many other power categories. For example, age intersects with gender, sexuality, class, (dis)ability and race. Therefore, an intersectional approach to power is crucial. Intersectionality theory clarifies that different power categories cannot be separated in a person's—or in this case, a character's—life. Instead, power categories intersect with each other and transform each other. In my text analyses, I thus aim to analyse “the differential ways in which different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities” (Yuval-Davis 205). Consequently, an adolescent girl's access to power is different from an adolescent boy's or an adult woman's, for example. A black woman's experience of living in a specific society is different to that of a white woman and, in a dystopian world, the character of an adolescent, biracial and (dis)abled girl faces different challenges to an adolescent, white and able-bodied girl.

Sadly, among the female protagonists in YA dystopian literature, “most still are white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cis-gendered girls” (Green-Barteet and Coste 82), meaning that diverse characters are not that common within the genre.⁷ In turn, this only allows readers who are in some way privileged, perhaps due to the whiteness of their skin, the opportunity to find characters that are similar to themselves in YA dystopian literature. However, a defining characteristic of the works I analyse in this study is that they interrogate how different power categories relate to one another, giving some adolescent characters more access to power and a greater ability to affect their own lives than others. Several of them depict more diverse characters than the most common character type identified by Green-Barteet and Coste. From a teaching perspective, the novels provide insights about the importance of human rights and social justice. It is for this reason that this study focuses on mothers and murderers in YA dystopian

7. Christopher Owen and Scott Lauchlan-Ford define cisgender (also spelled cis-gender) as “[a] person who identifies as the gender identity and biological sex they were assigned at birth. In simple terms: a person who is not transgender” (11).

literature and how the educational potential of these narratives can be actualised in the classroom.

What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?

The definition of YA dystopian literature has been discussed by many scholars. For example, the introductions to the essay collections *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* edited by Day, Green-Barteet and Montz, *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2014, first published in 2013) edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz, and *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults* (2003) edited by Hintz and Elaine Ostry, are devoted to this topic. In this section, I will define the concepts of *utopia*, *dystopia* and *YA dystopian literature*, arguing that the genre of contemporary YA dystopian literature can be viewed as a *fuzzy set*, with *The Hunger Games* trilogy as the most prototypical example of the genre.

One starting point for the definition of YA dystopian literature is to clarify the difference between a utopia and a dystopia. Whereas utopia means both “‘the perfect or good place’ and ‘no place’” (Fitzsimmons 5)—as in a place that is unattainable—dystopia means “bad place” (Claeys 107, 117). Hintz and Ostry expand this distinction by clarifying that they

use ‘utopia’ [...] to signify a nonexistent society that is posited as significantly better than that of the reader. It strives toward perfection, has a delineated social system, and is described in reasonably specific detail. Dystopias are likewise precise descriptions of societies, ones in which the ideals for improvement have gone tragically amok. (3)

A dystopia is thus a society that has tried to evolve towards a higher state, but which has fundamentally failed in this endeavour. For instance, Hintz and Ostry underline that in many dystopias, “total-

itarian societies assert the power of determining who lives and who dies” (9).

Day, Green-Barteet and Montz also highlight the close relationship between utopias and dystopias, by underlining that “dystopian literature depends upon considerations of possible futures, specifically futures in which attempts to create utopian societies have failed” (8). Similarly, in *New World Orders in Contemporary Children’s Literature: Utopian Transformations*, Clare Bradford, Kerry Mallan, John Stephens and Robyn McCallum (2011, first published in 2007) argue that “works of fiction employ [both] utopian and dystopian themes and motifs in a way that has a transformative purpose: that is, they propose or imply new social and political arrangements by imagining transformed world orders” (6). According to Basu, Broad and Hintz, the possible futures depicted in dystopias can be viewed as warnings that address contemporary issues, such as global warming and the relationship between technology and the self (1).

In this study, the concepts of *young adult* (YA) and *adolescent* are used in a broad sense to encompass individuals aged 13–25. I use YA when I refer to the genre of YA dystopian literature, since this is the term used for these books as well as other genres of YA fiction. When I address the young characters in these books in my study, I use the term adolescent. Previous research provides no consensus as to the exact age limits for these concepts, nor for the target audience of YA literature.⁸ I have decided to use this wide age range because the genre of YA dystopian literature has a broad target audience of young people but, due to the inclusion of violence and death, the books are not aimed at really young children. Still, it is important to recognise that the age of actual readers is much more diverse, with a lot of adults, such as myself, as well as younger children, reading and enjoying these books. The age of the readers is thus not the first crite-

8. Merriam-Webster defines an adolescent as an individual who has reached puberty, but who has not yet reached the age of majority (“adolescent”). I perceive this category as more fluid and have therefore included individuals up to 25 years old in the concept.

tion for my definition of the genre. Rather, the themes⁹ and motifs it addresses are what constitutes the genre's characteristics. Within my corpus of primary texts, the novels include adolescent protagonists of varying ages and, while some of the novels are targeted at the younger adolescents in my definition of adolescents, others are written for those who are slightly older.

The introductions to the three essay collections mentioned above identify and discuss various characteristics of the genre of YA dystopian literature. Hintz and Ostry argue that "dystopia can act as a powerful metaphor for adolescence", since YA dystopian literature portrays oppressive adults and adult institutions. Many adolescents in non-fictional societies experience these phenomena in their everyday lives, as well as surveillance and a lack of access to the kind of power that comes with adult privileges (Hintz and Ostry 9–10). "The adolescent craves more power and control, and feels the limits of his or her freedom intensely", which is a topic addressed in YA dystopian literature (Hintz and Ostry 10). Because of these experiences of oppression and limited freedom, the adolescents rebel against the dystopian worlds and are often successful. They thereby repeatedly become saviours who save the world from falling into a dystopian abyss (Ibid.).

The insights adolescents allegedly gain from YA dystopian literature are summarised by Hintz and Ostry as follows:

In these books, children and young adults learn about the need for leadership, the stresses of decision making, and the dynamics of group cooperation against a common enemy. They learn how to use limited resources to overcome incredible odds, and become more powerful and capable than they ever could have imagined. (11)

9. A theme is "a subject or topic of discourse or of artistic representation" (Merriam-Webster, "theme").

To summarise, adolescent characters face similar challenges to those of adults in leadership positions, and they have to find ways to survive in a hostile world despite the odds being stacked against them.

The recurrent topic of adolescent rebellion in YA dystopian literature, specifically female rebellion, is addressed in the introduction to Day, Green-Barteet and Montz's essay collection. The editors argue that the female protagonists in YA dystopian literature

occupy liminal spaces as they seek to understand their places in the world, to claim their identities, and to live their lives on their own terms. Further, and perhaps most significantly, these young women also attempt to recreate the worlds in which they live, making their societies more egalitarian, more progressive, and, ultimately, more free. (Day et al. 3)

These dystopias thus highlight how young girls and women, because of the interplay between gender and age-related power structures, need to rebel in order to take charge of their own lives and to create a better, more just world. This is necessary because they live in dystopian and oppressive societies. I argue that this type of society is the number one defining characteristic of the genre.

Some defining stylistic characteristics of YA dystopian literature are described by Basu, Broad and Hintz:

[T]hese dystopian warnings are distilled into exciting adventures with gripping plots. Their narrative techniques often place us close to the action, with firstperson narration, engaging dialogue, or even diary entries imparting accessible messages that may have the potential to motivate a generation on the cusp of adulthood. (1)

As the editors clarify, YA dystopian literature is usually set in a future science fiction society, but also incorporates traits from the adventure genre, the romance plot and the Bildungsroman. The latter depicts a young person's development towards adulthood. The mixing of dif-

ferent genres can thus be viewed as yet another defining characteristic (Basu et al. 6–9). I wish to add fantasy to the list of genres that frequently influence and are combined with a dystopian setting, such as when young characters develop magical abilities as a result of a scientific experiment or an accident. I will touch on this topic in my case study of Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's *Shatter Me* series (2011–2020). In summary, genre hybrids can be added to the list of defining characteristics for YA dystopian literature.

That YA dystopian literature incorporates some sense of hope for a better world is clarified by Basu, Broad and Hintz: “[T]he dystopian worlds are bleak not because they are meant to stand as mere cautionary tales, but because they are designed to display—in sharp relief—the possibility of utopian change even in the darkest of circumstances” (3). In addition, the editors mention multiple themes that recur in YA dystopian literature: ecological destruction, a post-apocalyptic event such as a plague or zombies, conformist societies that exclude those who do not fit into the prescribed identity, enslavement, silencing of the inhabitants and their critique of the society that they live in, mind-altering surgeries, the protagonist’s rebellion against the regime and the protagonist’s awakening to the dystopian and oppressive tendencies in society (Basu et al. 3–4).

As this brief overview of some attempts to define YA dystopian literature has shown, many different aspects have been identified as being central to this type of book. In addition, it is possible to either view the dystopian aspect as a mode or approach that can be used in several different genres (cf. Day et al. 8; Hintz and Ostry 2), or as a genre of its own, but one that can incorporate inspiration from other genres (cf. Basu et al. 6). In this study, I define YA dystopian literature as a genre that depicts a dystopian and oppressive society, and which is aimed at adolescent readers. Additionally, a work of YA dystopian literature incorporates some, many or all of the traits mentioned in this section. The most frequent are summarised below:

- Dystopian and oppressive societies and/or regimes who oppress young people and/or adults.

- Adolescent characters who rebel against the regimes of their dystopian society.
- A science-fiction future society.
- Mixing different genres.
- Hope in the creation of a better and more just world.
- Adolescent characters who save the world.

Instead of proclaiming that YA dystopian literature must incorporate a specific number of genre traits, or else it is not YA dystopian literature, I view it as a fuzzy set. The concept of the fuzzy set has been applied to fantasy literature by Brian Attebery in *Strategies of Fantasy* (1992). Attebery defines J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955) as the prototype for fantasy literature, because of the importance of this particular literary work for the genre and for fantasy authors who have been inspired by Tolkien's series. Other fantasy works can be described as more or less similar to *The Lord of the Rings*, which makes it possible to view Tolkien's work as the core of the genre (Attebery 2, 12–14).¹⁰

In a similar vein, Collins' trilogy can be viewed as the prototypical example of the contemporary YA dystopian phenomena. Although Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), for example, was published before *The Hunger Games* trilogy and has provided crucial inspiration for the genre, it was not until the release of Collins' first novel in 2008 that a virtual flood-wave of YA dystopian literature was published.¹¹ In many of these texts, the inspiration from Collins' trilogy

10. Farah Mendlesohn has challenged this view of the genre in *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), in which she argues that fantasy literature does not consist of one fuzzy set, but four, due to four distinctly different ways of portraying the relationship between the protagonists and the supernatural forces found in fantasy literature. For the purposes of my argument here, however, it is enough to cover the basics of Attebery's argument.

11. Rebekah Fitzsimmons clarifies that "Collins popularized the trilogy format along with the YA dystopian subgenre, and the blockbuster series is credited with spawning a wide range of imitators" (4). Fitzsimmons' article explores the trilogy format often used in YA dystopian literature and identifies three different phases that recur in YA dystopian texts.

is more or less explicit. The fuzzy set of YA dystopian literature can thereby be described as consisting of texts that possess similarities to Collins' work. One defining characteristic of Collins' trilogy is the already-mentioned oppression of the young by adults and adult regimes, and, in this sense, the age-related and extreme differences in power that are the focal point of this study comprise a central genre trait that has inspired many of Collins' successors. The Swedish YA dystopian phenomenon can also be tied to the success of the original novels, their Swedish translations and the four *Hunger Games* movies.

To exemplify my understanding of the genre as a fuzzy set, I will briefly sketch out the role of science-fictional future worlds in the genre.¹² While most primary texts that I analyse in this study are set in a high-tech society of the close or distant future, some of them are set in an alternate contemporary society. This society lacks the advanced technology that is one of the most distinct and defining characteristics of the science fiction genre,¹³ but still incorporates enough other genre traits for me to view it as part of the YA dystopian genre. This is the case with British author Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* sequence (2001–2008), which depicts an alternate world in which black people are superior to white people, but which has no elements of science fiction. In other cases, such as Swedish author Sofia Nordin's *En sekund i taget* [One Second at a Time] series (2013–2017), an apocalyptic event has taken place, but there is no explanation as to why. In Nordin's world, a mysterious fever has killed most of the population, but it is unclear whether the fever is a result of government experiments gone awry or a virus, for example. However, the series incorporates enough of the genre's other characteristics for me to view it as a YA dystopian text.

To conclude, in applying the understanding of YA dystopian lit-

12. I will delve deeper into this topic and the impact of feminist science fiction on YA dystopian literature in the chapter on adolescent mothers. See "Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview".

13. For a discussion of the role of technological inventions in science fiction, see Darko Suvin's famous article "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre" (1972), p. 378–379.

erature as a fuzzy set to the novels I read as potential primary texts for this study, I was searching for novels that include several of the genre traits identified in this brief overview of previous research. In the next section, I will present the selection criteria for the corpus of YA dystopian literature analysed in this study.

The Text Corpus: The Selection of Primary Texts

My text corpus includes a total of one hundred YA dystopian novels and one short story in the form of a sequel.¹⁴ I have chosen to use such a large corpus of primary texts because I want to provide a thorough overview of the genre of YA dystopian literature, specifically how the motifs of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother are depicted in this type of book.

Most of the novels are part of a series, which is the most common publication format for YA dystopian literature (cf. Fitzsimmons 3), but there are also examples of stand-alone novels. Contrary to many previous studies of the genre of YA dystopian literature, I have decided to include all the novels in the book series in my analysis. When only the first book is included, which is common in articles on the topic—probably because of the briefness of the article format—as well as in monographs, there is a risk that the scholar will draw conclusions that are not valid for the series as a whole. For example, in an analysis of Lowry's *The Giver*—the first novel in a series of four books—Maria Nikolajeva argues that the adolescent character Jonas dies at the end of the book. She even states that readers who interpret the book's ending in a different way and argue that Jonas does survive represent an unsophisticated reading of the novel (Nikolajeva, *Power* 86–88). However, in the sequels, Jonas is very much alive, and readers obtain insights into how his life develops after leaving the dystopian

14. This short story is a sequel to American author Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014). For a full list of all the texts in my corpus, see Table 1 on pp. 22–23.

society into which he was born (cf. Lowry, *Son* 308–310). In my analysis of the presence of two specific motifs, it is crucial to analyse the whole series in order to give an accurate account of whether or not a motif is present and, if so, how that particular motif is actualised within the series.

I have also included two proto-texts in the corpus. These texts are not actually YA dystopian literature, but they have provided crucial inspiration for the genre. The first one is British author George Orwell's classic dystopian novel for adults, *1984* (1949). This novel has been the inspiration for the excessive societal surveillance that is a common genre trait in YA dystopian literature. The second proto-text included in my corpus is Canadian author Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)—another classic dystopian work aimed at an adult audience. Atwood's handmaids, who are ritually raped and forced to carry the children of the infertile ruling class, have inspired many YA dystopian novels' depictions of enforced reproduction and motherhood; a topic that will be explored further in the chapter about adolescent mothers.

The most important selection criteria for my corpus of YA dystopian literature is that the novels incorporate (at least) one of the two motifs that this study focuses on: the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother. My selection process consisted of reading all the novels I found that seemed to include these motifs. I have looked for relevant texts in previous research that mentions the presence of any of the motifs, by reading reviews of new novels that I have encountered via social media, for example, and through suggested reading from colleagues.¹⁵

This selection process has in no way been a straightforward endeavour. Sometimes, I have found one of the motifs while reading a book that I thought could potentially include the other motif. At other times, I have read a book thinking that it would fit into my

15. I would like to thank my colleague Maria Nilson for her never-ending support in finding relevant books for my study. We have been working on two different research projects on YA dystopian literature, and she has continuously recommended books she has come across that seem relevant to my project.

corpus due to its topic, but found that the novel does not fit into my definition of YA dystopian literature. For example, this was the case with *The Mother Code* (2020) by Carole Stivers, which addresses motherhood, but which I view as a book for adults. The mothers in question are also machines. Yet, at other times, a novel that I thought would include either adolescent killers or mothers did not. The final corpus is the result of four and a half years of reading YA dystopian literature.

In the end, I had to limit myself to around one hundred novels, both due to time limits and because I would not be able to do a larger number of novels justice in one study. There are a few novels that I have come across too late to include them in my study, even though they are relevant to my motif-centred analysis, such as *The Testing* trilogy (2013–2014) by Joelle Charbonneau.

Another selection criterion for the primary texts is that they are contemporary. The works of YA dystopian literature in my corpus have—with one exception—been published since 2000.¹⁶ The vast majority of the novels in my corpus have been published during or after the year 2008, when the first novel in Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy was published.¹⁷ As I clarified in the previous section, the trilogy paved the way for a many works of YA dystopian literature that resemble Collins'. This can be viewed as equivalent to how J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007) led to the publication of many new fantasy novels and increased interest in older fantasy publications (cf. Levy and Mendlesohn 165–170). According to Sarah Hentges' visualisation of the genre of YA dystopian literature as a

16. The exception is Lowry's *The Giver*, published in 1993. This novel is one of the roots of the YA dystopian genre (cf. Hentges unnumbered page before the title page) and has paved the way for other YA dystopian literature. For this reason, I regard it as a central text for this investigation. The second book in the series, *Gathering Blue*, was published in 2000.

17. At least one novel in the following series in my corpus was published before 2008: Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* sequence (2001–2008), Lois Lowry's *The Giver* quartet (1993–2012), Gemma Malley's *The Declaration* trilogy (2007–2010), Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* quartet (2001–2006), Neal Shusterman's *Unwind* dystology (2007–2014) and Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* series (2005–2007).

tree, novels published before 2008 can be viewed as its roots, with Collins' trilogy as the trunk and the novels published after the first *Hunger Games* novel as branches reaching out from Collins' series (Hentges unnumbered page before the title page). Using this visualisation, it is clear that Collins' trilogy splits the genre into a distinct before and after *The Hunger Games* trilogy. The most recent novels included in my corpus were published in 2020.

One more selection criterion for my primary texts is that they were originally written in either English or Swedish. While Swedish is my mother tongue, English is the only other language in which I am proficient enough to analyse novels at a scholarly level. As the overview of research on YA dystopian literature conducted this far will show, most research focuses on Anglophone texts. Because my view of a dystopian society is that it is a refracted image of contemporary societies and how they will potentially develop if the current generation is unable to successfully deal with their challenges, such as climate change and threats to democracy, it has been crucial for me to include depictions of future versions of a dystopian Sweden in my study. A benefit of this approach is that I can highlight some general similarities and differences between YA dystopian literature written in English and Swedish. However, I do not attempt to conduct a thorough comparative study; this is a topic for a different research project altogether.

The majority of the YA dystopian texts in my corpus are written in English (87 out of 101). I have made this choice because I am writing this book in English. It is beneficial for most primary texts to be accessible to my readers who cannot read Swedish, especially as a goal of this study is to inspire teachers from different countries to use YA dystopian literature in the classroom. For the same reason, only one out of six case studies included in this monograph is devoted to a Swedish series. In future publications, I would like to devote more attention to the Swedish examples.

The Power Category of Age: Theoretical Framework

In this study, I illustrate how the power category of age and its intersections with sexuality, class, race, ethnicity and educational background, for example, are constantly highlighted and debated in YA dystopian literature. Trites views adolescent literature as an ideological institution that both reflects aspects of the world *and* affects how its readers view real-life societies. It simultaneously reflects ideologies present in the society in which the novel was written about what an adolescent is, how an adolescent behaves and how an adolescent should behave *and* perpetuates ideologies about adolescence and age-related power aspects through literary works. Therefore, adolescent literature can be viewed as “a discourse of institutional socialization” (Trites, *Disturbing* 22).

I apply this perspective to the genre of YA dystopian literature by clarifying how it repeatedly problematises the power category of age by interrogating what kind of power the adolescent characters can access in their dystopian society and how they use the (limited) power available to them. This interrogation occurs within the pages of literary fiction, but has ideological consequences for how these issues are understood and dealt with in the real world, since ideologies in literary fiction have the potential to affect empirical readers' worldviews and actions. Consequently, YA dystopian literature can, for example, be used in the classroom to discuss age-related power aspects in both the intradiegetic dystopian society of the literary work and in the students' non-fictional societies.

AETONORMATIVITY VERSUS THE MIGHTY CHILD

Nikolajeva coined the term *aetonormativity*, which describes how adults are positioned as normative, both in real life and in children's literature. Children are positioned as non-normative, as deviating

from the adults in terms of their low age. Accordingly, adults have more power and more extensive rights than children (Nikolajeva, “Theory” 16). For example, adults can legally drive cars and vote, but children cannot. As Nikolajeva clarifies, the power category of age has some defining characteristics that make it different to the unequal distribution of power between women and men, or LGBTQ+ people and heterosexual people, for example. Infants and young children cannot be expected to provide for themselves and to live their lives independently in the way that society expects adults to do. There are logical and well-intentioned reasons for limiting children’s power, to some extent. However, as Nikolajeva underlines, this has led to a rhetoric that claims that adults must protect and control children and adolescents for the young people’s *own good* (Ibid.). This rhetoric can easily be used and abused when adults put oppressive policies and rules into place and do not respect the opinions of children and adolescents, such as about who they want to be or how they want to live their lives.

Henry Giroux introduces the concept of *childhood innocence* to describe this rhetoric about the need to protect the young: “Marked as innately pure and passive, children are ascribed the right of protection but are, at the same time, denied a sense of agency and autonomy” (2). Young people’s “freedoms are curtailed and their constitutional protections and rights of citizenship are restricted” (Giroux 11). In addition, there is a “contradiction between adult concern for the safety of children and the reality of how adults treat children on a daily basis. Most of the violence waged against children is by adults” (Giroux 16). Thus, Giroux demonstrates how rhetoric about the need to protect children does not necessarily match how adults actually treat children, and simultaneously underlines how childhood innocence can be used to keep the young locked in their less powerful position. This pattern, which both Nikolajeva and Giroux highlight, will be explored throughout this book and its analysis of how the adolescent characters are positioned in relationship to the adults in their dystopian worlds.

Another defining characteristic of aetonnormativity, which Ni-

kolajeva underscores using Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, is that the younger generation of today will grow up to become the adult generation of tomorrow. Throughout childhood and adolescence, they are taught to view adults' dominant power position as natural and, as a consequence, they will be the ones who are responsible for controlling and possibly abusing their own or others' children once they reach adulthood. Nikolajeva exemplifies this argument by clarifying how the adult Harry, a father of three children who readers meet in the epilogue to the *Harry Potter* series, is "prepared to oppress his own children" ("Theory" 18). She has thus identified a pattern in children's literature that she views as a defining characteristic of how aetonormativity also functions in real-life societies.

In an article called "Harry Potter and the Curse of Aetonormativity: Age-Related Cognitive Scripts and a Disruption of 'the *Harry Potter* Literary Schema'" (2020), I compare the young Harry in the novels with the adult Harry in the script for the stage play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016). Whereas the young Harry challenges the adults' way of controlling him and keeping vital information from him by repeatedly breaking the adults' rules and rebelling against them—predominantly the evil adults—the adult Harry exerts extensive control over his children. He legitimises this behaviour by claiming that it is for the children's own good. Harry thereby utilises the rhetoric of aetonormativity, how children need to be protected from aspects of the world for their own good. However, he repeatedly abuses his position of power, as an adult, to control his children in an oppressive way, such as when he stops Albus, his youngest son, from seeing his only friend, Scorpius Malfoy. Harry does so because he has been told there is a dark threat to Albus, which he assumes is the son of his old nemesis, Draco Malfoy (Alkestrand, "Harry" 50–52). The discrepancy between the young Harry and the adult Harry fits into the overall pattern of children's literature identified by Nikolajeva. When the young become adults they often use and abuse their power position as adults in relationship to their own or others' children.

In YA dystopian literature, adults and adult institutions repeatedly abuse the privileges that are given to them due of their greater age,

using their more extensive power to oppress children and adolescents instead of protecting them. This oppression is often blatant. There are numerous examples of aetonormative power abuse in the novels in my corpus. However, young characters repeatedly rebel against the adults and their dystopian society in order to create a more just and democratic world. In these instances, the adolescents are often successful. For example, Katniss in *The Hunger Games* trilogy experiences extreme forms of aetonormative power abuse, most glaringly during her participation in the Hunger Games, but she successfully rebels against not one, but two, oppressive adult leaders: President Snow and the leader of District 13, Alma Coin. She thereby paves the way for a new and more democratic society. For this reason, a theoretical tool that views young characters as powerless in comparison to adult characters is not adequate for my study.

An alternative view of the power available to both the children who read children's literature and the child characters in children's literature is presented in Clémentine Beauvais' *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children's Literature* (2015). Where Nikolajeva highlights how the normative position of being an adult gives adults the power to control children, supposedly for their own good ("Secrets" 235), Beauvais argues that children simply have a different kind of power to adults—the power to creatively deal with the challenges of an unknown future after the adult generation has died (*Mighty* 3, 101). They thus have distinctly different views of actual and fictive children's ability to affect their own lives.

Beauvais exemplifies her argument using Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (*Mighty* 100–101). Harry Potter's headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, knows that Harry is the only one who can defeat the evil wizard Lord Voldemort. He provides Harry with the information that he has access to, such as that about Voldemort's childhood and personality. This information is crucial for Harry's victory over Voldemort, but Harry uses the information given to him by the adult authority figure in creative and surprising ways that Dumbledore could never have foreseen. The child character, Harry, is mighty in the sense that he has more time left to profoundly affect the fictional world

than Dumbledore does. Harry's triumph over Voldemort illustrates how factual knowledge is not enough for children to be successful in their future lives. Adults cannot give children or child characters all the tools they need in order to live successful and good lives. The potential of what the child *might* do is what makes it mighty. From this perspective, young characters have an inherent ability to affect the future long after the adult generation has died. They are thus not powerless, but their power is different to that of the adults or the adult characters (Ibid.).

The arguments of both Nikolajeva and Beauvais are based on attempts to categorise children's literature and its depictions of age-based power relationships to produce a description of this type of literature.¹⁸ While my theoretical standpoint is indebted to these two different conceptions of the power relationships between adults and the young, my approach to this power aspect is distinctly different. I do not strive to define how this power relationship is expressed in the YA dystopian genre as a whole, nor do I think this a possible or fruitful way of approaching the topic in this study. As Christopher Owen states, time to change the world "does not provide opportunity for all children [or child characters] equally", due to their different intersectional subject positions, which affords them different possibilities to affect their society (194). For example, a white, middle-class child with parents who are academics will most likely be able to influence their surroundings more profoundly than children who are less privileged within Western societies.

Nikolajeva and Beauvais both welcome studies that pay attention to power categories other than age. Nikolajeva clarifies that

18. However, Nikolajeva highlights one important exception to the aetonnormative pattern that she argues permeates children's literature. She analyses how Pippi Longstocking, in the novels by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, does not accept the adults' normative position. She views the Pippi books as a rather unique example of children's literature that does not confirm an aetonnormative worldview and instead adheres to a child normativity. The first Pippi book, *Pippi Långstrump* [Pippi Longstocking], was published in Swedish in 1945. (See Nikolajeva, *Power* 9.)

[a]etonormativity does not operate in a vacuum, but is intertwined with other heterological structures, including gender, ethnicity and class. By taking these into consideration, we can reveal how power hierarchies amplify or obscure each other. Adult norms can in a literary text be blurred because other alterities are more prominent. (Nikolajeva, *Power* 203)

However, overall, her study still reinforces a binary conception of children/adolescents versus adults, viewing them as two distinct groups, each defined by their access to power. Beauvais argues that “[t]he added complexity of sociological and cultural differences in status between adults amongst themselves and children relative to one another is of course another essential parameter”, but she stresses that this is a topic “for a further study” (11). She thereby states that she will not include an intersectional perspective in her study. To summarise, there is a need for studies that attempt to move beyond this binary and fully embrace an intersectional perspective. This is one of the overarching goals of this monograph.

Therefore, instead of proclaiming that young characters are either oppressed and unable to wield power, in line with Nikolajeva’s argument, or are, per definition, mighty because as a group they have more time left to affect and change the world they live in, following Beauvais’ reasoning, I view these positions as two different motifs that can occur in texts aimed at a young audience: *the controlled child/adolescent motif* and *the mighty child/adolescent motif*.

THE CONTROLLED CHILD/ADOLESCENT AND THE MIGHTY CHILD/ADOLESCENT: TWO MOTIFS

The controlled child/adolescent motif highlights the limited freedom and access to opportunity of children/adolescents, in line with aetonormativity. The adults are the ones in control, those who wield power within the dystopian societies, and they legitimise their actions by arguing that children and/or adolescents need to be protect-

ed from aspects of reality that their youth means they are, allegedly, not ready to deal with. Consequently, young people's access to power is restricted, often leading to an all-encompassing and sometimes abusive form of control over the young person. The mighty child/adolescent motif instead portrays children/adolescents as mighty—that is, as able to change the world due to their specific ability to use adult knowledge in creative and unforeseen ways. Instead of being depicted as controlled by adults and limited due to their youth, young people are portrayed as mighty because they have access to a kind of power that adults do not. For instance, they can convince others to rebel against oppression and thereby actively work towards gaining more power and/or creating a more democratic world that the adults are not willing to strive towards, or are perhaps not even able to conceptualise.

These two motifs carry radically different ideas about the power category of age. They can occur on their own or together in specific texts in children's and YA literature, such as YA dystopian literature. While the controlled adolescent motif showcases the limitations of young people's power, the mighty adolescent motif highlights their power to influence the way that their world is organised. I use the motifs as tools for identifying different conceptions of adolescent characters' access to power in a specific novel.¹⁹ This allows the analysis of each young character's access to and/or lack of power in a specific YA dystopian text, investigating who is portrayed as controlled/mighty in different situations and identifying what ideologies are communicated through the depiction of these two motifs. Simultaneously, this opens up for an intersectional analysis that not only highlights age-related power structures, but also power relations tied to other power categories.

The defining characteristics of the power category of age mean that it poses specific challenges in non-fictional societies, both in-

19. For an alternative way of theorising these two motifs as two cognitive scripts, see Alkestrand, "Harry Potter and the Curse of Aetonnormativity: Age-Related Cognitive Scripts and a Disruption of 'the *Harry Potter* Literary Schema'" (2020).

side and outside the classroom. How can adults empower children while remaining responsible adults who ensure that children are protected from harm? How can teachers treat children as equals while maintaining the inescapable relationship of power between them and their students? For example, a teacher sets rules, scrutinises students' achievements and determines their grades, while students have to follow these rules and do well in examinations in order to have opportunities to acquire the knowledge and education they need when trying to establish themselves on the labour market. While this study does not strive to answer these questions, it has been born from a belief that YA dystopian literature's interrogations of the power category of age have the potential to ask difficult questions about this power relationship. The fact that these literary works raise these questions can contribute to further theoretical reflections on age—reflections that are of equal importance to everyone, whatever their age. In this sense, the educational potential of YA dystopian literature, as regards the power category of age, is indeed age-less.

*The Matrix of Domination:
A Theoretical Tool for Analysing
an Oppressive Society*

Although this study focuses on age-related power structures in YA dystopian literature, its intersectional approach requires a theoretical framework that allows this power category to be analysed in relationship to other power structures in the intradiegetic societies of YA dystopian literature. For this purpose, I use Patricia Hill Collins' concept of *the matrix of domination*. This concept has been developed to analyse racial oppression in relation to class, sexuality, gender and nation in human societies. Hill Collins presents it as a new way of understanding dominance and resistance, using a Black feminist perspective (273, 275).²⁰ I will expand the concept to encompass other

20. Owen has applied this concept to the analysis of literary fiction in his

power categories such as age and (dis)ability, and thereby analyse oppression based on age and its intersections with other power categories.²¹ My focus is thus on a different power category than that of Hill Collins, who uses race as her focal point.

In line with Michel Foucault's conception of power (cf. Foucault 148–149), Hill Collins regards power “not as something that groups possess, but as an intangible entity that circulates within a particular matrix of domination and to which individuals stand in varying relationships” (274). This emphasises the contextual dependence of an individual's access to power. Each society, or in this case, each fictional society, can potentially have its own matrix of domination, in which certain classes, races, genders, nationalities, etcetera, are defined as superior and others as inferior. Hill Collins also clarifies how each person's “subjectivity frames human actions within a matrix of domination” (Ibid.). In short, the way a person is positioned within their society affects their actions and interactions with other people, since “[e]ach individual derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression which frame everyone's lives” (Hill Collins 287).

Domination is defined “as encompassing intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation”, which “points to the significance of these oppressions in shaping the overall organization of a particular matrix of domination” (Hill Collins 275). I argue that

doctoral thesis on systemic oppression in Anglophone middle-grade fantasy and science fiction, arguing that Hill Collins' approach provides “a more holistic and intersectional approach to society, enabling it to work well as a framework for studying systemic oppression” (11). I have previously used this concept in a book chapter about racial oppression and white privilege in two YA dystopian series available in Swedish: the *Blood Rain* series (2014–2017) that I analyse in the chapter on adolescent mothers and *Die Eleria* Trilogie [the Eleria Trilogy] (published in German 2012–2014) by Austrian author Ursula Poznanski (see Alkestrand, “(De)Stabilizing the Boundaries between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Racial Oppression and Racism in Two YA Dystopias Available in Swedish” (2021)).

21. Owen similarly includes age as a relevant power category in the matrix of domination, highlighting for example an intersection between heteronormativity and speciesism in one of his primary texts (153). Speciesism refers to “prejudice or discrimination based on species” (Merriam Webster, “speciesism”).

other power categories, such as age, (dis)ability and ethnicity, are also significant when adopting an intersectional approach to domination in YA dystopian literature, and should therefore be considered in relation to the matrix of domination in this study. When the matrix of domination is applied to non-realist genres, such as science fiction and fantasy, there may also be other power hierarchies based on technology or magic, for example, that profoundly affect the matrix of domination in that particular fictional universe.

The matrix of domination consists of four different domains: *the structural domain*, *the disciplinary domain*, *the hegemonic domain* and *the interpersonal domain*. The structural domain organises oppression by regulating citizenship and rights, as well as establishing policies (Hill Collins 276). It also “encompasses how social institutions are organized” to subordinate certain groups, establishing who is privileged and who is not (Hill Collins 277). For example, in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, the structural domain divides Panem into the Capitol, where the privileged people live, and the districts, where the inhabitants are oppressed by the Capitol.

The disciplinary domain manages oppression through rules, hierarchies and how organisations are run. Discrimination and an unfair division of privileges, such as the best jobs and specific rights, add to this domination. Surveillance is also used to discipline the inhabitants. While policies are a part of the structural domain, the way specific organisations are organised belongs in the disciplinary domain (Hill Collins 276–277, 280). One example from Collins’ trilogy is the rule that twenty-four children from the districts must participate in the Hunger Games each year. The Games function as a tool for disciplining and controlling the districts.

The hegemonic domain justifies oppression using consciousness, ideology and culture. It “aims to justify practices” in the structural and disciplinary domains (Hill Collins 284), and, to do this, it has to establish the approval of the subordinated group. This is achieved through a “manipulation of ideas, images, symbols, and ideologies” (Hill Collins 285). In Collins’ trilogy, the Games are broadcast and turned into a spectacle that the inhabitants have to watch. They are

therefore used to indoctrinate the inhabitants into believing that the Games are a natural part of life and, in some districts, they even become a way to pursue a career. The TV show perpetuates ideologies about how the districts deserve to be punished in the Hunger Games, as well as the belief that there is only one way to survive the Games: to kill all the other Tributes, that is, the other children participating.

The interpersonal domain, finally, consists of individuals' lived experiences, which involve interactions with other people in various constellations (Hill Collins 287). At this level, the interactions between Katniss and President Snow, for example, contribute to the latter's oppression of the former. He is responsible for sending Katniss to a second round of the Games the year after she and Peeta Mellark have defeated the Gamemakers, when she forced them to let them both win and thus survive the Games (Collins, *Mockingjay* 208–209). Snow's oppression of Katniss therefore has a profound impact on her life.

These four domains are all interconnected, according to Hill Collins: "By manipulating ideology and culture, the hegemonic domain acts as a link between social institutions (structural domain), their organizational practices (disciplinary domain), and the level of everyday social interaction (interpersonal domain)" (284). This emphasis on the importance of ideology when constructing a matrix of domination is one of the main reasons why I regard Hill Collins' theory of domination as beneficial for this study. By investigating age-related power structures in relation to all these domains, as well as in relation to intersections with other power categories, this study aims to explore how age-related power structures are experienced by young characters, but also how they are created, maintained and legitimised within the characters' fictional dystopian worlds.

Hill Collins clarifies how a challenge to different types of domination can be organised. The structural domain can be affected through reforms and/or revolutions, the disciplinary domain through changes from inside the institutions and organisations, and the hegemonic domain's ideologies can be counteracted using "counter-hegemonic knowledge", which is knowledge that proves the hegemonic ideologies upon which the oppression is based to be faulty (Hill Collins

277–278, 281, 285). Changes in the other domains affect the interpersonal interactions.

In this study, I will show that all these types of resistance can be found in YA dystopian literature. Rebellions and revolutions are common. Many of these rebellions are *righteous*, since the reasons for the rebellion are depicted as righteous; they also lead to a major change in the status quo, which functions as a step towards change that contributes to a more just and less dystopian organisation of society (Alkestrand, “Righteous” 110, 114–115). However, these rebellions often lead to violence and even death, repeatedly turning the rebellious youth into killers. I will explore the motif of adolescent killers in the next chapter. In the chapter on adolescent mothers, I will touch on how protecting your child from a dystopian society can become a motivation for challenging and/or rebelling against a dystopian regime.

Previous Research on Young Adult Dystopian Literature

Research on YA dystopian literature is rich and covers many different topics and theoretical approaches. Much of the research has focused on a few famous YA dystopian works, predominately Collins’ *Hunger Games* trilogy and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* trilogy (2011–2013), but there is research on less well-known YA dystopian literature too. Most studies take the form of articles, which creates some limitations for these studies’ scope and/or depth, but there are also monographs devoted to YA dystopian literature. As this overview will clarify, there is a continuing need for more full-length studies of this genre, in order to move beyond brief analyses of one or a few texts, on the one hand, and brief overviews of a larger corpus, on the other hand, allowing more extensive and detailed studies of the genre.

This section presents an overview of some central research areas that I have identified. A more detailed overview of research on educational approaches to, and applications of, YA dystopian literature

is presented in Chapter 3, which is devoted to its application in the classroom. Research pertaining to the two motifs under investigation—the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother—is presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The purpose of the overview is to clarify which topics have been analysed to date and to situate my own study of the two motifs within the research field.

LOVE, ROMANCE AND SEX(UALITY)

One research area focuses on love, romance and sex(uality). Given that this is one of the three central topics of adolescent literature according to Trites (*Disturbing x*), this does not come as a surprise. In dystopian settings, these aspects of the adolescent characters' lives are rigorously controlled.

A chapter in *Sexual Content in Young Adult Literature: Reading between the Sheets* (2015) by Bryan Gillis and Joanna Simpson, identifies five different types of sex-related topics in the genre. The first one is “government-controlled sex”, which is investigated in works such as George Orwell's *1984* and Lauren Oliver's *Delirium* (2011) (Gillis and Simpson 77). The second one is “drug-induced sexual apathy”. Here, Lowry's *The Giver* is used as an example. In Lowry's novel, everyone who has reached puberty is supposed to take a pill that removes sexual attraction (Gillis and Simpson 81). The third one, “disease-induced sexual abstinence”, is discussed in relation to Scott Westerfeld's *Peeps* (2005) (Gillis and Simpson 83). The fourth category explores “sex in the midst of an apocalypse”, using Andrew Smith's *Grasshopper Jungle* (2014) (Gillis and Simpson 85). The final category looks closer at “sex and romance in dystopian series”, for example *The Hunger Games* trilogy and Roth's *Divergent* trilogy—two series that are included in my corpus. Gillis and Simpson argue that these series are first and foremost dystopian, since the romance elements do “not overshadow the dystopian structure of the stories” (90; quotation on 96).

Debra Dudek's article clarifies how love can function as a rebellion through her analysis of the *Delirium* trilogy (2011–2013) and the

Matched trilogy (2010–2012) by Ally Condie (161). This connection between sexual awakening and rebellion is explored by Day in “Docile Bodies, Dangerous Bodies: Sexual Awakening and Social Resistance in Young Adult Dystopian Novels” (2016), where she argues that “young women depicted in such dystopian novels first encounter and learn about the possibilities of social rebellion through their relationships with young men who have already established their own rebellious paths” (90). She thus ties the discussion of sexuality to both the depiction of rebellion and gender in her primary texts.

In my study, I will address love, romance and sexuality in relation to the motif of the adolescent mother.

ECOCRITICAL APPROACHES

Many works of YA dystopian literature focus on environmental destruction, and several scholars have applied an ecocritical perspective to this type of literature. For example, an article by Åsa Nilsson Skåve discusses the portrayal of environmental destruction in a selection of Swedish YA literature. Nilsson Skåve mentions how the *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] series (2014–2017) by Swedish author Mats Wahl, which I analyse in one of the case studies in the chapter on adolescent mothers, blames the older generation for environmental crises that include sandstorms and floods in a dystopian future Sweden. The adolescent protagonist, Elin Holme, works hard to protect and improve the environment when she becomes a young politician (“Dystopiska” 102–103).

An article by Megan McDonough and Katherine A. Wagner analyses how rebelliousness and the resulting agency, in the form of rebellions, are linked to contact with nature as the polar opposite of technology and urbanisation in YA dystopian literature. For example, the protagonist Tally Youngblood’s rebellious awakening in Westerfeld’s *Uglies* (2005) takes place in the Smoke, a small settlement outside the high-tech city (McDonough and Wagner 160–161). Westerfeld’s book series is included in my corpus. The article’s authors argue that

ecofeminism, an approach that combines a focus on the environment and gender, can highlight how characters in novels such as *Uglies* gain agency and power in contact with nature (McDonough and Wagner 168). Therefore, their article applies an ecocritical perspective.

In a similar vein, Micah-Jade M. Coleman utilises the concept of *environmental injustice* in relationship to Sherri L. Smith's *Orleans* (2013) in her master's thesis. According to Coleman, this novel, which explores a post-apocalyptic New Orleans, portrays the city in question as connected to the South (4). The division between the "developed North" and the "developing South" in the novel is depicted as a reason behind environmental destruction, since it promotes environmental racism in which the North is positioned as superior to the South (Ibid.). Two other examples of research that focuses on environmental destruction are Alexa Weik Von Mossner's "Hope in Dark Times: Climate Change and the World Risk Society in Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries 2015* and *2017*" (2013), which examines two books where climate change affects values and norms, so that Von Mossner regards it as "an example of '*critical eco-dystopias*'" (69; quotation on 70), and Elaine Ostry's analysis of connections between environmental destruction, on the one hand, and technology and consumerism, on the other ("On" 101).

There is an entire monograph devoted to the topic of the relationship between the environment and humanity in YA fiction: Alice Curry's *Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Fiction: A Poetics of Earth* (2013). Curry explores YA literature as a whole, but she highlights some aspects of YA dystopian literature. For example, she analyses the scene in which Katniss fires an arrow into the pig's mouth on the Gamemakers' table when they ignore her: "Whilst Katniss initially undergoes a process of objectification whereby her animal body becomes alien to herself [through the makeovers in the Capitol], she thus succeeds in reclaiming her animality as a subversive gesture against oppression" (Curry 53). When Katniss embraces her body and her athletic nature, she no longer lets the Capitol shape her into a pretty doll. Curry highlights how adolescents can play a central part in attempts to change the world and make it more ecologically sus-

tainable, since they are not yet a part of the adult generation and thus have the ability to see flaws in the systems that adults have created and/or are upholding (197).

One example of a study that addresses ecocritical perspectives and Collins' trilogy is Jennifer Harrison's article, which focuses on sustainability versus commodity in the series. She argues that "Collins sets up a dichotomy between social and political exploitation and the sustainable human and environmental relationships modelled by the rebels", clarifying how there are two distinctly different views of the relationship between humans and the environment in Collins' series (Harrison, "Bread" 159).

Another analysis that addresses the relationship between humans and their surroundings, albeit from a slightly different perspective than ecocriticism, is Roxanne Harde's analysis of Katniss' Appalachian heritage and the way this affects her character in Collins' trilogy. Harde argues that her Appalachian body gives Katniss resilience and the ability to withstand physical hardships because of its connection to her home region (58). She "embodies her home district, the Appalachian hills of the southeastern United States" (Harde 57).

In this monograph, I highlight sustainability issues where they are relevant, despite choosing not to incorporate an ecocritical perspective in my study. For example, in the chapter on adolescent mothers, I highlight the attempts made by Elin, the protagonist in the *Blood Rain* series, to work for a healthier environment.

POST-HUMAN READINGS

Scholars have also applied a *post-human* perspective to YA dystopian literature. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "post-human" as "[o]f or relating to a hypothetical species that might evolve from human beings, as by means of genetic or bionic augmentation" ("post-human").

The distinction between humans, nonhumans and the post-humans is explored by Elaine Ostry. In her article, she argues that a

recurrent trend in YA dystopian literature and other types of science fiction for young readers is the use of biotechnology to control the young generation, to an even greater extent than the control adults have over children in real-life societies (Ostry, “Is” 223). An article by Erin T. Newcomb also focuses on the post-human in the form of a clone in Nancy Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) (175).

In Harrison’s monograph *Posthumanist Readings in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction: Negotiating the Nature/Culture Divide* (2019), she analyses *The Giver* and Philip Reeve’s *Mortal Engines* quartet, for example—two series that are included in my corpus. She argues that works of YA dystopian literature explore post-humanist possibilities. They

provide models for how young people can positively negotiate between the development of individual subjectivity and collective identity; they offer new ways of considering concepts such as time, progress, evolution, and development; they reconsider binary constructions and hierarchies; they renegotiate and reconsider social structures such as the family and the community; and finally, they depict identity and bodies as fluid, fractured, and mutable. (Harrison, *Posthumanist* 3)

All these aspects tie into a reconsideration of the relationship between humans and the environment, according to Harrison (*Ibid.*).

Attempts to enhance humans and humanity in YA dystopian literature are investigated by Anna Bugajska in *Engineering Youth: The Evantropian Project in Young Adult Dystopias* (2019). For example, she analyses American author Neal Shusterman’s *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy (2016–2019), to which I devote a case study in my chapter on adolescent killers. Discussing concepts such as post-humanism and trans-humanism, Bugajska argues that “[t]he inescapable idealization of the juvenile protagonists makes them necessary harbingers of hope and the carriers of various utopian standards” (18). She highlights how body modifications are common within the genre, and that these are often used as a part of the evantropian project of improving humanity. For example, these aspects are mentioned as

important in both the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy and Westerfeld's *Uglies* series (2005–2007) (Bugajska 168). I will return to Bugajska's study in my case study of Shusterman's trilogy.

ASPECTS OF POWER

During my extensive reading of previous research on YA dystopian literature it has become clear that the vast majority of research on this genre is devoted to power aspects, agency and/or resistance to existing power relationships in the form of rebellions and revolutions. In "The Future is Pale: Race in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Novels" (2013), Mary J. Couzelis argues that many YA dystopian novels do not address racial and ethnic diversity, and that Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005) and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008) all endorse white privilege and do not question the racial hierarchies of contemporary society (132). Depictions of race and racism are also highlighted in the *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction* (2021) anthology, edited by Green-Barteet and Meghan Gilbert-Hickey. The book is divided into the following sections, illustrating the kind of questions posed in the anthology: defining diversity, erasing race, lineages of whiteness and racialised identities. For example, Alex Polish analyses "The Racial Coding of Dis/ability in the *Divergent* Series", arguing that people with damaged genes are treated as (dis)abled in the final novel of the series, *Allegiant* (2013), but that the racial implications of the eugenics campaign are not highlighted. Racialised characters are also othered, and the racist oppression directed against them is not acknowledged within the narrative (Polish 165–166).

Another study that focuses on race is Elizabeth Ebony Thomas' *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games* (2019). Thomas analyses both the negative reactions to the casting of the mixed-race actress Amandla Stenberg for the role of Rue in Collins' series and race aspects of the trilogy and its movie adaptations. She clarifies that the outrage over how Rue was not played by a white actress, even though she is explicitly described

as dark-skinned in the novels, shows how white readers were not able to conceptualise Rue as racialised. In her analysis of the novels and the movies, she “show[s] how the novel’s moral center of gravity is transferred from Rue to Katniss, as the benefits of Rue’s sacrifice provide not only the impetus for Katniss’s revolution but also directly enable it” (Thomas 39).

Claire P. Curtis analyses two YA dystopian novels that offer radically different opportunities to “awaken a desire in readers to think about the role they can play as young adults and the responsibilities they might have in creating a new world” (97). In her article, she argues that while Julie Bertagna’s *Exodus* (2009) encourages readers to become active in creating a new and better society, Susan Beth Pfeffer’s *Last Survivors* series (2006–2013) does not; instead, Curtis argues that Pfeffer’s text presents injustice as impossible to overcome, which leaves readers with the pessimistic message that there is no point in trying to create a better world (85–86).

Bridgette Barclay also addresses the connections between different power categories in her analysis of Libba Bray’s *Beauty Queens* (2011), a novel included in my corpus, which includes depictions of a transgender²² character, a queer character, race and (dis)ability. The novel “offers an honest discourse about multiple removals from power and satirizes dominant culture’s norms to show the power of becoming, of indeterminacy, and of hybridity” (141), according to Barclay’s article.

A great deal of the research on power relationships focuses on gender. Often this topic is dealt with in relation to adolescent rebellions. The *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* essay collection aims to explore

the ways in which the dystopian mode provides girls—who continue to be constructed as passive and weak within much

22. Transgender is “an umbrella term to describe someone who identifies as a different gender than the one assigned at birth. Transgender people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) gender-fluid, non-binary, agender, trans man, or trans woman” (Owen and Lauchlan-Ford 12).

of Western culture—with the means to challenge the status quo, even as many of these works remain invested in elements of romance that may be seen as limiting girls’ agency. (Day, Green-Barteet and Montz 4)

For example, Mary Jeanette Moran explores the physical transformations of Tally Youngblood, the protagonist in Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* trilogy, as a process of increasing rebelliousness in relation to the existing social order. Her final rebellion takes place when she is able to independently counteract brain modifications imposed on her and the vast majority of citizens by the government (Moran 137).

In the same essay collection, Ann M.M. Childs discusses how it seems to be impossible for female characters in YA dystopian literature to establish long-lasting friendships with other girls, as they constantly have to choose between love interests and friendships, with the former being prioritised:

Despite the subversive elements that mark rebellion in young adult dystopian fiction, in cases where a female protagonist has a prominent female friendship, the friendship will be sacrificed in order to reconcile dystopia’s hopelessness with the hopefulness of young adult fiction, often at the cost of reinforcing negative female stereotypes. (187)

This conclusion is similar to Isabel Santaularia’s, whose article argues that the authors of YA fiction “foreclose alternative possibilities for radically female futures and pre-empt the political participation of girls in the construction of a new world” (16). She thereby illuminates the connection between female heroes and contemporary gender norms. In her master’s thesis, Stephanie Vega also discusses gender in relation to rebellion, arguing that protagonists in YA dystopian literature are simultaneously portrayed as action heroines and romance heroines, which ultimately leads to the confirmation of a patriarchal²³

23. A patriarchy is defined by Geraldine Moane as a society in which “almost

status quo (iii). Yet another analysis of heroes in YA dystopian literature, such as Collins's series, can be found in Louisa MacKay Demerjian's article "What Makes a Young Adult Dystopian Hero?" (2016).

Hentges' monograph *Girls on Fire: Transformative Heroines in Young Adult Dystopian Literature* (2018), which I referred to in the section on definitions of YA dystopian literature, focuses on female heroines from a broad range of primary texts. For example, Hentges describes the historical roots of the genre, recurrent themes and othered girls in YA dystopian literature. I will address Hentges' study in more detail in the analysis chapters.

In her doctoral thesis, *Reductive Reproduction: Intersectional Motherhood in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (2016), Gilbert-Hickey analyses different types of mothers in YA dystopian literature, arguing that "[t]he normative maternal role is impossible for poor women, young women, queer women, unmarried women, and women of color precisely because of their intersectional identities" (Gilbert-Hickey abstract). She thus ties depictions of motherhood to gender, age, sexuality, race and class and their intersections. I will cover this study in-depth in Chapter 2 on adolescent mothers.

In the anthology *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals* (2018), edited by Myrna J. Santos, gender expectations are explored from a variety of angles. For example, Ryan K. Strader analyses agrarian ideals in *The Hunger Games* through an analysis of the hunter, the garden and democracy. Benjamin C. Parker investigates revolutionary women and their resistance to oppressive regimes in *The Hunger Games* trilogy and the *Divergent* trilogy, for example. Christa van Raalte analyses the older female antagonists in the film adaptations of the same series, and Alison J. Halsall argues that heteronormative gender ideals limit opportunities for female empowerment in Collins' and Roth's series, and that it is possible to read Katniss as a queer character (62, 64).

In their article, Lisa Manter and Lauren Francis explore Katniss'

all of the major systems of society [...] which are hierarchically organized are male dominated" (28).

romantic and non-romantic desires. They argue that Katniss displays more love and desire for her sister Prim and for Rue, another Tribute, than for the two young men in the series' love triangle: Gale Hawthorne and Peeta. In their article, they view her as "queer" in the broad sense, as a character who disrupts norms. Their aim is to "highlight her potential as a queer figure who challenges mainstream expectations of teen romance" (Manter and Francis 287).

The topic of queerness in YA dystopian literature is interrogated in an article by Green-Barteet and Coste. They clarify how most protagonists in this genre are still heterosexual and cisgender, but even novels that include queer characters reinscribe heteronormativity²⁴. They

analyze *The Scorpion Rules* (2015) and *Love in the Time of Global Warming* (2013), both of which feature queer girl protagonists, and conclude that these texts ultimately marginalize that queerness. While they offer readers queer female protagonists, they also equate queerness with non-normative bodies and reaffirm heteronormativity. The rebellion of both protagonists effectively distances them from the queer agency they have developed throughout the narratives. (Green-Barteet and Coste 82)

There is thus a need for more YA dystopian literature that includes queer characters in a way that challenges heteronormativity in a more profound sense than the novels analysed by Green-Barteet and Coste.

Raising the same issue of the importance of diverse characters, S. R. Toliver's article states that the current tendency in publishing to

24. As Marcus Herz and Thomas Johansson clarify, "[h]eteronormativity points at the everyday and mundane ways in which heterosexuality is privileged and taken for granted, that is, normalized and naturalized" (1011). As a consequence, heterosexual people are privileged, while people with other sexual orientations are viewed as non-normative and therefore not entitled to the same privileges as heterosexual people. This creates a system of oppression.

not give much room to non-white characters “promotes the idea that white female adolescent protagonists of the future get to experience freedom, equality, and societal progress, while adolescent females of color get to remain ignored as they continue to struggle for mere existence” (187). This reinforces the need for more diverse YA dystopian literature. Toliver analyses fifteen YA dystopian novels with non-white central characters.

Robin A. Parent’s doctoral thesis consists of a reader-response focused analysis of YA dystopian novels and their reception by adolescent girls and women. The study does not include any male or non-binary respondents. It illustrates differences in the response to female protagonists in YA dystopian literature in the various age groups (Parent 6), thereby highlighting an intersection between gender and age. While the number of respondents is too small to generalise the results, it points towards a crucial difference in feminist approaches: “The women participants demonstrated a broader societal concern, such as those shared by second wave feminists. The girls, in contrast, were firmly situated within individualist aspects of third-wave feminism” (Parent iv). This illustrates the need to conduct further empirical studies, through which differences between different groups of people and their interpretations can be highlighted.

While most gender-focused studies of YA dystopian literature concentrate on female characters, and particularly on female protagonists, some research has been conducted that focuses on the construction of masculinity. In her article, Jessica Seymour argues that there is a wider conception of masculinity in YA dystopian literature than in traditional definitions of masculinity. This includes a care circle, a trait that is traditionally associated with femininity. The male protagonists that she analyses, for example Agent Six of Hearts in *The Lab* (2006) by Jack Heath, are not willing to kill other people until they are faced with the choice between killing someone in order to protect their care circle, which is their loved ones, and not being able to protect them at all (Seymour 628, 637).

Research on age as a power category, including generational power differences is, like gender, a significant field of research. The essays

in *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* focus on young female protagonists, thereby highlighting intersections between age and gender, more or less explicitly. The introduction clarifies that in recent years there has been a lot of focus on what it means to be a young women in literature, which the editors view as indicating an aim to “reconsider and redefine adolescent womanhood” among authors, scholars, parents and today’s young women (Day et al. 5).

The practice of child sacrifice in *The Hunger Games* trilogy is explored in Susan Shau Ming Tan’s article (“Burn” 55), and Susan Louise Stewart’s article explores the same topic in Neal Shusterman’s *Unwind* (2007). Heather Snell analyses the construction of young saviours in *Unwind* in her article. Abbie Ventura’s article problematises a conception of the child as a revolutionary subject through an analysis of M. T. Anderson’s *Feed* (2002), Nancy Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) and Pete Hautman’s *Rash* (2006) (89, 91). In her article, Patricia Kennon analyses gender structures in YA dystopian literature, where children create their own societies after the adults have disappeared in one way or another (40).

The importance of memories of childhood in Hugh Scott’s *Why Weeps the Brogan?* (1989), Ruth Hooker’s *Kennaquhair* (1976) and Robert C. O’Brien’s *Z for Zachariah* (1974) is highlighted in Elizabeth Braithwaite’s article. She argues that “all three texts suggest that childhood is innately innocent, and that it can be called upon through memory or invoked through experience to support a positive social order, to challenge a negative one, or to enable a transition toward self-actualisation” (Braithwaite, “When” 56). Hentges defines O’Brien’s novel as one of the roots of the YA dystopian genre (unnumbered page before the title page).

In another article by Braithwaite that focuses on constructions of guilt, she argues that

[i]n post-nuclear texts for young adults the emphasis tends to be on the perceived responsibility of the young adult reader’s generation to work towards preventing the disaster from becoming reality, rather than on the guilt of the adult generation

that caused the disaster. However, in texts dealing with environmental disaster, the young adult reader's generation can be seen to have some measure of culpability, and so the issues of guilt and responsibility become more complex. ("The Hope" 1)

Responsibility for the society gone awry is thus put on different groups in different types of disaster texts, according to Braithwaite.

All these studies address aspects of what it means to be a young character in a YA dystopian text. Throughout this study, I will explore this question further in my analysis of adolescent killers and adolescent mothers.

OTHER TOPICS AND APPROACHES

In addition to the recurrent topics of previous research that I have addressed this far, scholars have also devoted critical attention to subjects that include the sorting into different factions in the first two books of Veronica Roth's *Divergent* trilogy, *Divergent* (2011) and *Insurgent* (2012) (Basu), different genres that affect specific YA dystopian novels (Lauer; Broad), technology and literacy as a tool for rebellion (McDuffie), the connections between the Hunger Games as gladiator games and computer/video games (Muller 51), the role of surveillance in the Hunger Games (Brost 92), and food's association with rebellion in *The Hunger Games* trilogy (Gilbert-Hickey 95). Sarah Hardstaff also touches on the role of food in Collins' trilogy in her article, arguing that when Katniss arrives in the Capitol she is fattened up for the kill in a manner similar to Hansel and Gretel in the fairy tale (49).

The relationship of YA dystopian literature to the overall development of YA fiction is investigated by Chelsea Elmore in her honours essay. Through a text analysis of Veronica Roth's *Divergent* trilogy, which is included in my corpus, she explores the following question: "How does the increasingly popular YA dystopian fiction reflect realism and mimesis?" (5). She argues that "[m]imetic theory suggests

that teenagers can find therapeutic closure in a dystopia because the text represents a shadow of reality rather than its harsh actuality” (Elmore 44), thereby clarifying that there are mimetic elements in YA dystopian literature that reflect aspects of non-fictional societies.

These examples of other topics in previous research illustrate the diversity of scholarly interest in YA dystopian literature.

*

To summarise, there are many previous studies of YA dystopian literature, and they have focused on many different topics. Most of this research has been published in article form, resulting in obvious restraints on both how thorough the analyses can be and the size of the text corpuses that can be explored. Therefore, there is a need to expand the current research with more full-length studies, in which it is possible to provide both deep analysis of specific works of YA dystopian literature and the scope and defining characteristics of the genre as a whole. This monograph aims to address both these overarching goals. As I will clarify more in depth in the analysis chapters, as yet there is little research on the motifs of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother in YA dystopian literature. My study strives to illustrate what insights can be gained from focusing on these motifs, as well as to exemplify how the monograph format and a large text corpus can aid a thorough analysis of YA dystopian literature.

The Design of the Study: Outline and Why it Looks the Way it Does

In addition to the introductory chapter, this study has three chapters and a conclusion. The first two chapters, “Chapter 1: To Kill or Be Killed? Adolescent Killers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature” and “Chapter 2: Protecting Your Child at All Costs: Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature”, address the two motifs that I use to highlight age-related power structures. Each chapter includes

an overview of different categories of the motif present in my corpus, as well as three case studies. At the end of each chapter, I identify, summarise and compare the ideologies linked to age-related power structures that are communicated in each case study, thereby clarifying the motifs' educational potential as regards age-related power structures. The third chapter, "Adolescent Killers and Mothers in the Curriculum: Classroom Exploration of Adult Oppression of the Young Using Young Adult Dystopian Literature" utilises the chapters on textual analysis as a stepping stone for six suggestions for teaching plans. The chapter thus provides inspiration for how the educational potential of each motif identified in the previous two chapters can be actualised in the classroom. The study ends with a conclusion called "Mothers and Murderers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: Concluding Remarks".

The chapter about adolescent killers in YA dystopian literature presents previous research on the topic and provides an overview of the nine different categories of adolescent killers I found in my corpus. The three case studies analyse the different types of adolescent killers and killings present in American author Christina Henry's *The Girl in Red* (2019), Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's *Shatter Me* series (2011–2020) and American author Neal Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy (2016–2019). The chapter focuses on the protagonists Red in Henry's novel, Juliette Ferrars in Mafi's series and both Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch in Neal Shusterman's trilogy. It also identifies the ideologies related to the power category of age that are communicated by the motif of the adolescent killer in each novel/series, as well as compares the three text examples with each other.

In the chapter on adolescent mothers, I introduce five different types of adolescent mothers found in my corpus of primary texts. I relate these categories both to previous research and to the historical heritage of YA dystopian literature in feminist science fiction, which addresses reproduction, gender and motherhood. The three case studies are an analysis of the characters Lyda Mertz in American author Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014), Shari Chopra in American authors James Frey and Nils Johnson-Shelton's *Endgame*

trilogy (2014–2016) and Elin Holme in Swedish author Mats Wahl's *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] series (2014–2017). The ideologies about the power category of age that are communicated by the motif in each series are identified and compared to the other series' ideologies.

The third chapter, about teaching YA dystopian literature, incorporates an overview of the research about the genre in relation to educational and didactic aspects. It presents three central educational concepts: *critical literacy*, Martha C. Nussbaum's concept of *narrative imagination* and Judith A. Langer's notion of *envisionment building*. These provide inspiration for six suggested teaching plans—one for each case study included in the two text analysis chapters. The teaching plans include aims, tasks, assessment practices and evaluation processes for the six YA dystopian novels that I have devoted case studies to.

Finally, the conclusion briefly summarises the findings of my study and identifies potential areas for future research.

*

I have decided to combine broad overviews of how the two motifs are actualised in the genre with six case studies because I want to explore two common characteristics of the genre of YA dystopian literature *and* how a specific motif can be used in different ways in different novels. In previous research, there is a clear tendency to either do a broad analysis of the genre *or* to analyse a few example texts in depth. This is true both for articles, where it may be necessary to pick one of these approaches due to space limits, and for monographs. By combining both approaches, I attempt to give readers a sense of how the adolescent killer and adolescent mother motifs are used to highlight the power category of age in the genre *and* to exemplify the ways in which these motifs are used to interrogate age-related relationships of power in specific novels and series. The study thus aims to provide both breadth and depth in the analysis of the motifs and the power category of age in YA dystopian literature. Because of my large corpus of primary texts, I have been able to identify some patterns in the

genre that I would not otherwise have been able to detect. This extensive reading has also helped me identify which works of YA dystopian literature are beneficial to analyse in the case studies. There are obviously more of these that I could have selected for these in-depth analyses, and therefore I include a discussion of why I chose the texts that I have in each analysis chapter.

In addition, the combination of the two text analysis chapters about age-related ideologies in YA dystopian literature and the chapter on how these ideologies can be practically utilised in the classroom, so promoting the educational potential of the novels, enables different ways to approach the reading of this study. While the classroom chapter is an extension of the text analyses conducted in the chapters about the two motifs, and is therefore placed after these in the book, it is also possible to start by reading the chapter on classroom applications and then move on to the parts of the text analysis chapters that are most relevant to a specific reader. The index of concepts will guide readers to the place where I define the central concepts.

No matter which reading path a particular reader picks, my hope is that the combination of text analysis, the identification of the age-related ideologies in the novels and the suggested teaching plans will help readers, especially teachers and trainee teachers, to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

TO KILL OR BE KILLED? ADOLESCENT KILLERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

The extreme aetonormative power abuse committed by adult characters and institutions in YA dystopian literature contributes to the genre's educational potential, by problematising, interrogating and questioning the uneven distribution of age-related power that profoundly affects the interaction between young people and adults in non-fictional societies. By presenting extreme situations that perpetuate aetonormativity to the point of adult abuse of power, YA dystopian literature illustrates the possible consequences of adults' power in real life. This, in turn, gives the genre an educational potential for exploring the power mechanisms behind a power hierarchy that is often not regarded as such, but rather as a natural state, or as a necessity for the protection of children. This is achieved using hyperbole, the exaggeration of power relationships in non-fiction societies. In this chapter, I use the adolescent killer motif to analyse the adult abuse of power that is faced by the young characters in my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian texts. Age-related power structures in the dystopian societies are illuminated when an adolescent is forced to become a killer²⁵.

25. I use the word "killer" to denote a character who is responsible for taking someone else's life, regardless of the reason why they do so. While some of the killings are defined as "murders" by the society the character lives in or by the character themselves, others are defined as accidents. The use of the word "killer" in this chapter should thereby be regarded as meaning "a person who has killed someone".

The motif of the adolescent killer is very prominent in contemporary YA dystopian literature. Young characters kill for different reasons: some are forced to kill in order to survive in a dystopian world where their lives are at risk; others have unusual powers that turn them into lethal weapons and are exploited by the dystopian regimes; some are even forced to take on killing as a job, either because they have to take part in a lethal game or experiment that includes killing others in order to win, or because becoming a killer is the occupation that has been chosen for them by a dystopian regime. The number of adolescents who kill because they enjoy it is much smaller than that of adolescents who are forced to become killers for other reasons, and the former are usually portrayed as the enemy, abusing the act of killing for their own pleasure and/or gain.²⁶ In this chapter, I will analyse the different types of adolescent killers present in my corpus of YA dystopian literature to clarify how the act of killing someone can be portrayed in diverse ways and with varying consequences for the young killer.

Age-related ideologies, as well as other power categories, are distinctly highlighted by the motif of the adolescent killer, positioning the protagonist(s) as responsible for the most severe crime in contemporary society. While the act of killing someone can be viewed as the ultimate wielding of power, the adolescent killers in YA dystopian literature—who are forced to become killers by dystopian regimes and the adults that rule these regimes—are simultaneously disempowered. In these cases, their ability to kill is dictated and directed by the regime in question. Therefore, the act of killing highlights an extreme kind of abuse of adults' power, by turning adolescents into killers against their will.

I argue that an analysis of the adolescent killer motif can contribute to a deeper understanding of the power category of age in YA dystopian literature, specifically in terms of how a binary conception of adolescents as either repressed (cf. Nikolajeva, "Theory") or

26. See my discussion on pp. 92–94 of Kass Morgan's *The 100* series and Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy for two examples of exceptions from this overall pattern.

empowered (cf. Beauvais, *Mighty*) cannot accurately account for the power position of adolescents within YA dystopian literature.²⁷ The depictions of the characters' intersectional subject positions contribute to nuancing the power category of age by clarifying that other power categories such as (dis)ability²⁸, sexuality, gender and race intersect with age, and create distinctly different opportunities for the young protagonists to influence their dystopian worlds.

The aims of this chapter are: 1) to provide an overview of different types of adolescent killers within the Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature in my corpus, 2) to investigate how the act of killing has different effects on the adolescent characters' access to power in their dystopian societies, and 3) to highlight the ideologies behind age-related power structures, as communicated by the adolescent killer motif in three different examples of YA dystopian literature: American author Christina Henry's *The Girl in Red* (2019), Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's *Shatter Me* series (2011–2020) and American author Neal Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy (2016–2019).

Text Selection, Theoretical Framework and Chapter Structure

I selected my case studies using the criteria that they explore the motif of the adolescent killer in distinctly different manners, and because they highlight the alternation between empowerment and repression that is tied to the motif in illuminating and diverse ways. Henry's and Mafi's series predominantly exemplify three overarching trends within the motif: the adolescent who kills out of self-defence, to survive in a dystopian society (Henry), the adolescent who kills to protect others from harm (Henry and Mafi), and the adolescent who

27. I introduce Nikolajeva's and Beauvais' standpoints in the book's introduction. See the section on "Aetonnormativity versus the Mighty Child".

28. For an explanation of why I use "(dis)ability" instead of "disability", see note 2, p. 18–19.

is used as a lethal weapon by others (Mafi). Shusterman's invention of adolescents who are hired to become killers should be seen as a rare alternative to the adolescent who is forced to become a killer through participation in a lethal game or an experiment, which is more common within the YA dystopian novels in my corpus. Together, these three series map the different ways the motif of the adolescent killer can be connected to age-related power structures.

In order to explore the power dynamics of the different dystopias and how they affect the protagonists' actions, I apply an intersectional approach to power and Patricia Hill Collins's concept of the matrix of domination. Adolescent killers and their power positions are analysed by identifying the controlled adolescent motif and the mighty adolescent motif at different points in the narrative of the three primary texts. In addition, I identify ideologies regarding the distribution of age-related power that are communicated by the adolescent killer motif in my three case studies. These ideologies form the starting point for my discussion about classroom applications in Chapter 3.

The chapter begins with an overview of the incidence of different kinds of adolescent killers in my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature. These examples give additional support for my claims about the various categories of adolescent killers that can be found in YA dystopian literature, as well as provide background knowledge, before I move on to a close reading of the three main examples. The section's categories of adolescent killers have been derived from a motif-focused reading of my whole corpus of primary texts, in which I have listed different kinds of adolescent killers throughout the reading process. This overview is followed by an analysis of the adolescent killers called Cordelia, or Red, in Henry's novel, Juliette Ferrars in Mafi's series and Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch in Shusterman's trilogy. In the section that follows these case studies, I identify and compare the ideologies about age-related power structures found in the three case studies. In the conclusion, I summarise my main arguments about the adolescent killer motif's relationship to the power category of age.

Adolescent Killers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview

YA dystopian literature offers numerous reasons why adolescents become killers. In this section I provide an overview of these to clarify how versatile the motif of the adolescent killer is within the genre, using my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian texts, which showcases nine different categories of the adolescent killer motif (see Table 2). I will also illustrate how, although the reasons for becoming a killer may initially seem very different, most protagonists who are also adolescent killers are portrayed as righteous killers.²⁹ The enemies, however, repeatedly take other people's lives for unjust and selfish reasons. Although the aim of this section is to give a broad overview of different variations of the motif, I want to stress that the motif is consistently connected to issues of adolescents' access to/lack of power.

29. I want to emphasise that what I analyse in this chapter is how the killings are depicted as righteous or unrighteous *within the intradiegetic world of the novels*. This should not be conflated with me arguing that the act of taking another human's life can ever be regarded as righteous.

Table 2: *Nine Categories of Adolescent Killer in YA Dystopian Literature*

Adolescent killer category:	Exemplified in this chapter by: ³⁰
1. Adolescents who kill in self-defence within a dystopian setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edfeldt, <i>Brännmärkt</i> [Branded] (Adeline Theta) • Roth, the <i>Divergent</i> series (Tris Prior) • Dashner, the <i>Maze Runner</i> series (Thomas³¹) • Bray, <i>Beauty Queens</i> (Taylor Hawkins) • Söderlund, <i>Ätlingarna</i>-trilogin [The Descendants trilogy] (Wilma Eriksson) • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, the <i>Endgame</i> trilogy (An Liu) • Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> (Red) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch) • Baggott, the <i>Pure</i> trilogy (Lyda Mertz) • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [the Blood Rain series] (Elin Holme) • Reeve, the <i>Mortal Engines</i> quartet (Tom Natsworthy)

30. The three main text examples analysed in this chapter are written in bold in the table and the young killers names are mentioned after the title. Please note that there are several adolescent killer characters in many of the series, *but that I only mention the character that I use to exemplify a specific category of killers* in the table. Some killers commit different types of killings, but I have only categorised the acts of killing that I use to illustrate a specific category of killers in this chapter.

There are more examples of different types of killers in my overall corpus than those mentioned in this chapter, but I do not have the space to address all of them in this study. The purpose here is primarily to exemplify the nine different categories of killers I have found in my corpus. However, in a future study, it would be valuable to categorise all killers in the corpus and explore whether there are differences in which categories are found/common in texts from different countries and/or from different years.

31. In some series, the adolescent characters are only given a first name.

<p>2. Adolescents who kill to protect others from their enemies/a dystopian regime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Söderlund, <i>Ätlingarna</i>-trilogin [The Descendants trilogy] (Wilma Eriksson) • Baggott, the <i>Pure</i> trilogy (Lyda Mertz) • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [the Blood Rain series] (Elin Holme) • Roth, the <i>Carve the Mark</i> duology (Akos Kereseth) • Young, the <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy (Saba) • O'Brien, the <i>Birthmarked</i> trilogy (Gaia Stone) • Bray, <i>Beauty Queens</i> (Taylor Hawkins) • Ewing, the <i>Lone City</i> trilogy (Violet Lasting & the group of surrogates) • Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> (Red) • Mafi, the <i>Shatter Me</i> series (Juliette Ferrars & Kenji Kishimoto) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch) • Reeve, the <i>Mortal Engines</i> quartet (Hester Shaw)
<p>3. Adolescents who are prepared to kill parts of humanity to save humanity as a whole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashner, the <i>Maze Runner</i> series (Thomas) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch, aka Scythe Lucifer)
<p>4. Adolescents who kill corrupt adult leaders in a rebellion against the current regime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashner, the <i>Maze Runner</i> series (Thomas) • Roth, the <i>Carve the Mark</i> duology (Akos Kereseth) • Young, the <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy (Saba) • Baggott, the <i>Pure</i> trilogy (Partridge Willux) • Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i> trilogy (Katniss Everdeen) • Day, the <i>Fandom</i> duology (Violet & Nate) • Ewing, the <i>Lone City</i> trilogy (Carnelian) • Mafi, the <i>Shatter Me</i> series (Juliette Ferrars, Kenji Kishimoto, Warner Anderson, another of the Commander's children) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch)

5. Adolescents who have a special ability and are forced to use this ability to kill in the name of a dystopian regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bracken, <i>The Darkest Minds</i> series (Liam Stewart) • Roth, the <i>Carve the Mark</i> duology (Cyra Noavek) • (Mafi, the <i>Shatter Me</i> series (Juliette Ferrars))³² • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch) • Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i> trilogy (Katniss Everdeen)
6. Adolescents who are forced to kill by an institution, such as in an arena, a lethal game, or an experiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roth, the <i>Carve the Mark</i> duology (Cyra Noavek) • Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i> trilogy (Katniss & the other Tributes) • Dashner, the <i>Maze Runner</i> series (Gally) • Young, the <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy (Saba) • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, the <i>Endgame</i> trilogy (all twelve Players except Shari Chopra) • Söderberg, <i>Athena</i> (Benjamin) • Edfeldt, <i>Brännmärkt</i> [Branded] (Mia Gamma) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Citra Terranova & Rowan Damisch)
7. Adolescents who kill out of mercy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edfeldt, <i>Brännmärkt</i> [Branded] (Mia Gamma) • Grant, the <i>Gone</i> series (Hunter Lefkowitz) • Young, the <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy (Saba) • Baggott, the <i>Pure</i> trilogy (Pressia Belze) • Dashner, the <i>Maze Runner</i> series (Thomas) • Mafi, the <i>Shatter Me</i> series (Juliette Ferrars)
8. Adolescents who kill as part of a respectable profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Citra Terranova & Rowan Damisch)

32. As I clarify in my analysis of this series, Juliette is repeatedly used in this sense, but she never actually kills anyone before she regains control of her actions. Therefore, I put this series in parentheses here.

<p>9. Adolescents who kill for unrighteous reasons (for example, killing by mistake, killing innocent bystanders, killing in revenge, killing the wrong person, killing when brain-washed)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morgan, <i>The 100</i> series (Wells Jaha) • Reeve, the <i>Mortal Engines</i> quartet (Hester Shaw, Wren Natsworthy) • Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i> trilogy (Katniss Everdeen) • Shusterman, the <i>Unwind</i> dystology (a group of adolescents) • Westerfeld, the <i>Uglies</i> series (The Specials) • Grant, the <i>Gone</i> series (Charles Merriman aka Orc) • Young, the <i>Dust Lands</i> trilogy (Lugh) • Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> (Red) • Mafi, the <i>Shatter Me</i> series (Juliette Ferrars & Emmaline Sommers) • Shusterman, the <i>Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy (Rowan Damisch)
--	--

To the best of my knowledge, an overview of different types of killers in YA dystopian literature has not yet been published, but there is some previous research on the topic of adolescent killers in YA dystopian texts.³³ In Jessica Seymour's article "‘Murder me ... become a man’: Establishing the Masculine Care Circle in Young Adult Dysto-

33. For an overview of some novels for young readers in Swedish, German and English that depict the motif of a young killer in realist fiction, see Corina Löwe's article "Vilse, förtvivlad, ond: Att skriva fram det oskrivbara" [Lost, Despairing, Evil: Writing the Unwritable] (2019).

Michelle Ann Abate analyses the role of homicides in children's literature, with a focus on American literature, in *Bloody Murder: The Homicide Tradition in Children's Literature* (2013). She presents an historical overview of how homicides have been depicted in fiction and clarifies that there is not yet that much research on homicides in children's literature. In her chapters, she includes analyses of fairy tales and S. E. Hinton's classic YA novel *The Outsiders* (1967), for example.

Jag gör med dig vad jag vill: Perspektiv på våld och våldsskildringar [I Do What I Want With You: Perspectives on Violence and Depictions of Violence] (2019), an essay collection edited by Torsten Pettersson, explores depictions of violence in different types of literary fiction, such as crime novels. Similarly, the essay collection *Violence in English Children's and Young Adults' Fiction* (2010), edited by Thomas Kullmann, investigates the role of violence and its effects on young readers in works such as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007).

pia" (2016) she addresses the second of the nine categories of adolescent killers in Table 2—adolescents who kill in order to protect others. Seymour's conclusions will be presented throughout this chapter.

Sarah Outterson Murphy analyses the protagonists of Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1985) and Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010) in relationship to the concept of the child soldier. She highlights some similarities between the protagonists in these series and real-life child soldiers, such as how they are emotionally isolated and suffer from the adults' violence. Murphy argues that turning young people into killers in this way is unusual in children's literature as a whole (200, 202). While I agree that this is true for most types of children's and YA literature, this chapter will demonstrate that the motif of the adolescent killer is not at all uncommon in YA dystopian literature—quite the contrary.

Amber M. Simmons also discusses the experiences of the Tributes in Collins' series in relationship to real-life child soldiers, and she states that child soldiers often become soldiers to access food and medical resources. Simmons compares this to how the children in Panem's districts can put their name into the Tribute lottery an extra time in exchange for *tesserae*, "a year's supply of grain and oil for one person" (29). Her article demonstrates that the children of Panem are willing to risk their lives for the sake of feeding themselves and their families, in a way that is reminiscent of the experience of child soldiers in non-fiction societies (Ibid.).

In my article called "Adolescent Killer and Politician: Age-Related Ideologies in the Dystopian Future Sweden of Mats Wahl's *Blood Rain Series*" (2019), I analyse the protagonist Elin Holme's position as an adolescent killer, politician and mother with the help of cognitive scripts. I exemplify my main arguments using Collins' trilogy and James Dashner's *Maze Runner* series (2009–2016), before moving on to Wahl's series. One of the article's aims is to highlight how the positions of adolescent killer, politician and mother intersect with and affect each other in Wahl's series. I clarify "that killings can in fact be motivated and necessary in a dystopian world that repeatedly puts adolescents in harm's way" (Alkestrand, "Adolescent" 215).

The article touches on categories one and two in the table above—self-protection and the protection of others.³⁴

However, research about adolescent literature has focused on death's influence on the adolescents' lives, rather than adolescents who end others' lives. Two influential studies on the topic of death are Roberta Seelinger Trites' *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* (2000) and Kathryn James' *Death, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Adolescent Literature* (2009).³⁵ They both discuss how depictions of death are tied to sexuality and power. Whereas Trites argues that death, sexuality and rebellions against adult authorities and institutions, as well as norms such as gender norms, are the defining characteristics of adolescent literature (x), James connects her investigation of death to gender and power (3). James also touches on the topic of adolescent female killers in her analysis of Australian post-disaster narratives. She argues that "there is a distinct uneasiness surrounding representations of the female as killer because, although these texts offer women new roles, they also tend to demonstrate that these roles are bound within a patriarchal framework" (James 8). In her analysis of *The Airdancer of Glass* (2004) she identifies several different motives for killing: the welfare of the female protagonist's future children, self-defence, politics, alleged "insanity" and psychosis (James 167). In a similar vein to Seymour, she underlines how killing to protect your family is a common reason to kill, but James' analysis investigates female protagonists (Ibid.).

I will briefly mention two examples of previous research that focus on violence in YA dystopian literature in a more general sense, before moving on to exemplifying the different categories of adolescent killers. Susan Shau Ming Tan investigates violence in Card's *Ender's Game* from 1985, a book that she herself regards as a proto-text for contemporary YA dystopian literature ("Battling" 245). Ender kills

34. Wahl's series will be analysed in depth in the next chapter about adolescent mothers.

35. An overview of how death has been depicted in children's literature can be found in the introduction to *Global Perspectives on Death in Children's Literature* (2016), written by [Lesley D. Clement](#).

two classmates, and Tan argues that the adults have turned him into a weapon through his training in Battle School (“Battling” 247). Tan views YA dystopian literature as “a genre characterised by violence” (“Battling” 244). Similarly, Laura Poladian, in her article “Narrating Trauma: The Value of Violence in YA Dystopian Fiction” (2016), summarises how violence has been an important part of children’s literature, from the first Golden Age of children’s literature around the year 1900 up to contemporary YA dystopian literature (73–74). In an analysis of Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* and Collins’ trilogy, she argues that in both cases the books have been banned and questioned largely because of the violence that they depict (Poladian 75). This illustrates how the violence in YA dystopian literature has been challenged by the adult world, for example by banning the books. At the same time, the wide readership across age groups suggests that YA dystopian literature touches on topics that are relevant to children, adolescents and adults alike. One of the ingredients specific to the YA dystopian genre is the adolescent killer motif.

CATEGORY 1: ADOLESCENTS WHO KILL IN SELF-DEFENCE

The first category of adolescent killers found in my corpus of YA dystopian literature consists of **adolescents who kill in self-defence within a dystopian setting**. In fights with the enemy, the protagonist of Lizette Edfeldt’s Swedish YA dystopian novel *Brännmärkt* [Branded] (2017),³⁶ Adeline Theta, uses violence against several soldiers, who most likely die because of her actions (Edfeldt, *Brännmärkt* 267, 392, 396–397, 402–403).³⁷ Tris (Beatrice) Prior in Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* series similarly kills Edward, nicknamed Will, when he attacks her due to the influence of a special serum that turns people into

36. This book is the first one of a planned series, but book two has not yet been published.

37. The narrative never clarifies whether they die, but since they fall off a train at full speed, for example, it is most likely that they do (Edfeldt 397).

mindless killers (Roth, *Divergent* 443–444, 446), and Thomas repeatedly kills enemies when he is attacked in Dashner’s *Maze Runner* series (cf. Dashner, *Maze* 192–194; Dashner, *Death* 293). Taylor Hawkins, one of the pageant contestants stranded on a supposedly desolate island after a plane crash in Libba Bray’s *The Beauty Queens* (2011), also kills soldiers when they attack her (Bray, *Beauty* 214–215, 275). In a similar vein, one of the protagonists in Swedish author Mats Söderlund’s trilogy *Ättlingarna* [The Descendants] (2018–2020), Wilma Eriksson, kills at least four enemies when they attack her and her allies with lethal violence (*Flykten* [The Escape] 427–429). In all these cases, the adolescents kill because they do not have any other viable option if they want to survive in their dystopian societies.

In the *Endgame* trilogy (2014–2016) by James Frey and Nils Johnson-Shelton, the adolescent character of An Liu is a mass murderer, but his current killing spree is depicted as the result of his family’s brutal torture throughout his childhood. The torture is a part of the preparations for Endgame—a competition in which twelve adolescents from twelve different bloodlines must fight each other to their deaths to save their own people from total destruction.³⁸ At the age of eleven, he killed his whole family in order to protect himself from harm (Frey and Johnson-Shelton, *Calling* ix–x, 214). His actions are explained as a result of an abusive childhood, and although his current killings are described as unjust and often unnecessary, he became a killer through an act of self-protection. Thus, what originally turned him into a killer was a desperate need to protect himself. Later, he started enjoying the act of killing. An is a complex character who commits many killings throughout the series, but this first one illustrates how the mistreatment he suffered from adults turned him into a brutal mass murderer. Hence, the adults’ power abuse is highlighted.

This category of adolescent killers will be analysed in depth, using Henry’s novel as an example. There are also examples of this category in Shusterman’s work, which I will return to in the section on that se-

38. The *Endgame* trilogy will be analysed in detail in the next chapter, on the adolescent mother motif.

ries. Two adolescent mothers, Lyda Mertz in Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014) and Elin Holme in the Swedish YA dystopian series *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] (2014–2017) by Mats Wahl, both kill in self-defence. These killings will be analysed in detail in the chapter on adolescent mothers.

CATEGORY 2: ADOLESCENTS WHO KILL TO PROTECT OTHERS

The act of self-protection is often combined with protecting others by using lethal violence. This is true for Söderlund's protagonist Wilma, who tries to defend her mother and aunt from being killed by their enemies (Söderlund, *Flykten* 429). Lyda in the *Pure* trilogy and Elin in the *Blood Rain* series both kill in order to protect their child from harm.³⁹ These killers belong to the second category of adolescent killers—**adolescents who kill to protect others from their enemies/a dystopian regime**. Seymour has identified this type of killing in YA dystopian literature, and argues that the characters kill in order to protect their “care circle”:

Killing is in itself not generally considered bad or immoral in the context of contemporary YA dystopia—particularly when the totalitarian regime necessitates a violent uprising. Protecting *the care circle* [my italics] remains a desirable trait, even though the behaviors necessary to ensure this protection may involve acts of violence. (Seymour 636)

While Seymour focuses on male characters in Dashner's *Maze Runner* series, for example, her argument is applicable to female characters in YA dystopian literature too.

More examples of adolescents who kill in order to protect oth-

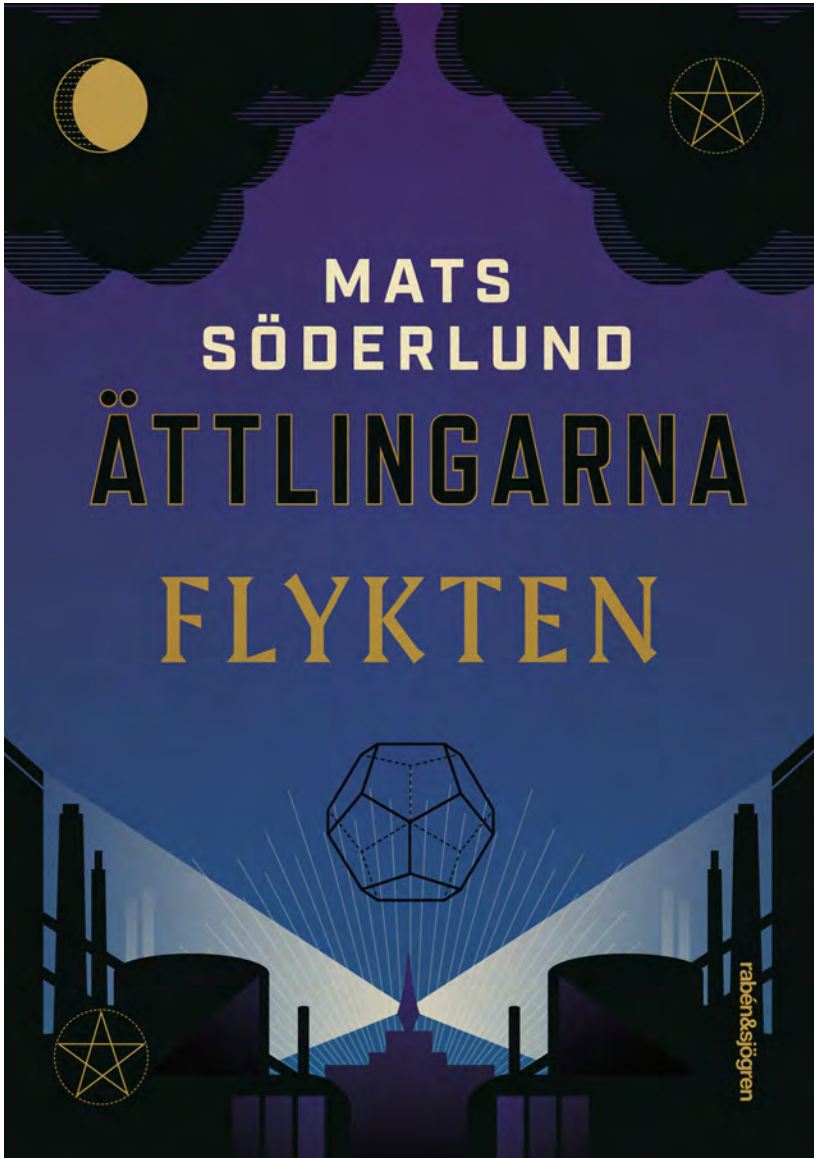
39. Both Lyda's and Elin's actions will be analysed in detail in the chapter on the adolescent mother motif. They both fit into the first category too, since they also kill in self-defence.

ers from harm can be found in Veronica Roth's novel *Carve the Mark* (2016) (the first in a duology), in which Akos Kereseth, one of the protagonists, kills a soldier to save his captured brother (Roth, *Carve* 58). Akos profoundly doubts the righteousness of his own actions. In Moira Young's *Dust Lands* trilogy (2011–2014), Saba similarly kills members of the Tonton—violent robbers—when they attack her and her allies (Young, *Blood* 231), an action described as necessary in order to survive the lethal attack. Gaia Stone in the *Birthmarked* trilogy (2010–2012) by Caragh M. O'Brien is prepared to kill someone when she rescues her love interest, Leon Grey/Vlatir, from the enemy (O'Brien, *Promised* 222–223). In Bray's novel, Taylor protects another contestant by killing the soldier who is about to end her co-contestant's life (*Beauty* 353). Violet Lasting, in Amy Ewing's *The Lone City* trilogy (2014–2016), leads a rebellion that aims to overthrow the Royalty's slavery of adolescent girls with magical abilities. During this rebellion, the oppressed girls kill numerous soldiers (Ewing, *Black* 253–267).

In fact, protecting others is one of the most common reasons why protagonists of YA dystopian novels become killers. Often, the enemy consists of adults or people under the influence of an adult dystopian institution, highlighting extreme inter-generational aetonormative power differences. Thus, in these examples, Trites' argument about institutional control over adolescents' lives in *Disturbing the Universe* (xi–xii), is highlighted in extreme ways. This category of killers will be explored in relationship to Henry's, Mafi's and Shusterman's YA dystopian texts in this chapter.

CATEGORY 3: ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE PREPARED TO KILL PARTS OF HUMANITY TO SAVE HUMANITY AS A WHOLE

YA dystopian literature discusses the idea that killing may be righteous if your aim is to save humanity as a whole in series such as the *Pure* trilogy, where Partridge's father sets off detonations that kill or



Wilma Eriksson in Swedish author Mats Söderlund's Flykten [The Escape] kills in self-defence and to protect others.

main the people who live outside of the protective Dome, to save the Earth from overpopulation (Baggott, *Pure* 25, 142). Usually, it is the adults who are prepared to sacrifice parts of humanity to save Earth and the small number of people who are chosen survivors.⁴⁰ However, in my corpus, I have found one example of a young protagonist⁴¹ who is involved in a similar plan: Thomas in the *Maze Runner* series. He thereby represents the third category of **adolescents who are prepared to kill a small number of people to save humanity as a whole**.⁴²

Thomas takes part in a maze experiment that aims to simulate specific brain patterns, ones that may help scientists find a cure for the Flare disease, which threatens to kill all of humanity. He collaborates with an institution called WICKED, which has created monsters that kill the adolescent participants who are locked in a maze. The experiment's purpose is to stimulate these brain patterns (*Death* 11–12). WICKED also plans to kill off half of the population to save Earth from environmental destruction and overpopulation (Dashner, *Kill* 172). Thomas agrees to the experiment in his aim to save humanity, but his memory is wiped when he enters the maze (*Maze* 2). Throughout the book, his suspicions about WICKED's inten-

40. See Austrian author Ursula Poznanski's *Die Eleria* Trilogie [the Eleria Trilogy] (published in German 2012–2014), in which the protagonist Eleria reveals that the allegedly benign founder of the protective sphere society in which Eleria grew up was actually a mass murderer who decided to kill off most of humanity to rescue the Earth's natural resources, counteracting overpopulation by setting off huge bombs (see Alkestrand, "(De)Stabilizing the Boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them': Racial Oppression and Racism in Two YA Dystopias Available in Swedish" (2021) for an analysis of this series, which has not been translated into English).

41. Teresa in Dashner's series also takes part in this plan, but in my reading she is not the protagonist. Her and Thomas' views on matters are repeatedly contrasted, as when Teresa is more prepared to sacrifice human lives for the greater good than is Thomas. See Dashner, *The Fever Code*, pp. 242–244.

42. The *Endgame* trilogy explores how a group of adolescents are tasked with killing other Players to save their own bloodline. I have not equalled this with adolescents who kill a few people to save humanity as a whole, since the Players are not striving to save everyone. The setup is that one of the Players gets to save their own people, to whom they have a closer relationship than other bloodlines. In this sense, their goal is distinctly different from Thomas' goal.

tions arise and are confirmed. Thomas realises that he has become the adults' pawn. Still, presenting an adolescent in this position is very rare in my corpus, possibly because it profoundly questions the righteousness of the protagonist's actions and therefore problematises whether the adolescent Thomas is just as bad as the adult institution of WICKED, instead of positioning a group of adults as the ultimate evil force.

The supposition about Thomas' motives is nuanced in the final book in the series—the prologue *The Fever Code* (2016), which details Thomas' life before he entered the Maze in the first book. It clarifies how Thomas did not really have any other option than to agree; because he is immune to the Flare, he was taken from his parents at a very young age. WICKED killed his parents and Thomas was raised and abused by the institution, believing it to be his responsibility to do whatever it takes to find a cure for the disease that has destroyed his world (Dashner, *Fever* 4–5, 12–13, 27). He was convinced to participate in a mass murder of infected employees, including the former leader of WICKED, as part of an endeavour to save humanity as a whole (*Fever*, 244–246, 252–253). Thereby, the institution's abuse of Thomas is highlighted to an even greater degree in this prequel, and the extent to which abusive adults have restricted his ability to make his own, independent choices is underlined. This, in turn, explains why he acts the way he does and simultaneously questions the extent to which Thomas is responsible for the plan.

In my analysis of Shusterman's series, I will investigate how Rowan, one of the protagonists, chooses to kill evil “scythes” in order to stop them from killing lots of innocent people who were not supposed to be “gleaned”. This is the only other example of this third category of adolescent killers I have found in my corpus.

CATEGORY 4: ADOLESCENTS WHO KILL CORRUPT
ADULT LEADERS IN A REBELLION AGAINST THE
CURRENT REGIME

Thomas' killing of the leader of WICKED belongs to the fourth category: **adolescents who kill corrupt adult leaders in a rebellion against the current regime**. This category positions the adolescent in a political battle to the death against the dystopian regime's adult leader. In Roth's *The Fates Divide* (2018), the sequel to *Carve the Mark*, Cyra Noavek plans to kill the father who raised her, since he has committed countless crimes against humanity in his role as a political leader (Roth, *Fates* 234). While working towards this goal, she kills soldiers who work for her father (*Fates* 346). In the end, it is Akos who kills the man who raised Cyra—the man he recently found out is his biological father, not Cyra's—enabling Cyra to become the new leader of their society (*Fates* 402, 425–426). Here, Akos' killing of the leader is portrayed as righteous, since it will prevent others from suffering under the leader's dictatorial regime.

Similarly, in the *Dust Lands* trilogy, Saba kills a charismatic sect leader and initiates a more democratic society, which does not exploit young girls as baby factories, for example (Young, *Raging* 411). Saba herself, though, leaves this society behind and ventures away with her lover (*Raging Star* 423, 431–432), signalling how she has given up finding her place in this society, where she has been abused and used as a lethal weapon. Her actions can be regarded as a strong refusal to be a continued part of that society.

Further examples of adolescents who kill corrupt leaders can be found in the *Pure* trilogy and *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Partridge Willux, in the former series, kills his father, who is a political leader, a mass murderer and the one who ordered the Detonations that killed large parts of the population and doomed others to being fused with objects and other humans (Baggott, *Fuse* 545) and, in the latter series, Katniss Everdeen kills President Alma Coin of District 13 after she realises that the rebel leader is just as corrupted by power as the leader of the Capitol, President Snow. For example, Coin is prepared

to sacrifice her enemies' children in a new version of the Hunger Games (Collins, *Mockinjay* 431–435). In *The Fandom Rising* (2019) by Anna Day, the sequel to *The Fandom* (2018), Violet and her little brother Nate similarly kill President Stoneback to stop him from releasing a virus that will kill the part of the population oppressed by the privileged class, thereby causing genocide (Day, *Fandom Rising* 218, 261). Yet another example can be found in Ewing's *The Lone City* trilogy, in which Violet decides not to kill her arch-nemesis the Duchess, who is responsible for a huge amount of suffering. Instead, the Duchess's niece, Carnelian, decides to kill the evil woman herself because of how she has been mistreated by her (*Black* 278). Juliette in Mafi's series and Rowan in Shusterman's trilogy both kill corrupt leaders.

However, in Marie Lu's *Legend* trilogy (2011–2013), there is a twist to this pattern. The two protagonists, Day and June, plan to kill a new political leader and start a revolution, but call it off when they realise he is nothing like his dictatorial father, who used to be the leader. Instead, the son tries to create a better society for the population (Lu, *Prodigy* 29, 34, 46, 60, 141–142, 173–174). Here, a common genre motif is thus transformed into a reflection on the identity of the real enemy in this dystopian world. Simultaneously, the assumption that a son will automatically become a copy of his father is questioned.

CATEGORY 5: ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE USED AS A LETHAL WEAPON BY A DYSTOPIAN REGIME

A fifth category of adolescent killers are **adolescents who have a special ability and are forced to use this ability to kill in the name of a dystopian regime**.⁴³ In this category, the aetionormative power abuse

43. This kind of adolescent killer motif also occurs within the fantasy genre, for example in Gustav Tegby's Swedish fantasy novel *Beröringen* [The Touch] (2019). In this novel, the adolescent protagonist is recruited by a sect. They want her to use her ability to kill people just by touching them to murder their opponents. As soon as someone touched by the protagonist moves further away from her than

is especially clear, since the adolescents are turned into a weapon for the adult regime.

In Alexandra Bracken's *The Darkest Minds* series (2012–2018), children and adolescents with magical abilities are used by the so-called Children's League in the fight against the current regime. For example, they turn the adolescent Liam Stewart into their killing machine, forced to kill whomever they decide—in total a whopping 148 people—before he escapes from them (Bracken, *Darkest* 289–290, 445–446). One of the protagonists in Roth's *Carve the Mark* duology, Cyra, has a lethal touch which causes other people, and herself, tremendous pain and, eventually, death if she touches them long enough; the ability is explained as a result of the “current-shadows” that affect the solar system she lives in. Cyra mistakenly killed her own mother as a child when Cyra got mad at her (*Carve* 78, 83, 158). She is used as a weapon by her brother—a cruel leader who uses her to torment his opponents (cf. *Carve* 105–106).

There are many similarities with Mafi's series. The *Shatter Me* series will be used for in-depth analysis of this category. One of the protagonists in Shusterman's series, Rowan, is also used in this way by a dystopian regime, which I will expand on in that section.

CATEGORY 6: ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE FORCED TO KILL IN AN ARENA, A LETHAL GAME, OR AN EXPERIMENT

In the *Carve the Mark* duology, Cyra's brother forces her to fight in an arena and, as a result, she has to kill people against her will (*Carve* 160–161). Cyra is just one example of the sixth category of adolescent killers: **adolescents who are forced to kill by an institution in an arena, a lethal game, or an experiment**. Katniss in *The Hunger Games* trilogy is a prototypical example in this category. After taking her sister Prim's place in the Hunger Games, she is forced to kill her oppo-

approximately 50 metres, they fall down dead.

nents to survive. She refuses to kill Peeta Mellark when they are the only Tributes left, igniting a rebellion against the Capitol (Collins, *Hunger* 418–419), but that does not change the fact that the Hunger Games has turned her into an adolescent killer. In *Mockingjay* (2010), she describes herself as the Capitol’s “slave”, who does not want to be “a piece in their Games” (Collins, *Mockingjay* 252), signalling her lack of free will.

In a similar way, several characters in the *Maze Runner* series are forced to become killers due to WICKED’s maze experiment. For example, Gally is used by WICKED to kill Charles Merriman, nicknamed Chuck, to stimulate specific brain patterns as part of the experiment that aims to find a cure for a dangerous disease (*Death* 112). The adult institution thus dictates who will become a killer, and is prepared to sacrifice adolescents in the process of finding a cure for the disease. Saba in the *Dust Lands* trilogy also suffers the fate of being forced to become a killer in a dystopian world. At one point she is captured and forced to fight in gladiator games in an arena. Her opponents are killed by the people in charge of the tournament after Saba defeats them, so she feels responsible for their deaths (*Blood* 142, 146–147). She is even nicknamed “the Angel of Death” (*Blood* 153).

Another example of this sixth category of adolescent killers can be found in the *Endgame* series. Long before *Endgame* begins, the Players’ families turn most of them into professional assassins (*Calling* 2). While some of the characters love killing and others hate it, the power play of the alien Makers is emphasised throughout the trilogy, as an adult institution that forces adolescents to take on the role of killers. Shari Chopra, however, refuses to kill other Players and decides to protect her daughter instead. Her family and people question her suitability as a Player because of it (*Calling* 459–461). Shari will be analysed in detail in the next chapter on adolescent mothers.

The same pattern, with an adult institution that forces adolescents to become killers, is found in Marta Söderberg’s Swedish YA dystopian novel *Athena* (2015). After being captured and trained by a dictatorial institution, the two protagonists are faced with the task of killing a human being. While the female protagonist Maya refuses,

deceiving the institution so they think she has indeed killed an old acquaintance, when she actually found a way to save him, the male protagonist Benjamin does not manage to escape becoming an adolescent killer.⁴⁴ He is forced to kill his father figure, who was one of the very few people who ever loved him, in order to prove his loyalty to the institution of Athena (Söderberg, *Athena* 279–285).

Similarly, a young character called Mia Gamma, in *Brännmärkt*—who belongs to the Gamma section of society, which is reserved for soldiers—decides to kill someone before her general does. She does this because he would not have had enough mercy to kill with just one shot: “‘He would have made her suffer. Then he would have shot me for refusing [to follow his order].’ [---] ‘You cannot judge me for that’” [my translation] (*Brännmärkt* 366).⁴⁵ Here, it is clear that Mia does not feel like she has a choice—if she wants to survive, she has to kill this person and obey the regime that rules the dystopian world of the novel.

44. Here, Maya chooses pacifism instead of playing by Athena’s rules. In my corpus, it is uncommon for adolescents to be successful in escaping their fate of being used as lethal weapons, but another example of where pacifism is used instead of violence is in Shusterman’s *Undivided* (2014), the final book in the *Unwind* dystology (2007–2014). The rebellion against the dictatorial regime’s unethical “unwinding” of adolescents, which is the practice of splitting an unwanted adolescent into all their organs and selling them, is achieved without the use of violence. The rebellion manages to make “the institutionalized murder that has defined a generation” illegal and a thing of the past (Shusterman, *Undivided* 369).

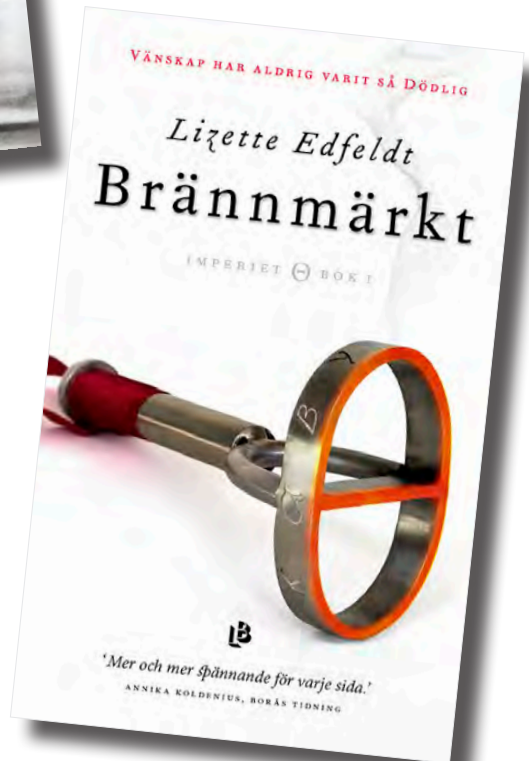
Another example of pacifism can be found in Austrian author Poznanski’s *Eleiria* trilogy. Here, the protagonist, Ria, is able to rebel and overthrow rulers who use violence to gain power without resorting to violence herself. Her power to use words to convince people is described as a weapon that is sharper and more successful than any knife (Poznanski, *Slutet* [The End] 461).

45. Swedish quotation: “‘Han hade fått henne att lida. Sedan hade han skjutit mig för att jag vägrade.’ [---] ‘Du kan inte döma mig för det.’”



*In Swedish author Marta Söderberg's **Athena**, the male protagonist is forced to kill by an adult institution, whereas the female protagonist is able to escape this fate in a rare example of successful pacifism in a YA dystopian novel.*

*Swedish author Lizette Edfeldt depicts adolescents who kill in self-defence, who are forced to kill by an institution and who kill out of mercy in **Brännmärkt** [Branded].*



CATEGORY 7: ADOLESCENTS WHO KILL OUT OF MERCY

A seventh category of adolescent killers is **adolescents who kill out of mercy**. For Mia, in the example above, this is a central motivating force. In the *Gone* series (2008–2013) by Michael Grant, Sam Temple, who becomes one of the leaders in a society where all the adults have disappeared, kills another adolescent in a mercy killing. Hunter Lefkowitz has been attacked by a bug infestation that makes the bugs eat him from the inside out. He has tried to take his own life to end his suffering, but been unable to do so. Instead, Sam uses his mutant power to throw light beams that burn Hunter so that he does not have to suffer any longer (Grant, *Plague* 112–114).

Other examples in this category include Saba in the *Dust Lands* trilogy, who kills one of her allies when the enemy is about to capture her (*Blood* 411), Pressia Belze in the *Pure* trilogy, who kills her dying mother to save her from the torture of a prolonged death (*Pure* 427–428), and Thomas in the *Maze Runner* series, who kills his friend Newt, who has caught the Flare disease, when Newt begs him to end his misery (*Death* 253).

In all these examples, the characters kill for very different reasons than the adolescent killers in the previous categories. Instead of being forced to kill, killing is the only available means of preventing prolonged misery for their loved ones. In a way, this most closely resembles the act of killing in order to protect others but, in this particular category, the loved ones are killed, instead of being protected by the protagonist killing the enemy. This act protects them from suffering further harm caused by the dystopian regime and can be viewed as the very last solution when the dystopian world harms the characters.

CATEGORY 8: ADOLESCENTS WHO KILL AS A RESPECTABLE PROFESSION

Adolescents who kill as part of a respectable profession also exist in YA dystopian literature, and this is the eighth category of adolescent killers. I have placed Citra and Rowan, from Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy, who are both recruited for a job that is seen as the most noble one of their fictional world, in this category. During their adolescence, they are approached by a "scythe". A scythe is an allegedly benign and just killer in a world where mortality has been defeated, and the scythes' sole purpose is to make sure that the population does not get too large. Within the context of the series, when a scythe "gleans" someone, this is not seen as an act of killing, but as a sacred mission. The scythes' gleanings are thus depicted as righteous. A scythe decides that either Citra or Rowan will get the opportunity to become his apprentice, and what follows is a professional training in how to become a scythe. Initially, neither of them wants to become a scythe, but they do not feel they can refuse, since there are privileges tied to being a scythe, such as a year's protection from getting gleaned for all their family members (Shusterman, *Scythe* 11, 23, 50).

I have not been able to find any other examples of this particular version of the adolescent killer motif in my corpus, which is the main reason why I have decided to explore this trilogy in detail later in this chapter. There are examples of adolescent soldiers in my corpus, but they are not recruited for a position as a respectable killer in a society that supports the use of lethal violence; instead, killing is sometimes a necessary evil they have to resort to in their role as adolescent soldiers. In the section on Shusterman's trilogy, I will further clarify the ways in which the decision to turn the adolescents into scythes can be interpreted as an abuse of power committed by the adult world.

CATEGORY 9: ADOLESCENTS WHO COMMIT UNRIGHTEOUS KILLINGS

In addition to the eight categories of adolescent killers I have discussed this far, which can all be characterised as variations on becoming a killer for a righteous cause and/or because you are forced to, there are abundant examples of unrighteous killings in YA dystopian literature. I will not explore these in detail, because my focus is on killers who are in some way forced to kill in order to survive in a dystopian regime, one subject to aetionormative power structures, and whose actions are thereby described as righteous. These are the types of killers that are the most relevant to the overall aim of my study.⁴⁶ The antagonists in YA dystopian literature—be they adolescents or adults—almost always kill for unrighteous reasons. Here, however, I will briefly mention a few examples of *protagonists* who commit what are portrayed as unrighteous killings. In the table, I grouped them together into one category of **adolescents who kill for unrighteous reasons**, but there are different versions of this type of killer. Consequently, further research on this category would be valuable in increasing knowledge about these types.

In Kass Morgan's *The 100* series (2013–2016), Wells Jaha, one of the protagonists, enlarges an air leak on the spaceship inhabited by his community, after Earth has become uninhabitable, thereby condemning everyone who stays on the spaceship to death.⁴⁷ The reason is that his love interest, Clarke Griffin, has been imprisoned for a crime for which she was not responsible and will be executed when

46. In my corpus, the depictions of righteous killings are the ones that deal most explicitly with aetionormative power abuse. The reason the adolescents' killings are depicted as righteous is that the adolescents are in some way forced to kill due to adults' abuse of power. Therefore, I have decided to provide a more detailed overview of these than of the killings that are depicted as unrighteous. Unrighteous killings may sometimes also be a result of aetionormativity in my corpus, but the connection is not as explicit in this type of killing as it is in the ones that are described as righteous.

47. I will not analyse the TV series based on the books here. For an analysis of this adaptation and how it depicts adolescent killers, see Andrew Howe, "Survival of the Fittest: Gendertopia and the Women of *The 100*" (2018).

she turns eighteen, due to an implicit policy that all adult criminals are killed in order to ensure that the limited amount of oxygen on the spaceship can sustain the population for as long as possible (Morgan, *100s* 297–299). Wells, who knows that his community plans to travel back to Earth in order to find out whether it is possible to live there again, believes the air leak needs to increase so this expedition will take place before Clarke turns eighteen (*100s* 299; Morgan, *Homecoming* 252–253). Without intending to, this leads to him killing the hundreds of people who are unable to get a seat on the rescue vehicles and return to Earth (Morgan, *Rebellion* 17). Wells considers himself a murderer, but Clarke argues that he actually saved the hundred adolescents who, instead of facing capital punishment, were sent to Earth to find out if it was inhabitable before the spaceship's other inhabitants followed (*Homecoming* 258). However, overall, Wells' killings are described as unrighteous in the novel, even though his actions were not supposed to lead to people dying and even though they contributed to saving the convicted adolescents from capital punishment. The significant difference from the killings that are depicted as righteous in my corpus is that the narrative, in this case *The 100* series, does not excuse or endorse the act of killing; instead, Well's acts of killing are portrayed as unrighteous, wrong and amoral.

In Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* quartet (2001–2006), the adolescent Hester Shaw discovers that her biological father is a brutal murderer who killed her biological mother and her adoptive father (Reeve, *Mortal* 51). She kills people in order to protect others, which corresponds to the second category but, contrary to most killer protagonists in that category, she is portrayed as enjoying the act of killing (Reeve, *Predator's* 302, 340–341). Her actions are thereby portrayed as unrighteous, whereas her boyfriend, and later husband, Tom Natsworthy's killings are described as righteous, because he feels bad about having to kill in order to protect himself (*Mortal* 301). Here, the lack of guilt is what makes Hester's repeated killings examples of unrighteous killings. The killings themselves may be done for a noble cause, but since they showcase "the darkness" in her, her actions are depicted as despicable.

Unrighteous killings also occur in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, for example, when Katniss kills a woman while she is protecting Peeta and trying to move him to a safe location (*Mockinjay* 367). When Katniss kills Tributes after her fellow Tribute and ally Rue's death, this can be viewed as an example of killing for revenge (*Hunger* 293–294). Killings out of revenge are usually not portrayed as righteous. For instance, when a group of adolescents kills an adult, Cleaver, because they believe he was responsible for the death of some of the adolescents in their group in Neal Shusterman's *Unwind*, the first book in the *Unwind* dystology (2007–2014), it is depicted as amoral and wrong (Shusterman, *Unwind* 250–252). In Katniss' case, however, the narrative to some extent justifies her thirst for revenge, because of the devastation that she feels after Rue is killed and because she is expected to kill other Tributes in the Games (*Hunger* 293–294). This also places her killing in the fifth category—those who kill as part of a game enforced by a dystopian regime. Mafi's Juliette is another example of a protagonist who kills for revenge. I will explore these killings in the section on Mafi's series.

The Specials—genetically improved adolescents who work as soldiers—are described in Scott Westerfeld's *Extras* (2007), the final book in the *Uglies* series (2005–2007), as brutal and unrighteous killers, since they do not hesitate to kill anyone standing in their way. One of these Specials is Tally Youngblood, the protagonist of the first three novels in the series, but who has become a legend for adolescents like Aya Fuse—the protagonist of the final book in the series. Tally argues that they have killed in order to protect the planet, but Aya regards Tally as “a little ... unstable” and does not uncritically buy into Tally's descriptions of her killings as necessary and just (*Extras* 40, 283, 291–292, quotation on 291). Focalisation from the perspective of a new protagonist is thus utilised to criticise the conception of necessary killing that Tally represents.

Killings sometimes occur by mistake, for example in the *Gone* series when a girl dies after a fight with Charles Merriman, nicknamed Orc (Grant, *Gone* 192). It is unclear if he intended to kill her, but one of the characters strongly underlines that “it's still murder” (Ibid.),

thereby defining the action as an unrighteous killing. Sometimes the wrong person is killed, for instance in the *Dust Lands* trilogy when Saba's brother Lugh aims for the enemy but ends up killing a friend instead, which leaves him devastated (*Rebel* 372). Hester's daughter Wren, in Reeve's *Mortal Engines* quartet, accidentally becomes a killer when her attacker falls on the sharp end of her weapon (Reeve, *Darkling* 530). The attacker is responsible for this, especially since he tried to hurt her, but Wren still feels guilty about her actions.

In short, these examples showcase that the protagonists' actions are not always depicted as necessary or just. Instead, many narratives pose questions about whether the killings are necessary, and protagonists repeatedly question their own actions.

*

To summarise, the nine categories of adolescent killers presented in this section illuminate the presence of different variations on the adolescent killer motif in YA dystopian literature. As I have clarified in this section, they are all related to overarching age-related power structures within their dystopian worlds, although in different ways. In the remainder of this chapter, the novels by Henry, Mafi and Shusterman—and the connections between age-related power aspects and the adolescent killer motif in them—will be explored further. I will highlight how the adolescents' oppression by individuals, institutions and society at large affects their depiction as adolescent killers, and which ideologies relating to age-related power structures are communicated via the adolescent killer motif in the different series.

Killing in Self-defence and to Protect Others: Red in Christina Henry's The Girl in Red

Henry's novel *The Girl in Red* explores the 20-year-old protagonist Red's experiences of becoming a killer. It is set in a future US, devastated by a lethal airborne disease called the Cough (Henry 20,

34).⁴⁸ I view the novel as a feminist re-telling of *Little Red Riding Hood* in the shape of a YA dystopian novel. Similarly, Maria Nilson argues that “Henry’s novel is more of a young adult dystopian one than a new version of a fairy tale, although *Little Red Riding Hood* is alluded to again and again” (“Fairy” 18).⁴⁹ The official institutions of Red’s society have largely collapsed, and thus no longer rigorously control how much power a specific person can access. The novel predominantly investigates Red’s intersectional subject position in relation to the hegemonic domain of oppression, which uses the manipulation of consciousness, ideology and culture as tools to justify systemic oppression (Hill Collins 284), and in relation to the interpersonal domain, which shapes the daily lived experiences of individuals and their interactions with others (Hill Collins 287).

In the novel, both the structural domain, which organises oppression through the regulation of citizenship, rights and the establishment of policies (Hill Collins 276), and the disciplinary domain, which uses rules, hierarchies, how organisations are organised, discrimination and surveillance to manage oppression (Hill Collins 276–277, 280), have begun to fall apart as a consequence of the crisis. The president has died and been replaced by the secretary of state (Henry 236). The government is mostly discussed in the story as a force that tries to round up survivors and put them in quarantine. In this sense, the official institutions have lost some of their influence over the population.

While Red’s family, especially her brother Adam, trusts the government to do what is best for the population, Red herself believes the government has some ulterior motive (62, 123–124). Significantly, this unwillingness to simply accept that the people in charge have the population’s best interests at heart stems from Red’s extensive knowledge of what usually happens in dystopian novels and movies (39). Her position as a reader of dystopian literature both guides her

48. In the remainder of this section, I will only provide page numbers in the references to Henry’s novel.

49. Apart from Nilson’s article, I have not been able to find any previous research on Henry’s novel.

reactions to the catastrophe and interrogates the genre of YA dystopian literature on a meta level, by asking what happens when a reader of dystopian literature faces their own dystopian reality.⁵⁰

In this section, I will first briefly highlight some stylistic characteristics that are central to the understanding of this YA dystopian novel. I will then clarify Red's intersectional subject position in relation to both the world that she lived in before the outbreak of the Cough and the state of the world after the disease has spread widely. Next, I will move on to an analysis of how Red becomes a killer, who she kills, why she kills them and how her actions relate to her intersectional subject position and the different domains in the matrix of domination. Throughout the analysis, I will investigate how age-related power structures define her access to/lack of power in the dystopian universe by examining the use of the motifs of the controlled adolescent and the mighty adolescent.

STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF *THE GIRL IN RED*

The Girl in Red is entirely focalised from Red's perspective.⁵¹ It is narrated through an alternation between two different time planes, where the first consists of a chronological depiction of what happens to Red as she is on her way to her grandmother's cottage in the woods for six weeks (24). She aims to find a quiet, safe space, far from the contagious people in the cities. The second encompasses analepses that provide the background to how she first set out on her journey, how her family was killed and what she has had to do in order to

50. This type of meta perspective is not uncommon within the genre. For example, in Day's *The Fandom* duology (2018–2019), the protagonists are all fans of a YA dystopian work and are transported into its world at a fan event for that particular dystopia; one of them even writes fan fiction about it (Day, *The Fandom* 22–33). The characters use their knowledge of the fictional universe as they try to navigate it themselves.

51. Henry's novel is the only work of YA dystopian literature in the six case studies that is focalised from just one character's perspective. All the rest are focalised from several different characters' perspectives.

survive since the disaster, most significantly defending herself from several attackers by using lethal force.

The novel rewrites and redefines the narrative of the original fairy tale by depicting Red as a biracial, bisexual, fierce and feminist protagonist with a prosthetic leg, who is rebellious in relation to the government and to other people's hegemonic conceptions of her. The connection with the fairy tale is indicated by her nickname, Red, given to Cordelia by her father after she bought a red sweatshirt with a hood (51). Ever since, Red has worn this sweatshirt to signal her identity: "Cordelia was her name, but Red was who she was" (51–52). In addition, her quest to travel to her grandmother's house in the woods, to protect herself from human "wolves"—that is, men who want to hurt and sexually abuse her—alludes to *Little Red Riding Hood*.⁵² In addition, dystopian novels and movies are a constant point of reference throughout the narrative, as Red has composed a list of rules based on knowledge she has acquired from dystopian narratives about what a protagonist should and should not do in order to survive in a dystopia (cf. 330).

RED'S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITION

As highlighted earlier in this study, most female protagonists in YA dystopian literature are white, able-bodied, cisgender and heterosexual (cf. Green-Barteet and Coste 82). Red, however, does only fit this description in one sense: she is cisgender. Her intersectional subject position is thoroughly defined by her race, (dis)ability, gender, age and—after the disaster—her position as an adolescent killer. I will begin by analysing her subject position in the pre-disaster version of this future US.

52. Henry's novel also contains references to *Macbeth* (Red's mother is a professor of literature who loves Shakespeare) (111), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (260), *Hansel and Gretel* (109–110) and a slightly less obvious allusion to J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels (1997–2007), when a lab-created monster is called "the Thing That Should Not Be" (354), reminiscent of the replacement of Lord Voldemort's name with "He Who Must Not Be Named" by those who fear him.

Before the outbreak of the Cough, Red goes to a college in her hometown, despite grades that would be good enough for admission to a prestigious university. The reason for her decision to stay at home is her acceptance of how her parents are getting older and therefore need to be taken care of, even though they do not see it that way themselves (58). As the youngest in the family, Red is treated like “a twenty-year-old baby” (38). Thus, even before the disaster, she experiences not being taken seriously because of her age and her position as the youngest child, highlighting the parents’ actonormative tendencies to not view her as an adult.

Red’s age intersects with her (dis)ability in this regard. She lost her leg in a car accident at the age of eight (36). While she does not really regard her (dis)ability as something completely negative, as she has learnt to compensate for the prosthetic leg (16), others do: “There was very little she couldn’t do, and she didn’t really think about it as a limitation (even if a lot of other people who looked at her with sympathetic gazes did)” (36). This quotation illustrates how being (dis)abled is regarded as non-normative in the hegemonic domain of this version of a future US. It also showcases the persistent conception of what an able-bodied person is and is not. Robert McRuer clarifies that there is “a system of compulsory able-bodiedness that [...] emanates from everywhere and nowhere” (8). Although Red does not see her prosthesis as a limitation, other people do, due to this force of compulsory able-bodiedness.

Her mother treats her as “crippled”, even though Red has never been allowed to use that word about herself (57). This conflict between Red and her mother dictates their relationship. Apparently, Red’s mother is concerned about how Red does not fit into the ideological mould of a person who is fully able to care for herself. It also seems that her mother still thinks of Red as a (dis)abled child, unable to provide for herself to the same extent as Red’s older brother, who goes to a university in a different town. In Red’s mother’s opinion, being (dis)abled seems to equal not being able to take care of yourself.⁵³

53. It is also possible to interpret the mother’s attitude as a consequence of traditional views of men being better adapted to life in the public arena and women

Race is a power category that profoundly affects Red's access to power in the pre-disaster world. Her biracialism is frowned upon by white people who, according to Red, seem to be uncomfortable as they cannot put her in either the category of white people or black people (11). This response can be interpreted as a reaction to how the two supposedly binary categories of white and black are destabilised and transgressed. Red has to endure judgemental glances due to her race and (dis)ability, creating an intersection that underlines how multiple power categories together position her as a deviant in relationship to the hegemonic domain, which controls public opinion through, for example, ideology (Hill Collins 284). Her bisexuality, though, is not presented as something regarded as surprising or wrong by others. Instead, it seems like the world before the Cough does not really care about her non-heterosexuality, perhaps indicating that this world is less heteronormative than the contemporary US. Since Red is cisgender she is privileged in this sense.

In summary, Red's pre-disaster intersectional subject position is not very privileged. Her youth, her biracial heritage and her (dis)ability intersect with each other and position her as someone who is non-normative in several different ways. In the post-disaster world, these power categories and their intersections are highlighted throughout Red's struggles with the new, dystopian world. In addition, her female gender is constantly foregrounded as something that makes her even more vulnerable in a society where civil rights and laws seem to have been abandoned, due to the breakdown of social institutions such as the government and the police. Consequently, she has to protect herself in whichever way she can, and this is depicted as the reason she becomes an adolescent killer.

I will now explore how Red's intersectional subject position affects her chances of survival in this dystopian world. The intersection between Red's age, her position as the youngest in the family and her prosthetic leg dictates her family's view of her when they discuss what

as better suited for life in the home sphere, but this gender aspect is not explicitly addressed in relation to their lives before the Cough.

action to take when the Cough starts spreading. Red is adamant: the best course of action is to walk to the grandmother's cabin in the woods, as far away as possible from other people and contagion (20). Her family, however, does not trust her to know what is best for them or herself. While Adam believes that the government must be doing what is right in creating the quarantines, Red's parents do not listen to her, partly because of her youth: "[N]obody would listen to her. That's what happens when you're the *baby* [my italics] of the family" (38). Red argues that she is "an adult, too", but her mother does not believe she will be able to walk all the way to her grandmother, due to her prosthetic leg (57). Consequently, Red feels that she is being treated like a small child (Ibid.).

Here, an aetionormative perception of adolescents as less knowledgeable than adults intersects with an ableist⁵⁴ view of non-normative bodies as less capable of enduring physical hardships. Red describes her family's treatment as

the worst part of being an amputee. She could deal with the fatigue and the swelling and the stares and the unbelievably rude questions from strangers. What she couldn't deal with was people who were not amputees acting like they knew what was best for her, and yes, that included her family. (55)

Combined, these ideologies position Red as both mentally and physically unable to satisfactorily navigate in a society in crisis, highlighting how the hegemonic domain shapes interpersonal relationships in this dystopian version of a future US. The controlled adolescent motif is thus actualised due to this intersection between age and (dis)ability.

Nonetheless, in the family, Red is actually the one who is best prepared to leave their house, both in a psychological and a physical sense. This is partly a result of her knowledge of dystopian literature

54. Ableism refers to "discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities" (Merriam-Webster, "ableism").

and what usually happens to protagonists in this type of narrative. As soon as she understands that the Cough is spreading and that the authorities are unable to control the disease, Red starts training for the long walk she knows she will eventually have to embark on. She starts talking long walks with a heavy backpack, making sure she is up to the challenge despite her prosthetic (46). As much as Red does not view her prosthetic as a hindrance, she realises that long walks affect the stump and that she needs to let it adjust to the added weight gradually, because she does not want to slow down her family when they finally leave (46–47).

However, her family does not do the same, and after they finally agree to travel to the grandmother's place, they come up with reasons as to why they have to wait a few days before they leave (20, 38). During a trip to pick up supplies—like camping gear—for the rest of the family, Red's mother catches the Cough (73). Too late, the truth of Red's assertion that they need to stay away from densely populated areas becomes clear to her family members. If only her family had listened to her, the mother might not have caught the disease. Consequently, the narrative underscores that being young or (dis)abled does not make you less able to make the right decisions in order to protect your family. On the contrary, in this regard, Red's knowledge about dystopian narratives and her physical preparations make her the most knowledgeable and well-adapted person in her family.

Apart from the aetionormative and ableist doubts of the family, Red is also confronted with overt and violent racism⁵⁵ even before she is able to leave her house. Red and her brother are just getting ready to leave, saying goodbye to their sick mother and their father, who has decided to stay with their mother, when they are attacked by white supremacists (109–110, 115). In this group of racists, they recognise a man they have known for a while, Martin Kaye (115), which underlines how interpersonal interactions have altered due to the collapse of institutional control of the residents, and how the

55. In this study I define racism as “a racial project that combines essentialist representations of race (stereotyping, xenophobia, aversion, etc.) with patterns of domination (violence, hierarchy, super-exploitation, etc.)” (Omi and Winant 963).

literal and metaphorical space for overt racism has expanded. Specifically, the racism stems from a fear of miscegenation; the marriage and/or cohabitation of people from different races (Encyclopædia Britannica, “miscegenation”). The mixing of black and white people through marriage, and especially through procreation, is viewed as negative and/or a dangerous deviance within this racist conception.⁵⁶

As Richard Dyer clarifies, “[i]f races are conceptualised as pure (with concomitant qualities of character, including the capacity to hold sway over other races), then miscegenation threatens that purity” (25). Dyer illustrates how whiteness is ideologically equalled with a lack of race—of being just “people”—but miscegenation threatens that conception. It shows that white people are also racialised, thereby counteracting the conception that white people are the only real people and should therefore be afforded all the privileges (Dyer 1, 25). Hence, the fear of miscegenation can be interpreted as a fear of exposing how the ideological building stones of a racist worldview are faulty.

When the group demands that the parents come out of the house, the family members immediately realise that the racists intend to seriously abuse and/or kill them. Red’s mother clarifies how she, unlike Red, is used to the racism of an earlier era, which now seems to be blooming during the disaster (115). She also states that she has more knowledge about and lived experience of that kind of racism than Red:

I know very well what they want to do. *I know better than you* [my italics]. When I married your father it was not exactly a common thing for a black woman and a white man to walk hand in hand. I got spit on enough times to know there were

56. In her analysis of colonial English fiction about India, Loretta M. Mijares makes a distinction between interracial marriage and miscegenation since they are treated differently within her corpus of texts: “Interracial romance or marriage is simply a relationship between two individuals, whereas miscegenation involves the offspring of such individuals. The actual existence of a growing mixed-race community in colonial India gave rise to different fictional responses than did the long-lived colonial fantasy of interracial desire” (323). Thus, the offspring becomes proof of an intermixing of races that is seen as a deviance, similar to how Red, her brother and their parents are treated during the disaster.

people in the world who thought we were doing wrong. Although I never thought Martin Kaye was one of them. He was always polite to us. (Ibid.)

The mother's experiences mirror American history's race conflicts and showcases how the prejudice now resurfacing, in the form of overt violence that targets miscegenation, is based upon racist attitudes and practices from earlier historical periods.

Red voices an explanation as to why the disaster has changed the man's behaviour: "'He had to be [polite]' [...]. 'And now he doesn't feel he has to be, so he's going to hurt you and Daddy because of it'" (115). Red's statement clarifies that when society is breaking down and the ordinary institutions of order, such as the police, have been shattered, this man no longer has a reason to hide his explicitly racist views. The hegemonic domain in Red's pre-disaster society defines his overt racism as wrong and unethical, but in the disaster situation, anti-hegemonic ideas, like killing the so-called perpetrators of miscegenation, allows this group of white supremacists to transform their views into actions. When no one is around to police human rights and democracy, racist ideas can flourish unchallenged. This affects the interpersonal domain's interactions between individuals in Red's society to such a great extent that someone who used to be polite to Red's parents suddenly tries to kill them. For Red, the incident becomes a brutal awakening to a type of racism she has not had to face before. The existence of a more violent racism can be explained as a result of the lack of regulation from democratic institutions, for example the courts and the police; they may not have succeeded in counteracting all racism, but were at least able to punish those who commit physical hate crimes. When these democratic forces disappear, interactions in the interpersonal domain are once again deeply affected by the type of racism that Red's mother had to endure when she was younger.

Red and her brother escape from the racists when their parents decide to physically challenge them as a distraction so their children can escape (115). Consequently, the parents sacrifice themselves for their children, protecting them from harm in an action that is similar

to how the adolescent mothers Lyda, Shari and Elin—analysed in the next chapter—are prepared to do whatever it takes to protect their children, including becoming responsible for killing other people. The parents thus illustrate the potentially productive potential of an aetonormative conception of children: children need to be protected from real threats to their safety and well-being, whatever it takes.

THE ADOLESCENT KILLER, RED

The majority of the chronological time plane, which starts when Red has been travelling towards her grandmother's house for six weeks, explores what happens to Red after her brother has died and she has to navigate through her dystopian world alone. This depiction strongly emphasises her vulnerable position due to her female gender. She is repeatedly attacked by men who want to sexually abuse her and kill her. The first killing that is depicted in the novel, which is not the first she has committed, demonstrates how Red has literally become a piece of prey for men after the crisis. This fits into the first category of adolescent killers—adolescents who kill in self-defence. The power relationship between the young woman and her male attacker also echoes the countless narratives of rape and sexual abuse highlighted in 2017's #MeToo movement. Red may live in an imaginary future society, but the oppression she faces is the same kind of oppression that women—especially intersectionally oppressed women—face on an everyday basis in non-fictional contemporary societies.

In the killing scene, a man walks up to Red as she is cooking her food, and she immediately knows what he intends to do:

Red knew very well what he was thinking, what he thought he would be able to do to her. Men like him were everywhere, before and after the world fell apart, and it didn't take any great perception to see what was in their eyes. No doubt he'd raped and murdered and thieved plenty since the Crisis [...] began. (9)

This showcases the same logic as in the case of the racist man who used to treat Red and her family with respect, but who later took part in the racist attack against her parents. When civil rights and policies that were set into place in order to prevent racist attacks and rape are eroded, people who have always wanted to let their dark desires roam free can now do so without being persecuted and/or imprisoned. Without institutions that uphold democratic values, it becomes almost impossible to counteract prejudiced and violent behaviour.

It soon becomes clear that Red is not the right person to attack. She is prepared to use her axe to defend herself with lethal violence when necessary. She clarifies that she “would not be a hunted *thing* [my italics]” (24). The refusal to become a “thing” signals Red’s unwillingness to be viewed as the object of others’ sexual and murderous desires. She is a subject with an agency that helps her protect herself. While, to ableist people, her prosthetic leg signals heightened vulnerability in a crisis, this prejudice does not match the truth:

Lots of people thought that because she was a woman with a prosthetic leg it would be easy to take advantage of her—that she would be slow, or incapable. Lots of people found out they were wrong. Someone had found out just a short while before—hence the still-bloody axe that kept drawing the attention of the stranger who’d come to her fire without invitation. (10)

This passage thus highlights both that others view her as less capable of defending herself due to the intersection of gender and (dis)ability, and how tightly tied her killings are to her intersectional subject position. If people, predominantly men, because of their sexist and ableist views, did not view her as easy prey, they would perhaps not attack her, and so she would not have been forced to become an adolescent killer. Being a young woman makes Red even more prone to being attacked, highlighting how age intersects with her gender and (dis)ability and positions her as allegedly easy prey for men with evil intentions.

Red is killing in self-defence, in a dystopian society where this is

a prerequisite for her survival, which matches Category 1 in Table 2 of adolescent killers.⁵⁷ She does not really have any other option than to use lethal violence when necessary, emphasised by this quotation: “She was just a woman trying not to get killed in a world that didn’t look anything like the one she’d grown up in, the one that had been perfectly sane and normal and boring until three months ago” (17). Lethal violence is depicted as the only means available to her if she wants to stay alive. Simply wounding her attackers is not viewed as final enough, which can be interpreted as an indication of how it may save Red from being attacked, raped and killed, but will not permanently remove the threat this man poses to women as a whole. Resorting to lethal violence is a distinct genre trait of YA dystopian literature, as exemplified by my overview of different types of killers in this chapter, and pacifism is usually not portrayed as an option in the fight against the oppression of dystopian regimes.

In an analysis of violent girls in YA literature, Tara Moore clarifies that “the worlds in which these girls live demand that they fight for self-preservation and insurrection. Since violence is being used against the soldier girls, their own use of violence becomes a positive display of agency, an expression of power in a conflict situation” (116). This description fits Red’s use of lethal violence in a dystopian world where she has to defend herself, even though she is not a soldier. Only by assuming the role of an adolescent killer can she be certain that the threat—in this case the man that comes to her fireplace—has been defeated for good.

Throughout the narrative, *Little Red Riding Hood* is used as a template for apt metaphors concerning Red’s power, or lack thereof, during her journey to her grandmother’s house. When the man walks up to her fire, she describes him as a “coyote” that she has to ensure will not kill her in its search for food (16). It is not until later

57. It is not entirely clear in the narrative whether the man actually dies, but he is lethally wounded and Red considers it likely that he will indeed die when she leaves the site of the confrontation (18). It is also clarified that she has not killed all three people she had met earlier, suggesting that she is responsible for at least one more killing than the ones described within the narrative (Ibid.).

that she clarifies that he was “just a man, not a coyote, not a hunter” (17). She ends up wounding him with her axe, not sure he will die (18). Once again, the fact that she was forced to use lethal violence is foregrounded: “[S]he was sorry not that she’d done it but that she had to do it. Red didn’t like to think of herself as a killer, but she wasn’t about to let herself *get eaten up* [my italics] just because she was a woman alone in the woods” (Ibid.). This quotation alludes to how Little Red Riding Hood or her grandmother is eaten by the wolf in different versions of the fairy-tale, and it helps the narrative to communicate that becoming a killer is not something Red chooses; she is forced to take on the role due to her vulnerable position in a dystopian world.

The second killing depicted in the novel takes place after a woman has tried to lure Red into trusting her. Her husband attacks Red, and Red kills him with her axe (88). She kills in self-defence, which represents the first category of adolescent killers presented in Table 2. This particular killing is psychologically tougher for Red, since the man’s teenage son, who was “old enough to harm her if he wanted”, but who only runs to his father’s side, appears and watches his father die (88, quotation on 89). “Red felt sick then, sick at what she’d become, but she couldn’t really be sorry. She couldn’t be sorry that she’d killed that man before he killed her” (89). The quotation underlines the necessity of Red’s actions, and as much as she hates being a killer, these killings are done in self-defence.

The third killing depicted in the novel, however, is not just done in self-defence: its aim is to protect “the care circle” (cf. Seymour 628), the people close to the adolescent killer who need to be protected from threats to their safety. Accordingly, this killing belongs in the second category of adolescent killers—those who kill in order to protect others from harm. After her brother has died, Red meets two children, Sam (a preadolescent girl) and Riley (an eight-year-old boy), who were orphaned after the crisis began, and who have travelled on their own for a while (185). In this situation, it is clear that their young age is what makes her prepared to trust them, when she clarifies that she would never have dared to team up with adults, who

she regards as people that cannot be trusted to have her best interests at heart (*Ibid.*). Red's conception of the adults as the enemy can be interpreted as the result of a binary conception of adults as distinctly different from children and adolescents, but instead of viewing the adults as the ones who are responsible for protecting young people, Red considers adults, as a group, the most serious threat to young people. Since the adults have so much power, they also have the ability to abuse that power, and this is why she does not trust them. Thus, adults are viewed as normative and as the ones with the most power, but they are not viewed as protectors of children and their needs in accordance with the rhetoric of aetonnormativity, which argues that adults control the young in order to protect them—quite the contrary. The power imbalance is what gives adults the opportunity to capture, abuse, rape and even kill children and adolescents.

Red decides to protect the children from these threats, since “[t]here are a lot of monsters out there, and all of them look like humans” (258). Her choice of words is significant on two levels: the monstrous dwells in how human nature can become a dangerous force if people give in to their dark desires, and in addition, a monster-like creature that has been bred in a government lab crawls out of some people who have caught the Cough (156–157, 318). Humans are indeed both metaphorically and literally speaking monsters in this dystopian world. Still, in the novel Red actively refuses to carry a gun as protection, since this is a tool that can only be used to kill (292). The axe can be used to chop up wood, for instance, and does not per definition turn her into an adolescent who is prepared to kill, even though it works well for that purpose when necessary. Consequently, Red distances herself from the role of a killer by refusing to use a gun and by using the axe instead. Moore clarifies that it is common that warrior girls in YA literature refuse to carry a gun. She stresses that “[t]he choice is especially significant since the gun is marked as a weapon of masculine arrogance” (Moore 122). Thus, Red's refusal to carry a gun can also be interpreted as a refusal of the type of violent masculinity it represents. It is this kind of masculinity that forced her to become a killer in the first place.

Red takes on the role of a substitute mother to Sam and Riley and, when she does so, she embraces the potentially productive force of aetonnormativity to protect young people from (adults') harm, just like the adolescent mothers investigated in the next chapter. However, contrary to the aetonnormative conception that adults should withhold information about some of the dangers of the world they live in from children, Red decides to treat the two children as capable individuals, who have already seen so many terrifying things that it is not productive to try to protect them from horrifying facts about their current situation: "[S]he realized that protecting little kids from the truth was a relic from an old world, and that these kids had surely seen just how bad people could be since the Crisis started" (181). She herself is an adolescent who has seen the chaos created by adults, and this can be interpreted as why she views the children more like people of her own age than small children who need protecting from the truth. Protecting the children from harm also functions as redemption for her failed attempts to protect her brother, which she promised her mother that she would do by staying close to him (319).

The situation when Red kills to protect her care circle occurs after Sam has been captured by a group of soldiers. Red knows that Sam risks being raped and killed by these men and, when she gets the chance, she kills the three men who have imprisoned Sam. This killing is different from the two that were previously depicted, since Red is the one who attacks them and, for the first time, relishes the act of killing: "She was furious, actually—furious that somebody like this was still alive and walking around when her family was dead" (341). However, the way the soldiers she kills are prepared to capture and rape young girls, leads to Red viewing one of them as a monster: "[H]e was a monster, *a wolf in the woods* [my italics] who took little girls away and *ate them all up* [my italics] and she did not want him to get back up again" (342). Therefore, she may be the attacker in the situation that leads to the men's deaths, but they were the ones who attacked Sam first and who gave Red a reason to kill in order to protect Sam by freeing her. When she actually commits the killings, they also function as revenge for the men's abuse of Sam. This killing

can thus be viewed as an example of killing for revenge, which I have categorised in the ninth category of adolescent killers—unrighteous killings. However, because the men have treated Sam so badly, Red's actions are still depicted as righteous. This clarifies how killing in revenge can sometimes be portrayed as justified in YA dystopian literature.

The allusion to *Little Red Riding Hood* is further expanded when Red flips the power dynamic between them upside down in her act of killing the men: "You're a wolf and I'm a hunter. I'm no Red Riding Hood to be deceived by your mask. I know what you are" (342). Significantly, at this point Red has removed her red sweatshirt in order to sneak up on the captors (342); she is no longer a Red Riding Hood. While she does put it back on shortly after the killings, she is forever transformed. She has become a hunter—someone who does not just defend herself against harm, but who is prepared to attack and kill others. She even asks the rhetorical question: "*Who's the wolf in the woods now?*" (343), further foregrounding her own transition from prey to hunter.

This transition also includes the development from Red's depiction using the controlled adolescent motif, to the portrayal of her as a mighty adolescent who has learnt to embrace her own power and to protect herself and others from harm. A girl who does not want to carry a gun is just as lethal, and just as capable of protecting the people she cares about, as someone who carries a gun. Red reflects on how she is different to the person who set out on the journey to her grandmother's cabin. She redeems herself with the fact that "[n]o amount of caution or knowledge or perfectly packed supplies could eliminate danger" (359). When she finally reaches her grandmother's cabin, together with Sam and Riley, she concludes that she is not a Chosen One who could save her family, but she is "*finally home, and there are no wolves in these woods*" (363). However, as Nilson argues, there does not seem to be much hope that the patriarchal structures in society, which enable men to become abusers, rapists and murderers of girls and women, can be changed ("Fairy" 19). Similarly, Jill Coste argues that "the fairy-tale dystopia provides not

hope for the future in a broad sense, but hope for individual power in a practical sense” (99). The focus of the novel is thus on Red’s literal and metaphorical journey towards a safe haven, rather than a major change in the dystopian world itself. The wolves are still out there, ready to attack other girls and women.

*

In summary, Red is predominantly vulnerable in the pre-disaster state of her society due to her age and (dis)ability. Her vulnerability increases after the crisis, when the combination of overt racism, overt sexism⁵⁸ that leads to threats of rape, tough physical conditions that turn her prosthesis into a more significant obstacle than usual, contagion and threats from devious adults make it dangerous for her to even approach another living being. In the novel, the erosion of institutions that uphold order and that define overt racism as unacceptable, for example, is portrayed as allowing space for ideologies of oppression within the hegemonic domain to dictate the functioning of interpersonal relations. Red manages to protect Sam and Riley from harm in her role as a substitute mother, but in order to do so, she has to kill three people.

In short, Red is initially forced by the extreme circumstances she lives in to embrace the role of a killer, even though she does not want to. Later, when she is faced with the capture and potential abuse of Sam, she decides to embrace the act of killing in order to save a young girl. The adults have created a society where she will not be safe unless she uses lethal violence. The same is true for Juliette in Mafi’s *Shatter Me* series who, due to her ability to kill people with her touch, becomes a pawn in political power struggles. I will now move on to an analysis of Juliette and her depiction as an adolescent killer.

⁵⁸ Merriam-Webster defines sexism as “prejudice or discrimination based on sex”, “*especially*: discrimination against women”, and “behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex” (“sexism”).

*Being Turned into a Lethal Weapon:
Juliette Ferrars in Tahereh Mafi's Shatter Me Series*

When the *Shatter Me* series begins, Juliette is a seventeen-year-old cisgender girl who has been locked up in a mental institution for 264 days by the Re-establishment—a dictatorial regime in charge of the dystopian world that she lives in. She is entirely isolated, has been starved and is only allowed to use the toilet once a day. The reason for this treatment is her lethal touch, which led to her unintentionally becoming an adolescent killer when, at the age of fourteen, she accidentally killed a three-year-old boy (Mafi, *Shatter* 1, 9, 13, 124).

Throughout the series, Juliette transitions from a totally controlled and oppressed adolescent, at the mercy of the Re-establishment's disciplinary domain under which she is monitored twenty-four hours a day, and subject to the hegemonic domain's ideologies about her special ability, which define it as an abomination, to become a young political leader of the rebels, someone who learns how to take control of her lethal touch and find empowerment in her special abilities. All Juliette's interpersonal interactions are affected by how she perceives herself as abnormal and how the majority of the other characters consider her to be a dangerous murderer. In this sense, the series highlights how the interpersonal domain contributes to the oppression of Juliette. It also underlines how the Re-establishment has enforced a policy that allows the imprisonment of a young girl whose special abilities make her a threat to the governments' power. Juliette's human rights are deemed secondary when, for example, she is placed in a mental institution that does not provide her with access to a bathroom on a regular basis. The way Juliette is treated when she is committed to the mental institution and during her time there clarifies how the structural domain's policies contribute to her oppression, by sending an adolescent to a mental institution that resembles a prison.

Juliette's lethal touch is defined as a (dis)ability by the Re-establishment's hegemonic domain. However, the narrative challenges the original conception of her as (dis)abled due to her lethal touch and

the mental stress that it causes her, highlighting that (dis)ability is a cultural construct—the result of compulsory able-bodiedness—which positions some people as non-normative because their bodies do not match the conception of what an able body is (McRuer 8). The controlled adolescent motif is gradually replaced by the mighty adolescent motif, but with setbacks that clarify how finding empowerment in this dystopian world is not a straightforward endeavour, especially not when you are defined as (dis)abled by the society you live in. As Marieke Bruins argues in her master’s thesis, “the adolescent female body is considered dangerous when it does not adhere to society’s values of what females should embody, but [...] through a growing connection with her body, emotions, and desires, Juliette is able to develop herself into an empowered young woman” (46).

On a stylistic level, the series is told through multiple focalisers. Juliette’s perspective is present throughout the whole series, whereas the other focalisers vary in the subsequent volumes.

This section begins with a clarification of Juliette’s intersectional subject position in a dystopian future North America. I investigate how the different domains of oppression in Hill Collins’ matrix of domination affect Juliette’s position in society. Thereafter, I contrast the conception of her lethal touch that she has been taught by the Re-establishment with the background story of how she came to possess this ability, which is gradually revealed in the fourth book, *Restore Me* (2018), and the fifth book, *Defy Me* (2019). The remainder of the section is devoted to an analysis of the killings Juliette commits: how they happen, who she kills, why she does so and how she views these different killings. Throughout, I highlight how the dystopian society that Juliette lives in has forced her to become a killer.

JULIETTE’S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITION

In the case of Juliette, her age and (dis)ability are the two power categories that are most prominently foregrounded in the series’ exploration of her power position in society, but gender conceptions about

adolescent girls are also repeatedly discussed and problematised in relationship to her character. However, race and class are not given the same thorough investigation in the depiction of Juliette. She is white and therefore does not suffer the kind of racial discrimination that characters of colour face in this dystopian world (*Shatter* 281). Because Juliette's adoptive parents are middle class and had the financial resources to provide her with food and shelter (Mafi, *Ignite* 121), nor does she suffer from discrimination based on social class or lack of wealth. However, these power categories are highlighted through other characters in the narrative, who face discrimination due to their minority status.

While Juliette is heterosexual, and thereby privileged in this sense, there are other characters in the narrative who are gay and trans. As in Henry's dystopian world, being gay does not seem to surprise or make people uncomfortable in this future North America, but the only transgender character has to face transphobia⁵⁹ from another minor character, who treats their process of transitioning as strange and unacceptable (Mafi, *Defy* 317; Mafi, *Restore* 375). Thus, a distinction is established between how Juliette's society views being gay and being trans, clarifying that the latter is still not fully accepted by some individuals. The hegemonic domain seems to define being transgender as more of a transgression of normativity than being gay. This suggests that while Juliette's society is not affected by oppression based on heteronormativity to the same extent as contemporary North America, cisnormativity establishes a hierarchy between those who identify as cisgender and cissexual on the one hand and those who identify as transsexual and transgender on the other, positioning the former as "dominant, normal and superior" in the hegemonic domain of oppression (cf. Baril and Trevenen 391). The transphobia of the minor character is a result of cisnormativity.

Juliette is described by the Re-establishment as an "abomination", "crazy", "insane", and a threat to other people's safety, such as the boy

59. Transphobia refers to "irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against transgender people" (Merriam-Webster, "transphobia").

she accidentally killed (cf. *Shatter* 4; *Unravel* 30).⁶⁰ The Re-establishment positions her body as unable to match the conception of an able body perpetuated by its hegemonic domain. Juliette has internalised this view of herself to the extent that she covers whole pages in text saying “I am not insane” in the notebook she uses to document her life in the mental institution (cf. *Shatter* 19). For Juliette, her lethal touch not only makes her *body* unable to ever match the definition of an able body, but also turns her into someone who has a mental disorder. Her sense of self is thus thoroughly dictated by how her killing power turns her into a deviation from what she perceives as a “normal” human being. In the series, Mafi uses the literary technique of letting Juliette cross out things that she has written in her notebook, with the goal of functioning “as a visual representation of the chaos in Juliette’s mind” (*Shatter* unnumbered page before the first page). In this example, a whole page of “I am not insane” has been crossed out, but with one final iteration of the phrase left intact at the very end of the page (Ibid.). Consequently, the narrative foregrounds the extent to which Juliette tries to overcome her own conception of her alleged “insanity”.

Juliette repeatedly tries to convince others that she is not “crazy” (*Shatter* 129), but since she does not fully believe in it herself, this is almost impossible. Before Juliette arrived at the mental institution, she had been sent from one institution to the next and treated with pills, dangerous drugs and electroshocks, but to no avail (*Shatter* 145). In short, her lethal touch accidentally turned her into a killer, and therefore she is now supervised by the society’s disciplinary domain in the form of a mental institution. Consequently, her interpersonal interactions are strictly controlled. Since she is put in isolation, the only human interactions that she experiences take place when she runs to the toilets and the showers, which she is only allowed to use

60. Throughout this study, I put “insane” and similar words that can be used as slurs about (dis)abled people, for instance “crazy”, within quotation marks to clarify that these are the words that are used in the narrative. I do not endorse the use of this kind of ableist language, but since the words are important for how some characters identify themselves, I regard it as necessary to use them in my analysis.

for a very brief period each day, and many of the residents of the institution do not even seem to know that these rooms exist (*Shatter* 13). To summarise, the institution's control over her is all-encompassing. It abuses its disciplinary power over the residents to make them suffer and can therefore not be viewed as a psychiatric hospital, but rather as an oppressive prison-like institution. In this way, the disciplinary domain exerts power over Juliette.

Juliette's (dis)ability intersects closely with her youth. Her adoptive parents never loved her, and were both physically and psychologically abusive (*Shatter* 5, 21–22), and were also the ones who suggested her institutionalisation by defining her as “certifiably insane” (*Defy* 40; Mafi, *Unravel* 11).⁶¹ The parents were “desperate to get rid of [her], to make [her] someone else's problem, to convince themselves the abomination they raised was not, in fact, their child” (*Shatter* 120). Juliette was also bullied in school, and called “Freak” and “Psycho” (*Shatter* 136–137). Thus, the interpersonal relationships that she experienced up to the point of her institutionalisation solidified the view that she is a “crazy” murderer, highlighting the importance of the interpersonal domain in the establishment of her oppression.

Power differences based on gender are investigated most thoroughly through Juliette's two romantic interests, who help her challenge and change her self-conception when they question the way she regards herself as a threat, as “crazy” and as “a monster”. They can both touch her without being harmed. Initially, she falls in love with Adam Kent. He enters her cell in the role of a fellow resident, but later turns out to be working for Warner⁶² Anderson, the son of the Re-establishment's leader (*Shatter* 3–4, 45–49). When Warner collects her from the mental institution, she is afraid to disobey him when he wants her to become his weapon in the fight for the Re-es-

61. The parents' desire to put their child in a mental ward is similar to how Lyda's mother, in the *Pure* trilogy by Julianna Baggott, acts after her daughter falls pregnant outside of marriage, which I will explore in the next chapter on adolescent mothers.

62. Warner's given name later turns out to be Aaron (*Unravel* 401), but for clarity, I will refer to Warner/Aaron as Warner throughout this chapter.

tablishment, since she suspects that Warner would be willing to hurt Adam (*Shatter* 93). Therefore, she decides to play by his rules and “be the perfect mannequin”, instead of continuing her initial resistance to wearing the clothes that Warner has picked for her (*Shatter* 70, 93). Here, she resigns herself to following stereotypical gender norms instead of rebelling against them, due to her romantic attachment to Adam. Still, she expresses feminist views by clarifying that she is “no one’s property” (*Shatter* 70), and by telling Warner, who is in love with her, that she is “not yours to *want*” (*Shatter* 178). In this sense, she underlines that she is not an object of desire for anyone to claim; she herself decides who is allowed to pursue her romantically and sexually.

However, despite the fine clothes and the appetising food, Juliette’s life in the soldier compound is not that different from the mental institution; she is under constant surveillance and closely monitored by Warner (*Shatter* 123). Consequently, although she is in a new setting, she is still portrayed through the controlled adolescent motif, where the disciplinary domain enforces her imprisonment, even though Warner seems more fascinated of than afraid of Juliette’s lethal touch. Gender intersects with age and (dis)ability through the romantic attachments Juliette creates, first to Adam and later to Warner, and these power categories thereby greatly affect her interactions in the interpersonal domain.

To summarise, Juliette is strictly controlled, predominantly due to her supposed (dis)ability and her age, with conservative gender ideals about women also being highlighted at the beginning of the series. Previous research has reached different conclusions about Juliette in relationship to patriarchal notions about women. Megan Schillereff, whose analysis is based on the first and third (but not the second) book in the series, argues that “she is a strong female character capable of changing her world, and she does it not by employing her sexuality but rather through a realization of self” (71). She views Juliette as a “posthuman saviour” due to her lethal touch (Schillereff 73, 77). However, Sara K. Day argues that in the first novel, *Shatter Me*, Juliette only begins to rebel after she has been awoken to this cause through her romantic relationship with Adam (83). “[T]he rep-

resentation of the adolescent body not only as a potential tool for the state—one controlled by social and/or governmental expectations of conformity—but also as a potential *weapon* [my italics] ultimately reinforces contemporary Western culture’s contradictory attitudes towards and portrayals of the adolescent woman”, according to Day (91). She clarifies that the parallel between female adolescent sexuality and rebellion implies that female sexuality is threatening (Ibid.). Contrary to Schillereff and Day, I argue that Juliette is depicted as simultaneously repressed and empowered in her dystopian society. Intersections between predominantly (dis)ability, age and gender position her as without privilege, but she gradually learns to navigate in this dystopian world, using her lethal touch for her own benefit. This, in turn, helps her find empowerment despite the intersectional oppression that she has to endure.

I will further this argument in my following exploration of the different killings committed by Juliette throughout the series and how they relate to her changing perception of her own intersectional subject position, as well as actual changes in her access to political power. Her changed sense of self is primarily a result of her starting to view her lethal touch not as a (dis)ability, but as a special ability. Thus, her lethal touch does not change in any way, but because she starts to view it as an asset that can be controlled instead of a sickness that turns her into a physically and psychologically challenged individual, how she relates to it changes, making it possible for her to find empowerment.

THE ADOLESCENT KILLER, JULIETTE

Juliette’s first killing, in which she accidentally kills a young boy, takes place years before the series starts, but is present throughout the series because of how this incident shapes Juliette’s view of herself. The boy she killed was abused and mistreated by his mother in a store. The mother kept him on a leash, she was mean to him and apparently did not really care about her child, which reminded Juliette of how

her adoptive mother abused her and never loved her. Juliette tried to help the child, but when she touched him, he died from her touch (*Shatter* 124–125, 145). She accidentally killed in her effort to help a fragile child, which is a type of killing in the ninth category in Table 2—unrighteous killings, in this case killing by mistake. At this point, Juliette was not aware that her touch was lethal, but she still blames herself for her actions and views herself as a monster: “I should not be allowed to live” (*Shatter* 126).

During her time at the military base with Warner, Juliette is forced to relive this situation in what later turns out to be a simulation, but Juliette believes it is happening for real: a small child is in mortal danger, she tries to save him and he is hurt by her touch. This situation triggers a rage that leads to her revealing a new ability: super-human strength (*Shatter* 160–163). It also foregrounds the discussion about how Warner wants to use her as a weapon and clarifies that Juliette is not in charge of her own life. If Juliette does not agree to hurt people for him, she will end up killed or maimed, which means she cannot refuse when he wants to use her to control and restrain the people who rebel against the Re-establishment (*Shatter* 52, 128). In effect, Juliette’s experience is that she is forced to use her lethal touch to hurt people, while most of all she just wants to get rid of it and to be a teenager who can touch people without being scared of killing them.

Juliette equates her body with “a carnivorous flower, a *poisonous* [my italics] houseplant, a loaded gun with a million triggers and he’s [Warner’s] more than ready to fire” (*Shatter* 117). The metaphor of the flesh-eating flower is thus combined with gun imagery that makes it clear that she is not the one wielding Juliette the weapon, but Warner. This is an abundantly clear version of a patriarchal relationship, where the man uses the female body as a weapon without her consent, clarifying the power relationship between the two characters. This is further underlined by Juliette when she states that Warner wants her “to be a *monster* for” him (*Shatter* 179), that he regards Juliette as “his trophy. His secret *weapon* [my italics]” (*Shatter* 153), and that he “wants to morph [her] into an animal who preys on

the weak. On the innocent" (*Shatter* 127). Clearly, Juliette is a controlled adolescent who, due to her special abilities, is at the mercy of a powerful young man. The intersection between Juliette's gender and her (dis)ability therefore renders her powerless and controlled in comparison to Warner.

Juliette and Warner are repeatedly contrasted against each other in terms of how they view killing people. These differences are connected to traditional conceptions of femininity and masculinity. Whereas Warner is ready to kill a soldier who helped the rebels, stating that he would never have become a powerful young leader unless he was prepared to kill when necessary, Juliette is devastated when one of Warner's soldiers is hurt by her touch after Warner told him to catch her (*Shatter* 77–78, 84, 104). Still, Juliette secretly enjoys the feeling of power that rushes through her when she uses her touch: "I enjoy the way it feels to be brimming with more life and hope and human power than I knew was possible. His pain gives me a pleasure I never asked for" (*Shatter* 78). This discrepancy, between how Juliette views her own touch as a disease and the rush of power that it gives her, leads to even more negative feelings for Juliette, who does not want to be a weapon because she cares about other people (*Shatter* 201). Simultaneously, the power that her lethal touch gives her can be viewed as a forbidden desire that makes her feel more at ease with herself than when she has to restrain it. This makes her question whether she is a good person.

When Juliette is able to escape from the military base, she feels alive for the first time ever (*Shatter* 192–193). She has desperately craved this kind of freedom throughout her childhood, during her time in the mental institution and at the military base, when she did not really have more freedom than in the mental institution. This is the first time in the series that the motif of the mighty adolescent begins to replace the motif of the controlled adolescent, and this transition is tied to her no longer being controlled by an institution that serves the disciplinary domain of the Re-establishment—in this case the military base. Simultaneously, it occurs after she has behaved in a way that breaks the boundaries of what is entailed by being a tradi-

tional female who abhors violence, which suggests that more masculine traits equal power, even when a woman displays them.

Juliette's view of using her lethal touch is dependent upon who she uses it on. After the incident with the toddler who she harms with her touch in the simulation, which she believes really happened, she defines herself as a murderer: "I'm a murderer. A monster. A worthless soul stuffed into a *poisonous* [my italics] body" (*Shatter* 135). Just like the metaphor with the poisonous plant mentioned earlier, she defines herself as threat—a poison—to those around her. She even thinks that she should be killed because of how dangerous she is (*Shatter* 166).

However, after Adam has been shot by soldiers, Juliette feels a need to protect her true love. She plays on Warner's desire for her in order to escape from the military base. As they kiss, she takes his gun and shoots him. She aims at his heart and has no moral qualms about her actions. She escapes, but it is soon revealed that Warner survived her violent attack (*Shatter* 259, 269, 314–315). Lethal violence is thus sometimes defined as amoral and sometimes depicted as righteous, since it is being used against someone who has severely abused Juliette and others. Consequently, the *Shatter Me* series problematises and questions when the end justifies the means. As Sara K. Day states, Juliette "chooses a form of resistance that capitalizes on her sexual attraction as a means of gaining power in a dangerous situation", thereby wielding the weapon of sexuality instead of her lethal touch (84). By playing on Warner's sexual attraction to her, she benefits from him showing vulnerability in close proximity to her. This gives her the opportunity to escape from her enforced role as Warner's lethal weapon.

Overall, the second book in the series, *Unravel Me* (2013), depicts the transformation of the controlled adolescent Juliette, who is used as a weapon by others, into someone who gradually learns to control her powers and simultaneously takes on the role of a superhero, visually clarified by her use of a superhero suit (*Unravel* 29).⁶³ As

63. The superhero suit visually positions Juliette as an action heroine. In *Be-*

Bruins argues, “[b]y refusing to cover herself up or to isolate herself from society, she [Juliette] highlights the conception of her body as a weapon, but one that is no longer controlled or exploited by those in power or the power structures that are in place in her society” (54). She is no longer used as a weapon by Warner. Instead, she becomes an important political symbol for the resistance against the Re-establishment (*Unravel* 188). The resistance is located at a military base, where others with superhuman abilities have found a refuge from a society that deems them to be unnatural and monstrous (*Shatter* 296–301; *Restore* 226). For the first time in her life, Juliette is part of an institution that does not define her as (dis)abled and unnatural, but as one person among many with special abilities. At the resistance’s military base, the conception of Juliette as abnormal, which the Re-establishment’s hegemonic domain has promoted, is challenged and replaced with anti-hegemonic knowledge about how other people have similar abilities to hers.

In Juliette’s role as a symbol for the rebels, the question of when lethal violence is justifiable comes to the fore of the narrative. Juliette recognises that people, including herself, tend to justify the act of killing others, for example by arguing that lethal violence could be necessary for rebellion and the creation of a better world. She explicitly challenges this view: “I wonder if it’s ever actually possible to justify killing as a means to an end” (*Unravel* 174–175; quotation: 175). This passage can be viewed as a meta comment on the genre of YA dystopian literature, which frequently depicts killing as necessary to create a better world (cf. Seymour 636). Thus, the meta perspective contributes to a thorough discussion of the righteousness of Juliette’s actions.

yond Bombshells: The New Action Heroine in Popular Culture (2015), Jeffrey A. Brown argues that female action heroines have developed in the years before the publication of his book: “Factors like the preference for youthful heroines, their relationships with central male characters, and the sometimes extreme levels of violence associated with heroines all help illustrate how the current wave of action heroines is defining femininity through a struggle with stereotypical and historical ideas about womanhood” (7). In Juliette’s case, her youth, her love interests and her very complicated relationship to using violence all define her character in a similar vein to the action heroines Brown analyses.

The same moral aspects of the act of killing are discussed in relationship to Juliette's realisation that it would be easy for her to let someone else decide who the bad guys are and to kill them on their behest (*Unravel* 173):

Who are you to decide who should be killed? Who are you to tell me which father I should destroy and which child I should orphan and which mother should be left without a sister, which grandmother should spend the rest of her life crying in the early hours of the morning because the body of her grandchild was buried in the ground before her own? (*Unravel* 174)

Here, the anonymous victims in a potential attack on the Re-establishment become individuals with a family and a background story, which certainly makes it harder to justify the act of killing them. Consequently, Juliette questions how killings that are due to the dystopian state of the world have become an almost necessary part of interactions within the interpersonal domain.

However, when Juliette later faces Warner's father and the leader of the Re-establishment, Paris Anderson, she is forced to reconsider her attitude to lethal violence. Anderson is pointing a gun at Warner. Juliette has grown attached to Warner, who attempted to kill his father after deciding to change alliance and join the resistance against the Re-establishment. Juliette first uses her superhuman strength to make Anderson drop the gun and later shoots him in both legs (*Unravel* 237–239, 242–243). She is prepared to kill him, but another rebel tells her that it is far too soon to do that. Afterwards, she asks herself what she has done, and she suspects that he is dead. She later finds out that he is not, but that she caused permanent damage (*Unravel* 242–243, 443). This incident gives Juliette moral qualms: "I keep telling myself that I have no interest in killing people but somehow I find a way to justify it, to rationalize it when I want to" (*Unravel* 275). This challenges her self-concept as someone who would never enjoy the act of killing, as she begins to realise that she may have been used by others in the past, but is responsible for the acts

of violence she is prepared to participate in voluntarily. Her actions can be defined as a failed attempt to kill a corrupt adult leader, which represents category four of adolescent killers in Table 2.

It is clear throughout the series that Juliette does not wish to hurt anyone, but that her circumstances do not really provide her with other options. She can either become a killer in the name of creating a better world, or stand aside and let the Re-establishment hurt, abuse and kill civilians, while she does nothing to prevent it. Similar to Red, the dystopian world Juliette lives in more or less forces her to be prepared to use her special abilities in the fight for the greater good. Significantly, at the end of *Unravel Me*, Juliette takes part in a military operation to rescue civilians from the Re-establishment, and in the process she hurts and kills soldiers fighting for the Re-establishment (*Unravel* 424–425). These actions match category two in Table 2—adolescents who kill in order to protect others from a dystopian regime. She has made up her mind: she will use her special ability, not as someone else's weapon, but out of her own free will in the fight for a better world and to protect those who cannot defend themselves. Consequently, the motif of the mighty adolescent with the ability to save the world from evil is evoked but, to find this kind of empowerment, Juliette has to become someone she does not really want to be. This is reminiscent of the actions Katniss must take to work for a better world, such as killing President Coin.

After a confrontation with the Re-establishment's leader Anderson, in which he shoots her and she almost dies, Juliette becomes even more prepared to go to extremes to defeat him and the Re-establishment, while also changing as a person: "I'm done being nice. I'm done being nervous. I'm not afraid of anything anymore. Mass chaos is in my future" (*Unravel* 461). This is reminiscent of Red's transition from prey to hunter. Juliette's youth is also highlighted, but is not described as a reason for her not being able to face Anderson. On the contrary, she frames age as a relative concept: "Today I'm still just a child, but this time I've got an iron will and 2 fists made of steel and I've aged 50 years" (*Unravel* 460). This passage underlines the mighty adolescent motif by clarifying that her youth

will not stand in the way of her actions to save the world, and that she is indeed lethal, but that she now knows how to control her abilities and use them in the rebellion against the Re-establishment. She intends to use her abilities to assassinate Anderson, who destroyed the resistance's military base, killing most of her allies and friends in the process, and who severely abused Warner throughout his childhood (*Ignite* 78, 103). Thus, the category of the unrighteous adolescent who kills in revenge is intermingled with how Juliette was previously used as a lethal weapon and is now claiming her independence.

The revenge is expressed through a dehumanisation of Anderson that justifies why he needs to be killed:

I will be unapologetic. I will live with no regrets. I will reach into the earth and rip out the injustice and I will crush it in my bare hands. I want Anderson to fear me and I want him to beg for mercy and I want to say no, not for you. (*Ignite* 305)

Later in the series, it is revealed that Anderson was one of the people who were responsible for all the hardships she went through because of her lethal touch, by not telling her that it could kill people (*Defy* 107). This gives this passage new meaning; the revenge is also for him having treated Juliette's special abilities as a (dis)ability and destroying her childhood and the majority of her adolescence.

Juliette's attempt on Anderson's life showcases her extreme powers. She pushes 200 soldiers off a ship by projecting her powers, and kills a soldier (*Ignite* 371–372, 393). She manages to confront Anderson and to shoot him twice: once for Adam, who is revealed to be Anderson's son, whom he abandoned at an early age, and once for Warner, who was severely abused by his father Anderson (*Ignite* 396–397). The confrontation illustrates how Anderson has not taken her seriously due to an intersection of age and gender. She clarifies how Anderson is now “brought to nothing by *a silly little girl* [my italics] who was too much of a coward, he [Anderson] said, to defend herself” (*Ignite* 393). By making the attempt on Anderson's life, she once and for all decides that she “will never again apologize for surviving”

(*Restore* 1), which, in this case, means she considers killing in self-defence to be legitimate.

However, this view is questioned within the narrative by an adult character, Castle, who founded the resistance's military base. Juliette is gradually becoming a symbol for the rebels and a potential political leader of the dystopian North America portrayed in the *Shatter Me* series, rallying the masses with promises of change and a better world for their children (*Ignite* 342), and touching on improved social sustainability⁶⁴. Castle asks her: "How can you lead a nation in the right direction when you've just slaughtered all who oppose you? How will you be any different from those you've defeated?" (*Ignite* 227). This argument is reminiscent of how, in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, Katniss gradually realises that the leader of District 13, Coin, is just as ruthless as President Snow. Here, however, the young protagonist is the one whose motives are questioned.

Trites argues that in literature aimed at an adolescent audience, it is common for one or several adult characters to fill the role of an *ideology keeper*, to be the one who communicates the ideological content of the book. In this way, the adult perspective and its ideological content is highlighted and enforced in the narrative (Trites 77–79). Castle's comment about Juliette's readiness to kill for the greater good has that effect. It clarifies that what Juliette has come to regard as acceptable behaviour in a dystopian and extreme situation may not be righteous or justifiable at all, providing space within the narrative to question the protagonist's actions and to stand up for the need to keep the value of life intact. Still, Juliette argues that "[w]e can't just sit back and watch people die when we have the power to make a difference" (*Ignite* 227). With great power comes great responsibility and, as the series progresses, the balance between Juliette

64. I define social sustainability as follows: "Social sustainability is a given, if work within a society and the related institutional arrangements (1) satisfy an extended set of human needs and (2) are shaped in a way that nature and its reproductive capabilities are preserved over [a] long period of time and the normative claims of social justice, human dignity and participation are fulfilled" (Littig and Grießler 11).

using her powers for good, and her becoming just another mass killer who puts her own desires and needs before those of the people she is supposed to protect, is illuminated repeatedly.

At the end of the third book in the series, *Ignite Me*, Juliette declares herself the new leader of the continent after she has allegedly killed Anderson (*Ignite* 396–397, 402). This invokes the young politician motif, which previous research in the genre has explored in depth, for example in the essays in Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Amy L. Montz’s *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (2016). In this role, Juliette’s youth and inexperience make it hard for her to live up to the ideal of the Commander of North America. This is underlined primarily by Castle’s comments about the continent’s new young leader, such as when he states: “You are certainly brave *for your age* [my italics], Ms Ferrars, but I’m sorry to see your youth so inextricably tied to inexperience” (*Restore* 9). Here, Castle’s aetonnormative conception of Juliette makes him regard her as less suited to being a powerful politician than older people, similar to how Elin in the *Blood Rain* series has to try to prove the adults wrong, when they do not believe she will be a good politician due to her youth. I will investigate this in the next chapter on adolescent mothers. Just like Elin, Juliette’s formal education is limited. Juliette was put in the mental institution before she could finish high school. And, just like Elin, Juliette internalises the view of herself as less suitable due to her youth: “Me, a seventeen-year-old nobody with very little life experience” (*Restore* 59). This highlights the hegemonic domain’s conception of youth and being a politician as two positions that are impossible to combine.

Juliette’s self-doubts are contrasted with Warner’s belief in her. At this point in the series they have become romantic partners, and Warner has fully joined the resistance against his father. Juliette states that she does not “know anything about politics”, but Warner points out that only she could inspire a significant change in the status quo, rallying the masses for the resistance against the Re-establishment (*Restore* 123). He further argues that “[t]he world tried to crush you [...] and you refused to be shattered. You’ve recovered from every

setback a stronger person, *rising from the ashes* [my italics] only to astonish everyone around you. And you will continue to surprise and confuse those who underestimate you" (*Restore* 124). Here, Juliette is conceptualised as a phoenix who does not give up, but keeps fighting for the greater good of the continent, which is a strong image of the mighty adolescent striving to create a better world. Warner's view of Juliette thus challenges the hegemonic domain's conception of adolescent girls' inability to achieve political change.

However, it is soon revealed that the Re-establishment has let Juliette take on the role of commander as an experiment, and that Anderson was not killed in Juliette's attempt to assassinate him. It is also revealed that Juliette's true name is Ella Sommers, and that she has a sister named Emmaline, who is telekinetic and able to project visions (*Restore* 211, 227). Emmaline is in prison and the Re-establishment has used her to project visions of an Earth with an ecosystem that is severely damaged by humanity, ensuring their own rise to power by providing hope in dark times (*Defy* 323). Juliette/Ella's⁶⁵ biological parents, who are the leaders of Oceania, gave the sisters to the Re-establishment. Anderson picked abusive adoptive parents for Juliette in order for her powers to become manifest (*Restore* 206; *Defy* 105). Emmaline was the first of the so-called "Unnaturals" found by the Re-establishment, and Juliette's mother used genetic experiments on Juliette to turn her into an executioner for the Re-establishment (*Restore* 226).⁶⁶ This is an extreme version of adult power abuse, where the children are experimented on and literally turned into soldiers and weapons for the regime (cf. *Defy* 112). The abusive stepmother is

65. For clarity, I will refer to Juliette/Ella as Juliette throughout this whole chapter, but in the series, Juliette gradually takes on her original name and begins to identify herself as Ella, not as Juliette. This is visually exemplified in the titles of chapters focalised from her perspective, which are variously titled Juliette, Ella or one or two of these names crossed out.

66. At this point, it is also clarified that Juliette's powers arose out of scientific intervention. However, it is unclear if Juliette's abilities, as well as the other so-called Unnaturals' abilities, are originally a result of magic or scientific manipulation of these individuals, opening up for both fantasy and science fiction interpretations.

a recurrent motif in fairy tales, for example, but here both Juliette's stepmother and her biological mother are abusive. The older women are thereby demonised.

According to Sarah Hentges, in YA dystopian literature, including the *Shatter Me* series (186), it is common that "some kind of government scheme" is the reason for adolescent girls' special powers. The power relationship is highlighted by the daughter of a different commander, who was also weaponised by her parents: "[O]ur parents chose to be homicidal maniacs. We, on the other hand, were forced to be" (*Defy* 37). The children are left with no choice about whether they want to use lethal violence or not. Thus, Juliette's story is not unique. All the commanders' children have undergone similar experiences of being used as weapons for the Re-establishment, showing how this is a structural problem in their dystopian world, which is based on adults abusing their power against defenceless children.

The question of when killing is righteous becomes even more pronounced when Juliette discovers that the Re-establishment now plans to kill everyone in the sector where Juliette lives and works as a young politician (*Restore* 403). She first attempts to make a group of powerful people who support the Re-establishment rebel against Anderson's regime, but when that fails she uses her powers to kill them all—more than 600 people (*Restore* 411). However, their deaths later turn out to be faked—a vision that Anderson used to fool Juliette and make her think she is more powerful than she is (*Defy* 4, 6). The act's purpose was to make Juliette's seem "unhinged" and eliminate the mass support for her (*Defy* 42). Here, the *Shatter Me* series provides a surprising twist to the motif of the adolescent politician/political symbol that is common in YA dystopian literature, by clarifying that Juliette was never really in charge of a whole continent. She just believed that she was, while the adults were waiting in the wings for the right moment to remove her from her power position (*Defy* 42). The result is once again an extreme version of aetionormativity. The Re-establishment let Juliette believe that she was powerful, when she was actually still controlled by the adults, albeit in a rather atypical way.

After Juliette's alleged mass killing, her biological parents capture her, bind her powers and take her to her childhood home, where they physically and mentally abuse her, as well as drug her, in violent experiments. By now, Juliette has found out how severely her biological parents have abused her and her sisters. She has also visited Emma-line, who is forced to live underwater in a tank, where her sole purpose is to be the Re-establishment's weapon (*Defy* 226, 324). Juliette escapes by killing her mother (*Restore* 422; *Defy* 83–84, 118, 123, 235), and, for the first time, enjoys the act of killing. Revenge is what motivates her actions, which positions this murder in the ninth category of adolescent killers, those who kill for unrighteous reasons, in this case for revenge.

However, her actions are to some extent legitimised within the narrative. Juliette rips out her mother's heart with her bare hands after feeling "a violent, potent, animalistic need to murder her", since her mother is "the worst kind of human being. A traitor to humanity" (*Defy* 234). Although the glorification of murder is problematic, the act of killing her mother—her primary abuser—turns the power hierarchy between them upside down for the first time. The extreme aetonnormative power abuse of Juliette's parents, especially her mother, can only end after Juliette has turned the weapon that her mother helped create—that is, Juliette herself—against its creator. Here, murder leads to empowerment, since the act of killing the mother is portrayed as a necessity in the fight against the Re-establishment. Simultaneously, it poses the uncomfortable question of whether Juliette is increasingly becoming a copy of the ruthless adults in her world.

The growing resistance against the Re-establishment is foregrounded after Juliette escapes from her parents and meets a rebel group led by the daughter of Juliette's adult advisor, Castle, and her wife (*Defy* 317–318). The daughter has been inspired by Juliette. She states that "[a]ll the resistance groups across the globe now know the truth" about Juliette's true identity (*Defy* 322), and that Juliette has become "a figure to rally around" (*Defy* 328). Clearly, the former Commander of North America is now a true political symbol of global resistance. The way that Juliette has inspired others in the

young generation to rebel demonstrates that, no matter how much the Re-establishment tries to control Juliette, she is able to influence the political landscape of this dystopian world. She does not primarily do this by using her lethal touch or her superhuman strength, but through her willingness to do whatever it takes to fight the extremely oppressive adult generation that founded the Re-establishment. Juliette is an adolescent killer who is used as a weapon and kills in revenge, but she is simultaneously an underdog, who manages to question and showcase the lies upon which the Re-establishment builds its power position.

In the final book in the series, *Imagine Me* (2020), the Re-establishment commits even more atrocities against the children of the commanders, as well as the people that the adolescents are trying to protect. For example, the Re-establishment attacks the hiding place of Juliette and the other rebels. They kill many people and imprison Juliette (Mafi, *Imagine* 130, 156). Thus, the extent to which the adult regime is willing to abuse children and adolescents is underlined even further. This aetionormative power abuse even extends to total mind control in Juliette's case. She is mind-wiped and turned into Anderson's loyal soldier. He has even put a pager in Juliette's wrist with which he can summon her (*Imagine* 189–193, 239). The depth of this mind control is illustrated in a scene in which she agrees to cut off her own finger when Anderson orders her to do so, and by how she is attracted to Anderson as a result of her lingering, albeit deeply hidden, memories of her attraction to his son, Warner (*Imagine*, 245–246, 272–273).

The extent to which Juliette's biological mother used and abused her two daughters' bodies in her attempts to create weapons for the Re-establishment is further emphasised when Juliette discovers that she was only ever meant to provide a body for Emmaline's consciousness when Emmaline's own body could no longer survive in the water tank in which she is forced to live (*Imagine* 163). Juliette's reaction to this realisation showcases her despair and simultaneously creates a new interpretation of the title of the first novel in the series, *Shatter Me*: "A spare. That's all I ever was, I realize. A spare part kept in cap-

tivity. A backup weapon in case that all else failed. *Shatter me* [my italics]. Break glass in case of emergency” (*Imagine* 156). Here, Juliette is literally described as a weapon kept behind glass until she is needed to serve the Re-establishment’s attempts at world domination. Only when—or if—she was needed, would there be a reason to let her out of her glass cage and use her as a biological container for her sister’s consciousness.

However, Emmaline’s consciousness does enter Juliette’s body and, even though Juliette almost dies in the process, this is the beginning of a collaboration between the two sisters. Emmaline helps Juliette defeat the Re-establishment and, in return, she wants Juliette’s help in killing her own body so that she can finally find peace (*Imagine* 17–23, 46–47).

In the final rebellion against the Re-establishment, the children of the commanders join forces to save Juliette and to murder their parents (*Imagine* 51). In this process, they kill the Re-establishment soldiers who are attacking their hiding place, as well as the soldiers and scientists who work for the Re-establishment, when they rescue Juliette (*Imagine* 133, 141, 372). These are examples of the adolescent killer who kills in self-defence and to protect others, the first and second categories of adolescent killers presented in Table 2. While Anderson is killed by one of the other commanders, Warner, Juliette’s friend Kenji Kishimoto and one of the commanders’ children jointly kill another commander. In addition, Warner kills another commander. Juliette is responsible for taking the lives of the last two surviving commanders by snapping their necks and tearing their bodies in half as she is on her way to Emmaline in her water tank (*Imagine* 381, 384–386, 419). These killings belong in the fourth category of adolescent killers—those who kill corrupt adult leaders as part of a rebellion against a dystopian regime.

Before Juliette joins the final rebellion against the Commanders, however, her friends must de-activate Anderson’s mind control; she has been programmed to kill both Warner and Kenji (*Imagine* 387). This is an example of an extreme version of aetnonormative power abuse, in which Juliette’s mind and body are literally told to kill the

two people in the world she loves the most. She is per definition Anderson's weapon, which positions her in the fifth category of adolescent killers. However, she is able to break free of his influence before she follows this command, just as she withstood Warner's and Anderson's previous attempts to make her kill on their behalf. What brings Juliette back to herself is partly Emmaline begging her not to follow Anderson's command, but first and foremost Warner's love. He tries to reason with her, but her memories do not return until he kisses her. At this point in the narrative, she is able to stop herself from acting as Anderson's weapon (*Imagine* 400). The physical memories of Warner's touch and the strength of his love are presented as the sole solution for eradicating an extreme version of mind control. In this way, the power of romance and love is presented as the one thing that can save Juliette, who has spent most of her life being unloved.

Juliette's breaking of her metaphorical chains is portrayed as an exorcism of the evil inside of her: "I scream until the *monster* [my italics] inside of me begins to die. And only then—only when I'm certain I've killed some small part of my own self do I finally collapse" (*Imagine* 409). Afterwards, she rips out the transmitter in her arm and all her memories return (*Imagine* 409–410). She may not have physically killed Anderson but, all the same, she permanently defeated him.

Emmaline uses her mind-power to kill their biological father, who contributed to the abuse of his two daughters throughout their lives, thereby achieving the same kind of revenge as Juliette did when she killed their mother (*Imagine* 425). Both sisters thus fit into the category of adolescents who kill in revenge, which I have placed in the ninth category—unrighteous killings. Still, these examples are slightly different from most in my corpus, because the sisters' actions are legitimised within the narrative. The extreme power abuse by the parents is presented as a righteous reason to kill them, in the same sense as the killing of the commanders is depicted as the only option for the adolescents if they want to create a better world. In some cases, then, killing is portrayed as a just means to an end. The extent to which lethal violence is endorsed in Mafi's series makes it stand out in relation to the rest of my corpus.

In the series, the final killing for which Juliette is responsible is when she agrees to kill Emmaline after her sister begs her to (*Imagine* 426–427). She thereby kills out of mercy to end her sister’s suffering, which fits the seventh category of adolescent killers. Significantly, this is the only one of Juliette’s killings that happens off-stage. In a series that includes so many different examples of killing, this difference underlines how this particular killing is the hardest one for Juliette—something that is too heart-breaking to even put into words.

The end of the series depicts hope in the creation of a new, more just social order. Juliette stays in hiding, but she is celebrated as “one of the most feared, most lauded heroes of our known world” (*Imagine* 449), and she has lots of supporters who treat her as a hero (*Imagine* 443). Her killings are not portrayed as reasons to consider her evil or amoral. On the contrary, her actions are viewed as integral to the defeat of the Re-establishment, and thereby as righteous and necessary. The focus of the ending, however, is not on political developments following the defeat of the corrupt adult leaders, but on her and Warner’s upcoming wedding (*Imagine* 440–441). Thereby, a series that is in many ways radical in its occasional glorification of lethal violence, ends in a traditional YA dystopian way with a young female protagonist who can finally—or at least for a while—step away from her political role and celebrate the traditional heterosexual union of two lovers. The romance genre thus has the last word in this otherwise sometimes pitch-black YA dystopian series.⁶⁷

To summarise, Juliette commits different killings throughout the series, and at times it is unclear whether the means she uses to defeat the evil adult regime also risk turning her into someone evil. However, the narrative underlines how she is a victim of adult power abuse,

67. Day illustrates how young female protagonists are recurrently awoken to the need for a rebellion via a romantic relationship with a male character who is already determined to rebel (90).

For an analysis of how romantic heterosexual relationships are a vital ingredient of YA dystopian literature, to provide hope in an otherwise dark narrative, see for example Ann M.M. Childs’ “The Incompatibility of Female Friendships and Rebellion” (2016).

and the final book in the series clarifies that the only way for the adolescents to escape repression and oppression is to kill the evil adults responsible for their torment. The end of the series implies that the new world order led by the adolescents will be more just, and thereby more socially sustainable, but it is up to readers to imagine if, and if so, in what ways the adolescents succeed in this endeavour.

The line between righteous killings and despicable acts of violence will now be explored further in the section on Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy, in which the two young protagonists are selected to become professional killers in a world where mortality has been defeated.

*Killing as a Profession:
Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch
in Shusterman's Arc of a Scythe Trilogy*

The two protagonists in the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy, Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch, live in a world where there is no longer any cause of permanent death, apart from burning by fire (*Scythe* 227).⁶⁸ In order to control the size of the population after mortality was defeated, about two hundred years previously, a Scythedom was established. The “scythes” have the task of “gleaning” people according to a carefully monitored quota and must make sure they do not show any bias in who they decide to glean (Shusterman, *The Toll* 44; *Scythe* 55, 75). Consequently, all humans live under the constant threat of death, but since such a small percentage of the population is gleaned, most characters do not seem to worry too much about their lives ending, even though they are scared of the scythes.

The world is controlled by the Thunderhead—an artificial intelligence that monitors all humans and animals, records everyone's

68. For another example of YA dystopian literature in which immortality has been defeated, see Gemma Malley's *The Declaration* trilogy (2008–2010), which is also included in my corpus.

memories, makes sure that traffic runs smoothly and is seen as the creator of a utopian society in which all human needs are catered for by the Thunderhead. However, it is not allowed to interact with the Scythedom, which is thus totally in control of who is gleaned. At the age of sixteen, Citra and Rowan are picked by Scythe (Michael) Faraday to become his apprentices and to begin training to become professional killers (Shusterman, *Thunderhead* 168, 417; *Scythe* 50, 62, 93).

As the trilogy progresses it becomes clear that some scythes have started abusing their position and are killing for pleasure, not out of necessity, and are disregarding the rules that are supposed to dictate the scythes' profession. Citra and Rowan are drawn into the political struggles between the old and the new order, and must tackle their position as adolescent killers by trying not to be used and abused by others who want them to kill on their behalf. Just like Juliette in Mafi's series, Rowan is occasionally used as a weapon, but most of the killings he and Citra commit are tied to their position as scythes or aspiring scythes, which means that they are legitimised by society.

The focalisation shifts between several different characters throughout the trilogy, but Citra and Rowan's perspectives are present in all books. The narrative also includes extracts from the scythes' gleaning journals, speeches by different political forces and brief sections from the Thunderhead's perspective, for example.

In this section, I will first introduce Citra's and Rowan's subject positions in their society. I will thereafter clarify how their position as adolescent killers, as scythes, transforms their lives. The remainder of the section will be devoted to an investigation of the killings for which Citra and Rowan are responsible throughout the series and how they are justified and depicted in their supposedly utopian world, which is gradually revealed to be a dystopia. I will also highlight the situations in which the controlled adolescent motif and the mighty adolescent motif are present, to interrogate the power, or lack thereof, of these adolescent killers who are atypical in the genre of YA dystopian literature. Hill Collins' concept of the matrix of domination will also be applied.

CITRA'S AND ROWAN'S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITIONS

The set-up of this YA dystopian trilogy is distinctly different from most other texts in my corpus of primary texts. It begins as a utopia, where poverty, racism and different kinds of (dis)ability have been “defeated” with the help of the all-powerful Thunderhead. The climate crisis has been solved, and criminality is no longer a problem (*Scythe* 59, 109, 178; *Toll* 183; *Thunderhead* 59). Because people do not die from old age, they can simply “turn a corner” when they want to become young again. The only restriction is that they are not able to become younger than twenty-one, even though attempts are made to improve genetic therapy so that people can become adolescents again (*Scythe* 17, 25). Scythes are supposed to be selected from the best people, to make sure that they do not abuse the privilege of gleaning or the worldly comforts of the scythes, such as unlimited resources (*Scythe* 14, 16). They are not defined as killers, since they do not “kill”, but “glean” instead: “[W]e do not officially call it ‘killing’”. It is not socially or morally correct to call it such. It is, and has always been, ‘gleaning’, named for the way the poor would trail behind farmers in ancient times, taking the stray stalks of grain left behind” (*Scythe* 11). Consequently, the gleaned are compared to leftovers—the residue that has been left behind.

However, it is gradually revealed that the Thunderhead took over by subduing global riots. It killed all its opponents and replaced politicians and the existing political systems, including democracy, with its own supposedly benevolent dictatorship. Some scythes even contributed to the new world order by killing the few remaining politicians (*Scythe* 61, 136; *Thunderhead* 214, 433). The extent to which this world is governed by dystopian tendencies is gradually revealed to the readers and to Citra and Rowan, who eventually decide to not play by the rules of scythes because of these revelations.

The distinction between and intermixing of utopian and dystopian aspects in the fictional world of the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy has been highlighted in previous research. Based on an analysis of the

first two books, Anna Bugajska argues that “the drawbacks of his [Shusterman’s] utopia—controlled depopulation, the collapse of legal and linguistic structures for the description of extended relations, individual identity crises” can be viewed “as unavoidably dark lining of the silver singularitarian cloud, inherent in and conditioning any utopian project” (“Tomorrow’s” 57). In her book *Engineering Youth: The Evantropian Project in Young Adult Dystopias* (2019), Bugajska states that she views the first two books as “a fundamentally utopian tale” (*Engineering* 160). For example, Bugajska argues that Shusterman “proactively seeks to change the attitude of his audience to technologies they might consider dystopian by default, and shows how they can be used for the benefit of the society” (*Engineering* 161).

In a study of American tenth graders’ interpretation of the first two books in the trilogy, conducted by Jacqueline Bach, Emily Peters and Joshua Bourgeois, the students underlined the contradictions between the seemingly utopian society and its dystopian tendencies. For example, they highlighted how the society is superficial and stagnant, and that gleaning produces a lot of suffering amongst family members and friends, even though mortality has officially been defeated (Bach et al., “Teaching” 42–43). Despite the different interpretations found in previous research, where Bugajska seems to favour the utopian tendencies and the tenth graders are convinced that this is a dystopia, they all highlight the interplay between utopia and dystopia in the trilogy. In the following analysis, I will clarify how the dystopian tendencies become more and more pronounced the further the series progresses, by focusing on the relationship of power between the adolescent protagonists and the adult world.

In Citra and Rowan’s world, the intersectional subject position of a person supposedly has no effect on their access to free will and power over their own lives, since the world has dealt with racism, poverty and (dis)ability. However, the way the world has tackled these things is in no way perfect, so power differences based on different power categories still exist. For example, both Citra and Rowan have a mixed racial heritage, like everyone else, but there are still societal structures that define some races as superior. The index of a person’s

heritage always begins with the percentage of Caucasoid, clarifying that racial hierarchy is built into the system used to counteract racism by positioning whiteness as the first category that should be addressed (*Toll* 183–184). Therefore, the hegemonic domain's ideology about different race categories is built into the system that is used to counteract racism.

Rowan's highest percentage of any race category is Caucasoid, but Citra scores highest on the Afric category (*Scythe* 43–44). The narrative depicts no examples of racism directed at either of them, but the claim that racism has been defeated for good is counteracted by how less honourable scythes glean more people from certain cultural and racial backgrounds (*Thunderhead* 133–134).⁶⁹ Overall, both Citra and Rowan are privileged, especially after they become scythe apprentices and can access the scythe privileges, including unlimited resources and immunity from being gleaned, which applies to all their family members for as long as they themselves remain alive (*Scythe* 52). However, from the moment that they become scythes, they lose contact with their families, and all their interpersonal interactions are governed by their relationship to the Scythedom.

When it comes to (dis)ability, (dis)abled people no longer exist, since the Thunderhead has “cured” conditions such as deafness (*Scythe* 178). Both Citra and Rowan are able-bodied and healthy. In this world, physical pain, melancholia and obesity can be cured by the fine-tuning of “nanites”, which every human has implanted in their body (*Scythe* 33; *Thunderhead* 420–421; *Toll* 63). This is a common component in the science fiction genre. Here, the compulsory able-bodiedness, which Robert McRuer addresses in relationship to contemporary society, is taken to extremes when (dis)abled people are no longer allowed to exist. The challenge to able-bodiedness that (dis)abled bodies pose has thereby been silenced in the most perma-

69. In Bach et al. (2019), the authors state that tenth-grade students who took part in their teaching based on the first two novels in Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy argued that because everyone is a mix of all the races defined in the race index there is no racism, and therefore no Other, in this fictional world (Bach et al., “Teaching” 43).

ment way thinkable. McRuer analyses how one of the protagonists in the movie *As Good As It Gets* (1997), directed by James L. Brooks, displays obsessive-compulsive behaviour. He “cures” his (dis)ability and, when he does so, all the flaws in his character automatically disappear (McRuer 23). This example, just like the Thunderhead’s erasure of (dis)ability, suggests that (dis)abled people need to be “cured” in order to fit into society. This ideological standpoint relies heavily on compulsory able-bodiedness, which suggests that people will be both happier and better persons if they are able to erase their (dis)ability.

To summarise, the act of completely removing (dis)ability reinforces the idea that being (dis)abled is a serious breach of what being normative entails and, from this perspective, the act of “curing” a condition such as deafness does not come across as benign, but as abusive and hurtful.

Both Citra and Rowan are heterosexual and cisgender, but society at large seems to accept other kinds of sexualities and gender expressions. For example, a non-binary⁷⁰ character who was raised in Madagascar—where no one is assigned a gender during their childhood—causes confusion for some characters, because of their way of identifying as a woman during some weather conditions and as a man during others. However, only an ancient scythe who is portrayed as out of touch with the times, expresses transphobic comments (*Toll* 34–35, 462). In a similar vein to the *Shatter Me* series, heteronormativity does not seem to lead to discrimination and/or oppression in this world, but cisnormativity positions a non-binary person as a deviation from the normative position of cisgender people. When Citra and Rowan become scythes, they give up their right to find a mate and to create a family (*Scythe* 115), but romance grows between them and they explore their feelings, despite the restrictions.

70. Non-binary is “[a]n umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not fit the ‘man’ or ‘woman’ binary. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely. The most common gender neutral pronoun used by non-binary people, is ‘they’” (Owen and Scott Lauchlan-Ford 11).

While there are supposedly no differences between people due to ethnicity, the Mid Merican Scythedom is defined as a powerful Scythedom on a global scale (*Scythe* 127), positioning a future part of the US as a world-leading area in political affairs. Thus, both Citra and Rowan are privileged in this sense too, especially during their interactions with scythes from other parts of the world. Similarly, while it is explicitly argued that there should be no differences between the kind of training that female and male scythe apprentices are supposed to master, Rowan has a tendency to try to protect Citra from harm. He is expected to toughen up and to become a man through extreme torture instigated by an unrighteous scythe (*Scythe* 116, 179, 225). Consequently, gender norms that are recognisable in contemporary Western societies still govern the characters' interactions in the interpersonal domain. Although poverty has been defeated, there are still some differences in people's incomes and access to resources (*Scythe* 109), with the scythes at the top of this class hierarchy, never having to worry about petty problems such as too little money to get what they want or need.

In summary, the structural domain does not differentiate between people based on their race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender expression, gender, class or religion (the Thunderhead has dictated that there should be religious freedom) (*Thunderhead* 360), but the hegemonic domain is still largely defined by norms about different groups of people, positioning some as less powerful—or in more need of help—than others. This, in turn, affects the interactions of the interpersonal domain. For example, members of a religious sect are persecuted by the old order—the traditional faction of scythes—and disrespected by most people (cf. *Toll* 512, 518, 558–559). Some people, like the deaf, are no longer allowed to exist. The Thunderhead regards this as merciful, but the action promotes able-bodiedness as normative in the most extreme way. (Dis)abled people have literally been obliterated.

The privileges of the scythes are defined on a structural level, which means that the Scythedom is legitimised by both the rights given to it by the structural domain and the conception of scythes as necessary, legitimate and righteous that is perpetuated by the hege-

monic domain. The Thunderhead equates to the disciplinary domain in its role of all-encompassing surveillance. It is even described in terms reminiscent of Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon:⁷¹ as someone who is always present and who watches everything you do. Even if you are never punished, you constantly walk around waiting for the punishment (*Toll* 365).⁷² The Thunderhead can also be seen as a version of Big Brother in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* (1949), since they both control the inhabitants' behaviour through surveillance in all areas of their lives. The privileges of the scythes or, to phrase it differently, the special citizenship given to the scythes by the structural domain, positions them as superior to everyone other than the Thunderhead.

Immortality allows the power category of age to function differently in the fictional world compared to the world of the readers. For example, people can relive their twenties as many times as they like, so it is impossible to know a person's age just based on their appearance. To let your body age is frowned upon and seen as unnatural (*Toll* 133). However, you are only allowed to experience childhood and adolescence once in your life. This suggests that these are specific periods of life that people would not—or should not—want to experience again. It also defines young people as a distinctly different group

71. This is how Foucault describes the panopticon: “[Jeremy] Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery” (5).

72. The panopticon is a common genre trait in dystopian literature, and is present in George Orwell's *1984*, for instance. For an analysis of this particular version of the panopticon, see Ensieh Shabanirad and Mahtab Dadkhah's article “Utopian Nightmares: Disciplinary Power and Panoptic Society in George Orwell's *1984* and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island*” (2019).

from older people; it is the only group for which society still tracks their age (*Scythe* 152). These factors demonstrate how young people in contemporary societies are regarded as a separate group with separate needs, albeit through the use of an imaginary future society with (almost) immortal humans.

Citra and Rowan repeatedly face age-related prejudice about their abilities as scythe apprentices and junior scythes, showing how this society, which has supposedly conquered racism, (dis)ability and poverty, has not felt any need to blur the boundaries between children and adolescents, on the one hand, and adults, on the other. Consequently, aetonnormativity has not been challenged. Age-related ideologies still affect people's access to power at a fundamental level, which will be highlighted in the rest of this section through an analysis of Citra and Rowan's position as adolescent killers, or more specifically, adolescent scythes-to-be and scythes.

THE ADOLESCENT KILLERS, CITRA AND ROWAN

Citra and Rowan both have strong doubts when they are first approached by Scythe Faraday with the proposition that they start training to become scythes under his jurisdiction, because they do not find pleasure in the idea of becoming adolescent killers. Citra does not want to become a scythe, but when she tells Faraday this, he argues that this is the primary requirement for becoming a good and just scythe. She ponders the proposition deeply, and it is clear that she does not want to become a killer. An experience in her childhood, when she pushed a girl in front of a truck and thereby rendered her "deadish" (*Scythe* 21, 52–53, 201), weighs heavily on her conscience. To become "deadish" means that someone experiences something that would have killed them permanently in real-life societies, but which can be cured in this imaginary society, so the person can be resurrected (*Scythe* 202). This means that many people would not consider the act that troubling, after they had made sure the girl had been successfully resurrected but, for Citra, this is the worst thing she

has ever done (*Scythe* 202, 208). Citra's moral qualms illustrate that she is indeed a person of the "highest moral fibre" which, according to Faraday, is a prerequisite for becoming a good scythe (*Scythe* 51).

Gradually, Citra changes her mind and starts working towards becoming a scythe. This is partly a result of witnessing the respect and mercy Faraday shows in his gleanings. She starts to believe that she could be a good and righteous scythe, and that it could give her an important purpose in life (*Scythe* 115). Her changing view of scythes is clarified when she argues: "Yes, she would have blood on her hands, but blood can be a cleansing thing" (*Ibid.*). This quotation needs to be conceptualised within the framework of the world that she lives in, where gleanings are perceived as a necessary and just means of controlling population size. The hegemonic domain thus defines gleanings as something separate from unrighteous killings, whereas killing another human is regarded as a crime by contemporary societies.⁷³ Their distinction from murderers is made explicit within the narrative, when a murderer is defined as "[a]n individual who, without the blessing of society, or even its permission, permanently ends a human life" (*Scythe* 373). As a scythe, Citra will indeed end numerous people's lives permanently, but her actions are sanctioned by society, and even viewed as "a sacred mission" (*Scythe* 11).

At this later point in the narrative, Citra has gone from fearing the scythes to understanding and accepting the job description as necessary and just. She is supported in her self-concept of being a good scythe by Scythe (Marie) Curie, who believes that Scythe Goddard will cause problems, because he revels in the act of killing and is recruiting followers. In these uncertain times, Citra is needed: "I know the scythe you'll be, and it's exactly what we need" (*Scythe* 385). Thus, Citra grows accustomed to the idea of becoming a scythe, but after a whole year of training, she is still not totally comfortable with becoming a killer (*Thunderhead* 82). The types of killings that she enacts as a scythe apprentice, and later a scythe, belong to the eighth

73. One exception is capital punishment in societies where this is defined as legal punishment.

category of adolescent killers—adolescents who kill as a profession.

Just like Citra, Rowan is sickened by the thought of becoming a scythe, but he trusts his own empathy to keep him on the right track (*Scythe* 53). Faraday selected him because of his high morals and because he is just. However, Rowan is drawn into the power struggles between the old and new regime in a very distinct way; the Scythedom decides that Faraday may not have two apprentices and, instead of letting one return to their ordinary life, it is decreed that the chosen one must kill the other (*Scythe* 162). At this point in the story, Citra and Rowan's friendship is becoming a romance, and they are both devastated by the decision. Positioning two adolescents against each other and stating they must to kill one another is an example of the sixth category of an adolescent killer, one who is forced to kill by an institution, against their will. This can be regarded as extreme aetonnornative power abuse, since the most powerful adults in the world—the scythes—decide that only one of the adolescents will be allowed to live. Consequently, the controlled adolescent motif is actualised by not only the threat of being permanently killed, but by being forced to become a killer outside the acts of killing that are required of a scythe.

Scythe Faraday attempts to save both Citra and Rowan by faking his own death, but Goddard takes on Rowan as his apprentice instead (*Scythe* 212). All of a sudden, Rowan is introduced to a distinctly different view of what it means to be a scythe. Goddard is brutal and finds great pleasure in gleanings and in rendering people deadish. For example, he first forces Rowan to render twelve people—who will later be resurrected—deadish (*Scythe* 255–257), thereby turning Rowan into his own weapon, similar to the way Juliette is treated in Mafi's series. Later, this action is repeated again and again, until Rowan has been forced to render people deadish more than 2000 times (*Scythe* 382). In the process, Rowan grows “into an exceptionally skilled killer” (Ibid.). Clearly, Goddard does not consider it amoral or problematic to repeatedly put people through the experience of being rendered “deadish” for the sole purpose of turning his apprentice into a killing machine. The differences in how the old order, represented by

Scythe Faraday, and the new order, led by Scythe Goddard, regard the purpose of a scythe, could not be more distinct. The new order presents anti-hegemonic knowledge as an alternative to the hegemonic domain's definition of what a scythe is and should be under the old order.

From Rowan's perspective, Goddard is not a scythe, but a killer (*Scythe* 278). Rowan's aversion to Goddard's behaviour and philosophy turns into a plan to stop him. But first, he tries to save Citra from the inevitable confrontation in which one of them will kill the other. He renders her deadish and, since this is against the rules, he is disqualified. This ensures that Citra is sent to be resurrected and he will not have to choose between killing her and letting her kill him (*Scythe* 299–300). Here, rendering Citra deadish—an action which is usually seen as despicable—is carefully planned to save them both from their lethal battle (*Scythe* 300). Rowan's actions fit into the first and second categories of adolescent killers in Table 2, since he aims to protect both himself and Citra through his actions.

Rowan has made up his mind that he is willing to do whatever it takes to stop Goddard, but he is worried that to stop Goddard, he is himself “becoming a monster, too” (*Scythe* 325). The line between rebelling against an unrighteous scythe and turning into someone just as bad is thus highlighted and problematised in the narrative.

Both Citra and Rowan have to go through an initiation rite that plays on their willingness to kill in the name of scythes: Citra has to render her little brother deadish, and Rowan has to do the same to his mother. The purpose of the rite is to make sure that every aspiring scythe is strong enough. To hurt someone they love is the hardest thing they will ever have to do and, if they manage to do that, what follows as a professional scythe will always be easier. Whereas Citra is absolutely devastated when she does what she is told, Rowan does not have any problems with rendering his own mother deadish (*Scythe* 418–420, 428). However, he does not like who he is becoming: “He would rather be gleaned than be that person” (*Scythe* 428). Here, it becomes clear that Citra and Rowan develop differently in relationship to the prospect of becoming a scythe. The main reason

for the differences is that Citra is free to glean “with compassion and conscience” (*Scythe* 443), while Rowan has been forced to become a weapon in Goddard’s attempts to create a world in which scythes can glean as many people as they like and take pleasure in it. For example, Rowan is expected to take part in a mass killing against his own will (*Scythe* 390), just one of many examples of aetonnormative power abuse in which the adult scythe, with all his privileges, forces an adolescent scythe-to-be to take part in socially unacceptable gleanings. Thereby, Rowan becomes a controlled adolescent who must break the scythes’ moral codes, dictated by the hegemonic domain, to survive.

At the end of the first book in the trilogy, Rowan rebels against Goddard by killing him and burning his body so that he cannot be resurrected (*Scythe* 400). The reason for Rowan’s actions is that “Goddard isn’t a scythe. He may have the [scythe] ring, he may have a license to glean, but he’s not a scythe. He’s a killer, and he has to be stopped” (*Scythe* 394). This is the first time that Rowan autonomously decides to kill someone, so this is an example of killing for revenge (Category 9) and of killing a political leader who risks making their society a pure dystopia (Category 4). Rowan is even prepared to kill other scythes in this endeavour. He flees from the Conclave, where Citra is ordained a scythe, instead becoming the self-proclaimed Scythe Lucifer. He starts killing unrighteous scythes who show bias in their gleanings or do not adhere to the gleaning quota, for instance, by burning their bodies after they are killed (*Scythe* 442; *Thunderhead* 132). Thus, he acts outside the societal rules for the scythes’ gleanings, and can therefore be considered to be a murderer. He views himself as a bringer of light—as someone who rebels against the current order and takes life and death into his own hands to create what he views as a better world. This fits into the third category of adolescent killers—those who kill a smaller number of people in order to save humanity as a whole.

Rowan’s chosen path is contrasted against Citra’s, who officially becomes Scythe Anastasia and decides to be as merciful as possible, allowing her victims to live one more month to put things in order before she kills them, using the weapon of their choice (*Thunderhead*

34–35). She uses these measures to help “her sleep at night” (*Thunderhead* 39). She gradually realises that being a killer has become a part of who she is and is something she takes pride in (*Thunderhead* 55, 202). Consequently, despite Citra and Rowan’s different experiences of the Scythedom, they find their own way of dealing with the position of being an adolescent killer, which they did not choose in the first place, but have to learn to live with in one way or another. Whereas Citra acts within the institution of the Scythedom, trying to do what she can to make the gleanings easier for those affected without breaking the rules of the disciplinary domain of the Scythedom, Rowan becomes a rogue scythe who replaces the quota with careful research into which scythes abuse the privileges given to them by the Scythedom. They both work towards a better, more just world, but they do so in fundamentally different ways, using lethal violence and the privileged position of a fully trained scythe to do so.

The *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy repeatedly underlines how Citra is a compassionate scythe, who even inspires others to make the act of gleanings easier for the victims. While she has finally gotten used to the gleanings, and even feels a need to glean when she has gone too long without it, she avoids gleanings in anger and clarifies that the act of killing never gets easier for her (*Toll* 324–325, 407, 518). In short, she is following in Scythe Faraday’s footsteps and represents someone who kills because it is her job, but who does not enjoy it, and someone who most likely would have picked any other profession if given the option. When she asks herself whether she would help Rowan in his mission as Scythe Lucifer, she does not know the answer (*Thunderhead* 295), but she never openly questions or condemns his decision.

In a plot twist, it is revealed that Goddard’s mind and head(!) have been revived in the body of a former friend of Rowan. Rowan is captured and tortured by Goddard, and he feels completely and utterly broken. He manages to escape with some unexpected help from one of Goddard’s supporters, killing some guards in the process. These killings are done in self-defence and thus belong to the first category of killers. Later, Goddard rebels against the old order by killing the

Grandslayers, the rulers of the international Scythedom, by sinking the island they are visiting and proclaiming himself the new ruler of Mid Merica, while putting the blame on Rowan. Rowan and Citra, who try to flee from the sinking island, manage to escape permanent death by being enclosed in an airtight vault and, after three years of being deadish at the bottom of the ocean, they are rescued and brought back to life without having aged biologically (*Thunderhead* 312, 457, 498, 507; *Toll* 442). Consequently, they have another chance to affect their world's political situation, which has gradually grown more and more dystopian as Goddard expands his power. Simultaneously, age is relativised even further when Citra and Rowan's biological age does not match the number of years since their births.

While Citra is cared for after she has been revived, Rowan is imprisoned by Goddard, escapes from him within minutes of being executed and is instead captured by the Texas scythes, who want him to kill fifty scythes they do not like (*Toll* 383). Once again, people want to use Rowan as a lethal weapon. While he was very careful about who he decided to kill in the name of Scythe Lucifer, allowing everyone who had "a single redeeming quality" to live, he is now expected to kill people whom others simply dislike (*Ibid.*). Rowan's desperation and lack of autonomy is underlined as follows:

Scythe Faraday had once told him and Citra that they were called *scythes* rather than *reapers*, because they were not the ones who killed; they were merely the tool that society used to bring fair-handed death to the world. But once you're *the weapon* [my italics], you're nothing more than *a tool for someone else to wield* [my italics]. (*Toll* 528–529)

Rowan is no longer in charge of who he kills, therefore describing himself as "nothing more than an assassin" (*Toll* 529). The controlled adolescent motif is actualised when it is clear that Rowan's trajectory to becoming an honourable scythe has been hampered, replaced by him becoming a lethal weapon that people want to use for their own ends. However, Rowan escapes from the Texas scythes before he is

forced to kill anyone. The situation helps clarify how the Scythedom is in no way morally superior to the other humans, and that there is an urgent need to rebel against the very institution of scythes.

Citra is in charge of this rebellion. She reveals to the population how some scythes have censored history, such as by hiding how scythes sacrificed many lives in two different attempts to colonise space. The person in charge of this operation was Scythe Goddard. After this revelation, there are mass protests against Goddard (*Toll* 387–388, 509). People start arguing that there “*are* no honorable scythes” (*Toll* 518). While Citra finds empowerment in revealing the truth to the population, she decides to not keep fighting against Goddard on his terms; instead, she quits her job as a scythe (*Toll* 575). She argues that “Scythe Anastasia is gone. I’m done with death and dying and killing. From now on, I want my life to be about living” (*Toll* 575). Her decision is not only about being able to live a life of her choosing, instead of the life tied to being a scythe, but about undermining the very foundations of the Scythedom: “[N]ow we have the chance to show the world not just that we don’t need the Scythedom, but that we never did. *This* could have been our destiny, if the Scythedom hadn’t prevented it—and it still can be” (*Toll* 589). In this way, the institution of the Scythedom is challenged by the presentation of anti-hegemonic knowledge, demonstrating how the world does not depend on the scythes. There are other ways to keep population numbers under control, without giving such tremendous power to a group of people that will always include some individuals who abuse their privileges. Thus, when she challenges the institution that invested such a large amount of power in her, Citra is portrayed as a mighty adolescent.

When it becomes clear that Goddard will stop at nothing in his quest to reaffirm his position of power through lethal violence, Citra and Rowan decide to join a space operation initiated by the Thunderhead. They intend to start a new life, far from Goddard and the power struggles of the Scythedom. Citra is chosen to lead this operation. However, before she and Rowan reach their spaceship, Citra is rendered deadish. The only way to save her is to keep her body

frozen during the 117 years it takes to get to their space destination (*Toll* 573–574, 617).

Back on Earth, Goddard is killed by one of his supporters, there are global revolts against the Scythedom and all scythes are fired. Instead, every twenty years there are plagues on Earth that prevent overpopulation (*Toll* 621, 627). Scythe Faraday honours his position as a scythe by offering the sick mercy killings, and some other former scythes copy his example (*Toll* 627), but, overall, the Scythedom has become a thing of the past. Thus, the rebellion against the Scythedom was successful, despite Citra and Rowan's decision to leave the battle and virtually aim for the stars.

Throughout the space journey, Rowan acts as a leader and decides to not reset his age until Citra is revived (*Toll* 617). When Citra and Rowan finally reach their new home planet, Citra is resurrected. The lovers are reunited when Citra is woken up in a scene that, despite there being no kiss, is reminiscent of *Sleeping Beauty*. Rowan has “turned a corner” and is now just as young as he was when Citra was rendered deadish (*Toll* 631). In a surprisingly gender normative twist, which counteracts the overall portrayal of the protagonists as equal, the female leader-to-be is immobilised, while the male protagonist assumes this position of power instead. Just as in the *Shatter Me* series, romance and heterosexual love between a young man and woman has the last word in this work of YA dystopian literature. The gender normative ending thus buys into heteronormative love unions as the ultimate goal of young people's lives.

*

To summarise, Citra's and Rowan's experiences of the Scythedom are distinctly different, but they both soon realise that the honourable job for which they were selected is not particularly righteous and tends to legitimise an extreme abuse of power by various scythes. They both struggle with actions that they are more or less forced to take. They try to navigate the position of young scythes-to-be and later official or rogue scythes in a moral way, even when it means

breaking the rules of the Scythedom and presenting counter-hegemonic knowledge about the Scythedom to the masses. Contrary to Henry's and Mafi's novels, there are no explicit limitations to the characters' power due to the power categories of class, race, sexuality or gender, but they both have to face aetnonormative power abuse when the Scythedom—both the old order and the new—repeatedly demonstrates that Citra and Rowan are at the institution's mercy. The adolescents do rebel, but the mighty adolescent motif is seldom present. Instead, Shusterman's trilogy illustrates that even in a world where the adolescents are as privileged as they can be, their youth still makes them vulnerable to adults' power abuse. The power category of age is thus highlighted by being the one category of discrimination that is not defeated, on a legislative or actual level.

Ideologies Tied to the Adolescent Killer Motif in the Three Series

The three series analysed in depth in this chapter present different ideologies about what it means to be an adolescent killer, especially on the question of whether or not the killings should be regarded as righteous, as despicable, as done out of free will, or as a consequence of having been forced by someone else to kill. In this section, I summarise the ideologies and clarify similarities and differences in how the texts depict these ideological issues. Despite the texts' differences, what they have in common is how they use the adolescent killer motif to pose complicated and controversial questions about killing other humans.

Each series constantly interrogates when it is necessary, just or even righteous, to kill, and when it should be regarded as an instance of abusing your powers. There is a distinct difference between Henry's and Mafi's series, on the one hand, and Shusterman's, on the other, because gleanings are not really considered as killings at the beginning of the trilogy, even though this conception is gradually challenged as the trilogy progresses. Whereas the first two's main ideology about killing is that **killing someone is a despicable act and should**

be avoided whenever possible, the latter conceptualises a particular kind of killing as being societally acceptable. Still, all the series support killing in certain situations, which leads to relativisation in the conception of killing as something fundamentally amoral and wrong.

An ideology that can be found in Henry's *Girl in Red* and in Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy is that **adolescents can be forced to become killers to survive in a dystopian society because of how they are oppressed**. For Red, the only option available to her if she wants to survive is to be prepared to kill her attackers. As she states, she deeply regrets that she has been forced to such extreme actions. Here, self-protection requires the willingness to kill, and Red has gradually come to terms with this fact. Her young age, her gender and her (dis)ability make her even more prone to threats of rape and physical violence, clarifying how oppressive societal structures can make some people more vulnerable than others in a crisis. Consequently, Red gradually accepts that she must become a hunter, and sometimes kill others before they attack her, if she does not want to be preyed upon. Rowan, in Shusterman's trilogy, also finds himself in situations where it is a matter of kill or be killed, such as when he escapes from Goddard and kills some guards in the process. Rowan's vulnerability is a consequence of being taken under the wing of an evil scythe, even though Rowan does not want to be associated with Goddard at all. To stop being forced to kill for Goddard's enjoyment, he is willing to kill to enable his escape. Both Red and Rowan are thus made vulnerable through situations in which adults and adult institutions threaten their lives, and this is the reason they are prepared to kill.

Another ideology, closely connected with the previous one, states that **being forced to become an adolescent killer to survive is a severe form of oppression**. In all the series, this oppression includes an aetonnormative power abuse by adults that is directed against adolescents. Red is seen as a vulnerable young woman, who must therefore be prepared to kill her attackers. Juliette first tries to kill Anderson to stop him from hurting her, Warner and Adam, after she found out that he was responsible for her accidentally killing the young boy, because he did not tell her that her touch could kill. Later, Juliette kills

two of the commanders of the oppressive Re-establishment. Rowan kills the guards when he escapes from Goddard, because Goddard has used his power as an adult scythe to train Rowan as a killing machine. In all these instances, the act of killing is a result of oppression. In every case but one, killing someone is not described as empowering for the characters, but repressive. Juliette's killing of the two commanders is the exception, because it contributes to the final defeat of the Re-establishment.

Similarly, both the *Shatter Me* series and the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy foreground an ideology about how **being forced to become an adolescent killer in an experiment or by an institution/regime is an extreme version of aetonnornormative power abuse**. Juliette has been experimented on by her parents in order to increase her lethal touch, and she is used as a weapon by Warner and Anderson against her own will. However, she always manages to escape their influence before she actually follows their orders to kill someone. Rowan is repeatedly forced to render people deadish and participate in mass gleanings, which are essentially mass murders. Consequently, both characters' autonomy and free will are removed when someone else—in both cases older people and institutions run by adults—turns the adolescent characters into lethal weapons. In fact, even though the opportunity to become a scythe is tied to many privileges and prestige in Shusterman's future world, both Citra and Rowan are very hesitant about taking up this position and, at the end of the series, it is clear that the Scythedom really gave them no other options than to accept. The adolescents are thus not treated as individuals who should be allowed to decide their own actions, showing how adults abuse their power over the adolescents for their own pleasure and/or gain. This is portrayed as amoral and abusive. Accordingly, the adolescents cannot be held fully accountable for their actions, since someone else has forced them to commit the killings. This narrative twist makes it possible to simultaneously portray the adolescents as killers and as heroes struggling to do what is right.

All the series clearly emphasise the ideology that **killing for your own pleasure or gain is wrong and amoral**. For example: the men in

Red's world who rape and kill girls are portrayed as highly amoral, violent and abusive; Juliette is scared of her feelings of power when she touches someone with her lethal touch; and Goddard's pleasure in mass killings is portrayed as despicable. Mafi's series emphasises how killing a defenceless child is even worse than killing adults, and Shusterman's series similarly clarifies that killing the young should be seen as more problematic than killing older people, when Citra decides to not glean any children despite this being expected of her (*Scythe* 228–229). Acts of violence that are a result of pleasure and/or gain are contrasted with situations in which the protagonists have no other choice than to kill in order to survive or when others force them to kill.

In all three series, there is an ideology that demonstrates how **kill-ing to protect your care circle may be viewed as righteous within a dystopian setting**. When Red kills the three men who have captured Sam, she does so to prevent Sam from being raped, hurt and possibly killed and, because Sam is a child, the men's actions are depicted as even more despicable, explaining Red's decision to kill them. Here, Red is prepared to go to extremes to protect a child, one for whom she considers herself a substitute guardian, similar to how the adolescent mothers Lyda, Shari and Elin—who will be analysed in the next chapter—are prepared to kill in order to protect their children. The child's vulnerability further underlines the need for Red to kill the perpetrators. In the *Shatter Me* series, Juliette's friend Kenji kills a female attacker who is about to kill Warner, thereby killing to protect his care circle. Rowan renders Citra “deadish” to save them both from their fight to the death.

Both Mafi's and Shusterman's series actualise an ideology about how, **within a dystopian society, killing for the greater good may be necessary in the fight for a better world**. For example, both Juliette and Rowan are prepared to assassinate their oppressive leaders (Anderson and the other commanders, and Goddard). While Juliette is ready to kill people in the rebellion against the Re-establishment, Rowan assumes the role of *Scythe* Lucifer and sets out to kill unrighteous scythes who abuse the scythes' privileges. However, the series

also highlight a different ideology, one stating that **killing can never be justified as a means to an end**. In Mafi's series, the adult character of Castle questions how Juliette could possibly be better than the Re-establishment if she rebels by killing all her opponents and, in Shusterman's trilogy, Rowan constantly questions whether his use of lethal violence for a good cause, such as killing bad scythes in the role of Scythe Lucifer, makes him a monster that is as bad as the evil he is trying to defeat.

In Mafi's series, these two ideologies coexist, but the final book, *Imagine Me*, strongly suggests that the only way to survive is by killing the oppressive leaders of the Re-establishment. This illustrates how the cause sometimes justifies the means, but not always. The *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy demonstrates more support for the latter ideology than the former. This may seem surprising, because Shusterman has created a society in which some killing is deemed legitimate and even necessary but, as the series progresses, an ideology stating that **the act of killing can be amoral and wrong, even when it is sanctioned by society** becomes increasingly pronounced. Just as the righteousness of capital punishment can be questioned in a society where it is an established penalty for crime, the hegemonic domain's ideology that defines scythes and gleanings as necessary and just is gradually challenged, especially after Citra reveals how the Scythedom covered up its participation in mass murder.

When it comes to mass murder, Mafi's and Shusterman's series communicate different ideologies. After Juliette believes she has mass murdered more than 600 people, she is upset and others seem to be scared of her, but at no time is her decision fundamentally questioned, apart from Castle's comments about how it is almost impossible to be a good leader if your power comes from killing your opponents. The series thus supports an ideology about how **mass murder may be necessary in a rebellion that aims to create a better world**. Shusterman's series, on the contrary, repeatedly shows that **mass murders are despicable acts** by positioning the enemy, Goddard, as responsible for them. Rowan's actions as Scythe Lucifer are partly justified because they only target scythes who abuse their privileged societal position;

in essence, they are presented as worse and more evil than Rowan. One explanation for why Mafi can publish a book for adolescents in which a protagonist is a mass murderer, is the later revelation that Juliette did not actually kill all those people; it was a trick used by the Re-establishment so she believed she had won, while signalling to the people that she is a “crazy” murderer. This example shows that even though Shusterman’s series initially seems to support the act of killing, it is actually Mafi’s series that most thoroughly supports the use of lethal violence.

Finally, Henry’s novel and Mafi’s series support the ideology that **killing for revenge can be viewed as righteous if the perpetrators have been extremely oppressive**. In Henry’s novel, killing for revenge is depicted as righteous when Red saves Sam by killing the men who have captured and plan to rape, hurt and murder the young girl. In Mafi’s series, this ideology is supported by Juliette’s pleasure when she rips out her mother’s heart after discovering how much she abused her power as an adult in relation to both Juliette and her sister, as well as how Emmaline kills their father, who helped their mother with her experiments and abuse. Here, the protagonist and her sister take part in an act that is usually reserved for antagonists in YA dystopian literature, and they do so because of the oppression they have been forced to endure. This ideology, just like Mafi’s treatment of mass murder, stands out as rather unique in my corpus. It exemplifies an instance where the books pose specific educational challenges, because although Mafi’s series nuances these issues, it still supports actions such as murder, which can be defined as the antithesis of what a democratic society wants the new generation to stand for in their future.

*

To summarise, all three series have many examples of ideologies that explain why an adolescent has become a killer, that touch upon when killing may be necessary, or even just highlight how the oppression of the adolescent is tied to them becoming adolescent killers in the

first place. Still, there are some ideologies that directly counteract the aim of teaching the young generation how they should behave and, consequently, the books' overall ideologies need to be carefully problematised in the classroom. This is the topic of Chapter 3, on classroom applications, in which I will present practical examples of how these texts and their ideologies can be used to interrogate the power category of age and other power categories, and to help develop values linked to human rights.

Conclusion

The examples of adolescent killers discussed in this chapter illustrate the prominence of this motif in YA dystopian literature, highlighting how being an adolescent killer can simultaneously be a position of power and a position of being repressed. In the three main examples analysed in this chapter, none of the characters originally decide to become killers; they are instead forced to, either by dystopian circumstances, or other individuals, regimes and/or institutions. Consequently, their free will and autonomy cannot be taken for granted. Instead, the act of killing functions as an extreme form of adult power abuse, through which the adolescents can literally be forced to become killers. Gradually, however, these adolescent characters embrace the position of being killers, and this gives them the power to survive in their dystopian society. The characters' flux between repression and empowerment is thus highlighted through the motif of the adolescent killer.

The characters' intersectional subject positions are interrogated in the different series analysed in this chapter, illustrating how not only age, but intersections with other power categories, such as gender, race and (dis)ability, affect the different characters' access to power within their dystopian societies. This underlines the validity of my argument about how the view of the young characters versus the adult characters, in which the young are either perceived as powerless and controlled, as Nikolajeva argues, or as mighty, as Beauvais

argues, is far too simplified. Instead, this chapter has illustrated that the character of an adolescent killer can be both empowered and oppressed by the act of killing; sometimes they find empowerment in it and at other times they experience severe oppression due to it. This depends on *who* they kill, *why* they kill and *how* they kill, and through my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature, these decisions are discussed in relationship to the characters' intersectional subject positions and their resulting possibilities for navigating their dystopian worlds. In short, the adolescent killer motif in my corpus highlights the need to always analyse young characters' power position through an intersectional lens. Some characters are controlled and oppressed, others are mighty. Most of them are oppressed at some times, but mighty at others.

The violence used by the adolescents has tremendous consequences for the adolescent characters and their sense of self. For example, both Red in Henry's novel and Citra and Rowan in Shusterman's series leave their societies after they have been forced to kill.⁷⁴ Being forced to kill, for whatever reason, has permanently destroyed their belief in the righteousness of their society and the adult world. Instead of depicting adolescents learning to accept the status quo, which Trites argues happens in her corpus of mainly realistic examples of adolescent literature (*Disturbing* 35), the books show how Red, Citra and Rowan all distance themselves from the society that turned them into adolescent killers. They do not believe in society's ability to improve and, in this sense, they present a very dark and hopeless view of the chances of creating a socially sustainable society. The ending to Mafi's series is more hopeful in its presentation of Juliette's belief in the beginning of a new era, but it moves the focus from the overarching political struggles to Juliette's personal happiness, as she is about to get married. In every case, the act of taking someone's life has changed the protagonists forever, and they all try to start over and move beyond the killings to create a happier life for themselves.

74. Juliette stays hidden for a while after the commanders are killed, but what happens after that period of time is not depicted in the series.

To conclude, the different versions of the adolescent killer motif presented in this chapter all illustrate how oppression can lead to becoming a killer. Although the primary axis of oppression relevant to this motif is age, all the works analysed in the case studies complicate the binary between the power positions of the adolescents and adults by portraying intersections with other power categories such as gender, race and (dis)ability. This YA dystopian literature thus contains an educational potential as regards investigating the power relationships between adolescents and adults. The books use hyperbole as a technique, because the motif demonstrates how adults can use their power to abuse adolescents to the point of forcing them to take someone's life. While teachers obviously do not want to tell their students to kill someone, the motif highlights how there may be no other options for adolescents in a specific dystopian setting, if they want to defend themselves against the adults' dystopian and oppressive world. Consequently, the motif is used to pose an uncomfortable, but crucial, question about what happens when adults abuse their power over the young without any regard for their safety, protection or life. In this sense, the books function as cautionary tales about what may happen if democracy and human rights are not defended in non-fictional societies, thus incorporating dystopias' ability to "warn readers about the possible outcomes of our present world" (Baccolini, "Useful" 115).

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AT ALL COSTS: ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Thus far, I have exemplified the extreme aetionormative power abuse encountered by young characters in YA dystopian literature through an analysis of the adolescent killer motif. A second motif that is utilised to highlight the theme of age-related power in YA dystopian literature is the adolescent mother struggling to protect her child from evil in a dystopian society. While this motif is present in various works in my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian primary texts, the motif communicates somewhat different ideologies about the distribution of power according to age. The thematic content carried by the motif of the adolescent mother thus varies in YA dystopian literature, but the motif always interrogates the power category of age through its focus on the relationships of power and/or dependence between the child, the adolescent mother and the adult world. Consequently, the motif incorporates an educational potential regarding the relationship of power between children, adolescents and adults.

In this chapter, I analyse three adolescent mother characters' struggles to protect their children in their dystopian worlds, where human rights are constantly threatened: Lyda Mertz in American author Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014), Shari Chopra in American authors James Frey and Nils Johnson-Shelton's *Endgame* trilogy (2014–2016) and Elin Holme in Swedish author Mats Wahl's *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] series (2014–2017).⁷⁵ Since dystopian worlds

75. This YA dystopian series has not been translated into English. All transla-

do not live up to the standards of a society with social sustainability, all three narratives strongly emphasise how parents, predominantly the mothers, struggle with their mission to protect their child.

The aim of the chapter is 1) to provide an overview of how the adolescent mother motif is actualised in my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature, 2) to analyse how the liminal position of an adolescent mother is used to highlight and problematise aetnonormative power structures in dystopian worlds, using an intersectional approach that considers the multifaceted subject position of a specific character who is an adolescent mother, and 3) to investigate the ideologies connected to age-related power distribution that are communicated by the adolescent mother motif.

Adolescent parents occupy a liminal position in terms of age-related power structures, which positions them as simultaneously empowered and repressed. The adolescent parent is not yet an adult, with the power that this normative position bestows upon them, due to aetnonormativity and its positioning of adults as normative and children and adolescents as deviating from the norm (cf. Nikolajeva, “Theory” 16). However, the adolescent parent is also the foremost authority for their child, so they are responsible for taking care of and protecting their child, whilst simultaneously being controlled by adults because of their young age. As Lydia Kokkola argues in *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality: Sexy Sinners and Delinquent Deviants* (2013), “[i]n a very concrete manner, parenthood brings an end to the time when an individual can think of themselves primarily in terms of being someone else’s child, and must think of themselves as being primarily someone else’s parent” (60).

The pregnant adolescents are, according to Kokkola, often depicted in YA literature “as monstrous beings, whose bodies – because they fall outside of the child-adult binarism – are abject” (61). The transgression of this binary, in turn, “undermines the locus of power that rests on the adult/adolescent division” (Kokkola 99). The adolescent mother thus transgresses the discursive boundary between adults and adolescents by embracing the role of becoming a mother,

tions of Swedish quotations are my own.

which is regarded as a task for adults and something that Kokkola's YA material warns against.

However, in some works of YA dystopian literature, such as American author Amy Ewing's *The Lone City* trilogy (2014–2016), adolescents are forced to become mothers by a dystopian state, and these books contain no warnings about becoming pregnant. Instead, forced pregnancy becomes yet another way of abusing adolescent girls.⁷⁶ According to Geraldine Moane, historically “[t]he control of women’s reproduction became central to the development of patriarchy”, since “[w]omen became commodities not just as labourers, but as bearers of children who could contribute labour and who would inherit surplus” (33). Therefore, I regard forced pregnancies in dystopian societies as a form of oppression that is based on an intersection of patriarchy and aetonormativity.

YA dystopian literature that utilises the motif of adolescent motherhood complicates the binary of adults against young people, where the former group has power and the latter group lacks power and is repressed, presented by Nikolajeva using the concept of aetonormativity (“Theory” 16). These dystopian worlds show that age-related power relations are not based solely on this binary between young and adult; instead, each individual, or in this case, each character, is positioned in an intersectional system of power relationships, where being a parent provides the young person with a type of power that is unavailable to adolescents who are not parents.

By highlighting the specific opportunities and challenges posed by an adolescent mother’s access to power, the YA dystopian works analysed in this chapter show that an aetonormative understanding of the power category of age is not nuanced enough. Adolescent parents simultaneously belong to adolescents and adults, in their different roles as someone else’s child and the parent of their own child. An intersectional approach is therefore crucial when analysing these texts’ depictions of adolescent mothers.

My analysis focuses on the motif of adolescent mothers. While

⁷⁶ I will discuss this tendency further in the section called “Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview” in this chapter.

there are depictions of adolescent fathers in YA dystopian literature, they are often absent from the narrative and/or dead. I will briefly touch upon the father's role in the three series that I analyse in depth in this chapter, but my focus is on how the mothers cope, both with the task of parenthood and the common lack of support from the child's father, in relation to the dystopian world the mother lives in. Consequently, female gender and its intersections with age and parenthood will be highlighted throughout the chapter, as well as other power categories that are relevant to a specific work.

Due to the intersection between age and gender, adolescent girls are positioned differently in the systems of oppression in each work of YA dystopian literature, compared both to adolescent boys and adult women. While adolescent boys also face age-based discrimination in YA dystopian literature, they are usually positioned as superior to adolescent girls due to patriarchal power structures, whereas adult women face the consequences of patriarchy in different ways to adolescent girls, due to the power and responsibilities that adulthood bestows on them in their aetnonormative dystopian worlds. In addition, other power categories such as class and race dictate how each adolescent character is positioned in their fictional world. This illustrates the need for an intersectional approach to the power category of age.

In addition to highlighting the intersectional quality of the power relationships between children, adolescents and adults, the motif of the adolescent mother also clarifies how parenthood not only makes you responsible for, and gives you power over, your child—it can also render an adolescent parent more vulnerable than adolescents who are not parents, especially in a dystopian society where the child may become a pawn in political conflicts or be used to pressure an adolescent parent into compliance to protect their child. In this chapter, I illuminate how, in YA dystopian literature, parenthood often becomes a vehicle for the need to reform and/or rebel against the dystopian regime and to create a new and better world for the younger generation. Thus, being a parent creates a strong imperative to work for societal change and to counteract the adults' power abuse of children and adolescents, which is legitimised by the aetnonormative rhetoric

of controlling the young for their own protection.⁷⁷ At the same time, however, attempts to protect a child from evil rely on a conception of children as needing protection and lacking the ability to protect themselves, due to their young age. In summary, aetnonormativity is in play in several different ways, both as it relates to the children and to the adolescent mothers.

Text Selection, Theoretical Framework and Chapter Structure

The first adolescent mother character analysed in depth in this chapter, Lyda in the *Pure* trilogy, does not give birth in the trilogy's timeline, but her identity is radically changed by protecting her unborn child from the dystopian world she lives in. The trilogy explores the positioning of an expectant mother as a deviation from the norm of older, married mothers. The second mother character, seventeen-year-old Shari in the *Endgame* trilogy, has a daughter who turns out to be both a child and a magical key in the lethal *Endgame*, in which twelve Players fight each other to the death. Her husband dies while protecting his family, leaving Shari to care for their daughter on her own.⁷⁸ This trilogy demonstrates how motherhood can take on otherworldly dimensions in YA dystopian literature, where a child

77. In "The Incompatibility of Female Friendships and Rebellion" (2014) Ann M. M. Childs argues that romantic, heteronormative love is often what awakens a female protagonist to the need to rebel against an oppressive society. In this chapter, I illustrate how motherhood can fulfil the same purpose in YA dystopian literature.

78. The *Endgame* trilogy includes riddles, coordinates, illustrations and similar material that readers are supposed to decipher to participate in a treasure hunt with a prize of around \$500,000. I do not include this material in my analysis, instead treating the books as ordinary novels.

For an analysis of the "intermedial worldmaking" of these and other intermedial aspects of *Endgame*, see Floortje Sprenkels' master's thesis (2016). Danuta Fjellestad regards *Endgame* as an example of an augmented reality novel, but states that the extra content remains supplementary to the traditional novel text in "Dancing with the Digital: Cathy's Book and S.".

is not only a child but also a pawn in the dystopian world's politics. The third and final adolescent mother analysed in this chapter is Elin in the *Blood Rain* series, who is sixteen when the series begins. Her partner is killed shortly after their daughter is conceived. Elin struggles to protect her daughter from corrupt regimes in a future dystopian Sweden. This series differs significantly from most of the works in my corpus, portraying Elin both as an adolescent mother and as an adult mother, depicting her daughter's development well into the daughter's twenties.

Contrary to Jeffrey A. Brown's conclusion that using extreme violence to protect your child is predominantly a characteristic that defines *fathers* in action movie genres (15), this chapter will show how all three adolescent mother characters illustrate the way that maternity can motivate the same kind of violence in YA dystopian literature. In relation to science fiction movies from the 1980s and early 1990s, Maria Nilson argues that it is more acceptable for women to use extreme violence if they do so to protect their child. She thereby foregrounds how violence can be explained and even endorsed if women use it to protect their offspring (Nilson, "Mammor" 45). This suggests that traditionally feminine aspects of maternity, such as being caring, somewhat counteract the traditional conception of women as non-aggressive, allowing the combination of motherhood and violence.

I have picked my three examples of adolescent mothers using the criteria that they all explore the constant flux between empowerment and repression that is connected to their mothering endeavours, but they do so in distinctly different ways. They also provide different answers to the question of the kind of power a young mother can gain in her dystopian world. I have not included examples of enforced motherhood by a dystopian state in my main examples. While this is a recurrent pattern in YA dystopian literature, I have selected texts that focus on the young mother's power position in relation to her child. However, I discuss the common strategy of using women as

In a doctoral project conducted at Uppsala University in Sweden, Julie Blomberg Gudmundsson is exploring the interaction between different media in the *Endgame* trilogy.

breeders or baby factories in a section that provides an overview of how reproduction and motherhood is depicted in Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature, briefly relating these contemporary works to an earlier tradition of feminist science fiction. The selection of my three main examples strives to illustrate diverse ways in which an adolescent mother protecting her child can be depicted in YA dystopian literature. My focus is not on the child as such, but on the adolescent mother and her positioning within the power structures of her dystopian society.

As Meghan Gilbert-Hickey argues in her doctoral thesis about reproduction and mothers in contemporary YA dystopian literature, “[t]he normative maternal role is impossible for poor women, young women, queer women, unmarried women, and women of color precisely because of their intersectional identities” (i–ii). All three characters diverge from a normative maternal role in one or more ways, due to their intersectional subject position and the way that their dystopian world is organised. However, their relationships with their children are distinctly different. I share Gilbert-Hickey’s research interest in intersectional perspectives on adolescent mothers, but my analysis of the adolescent mother motif is different from hers due to my focus on power structures tied to age, my inclusion of Swedish YA dystopian literature, and my overarching educational approach. The chapter demonstrates that in YA dystopian literature, it is not only adult mothers who protect their children, like Gilbert-Hickey argues (67)—so do the adolescent mother characters within the genre.

The age-related ideologies connected to the three adolescent mothers under investigation will be analysed using the controlled child/adolescent motif and the mighty child/adolescent motif, as well as Hill Collins’ matrix of domination. The chapter also highlights the ways in which the adolescent mothers resist and/or rebel against their dystopian societies in their mission to protect their children. Ultimately, it clarifies how the characters’ position as an adolescent mother communicates specific ideologies about age-related power.

The chapter begins with an overview of how the motif of the adolescent mother is depicted in my corpus, which also touches on how con-

trolled reproduction is a recurring ingredient of the genre. This section includes a table of the different types of adolescent motherhood found in my corpus: forced pregnancy, paid surrogacy, fake pregnancy, unplanned pregnancy and planned pregnancy. Thereafter, the three adolescent mothers are analysed in one section each. This is followed by a section comparing the age-related ideologies tied to the three adolescent mothers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature: An Overview

The genre of YA dystopian literature has its roots in science fiction, particularly feminist science fiction.⁷⁹ It is therefore no surprise that the YA dystopian texts in my corpus display many similarities with that type of science fiction. This section briefly sketches the origin of the adolescent mother motif in feminist science fiction. I will also provide an overview of how the motif is actualised in my corpus of primary texts. Table 3 groups examples of the adolescent mother motif in five different categories: 1) **forced pregnancy**, where the mother is impregnated against her will, 2) **paid surrogacy**, where an adolescent becomes a surrogate in return for a salary, 3) **fake pregnancy**, where the mother pretends to be pregnant, 4) **unplanned pregnancy**, where the mother becomes pregnant in a consensual or semi-consensual sexual interaction that does not aim to result in a pregnancy, and 5) **planned pregnancy**, where the mother becomes pregnant as a result of consensual sex that aims to produce a child. The categories are derived from my close reading of the whole corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature.⁸⁰

79. See Hentges, p. 30–39 for an overview of the literary forerunners to YA dystopian fiction.

80. I have not included examples of miscarriages in this overview. For one example, see Moira Young's *Dust Lands* trilogy (2011–2014), in which Saba miscarriages when she does not yet know that she is pregnant (Young, *Raging* 390). Her

Table 3: Five Categories of Adolescent Mothers in YA Dystopian Literature

Category of adolescent mother	Primary texts ⁸¹
1. Forced pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (June Osborne and the other handmaids) [proto-text] Lowry, <i>The Giver quartet</i> (Claire⁸²) O'Neill, <i>Only Ever Yours</i> ("the companions") Ewing, <i>The Lone City</i> trilogy ("the surrogates") Young, <i>The Dust Lands</i> trilogy (adolescent girls)
2. Paid surrogacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Brien, <i>The Birthmarked</i> trilogy (Sasha) McCafferty, <i>The Bumped</i> duology (the Surrogettes)
3. Fake pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCafferty, <i>The Bumped</i> duology (Melody Doe)
4. Unplanned pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCafferty, <i>The Bumped</i> duology (Harmony Doe) Morgan, <i>The 100</i> series (Glass Sorensen) Nordin, <i>En sekund i taget-serien</i> [The One Second at a Time series] (Ella) Reeve, <i>The Mortal Engines</i> quartet (Hester Shaw) Blackman, <i>The Noughts & Crosses</i> sequence (Sephy Hadley) Malley, <i>The Declaration</i> trilogy (Anna Covey) Grant, <i>The Gone</i> series (Diana Ladris) Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy (Lyda Mertz) Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [the Blood Rain series] (Elin Holme)
5. Planned pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Brien, <i>The Birthmarked</i> trilogy (Emily) Melamed, <i>Gather the Daughters</i> (Amanda Balthazar) Shusterman, <i>The Unwind</i> dystology (Kate-Lynn, Emmalee & Makayla) Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy (Shari Chopra)

In 2000, Raffaella Baccolini wrote that

pregnancy can be categorised as an unplanned pregnancy.

81. The case studies are written in bold in this table.

82. Some protagonists are not given a last name by their authors.

[c]ontemporary science fiction texts written by women increasingly foreground the interaction of gender and genre. In particular, the questioning of generic conventions by feminist science fiction writers appears to have contributed to the creation of a “new” genre, such as the “critical dystopia”, or works of science fiction that contain both utopian and dystopian elements. (“Gender” 13)

In her article, she analyses three examples of the critical dystopia for adults: British author Katharine Burdekin’s *Swastika Night* (1937), Canadian author Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and American author Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* (1993). What characterises these texts, according to Baccolini, is that they “open spaces of resistance and maintain the utopian impulse within the story” (“Gender” 19). They “maintain a locus of resisting hope and subversive tension in an otherwise pessimistic genre that has little or no space for hope” (Baccolini, “Gender” 30).

Jane Donawerth also underscores the centrality of hope in some feminist science fiction, specifically the texts produced in the 1990s: “The feminist dystopia of the 1990s is like a Pandora’s box: the last thing to emerge is hope. These novels make dystopia a place of birth. Borrowing from the recovered slave narrative, the authors rewrite the dystopia as a story of political renewal” (62). Both Baccolini and Donawerth thus touch upon the role of hope. Michael Godhe also discusses the presence of hope in both utopias and dystopias, arguing that “dystopias as much as utopias generate figures of hope—although hope and despair could be hard to disentangle” (33).

According to Kay Sambell, the depiction of hope is a key difference between adult and YA dystopian literature: the presence of hope in an otherwise dark and dystopian society defines YA dystopian literature; this tendency is especially obvious in the more hopeful endings of the YA dystopian texts (172). The possibility of change—of the creation of a new world, usually initiated by the young protagonists fighting an oppressive regime in YA dystopian literature—can thus be tied to its heritage from feminist science fiction.

In her illustration of a tree with roots, a trunk and branches, Sarah Hentges shows how the genre of YA dystopian literature grew from its roots in feminist science fiction, such as Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (Hentges unnumbered page before the title page)—two texts also analysed by Baccolini. The genre developed into a phenomenon primarily targeting young adults via American author Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010), visualised as the tree's trunk, and further expanded into a large number of YA dystopian texts, such as American author Veronica Roth's *Divergent* trilogy (2011–2013) and American author Caragh M. O'Brien's *Birthmarked* trilogy (2010–2012), to mention just a few examples of the texts that Hentges defines as the tree's branches (Ibid).⁸³ What connects these YA dystopian texts, according to Hentges, is the Girl on Fire:

The Girl on Fire is rarely a perfect, infallible hero; she is most often a real girl struggling to find herself and keep her friends and family safe against impossible odds. She wants to discover the truth that has been kept from her, and from the populace more generally. She wants to cut the ties that bind and bring freedom to oppressed peoples. She is an outcast, a rebel. (6)⁸⁴

83. For an introduction to feminist science fiction from the 1970s to 1990s, see L. Timmel Duchamp, "Something Rich and Strange: Karen Joy Fowler's 'What I didn't see'" (2006), pp. 356–358. The development of feminist science fiction is described by James Gunn and Karen Hellekson as follows: "Feminist science fiction has gone the way of feminism, of course: Gone are the separatist utopias, the separate realms of a man's world and a woman's world. Women and men get to play together now, but as science fiction and feminism evolve and change, we see feminist science fiction take on a new role: that of, as [Marlene S.] Barr says, 'nurturing and embracing the Other,' because the Other is no longer alien or even particularly shocking" (Gunn and Hellekson xi). In her doctoral thesis, *Estranging Cognition: Feminist Science Fiction and the Borders of Reason* (2005), Jenny Bonnevier investigates "the ways in which science fiction discourses [...] are gendered, as well as how feminist concerns with rescripting gender in sf has changed the genre" (17).

84. Hentges focuses on the feminist potential of YA dystopian texts and tends to defend the genre by underscoring progressive gender ideals, while downplaying the more stereotypical aspects of the depiction of female protagonists in YA dystopian literature, such as the focus on achieving a heterosexual relationship and on

Reproduction and reproductive slavery also connect the roots with the branches (Hentges 112).⁸⁵

Another aspect that connects the tree's roots and its branches is the motif of the adolescent mother, navigating through her dystopian society to protect herself and her child. Hentges states that the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, written for adults, should be regarded as "a clear template for many YA dystopian novels that take up the subject of compulsory reproduction and the enslavement of women for the purposes of reproduction" (33), thereby defining it as a proto-text for YA dystopian literature. The republic of Gilead in Atwood's novel tries to solve the problem with infertility and too few children by enforcing ritualised and religiously legitimised rapes of the Handmaids, women who have previously had a child and so demonstrated their fertility (Atwood, *Handmaid's* 93–95), but who are deemed amoral by the current regime's hegemonic domain. The hegemonic domain justifies oppression through a manipulation of consciousness, ideology and culture (Hill Collins 284). The handmaids are captured and condemned to bear a child that results from rape, nurture it for a brief time and then move on to the next family and produce yet another baby (*Handmaid's* 127).

June Osborne, the novel's protagonist, tries to protect her child from its fate of growing up in a dictatorial regime that treats women as secondary citizens. Her pregnancy is an example of a forced pregnancy; she has to get pregnant in order to please the couple that she serves, and when she realises the husband is infertile, she has sex with another man instead. Similarly, Baccolini highlights how women in *Swastika Night* are dehumanised, imprisoned and utterly reduced to their biological function as women in another proto-text for YA dystopian literature ("Gender" 19), which also focuses on forced pregnancy.⁸⁶

motherhood as the end goal for adolescent girls, after they have dealt with their oppressive societies at a political level.

85. On p. 112, Hentges presents another tree figure, this time a tree of the different themes in YA dystopian literature, and aspects of reproduction occur both as one root and one branch in this thematic tree.

86. The centrality of mother characters for the development of both dystopias

Through an overview of the examples of the adolescent mother motif in my corpus of primary texts, I will demonstrate that the motif of a mother prepared to do anything to keep her child safe in a dystopian society recurs in various YA dystopian works, in addition to the three examples analysed in this chapter. The overview includes examples of forced pregnancies, paid surrogacy, unplanned pregnancies and planned pregnancies, suggesting that no matter the circumstances in which the mothers get pregnant, they all love their children fiercely, and they are prepared to do whatever it takes to protect them from their dystopian societies.

CATEGORY 1: FORCED PREGNANCY

In American author Lois Lowry's *The Giver quartet* (1993–2012), which Hentges defines as another root of contemporary YA dystopian literature, fourteen-year-old Claire becomes a surrogate mother, a so-called Vessel (Lowry, *Son* 3, 7). This is an example of a **forced pregnancy**, the first category of adolescent mothers found in my corpus. Her son is taken from her directly after birth, but she constantly aims to reconnect with him. When her son is sentenced to be “released”, killed, because he does not sleep well, and is therefore not seen as suitable for adoption by parents who society has deemed suitable to raise a child, an adolescent rescues Claire's son by running away with him, and she follows. Throughout this endeavour, she repeatedly risks her own life, such as by climbing a steep cliff; she is prepared to do whatever it takes to protect her son, and assume her maternal role, even though society refuses her the right to do so. Ultimately, however, it is her son who saves his mother (*Son* 11, 124, 126–127, 226–228, 362, 391–392). As Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Mateusz

and utopias for adults is explored by Mary E. Theis in *Mothers and Masters in Contemporary Utopian and Dystopian Literature* (2009). For an analysis of the motif of pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers in YA fiction, see Kokkola's chapter “The Calamitous Consequences of Carnality: Loss and Loneliness, Pregnancy and Parenthood, Disease and Death” in *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality* (2013).

Marecki argue, “Claire can be reunited with her son and emblematically become a full-fledged mother only after she has undergone the process of maturation” that evolves throughout the novel (195).

In addition to the motif of the mother who protects her child from a dystopian society, controlled reproduction and the duty of girls and women to become mothers and maintain the population are explored in several YA dystopian works, such as Irish author Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours* (2014).⁸⁷ In this dystopian society, women are extinct and a species of womanlike creatures, eves, have been designed to fill this void. They are either celibate teachers at the girls’ school, a concubine, or a companion who marries a man and carries his children (O’Neill 6, 38–39). The third option is promoted as the ideal for every woman. As Jade Dillon clarifies,

[t]he eves are politicised through the imprisonment of the female gender as the government maintains control over the female body, and exert [sic!] dominance over them. This control and dominance is obtained through the institutional framework surrounding the girls’ education which focuses on how to be the perfect male companion. (36)

According to Elisabetta Di Minico, “a separation between motherhood and uncensored and free female sexuality, between nurturing traditions and sin, between virginal ideas of caretaking and carnal desires” permeates the division between the companions and the concubines (10). As Susan Cahill argues, “the girls are manufactured into commodities that the naturally-born male children will consume” (162). By highlighting that they are expected to “smile, seek approval, be good and complacent, just like children” (128), Ekaterina Muraveva underlines the type of passivity expected from these future wives, mothers, concubines and teachers. As Heather Braun underscores, “O’Neill creates a claustrophobic world in which seduc-

87. For an analysis of reproduction in YA dystopian literature, see Nilson, “Reproduction and Family in Fantastic Fiction” (2018).

tion, starvation, and successful matchmaking are the only means of female control and survival” (71). Since the companions’ primary mission in life is to reproduce, I regard them as an example of the category of forced pregnancy. They do not really have the option to not become mothers. The hegemonic domain in their society has taught them that motherhood is the highest goal for a woman, and this indoctrination is what makes them long for a planned pregnancy, not primarily love or the longing for a child in and of itself.

Ewing’s *The Lone City* trilogy is a more clear-cut example of the category of forced pregnancy. In this dystopian world, lower classed girls with magical powers are sold as surrogates in slave auctions. The infertile royalty who buy them use the surrogates to create their heirs, not caring that the surrogates will not survive childbirth; they all die as a result of it. In a battle amongst the royalty over who will produce the heir to the throne, surrogates are lobotomised and murdered (Ewing, *Jewel* 38, 76, 134–135, 286, 383). Here, the forced pregnancy is literally a death sentence, and the experience of motherhood is stolen from the surrogates, who simply become vessels for royalty.

In Canadian author Moira Young’s *Dust Lands* trilogy (2011–2014), which Hentges defines as another branch on the YA dystopian tree (unnumbered page before the title page), the Tonton create a new society. Adolescent girls are used to produce the babies of the new society. When these children are born, they are taken from their mothers and given to wet nurses, which is reminiscent of Lowry’s series. If the children are weak or if there are too many children, they are left outside overnight and thus killed (Young, *Rebel* 301). Consequently, the girls are vessels for the new society’s next generation and are also robbed of their children.

CATEGORY 2: PAID SURROGACY

In Caragh O’Brien’s *Birthmarked* trilogy—a text defined as one of the branches on the YA dystopian tree by Hentges (unnumbered page before the title page)—Sasha also becomes a vessel for someone else’s

child, but she does so willingly. She thereby represents the second category of adolescent mothers in my corpus: **paid surrogacy**. Sasha has taken up a position as a surrogate mother at the Vessel Institute, a baby factory in the dystopian city called the Enclave, where adolescent girls work to produce children for childless couples. She is given a salary, but soon realises that she wants to keep her child. She has heard rumours about how she will be locked up until the birth if she decides to resign from her position, and the official version would be that she died in childbirth. Therefore, she flees to underground tunnels, surviving there thanks to a friend who provides her with food. Once the Enclave has been defeated in a revolution, Sasha can return to society (O'Brien, *Promised* 51–52, 177–183, 278–279). Her actions are thus dictated by the same need to protect her child as in the previous examples.

Even though Sasha is supposedly willingly signing up to be a surrogate, there are clear similarities with the previous category, forced pregnancies, because surrogacy is a way to make a living for girls who do not have many chances to obtain resources like food and shelter. They may be paid, but if they were not desperate for employment in the first place, they would probably not do this job. A girl who gives birth to three healthy children is promised to live within the Enclave's protective city walls and to receive a pension (*Promised* 81). These are better conditions than Sasha could ever wish for if she did not accept the job.

Megan McCafferty's *Bumped* duology (2011–2012) also explores the connection between making a living and paid surrogacy. In the world of the series, a virus makes most people infertile from the age of eighteen to twenty, so adolescent girls are paid tremendous sums of money to be “bumped”, undertaking paid surrogacy. Some adolescents bump for free, which is unpaid surrogacy. One of the protagonists, Melody Doe, has signed a contract to deliver a child for a couple, and has earned a lot of money in the process. Another character has guaranteed her first year at a prestigious school thanks to money from a surrogacy contract. Parents even take loans based on the income that adolescents will generate once they deliver a healthy

child for its adoptive parents. Drugs are used to discourage bonding between the biological mother and the child, but sometimes girls become attached to their child and are upset when it is taken from them at birth (*Bumped* 37, 39, 49, 89–90, 239–240). The girls who take part in surrogacy are called “the Surrogettes” (*Bumped* 39–40).

CATEGORY 3: FAKE PREGNANCY

In McCafferty’s duology, at the age of sixteen Melody decides not to follow through with the surrogacy; she no longer wants to be a Surrogette. Instead, she is attracted to her childhood friend, with whom she has not been allowed to be intimate due to her commitment to surrogacy. Condoms are forbidden, so casual sex without the risk of pregnancy is not an option in this fictional world. Gradually, Melody starts rebelling against the view of paid surrogacy as a legitimate way of treating adolescents. However, her twin sister Harmony becomes pregnant when she has sex with the partner assigned to Melody (*Bumped* 277–278, 293–294, 309). In order to pretend that she has fulfilled her duties as a Surrogette, Melody fakes her pregnancy for the whole nine months, using a high-tech fake “bump” that looks just like a pregnant belly. When she finally reveals that she was never pregnant, she is initially sued by the adoptive parents, but they later realise that it is not reasonable to ask a teenager to carry their child for money. Melody’s faked pregnancy functions as a first step towards ending the practice of paid surrogacy in this fictional world (McCafferty, *Thumped* 54, 198, 221, 226, 252–253, 257–258, 263–267, 290). Her gradual awakening to the unacceptable pressure placed on her by her parents, in her role as a Surrogette, leads to thorough interrogation of the basis for the surrogacy system in the narrative. This inquiry shows how becoming a Surrogette cannot be viewed as voluntary, because Melody’s parents have more or less forced her to do so.

Hence, a fake pregnancy becomes a first step towards rebelling against the surrogacy system.

CATEGORY 4: UNPLANNED PREGNANCY

There is a significant difference between the pregnancies in my corpus that I have so far discussed and those of the three adolescent mothers in my case studies. For the former, motherhood is a result of a forced pregnancy or surrogacy that cannot be viewed as entirely optional. In the case studies, Lyda, Shari and Elin all become pregnant after intercourse with someone to whom they are romantically attached. Shari's pregnancy occurs within a marriage and seems to be planned, whereas Lyda and Elin's pregnancies are unplanned. My corpus of primary texts includes other examples of **unplanned pregnancy** that result from consensual or semi-consensual sex.

One of these is Melody's twin sister, Harmony, in the *Bumped* dystology. As mentioned above, she gets pregnant when she has sex with the partner assigned to her sister. He believes he is having sex with Melody and fulfilling his duty as an adolescent sperm donor. Harmony is married to a different man, so she decides to pretend that her husband is the twins' father, but eventually the truth is revealed (*Bumped* 203–204, 316–318). Harmony decides to give up the twins for adoption by the couple who believed that Melody, who was never pregnant, carried their child. Harmony realises that she is not ready to become a mother, even if that may mean that she will never have more children of her own; there are other things she wants to do before taking on the pressures and responsibilities of motherhood (*Thumped* 273–276). Harmony thus also rebels against the expectations that she will be a mother and decides to do what she believes is best for herself.

When Glass Sorensen in American author Kass Morgan's⁸⁸ *The 100* series (2013–2016) accidentally falls pregnant by her lover, she breaks one of the most important laws of the spaceship she lives on—the strict regulation of reproduction. Minors like Glass are incarcerated and adults are killed as punishment. When the authorities discover that Glass is pregnant, she tries to escape but accidentally

88. The author's real name is Mallory Kass.

falls down the stairs. When she wakes up, she finds out that her child could not be saved (Morgan, *Day* 32; Morgan, 100s 238–239). The enforcement of the policy thus leads to Glass' child's death, albeit in a less direct manner than in Young's trilogy. Still, since Glass is unconscious when they remove the child, it is tempting to wonder whether the child really died in the fall, or whether the authorities did not deem it worthy of being saved.

Another example of an unplanned pregnancy can be found in Swedish author Sofia Nordin's *En sekund i taget* series [One Second at a Time] (2013–2017). Fourteen-year-old Ella discovers she is pregnant in the fourth and final book in the series, *Om du såg mig nu* [If You Could See Me Now] (2017). She is terrified of giving birth, as there are no adults, no doctors and no hospitals left in the post-apocalyptic future Sweden she lives in, which has been destroyed by a fever that has killed all the adults. Out of the three boys that she has had sex with, she picks one—Esmael—with whom to raise her child (Nordin, *Om* 164–166). This example of an expectant adolescent mother is different than most, since Ella plans to involve one of the potential fathers in raising her child. Similarly to how young children are portrayed as bringers of hope in both the *Pure* trilogy and the *Endgame* trilogy, to which I will return later in this chapter, Esmael sees this child as the beginning of a new world: “A perfectly special child that's sort of the whole future. It's life coming back, conquering death and the fever and everything [my translation]” (*Om* 177)⁸⁹. In this sense, this Swedish example ties in with the conception of the mighty child, who might create a new society (Beauvais, *Mighty* 100–101).

The adolescent mother motif is also actualised briefly in British author Philip Reeve's *The Mortal Engines* quartet (2001–2006), when the adolescent Hester Shaw is revealed to be pregnant at the end of the second book in the series, *Predator's Gold* (2003). The pregnancy is described as unplanned (Reeve, *Predator's* 340). However, at the

89. Swedish quotation: “Ett alldeles speciellt barn som liksom är hela framtiden. Det är livet som kommer tillbaka, som segrar över döden och febern och allt.”



An adolescent girl who gets pregnant by accident in a world without adults, hospitals and doctors can be found in Swedish author Sofia Nordin's Om du såg mig nu [If You Could See Me Now].

beginning of the next book in the series, *Infernal Devices* (2005), Hester and her husband Tom Natsworthy's daughter is 15 years old, and Hester is no longer an adolescent mother (Reeve, *Internal* 9). Therefore, readers never experience a depiction of Hester as an adolescent mother—only an adult one. Like Nordin's series, the father is present and a vital part of the process of raising the child.

Another unplanned pregnancy can be found in British author Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* sequence (2001–2008)—a text that has been discussed as a YA dystopian text in previous research,⁹⁰ even though it does not incorporate any science fiction elements.⁹¹ Persephone Hadley—or Sephy—gets pregnant with her daughter Callie Rose as a result of semi-consensual intercourse. Sephy herself is a Cross, black, which is positioned as the superior race within Blackman's fictional universe.⁹² Her daughter is conceived with a nought, a white man, which is seen as the inferior race. It is against the law to have a child with someone of a different race (*Noughts* 17–19, 376–377). This is yet another example of how the fear of miscegenation, the act of conceiving a child with someone of a different race (cf. Merriam-Webster, “miscegenation”), is depicted in YA dystopian literature. The father is convicted of rape and executed (*Noughts* 427, 434–435). Just like Red in American author Christina Henry's novel *The Girl in Red* (2019), which was analysed in the previous chapter,

90. See Clémentine Beauvais, “Romance, Dystopia, and the Hybrid Child” (2016).

91. Maria Nikolajeva argues in *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (2010) that Blackman's series is not really a dystopia, but an example of “a counterfactual novel”, in which an alternate history is presented (75).

92. When the race hierarchy is flipped upside down in the series, all blacks are turned into oppressors. In previous research, different scholars have viewed this practice in distinctly different ways. On one hand, Clare Bradford argues that “[b]y mapping the power relationships of Crosses and noughts onto practices and histories which have privileged Europeans over their non-white **others**, the [first] novel reinstalls those relationships and normalizes them” (42). On the other, Christine Wilkie-Stibbs views Blackman's first three novels as a successful example of defamiliarisation, which highlights “the taken-for-granted, internalized, and unexamined assumptions of any of her white, middle-class readers about the way that power and privilege may be located in them” (241).

Sephy has to deal with racism directed at biracial people, in this case her daughter. She is prepared to do whatever it takes to protect her child from a dystopian world where racial discrimination and terror attacks are constant threats to the safety of the population (Blackman, *Knife* 30).

Another example of an unplanned pregnancy can be found in British author Gemma Malley's⁹³ *The Declaration* trilogy (2007–2010). After being told she has been sterilised, and will therefore never have children of her own, the adolescent Anna Covey discovers she is pregnant. In her world, children are threatened and hunted down by the authorities. As a mother, Anna protects both her daughter and her younger brother fiercely, along with her partner, and is prepared to die for her brother and daughter to keep them safe (Malley, *Legacy* 27, 90–91). Here, the interplay between the empowerment and repression entailed by being an adolescent mother in a dystopian world is explicit in Anna's statement that motherhood "made her both stronger and more vulnerable than she'd ever thought possible" (*Legacy* 77). This willingness to do whatever necessary to protect your child is explored further in the following three case studies.

An unplanned, supernatural pregnancy occurs in Michael Grant's *Gone* series (2008–2013). Diana Ladriss gets pregnant by Caine Soren, one of the most powerful and evil adolescents in the series. The child develops much quicker than an ordinary child, and when Diana gives birth after a pregnancy of only four months, it turns out to be possessed by the darkest and most evil power in the non-adult society Diana lives in. Still, Diana realises that the child is still her daughter: Gaia. She needs to be fed and protected to the best of Diana's ability for the brief time before she develops into an adolescent killer possessed by a dark force—the result of a virus transported through space on a meteorite. This Gaiaphage has completely taken over Diana's daughter (Grant, *Fear* 471, 478–479, 488, 498; Grant, *Light* 387). The Gaiaphage kills a large number of people before she is finally defeated and killed by another supernatural force. Gaia thus fits into the

93. This author's name is a pseudonym for Gemma Townley.

ninth category of adolescent killers presented in the previous chapter: those who commit unrighteous killings, in this case in a brain-washed state. By this point, Diana has realised that there is nothing left of her daughter (*Light* 2, 221–224, 388–390). This particular pregnancy therefore stands out as distinctly different from the other examples in my corpus. Instead of needing the adolescent mother's protection, this child turns into the foremost evil force and the only solution is to kill her.

CATEGORY 5: PLANNED PREGNANCY

In the *Birthmarked* trilogy, protagonist Gaia Stone's best friend Emily is an example of **planned pregnancy** within a marriage. Emily's son is stolen by the dictatorial Enclave, and when his parents try to get him back, the father is killed and Emily is forced to work for the Vessel Institute if she wants to see her son again (*Promised* 47–51). Thus, she is forced to contribute to upholding the Vessel Institute and paid surrogacy in order to keep her child safe.

Gather the Daughters (2017), by American author Jennie Melamed, focuses on the role of girls in reproduction. In a society where the adolescent girls' "worth is based solely on their ability to reproduce" (Pigmans 23), and where fathers' rapes of their daughters until they menstruate for the first time are seen as both natural and holy, fourteen-year-old Amanda Balthazar realises that she is pregnant with a daughter and that her beloved husband will eventually become a child molester (Melamed, *Gather* 24–28, 81, 95–96). The pregnancy is the result of consensual sex within a marriage, and the pregnancy is planned, but since the society Amanda lives in is too terrible to raise a daughter in, she tries to find a way to escape from the island on which her society is located. However, she is killed by the Wanderers, who rule the society, before she can escape and raise her daughter somewhere else (*Gather* 148–149, 175, 389–390). Amanda's attempts to protect her unborn child from a dystopian society thus result in both her own and her child's death.

Another protagonist, seventeen-year-old Janey Solomon, refuses to grow up and become a mother. Instead, she first starts a rebellion and later starves herself to death, trying to prevent puberty when the rebellion fails (*Gather* 26, 261–269, 400–401, 416). As Eva Pigmans clarifies, the rebellion aims to change both the adolescent girls' own lives and the lives of their future daughters (23). Both Amanda and Janey's dire fates illustrate how the society they live in is not a safe place to raise a child—especially not a daughter.

In Shusterman's *Unwind* dystology (2007–2014), the character of Mason Starkey creates his own harem, impregnating three different girls who he intends will bear his children: Kate-Lynn, Emmalee and Makayla. These pregnancies are planned (Shusterman, *Unsouled* 334). The series does not depict the girls in more detail, but this is a rather unusual example of planned pregnancies that occur outside of a more traditional romantic and/or sexual relationship. The goal of monogamy is challenged via this approach to becoming an adolescent father, but because Mason becomes one of the main antagonists in the series, his choice stands out as yet another thing that makes him different from the other adolescent boys. It underlines how he is a non-normative adolescent boy.

*

In summary, YA dystopian works, just like their feminist science fiction forerunners, repeatedly illuminate how patriarchy enables dystopian societies to use girls as baby factories against their will, and position them as mothers in a society where their children will come to harm. The motif of the adolescent mother is thus a valid point of departure for an analysis that focuses on young women's oppression and power. Of the three different categories of adolescent mother, forced pregnancy is the most common. In my case studies, I have decided to analyse two examples of an unplanned pregnancy and one example of a planned pregnancy, because the relevant novels focus more on motherhood and its challenges than on the oppression tied to reproduction itself. Consequently, there is more focus on the ad-

olescent mothers' status as young mothers, which makes it possible to centre the analysis on an investigation of the age-related power aspects of adolescent motherhood in a dystopian world.

Protecting an Unborn Child: Lyda in the Pure Trilogy

In the *Pure* trilogy, the interpersonal domain, the everyday lived experiences of oppression (Hill Collins 287), is highlighted through Lyda's experience of being an expectant, unmarried adolescent in a society which strongly controls reproduction, and which positions young unwed mothers as non-normative. The narrative clarifies not only the intersectional power position of Lyda, but Lyda's thoughts and feelings about the prospect of bringing a child into a dystopian world. The hegemonic domain, which is society's use of culture, consciousness and ideology to legitimise oppression (Hill Collins 284), is highlighted through a gender ideology that positions an expectant adolescent as "crazy"⁹⁴ and unsuitable for continued existence in society. This underlines how Lyda's age contributes to making her pregnancy punishable by the dystopian society that she lives in.

The *Pure* trilogy is focalised from several different characters' perspectives. Throughout the trilogy, Lyda is one of the focalisers.

In this section, I will first introduce the two dystopian societies in the *Pure* trilogy and Lyda's intersectional subject position in these societies. Thereafter, I will investigate how Lyda relates to the prospect of becoming a mother, especially in terms of her need to protect her unborn child. The section also includes an analysis of how Lyda's pregnancy contributes to her identity transformation and, ultimately, to her decision to rebel against the society that she grew up in.

94. Just like in my analysis of Juliette Ferrars in the previous chapter, I put these ableist words within quotation marks to underline that these are the words used in the narrative, not words that I believe it is appropriate to use about someone. For Lyda, her perceived "craziness" is central to how she is positioned within the society she lives in, so it is important to illustrate how these words are used in the narrative.

Throughout the section, I will analyse how oppression is established, maintained and challenged in the dystopian world of the *Pure* trilogy, using Hill Collins' matrix of domination, and how this oppression specifically relates to Lyda's position as an adolescent expectant mother. The controlled adolescent motif and the mighty adolescent motif will be used to analyse how Lyda's access to power in her dystopian world varies in different situations and at different stages of her identity development.

LYDA'S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITION

The structural domain, which organises oppression by regulating citizenship, rights and policies (Hill Collins 276), divides Lyda's world into two. First, the Dome, where the privileged few who escaped the Detonations live. The Detonations were bombs that covered the world in ashes and killed many people, leaving the survivors fused to the ground, objects and each other. Second, the world outside the Dome, where the fused live, trying to survive in a hostile environment without the technology and relative luxury of the people who live inside the glass sphere (Baggott, *Pure* 25, 142). The structural domain only grants citizenship of the Dome to the minority who were told about the Detonations beforehand and were consequently able to get to safety inside the protective sphere (*Pure* 142).

The Dome uses the slur *wretches* about the people living outside of it. The word "wretch" means base, despicable, vile and miserable, and this is how the survivors outside of the Dome are viewed by the people living inside the Dome. They are also considered to be uncivilised and rapists (*Pure* 352). All this creates a clear-cut distinction between "us" and "them". Lyda's love interest, Ripkard Crick, aka Partridge, Willux, who is the son of the dictatorial leader of the Dome, has been told that the "wretches" are the "the violent, sickly, poor, stubborn, uneducated" who refused to enter the glass sphere (*Pure* 142). Lyda views them as "evil, deranged. They're vicious, deformed, no longer truly human. She's heard a hundred dark and aw-

ful tales of the girls who survived, the ones who kept some part of their humanity only to be raped or eaten alive” (*Pure* 189). In this quotation, the “wretches” loss of humanity and their deformity is emphasised in a way that explicitly aligns their (dis)abilities⁹⁵ with savagery, violence, and sexual abuse. The people in the Dome, who are neither fused nor have extensive scarring because of the Detonations, are called Pure (*Pure* 29), which clearly highlights the hierarchy between the two groups. Due to what Robert McRuer calls “compulsory able-bodiedness” (32), anyone who is (dis)abled is positioned as not only less powerful than the able-bodied, but also as a violent and sexual threat to the Pure’s alleged purity.

The hierarchy and the oppression that it supports are based on an intersection of ethnicity, (dis)ability, class and racial imagery. The two groups are defined as belonging to distinctly different cultures, and this cultural distinction is upheld by separating the able-bodied people living in the Dome from the fused people living outside it, both physically and at a mental level. Being fused is depicted as a (dis)ability—for example, the hand of one of the protagonists, Pressia Belze’s, is encased in a doll head (*Pure* 12). Hegemonic knowledge about the “wretches” is used to legitimise the oppression of them. This, in turn, affects the everyday interpersonal experiences of oppression of the people living outside of the Dome, that is, the interpersonal domain. For example, they do not have access to the same resources, such as a traditional education, as the people living inside the glass sphere (*Pure* 67). Consequently, the hierarchy also includes class, since those deemed less valuable by the society in the Dome suffer from poverty. They have to struggle to get enough food and shelter to survive (cf. *Pure* 31–34).

In the trilogy, the biological distinction between the two groups, (dis)abled or untainted by the Detonations, is coded in racial imagery. The Dome’s rhetoric about the so-called “wretches” characterises them as uncivilised and violent, character traits that are stereotypically associated with a racial other (cf. Said’s description of

95. For an explanation of the parentheses around “dis”, see note 2, p. 18–19.

Orientalism, Said 13). In the *Pure* trilogy, the division between “us” and “them” supports prejudices about how dangerous “the wretches” are. The hegemonic domain thus establishes a hierarchical relationship between Pures and “wretches” using the hegemonic knowledge of the supposed differences between “us” and “them” to legitimise the mistreatment of the latter. Together, ethnicity, (dis)ability, class and race intersect and position the survivors as barely human.

Compared to the survivors, Lydia is privileged. Since she is ethnically Pure and physically able-bodied, she is positioned at the top of the hierarchy. The same is true of her lover Partridge. In addition, she is white with “creamy Pure skin” (Baggott, *Fuse* 394). The whiteness of her skin thus further signals her supposed purity. Partridge’s “perfect” skin, which is described as “cream”, just like Lyda’s, is also underlined in the narrative as part of the physical description of what makes him stand out visually as a Pure (*Pure* 141). Hence, a connection is established between being Pure and being white. Many of the survivors outside of the Dome have shards of glass or metal in their faces, as well as extensive scarring (cf. *Pure* 168), which makes their skin the visual opposite of the white, untainted skin of the Pures Lyda and Partridge. This is reminiscent of Richard Dyer’s argument in *White*, about how white people are viewed as “a human norm”, whereas people of colour are racialised (1), but here, the lack of scars and fusing is what makes someone Pure. Since the two protagonists who are Pures are also white, the intersection between able-bodiedness and white skin is foregrounded.

Being Pure also means that Lyda has a class advantage. Although resources in the Dome are strictly controlled, she has access to education and a safe living environment (*Pure* 67)—privileges that are not available to the survivors. Lyda is heterosexual and cisgender. In short, at the beginning of the trilogy, she is privileged due to intersections between (dis)ability, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality and gender identity.

However, life in the Dome is also dictated by the disciplinary domain’s oppressive rules and hierarchies, which are used to manage oppression (Hill Collins 276–277, 280). This is especially true for

young girls. Lyda is born and raised in the Dome's strictly controlled society, where reproduction is only available to the privileged few who have been deemed suitable (*Pure* 63). As Di Minico argues in her analysis of feminist science fiction, "regulating sexuality or sexually abusing bodies is a way to control social structures and, consequently, female gender identity and roles" (11). Lyda initially enjoys life in the Dome, and she regards the people living outside of the Dome as a threat, thereby buying into the Dome's hegemonic knowledge about the "wretches". However, Partridge tricks her into helping him steal a knife that he needs to escape from the Dome by playing on her romantic feelings for him. As punishment, she is initially confined in a rehabilitation centre and later sent outside the Dome by Partridge's father, to trick Partridge into revealing himself. Lyda's reaction to this task reveals her hegemonic knowledge about the "wretches": "It's a death sentence. She won't be able to breathe the air. She'll be attacked. The wretches will rise up, rape her and kill her" (*Pure* 102, 104, 352–353; quotation on 352). Once again, violence and sexual abuse are defined as characteristic traits of the survivors.

During her time outside the Dome, Lyda realises that the people living there have very hard lives, that the stereotypical portrayal of them is not accurate, and that she prefers life outside the Dome. Consequently, she gains insight about how the Dome's hegemonic knowledge is used to justify oppressing the survivors.⁹⁶ Apart from refuting the stereotypes of "wretches", Lyda's view of gender roles is transformed as a consequence of her lived experiences in the interpersonal domain. She transitions from being indoctrinated into conservative gender ideals that position women as future wives and mothers, to identifying with "the mothers". They are fierce, female

96. For an analysis of how the protagonist Ria, in Austrian author Ursula Poznanski's *Die Eleria* Trilogie [the Eleria trilogy] (published in German 2012–2014), similarly realises that the prejudices she has been taught about the Prims, who live outside of her protective sphere society, are false and used to legitimise their oppression, see Malin Alkestrand, "(De)Stabilizing the Boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them': Racial Oppression and Racism in Two YA Dystopias Available in Swedish" (2021).

warriors living outside of the Dome, who used to be housewives, but who now consider men to be “Deaths” and, more importantly, are willing to sacrifice themselves for the safety of their children. The mothers are fused to their children and/or items from their past lives, such as jewellery and a hedge-clipper (*Pure* 246–247, 280, 307; *Fuse* 48). They constantly carry their children on their bodies, almost like a never-ending pregnancy.

These mothers are reminiscent of grotesque Amazons who have decisively flipped the power hierarchy between women and men by becoming fierce warriors. Their strength is mainly psychological, consisting of a strong conviction in the alternative lifestyle they established after the Detonations, and the community that they have created together. The pairing of stereotypically female attributes, predominantly motherhood, with weapons and a willingness to kill, presents them as a transgression of the female-male binary. As Kara E. Hemphill argues, they have “been fused to the feminine objects of their past lives but have simultaneously adopted masculine tools [such as spears] and made them their own” (57). Lyda contrasts these mothers to her own biological mother: “Unlike her own mother, the mothers here are fierce but also fiercely loving” (*Fuse* 48). I will return to this distinction between different mothering ideals later in this section.

As Hemphill argues, “femininity in [*Pure*] is associated with class privilege even as it oppresses the women it is forced upon” (24). The narrative establishes an intersection between being middle and upper class, which equals living in the safety of the Dome, and being able to live up to traditional feminine ideals, while being working class equates with living in the unsafe environment outside the Dome, which makes it impossible to adhere to these ideals. To survive, women have to be able to protect themselves and thereby assume traditionally male attributes, such as using weapons. The mothers are the most vibrant illustration of this, since they have transitioned from housewives to female warriors and soldiers, thereby replacing a stereotypical gender role with gender-transgressive strength.

In the Dome, the structural domain distributes privileges unfair-

ly, based on gender. Girls are not given a science education. Instead, they attend lessons in subjects such as art and infant care. Protecting girls' reproductive organs is regarded as more important than enhancing their bodies and minds with the "coding" to which all boys have access. However, it is later revealed that this coding slowly destroys the boys' bodies (*Pure* 63, 67, 325, 348, 404). The girls are thus spared this suffering, but since this act's main purpose is to make sure they can reproduce, the power hierarchy between males and females is still enhanced through this practice of making the adolescent boys' physical strength immensely superior to the girls'. Simultaneously, it underlines how girls exist primarily to fulfil their reproductive duty, whereas the boys are deemed suitable for a wider range of tasks in society.

The lack of female education also extends to the area of reproduction. When Lyda leaves the Dome, she does not know how children are conceived and she believes it is impossible to become pregnant outside of marriage. Therefore, when Partridge and Lyda end up in bed after meeting outside the Dome, Lyda does not know what Partridge means when he asks her whether she is sure, implying if she wants to have sex with him. She realises what he means too late to give a fully informed consent, and while she tells herself that she should tell him to stop, she does not want to; instead, she longs to be his wife (*Fuse* 78–79, 142–143). The Dome has deliberately limited Lyda's knowledge of reproduction, which makes her vulnerable in a sexual interaction with an adolescent boy.

It is unclear whether Partridge realises that the girls in the Dome do not know that intercourse can lead to pregnancy outside marriage but, regardless, he puts Lyda in a precarious situation in which she risks becoming pregnant. This situation clarifies how adolescent girls are more extensively controlled than boys of the same age, underlining the need for an intersectional approach to how young people are treated within the Dome.

Immediately after their sexual encounter, Lyda is left to fend for herself. Partridge enters the Dome to take over its leadership from his father, and to change Dome society and how it relates to the peo-

ple outside. However, he is tricked into a forced engagement (*Fuse* 307–308). He later decides to rebel and kills his own father (*Fuse* 545), corresponding to the fourth category of adolescent killers in the previous chapter, those who kill corrupt adult leaders to create a better world. Partridge becomes the new leader (Baggott, *Burn* 33), but realises that he may not be able to change the way the Dome is structured and ruled.

Partridge tries to convince Lyda to follow him into the Dome, but she does not want to. This decision to stand up for herself instead of being a man's "helpmate", as she was taught in the Dome, turns her into a new person; she feels much more independent (*Fuse* 127, 156–157, 179). Thus, utilising her free will outside of the Dome shows Lyda that she does not have to be party to the hegemonic domain's construction of girls as helpmates to men. I agree with Gilbert-Hickey's argument that within the *Pure* trilogy "the nuclear family, as well as heteronormative romantic marriages, render women weak and voiceless" (38). Lyda does not find independence until she rebels against these hegemonic ideals via a counter-hegemonic gender conception of women.

The vulnerability tied to not having access to knowledge about sexual interactions is highlighted when Lyda discovers she is pregnant. She thinks it is a misunderstanding, since "[i]t's not possible to be pregnant and unmarried. Is it?" (*Fuse* 78). This question illustrates how, inside the Dome, having a child outside of marriage is virtually unimaginable. Unmarried pregnant girls are considered "ruined, disgraceful, pitiful..." (*Burn* 46), and a threat to the social order (*Burn* 47). Thus, "women's worth is directly dependent on their sexual morality" (Di Minico 12), but the girls never have the opportunity to make informed choices about whether to engage in sexual activities, because they do not know they risk getting pregnant outside of marriage if they have sexual intercourse. Patriarchy positions the young women as unknowing and easy to prey on. By withholding information about reproduction, male power privileges are enforced through the power technique of keeping the oppressed in ignorance.

Lyda's question about the possibility of becoming pregnant out-

side of marriage emphasises how girls are not expected to become mothers before marriageable age, and clarifies how Lyda's position as an adolescent mother is not even part of hegemonic knowledge about what motherhood means in the Dome. Being too young equals unsuitability for motherhood, according to the hegemonic conception of motherhood perpetuated by the Dome. In addition, because Lyda is separated from Partridge, she potentially has to raise their child on her own. Significantly, she does not think that Partridge has the right to know about the pregnancy, since he made the decision to leave her: "This is hers. He is gone. She has to learn to rely solely on herself" (*Fuse* 370). Lyda is preparing to become a single mother: "[S]he'll fend for herself and her child. She'll make it, alone" (*Fuse* 372). In conclusion, her young age adds to the stigma surrounding her pregnancy outside of marriage, creating an intersection between age and marital status.

When Lyda meets the mothers, they radically challenge Lyda's understanding of the patriarchal power relationship between the women and men that she grew up with in the Dome, including the hegemonic conception of women's role as well-behaved wives and mothers who obey their husbands. The mothers are also mothers, but they fend for their children on their own, without men, whom they regard as the cause of the Detonations and all the resulting problems (*Pure* 309). Here, motherhood does not equal being less powerful than men—quite the opposite. This radical feminist view is supported within the narrative when it reveals who was responsible for the Detonations: Partridge's father who decided to set them off to save the world. According to Bradwell—one of the rebels outside of the Dome—"[t]hey planned the apocalypse because they wanted the earth to survive, regenerate itself, so once they've used up their *limited resources*, they'll be ready to use the world's again" (*Pure* 205). Hence, ecological sustainability was meant to be re-established without considering social sustainability.

This disregard for human rights and equality is enhanced by how Partridge's father added an ingredient to cause fusing, "just to create a subhuman *class* [my italics], a new order of slaves, to serve" the

Pures when the world was set right again (*Pure* 413). All the adults in the Dome know about the mass murder; the children and adolescents, however, do not (*Fuse* 286). By “protecting” the children from the knowledge that their wealth and safety is the result of a genocide and the infliction of severe physical and mental suffering, the oppression of the survivors is enforced with no risk of the young generation rebelling against the deeds of the adult generation. Here, aetonormativity functions as a way of controlling the young generation and keeping them complacent and ignorant about the actions of their elders.

The mothers’ conception of men as evil is supported by how one man was the cause of the destruction. As a result of Partridge’s father’s actions, the mothers had to take care of themselves, bury the children who died in the Detonations and literally carry their fused children, who will never grow up, on their bodies for the rest of their lives (*Pure* 307). This is a strong and visual illustration of how women must carry the burdens bestowed upon them by a patriarchal society.

To summarise, the patriarchal order and the Dome adults’ compliance in mass murder have contributed to creating the Dome’s matrix of domination by constructing an underclass of people to support and sustain the privileged class. The mothers face the additional challenge of trying to take care of their fused children. Aetonormativity and patriarchy intersect in the creation of this system of oppression.

Although Lyda does not fully accept the concept of all men as evil that the mothers perpetuate, their version of feminism challenges the conservative gender norms of the Dome with an anti-hegemonic conception of gender. She becomes a female warrior (*Fuse* 206), killing two soldiers when she and her allies are attacked (*Pure* 421–422; *Fuse* 133). These killings fit in both the first category of adolescent killers, who kill in self-defence, and the second category of adolescent killers, who kill to protect others from harm, as defined in Table 2 in the previous chapter. Lyda is prepared to do anything to protect the people she cares about, including her unborn child. She transitions from a girl who fulfils conservative expectations about the purpose of a girl’s life, to a rebel warrior who challenges the Dome’s power dis-

tribution between women and men. According to Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, dystopias are “built around the construction of a narrative of the hegemonic order and a counter-narrative of resistance” (5). Lyda’s rebellion against the conservative gender norms of the Dome is a clear example of this narrative arc.

As Kathryn James argues, female characters who kill may disrupt the patriarchal order by positioning a girl as prepared to use aggression in a manner that diverges from the stereotype that women are non-violent. According to James, when violence is used as a part of motherhood, to protect a child, “there are limitations to the effectiveness of this disruption” (167). However, in Lyda’s case, her willingness to become an active agent who protects her unborn child and the people she cares about through lethal violence signals a disruption to the Dome’s stereotypical view of girls, which has until now defined her sense of self. Thus, motherhood as a motive for killing someone does not necessarily confirm gender norms.

Sara K. Day argues that “[o]nly by overcoming cultural conditioning regarding their sexuality [...] can girls gain the agency required to become women, leaders, and heroes” in the *Pure* trilogy (75). The controlled adolescent motif, which is present throughout the depiction of Lyda’s life in the Dome, is replaced by the mighty adolescent motif when she finds empowerment through her interactions with the mothers. As Gilbert-Hickey underlines in her discussion of the mothers, “female-centered kinship systems enable women, including mothers, to find not only voice and identity but also physical and political power and strength” (38), and this power extends to Lyda.

THE ADOLESCENT EXPECTANT MOTHER, LYDA

The mothers’ view of Lyda’s pregnancy is distinctly different to that of the society in the Dome. Whereas an adolescent mother is unthinkable inside the Dome, due to the hegemonic domain’s ideologies about gender and motherhood, they view Lyda’s child as a symbol of hope and a new beginning: “A baby we can all hold. The

first since the Detonations” (*Fuse* 398); “[t]his child is our new beginning” (*Burn* 286). The mothers’ hope in the child’s potential to create a new future is in line with Beauvais’ conception of the mighty child in children’s literature (*Mighty* 3). The mighty child motif is used to demonstrate how the next generation can potentially bring a new beginning, one not entirely dependent on the consequences of the Detonations, nor on the oppressive structure of the Dome.

In this sense, the new child represents the possibility of challenging the system of oppression established by the Dome. The child’s lack of physical deformity from the Detonations—a literal pureness—symbolises the concept of the Romantic child who, untainted by society, has the potential to be the beginning of a new, more natural and better world order (cf. Nikolajeva, “A Return” 128). Significantly, a child conceived by white parents becomes the saviour and hope of a new and better world, underlining a connection between purity, innocence and whiteness. Dyer highlights this link between whiteness and supposed purity as follows: “White people are neither literally nor symbolically white. We are not the colour of snow or bleached linen, nor are we uniquely virtuous and pure. Yet images of white people are recognisable as such by virtue of colour” (42). The whiteness of the child saviour, even connoting the Christ child, implies that this is a fundamentally good child, who will reinforce hope and a purity of heart in a dystopian world.

In addition to challenging hegemonic gender norms and the prejudice about the “wretches”, Lyda also mentally transitions from identifying with the Dome to sympathising with the “wretches” during her time outside it. She states that “she’s lucky she got out” (*Fuse* 209). Later, when she returns to the Dome to try to save her lover, Partridge, she considers herself a different person, and feels smothered and confined by Dome society: “She doesn’t want to be Pure anymore, and now, because of this baby, she isn’t and that feels right” (*Fuse* 453). Being Pure is given an additional meaning here, a label to put on the Dome girls who follow the rules for adolescent girls defined by the disciplinary domain of the Dome. Lyda finds empowerment in subverting these rules and gradually starts overcom-

ing the ideological boundaries between “us” and “them”. Her loss of sexual innocence means that she is no longer “Pure” according to the Dome’s hegemonic domain.

Partridge’s new partner, with whom he enters a fake engagement because of pressure from his political advisors, but later falls in love with, summarises Lyda’s transition: “The wretch who was once a Pure is pregnant” (*Fuse* 540). Thus, Lyda’s interactions with the world outside the Dome and its culture result in Partridge’s wife believing that Lyda no longer belongs to Dome culture. Lyda is described as tainted by her interactions with the world outside of the Dome and labelled a “wretch”, suggesting that Lyda’s purity can be removed by interacting with the other ethnicity. This also highlights the intersection of racial imagery and (dis)ability, because co-habitation with a person of a different race is viewed as miscegenation—a dangerous mixing of different races—according to a racist world-view. Similar ideas about the danger of mixing with the “wretches” are underlined in the narrative.

Whereas Lyda is not physically (dis)abled by fusing, she is positioned as mentally unstable and even “crazy” after she helps Partridge escape from the Dome by not reporting the theft of the knife, which he needed to get through the ventilation system on his way out of the Dome. In the Dome, people with mental “issues” are usually permanently removed from society (*Pure* 67), which suggests that mental conditions also taint the pureness of a Pure individual and are therefore not permitted inside the Dome. People with mental conditions threaten the compulsory able-bodiedness of the Pure from within the Dome. Therefore, they are removed from society before they can challenge what it means to be Pure. By transgressing the ideological boundary of the hegemonic domain between able-bodied Pures and (dis)abled “wretches”, Pures with mental conditions are virtually unimaginable in this hegemonic knowledge of how the world functions, and are therefore removed from society.

The controlled adolescent motif is present in the narrative during Lydia’s two enforced stays at the rehabilitation centre. Her initial institutionalisation, after unwittingly helping Partridge escape,

demonstrates the disciplinary domain's institutional surveillance and control of the citizens. Lyda is afraid that she will not be allowed to reproduce or be able to find a family that will accept her as a wife or a mother. She considers how her future may be destroyed by Partridge's actions and her decision to not stop him stealing the knife (*Pure* 102–103, 106). Significantly, her actions are described as a “stain”, highlighting how her purity, which is ideologically equal to her white, un-fused skin, has now been destroyed (*Pure* 103). Lyda can never be entirely Pure and untainted after this event. Significantly, she asks herself if she is “unclean now” (*Pure* 350), further emphasising the link between a behaviour that challenges the status quo of Dome society and losing her purity. She is also afraid they will never let her out of the rehabilitation centre, and tries to hold on to the truth, thinking “*I’m not crazy*” (*Pure* 232). Just like Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's Juliette Ferrars, who was analysed in the previous chapter, Lyda tries to resist the hegemonic domain of an oppressive society that defines her as “crazy”. Interestingly, Lyda is not angry with Partridge, who impregnated her, which may be due to her lifelong indoctrination that a girl should be obedient to the man in her life.

During Lyda's second stay at the rehabilitation centre, after she returns to the Dome to save Partridge from the mothers' retribution for the way he treated Lyda, the stakes are higher. Lyda feels the need to protect her child from the destructive world of the Dome (*Fuse* 398, 493). While she is confined in the rehabilitation centre, Lyda can feel the fierce warrior she was outside the Dome fading, and wonders whether “the Dome [has] already made her weaker and more frightened” (*Burn* 97). She realises that “she can't stay here and be Partridge's happy wife, wearing pearls, knitting booties, writing in baby books” (*Burn* 187). Consequently, she finds it impossible to adapt to the pressure of the hegemonic domain's construction of gender norms. Simultaneously, her precarious situation highlights the controlled adolescent motif, as she is literally confined because of actions that challenge the status quo of the Dome in terms of gender and age expectations.

Instead of striving to match the hegemonic domain's construction of a role model for expectant mothers, Lyda builds wire armour and breaks the crib to make spears (*Burn* 188, 216). She "uses the physical structures of her pregnancy—the wires upon which her maternity clothing hangs, the spindles of the crib her child will sleep in—to create armor and weapons to protect herself and her child" (Gilbert-Hickey 56). Lyda also recreates the soot-covered world outside the Dome, through the strongly symbolic act of burning a book on the topic of how to create a perfect nursery (*Burn* 215). This alternative version of a nursery makes her feel safe, but she also realises that "[t]his is the room of a crazy person, and she's the crazy person within it" (*Burn* 339). The redecorated nursery highlights Lyda's transition to identification with the world outside the Dome, as well as her refusal to live up to the hegemonic domain's expectations of a Dome mother. It also becomes a symbol of how she questions her own "sanity".

During Lyda's time in the rehabilitation centre, the ideals of her own mother are contrasted with the mothering ideals of the mothers, and Lyda finds the latter preferable. Her own mother's love is described as "a locked-up love, a buried-down love, a love to be ashamed of because ... because that kind of love makes you vulnerable? Makes you weak? Why hasn't her mother come to visit? Is she too ashamed of her daughter now? Lyda misses the mothers and their fierce love" (*Burn* 215). A fierce mother who goes to extremes to protect her child becomes the ideal that she aims towards, thereby privileging this gender ideal over the one she was taught by the Dome. Lyda even tells her own mother that she does not need her, since she already has mothers (*Burn* 292). In short, she refuses to become a copy of her biological mother; a mother who is even prepared to report Lyda as "certifiably crazy" in her role as a medician (*Burn* 362). Instead, Lyda decides to fight to protect her child, whatever it takes.

Lyda's decision to protect her unborn child is highlighted when she discovers that the Dome plans to take her child after the birth and keep Lyda in the rehabilitation centre for the rest of her life because of her alleged "craziness" (*Burn* 334). Lyda realises that she

must escape from the Dome and its oppressive institutions, rules, hierarchies and ideologies: “This place—it can’t be saved” (*Burn* 342). The mighty adolescent motif is illuminated when she decides to send a message to the rebels outside the Dome, saying that it is time for a revolution that will destroy the Dome’s protective sphere and radically challenge the division between the Dome and the survivors (*Burn* 360). Lyda thereby becomes one of Julianna Baggott’s female characters who are depicted “as key agents in the resistance of dystopian governments and the rebuilding of a new world” (Fritz 17).

The decision to trigger the revolution is tied to Lyda’s realisation that the only way to protect her unborn child is to destroy the Dome’s dystopian society and create a new start for her world:

‘I can’t live in here for the rest of my life, Pressia. You have to understand. This place has to be stopped.’ [...] ‘I was bred to be *pale* [my italics] and weak,’ Lyda says. ‘I was raised to be quiet and sweet. I didn’t know what I was capable of. You go around thinking that it’s not fair that the wretches have to live out there. But I know that it’s not fair that the Pures have to live in here—behind glass, batting around in our little fake world. If the Dome fell, it would be a mercy—not for the wretches, but the Pures.’ (*Burn* 385)

Here, the hegemonic domain’s oppressive ideologies are highlighted, and Lyda’s rebellion against the Dome is driven by how there is no future for her—nor for her child—in the Dome and the strongly divided world it has established. The word “pale”, which connotes purity, is here used in a different sense—as a girl who is taught to follow the rules and to accept the status quo without questioning it. After her experiences outside the Dome, Lyda will never again be pale in this sense.

The mighty adolescent motif is further foregrounded in a letter Lyda sends to Partridge, in which she describes how she can feel herself changing in order to “*meet some future I can’t imagine, but a future that’s coming all the same*” (*Burn* 251). Facing an unknowable future in

a successful way is the primary defining characteristic of the mighty child, according to Beauvais (*Mighty* 100–101). The expectant mother and her child become a symbol of hope—something that can counteract the dystopian reality of her world by being in a state of becoming, moving towards a new self that is fundamentally altered by the experience of being a mother. For Lyda, the experience of being pregnant gives her the hope she needs to pursue a better society for her and her child. It empowers her and makes her realise that she can influence the society she lives in. The child thus becomes a catalyst for Lyda’s agency in her dystopian world.

Even at an early stage of her pregnancy, Lyda realises that she is a “pawn” in the political games of the Dome (*Fuse* 491): “She’s not Lyda. She’s the vessel carrying a Willux [Partridge’s last name]” (*Burn* 49). Ultimately, her decision to send the message to the rebels is what leads to the destruction of the Dome. Partridge also wants to protect their child, but his solution is to keep the Dome intact, since he is afraid that he, his wife, Lyda and their child will be the first to be killed in an attack on the protective sphere (*Burn* 438). He decides not to follow Lyda outside the Dome when she is rescued by the rebels. Instead, he stays with his wife and goes down with the “ship” (*Burn* 449–450). Lyda thereby becomes a single mother and is left on her own to fend for and protect her child.

This conclusion is further emphasised in a short story called *Lyda* (2015), which describes the birth of Lyda and Partridge’s child. Lyda is terrified of bringing her child into the world. The mothers tell her to raise it far from where the Dome used to be, since people will come after Partridge’s child. She has not seen Partridge since the start of the revolution, and she wonders if he is dead. Lyda does not expect to see him ever again. The story ends when their child comes into the world (Baggott, *Lyda*). Lyda’s situation as a single adolescent mother is not improved after the fall of the Dome; instead, she has to run away with her child in order to protect it. Her position as a young mother, vulnerable due to a society that does not support her, remains, and her child is threatened for being heir to a young man who may or may not be dead. Lyda’s fight to protect her child has only

just begun on the final page of her story, but the depiction of Lyda highlights the vulnerable position of an adolescent mother-to-be in a dystopian world that does not ensure the safety of neither adolescents nor children.

*

To summarise, Lyda's liminal position as an adolescent who is also an expectant mother illustrates how a conception of age-related power structures that focuses solely on age fails to capture how every child or adolescent character is positioned by other kinds of power structures. In Lyda's case, the intersection between predominantly age, gender, marital status and perceived "craziness" is what invokes the controlled adolescent motif. Simultaneously, her initial Pureness is considered to be tainted by her interactions with survivors. She becomes a mighty adolescent by rebelling against the intersectional oppression of the Dome. This fluctuation between controlled and mighty underlines how power is context-dependent, demonstrating the ways in which this fictional universe's matrix of domination threatens a young mother.

Protecting a Magical Child: Shari Chopra in the Endgame Trilogy

Whereas Lyda strives to protect her unborn child in a dystopian society, in the *Endgame* trilogy, Shari Chopra must prevent the other Players of Endgame from killing her daughter Alice, who is two years old at the beginning of the trilogy. Shari's experience of being an adolescent mother differs in significant ways from Lyda's, primarily due to her more privileged intersectional subject position. Shari is an able-bodied, upper class, married, Indian woman who has a maid and servants. Her family and the rest of her people are prepared to sacrifice themselves to protect her and her daughter, and she finds mental support during Endgame in the Hindu religion and medita-

tion (Frey and Johnson-Shelton, *Sky* 66, 358, 438, 451, 456; Frey and Johnson-Shelton, *Rules* 301). However, both Lyda and Shari have to use extreme measures to protect their children from the dystopian world they live in. They both rebel against the hegemonic domain's distribution of power by challenging the structural domain's institutions.

The *Endgame* trilogy highlights aetonormative power structures when Alice becomes the target of professional adolescent killers. Because Alice is a young child, she is more vulnerable to the actions of the other Players, and her position as someone who is not yet an adult, and therefore unable to defend herself, creates a strong incentive for the adolescent mother and the adults who support her to protect Alice. Hence, the aetonormative conception of children's needs becomes a reason for standing up to distinct threats to the young, and Shari's position as an adolescent mother who is unable to fully protect her child is illuminated in the *Endgame* trilogy.

In this section, I will first analyse Shari's intersectional subject position and then discuss how her position as an adolescent mother affects her approach to Endgame. Finally, I will highlight the ways the task of killing a child cause several of the Players to rebel against the rules of Endgame and enforce a new, more socially sustainable world order that is better for both children and adolescents.

SHARI'S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITION

Shari is one of twelve Endgame Players between the ages of thirteen and twenty. Endgame is a competition between twelve different bloodlines of people. The goal is to find three different keys: Earth Key, Sky Key and Sun Key. The Player who wins by collecting the final key will save their people from destruction, while the rest of humanity will be killed off. Endgame is instigated by the Makers—supernatural beings who were once believed to be gods, but who turn out to be aliens who want to enslave the human race (Frey and Johnson-Shelton, *Calling* ix–x, 83, 271). Endgame is thus built upon a sys-

tem of oppression, in which humans must follow the Makers' rules or die. A hierarchy has been established in the institution of Endgame, in which those who are willing and able to kill the rest of the Players are positioned at the top. This hierarchy is part of the disciplinary domain. In the narrative, its influence over the Players is as follows: "Once the game begins, we must deliberate and decipher, move and murder. Some of us are less ready than others, and the lesser will be the first to die" (*Calling* ix).

The Makers' ability to oppress the Players is based on the hegemonic knowledge of Endgame they promote, which states that the only way to ensure survival for yourself and your people is to kill others. This system of oppression affects the Players tremendously, as they all risk their lives while playing Endgame. The Makers' rules for Endgame and the system of oppression it entails exist alongside the seemingly realistic world in which Endgame takes place. Most humans have no knowledge of Endgame or the Makers.

The focalisation varies between the original twelve Players and a few other characters at the start of the series. Several of them die, and thereby disappear from the narrative at different times in the trilogy, but Shari remains one of the focalisers throughout the whole trilogy.

All the Players represent different cultures, have different inter-sectional subject positions and also view Endgame in distinctly different ways, especially in terms of whether or not they believe that it is righteous, or at least morally acceptable, to kill others in order to win. Still, everyone except Shari ends up killing at least one person during Endgame. Her status as an adolescent mother and a wife is outlined as a reason for trying to avoid killing the other Players (*Calling* 459–461). Unlike Lyda, and also Elin, whose killings will be analysed in the next section, motherhood does not function as a catalyst for becoming a killer; instead, motherhood makes Shari want to avoid killing as part of Endgame. One pragmatic explanation for Shari's actions is that she would have to kill all the other Players and actively seek them out in order to save her daughter, and it is more likely that she can protect her daughter by hiding her than by defeating a group of trained assassins.

Although Shari decides to avoid killing in Endgame, she has actually killed before:

‘[Y]ou said that I am not a natural killer, and I concede that I am not. But I *have* killed, and I will kill again if Endgame requires it. But I will not take pleasure in it.’ [---] ‘I will not kill a person who is a true human being, do you see? The boy I killed was a monster.’ (*Sky* 65)⁹⁷

Thus, Shari is in fact an adolescent killer, but she does not want to take part in the killing practice of Endgame unless this is absolutely necessary, and unless the target is so amoral that they can no longer be considered to be fully human.

While pacifism and unwillingness to kill can be regarded as traditional female traits,⁹⁸ Shari does not fit into the role of a traditional female. Her toughness and ability to withstand pain is emphasised when another Player captures her and cuts off her left ring finger, where she used to wear her wedding ring: “The cut hurts, the stump of her finger throbs, but the pain is nothing compared to the pain of childbirth. *These stupid boys know nothing about pain*, she thinks” (*Calling* 160). This literal amputation of what defines her as the wife of her husband does not render her helpless and without the symbolic support of a man; instead, her ability to deal with pain and the insight into how women who have given birth have a different scale for pain altogether, underline how her female gender in no way makes her less powerful than the male Players—quite the opposite.

In contrast to Lyda, Shari’s pregnancy seems to have been planned and was within a marriage, in a culture where the hegemonic domain does not define her youth as non-normative for mothers. Therefore,

97. Since it is not clarified under what circumstances, or for what reasons, Shari became a killer, I have not been able to categorise her killing in Table 2 in the previous chapter. However, based on this quotation, it seems likely that she either did it in self-defence (Category 1) or to protect others she cares about (Category 2).

98. In a list of traits that are traditionally viewed as female versus male, Nikolajeva lists avoidance of aggression as a stereotypically female trait, while “violent” is the adjective used about males in this list (*Barnbookens* 193).

her youth is not viewed as problematic in relation to her motherhood. As a rich woman who is the chosen one, destined to protect her people in Endgame, she is much more privileged than Lyda. Lyda's whiteness does not compensate for the oppression directed against her, whereas the fact that Shari is a woman of colour seemingly does not limit her power as one of the Players (*Calling* cf. 81). Combined, Shari's marital status, heterosexuality and the fact that she is cisgender all position her as a more normative mother than the unmarried Lyda.

Shari decides to play the game differently to all the other Players. Instead of hunting the others down and trying to kill them while looking for Earth Key, she returns to her home to spend time with her family. When she discovers the location of Earth Key, she decides to not go after it (*Calling* 364). She refuses to play by the Makers' rules and thereby challenges the hegemonic domain's indoctrination, which states that the only way to be successful in Endgame is to kill your opponents. Shari's fears for her family's safety are heightened after she dreams about killing both her husband and Alice (*Calling* 363–364). After that, she decides to always carry a gun loaded with three bullets so, if necessary, she can kill all three of them before the other Players catch them (*Calling* 364; *Sky* 360). This could be viewed as an example of a possible mercy killing, that is Category seven in Table 2 in the previous chapter. Later, it is revealed how this dream also showed her that Alice is Sky Key and thus a target for all the other Players after one of them has found Earth Key. She states that her “Endgame is different. They will pursue, search, hunt, and kill. I will wait here, with you. And our beautiful girl. Eventually, they will have to come to me” (*Calling* 461).

In summary, the main goal of Shari's Endgame is to protect her daughter, both from the other Players and from a situation in which her only choice is to kill her own daughter in a merciful way, before the other Players can hurt and kill her. The obligation to protect your child that is associated with parenthood is heightened due to Alice being Sky Key. Shari thus follows the pattern defined by Jessica Seymour, in which “[t]he care circle [...] is used in contemporary YA dys-

topia to increase the characters' desire to *protect at all costs*" [my italics] (638). This pattern not only applies to parents who are protecting their children. For example, both Katniss Everdeen in Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy and Gaia in O'Brien's *Birthmarked* trilogy strive to protect their younger sisters from harm.

At the beginning of the second book in the *Endgame* trilogy, *Sky Key*, Shari vows to protect her daughter: "It's okay, sweetheart. No one is going to hurt you. I will never let anyone hurt you" (*Sky* 3). Her promise defines the overall narrative of the novel, since all the other Players are faced with the task of killing a young girl, and Shari must constantly prioritise her daughter's safety when deciding how to play Endgame. However, throughout the novel, her promise becomes increasingly hard to keep, since she realises that she may have to kill Alice herself (*Sky* 359). Here, the aetionormative power structures of Endgame that position a young girl as a victim create an extreme situation for Shari, in which the only possible way to protect her daughter may be to give her the gift of a swift death. Being the chosen one means that Alice has become a pawn in Endgame and this, in turn, renders her humanity secondary for the other Players.

Although Shari's decision to become an adolescent mother as such is not questioned by her own people, or seen as deviating from the norms, Shari's status as a mother leads to some of her people questioning her suitability to be a Player: "She is too *good* for death. Imagine that! A Player of Endgame. A Player of Endgame who also happens to be a *mother*. Can you believe it? That is what we have pinned our hopes to. A spineless quitter" (*Sky* 60). Here, the concept of being a mother, on the one hand, and being a killer, on the other hand, are defined as two positions that simply cannot be combined. This is due to the hegemonic domain's construction of Players in Endgame as ruthless killers. The expectations tied to being that type of killer do not match the expectations tied to being a caring and loving mother. However, for Shari, being a mother is what makes her rebel against Endgame and its rules: "I will stand for my people. I have stood for my people, and chief among all, I will stand for Little Alice. [---] They will come for her. We, all of us, every initiated

member of our line, must protect her” (*Sky* 65). Motherhood equals resistance to the status quo for Shari.

THE ADOLESCENT MOTHER, SHARI

Motherhood makes Shari question Endgame more profoundly than the other Players. She goes as far as condemning Endgame, which has been regarded as the most important rite by her people for generations, by highlighting the amorality of turning a vulnerable child into a political pawn (*Sky* 66). She thus denounces abusing children for the sake of the game, highlighting the extreme abuse of adult power of which the Makers are guilty in making Alice Sky Key. For Shari, just like Lyda, the regime’s threat to her child becomes a catalyst for rebellion against it. In Shari’s case, however, it is mostly her daughter who is the victim of aetonnormative power abuse, not herself.

Shari has to deal with the impossible dilemma of whether she should kill her daughter in order to save the rest of humanity or keep fighting to protect her, because she learns that if Alice is not killed, a destructive event called Abaddon will soon affect the Earth. Her people tell her they will not sacrifice Alice; instead, they will protect her, taking her to an old hiding place in the mountains where they will stand united against the other Players (*Sky* 336, 362–363). Most of the other Players, however, aim to save humanity by murdering a child, making Shari question whether her decision makes her a bad person (cf. *Sky* 418). As a mother, she is expected to protect her daughter, but she wonders if that rule still applies when protecting her child could mean that countless other people are killed.

When Shari’s people and Alice are attacked by the other Players, Shari seriously considers killing Alice herself, but cannot bring herself to do it. Her entire family, including her husband, parents, and grandparents, are killed in the effort to protect Alice (*Sky* 451, 438, 456, 459). Just like Lyda, protecting her child is Shari’s first priority, which is clarified in the following quotation: “*I am coming to fight for what I love. I am a mother first. My bullets are not for you [Alice]*” (*Sky*

443). Consequently, motherhood is her primary defining characteristic, and the fierceness with which she protects her daughter is reminiscent of the mothers in the *Pure* trilogy.

However, Alice disappears when she touches Earth Key, thereby narrowly escaping being killed by another Player's bullet (*Rules* 8). Alice is thus not killed, but Shari can no longer protect her. Shari's attempts to find her daughter are at the centre of the plot in *Rules of the Game*, the final book in the trilogy. Initially, Shari wants revenge on the Player Aisling Kopp, Aisling's people and her helper, who all helped kill her family and line. However, she later decides against this so they can help her find her daughter instead, while simultaneously trying to stop Endgame and Abaddon (*Rules* 68, 74, 108).

Shari highlights how the youngest generation will be left to deal with the world after the adults' lives have ended, positioning Alice as a mighty child who will inherit the world:

'Little Alice is three years old. Every child who survives Abaddon will inherit this world. But it will be *hers*.' She points to the sky. 'Not the Makers?.' She pats her chest. 'Not mine.' She points at them [her fellow Players]. 'Not yours.' She lets her hand fall to her side. 'If I agree [to cooperate with you], then I ask you to help me deliver it to her.' (*Rules* 108)

The mighty child motif underlines how the future generation will decide the future, and that Alice has a particular role to play in this endeavour, both because she is no ordinary child and because of the assaults she has already endured on her freedom. Shari's speech to her fellow Players also positions her as a mighty adolescent rebelling against the dystopian aspects of the world she lives in.

For Shari, being an adolescent mother equals constantly trying to protect Alice from both human and supernatural foes, but also realising that her dystopian world contains threats from which she cannot protect her daughter. The helplessness she feels when one of the Players is trying to kill Alice renders her immobile: "Shari can't think she can't yell she can't call out she can't reach she can't act she

can't feel she has to repress it all she is powerless she is powerless she is powerless and she has to embrace the powerlessness" (*Rules* 297). Here, stream of consciousness is utilised to further underline Shari's emotional turmoil, which can hardly be translated into ordinary language. This inability to affect her situation positions her as a controlled adolescent, unable to protect the one she loves the most in the world.

Throughout *Sky Key*, the dilemma of whether to kill Alice to save the world affects the other Players too. Most of them are willing to kill her at the beginning of the novel. Several of them do try to murder her, albeit unsuccessfully (cf. *Rules* 8). In the end, however, the amorality of killing a child is what brings most of them together and gives them a reason to rebel against the Makers and the system of oppression on which Endgame is based. As Aisling argues, "Who wants the right to live on Earth if it's ugly and dying and full of misery? Not me" (*Rules* 14). Together with two other Players, Aisling decides to stop playing Endgame according to the Makers' rules: "We'll kill Endgame. Together", the Player Jago Tlaloc exclaims (*Rules* 15). The choice between killing a child or rebelling against the rules of Endgame and the system of oppression it represents is the choice between submitting to extreme aetonormative power abuse or challenging it in the hope of creating a more socially sustainable future.

Ultimately, the rebellion against the Makers is successful due to collaboration between people from different bloodlines. When one of the Makers takes Alice from Jago before he has the chance to kill her, Aisling's grandmother summons the power of the dead and mentally transports herself to the place where Alice is kept, enabling another Player to use a magical weapon to kill the Maker (*Rules* 301, 305, 307, 310). Alice survives, and her reunion with Shari emphasises the strong bond between mother and daughter: "the kissing, loving, fawning, pawing, desperately grateful lives of a mother and a child, brought together for good and at last" (*Rules* 314). The rebellion against the Makers falsifies the hegemonic domain's view that the only way to survive Endgame is to kill the other Players. It ends the long slave-master relationship of the humans and the Mak-

ers, thereby restructuring the structural domain of the intradiegetic world by defeating the institution of Endgame and the oppression it legitimises. At the heart of this successful rebellion is the belief that aetonnormative power abuse against children is so unacceptable that even the most hardened and experienced killers renounce it and reconcile their differences, thereby foregrounding the mighty adolescent motif.

The killing of the Maker is the beginning of a new world order. Although Abaddon does affect the Earth, fundamentally destroying the existing societies, it is depicted as the beginning of a better and more collaborative world. The crisis resets the ecosystem to a more sustainable state, which makes it possible to start building a more sustainably sound world, both in the ecological and the societal senses (*Rules* 322, 324–325). Shari and Alice live with two other Players, and Alice is described as one of the main reasons they have been able to become friends (*Rules* 324). An innocent child, who has been rescued from being a target for adults' power abuse and willingness to enslave humanity, thus becomes a catalyst for the healing of the world. As a consequence, adult power abuse is strongly criticised and Alice is positioned as a true mighty child, able to affect the future and bring about a change in the status quo that the adolescents could not foresee, but which they support once they realise that killing a child can never be the key to saving the world. The Makers' inexcusable power abuse of a young child turns enemies into friends, Players into rebels, and this is the sense in which age-related power structures define the overall plot of the series.

*

To summarise, the *Endgame* trilogy highlights how threats to a child can make the mother a determined rebel. Killing a child is seen as so unacceptable that people from different backgrounds unite, and in this unity they find the strength to overthrow the Makers. All Players are forced to take part in Endgame, demonstrating how their youth has been taken away from them. Consequently, just like the *Hun-*

ger Games trilogy, Endgame pitches children and adolescents against each other in a game that is a form of extreme adult power abuse—in this case originating from the alien Makers.

*Protecting Your Child in a Dystopian Sweden:
Elin Holme*

In the *Blood Rain* series, Elin Holme aims to protect her daughter from two corrupt regimes in a future Sweden, thereby struggling with similar challenges to both Lyda and Shari. However, while both Lyda and Shari rebel against the current social order by instigating a revolution against the Dome or rewriting the rules of Endgame, Elin becomes a young politician in the new regime. Crucially, she decides to become a politician because she wants to protect her young daughter Hallgerd, nicknamed Gerda, from retribution for the three killings that Elin committed while protecting her family and herself. These killings fit in the first and second categories in Table 2 in the previous chapter: those who kill in self-defence and those who kill in order to protect others. As a politician, Elin must repeatedly justify why she, as an adolescent and later a young woman, is suitable to be a politician. The liminal position of being an adolescent is highlighted throughout the narrative, when Elin has to both protect her child from malicious adults and deal with the prejudice about her own youth. Aetonormativity is thus underlined via the relationship between Elin and her child, as well as the relationship between Elin as a young woman and the adult generation.

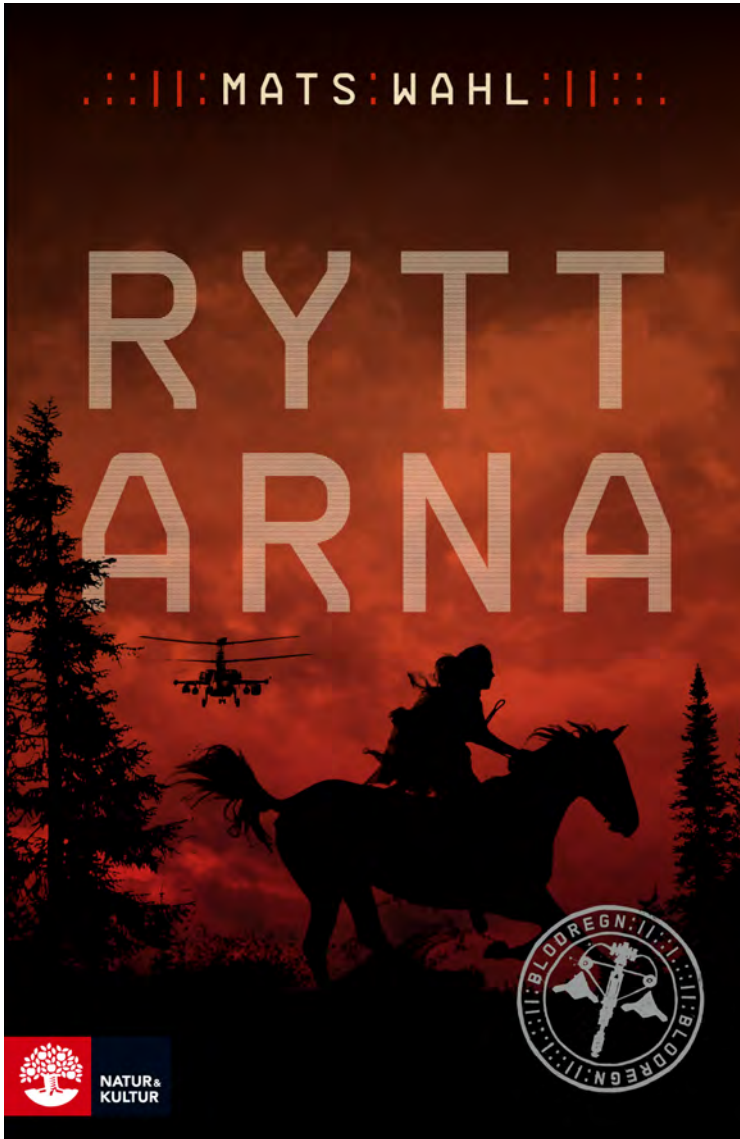
In the series, the focalisation varies between several different characters. Elin is one of them, and she is the most frequent focaliser. In the following section, I will first analyse Elin's intersectional subject position, and then move on to an analysis of how she strives to protect her daughter from harm in her dystopian society.

ELIN'S INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECT POSITION

Elin's dystopian world is attempting to deal with the consequences of environmental destruction, robots replacing the vast majority of human workers, gang violence and bleak opportunities to create a better future for its citizens and the immigrants from other parts of the world, where living conditions are worse than in Sweden. These immigrants are generally not allowed to enter Swedish territory or become Swedish citizens, and must therefore settle in an area destroyed by nuclear waste (Wahl, *Krigarna* [The Warriors] 63, 73, 217, 305–306; Wahl, *Lagstiftarna* [The Lawmakers] 46). As Åsa Nilsson Skåve argues, the adult generation is portrayed as responsible for the environmental change (Nilsson Skåve, “Dystopiska” 102–103), which causes floods, drought and rainstorms with Saharan sand—the “Blood Rains” (*Lagstiftarna* 433).

In this future dystopian Sweden, Elin is vulnerable due to her intersectional subject position. At the beginning of the series, which starts with *Ryttarna* [The Riders] (2014), Elin is sixteen years old. Sweden is controlled by a dictatorial regime that uses extensive surveillance to control the population. The disciplinary domain controls the population, such as by monitoring who people meet and by censoring mass media (Wahl, *Ryttarna* 82). As most jobs are given to robots, unemployment is widespread, leading to meagre financial resources for much of the population, Elin's family included. The structural domain also contributes to the control of the population, for example by establishing a policy that all school children must take a sedative drug. Elin's parents disagree with this policy, so she has been home-schooled (*Ryttarna* 129).

In addition to her working-class background and not being as educated as most people her age, Elin's youth positions her as less powerful than adults. Her female gender, however, does not position her as less able to protect herself than males. Both Elin and her brother are able to defend themselves using weapons, which becomes clear when they are attacked due to a family feud and Elin kills a man in self-defence (*Ryttarna* 44–45). This can be regarded as another exam-



Ryttarna [The Riders] by Swedish author Mats Wahl depicts the protagonist Elin Holme's killing of a man in self-defence when she and her brother are attacked during a family feud.

ple of killing to protect your care circle (Seymour 638), which is the second category of killers that I defined in the previous chapter. As Seymour states, contemporary YA dystopian literature establishes a distinction between “killing being constructed as occasionally necessary and murder being constructed as unnecessary and self-serving” (Ibid.). Although Elin struggles with guilt and keeps asking herself whether her deed turns her into a murderer, the media portrays her as a hero of the people, able to defend her family and protect both herself and her brother (*Lagstiftarna* 192). This reflects how random killings are common in this version of a future dystopian Sweden. In a similar vein to Juliette Ferrars in the *Shatter Me* series, which was analysed in the previous chapter, Elin’s use of lethal violence is not just accepted, but celebrated within the frame of her dystopian world. Contrary to Juliette, Elin is able-bodied both in a physical and psychological sense, and thereby privileged. Whereas Juliette’s guilt is increased by how the hegemonic domain defines her as an “abomination”, Elin’s actions are supported and lauded by the media, but she still feels guilty.

Another power category that is highlighted throughout the narrative is Elin’s sexuality, which is never defined using a specific label, but which includes sexual encounters with both men and a woman. This Swedish dystopia differs from most Anglo-American dystopias in its fluid conception of sexuality which, according to Nilsson Skåve, is a key difference between Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature (“Dystopiska” 106). Elin is cisgender, which means she is normative in terms of gender identity. She is white, and, as I argue elsewhere, “her white privilege is neither problematized nor critically highlighted in the series” (Alkestrand, “(De)Stabilizing” 96). Instead, “she has the option to stay silent when faced with a racist worldview since she herself is not directly affected by it”, especially in relation to the immigrants, suffering at the border of Sweden (Ibid.). Additionally, Elin is an atheist and strongly suspicious of the Christian religion embraced by her younger sister.

To summarise, Elin’s working-class background, her lack of thorough schooling and her youth intersect, positioning her as less

powerful than adults and people of a different class and educational background. Simultaneously, her white skin colour and Swedish citizenship provide her with privileges, such as being able to live within the Swedish borders and not being directly affected by the immigrants' tough living conditions. Being female does not lead to any apparent disadvantages for her, and nor do her sexual encounters with a woman. This suggests that Wahl's future Sweden is less homophobic than contemporary Sweden.

Elin's intersectional subject position is drastically affected by a new political regime, which successfully rebels against the government and profoundly re-organises the structural domain. The rebels are led by Elin's aunt, Karin Holme, and create a new regime that initially seems to be more democratic, but turns out to be just as intent on controlling the population as the previous one (*Krigarna* 362–369; *Lagstiftarna* 341–342), similarly to District 13 and President Coin in *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Elin, who later becomes a politician in Karin's party, is chosen as a member of the parliament. She eventually becomes the minister of justice and later the prime minister (Wahl, *De levande* [The Living] 431; Wahl, *De älskande* [The Loving] 264–265). The final book in the series, *De älskande* (2017), portrays Elin as a well-established adult politician who no longer believes it is possible to create a better society or to improve the destroyed environment—two political issues she focused on at the beginning of her political career. She also describes her younger self as naïve for believing in the possibility of creating a better world (*De älskande* 192, 264–269), further underlining the existence of prejudices about young people and their ambitions within the narrative.

In the series, Elin's access to power is primarily explored through three different subject positions: adolescent single mother, adolescent killer and young politician. Elin becomes a mother after a brief but intense love affair with the son of the man she killed in the family feud. He is killed almost immediately after their daughter is conceived (*Ryttarna* 199, 214–216). Elin thereby becomes a single adolescent mother. In addition to the man Elin kills during the family feud, she also kills the two leaders of a criminal gang when they attack her

family home (*Krigarna* 306). These killings result from the need to protect Elin's care circle (cf. Seymour 638). An important reason for Elin's decision to become a politician is to protect her daughter from retribution from the gang whose leaders she killed; being a politician gives Elin profoundly more power in her dystopian world, as well as protection by her bodyguards (*Lagstiftarna* 196–197). These different subject positions intersect with each other, and they all shape the depiction of Elin's decisions throughout the *Blood Rain* series.⁹⁹ In the following, I will focus on Elin's attempts to raise and protect her daughter Hallgerd in a dystopian society, highlighting a number of key moments that define the kind of mother Elin is and how she relates to her dystopian world in her mothering endeavours.

THE ADOLESCENT MOTHER, ELIN

The first regime in the *Blood Rain* series is willing to commit child abuse in its efforts to control the population and to combat the rebels, which forces Elin to take extreme measures to protect her child. After Elin's aunt Karin—the leader of the rebels—has visited her family, Elin is terrified that the police will come and interrogate them. In an effort to protect her daughter from the police—an institution that she does not have faith in, since she knows that many police officers are corrupt—she intends to leave her family's house with her four-month-old daughter on the evening of Karin's visit. However, when her mother gets very upset and begs Elin not to take Hallgerd away

99. For an analysis of how Elin's position as an adolescent single mother, an adolescent killer and a young politician intersect throughout the *Blood Rain* series, see Alkestrand, "Adolescent Killer and Politician: Age-Related Ideologies in the Dystopian Future Sweden of Mats Wahl's *Blood Rain* Series" (2019). In that article, I use cognitive scripts and intersectionality to explore the interconnections between the different subject positions. One of the article's main arguments is that "the relationship of power between adults and adolescents in YA dystopian fiction can be reconceptualised when the protagonist is not only an adolescent killer and a young politician, but is also an adolescent single mother who lacks the authority of being an adult, but who is simultaneously the number one authority for her daughter" (Alkestrand, "Adolescent" 210).

from her, Elin decides to leave in the morning instead. This turns out to be too late. The military arrives before Elin can leave. They pressure her to reveal information that an undercover rebel, working as a police officer, communicated to her by writing a message on a dusty car window, hidden from surveillance cameras (*Krigarna* 32–34, 67). Elin's father Gunnar begs the military to leave them alone: "Can't you please stop tormenting us, Gunnar begs. Elin is barely an adult, Lisa [Elin's sister] is a child and Hallgerd an infant. What you're doing is improper! [my translation]" (*Krigarna* 67).¹⁰⁰ Here, the institution of the military is questioned due to its willingness to put children and infants in harm's way.

Extreme power abuse by an adult institution as regards children highlights its amorality, while simultaneously clarifying that the Sweden of the *Blood Rain* series is not safe for the young generation. There is no special consideration of the needs of the young. According to aetionormativity, children must be protected from harm. Here, instead, the most vulnerable—in this case an infant, utterly unable to protect herself—are used as pawns in the political conflicts between the current regime and the rebels. This is reminiscent of how adult power abuse places both Lyda's unborn child and Shari's young daughter in the middle of the dystopian regime's power struggles.

The controlled adolescent motif is highlighted when the military injects Elin with a sleeping serum, and Hallgerd is taken from her. Both Elin and Hallgerd are taken to a special facility for prisoners, but are separated. The interrogators use Hallgerd as leverage in their interrogations of Elin: they let her hear Hallgerd but not see her and they inject her with drugs before pumping her breast milk for Hallgerd (*Krigarna* 67, 71, 83, 88). Later, they let Elin see Hallgerd on the other side of a glass wall, but not touch her:

The baby's eyes are closed and Elin weeps. She screams for Hallgerd, but the child can't hear. Elin tries to rip her own

100. Swedish quotation: "Kan ni inte sluta plåga oss, ber Gunnar. Elin är knappt vuxen, Lisa är ett barn och Gerda ett spädbarn. Det ni gör är otillständigt!"

arms, which have been attached with wide Velcro tape stripes to the wheelchair's handles, free. She throws herself against the wide strap underneath her breasts. The child on the other side of the glass lies with her eyes closed, the mouth is so small. For a moment, Elin is unable to breathe. The crying is about to suffocate her [my translation]. (*Krigarna* 98)¹⁰¹

This passage underlines both Elin's helplessness and her futile attempts to protect Hallgerd. She even prays to a god she does not believe in to protect her daughter (*Krigarna* 72). In this situation, both Elin and Hallgerd are confined, and their freedom and ability to affect their futures are put on hold. They are both utterly controlled by the dystopian regime's disciplinary domain, invoking the controlled adolescent and the controlled child motifs.

Elin unwillingly becomes a pawn in the political conflict between the government and the rebels. She is offered the opportunity to return home, if she helps the government find the rebels. However, she is not allowed to take Hallgerd; first, she has to prove that she can be trusted. Elin has to face the dilemma of whether she should stay in the facility and be close to Hallgerd, but risk Hallgerd being poisoned by the drugs they have given to Elin and that Hallgerd absorbs via her breast milk, or whether she should leave and try to work from the outside to save her daughter. She realises she is totally powerless in the facility, whereas she has the possibility to act if she is set free. Therefore, "staying is not an option [my translation]" (*Krigarna* 103, 105–106; quotation on 106).¹⁰²

However, Elin has agreed to help an undercover female rebel send a message to the rebels once she is back home, so the rebel ensures

101. Swedish quotation: "Barnets ögon är slutna och Elin gråter. Hon ropar på Gerda, men barnet kan inte höra. Elin försöker rycka loss armarna, som fjätrats med breda kardborrband vid rullstolens handtag. Hon kastar sig fram mot den breda remmen under bröstet. Barnet på andra sidan glaset ligger med slutna ögon, munnen är så liten. En stund blir Elin andlös. Gråten håller på att kväva henne."

102. Swedish quotation: "Att stanna är inget alternativ."



In Krigarna by Swedish author Mats Wahl, Elin Holme and her daughter are captured and tortured by the dystopian regime.

that Elin leaves with Hallgerd, who is hidden in a bag (*Krigarna* 108–109). Just as the government used Hallgerd to torment Elin, the rebels also play on Elin's need to protect her daughter to manipulate her and use her for their own ends. Hence, Elin's position as an adolescent mother is used to control her and ensure her loyalty. Interpersonal interactions are strongly affected by the oppression of the population, primarily through the regime's and the rebels' willingness to abuse a child for political purposes.

The challenges of Elin's long and dangerous walk home are combined with her worry about how the experience of being confined has affected her daughter, thus prolonging the torture associated with Elin's interrogation. Hallgerd's behaviour has changed since she was captured, and Elin fears that she has been permanently damaged by the drugs they gave to Elin and the sleeping medication Hallgerd received to keep her quiet during their escape. Elin also has nightmares after her imprisonment about Hallgerd's feet having been amputated (*Krigarna* 191, 259), symbolising her daughter's lack of freedom and independence in their dystopian world. The imprisonment and the torture clearly affect both mother and daughter after they have left the facility, and Elin's need to protect Hallgerd becomes even more pressing. Similarly to Red in Henry's novel, which was analysed in the previous chapter, Elin's belief in protection by the police and the military—institutions that play an important role in disciplining citizens—is gone. Therefore, Elin takes the task of protecting Hallgerd into her own hands, without the comfort of being able to rely on a safety net provided by societal institutions. Instead, these institutions contribute to the oppression of an adolescent mother who wants to protect her daughter from a dystopian regime.

The acute need to protect Hallgerd's life from violent adults is actualised again shortly after Elin and Hallgerd have returned home, when Elin's family is attacked by a criminal gang. When the attackers arrive, Elin and Hallgerd are asleep, but Elin wakes up in time to see the male leader of the gang attack her father with a knife and stab him in his arm. Elin shoots the gang leader, and when his wife aims her gun at Elin's father, Elin shoots her too (*Krigarna* 305–306).

As a result, Elin saves her family, Hallgerd included, through lethal force. Elin has troubles reconciling herself with killing three different people, but the media portrays her as a hero of the people. Although she did feel a need to act to protect herself and the people she loves during both attacks, which matches the first and second categories of adolescent killers defined in the previous chapter, she keeps asking herself whether this makes her actions morally acceptable. Here, the media image conflicts with her own ethics, and she is unable to reconcile the two concepts of killer and hero.

The media is depicted as relatively independent in relationship to the regimes, even though it is a tool that the hegemonic domain can use to perpetuate oppressive ideologies. It celebrates Elin when she kills in self-defence while the old regime is in charge, and also celebrates her killing the gang leaders after the second regime has gained power. Elin is perceived as connected directly to the people of the country—the individuals trying to make a living and survive in a harsh reality—which is why her behaviour is depicted as an act of heroism. In the media's rhetoric, she is a counterweight to the political leaders and those institutions in society that obstruct human rights.

Being a killer defines Elin's self-image to such a great extent that she is unable to view herself as a good mother. For example, she concludes that she "smell[s] so much of death that no one wants to come close to [her], not even Hallgerd [my translation]" (*De levande* 420).¹⁰³ Similarly to Shari, she does not know how to combine being a killer and a mother, but where Shari reaches the conclusion that her act of killing is defensible, Elin's guilt stays with her throughout the series. Her decision to become a politician in her aunt's party, after they have defeated the government and established a new regime, is tied to her attempts to be a good mother for Hallgerd. As I have argued elsewhere, "Elin fears for her and Hallgerd's lives after the manslaughters, and by taking on the role of a politician she can protect Hallgerd more efficiently" (Alkestrand, "Adolescent" 221).

103. Swedish quotation: "luktar så mycket död att ingen vill komma nära [henne], inte ens Hallgerd."

This critical need for protection is highlighted when Elin is almost killed by a sniper, who is attempting to avenge Elin's killings of the gang leaders. Another woman is killed instead, and Elin feels responsible for her death. Later, Elin is again targeted by the sniper, and both the sniper and a bodyguard die in the confrontation (*De levande* 406–407). Elin blames herself for the death of her bodyguard, whom she had started to view as a friend (*Lagstiftarna* 487–488, 494; *De levande* 406–407, 421).

Elin's self-concept contrasts with the media's support for her actions. It is also juxtaposed with how she gains a lot of political followers, many of them girls and young women who want her autograph and want to be like her (*Lagstiftarna* 13, 52–53). Her successful political career finally makes her the most powerful individual in Sweden: the prime minister. At the beginning of her political career, however, she is constantly questioned in her role as a politician, both by party members and other people. This is not due to her being a killer, but because of her youth, which many people regard as the reason she is not competent or experienced enough to represent the people in the government (cf. *Lagstiftarna* 15).

Aetonnormative power structures position Elin as inferior to older and more experienced politicians, and this makes it hard for her to establish herself as a reliable politician. It also affects her self-esteem. For instance, she considers herself to be “[a] murderous fraud who is not even liked by her own daughter [my translation]” (*Lagstiftarna* 192).¹⁰⁴ Here, Elin's intersectional subject position as a killer, a politician and an adolescent mother, who is unable to spend as much time with her young daughter as she would like due to her pressing work schedule (cf. *Lagstiftarna* 26), are intertwined. According to Elin, these intersecting subject positions make her a fraud who, due to her lack of ordinary education, does not feel knowledgeable enough. Hallgerd is repeatedly upset with and angry at Elin, for example when she discovers that her mother has killed people; she pretends to be a wolf and bites her mother (*De Levande* 171–172). Such

¹⁰⁴. Swedish quotation: “En mordisk bluff som inte är omtyckt ens av sin egen dotter.”

experiences make Elin regard herself as an unsatisfactory mother.

The relationship between Elin and Hallgerd is strained throughout Hallgerd's childhood and adolescence. The final book in the series reveals that Hallgerd moved away from her mother during her adolescence, after discovering that her biological father's murder was sanctioned by Elin's new partner. At this point, Elin did not know that her partner was the one who gave the order to kill Hallgerd's father but, regardless, this leads to mother and daughter not re-establishing their relationship until Hallgerd has a child of her own (*De älskande* 224, 264). At this point, Elin is an experienced adult politician who is about to retire from her political career. Contrary to Shari, who is a bit overprotective following the events surrounding Alice being Sky Key, but is able to establish a loving relationship with her daughter, Elin is not part of Hallgerd's life after Hallgerd's early adolescence. Thus, she is unable to protect her daughter or control her behaviour. She unwillingly becomes an absent mother. The reunion between mother and daughter in the final book in the series is portrayed as a new beginning, but that is where the story ends.

In contemporary YA dystopian literature, it is rare for the story arc to follow the adolescent hero into adulthood. Here, Wahl's series is an exception to the most prevailing narrative pattern, that of ending the story after an adolescent rebellion, perhaps with the addition of a brief epilogue like the one in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, which depicts Katniss as an adult mother of two who is raising her children with Peeta Mellark (Collins, *Mockingjay* 454–455).¹⁰⁵

105. For an analysis of the depiction of Katniss' mother as well as Katniss' own approach to motherhood, see Berit Åström's article "Negotiating Motherhood in *The Hunger Games*" (2018). Åström argues that the "novels gesture towards a recognition of a more complex view of motherhood and mothering, where a mother might temporarily abdicate from the maternal role, or re-formulate it according to her own needs, and yet not be vilified as a bad mother" (5). She also emphasises that Katniss has been "coerced into motherhood" by Peeta (Åström 13).

Another exception to this overall pattern is Hester Shaw in Reeve's *Mortal Engines* quartet. There is a narrative gap between Hester finding out that she is pregnant at the end of book two, *Predator's Gold*, and the daughter's adolescence in book three, *Infernal Devices*. From book three, the focus is more on the daughter than the mother, with large parts of the narrative being focalised from the daughter's perspective.

*

In summary, Elin's interactions with the two different regimes in the *Blood Rain* series are affected by her position as an adolescent mother. As I have argued elsewhere, Elin "is constantly navigating in her world *as* an adolescent and *as* a single mother who is protecting her daughter. Her position as a single mother thus shapes her resistance to the regimes" (Alkestrand, "Adolescent" 221). At the same time, her career choice is affected by her status as a mother, because she realises that gaining political power brings benefits like being able to hire professional protection for her daughter. By becoming a powerful politician, she affects her own class status by gaining access to financial resources, as well as a position in society that gives her a lot of political power and improves her ability to care for her daughter and protect her from the dystopian tendencies of the regime for which she is a symbol. In the end, though, it is her choice of a romantic partner that is the reason she loses contact with Hallgerd in her adolescence. Thus, political power and opportunities to influence how the structural and disciplinary domains are organised do not allow her to avoid conflicts with her loved ones.

A significant difference from both Lyda and Shari's experience of life as adolescent mothers who rebel against oppression in order to protect their children, is that Elin works from within the political system of the second regime. She thus affects the disciplinary domain from within the political institution (Hill Collins 281), instead of rebelling against the structural domain via revolution (Hill Collins 277–278), like Lyda and Shari.

Elin has a lot more political power than both Lyda and Shari, but in her role as a well-established adult politician she seems to have accepted the social order as it is. For example, she no longer believes that politicians can solve issues of immigration and environmental destruction, for instance (*De älskande* 266–267). In contrast to her younger self, who fought hard to establish a political environment that is both ecologically and socially sustainable, she has become part of the adult generation not just physically, but also due to her

attempts to distance herself from a youthful belief in the chance of creating a better world.

Although both Lyda and Shari are portrayed as mighty adolescents who contribute to a major change in the status quo of their dystopian worlds, Elin is never portrayed as a mighty adolescent. She is indeed powerful within the political system, but she does not represent the youth's ability to use their creativity in establishing a new, changed and improved world, as defined by Beauvais (*Mighty* 100–101). Instead, she has succumbed to the status quo. As a consequence, the ending of the *Blood Rain* series is darker than both the *Pure* trilogy and the *Endgame* trilogy. As Sambell argues, a defining characteristic of dystopias for young readers is the seemingly inconceivable combination of the dystopian mode and hope (164). The *Blood Rain* series' ending does not encompass the same amount of hope and, in this sense, it is similar to dystopias for adults, in which the hero is often not successful in their quest to improve their society (Ibid.). The children and adolescents are not portrayed in the same hopeful way as in the *Pure* and *Endgame* trilogies—as mighty children and adolescents who will potentially save the world. Instead, the future is indeed portrayed as dark in the *Blood Rain* series, since aetonnormative power structures are confirmed and the adults' inability to improve the world is highlighted.

Ideologies Tied to the Adolescent Mother Motif in the Three Series

The depiction of the three adolescent mother characters analysed in this chapter share several ideologies associated with age-related power dynamics, but there are also significant differences. Both the similarities and the differences will be examined in this section.

One ideology that the three series share is that **children need to be protected from adult dystopian regimes by adolescent mothers and their allies (adolescents and/or adults) because of their vulnerability**. Lyda's, Shari's and Elin's children are all threatened by their

dystopian societies, so their mothers have to stand up for their needs and safety. This conception of the need to protect children relies on aetonnormativity, which positions the young as more vulnerable than adults. Whereas heteronormativity and patriarchy are two examples of norm systems that position one group (straight people, men) as superior to another (gay people, women) solely based on prejudices that construct the inferior group as less entitled to power, aetonnormativity can function as a force to protect the young from evil. The recognition of children and adolescents' physical, psychological and developmental needs can be used as a basis for establishing support that helps them develop into adults in a safe environment. However, it can also be used to legitimise adult power abuse of children and adolescents. In this case, the dystopian regimes disregard the children's needs, making it crucial for the mothers to protect their children from a society that supposedly exists to support its population, but which repeatedly puts children in harm's way instead.

This overarching ideology can be concretised by a different ideology, which highlights the role of society's institutions: **Children need to be protected from the oppressive institutions of dystopian regimes, since these institutions cannot be trusted to consider the needs of children.** Lyda's rehabilitation centre, Endgame—which functions as an institution of its own—and the police and military in Elin's dystopian Sweden all ignore the need to protect children that is at the heart of the rhetoric of aetonnormativity. The lack of safety and support for children and adolescents underlines the dystopian qualities of the three series, since the abuse committed by adult institutions demonstrates that even the most defenceless are at risk of becoming involved in the dystopian regimes' power struggles. Consequently, the three series promote an ideology about how **the younger generation needs a safer society than the current one.** All the series highlight the need for both improved social and ecological sustainability, with a particular focus on the importance of recognising the specific needs of children and adolescents and their right to a safe and nurturing future.

All series further underline an ideology that states that **being an**

adolescent mother entails being prepared to risk—and even sacrifice—your own life for your child. As Lyda puts it, a mother should be “fiercely loving”, which pinpoints the potentially productive potential of aetonormativity, through its need to protect the young from harm. Because Lyda, Shari and Elin all live in dystopian worlds, with frequent killings and extreme threats to the population, living up to this role model means going to extremes to protect your child. Instigating a revolution, like Lyda, defeating and rewriting the rules of the institution of Endgame, like Shari, and making deals with both the government and the rebels, plus killing people that threaten your family, like Elin, are examples of how aetonormativity’s rhetoric about the need to protect the young can turn adolescent mothers into heroes (and killers).

However, the different series provide different options for how the mothers should act in relation to their dystopian societies. The fates of Lyda and Shari communicate an ideology about how **the adolescent mother has to rebel against the adult-led dystopian society to protect her child from harm and create a better society for her child.** For these characters, motherhood is a strong incentive for rebellion. Both characters’ rebellions are examples of *righteous rebellions*, since they 1) aim to overthrow power-abusing adults and adult institutions, and 2) lead to a major change in the status quo (Alkestrand, “Righteous” 109, 114). Elin’s aim to change her dystopian society by becoming a politician communicates a different ideology, one about how **the adolescent mother needs to gain political power within the current political system to protect her child from harm and create a better society for her child.** This is the main difference between the *Pure* trilogy and the *Endgame* trilogy’s ideological approach, on the one hand, and that of the *Blood Rain* series on the other. The former two promote youth rebellions as the only way to make society less dystopian, whereas the latter highlights the potential of working from within the system to change the politics of a country.

Nevertheless, the depiction of the older Elin, who has given up her belief in creating a more ecologically and socially sustainable world, challenges the ideology of the former books by depicting an

ideology about how **politicians are unable to deal with political and environmental challenges**. Although Elin's strategy to gain power by becoming a politician is successful in terms of her access to power in her dystopian world, the *Blood Rain* series does not present it as a solution to the overall problems of her world. The two ideologies are contrasted and associated with how the young Elin believes in the former and the older Elin distances herself from her youthful hopes by subscribing to the latter. Also, the narrative foregrounds the struggle of combining a political career with motherhood, which illustrates how political power does not equal a successful relationship with your child.

The depictions of Lyda and Shari communicate an ideology that it is **amoral and unacceptable to turn an innocent child into a pawn in a political conflict**. While Lyda's unborn child is the heir of the new Dome leader, Partridge, and therefore at risk of capture once it is born, Shari's Alice is literally a key in Endgame, which places her in danger of being killed by the other Players and the Makers. Lyda's child risks being the victim of child abuse, whereas Alice is already a victim of vicious adults.

Similarly, the *Blood Rain* series incorporates the ideology that **adult power abuse of children is amoral and unacceptable**, when Elin's father begs the military to not use violence on children and adolescents. The military's disregard for the need to protect the young and the abuse they commit against Hallgerd when she is kept away from her mother during their imprisonment both clash with the ideology of needing to protect children from the dystopian society. The two ideologies about power abuse critique how adults abuse the power that they have over children, but all the series argue for the need to protect children in a way that ultimately supports the unequal distribution of power. Thus, the three series' age-related power ideologies centre on the need to protect children without abusing the power privileges connected to motherhood.

Furthermore, the depictions of Lyda and Elin underline an ideology about how **single motherhood puts extra pressure on the adolescent mother to protect her child from harm in a dystopian society**.

This is a particularly pressing concern for Lyda, who lives in a society that regards adolescent, unmarried mothers as an abomination. The Dome society's dystopian version of aetonnormativity, where girls are "protected" from knowledge about reproduction, does not stop it from punishing Lyda for not having had access to that knowledge. The adults' gender-based censoring of information about sex is thus critiqued through the *Pure* trilogy's depiction of the treatment of Lyda.

Finally, the depictions of both Shari and Elin communicate an ideology about how **it can be necessary to use lethal force to prevent your child from being killed in a dystopian world**. Shari's family and people sacrifice themselves to save Alice from the other Players when they are attacked, and Elin kills the two gang leaders when her family—including her sleeping daughter—is physically attacked. The two mothers' actions can be tied to them being fiercely loving mothers who are prepared to do anything for their child. Whereas Shari does not regret encouraging her family and people to kill the other Players and their helpers during the attack, Elin considers her status as an adolescent killer as a reason why she and Hallgerd cannot establish the type of loving relationship that she longs for. Thus, in the *Blood Rain* series, the ideology about the need for lethal violence to defend your child is contrasted with the ideology that **being a killer makes you unfit to be a mother**. While the media strongly supports the former ideology, Elin questions the righteousness of her own actions. These two conflicting ideologies are not resolved within the narrative. Instead, readers are prompted to take a stand on Elin's killings. Contrarily, Shari's relatives believe that being a mother makes her unfit to become a killer. Both these standpoints underscore how the two roles are viewed as contradictory and therefore impossible to combine.

*

To sum up, all three series support a mothering ideal that includes protecting your child, whatever it takes. They highlight the more productive aspect of aetonnormativity, which consists of a strong imperative to protect children from harm and to consider how they

may need specific types of age-appropriate support and protection. Simultaneously, they take a clear stand against adults who abuse the unequal distribution of power according to age, and who use that power advantage to manipulate others' behaviour, most specifically the adolescent mothers themselves. Whereas Lyda and Shari are depicted as mighty adolescents who rebel against the dystopian regimes, Elin gains power within the system in her role as a politician, but she ultimately fails to combat the issues connected to creating a socially and ecologically sustainable world. In all three series, aetonormativity is highlighted both as a productive force that can ensure the protection of children's specific needs and as something that can easily become abusive when adolescent mothers and their children are used for political means. Thus, they all nuance Nikolajeva's conception of aetonormativity as a negative force (cf. "Theory" 16). Adult power is a privilege that can be used to genuinely protect children and adolescents *and* to oppress the young.

Conclusion

The constant flux between empowerment in the role of a young mother and the incentive that it provides to resist an oppressive dystopian society, on the one hand, and being controlled, abused and hurt by the dystopian society in the role of an adolescent mother, on the other hand, illustrates how the motif of the adolescent mother complicates the binary of children and adolescents versus adults. The adolescent mother occupies a liminal position as both the mother of a child and as someone's child, while being oppressed by a dystopian and aetonormative society. The ways that the adolescent mother motif is used in my corpus of Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian literature illustrates how neither the conception of the controlled child/adolescent, based on Nikolajeva's theory of aetonormativity, nor the notion of the mighty child, based on Beauvais book *The Mighty Child* (2015), captures age-related power hierarchies linked to the motif of the adolescent mother in YA dystopian literature.

Instead of taking sides and proclaiming that young characters in children's and/or YA fiction are either less powerful or more mighty than the adult characters, I argue that an intersectional approach to each text's own matrix of domination is necessary. Highlighting intersections between different power categories and clarifying how they affect an adolescent mother makes it possible to diversify and problematise who has access to power in each dystopian society.

All three examples show that the young are indeed vulnerable to adult power abuse, but they also underline that the young mothers have an excellent reason to stand up against oppression: the hope of a better future for their children. They are all prepared to do whatever it takes to protect their child, including using lethal force. This hope for a new beginning is what makes them rebel or work for a change from within the political system.

A possible explanation for the different approaches to political change in the two American series, on the one hand, and the Swedish series, on the other, is that the relationship between the individual and the state is constructed differently in the two countries. For example, in Sweden, healthcare and education are free and the provision of social security for citizens is a political priority. In the US, healthcare and education are expensive, thereby becoming a privilege that is tied to income and social class in a more explicit sense than in Sweden. Therefore, the perceived relationship between the state and the citizen in Sweden can be more justifiably described as a collaboration than in some other countries. This can be seen in how the Swedish authorities have primarily used recommendations on social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic (2020–) instead of lockdowns and punishments, for instance. My intention here is not to take sides, but rather to highlight how Elin working *within* the political system instead of *against* it may potentially be a consequence of how the state and its relationship to the individual is conceptualised differently in Sweden than in the US.¹⁰⁶

106. For an American YA dystopian text that explores the possibilities of working for political change within the system, but where the adolescents eventually realise that the system is so flawed that the only available option for actual change is

Addressing the motif of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother is complex in a classroom context. The two chapters on the different motifs have delved into the fictional worlds in the textual examples and summarised the ideologies communicated by the different books. However, the question of how to work with these books in the classroom to highlight their ideologies and thus support the realisation of the educational potential they hold, remains unanswered. In the following chapter, I will use previous research on educational aspects of YA dystopian literature, as well as *critical literacy*, Martha C. Nussbaum's concept of *narrative imagination* and Judith A. Langer's concept of *envisionment building* as inspiration for examples of hands-on learning activities tied to my six case studies of adolescent killers and adolescent mothers.

to rebel, see the final book in Alexandra Bracken's *The Darkest Minds* series (2012–2018), *The Darkest Legacy* (2018). In future research, a comparison between how this series and the *Blood Rain* series conceives the relationship between the adolescent protagonists and the dystopian state would be a valuable addition to the discussion of differences between American and Swedish YA dystopian literature.

ADOLESCENT KILLERS AND MOTHERS IN THE CURRICULUM: CLASSROOM EXPLORATION OF ADULT OPPRESSION OF THE YOUNG USING YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

In the previous two chapters, I analysed six YA dystopian texts in detail, focusing on the portrayal of adolescent killers and adolescent mothers and how these motifs highlight age-related power structures via different ideologies. Both motifs communicate controversial questions about young people's ways of living, such as: "Can it ever be considered as righteous for a young person to take someone else's life?" and "To what extent and through which means can an adolescent mother protect her child from harm?". These questions become even more pressing when the books are read and discussed within an educational context, in which teachers have to adapt to the demands of the national curriculum and the level of the students. If the teacher also wants to conduct teaching that helps students develop their understanding of democratic values and human rights, which are central to becoming a critically aware member of society, this challenge is even greater.

The text analyses conducted this far have underlined how YA dystopian literature uses the motifs of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother to interrogate how the power category of age is often used to legitimise restrictions on children and adolescents' agency and their ability to make life decisions in non-fictional societies. This interrogation uses hyperbole to showcase how society's aetnonormative power structures allow real and fictional adults to use and abuse the power that adulthood bestows upon them, often without their actions being viewed as power abuse by other adults. Since YA

dystopian literature exaggerates these power structures, it can help students—and their teachers—understand how age-normativity functions and make them better prepared to both identify and protest against adult power abuse. Hence, a teaching plan that focuses on one or both of these motifs in YA dystopian literature can provide the students with opportunities to navigate their society in a more active and aware way. Using this approach, the genre's potential for education about age-related power structures can be activated in the classroom.

In this chapter, I redirect the focus of my investigation from the texts themselves and the ideologies of oppression of the young that they depict, to how the texts can be used in a classroom setting. Thus, instead of exploring a text's educational potential via its age-related power ideologies, I suggest ways of supporting the actualisation of this potential in the classroom.

The aim of this chapter is 1) to present previous research about teaching YA dystopian literature, 2) to apply a selection of educational tools and theories to the genre, and 3) to use these theories and previous research to construct teaching plans for teachers working with the six YA dystopian texts from my case studies, activating their educational potential vis-à-vis age-related and other power structures. The works of YA dystopian literature are: American author Christina Henry's *The Girl in Red* (2019), Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's *Shatter Me* series (2011–2019), American author Neal Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy (2016–2019), American author Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014), American authors James Frey and Nils Johnson-Shelton's *Endgame* trilogy (2014–2016) and Swedish author Mats Wahl's *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] series (2014–2017). I have used three guiding principles for the teaching plans: 1) promoting knowledge about the genre of YA dystopian literature, 2) addressing ethical issues relevant to different power categories, focusing on the power category of age, and 3) supporting the students' ability to analyse literary fiction, emphasising power-related perspectives. Combined, these aspects can help realise the educational potential of these YA dystopian texts in a classroom setting.

My suggested teaching plans in this chapter strive to encompass aspects of literary fiction and of societal concepts. This can be achieved by contrasting general discussions about non-fictional societies with the text and by telling the students to return to the text and find concrete examples of the aspect they want to highlight.

Background and Chapter Structure

All teachers have their own toolbox for teaching, containing methods, theories and approaches that they use to optimise their teaching plans and adapt them to the students' previous knowledge, abilities and learning challenges. Usually, this toolbox is a result of both theoretical insights and hands-on experience in the classroom. In my case, this toolbox has developed over the course of my teaching career. Initially, I did my teacher training in Swedish (which combines knowledge of literary fiction and the Swedish language) and history for secondary school and upper secondary school. I then taught Swedish and English at an elementary school for a semester. Since then, I have taught literature to university students, specialising in children's and YA literature. My students are from Sweden and abroad, and I have continually taught trainee teachers who will work in Swedish elementary schools. Gradually, some tools in my teaching toolbox have been replaced by new ones, because some tools are better suited than others to my personal teaching style, my current student body and the Swedish context.

My overall approach to learning is sociocultural. The concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD)—coined by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky—has been a guiding principle throughout my teaching career. The ZPD denotes the next stage of development for a learner. This zone cannot be reached if the learner works on their own, but with the social support of peers and/or a teacher, known as *scaffolding*¹⁰⁷, they are able to progress in their learning and reach this

107. Scaffolding consists of different types of support for the students' learning

new and more advanced step (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 56; Elmgren and Henriksson 37–39). The ZPD has been fundamental to my teaching practice, as I am convinced that a sociocultural perspective on learning helps teachers understand the importance of the interaction between the individual student, the teacher and the other students in an individual’s learning process. From my perspective, a vital aspect of helping students reach the ZPD is providing them with continuous and constructive feedback throughout the teaching process.¹⁰⁸

In this chapter, I apply my teaching toolbox, which includes a sociocultural perspective on learning, to the YA dystopian literature in this study. I combine it with insights from the text analyses I conducted in the previous chapters to develop the suggested teaching plans. These plans can be used in their entirety, but it is also possible to pick one or two tasks. Teachers can modify these teaching plans, using tools in their own toolbox, and taking their students’ needs and previous experiences into consideration. This is especially important if any of the students have traumatic experiences of a specific type of oppression, which could be triggered by the suggested teaching plans. I want to emphasise that it is possible to use the same or similar tasks for other YA dystopian works, and that some of the more general teaching ideas can also be used when working with other types of literary fiction.

The chapter begins with an overview of previous education research about YA dystopian literature. The aim of this section is to identify previously used focus areas and methods. Additionally, writing this overview has helped me expand my teaching toolbox by providing inspiration for the suggested plans.

This overview is followed by a clarification of my theoretical framework for the teaching plans, which includes *critical literacy*, Martha C. Nussbaum’s concept of *narrative imagination* and Judith A. Langer’s five stances of *envisionment building*. While both Nussbaum

development. See Laurillard 127–129 for various types of scaffolding.

108. Cf. David Nicol’s discussion of the crucial importance of teacher feedback in the students’ learning development (109).

and Langer are well-known theorists in the field of literary education, their theories have not—to the best of my knowledge—been applied to teaching YA dystopian literature before.¹⁰⁹ Both Nussbaum and Langer emphasise the importance of literary fiction in the process of supporting student development towards becoming an active, democratic citizen, because literary fiction can help readers learn about ethics and society. Consequently, they highlight the benefits of using literature to discuss social justice issues. Langer is more concrete in how to support and scaffold the imagination of the students than Nussbaum is in her reasoning about the narrative imagination. Therefore, combining the two is beneficial when designing classroom approaches. There is a clear connection between these two theorists and critical literacy's aim of supporting students as they develop their ability to critically examine ideologies and power-relationships in texts and in non-fictional societies.

The theory section is followed by six practical examples of how to work with the selected dystopian literature in the classroom, in which I incorporate strategies identified by my theorists. The first three designs focus on the adolescent killer motif, and the last three on the adolescent mother motif. I summarise the age-related ideologies that were identified in the previous chapters in two tables, to remind readers of these. These ideologies function as stepping-stones for my suggested teaching plans, which aim to support students in actualising the educational potential of the novels regarding oppression, especially age-related oppression.

109. In an article about Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010), Anders Öhman devotes a lot of effort to explaining why Langer's concept of environment building is incorrect, or at least needs some adjustment, because he does not believe it is possible to evaluate and interpret a work of literary fiction at a profound level before a reader has experienced the whole "utterance", in this case the whole novel. Öhman thus relates Langer to a work of YA dystopian literature, but does so in a negative sense, arguing that his approach to the text, which focuses on plot summaries for example, is more relevant than Langer's (74, 77–78). Surprisingly, he only addresses the first novel in the trilogy, despite his overall argument relating to the importance of experiencing the whole plot. In my suggested teaching plans, I will showcase how Langer's approach can be fruitful when working with YA dystopian literature in the classroom.

The chapter ends with concluding remarks about the teaching plans.

Young Adult Dystopian Literature in Education: An Overview of Previous Research

An overarching trend in previous research on didacticism and educational approaches to YA dystopian literature is the publication of articles. Consequently, scholars have limited space to develop their teaching plans and their theoretical foundation. Therefore—as this overview of previous research will show—many of the contributions can only skim over the potential applications of a specific work of YA dystopian literature in a classroom context. They tend to focus on the theoretical foundations, or the dystopia itself, or the practical classroom applications. Using this insight, I argue that it is important to move beyond these brief studies and their important groundwork, and to start conducting more thorough studies of the educational potential and application of YA dystopian literature in the classroom. The monograph format is preferable for this, as it allows detailed attention to be paid to all three above-mentioned aspects. My study attempts to combine all three focus areas and it builds on previous research, providing both more depth and more breadth.

In this section, I present an overview of the research conducted this far. One aim has been to find inspiration for my suggested teaching plans which can be combined with my theoretical framework. The overview should also provide readers with a sense of what has been done so far and potential areas of development, such as the preference for writing articles instead of monographs.

The overview is divided into three parts: studies that focus on the didacticism and/or educational aspects of the YA dystopian texts themselves; studies that suggest teaching plans for different dystopian works; and studies that focus specifically on how teachers can use Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010) in the classroom.

DIDACTICISM AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Several scholars have devoted their research to the role of didacticism in YA dystopian literature or touched upon educational aspects of the texts in other ways. This overview presents various focuses for this research.

Dystopias for Different Age Groups

One important area of research is the difference between dystopian literature for young adults and that for an adult audience. Kay Sambell highlights two main differences:

Whereas the ‘adult’ dystopia’s didactic impact relies on the absolute, unswerving nature of its dire warning, the expression of moral meaning in the children’s dystopia is often characterized by degrees of hesitation, oscillation, and ambiguity. In the adult dystopian vision, morally appealing heroes are unequivocally shown to fail. [...] By presenting child protagonists as agents of moral transformation within the text, or at least by hesitating to depict the extinction of such hope in the narrative resolution to their stories, children’s authors risk fracturing or undermining the imaginative and ideological coherence of their admonitory fictional worlds. (164)

Dystopias for children and adolescents, on the one hand, and dystopias for adults, on the other, thus differ in two ways, according to Sambell: the extent to which the dystopia functions as a warning and the role of the heroes in the narrative.

Sambell extends this argument by identifying differences between the endings; dystopian literature for young readers generally has a more ambiguous ending, which suggests that things may work out for the young character, compared to the pitch-black endings in adult dystopian literature (172). This ambiguity invites young readers to

critically reflect on the ending, which Sambell views as a new approach to didacticism, one that aims to support active reflection instead of a more traditional type of didacticism, which uses explicit lessons in its communication with readers (173). Sambell suggests that there are two different functions or purposes in dystopian futuristic fiction for young readers: to warn the young about how trends in current society will have disastrous consequences, and “to counsel hope and present the case for urgent social change” (163). To summarise, this type of fiction aims to underline the severity of the threats, but also to give young readers hope that it is possible to change the world for the better.

In a similar vein, Thomas J. Morrissey argues that works of YA dystopian literature can be viewed as parables for contemporary society, since they are “imaginative and encouraging explorations that offer ethical pathways to better futures than current behavioral paradigms are likely to produce” (189). According to Morrissey, the purpose of YA dystopian literature can be described as “showing us the worst so that we can learn to build the better” (194), which has the inherently educational purpose of showing readers what to avoid. It also incorporates hope in the potential to create a new and better world, corresponding to Sambell’s description of the characteristics of dystopian literature for young readers.

The Didacticism of Young Adult Dystopian Literature

A research area that is closely related to the defining characteristics of dystopian literature for a young audience, which both Sambell and Morrissey touch upon, is that of the didacticism present in this kind of fiction. According to Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz, YA dystopian literature balances between teaching readers about problems in the contemporary world and creating opportunities to escape reality by reading about a fictional world (5). They describe the didacticism of the genre as “blatant” and argue that YA dystopian literature gives its readers clear answers and moral messages (Ibid.). They thus have a very different perception of this didac-

ticism to Sambell. Whereas Sambell views it as an opportunity for young readers to critically reflect on the ending, for example, Basu et al. argue that the didacticism is overt and does not invite multiple interpretations. One explanation for their differing standpoints could be that they have investigated different corpuses, which utilise different types of didacticism.

The topic of political activism is also addressed by Basu, Broad and Hintz. They argue that although YA dystopian literature portrays adolescents as “budding political activists”, they simultaneously support the disruption of the status quo, which they suggest has a special appeal for adolescents (Ibid.). Here, the scholars highlight the interplay between working for a regime as a politician or a political symbol and challenging that regime’s aims. This interplay is present in Wahl’s protagonist Elin Holme, for example, who is analysed in the chapter about adolescent mothers. On the one hand, young characters often strive to work within the field of politics, but on the other, they are repeatedly confronted with the importance of challenging the status quo through political rebellion.

Another study that addresses the topic of didacticism is Sara Buggy’s doctoral thesis. Buggy is using a Foucauldian approach to explore the disciplining of the body in YA dystopian literature. Throughout her study, she repeatedly touches on the educational aspects of this type of literature. For example, she argues that Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* series (2005–2007)—a series included in my corpus—illuminates issues in the contemporary world through a clear critique of the society in which protagonist Tally Youngblood lives, and that Veronica Roth’s description of her protagonist Tris Prior’s decision to have sex for the first time in the *Divergent* trilogy (2011–2013) is didactic in its clarification of how it should be considered carefully (Buggy 110–111, 196). Buggy suggests that “YA dystopia authors often lack faith in their readers, deeming it necessary to teach them explicit lessons”, while adult science fiction also includes a didactic aspect, but does so implicitly rather than explicitly (289). Her view is thus in line with Basu, Broad and Hintz’s, but differs from Sambell’s. Apparently, there is no consensus on this topic in previous research.

*The Potential of Young Adult Dystopian Literature
to Problematisé Different Issues in Real Life*

Apart from the above considerations of the genre's overall didacticism, several studies focus on the genre's ambition and/or potential to problematise a specific issue in the real world. For example, in her Canadian study, Elizabeth Marshall argues that YA dystopian literature with a focus on schooling, for example Joelle Charbonneau's *The Testing* (2013), can highlight "how classrooms are spaces of surveillance, conformity, official knowledge, and discipline" (191) for university students. In her teaching approach, Marshall's focus includes providing genre knowledge about dystopian literature and letting students decide whether or not they agree with YA dystopian authors' explanations about why the genre is so popular with adolescents by choosing a corner of the room depending on their level of agreement (192).¹¹⁰ She uses discussion questions such as "What is the school's relation to the dystopian society?" (Marshall 197). In this way, she underlines YA dystopian literature's potential for interrogating power aspects of schooling in non-fictional societies.

Similarly, Jonathan Alexander and Rebecca Black focus on the motif of educational testing in YA dystopian literature. They explore "how testing and its repercussions are represented in these novels, and what such might say about the contemporary cultural value placed on testing" (Alexander and Black 209). Thus, Alexander and Black relate depictions of education to a real-life context.

Continuing this theme, Nicole Du Plessis investigates the role of literacy in *The Hunger Games* trilogy. She argues that literacy is taken for granted in the series, that it is not threatened or restricted as it is in Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986), for example, in which women are forbidden to write and read. Still, the book created by Katniss and Peeta after the rebellion against the oppressive regimes becomes

110. When using exercises in which students must state an opinion, my experience is that thorough follow-up discussion is crucial. Otherwise, there is a risk that the exercise triggers conflict between the students. Since these exercises can potentially touch on sensitive topics, the students may need support to process the exercise.

a powerful tool for remembering the Tributes and the sacrifices made to create a better, more just and democratic world. It also becomes a survival tool, because it helps both Katniss and Peeta to deal with the trauma they have experienced (Du Plessis 102, 107, 113).

Some studies highlight how YA dystopian literature can be used as a tool to investigate sustainability issues. Åsa Nilsson Skåve's analysis of ecocritical aspects in Swedish author Stefan Casta's *Den gröna cirkeln* [The Green Circle] (2011) and *Under tiden* [Below the Time] (2012) demonstrates how this literary genre can be used to highlight environmental issues. Nilsson Skåve argues that "[t]he optimistic and didactic ambition in this kind of dystopian stories is often aimed at creating an engagement for environmental issues and a sustainable future among young people" ("När" 1). Thus, she underlines how a call for direct action is embedded in the genre. In this sense, she touches on political activism as a potential result of the reading act, which is reminiscent of Basu et al.'s approach.

In a similar vein, I explore sustainability issues and power abuse in an article on the Swedish translation of Austrian author Ursula Poznanski's *Die Eleria Trilogie* [the Eleria trilogy] (originally published in German 2012–2014; not translated into English), relating these focus areas to YA dystopian literature's educational potential. I argue that this trilogy—as well as YA dystopian literature in general—offers many opportunities for highlighting three types of sustainability in Swedish elementary and secondary schools: ecological, economic and social sustainability (Alkestrand, "Bristande" 165–167). The environment and sustainability are topics that all teachers in Sweden must cover, regardless of which subject they teach.

Within the framework of social sustainability, I explore multiculturalism and the power relationships between adolescents and adults in the *Eleria* trilogy, and how the depiction of these issues can help highlight the fundamental values in the Swedish curriculum in the classroom (Alkestrand, "Bristande" 165–167). I thus investigate certain aspects of the genre's educational potential that I also explore in this monograph. I suggest comparing the protagonist Eleria's non-violent rebellion against an oppressive dystopian regime with Swedish

environment activist Greta Thunberg's school strike for the climate in a classroom setting, to support reflection on how young people can work for a better world through political activism (Alkestrand, "Bristande" 183).

Social sustainability, specifically the relationship between the individual and the collective in Roth's *Divergent* trilogy and its film adaptations—another YA dystopian text included in my text corpus—is explored in relationship to classroom practices by Maria Nilson and Linda Piltz. They show how the movie version of the character called Tris achieves much more on her own, in terms of saving the world, than the version of the character found in the novels. This illustrates the different relationships between the individual and the collective in the two media formats (Nilson and Piltz 152–153). The authors suggest approaching the trilogy through the lens of critical literacy. The overarching aim of this approach is to identify and interrogate ideologies and power relationships in non-fictional societies through textual analysis that focuses on whose opinions are voiced in literary fiction, for instance (Nilson and Piltz 156–157). I will return to critical literacy in the next section of this chapter.

The importance of food in relationship to sustainability issues, and how this can be addressed in the classroom using children's and YA literature, is explored in an article by Corina Löwe. Löwe analyses two Swedish YA dystopian series: Sofia Nordin's *En sekund i taget* [One Second at a Time] series (2013–2017) and Mats Söderlund's *Ättlingarna* [The Descendants] trilogy (2018–2020). Both of these are included in my corpus of primary texts. While Nordin's novels depict how the few adolescents who survived a fever that killed all the adults in an alternate Sweden must learn to grow their own food and to milk cows, Söderlund's protagonists mostly eat vegetarian food, reminiscent of the food habits in Sweden today, but also eat crickets (Löwe 71, 73–74). Löwe's article primarily discusses the theme of food in her corpus, but she includes some suggested teaching ideas, such as exploring how the food distribution in one country is tied to other countries' food production using a glocal perspective, which combines the local and the global per-

spective (77). In this way, ecological sustainability can be addressed.

Water—another essential resource and thereby crucial for ecological sustainability—is highlighted in Anna Salomonsson’s analysis of the first novel, *Hotet* [The Threat] (2018), in Söderlund’s YA dystopian trilogy. Salomonsson focuses on the novel’s conflicts surrounding the distribution of water, as well as metaphorical interpretations of how Hongkong is flooded by a tsunami, for example. Salomonsson interprets this as a version of the Biblical flood. The article illustrates how Söderlund’s novel can help students to consider water as a resource from a glocal perspective, underlining the interconnectedness between local and global water access. It also highlights how the series explores the interdependence of nature and culture (Salomonsson 188–189, 193, 197–198).

Whereas Nilsson Skåve, Nilson and Piltz, Löwe, Salomonsson and I approach educational aspects of YA dystopian literature from the perspective of the Swedish school curriculum in the above-mentioned studies, Stefanie Van Melckebeke has investigated YA dystopian literature from a Norwegian perspective. In her master’s thesis, she analyses how Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* (2005) can support the educational aims established by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training for the subject of English, as well as overarching goals with which all subjects must comply. Van Melckebeke argues that YA dystopian literature’s status as a “genre [that] encourages its readers to view society with a critical eye” makes it an appropriate tool for enabling “young people to become independent and critical members of society” (9). The sense of hope that is included in YA dystopian literature is what “gives the genre an outspoken didactic quality”, since it establishes a connection between the actions that young characters are capable of within the dystopian worlds and readers’ belief in their potential to change society, according to Van Melckebeke (20). Here, she touches on the ability of YA dystopian literature to incite political activism in young readers. The study’s conclusions are based on previous research and on her own reading of the *Uglies* series. She has not done any empirical research on actual young readers’ opinions about YA dystopian literature.

The benefits that Van Melckebeke identifies regarding the use of YA dystopian literature in Norwegian schools are enhanced reading skills, support for young readers' understanding of themselves and highlighting important values found in contemporary society (28–29). In her text analysis, she focuses on conformity, environmental and technological development and societal and political criticism, such as gender equality. She concludes by arguing that “YA dystopian fiction not only has the ability to teach young people about society, but can also instill a feeling of hope within these readers that their generation can do better in the future”, which in turn makes “the genre both appealing and educational for adolescent readers” (Van Melckebeke 79). This quotation explicitly addresses the topic of political activism.

Another study that focuses on political activism and political action is Lindsay Morton and Lynnette Lounsbury's article. Their aim is to investigate if “there [is] any evidence to suggest YA dystopian texts have the potential to empower a new generation of young adults to move from political inertia to action” (Morton and Lounsbury 53–54). They base their Australian study on research on narrative empathy and a close reading of Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy, Roth's *Divergent* trilogy and James Dashner's *Maze Runner* series (2009–2016). All these series are included in my corpus. Morton and Lounsbury argue that since these series establish narrative empathy for the young protagonists, they may inspire adolescents who are already politically engaged, but there is not enough evidence to state that the series can make people who are disinterested become politically active (Ibid.). The political action of the characters can even function as a substitute for independent action, thus ironically working to repress political action (Morton and Lounsbury 65). This challenges the correlation between a character who takes political action and a young reader doing the same thing. An empirical study that investigates if and how this phenomenon affects adolescent readers would be a welcome addition to the research field, because there are few studies that investigate actual reader responses to specific YA dystopian works.

Political action and activism also form the focus of Sean P. Con-

nors' American article. He argues that YA dystopian literature as a genre "focuses on societies in which rogue governments and (increasingly) corporations use surveillance to manipulate and control teenagers" (Connors 2). "[T]hrough challenging students to consider how characters experience surveillance in YA dystopian fiction, educators can create opportunities for them to reflect on how they experience the gaze in their own lives, and how they are capable of resisting, should they choose so, its unprincipled or unethical use" (Ibid.). Connors includes suggested questions that teachers can use when discussing surveillance and the gaze in YA dystopian literature in his article (see p. 7). He focuses on the potential of YA dystopian texts in an educational context and highlights surveillance as a topic that can help young readers take political action.

Similarly, in her American study, Melissa Ames analyses "the potential educational uses of [...] young adult dystopias and argues that reading these texts may be a small step in the direction of engaging students in social justice issues and, perhaps, sparking more overt political action" (3). She suggests that the recent popularity of YA dystopian literature can be explained by the condition of the world post-9/11 and the novels' connections to the societies created by this event (Ames 4). Both Connors and Ames thus focus on the potential of YA dystopian literature to incite political action.

*

To summarise, the studies presented in this section all interrogate YA dystopian literature in relationship to its ambition and/or ability to teach its readers something about the real world. The focus is on the texts themselves and the characteristics of the texts that allow them to function as vehicles for learning. All the contributions—apart from von Melckebeke's master's thesis—are articles, resulting in varied but brief contributions to the research field. The next section highlights studies that approach this topic in a more practical manner, suggesting methods and/or approaches to teaching specific YA dystopian texts in a classroom setting.

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGNS FOR TEACHING YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Previous research presents a wide array of possible teaching plans. In this section, I will summarise these suggestions and identify which teaching methods and theories have been applied in research on the topic to date.

Young Adult Dystopian Literature as a Genre

Some previous research approaches YA dystopian literature as a genre with specific characteristics that can be analysed using narratological tools, for instance. In an introduction to YA dystopian literature for Swedish teachers, Maria Nilson suggests focusing educational efforts on identifying recurring themes and patterns in YA dystopian texts. This approach allows the identification of conflicting ideologies in this type of book. Nilson argues that a critical reading strategy includes highlighting contradictions and exploring gaps in the narrative, by asking questions about parts of the storyworld that are not addressed within the narrative (8). The text is followed by an appendix with a suggested lesson plan, written by Marie Wejrums and Zara Hedelin, in which the students 1) write down possible messages in the novel, 2) discuss in groups which messages they think seem most accurate, 3) present their findings in front of the class, and 4) discuss with the rest of the class how the search for messages helped them understand the text at a deeper level (Appendix). Thus, this text provides a practical teaching plan that combines tasks for individuals and groups.

Another study that focuses on genre characteristics of YA dystopian literature is Devin Ryan's presentation of and critical reflections on the design of a course called "YA Dystopian Literature: A Survey of Modern Book Series", taught at Western Michigan University in 2015. The article includes several suggested methods for teaching YA dystopian literature. Ryan states that Lois Lowry's YA dystopian novel *The Giver* (1993) is "one of the most commonly taught pieces of

literature at the middle school level” (4). It is also one of the texts in my corpus. Ryan thereby identifies the need to provide teachers with knowledge of this genre. He argues that it is important for students to gain knowledge about the genre of YA dystopian literature, for example its history and themes, before they start analysing example texts by looking for genre elements (Ryan 15). Ryan suggests combining brief quizzes with reading responses that the students write during the reading of the book, as well as comparison essays in which a book version is compared to the film adaptation, just to mention a few of his proposed teaching methods (27–28; for all the details of the course design, see Appendix). Ryan’s text thereby provides inspiration for tasks that can be used for teaching YA dystopian literature.

Joseph W. Campbell’s monograph also highlights how genre aspects and definitions can be taught in relationship to YA dystopian literature.¹¹¹ He argues that, for many American students, the best way to start working with YA dystopian literature and science fiction is to address the work’s allegorical aspects (Campbell 125), which is how the dystopias portray aspects and events that can be read as parallels with non-fictional societies. He discusses an undergraduate course about what he regards as the main differences between science fiction and dystopian literature (Campbell 143). According to Campbell, science fiction “aims to show the encounter with the other”, whereas dystopian literature “show[s] how power is maintained through othering” (147). By focusing on genre characteristics, genre history and allegorical interpretations, Campbell thus approaches YA dystopian literature from a genre-specific perspective.

Immersive Play Pleasure

A distinctly different approach to teaching YA dystopian literature is presented in an article by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm and Michael W. Smith.

111. Campbell includes an overview of some educational approaches to YA dystopian literature and science fiction in his book. This overview has been helpful in my own search for research on YA dystopian literature and education. See Campbell, pp. 119–149.

They underscore the importance of *immersive play pleasure* for development towards the zone of proximal development (ZPD), when using YA dystopian literature in schools (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 53). In their empirical classroom study of American middle school students, Wilhelm and Smith have identified the pleasure of play as central to the students’ approach to YA dystopian literature such as Dashner’s *Maze Runner* series.¹¹² They suggest working with drama and role playing strategies to process YA dystopian literature, because this kind of exercise can let the students assume the roles of different characters and work through the characters’ dilemmas (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 57).

One version of the role play is to have the students play the role of “good angel” and “bad angel” to show the range of actions characters could take when faced with various dilemmas (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 60). In another publication—a book that predominately voices young readers’ own interpretations of literary fiction—the authors suggest that “students could watch and/or make their movies or trailers of scenes from dystopian movies. They could create multimodal compositions of their own dystopias. They could do drama work where they interview characters from various dystopias or create a dystopia talk show or museum” (Wilhelm and Smith, *Reading* 164). Movie-making, character interviews, dystopian talk shows and museums can thus be added to previously identified teaching approaches to YA dystopian literature.

Political Activism and Awareness via Young Adult Dystopian Literature

The topic of political activism is addressed by Wilhelm and Smith. They argue that “[d]ystopia is particularly powerful in developing a social conscience and an agentive activist identity as a person who

112. For examples of Wilhelm’s daughter’s own statements on why reading YA dystopian literature is relevant for her, see Wilhelm and Smith’s book *Reading Unbound: Why Kids Need to Read What They Want and Why We Should Let Them* (2014), pp. 152–165.

is caring and will take risks to improve the lot of others and of the world” (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 57). In addition, they emphasise the importance of asking open questions about the literary works and allowing students to formulate their own open questions (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 58). Most significantly, the article’s authors found that their “participants took pleasure from using their reading to help them become the kind of people they wanted to become” (Wilhelm and Smith, “The Power” 59). They provide empirical evidence for my overall theoretical principle about how YA dystopian literature can help students learn about the world they live in and their place in it. Their research also supports the assumption that YA dystopian literature can encourage political action, which is addressed in several studies included in this overview.

Insights about Consumerist Society

In an article on how to use *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley and *Feed* (2002) by M. T. Anderson in the American classroom, Rachel Wilkinson, who teaches both at high school and university levels, argues that dystopian literature “exaggerates our modern context so that we can challenge it” (22). Thus, Wilkinson also underscores the role of hyperbole in YA dystopian literature. She illustrates how the two novels interrogate advertising and industry, the instant gratification that is expected from “mindless consumption”, reliance on technology and the degeneration of language (Ibid.). Wilkinson utilises “discussion starters” about consumerist society before the class reads the texts. For example: “Do you own any clothes, electronics, etc. that you rarely or never use? Why?” (25). She combines the use of these YA dystopian works with television shows such as *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, for example, to highlight aspects of consumerist society when working with her students (Wilkinson 26). Thus, Wilkinson focuses on consumerist society, while suggesting media and teaching approaches that can be beneficial when teaching YA dystopian literature from other perspectives.

*Moral and Ethical Questions in
Young Adult Dystopian Literature*

More suggested teaching methods can be found in Jaqueline Bach, Emily Peters and Joshua Bourgeois' article about using Neal Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy in the classroom with American tenth graders, which I touched on in my chapter about adolescent killers. For example, they mention rewriting the lyrics to John Lennon's *Imagine* (1971) so that it fits the society in the trilogy, where mortality has been defeated, as well as "here and now problems", where students discuss which aspects of the fictional world would be beneficial in our world and vice versa (Bach et al., "Teaching" 42). They also underline the benefits of asking "what-if questions" about the following themes: equality and diversity, death, and the value of life (Bach et al., "Teaching" 45).

In a different article, Bach explores Shusterman's *Unwind* series, together with Melanie Hundley and Emily Tarver. They argue that the first novel, *Unwind* (2007), focuses on moral and ethical questions tied to the value of life and war, in a world where adolescents can be "unwound", which means they are split into different body parts and sold off, if their parents do not want them anymore (Bach et al., "Unwinding" 128). They suggest several different teaching approaches: letting the students compare the war in the series to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, using a hand-out where the students fill in three claims they want to make based on the books and the textual evidence that supports their claims, a multi-genre written paper in which students can use different genres and media to explore an ethical question of their own choosing, and analysing the advertisements in a later book in the series, *Unsouled* (2014), as well as creating their own advertisements (Bach et al., "Unwinding 130–131, 133–134). What unites all these approaches is the establishment of links to and nuances between the world of Shusterman's series and the students' own world, which is an allegorical and contrasting approach.

Creative Writing

Some suggestions for how teachers can use creative writing activities with university students can be found in an article by American Sarah Hentges and her students Elaine Brum, Petra Ilic and Romaine Berry. Hentges has assigned students the following tasks: writing a poem about something Katniss Everdeen in Collins' trilogy will never lose or recover from, etcetera; producing a meme that captures the defining characteristics of one of the characters in Libba Bray's *Beauty Queens* (2012); and writing a continuation, such as a brief sequel or an epilogue, to Sherri L. Smith's *Orleans* (2013) (Hentges et al., "Teaching/Learning" 178, 180, 183). Both Collins' and Bray's novels are analysed in this study. In the article, three of Hentges' students contribute their opinions on the benefits and challenges of these teaching approaches. This article therefore functions as an evaluative analysis of a course design, which has been tested in a Danish classroom during Hentges' time as a visiting scholar in Denmark.

In a different study, Hentges suggests using social action projects to involve university students in making a difference in non-fictional societies based on their insights from YA dystopian literature. The example action projects include hosting film viewings, creating social media campaigns and making public art (Hentges, *Girls* 209, 212; for all action project suggestions, see 209–214).

Narrative Transportation Theory

Other applications in an educational context include Karen Patrick Knutsen's investigation of how Julie Bertagna's YA dystopian trilogy, *The Exodus* trilogy (2002–2011), can support pre-service ESL (English as a second language) teachers in becoming reading teachers who will be able to help students "consider the implicit messages" in YA dystopian literature, for example, instead of just reading for pleasure (13). Patrick Knutsen emphasises the importance of including metacognitive strategies in teaching literature, in this case YA dystopian literature, and suggests using narrative transportation theory (5).

The theory focuses on two processes: “being transported into a narrative world and performing that narrative” (Ibid.). When a reader experiences being transported into a story, they are also affected by the implicit ideologies of the text, so teachers need to give their students tools to interrogate these ideologies. Experiencing a connection to a specific character can help readers be transported into the narrative (Patrick Knutsen 6, 10). Thus, Knutsen underlines the potential benefits of using different characters’ perspectives as a point of entry to the novels when designing a teaching approach to YA dystopian literature.

*

In summary, previous research on suggested teaching plans highlights many different tasks, methods and approaches. Two monographs are included in the studies in this section: Campbell’s and Wilhelm and Smiths’s. In the final section of this overview, I will move on to pedagogical designs that focus specifically on Collins’ *Hunger Games* trilogy.

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGNS FOR TEACHING THE HUNGER GAMES TRILOGY

In the research on YA dystopian literature in the classroom, many studies focus on Collins’ *The Hunger Games* trilogy. This section presents different approaches to Collins’ trilogy.

Social Justice

In an allegorical approach, which focuses on relating the world of the YA dystopian text to contemporary non-fictional societies, Brianna R. Burke argues that *The Hunger Games* trilogy can be used to highlight the importance of social justice, especially in terms of how the

production of food by the districts for the Capitol is used to oppress the districts' inhabitants (1, 3–4). Her context is an American undergraduate level course. Food politics are tied to unequal class privileges and to racism, according to Burke (5). She views the Games as a metaphor for late stage capitalism, in which Tributes are consumable commodities (Burke 11–12).

Another study that addresses both social justice and food in Collins' trilogy is Amber M. Simmons' exploration of how the trilogy can be used to encourage social action among American students. Her focus is on issues related to violence and domination, and how the trilogy can promote social awareness and preparedness to work for societal change. More specifically, she aims to "foster literacy and help students understand that violence and brutality towards children is not fiction but fact" (Simmons 24). She applies a critical literacy perspective, where the goal is to investigate the fictional world's ideologies and support the struggle for social justice (Ibid.). For example, Simmons suggests highlighting how food is used to control and dominate the poor, while being consumed in excess by the wealthy in Panem's Capitol, and how children are forced to become warriors and kill other children. The students can then conduct social actions to promote justice and equality, such as educating the public about social justice issues (Simmons 26–30, 32).

In a study focused on social justice, oppression and resistance to these inequalities, Rodrigo Joseph Rodríguez argues that Collins' series can be used by educators to teach students about inequalities in non-fictional societies: "[E]ducators need to create opportunities for students to enter storyworlds such as the one Collins constructs in the *Hunger Games*—that is, storyworlds which call on readers to think and act boldly, and which invite them, like Katniss, to become more socially responsible citizens" (165). He thus highlights how a critical literacy approach can help students to identify issues in the real world and to act in ways that contribute to the creation of a more just world. Once again, YA dystopian literature's ability to incite political action is underlined.

“Girls on Fire”

In *Teaching Girls on Fire: Essays on Dystopian Young Adult Literature in the Classroom* (2020), three out of ten chapters focus on how YA dystopian literature can be used to teach adolescents about fictional “Girls on Fire” and gender aspects of YA dystopian novels.¹¹³ Hentges is one of the editors, and her monograph *Girls on Fire: Transformative Heroines in Young Adult Dystopian Literature* (2018), defines this concept as a girl character who

is rarely a perfect, infallible hero; she is most often a real girl struggling to find herself and keep her friends and family safe against impossible odds. She wants to discover the truth that has been kept from her, and from the populace more generally. She wants to cut the ties that bind and bring freedom to oppressed peoples. She is an outcast, a rebel. (*Girls* 6)

In Trites’ chapter, she investigates how *The Hunger Games* trilogy and the concept of the Girl on Fire can be used to teach students about different types of feminism. She also wants to promote a more complex understanding of Katniss in relation to the series’ feminist potential than a black-and-white conception of her as either “a wholly feminist role model—or as a wholly sexist figure” (Trites, “Teaching” 52). To achieve this goal in the classroom, Trites includes discussion questions such as “How are female characters empowered or disempowered—and by whom?” (“Teaching” 55; for further questions, see 55, 57, 61, 65).

Another chapter that focuses on gender conceptions in relation to Katniss is Wendy J. Glenn’s analysis of Katniss as an athlete. Glenn suggests using the depiction of this character to discuss and illumi-

113. The other chapters focus on other types of literary fiction and/or other types of dystopias, despite the title’s clear indication that the anthology is all about YA dystopian literature. This is why I cover so few of the study’s articles in this overview.

In addition to Trites’ and Glenn’s articles mentioned here, Hentges et al.’s article is included in the three relevant articles from the anthology.

nate “the gendered ideologies of sport” (19). Her teaching approach includes analysing a Nike advertisement from a gender perspective, comparing how Katniss uses her athletic abilities, such as archery, to become a saviour with other saviour-athletes in other texts and in real life, and analysing how Katniss is positioned in relation to the central male characters, for example by discussing the following question: “What role does Peeta play in Katniss’s definition of/enactment of herself as an athlete?” (Glenn 25, 27, quotation on page 30). Thus, both Trites and Glenn underline Collins’ trilogy’s potential for discussing gender aspects in the classroom.

Societal Issues and Political Action

Anders Öhman’s article is one example of a narratological approach to Collins’ series that also highlights societal issues. He illuminates the benefits of focusing on plot summaries and an analysis of central themes, such as the rebellion theme, when using Collins’ trilogy in the classroom (Öhman 80, 83, 88).

According to Thomas A. Lucey, Kara Lycke, James Laney and Christopher Connelly, *The Hunger Games* trilogy can be used in grades six to eight in American schools to teach important aspects of citizenship and self-sacrifice, and to promote student engagement in working towards a better society. This utilises the recurrent theme of political action. Their suggested approach to this teaching task, which aims to teach important societal concepts, involves a combination of literature, drama and visual art. For example, in their mini unit, they have included role plays where the characters face various ethical dilemmas (Lucey et al. 190, 192–193, 195). The focus is on the societal concepts, not on literary fiction as such, resulting in an approach where the YA dystopian work mostly becomes a vehicle for discussing societal dilemmas, without much attention to *how* Collins presents these issues in her literary work (cf. Lucey et al. 195–198).

Another article that discusses Collins’ series in relationship to societal issues is David R. Dreyer’s text about how it can be used to highlight war, peace and justice for US undergraduates. His focus

is on how the series relates to different theories of international relations, as well as moral issues surrounding starting a war, and how people behave in wars. He suggests using fiction because of its ability to turn complex, abstract theories into concrete and personalised stories about characters who struggle to take the morally correct course of action (Dreyer 252). *The Hunger Games* trilogy explicitly discusses whether violence and war can ever be righteous, and therefore works well for initiating discussions about when going to war is just and appropriate behaviour in war (Dreyer 258). Dreyer's allegorical teaching approach centres on creating parallels between events in the story and American history and society (Ibid.). Students on his course in "Politics in Fiction, Film, and Music" appreciated using fiction in this sense, since it "led them to become more attuned to the political implications of works of fiction", according to Dreyer (264).

Siobhan McEvoy-Levy's study also illuminates peace and violence in relation to Collins' series. The overall argument is that, in US classrooms, *The Hunger Games* trilogy can function as a vehicle for exploring peace and violence. "The power of *The Hunger Games* as a peace education vehicle lies in its capacity to challenge both gender stereotypes and militarism without alienating readers, while linking both themes with economic inequality and government oppression", according to the author (McEvoy-Levy 23). Topics that can be explored include the role of cultural memory, the consequences of a revolt, how terrorism can subdue the population and how the Capitol, by calling a group of soldiers Peacekeepers, justifies violence through a rhetoric that suggests that they want to protect the peace (Ibid.). McEvoy-Levy also highlights the benefits of exploring the fan activism tied to the Hunger Games phenomenon in peace education (26). Overall, the article underlines how YA dystopian literature can help promote empathy for those affected by war. The author foregrounds ethical aspects of Collins' trilogy and the benefit of discussing these in the classroom.

Altogether, the studies covered in this section include many suggestions for how to work with Collins' YA dystopian work in the classroom. Many of these approaches can be adapted to teaching other YA dystopian texts too. All the studies in this section are articles, and thus do not have the space to delve deeper into the details of the teaching process. This is in line with the overall tendency of previous research to use the article format. Hentges and Connor's anthology seemingly focuses all its attention on YA dystopian novels in the classroom, but closer examination reveals that only three out of ten articles address the specific phenomenon of YA dystopian literature. Therefore, I want to conclude this overview with a call for more full-length studies devoted to pedagogical approaches to YA dystopian literature.

In the rest of this chapter, I will use previous research as inspiration and combine some suggested teaching approaches with critical literacy and the work of two educational theorists who explore the potential to learn about ethics and life through reading literary fiction: Martha C. Nussbaum and Judith A. Langer.

The Power of Literary Fiction: Critical Literacy, Narrative Imagination and Envisionment Building

This section introduces the teaching approach called critical literacy, Nussbaum's concept of narrative imagination and Langer's notion of envisionment building. The purpose is to provide background knowledge about the theoretical frameworks that have inspired my suggested teaching plans, together with the more practical methods and tools identified in the previous section on research into using YA dystopian literature in the classroom. I have selected Nussbaum's and Langer's concepts because, used together, they capture how literary fiction can support student development towards becoming a critically aware world citizen, which is vital to upholding democratic society. In addition, they both emphasise how this ability is partly a

result of how readers interact with characters in literary fiction, for example by assuming a character's perspective on events. This corresponds to the overall aim of critical literacy, to help students critique power hierarchies in society and to work against oppression and towards political change.

CRITICAL LITERACY

The overarching theoretical framework for my suggested teaching plans can be defined as a critical literacy approach. According to Richard Beach, Deborah Appleman, Bob Fecho and Rob Simon, critical literacy “values analyzing the beliefs and ideologies portrayed in texts and in institutions that shape students’ lives” (13). It includes “working toward some form of individual or broader social change” (Ibid.). Thus,

the teachers’ role is not only to demonstrate ways to interrogate beliefs and ideologies associated with institutions portrayed in texts, but also to link that interrogation to addressing and acting on injustices inherent in these institutions as well [sic!] in students’ own lives and communities. (Ibid.)

This teaching approach underlines the importance of identifying, problematising and actively trying to work against power imbalances and oppression. Fiction is regarded as important to analyse in its own right, but this approach also underlines the value of relating texts, such as the six YA dystopian texts in my case studies, to the society in which the students live. A critical literacy approach thus supports teaching plans that analyse and interrogate power hierarchies in non-fictional societies through the lens of literature—in this case YA dystopian literature.

In their definition of critical literacy, Carlin Borsheim-Black, Michael Macaluso and Robert Petrone state that, in addition to ideologies and power, normativity and representation are also important

aspects to interrogate and critique. The authors clarify how students need to be taught to read and write both *with* and *against* texts, for example by critically examining the inclusion of specific canonical works in the literature curriculum. Reading against a text means problematising and questioning its ideologies (Borsheim-Black et al. 123–124); to read “between the lines to expose and interrupt embedded, dominant narratives, power dynamics, and perceived normalcy espoused by and hidden in the text” (Borsheim-Black et al. 125). While the authors apply this approach to teaching canonical literature, I believe that it is just as valuable in my suggested teaching plans, which aim to highlight power relationships in selected YA dystopian literature and in non-fictional societies.

Some discussion prompts for teaching guided by a critical literacy approach are included in an article by Thomas W. Bean and Karen Moni. For example, teachers can ask students to consider:

- how the world of adolescents is depicted in a work of literary fiction written by an adult,
- who the ideal reader for the text is,
- who has a voice and is allowed to speak within the novel and who is not, and
- how the text can potentially be rewritten to address gaps and silences within the narrative (Bean and Moni 645).

These questions are helpful hands-on suggestions for ways in which a teacher can apply insights from critical literacy in the classroom.

Gunilla Molloy clarifies that

critical literacy is not a method or a model, but an approach that illustrates the connection between language and power. Basically, it is a different way of thinking, to be able to see more than one perspective and to be allowed to critically investigate the values that are present in different texts (and within ourselves). It can be understood as an ability to both read and write own texts in a deeper and more reflective sense,

a critical sense that is not negative, but explorative [my translation]. (53)¹¹⁴

Here, I will use critical literacy as an overarching framework for interrogating power aspects of YA dystopian literature in the classroom, but also for relating these analytical findings to the life circumstances of the students and of adolescents with other intersectional subject positions. Critical literacy therefore inspires an ongoing dialogue between different interpretations (Molloy 54).

According to Molloy, a critical reading of texts with a focus on who has power and who does not can help students and their teachers see the text, and potentially also the world they live in, from different perspectives (54). This is crucial for the development of critically aware citizens in a democracy, but also for people who live in societies where democracy is threatened or non-existent, which is the type of societies that the protagonists of YA dystopian literature live in. Both Nussbaum's concept of narrative imagination and Langer's concept of envisionment building can be combined with critical literacy, providing teachers with more concrete theoretical tools to support the students' development towards a critical awareness that helps them consider and question what they read and the ideologies that are perpetuated.

*

To summarise, the overarching aim of critical literacy is to interrogate ideologies in literary fiction and to use this interrogation as a platform, or a stepping stone, for students to start working towards a more equal society in their own lives. In the next section, I will intro-

114. Swedish quotation: "Kritisk literacy är inte en metod eller en modell utan ett förhållningssätt som visar på sambandet mellan språk och makt. I grunden handlar det om ett annat sätt att tänka, att kunna se mer än ett perspektiv och att kritiskt få undersöka de värderingar som finns i olika texter (och inom oss själva). Det kan förstås som en förmåga både att läsa och att skriva egna texter på ett djupare och mer reflekterande sätt, ett kritiskt sätt som inte är negativt, utan undersökande."

duce Nussbaum's concept of narrative imagination. I argue that this concept can support my ambition to construct teaching plans that help students assume the perspective of someone else through literary fiction, thereby challenging the ideologies in the literary work and those in the students' social context, such as ones that may render their own privileges invisible to them.

NUSSBAUM'S CONCEPT OF NARRATIVE IMAGINATION

The *ethical turn* in literary fiction research emphasises how reading fiction provides people with ethical insights. Nussbaum is a major theorist in this field. According to her, literature poses ethical questions and dilemmas in a more efficient way than theoretical texts:

With respect to certain elements of human life, the terms of the novelist's art are alert winged creatures, perceiving where the blunt terms of ordinary speech, or of abstract theoretical discourse, are blind, acute where they are obtuse, winged where they are dull and heavy. (Nussbaum, "Introduction" 5)

Thus, literary fiction can make ethical aspects more concrete and easier to take into consideration because it depicts how characters deal with varying dilemmas, rather than providing a theoretical experiment in which one correct answer is usually built into the ethical problem. As Nussbaum states, the reason literary fiction is better adapted to these kinds of ethical interrogations is its complexity and variation. It also invites readers to identify with the experiences of the characters (Nussbaum, "Introduction" 22, 33). These two aspects are the main reasons I view Nussbaum as beneficial for the development of my suggested teaching plans.

According to Nussbaum, literary fiction has a privileged position in the discussion of ethical dilemmas. Whereas theoretical examples of ethical dilemmas are fixed and sometimes provide one correct answer, a novel will open up for different interpretations and solutions

to these dilemmas (Nussbaum, “Introduction” 47). Nussbaum also emphasises that the entertainment aspect of literary fiction is central to its importance in democratic societies; it allows people to explore complicated issues without experiencing the type of anxiety associated with them (*Not* 110).

The novel format is preferable because it gives its readers the opportunity to follow characters over an extended period of time, making it possible for readers to see how ethical dilemmas affect the characters’ attempts to live a good life (Nussbaum, “Introduction” 37). In order to become a world citizen, someone who takes responsibility for how they affect people around them and the world they live in, it is important to be able to assume the perspective of other people. From Nussbaum’s point of view, “literature, with its ability to represent the specific circumstances and problems of people of many different sorts, makes an especially rich contribution” (“Democratic” 145). This gives readers an opportunity to develop their imaginings about other people’s lives, actions and decisions and, by extension, to become more aware of different people’s differing opportunities to affect their own lives and worlds, due to their intersectional subject positions.

Nussbaum calls the kind of imagination that is developed through literary fiction *narrative imagination*. This type of imagination trains people in interacting with others in moral ways (Nussbaum, “Democratic” 148). The narrative imagination “both inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life, not all of which is open to view; in the process, the reader learns to have respect for the hidden contents of that inner world, seeing its importance in defining a creature as fully human” (*Ibid.*). This kind of imagination allows interactions with people of different backgrounds, which is what makes it so important in a democratic society, where people from different nations, genders, classes and/or religions need to be able to interact with each other in ethical and compassionate ways (Nussbaum, “Democratic” 144, 149). As Nussbaum states, it is not possible to change one’s skin colour but, through literary fiction, readers get to walk in someone

else's shoes and experience different characters' perspectives ("Democratic" 144, 149–150).

There are a number of canonical works of fiction that Nussbaum deems absolutely necessary for ethical philosophy, for example Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Times/Remembrance of Things Past* (1913–1927) and the genre of Greek tragedy ("Introduction" 23; "Democratic" 152). Thus, Nussbaum argues that *some* works of literary fiction are more appropriate than others for the development of ethical reasoning through narrative imagination. I have previously argued that the fantasy genre includes many works of fiction that can support ethical discussions and dilemmas, for example J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels (1997–2007) (Alkestrand, *Magiska* 80). In this current study, my overall argument is that YA dystopian literature provides opportunities to interrogate power relationships between adolescents and adults because of how the genre uses hyperbole to exaggerate acetonormative tendencies in non-fictional societies, thereby making them more obvious to readers. Consequently, my study highlights how this genre also offers many opportunities for readers to develop their narrative imagination. I will present examples of how teachers can support this educational potential in their teaching practice, using the suggested teaching plans in the final parts of this chapter.

*

I want to emphasise that I do not believe the narrative imagination is automatically activated in the classroom.¹¹⁵ If this was the case, simply reading a text in the classroom would give every student the same opportunity to analyse the text from the teacher's chosen perspective. The challenge of being a teacher is—as all teachers are acutely

115. Magnus Persson critiques Nussbaum for her assumption that enhanced empathy for a character will almost automatically transfer into empathy for people in the real world. He argues that it is important to consider *how* literary fiction can be included in literature education that aims to create democratic citizens (Persson, pp. 256–259, 263). This corresponds to my own considerations of *how* the educational potential of a literary work can be activated in the classroom.

aware—much more complicated than that. It takes time and effort to prepare a lesson, and to follow up and evaluate the teaching process, and often teachers are not given enough time in the classroom with the students to get to the point where all students are active, engaged and experience that their perspective is important and matters. I argue that students need to interact critically with the literary work in question, interrogating its ideologies in line with critical literacy. To do so successfully, students benefit from a teaching approach in which the power structures in the fictional world are identified and related to similar issues in their own society. This allegorical approach provides opportunities for the students to relate YA dystopian worlds to their own society and to find important connections, similarities and differences between the intradiegetic world and the world they live in. Langer's concept of envisionment building supports this process of knowledge transfer between the world of literary fiction and the context of a specific reader. The next section introduces this concept and its beneficial role in my suggested teaching plans.

LANGER'S CONCEPT OF ENVISIONMENT BUILDING

An envisionment is defined by Langer as

the world of understanding a particular person has at a given point in time. Envisionments are textworlds in the mind that differ from individual to individual. They are a function of one's personal and cultural experiences, one's relationship to the current experience, what one knows, how one feels, and what one is after. Envisionments are dynamic sets of related ideas, images, questions, disagreements, anticipations, arguments, and hunches that fill the mind during every reading, writing, speaking, or other experience in which one gains, expresses, and shares thoughts and understandings. (10)

Thus, an envisionment is a specific reader's complex view of a text

and the world it portrays at a specific point in time, as well as the ideas generated by interaction with the text and its imaginary world.

According to Langer, the type of thinking applied when reading literary fiction

moves us to see the multisidedness of situations and therefore expands the breadth of our own visions, moving us towards dreams and solutions we might not otherwise have imagined. [...] [I]t moves us to consider our interconnectedness with others and the intrinsic pluralism of meaning. It helps us become more human. (158)

This quotation highlights similarities between Langer's and Nussbaum's understandings of literary fiction. Langer views literature as intellectually challenging; it helps readers view things from several different perspectives, and makes it possible to harness the power of subjective experiences that others can learn from. The imagination that literature invokes can help us explore different possibilities, solve problems and understand others (Langer 9).

Further, Langer argues that literary fiction can provide students with important insights for their future lives and careers: "Through literature, students learn to explore possibilities and consider options; they gain connectedness and seek vision. They become the type of literate, as well as creative, thinkers that we'll need to learn well at college, to do well at work and to shape discussions and find solutions to tomorrow's problems" (2). Consequently, Langer underlines the opportunities for using literary fiction to prepare for dealing with a constantly changing society and imagining possible futures. When working with YA dystopian literature, what-if questions about the future are foregrounded in a natural way, because the dystopias feature anti-democratic tendencies in future societies, representing how these societies have failed to create a better world than the current one. Just like Nussbaum, Langer demonstrates the importance of literary fiction for the development of world citizens. The kind of imagination supported by reading literature, which in-

volves trying to understand the characters and different situations, enables readers to develop new perspectives on the world they live in (Langer 21).

The concept of envisionment is used by Langer as a guideline for designing pedagogical approaches to literary fiction in the classroom. Her concept has been developed using empirical research in multiple classrooms over an extended period of time. Both Langer and Nussbaum argue that literary fiction is an important training ground for critically aware citizens in a democratic society, and they both highlight the imaginative power of assuming the perspectives of literary characters, but Langer provides concrete educational tools for this process, presenting five different stances in the envisionment building process (see Table 4).

Table 4: Langer's Five Stances of Envisionment Building

Stance
1. To be outside of an envisionment and to step into it
2. To be inside of an envisionment and to move through it
3. To step outside of an envisionment and to rethink what you know
4. To step outside of an envisionment and to objectify the experience
5. To leave an envisionment and to go beyond

The first stance is **to be outside of an envisionment and to step into it**. This occurs at the beginning of the reading process, when readers try to gather clues about the literary world they are reading about, for example its environments and characters, and throughout the reading process, as readers change their assumptions and opinions about these aspects of the literary work (Langer 17–18). In the second stance, **readers have created an envisionment and are moving through it**; they use all the available information about the literary work, the real world and humanity to explore ideas about the text (Langer 18–19). The third stance, in which **readers step outside of the envisionment and rethink what they know**, is a process of knowledge

transfer from the literary work to a reader's society: What kinds of questions and insights has the literary work generated? How does this relate to the societal context of a specific reader? In this way, the envisionment is used to expand readers' knowledge and experiences (Langer 19–20). In the fourth stance, readers **step outside of an envisionment and objectify the experience**. For example, readers can compare the envisionment of a work of literary fiction with those of other literature, or reflect on how the envisionment relates to their own experiences (Langer 20–21). In this stance, the focus is on taking a step back from the envisionment, distancing yourself from it and reflecting on it analytically. The fifth and final stance, **to leave an envisionment and to go beyond**, is rarer than the other stances. Here, readers use an envisionment as inspiration for creating a new envisionment. For example, a reader can use a literary work as inspiration when composing a song (Langer 21).

Envisionments are individual and ever-changing. They equal the textworlds within a specific person at a particular time. This means that as soon as someone starts reading a text, they gather information about the world of the text and its characters. As they continue reading, they collect more information, and may therefore have to adjust their understanding of certain phenomena. Readers gradually develop a deeper understanding of the text. Personal and cultural experiences guide readers' understanding of the text and the envisionments that they create (Langer 10–11). Langer's five stances in the envisionment building process should not be regarded as linear; they may appear in a different order, and readers often move between the stances as they absorb more information about the literary work (17).

The five different stances can be highlighted and supported through a teaching plan that guides students through them. For the first stance, one way to give students the necessary clues for understanding a work of literary fiction is to briefly present the genre of YA dystopian literature to them, before they start reading a specific work. The second stance can be supported by letting students discuss their movement through their envisionment in groups, to help them to put into words the kind of information they have gathered

and to highlight gaps in their understanding. To support students in the third stance, teachers can provide students with open questions about how the future dystopian society is similar to and/or different from their contemporary society. The fourth stance offers rich opportunities for relating a specific YA dystopian work to the genre as a whole, or to other dystopian narratives with which the students have come into contact, such as literature, movies or computer games. The fifth stance can be explored by letting the students create a musical, for example, based on some characters in the literary work. My suggested teaching plans aim to introduce tasks that support all five stances combined.

*

In summary, Langer's stances provide both guidance and inspiration for working with literary fiction in rich ways that support students' development as democratic and critically aware citizens. The narrative imagination, which Nussbaum underlines as central to students' development in a democratic society, can be supported by designing teaching activities linked to the different stances of envisionment building. Langer's description of the different stances can also guide a critical literacy approach, aimed at supporting students to critically interrogate texts and their ideologies, helping design different tasks at different points of the reading process.

Teaching Plans for the Young Adult Dystopian Works in the Six Case Studies

In the following two sections, I will present six teaching plans for working with YA dystopian literature in the classroom, focusing on the motifs of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother explored in previous chapters. In addition to critical literacy, narrative imagination and envisionment building, four types of reading that students should apply are fundamental to how I have designed the tasks:

- **Ideological:** identifying and analysing ideologies and prejudices.
- **Motif-based:** focusing on the adolescent killer motif/the adolescent mother motif.
- **Character-focused:** exploring the characters' perspectives, decisions and actions.
- **Allegorical:** comparing aspects of the fictional worlds with non-fictional societies.

Therefore, the tasks aim to support these kinds of reading approaches to YA dystopian literature.

Because the target audience for the analysed YA dystopian texts is adolescents, the teaching plans are adapted to students aged roughly thirteen to nineteen. Factors such as the age of the students, the group dynamic of the class, the number of students, the students' different learning needs and the time available for providing feedback on tasks may mean that teachers will need to adjust the teaching plans. The overall aim of the teaching plans is to provide inspiration for teachers to use YA dystopian literature as a tool for investigating age-related oppression, as well as other types of oppression.

USING DEPICTIONS OF ADOLESCENT KILLERS IN THE CLASSROOM

In the chapter on adolescent killers, I illustrate how YA dystopian literature utilises the adolescent killer motif to investigate and problematise the division of power between adolescents and adults in dystopias. The use of this motif in YA dystopian literature illuminates aspects of similar power relationships in non-fictional societies, which is achieved through an allegorical approach that establishes links between the dystopian world and contemporary societies. The adolescent killers, who are forced to kill because of the circumstances of their dystopian worlds and/or by adult institutions, illustrate the extreme measures that adults can use to control, use and abuse adolescents. Sadly, this aetionormative power abuse has equivalents in

non-fictional societies, such as when children are turned into child soldiers but, at a more general level the motif highlights aetnonormative power structures that dictate how adults interact with adolescents on an everyday basis. By taking the power imbalance to its extreme, and by making the adults and/or the world that the adults have created responsible for how the adolescents are forced to kill to survive and protect those they love, YA dystopian texts bring attention to aetnonormative power structures in non-fictional societies through the use of hyperbole. This is why the motif has educational potential for improving reader insights into age-related power relations.

Although the awareness of issues such as gender inequality is continuously heightened in contemporary societies, adults' use of their power over adolescents is often not considered to be problematic. Adolescents, and especially adults, are so used to this power category's influence on their lives that they may need to consider extreme examples in order to understand how aetnonormativity functions and, in this sense, the adolescent killer motif in YA dystopian literature incorporates an educational potential. There is a need to protect young people from harm and to not put too much responsibility on young people before they are ready for it in contemporary societies, but sometimes this rhetoric can disguise the ulterior motives of adults who do not want to protect the young, but would rather use them for their own gain. As the chapter on adolescent killers shows, this is the case for the adults and the dystopian regimes that turn unwilling adolescents into killers in YA dystopian literature. Forcing them to become killers is the ultimate act of disregarding the adolescents' needs and their right to make their own decisions about what kind of lives they want.

In addition, the three case studies of Red, Juliette, and Citra and Rowan, illustrate the educational potential of YA dystopian literature to clarify how adults' oppression of adolescents is often intersectional in nature. For example, Red's attackers believe she will be easy to attack, rape and kill based on an intersection between gender,

youth and her leg prosthesis that positions her as a young (dis)abled¹¹⁶ woman in the dystopian society she lives in. Therefore, the characters not only face aetnonormative power abuse, but also other types of oppression. All three case studies have shown that the adolescent killer motif is so tightly tied to the protagonists' intersectional subject positions in their dystopian worlds that the motif provides a fruitful starting point for discussions about various kinds of oppression.

The focus of the three following teaching plans is guiding students to position the acts of killing performed by Henry's Red, Maffi's Juliette and Citra and Rowan in Shusterman's trilogy within the frameworks of their dystopian societies. Adolescents who kill is indeed a taboo subject, but by bringing attention to it in the classroom, the reasons for the characters' actions can be explored and understood within the context of the oppression directed against them. As Victor Malo-Juvera and Paula Greathouse clarify, "the purpose of taboos can be argued to be to maintain and reinforce the status quo", thereby supporting the marginalisation and/or oppression of certain groups of people (3). Therefore, breaking taboos can be one way to challenge the unfair distribution of power in specific societies.

To support this type of analysis, the students require knowledge about the genre conventions of YA dystopian literature. In addition, they need insights about the oppression that the characters have to deal with. To promote the discussion and problematisation of the power category of age, they also need tools to identify and analyse in what ways the oppression is related to power differences between the adolescents and adults in each series.

For a summary of the ideologies regarding age that the adolescent killer motif in each series communicates, see Table 5 below.

116. For an explanation of why I put parentheses around "dis", see note 2, p. 18–19.

Table 5: Ideologies about adolescent killers and age

Ideology	Present in
Killing someone is a despicable act and should be avoided whenever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series
Adolescents can be forced to become killers to survive in a dystopian society because of how they are oppressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Being forced to become an adolescent killer to survive is a severe form of oppression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Being forced to become an adolescent killer in an experiment or by an institution/regime is an extreme version of aetionormative power abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Killing for your own pleasure or gain is wrong and amoral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Killing to protect your care circle may be viewed as righteous within a dystopian setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Within a dystopian society, killing for the greater good may be necessary in the fight for a better world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Killing can never be justified as a means to an end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
The act of killing can be amoral and wrong, even when it is sanctioned by society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Mass murder may be necessary in a rebellion that aims to create a better world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series

Mass murders are despicable acts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shusterman, <i>The Arc of a Scythe</i> trilogy
Killing for revenge can be viewed as righteous if the perpetrators have been extremely oppressive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry, <i>The Girl in Red</i> • Mafi, <i>The Shatter Me</i> series

Some of these ideologies are highlighted using different teaching tools in the teaching plans for *The Girl in Red*, the *Shatter Me* series and the *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy below.

Teaching Plan

The Girl in Red: Becoming a killer in a crisis

Reading material

Christina Henry, *The Girl in Red* (2019)

Focus

- What happens to adolescents when they are caught up in a crisis, like Red in Henry's novel?
- In what ways can the act of becoming an adolescent killer be regarded as due to adults' oppression of adolescents?

Overall aims

- To gain knowledge about the genre of YA dystopian literature and its defining characteristics.
- To analyse power structures related to age, gender, (dis)ability and race in the dystopian world of Henry's novel.
- To identify and explore the motif of the adolescent killer and how it is portrayed in relation to the oppression of the adolescent Red in the novel.
- To investigate the motivations, thoughts and feelings of the character Red when she becomes a killer during the crisis.
- To relate Red's actions and responses to the crisis to the students' own experiences of a crisis.

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stance 1)

- Ask the students what kind of person that they would *want* to be in a crisis and what kind of person they think they *would* be. Let them discuss the question in groups of approximately four students. To support their discussions, list alternatives on the whiteboard, such as a hero, a protector, a bystander, someone

who hides, a killer, a thief, and so on. Let the groups summarise their discussions together with the rest of the class and take notes on the whiteboard about which option most of them picked. Take a photograph and document their responses for future reference.

- Give a mini lecture about the genre of YA dystopian literature and its genre characteristics. Cover topics such as what a dystopia is, what kind of societies YA dystopian literature depicts, in what ways the government or groups of people oppress other groups and the role of the young characters as rebels and the ones who fight against corrupt adults and regimes. (See the section “What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?” in the introduction for inspiration.)
- Read the first chapter of Henry’s novel aloud to the class while they follow the text in their own books.
- Let the students discuss in the groups why they think Red becomes a killer and why she is so hostile towards the man who comes to her fire. Document their responses in a mind map and take a photograph of it for future reference OR use a Padlet¹¹⁷ where the students can post their group’s response.
- Assign the rest of the book as mandatory reading. Clarify when students will be able to read in class and how much they are expected to read at home.

2. Power and oppression in *The Girl in Red* (Langer’s stances 2 & 4)

- Ask the students to give examples of characters from the novel who assume the kinds of roles in a crisis that you discussed in the introduction. Let them first discuss in pairs for a few minutes and then make a mind map using their responses, on the whiteboard OR with a virtual tool.¹¹⁸ Suggestions for relevant characters: Red, Martin Kaye (the man who knew the family, but who joined the racist mob when the Cough started spreading), Red’s attacker in the first chapter, Sam and Riley. If you use the whiteboard, document the students’ suggestions by taking a photograph of the mind map.
- Give a mini lecture that highlights the following topics: How Red is simultaneously more vulnerable in the dystopian society caused by the Cough than adults and more knowledgeable about the necessary preparations and actions than the adults. Mention Red’s (dis)ability, biracial status, youth, gender and sexuality, as well as the knowledge that she gained by reading and watching lots of dystopias. Introduce terms like ableism, racism, aetnonormativity, sexism and heteronormativity if you feel the students are ready to learn those types of con-

¹¹⁷. A Padlet is a virtual note board where users can post questions, comments, replies, text documents and other files.

¹¹⁸. There are many different digital tools available for making mind maps, such as Mindomo.

cepts. Otherwise, the teacher can address abuse based on the different power categories in more general terms. (See the section on “Killing in Self-defence and to Protect Others” about this novel in Chapter 1 and the index for concepts.)

- Divide the students into groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the questions below. The groups document their responses by assigning a member the role of secretary, who takes brief notes and hands them in at the end of the lesson. The teacher can either ask for handwritten or typed notes depending on their preferences and their class’ access to digital tools.
 1. List examples from the novel of the kinds of abuse Red faces during the crisis (for example violence, threats of murder, rape and theft).
 2. Why is Red abused? Does it relate to any of the power categories of age, gender, race, class and (dis)ability? Or to a combination of two or more of these categories?
 3. What are the similarities between the novel and the *Little Red Riding Hood* fairy tale?
- The teacher also moves between the different groups and listens to the discussions.

3. Walking in Red’s shoes (Langer’s stance 2)

- Divide the class into groups of approximately four students and let them discuss the questions below while a new secretary takes notes to be handed in at the end of the class. Once again, the teacher moves between the different groups and listens to their discussions.
 1. Why does Red become a killer?
 2. How does she feel about being a killer?
 3. Does she have any non-violent alternatives for self-protection?
 4. How does her youth affect how she acts in this crisis? Her prosthesis? Her gender? Her race?
 5. How does her relationship to her parents and brother affect how she responds to the Cough a) before they leave their house, b) on the trip to her grandmother’s house?

4. Writing assignment (Langer’s stance 4)

- Imagine that you are Red. You are writing a letter to your grandmother while travelling to her cabin. In the letter, tell her how you have dealt with the crisis. Explain who you killed and why. Try to make her understand what it is like to be a young, (dis)abled, biracial woman in this crisis. Discuss in your letter whether you could have dealt with situations in different, non-violent ways, and if so, how. Hand in the letter to your teacher for assessment.

5. Young people in crises (Langer's stances 3–4)

- Discussion seminar with all the students. Ask the students to take brief notes on each question, to be handed in by the end of the lesson, before the whole class discusses it together. The teacher chooses the notetaking method they prefer for this task.
 1. In what ways is Red's post-crisis society a dystopia? Give several examples from the novel.
 2. How does Red's power position in society affect what options are available to her in the crisis?
 3. Is killing ever described as just or righteous in the narrative? Why/why not?
 4. How does the narrative link Red's acts of killing to her experiences of oppression?
 5. How have you acted during the coronavirus pandemic? What have you done, and how have you dealt with the crisis psychologically? Are there any significant differences or similarities between your actions and Red's?
 6. How can adolescents help find solutions to different kinds of crises, such as the coronavirus pandemic or the climate crisis?
 7. Show the students the two mind maps about who they want to be and who they think they would be in a crisis similar to Red's, as well as the suggestions of characters who fit into the roles that were documented during tasks 1 and 2. Ask the students whether reading the novel and/or the tasks they have done have changed their views in any way. Also ask them which character they would like to be in the novel if they had to pick one, and to explain why.

Evaluation

Send out a brief digital evaluation¹¹⁹ of the teaching approach to the students. What worked well? What could have been improved? Are there any other tasks that they would recommend for the next class to work with the novel?

Teaching Plan

The *Shatter Me* Series: Turning an adolescent into a lethal weapon

Reading material

- Tahereh Mafi, *Shatter Me* (2011)
- Chapter 1 in Tahereh Mafi, *Unravel Me* (2013)

119. The teacher could use Google Forms for free online evaluations.

Focus

- How can a government or other institution use and abuse an adolescent with a special ability?
- How can an institution weaponise adolescents by forcing them to become killers?

Overall aims

- To gain knowledge about the genre of YA dystopian literature and its defining characteristics.
- To analyse power structures related to age, gender and (dis)ability in the dystopian world of Mafi's novel.
- To identify and explore the motif of the adolescent killer and how it is portrayed in relation to the oppression of the adolescent Juliette in the novel.
- To explore how Juliette is abused in the novel and how she responds to this abuse.
- To analyse Juliette's identity development over the course of the novel.
- To explore the literary techniques used in depicting Juliette's state of mind and sense of self (first person narration, journal notes, crossed out words and sentences, for instance).

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stance 1)

- Read the first chapter aloud.
- Briefly discuss in pairs:
 1. Why do you think Juliette is in isolation?
 2. Why do you think she is afraid of meeting a boy?
 3. Why do you think she is described as and describes herself as "insane"¹²⁰?
 4. Why are some words and sentences crossed out? Take a guess.
- Read chapter 2 aloud.
- Continue discussing the above questions in pairs. Which questions do the students now have answers for? Also discuss the following questions:
 1. How would you feel if you were put in isolation for as long as Juliette?
 2. What would you do and what would your biggest challenge be?
- Make a mind map with the students that lists things they believe are characteristic of YA dystopian literature. You can either use the whiteboard or make a virtual mind map. Add vital information about the role of institutions and gov-

¹²⁰. I put words like "insane" and "crazy" within quotation marks in this study, as a reminder that I do not endorse the use of these words, because they are ableist and can be used in a demeaning way.

ernments in the genre to prepare the students for subsequent discussions about how Juliette is abused and used as a weapon by the government. Also emphasise how many young protagonists in YA dystopian literature rebel against dystopian societies using violence. (See the sections “What Is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?” and “Adolescent Killers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature” in this book for inspiration.)

- Assign the rest of the book as mandatory reading. Clarify when the students will be able to read in class and how much they are expected to read at home.
- 2. Role plays using dilemmas from the book** (Langer’s stance 2)
- Divide the students into groups of three or four. Assign each group a dilemma from the book. Ask the students to discuss alternative solutions to the dilemmas. After they have agreed on a solution, they rehearse a brief role play of approximately five minutes to perform for the class. Examples of dilemmas:
 1. If you were Juliette, what would you do if you found out you were going to be used as a deadly weapon by Warner?
 2. Is it justifiable for Juliette to use lethal violence to escape from Warner?
 3. Is it possible to forgive yourself for accidentally killing a child?
 4. How would you act in the simulation at the military base where Juliette must choose between 1) trying to save the boy but risking killing him, and 2) standing by and watching him die?
 - Role play for the class:
 1. Let each group perform their role play for the rest of the class.
 2. Tell the rest of the students to take notes during the role play. What is the dilemma in this scene? How is the dilemma resolved? How would you have acted in this dilemma? The teacher asks for handwritten or typed notes as they prefer. The notes are handed in at the end of the lesson.
 3. After each role play, let the students discuss the dilemma in their role play-groups.
 4. The group that performed is in charge of asking the other groups about their thoughts and conclusions. The members take notes about the different solutions on the whiteboard and then document this by taking photographs that are submitted to the teacher.
- 3. Role play about the kinds of abuse Juliette encounters** (Langer’s stance 4)
- Use the same groups as the previous role play.
 - Tell the students to list the different institutions that abuse Juliette. Ask them to identify which power categories are at play in the different examples of abuse (for example age, gender or (dis)ability) and how Juliette deals with these kinds of abuse. These notes are handed in to the teacher.

- The group should then pick one example of the abuse they identified and write a script for a brief role play, approximately 5 minutes long, depicting how Juliette reacts to the abuse. The script is handed in to the teacher.
- The group rehearses the scene and then performs it for the class. The other groups' task is to identify the kind(s) of oppression in the scene. The acting group is in charge of a brief discussion of the other students' responses in front of the class.

4. Individual essay about how Juliette's identity development is affected by being forced to kill (Langer's stance 4)

- In an essay with a clear structure (introduction, body, conclusions), the students should respond to the following questions:
 1. How does becoming a killer affect Juliette's view of herself?
 2. What kind of person does she regard herself as at the beginning of *Shatter Me*?
 3. What kind of person does she regard herself as at the end of *Shatter Me*?
 1. Why has her view of herself changed? Identify at least three key events in the novel that affect her view of herself. Paraphrase or quote from the novel to support your argument.
 2. What role does Juliette's journal play in the novel? What do readers learn about Juliette from it?

5. A sequel in the form of a play (Langer's stance 5)

- Use the same groups as in the previous role plays.
- Ask the students to create their own sequel to *Shatter Me*. They can focus on any part of the narrative, but they need to be able to explain why they think this is what will happen next. The role play should be approximately 5 minutes long. Give the students time to rehearse, record and upload the scene, for example to your virtual learning platform.
- The group plays the recording of their sequel for the class. Then they explain why they decided to portray this scene and why they think this will happen next.
- Read the first chapter of *Unravel Me* together and discuss differences and similarities between the students' sequels and the novel's first chapter.

Evaluation

Let the role play groups discuss the pros and cons of this teaching approach. Ask them to list two things they thought were helpful about this approach and their two biggest challenges when working with the role plays. Also ask them to list any suggestions they may have about how to improve this approach in the future. Their notes can be handed in as handwritten or typed notes.

Teaching Plan

The *Arc of a Scythe* Trilogy: Becoming professional adolescent killers

Reading material

Neal Shusterman, *Scythe* (2016)

Focus

- What does it mean to be an adolescent, professional killer in a world where the act of killing is legitimised for these professionals?
- How are Citra and Rowan used by the institution of the Scythedom to do things they do not want to?

Overall aims

- To define utopias and dystopias.
- To analyse what kind of world is depicted in Shusterman's series: a utopia or a dystopia?
- To analyse power structures related to age, gender and race in the world of the novel.
- To identify and analyse the motif of the adolescent killer in Shusterman's series.
- To investigate the motivations, thoughts and feelings of the characters Citra and Rowan in relation to becoming a scythe.
- To analyse the narration in *Scythe*, such as the use of different text types, for example the scythe journals, in the depiction of this imaginary world.

Preparations

Before the first lesson: Divide the novel into sections of approximately 50 pages.

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stances 1–2)

- Ask the students to read the first page in the novel from the gleaned journal of Scythe H. S. Curie and take notes about what a scythe is in the imaginary world of the novel. Ask them to analyse the cover illustration¹²¹ of their specific edition of the book to help them understand the concept.

121. The cover of a book is included in its paratext, a concept coined by Gérard Genette. Eva Nordlinder defines a paratext as “everything except for the narrating body of text [...]. The paratext is a transition, threshold or hallway [...] between author, publisher, book and reader [my translation]”. Swedish quotation: “Allt utom den berättande textmassan kallas paratexter [...]. Paratexten är en övergång, tröskel

- Introduce the dictionary definition of a scythe using the whiteboard (see Merriam-Webster's definition: "an implement used for mowing grass, grain, or other crops and composed of a long curving blade fastened at an angle to a long handle" ("scythe")).
- Discuss in pairs why the killers in Shusterman's novel are called scythes. There is an explanation on the first page. Tell the students to discuss this definition in relationship to the dictionary definition of the word. Summarise the students' conclusions on the whiteboard.
- Introduce the concepts *dystopia* and *utopia* in a mini lecture. (See the section "What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?" in the introduction of this book for inspiration.)
- Ask the students to read the first chapter and make notes in a logbook about whether they think the novel is a dystopia or a utopia.¹²² This logbook will be used throughout the reading process. The teacher can choose whether they want to use a handwritten logbook or a digital one.
- Briefly introduce the motif of the adolescent killer and its frequency in the YA dystopian genre. (See the overview section called "Adolescent Killers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature" in Chapter 1 for inspiration.)

2. Logbook process (Langer's stances 1–4)

- Tell the students to read one section at a time while working with a logbook. After each section, the students discuss their findings and views in discussion groups of approximately four students. The students take notes in their logbooks during the discussions and then read the next section. The teacher reads the logbooks and provides formative assessment¹²³ approximately three times during the reading process.

eller farstu [...] mellan författare, förlag, bok och läsare" (70). She highlights how the illustration on the cover, as well as the formatting of the title and the author's name, can influence whether a young reader decides to pick up and start reading a book or not. Nordlinder argues that our first impression of a book is often a result of what the cover looks like (69). Therefore, exploration tied to the first stance in Langer's model for envisionment building can be activated by analysing a cover and a title.

122. I use the term logbook to denote a notebook in which students can collect and express their thoughts about a novel throughout the reading process. The purpose of a logbook is to provide an arena for critical and analytical thought, where the students do not have to focus on writing a well-structured essay. Instead, it is a space to think things through while writing.

123. Carol Boston defines the difference between formative and summative assessment as follows: "[I]t is important to consider that over the course of a year, teachers can build in many opportunities to assess how students are learning and then use this information to make beneficial changes in instruction. This diagnos-

- Throughout the process, these are the questions on which the students should focus:
 1. Is the world depicted in *Scythe* a utopia or a dystopia? Find examples in the text that support your conclusion.
 2. What examples of the adolescent killer motif are found in the novel?
 3. How do the different adolescent killer characters relate to the experience of becoming a killer? Do they enjoy it, despise it or have mixed emotions about their role as killers? Use specific examples/scenes/quotations from the novel to support your argument.
 4. What kinds of oppression exist in this fictional world? Give examples of how gender, age and race affect the characters' access to power.
 5. How is the novel narrated? Whose perspective is it written from? Quote some passages from the novel that support your conclusions.
 6. What different text types can be found in the novel? What kinds of information do they provide readers with? Give at least three examples from the novel.
 7. What would you do if you were living in the world of Shusterman's novel and were asked to become a scythe?

3. Mini essay (Langer's stances 2–4)

- The students write a mini essay of approximately 1000 words in class, either by hand or using a digital tool. They use their notes in the logbook to answer the following questions:
 1. What kinds of oppression based on age, race and gender exist in the world of *Scythe*? Give examples from the novel.
 2. In what ways are the adolescents Citra and Rowan used and/or abused by adults throughout the novel? Give examples from the novel.

4. Art exhibition (Langer's stance 5)

- Each discussion group should create one work of art for an exhibition that will be displayed for a parallel class and/or the students' parents.
- Each discussion group must choose a scythe character and depict them in visual

tic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction is called formative assessment. It stands in contrast to summative assessment, which generally takes place after a period of instruction and requires making a judgment about the learning that has occurred (e.g., by grading or scoring a test or paper)" (1). Formative assessment is preferably provided both during the work process and in combination with summative assessment at the end of the work process. It consists of constructive feedback, which highlights strengths, areas of development and concrete suggestions for how to improve on current or similar tasks.

form. In the artwork, they should include adjectives that describe what kind of scythe and person the character is. There are no other restrictions on how they approach the task, and they may use whatever technique they like (drawing, painting, photography or collage, for example).

- Each group writes a brief text of approximately 100 words introducing the character to the exhibition's guests. The text is displayed next to the work of art.

Evaluation

Use the logbook for a brief evaluation of the teaching approach. Specifically ask the students how they experienced the combination of logbooks, group discussions and artwork.

USING DEPICTIONS OF ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

The chapter on adolescent mothers highlights how works of YA dystopian literature that use the adolescent mother motif do so in ways that connect the mothers' struggles to protect and raise their children in their dystopian worlds to age-related oppression of both the adolescent mothers and their children. This is the sense in which analysing the adolescent mother motif in YA dystopian literature incorporates an educational potential for age-related power aspects. Adolescent mothers are repeatedly pressured and/or forced to collaborate with adults and adult institutions and regimes against their will in the YA dystopian texts explored in the adolescent mother chapter, because not collaborating would put their child at risk. For example, in the *Blood Rain* series, this is shown by how Elin's daughter is taken from her mother during their imprisonment by the dystopian regime, to force Elin to reveal crucial political information about the rebels.

The kinds of oppression that the mothers face in the three case studies are extreme. Nonetheless, they mirror how adolescent mothers can be used and abused in non-fictional societies, and how being an adolescent mother in a society that does not view you as old enough to be a parent poses challenges, even if the circumstances for

raising your child are otherwise benign. Thereby, in a similar vein to the motif of the adolescent killer, the educational potential of the motif of the adolescent mother lies in the exaggerations of the vulnerability of the young mothers and their children and how it illustrates some of the hurdles of being a young mother in non-fictional societies.

The topic of adolescent mothers may not be quite as controversial as adolescent killers, but considering the level of policing of adolescents'—especially girls'—bodies and sexual activity in contemporary society, it may also be regarded as a taboo subject. Teachers thus need to approach the topic with a clear plan for dealing with it. Conceptions about sexuality and sexual activities are strongly connected to gender, often highlighting gender stereotypes about what it means to be female, male, non-conforming to a binary conception of gender, etcetera. Therefore, teaching approaches that focus on the motif of adolescent mothers can provide many opportunities for discussing gender issues. When the mother is an adolescent, the gender aspect is combined with assumptions about what a young person should/should not do and is able to do.

Apart from gender and age, the intersections with other power categories that position adolescent mother characters differently in relation to their dystopian societies can support an analysis of how ethnicity and perceived (dis)ability, for example, affect an individual's opportunities to make decisions about their life. In this sense, the educational potential of the adolescent mother motif is not only applicable to age and gender, but to other power categories too.

The main issue addressed in my suggested teaching approaches for Baggott's Lyda Mertz in the *Pure* trilogy, Frey and Johnson-Shelton's Shari Chopra in the *Endgame* trilogy and Wahl's Elin Holme in the *Blood Rain* series is how the characters of young mothers highlight age-related and other power structures in their dystopian worlds. To work through these questions, the students must know about oppression in non-fictional societies, as well as have the ability to compare it with equivalents in the depicted dystopian societies. They thus require knowledge of the allegorical function of YA dysto-

pian literature. Table 6, below, summarises the age-related ideologies that I identified in the chapter about the adolescent mother motif. In designing the tasks, I have attempted to support a discussion about some of the ideologies in relation to each series.

Table 6: Ideologies about adolescent mothers and age

Ideology	Present in
Children need to be protected from adult dystopian regimes by adolescent mothers and their allies (adolescents and/or adults) because of their vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
Children need to be protected from the oppressive institutions of dystopian regimes, since these institutions cannot be trusted to consider the needs of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
The younger generation needs a safer society than the current one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
Being an adolescent mother entails being prepared to risk—and even sacrifice—your own life for your child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy • Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
The adolescent mother has to rebel against the adult-led dystopian society to protect her child from harm and create a better society for her child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggott, <i>The Pure</i> trilogy • Frey & Johnson-Shelton, <i>The Endgame</i> trilogy

The adolescent mother needs to gain political power within the current political system to protect her child from harm and create a better society for her child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
It is amoral and unacceptable to turn an innocent child into a pawn in a political conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baggott, The <i>Pure</i> trilogy Frey & Johnson-Shelton, The <i>Endgame</i> trilogy
Adult power abuse of children is amoral and unacceptable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
Single motherhood puts extra pressure on the adolescent mother to protect her child from harm in a dystopian society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baggott, The <i>Pure</i> trilogy Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
It can be necessary to use lethal force to prevent your child from being killed in a dystopian world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frey & Johnson-Shelton, The <i>Endgame</i> trilogy Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]
Being a killer makes you unfit to be a mother.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wahl, <i>Blodregns</i>-serien [The Blood Rain series]

The teaching plans for the *Pure* trilogy, the *Endgame* trilogy and the *Blood Rain* series are presented below.

Teaching Plan

The *Pure* Trilogy: Protecting yourself and your unborn child from a dystopian world

Reading material

- Julianna Baggott, *Pure* (2012)
- Julianna Baggott, *Fuse* (2013)¹²⁴

124. I have included the first two books in this teaching plan, since Lyda does not get pregnant until the second book, but the world that she lives in and which affects her experience of pregnancy are comprehensively introduced in the first book. If there is not enough time to include both books, I suggest using a few excerpts from the first book to depict the gender and age-related power structures of

Focus

- How does becoming pregnant affect an unmarried adolescent girl in a patriarchal dystopian world?
- In what ways does Lyda's pregnancy lead to power abuse by adults?

Overall aims

- To discuss how female and male characters are depicted in YA dystopian literature.
- To analyse power structures related to age and gender in the world of the trilogy.
- To identify and analyse the motif of the adolescent mother in Baggott's series.
- To investigate the motivations, thoughts and feelings of the character of Lyda about her pregnancy.
- To compare how the adolescent mother Lyda is treated in her dystopian society with views on adolescent mothers in the student's society.

Preparations

- Before the first lesson: divide the novels *Pure* and *Fuse* into sections of approximately 50 pages each.

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stance 1)

- Write the title of the first book, *Pure*, on the whiteboard. Let the students discuss in pairs what this word makes them think about. They should provide one guess about the kind of topic(s) the book deals with.
- Search for some different covers of the novel *Pure* on the internet. Show the students the different covers. Let them continue the discussion in pairs and provide one more guess about what the book is about.
- Briefly discuss their guesses and their overall thoughts about the different covers with the class.
- Read the prologue and the first chapter aloud while the students follow the text in their own copies.
- Ask every student to write a brief summary of what they discovered about the world of the book so far. The summary is handed in to the teacher.
- Divide the students into discussion groups of approximately four students. These discussion groups will work together throughout the teaching unit on Baggott's trilogy. Ask the groups to list questions about the world of the trilogy

the trilogy or to summarise these aspects for the students.

generated by the prologue and the first chapter. This list is handed in at the end of the lesson.

- Briefly introduce the concepts of gender inequality and power discrepancies between adults and adolescents (with or without an explanation of the concepts of sexism and aetionormativity depending on the age/educational level of the students).
 - Assign the students the first section of *Pure* as homework. Also ask them to list questions about gender and age that arise during the reading experience.
- 2. The world of the *Pure* trilogy** (Langer's stances 1 & 2)
- Give a mini lecture about gender stereotypes and YA dystopian fiction:
 1. List stereotypes on the whiteboard. Let the students contribute examples of stereotypes. Also cover how YA dystopian literature challenges these stereotypes in its depiction of many strong female characters. (See the sections "Aspects of Power" in the introduction and "Girls on Fire" in Chapter 3 for inspiration.)
 2. Briefly discuss Katniss Everdeen from a gender perspective. Highlight stereotypically male and stereotypically female traits. Most students will be familiar with Katniss from either the book or the movie version of *The Hunger Games* trilogy, so she is a good character to use for exemplifying gender stereotypes.
 - Ask the students to read the questions they have listed while reading the first section of the book aloud for the other members of their discussion group.
 - The students should pick three or four questions they want to discuss from all the questions listed by the group members. The questions must be related to gender and/or age. The students' task is to discuss these questions and compare the world of the trilogy with their society's view of how power should be divided between different genders and ages. Each group assigns one chair and one secretary. The former leads the discussion and the latter takes notes to be handed in at the end of the lesson. The teacher can ask for handwritten or typed notes. The teacher moves between the different groups and listens and, after the lesson, the teacher reads the groups' notes and provides a brief formative assessment. The students may need scaffolding in the form of reminders to focus on gender and age, as well as additional information about concepts such as patriarchy, sexism and aetionormativity.
 - End the lesson with an art session. Each student draws and/or paints the world of the book, creating a map of the world. This kind of map is very common in the fantasy genre, but can fill a similar function in YA dystopian literature:

visualising the imaginary world of the characters.¹²⁵ At this point the students may not be able to include many details, but they will be able to continue working on their art projects throughout the reading process and add new details to their map.

- Repeat the whole process in the discussion groups, starting with the students' discussions of their questions after each section of the *Pure* novel. Assign a new chair and secretary each time. Give the students the opportunity to add more details/revise/redraw their map of the world of the novel after each section.
- 3. Speech about a character from the novel** (Langer's stances 2 & 4)
- Tell each student to pick one adolescent character from *Pure*.
 - In a brief speech of approximately 5 minutes, the students should discuss how gender and age affect their chosen character's access to power in the dystopian world of the novel. What are they able to do, and what kind of restrictions/rules are they expected to follow because of their gender and/or age? They should also discuss which stereotypically male and female characteristics the character displays. Follow these steps:
 1. Give the students time to write their speech over one or more lessons.
 2. Homework: rehearse the speech and time it.
 3. Give the speech to the rest of the class.
 4. The other students write down one question for each presenter on a post-it note and put it in a hat.
 5. The presenter picks one post-it note and answers the question after their speech.
 - The teacher provides written feedback for each student. This feedback should be formative assessment, which aims to support the development of the student's critical thinking and oral presentation skills.
- 4. Group discussions about the adolescent mother motif in *Fuse*** (Langer's stances 1, 2 & 4)
- Work according to the established process in the discussion groups, with one assigned chair and one secretary, but instead of listing their own questions, the students should now look for clues and answers to the questions below during the reading process. They will be able to answer some of the questions early on, but many of them are not raised until later in the novel. After each discussion session, the teacher reads the notes and provides brief formative assessment of their discussion.
 1. In what ways is the adolescent mother motif present in the novel?

125. A map like this is included in the *Gone* series (2008–2013) by Michael Grant.

2. How does Lyda react when she finds out that she is pregnant?
3. How do other characters in the novel react to her pregnancy?
4. In what ways are Lyda's independence and actions restricted by the dystopian society she lives in
 - a) before she gets pregnant,
 - b) after she gets pregnant?
5. How do views about how a girl or an adolescent should behave affect Lyda's life after she becomes pregnant?
6. Why does Lyda feel she has to protect her unborn child from harm?
7. Compare Lyda's reactions to the pregnancy with Partridge's reactions. Can Lyda rely on him to be a good father for her child?

5. Comparison speech about adolescent mothers in the *Pure* trilogy and reality
(Langer's stances 3 & 4)

- In a brief speech of approximately 5 minutes, the students should discuss Lyda's situation as an adolescent mother in the trilogy. They need to explain how she experiences being pregnant, how the dystopian society controls her before and after she has become pregnant, and compare her situation as an adolescent mother to equivalents in their own society.
 1. Give the students time to research the situation for adolescent mothers in their own society during lessons.
 2. Devote one lesson to writing the speech. The speech is handed in to the teacher after the task is finished. It can be handwritten or typed.
 3. Homework: rehearse the speech and time it.
 4. Present the speech to the rest of the class.
 5. The other students must ask the presenter questions. Decide on a minimum number of questions each student should ask during the presentation session as a whole.
 6. The teacher provides written formative assessment to each student and grades the speech.

Evaluation

Give the students the opportunity to evaluate the teaching approach individually and anonymously in writing, using a digital evaluation sheet. Ask them what they found most rewarding and most challenging about the tasks. Ask them to suggest improvements to the teaching approach.

Teaching Plan

The *Endgame* Trilogy: Protecting a magical child from harm

Reading material

James Frey & Nils Johnson-Shelton, *Endgame: The Calling* (2014)

James Frey & Nils Johnson-Shelton, *Sky Key: An Endgame Novel* (2015)¹²⁶

Focus

- How do different Players deal with the moral dilemmas of *Endgame*?
- In what ways does Shari's position as an adolescent mother affect how she approaches *Endgame*, with its goal of killing all the other Players to save your own people from extinction?

Overall aims

- To be able to identify genre traits from YA dystopian literature, fantasy and science fiction in the first two *Endgame* books.
- To analyse power structures related to age, gender, ethnicity and class in the world of the trilogy.
- To identify and analyse the motif of the adolescent mother in the *Endgame* trilogy.
- To identify and analyse the motif of the adolescent killer in the *Endgame* trilogy.¹²⁷
- To analyse the different Players' thoughts, feelings and reactions to the rules of *Endgame*.
- To analyse the narration of the novel: from whose perspective is the narrative told? How does the choice of this kind of narration affect the reading experience?¹²⁸

126. The first two books are included in this teaching plan, since the depiction of Shari's position as an adolescent mother is deepened and becomes more complicated in the second book. An alternative to using both books is to work with excerpts and a mind map of the overall storyline of the first book and to focus on a close reading of the second book.

127. In Shari's case, the depiction of her motherhood is so directly linked to the presence of the adolescent killer motif in the trilogy that it is necessary to investigate how these motifs are related in order to understand the choices she makes in the role of an adolescent mother.

128. The concept of focalisation can be introduced if the class is ready to be taught more complex literary concepts. According to Burkhard Niederhoff's entry in *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (entry posted 2011, revised 2013), "[fo]calization [...] may be defined as a selection or restriction of narrative information in relation to the experience and knowledge of the narrator, the characters or other,

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stance 1)

- Read the prologue (pages ix–x) aloud together.
- List the rules of Endgame on the whiteboard.
- Let the students discuss in pairs the dilemma of having to kill some people to save the rest. Ask them to imagine they are Players: what would they do in this situation? Summarise the groups' conclusions together with the rest of the class.
- Introduce the tasks that the students will work with in relation to the Endgame books and give them a list of the tasks, so they can cross things out once a task is completed. The students will work independently with the different tasks with the support of the teacher and a digital learning platform.
- Let the students individually watch a pre-recorded mini lecture on the defining genre traits of YA dystopian literature. (See the section "What is Young Adult Dystopian Literature?" in the introduction for inspiration on what to touch on in the lecture.) The teacher answers the students' questions.
- When each student finishes with the lecture, they move on to reading the book.

2. Individual work, list of tasks (Langer's stances 1–4)

- a) Watch the mini lecture about fantasy literature. Write down the three most important facts you learned during the lecture and hand in your notes to your teacher.
- b) Watch the mini lecture about science fiction literature. Write down one question for your teacher that you think needs clearer explanation. The teacher collects this information and records a brief message for the students, explaining these aspects in a bit more depth.
- c) Read the first novel, *The Calling*. Throughout the reading process you should list information about the different characters. List their character traits, their view on having to kill because of Endgame and their power position in society (class, gender, race, age, ethnicity, mental health, etcetera). Hand in your notes.
- d) Quiz time: Pick one character and select a song that you think fits your character. Write a brief comment for your teacher explaining why you picked that song. For one lesson, your teacher will divide you into groups of approximately

more hypothetical entities in the storyworld" (Paragraph 1). In essence, a focaliser is a character or narrator through whom the actions in a narrative are experienced. Questions that can be used to identify the focaliser include "Who sees a certain event?". The same focaliser can be used throughout a whole novel or it can switch throughout the narrative.

four students. Your teacher will play the song and have the groups guess who it refers to. You may have to give clues to your fellow students.

- e) Wiki: Pick one of the characters and write a wiki¹²⁹ entry about them. Post your entry in an open discussion forum for the rest of the students.
- f) Comment on another student's wiki entry. You need to pick someone who has written about a different character. Write feedback to your fellow student about the content of the entry and the structure of the post. State both what is good and what can be developed further. Questions to consider: Is the description of the character accurate? Are any important pieces of information missing? Does the entry start with a brief introduction? Are the conclusions summarised at the end of the entry?
- g) Revise your entry using the peer feedback. Post the updated wiki entry.
- h) The teacher grades the task and then collects all entries into a wiki. The wiki entries are pinned to the wall of the classroom and other students and/or parents are invited to view and read OR the entries are made available digitally using a class blog, for example.
- i) Formal essay: Read the second Endgame novel, *Sky Key*. Take notes during the reading process on events and quotations you can use when writing an essay on the topics below. The essay will be graded by your teacher. You will receive feedback on its content and composition. The essay should start with a brief introduction that introduces your topic and a brief conclusion in which you summarise your findings. Make sure you include the page numbers where you found the information in the novel.

These are the questions you must cover:

- How does Shari's age, gender, ethnicity and class affect her access to power within the world of Endgame? Compare her power position to another Player who you regard as either more or less powerful than Shari.
- In what ways does Shari's position as a young mother affect how she plays Endgame? Compare her strategy with that of at least one other Player.
- How does Shari try to protect her daughter? Mention at least three examples.
- Voluntary extra task: Watch the mini lecture about focalisers. Take notes and write down a definition of what a focaliser is. Give three examples from three different focalisers, where it becomes clear that the narrative is focalised from their point of view. Post your response in a discussion forum. Comment on at

129. A wiki can be defined as a collective webpage with entries about a specific phenomenon, such as a book or a movie. For a description of a wiki, see Laurillard 195–197. In this teaching plan, I have adjusted the process slightly to fit the aims of the unit on *Endgame*.

least one other student's examples. Are they accurate? Clear? What did you learn from reading your fellow student's post?

Written, anonymous evaluation

How did you experience the teaching approach? Which task was the most rewarding and which one was the most challenging? Do you have any suggestions for how your teacher can improve this approach in the future?

Teaching Plan

The *Blood Rain* Series: Abuse of children and adolescents by a dystopian regime

Reading material

- Mats Wahl, *Krigarna* [The Warriors] (2014)¹³⁰

Focus

- What is it like to raise a child on your own in a dystopian world?
- How does this vision of a future dystopian Sweden highlight the ways that children and adolescents can be abused by adults?

Overall aims

- To analyse the role of violence in YA dystopian literature.
- To compare how children and adolescents' rights are disregarded and/or abused in the future Sweden of the *Blood Rain* series and in contemporary society.
- To identify and analyse the motif of the adolescent mother in the *Blood Rain* series.
- To discuss statements about age-related power structures in the novel related to the adolescent mother motif and to explain why or why not the student agrees with the statements.

Preparations

- Before the first lesson: Select a few scenes from *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* movies that are available on YouTube and which depict violence and its role in YA dystopian fiction.¹³¹
- Divide the novel into sections of approximately 50 pages.

130. Sadly, the book series has not been translated into English, so is only available in Swedish. However, the teaching tasks presented in this section can be adapted to other YA dystopian works.

131. Suggested scenes from *The Hunger Games* movies: Rue's death, Prim Everdeen's death and Katniss kills Alma Coin. Suggested scenes from the *Divergent* movies: Tris Prior and Four's fight, Tris fights Peter Hayes and the Erudite attack.

TASKS

1. Introduction (Langer's stances 1 & 2)

- Watch the movie scenes together and ask the students to list the different types of violence that are depicted.
- Make a mind map with the students for different kinds of violence in YA dystopian fiction using the whiteboard OR a virtual mind map.
- Read chapters 1–3 aloud. Discuss who Harald is.
- Hand out a brief summary of the first book in the series, *Ryttarna* [The Riders], to the students (see my analysis of the book in the section called “Protecting Your Child in a Dystopian Sweden” for a summary of vital events related to Elin’s role as a mother).
- Give a brief mini lecture about the adolescent mother motif in YA dystopian literature. (See the section “Adolescent Mothers in Young Adult Dystopian Literature” for inspiration.)
- Assign the students the first section of *Krigarna* as homework. Tell them to list examples of power abuse directed at children and adolescents by adults. This list is handed in at the beginning of the next lesson.

2. Blog writing in pairs (Langer's stances 1–5)

- Begin the lesson by dividing the class into pairs.
- Each pair will be responsible for one blog about *Krigarna*. If your school does not have access to a good blog platform, the students can either post their entries on a digital learning platform or hand in printouts that are collected as a leaflet at the end of the process. You read their blog posts throughout the process and provide brief formative assessment. At the end of the process, you grade the whole blog.
- Instructions for the blog:
 - You and your fellow student have started a blog about the novel *Krigarna* and young people’s rights in the real world. Write the following two posts together after you have finished reading the first section of the book:
 - a) Pick a name for your blog and, in your first blog post, explain why you chose this name.
 - b) Write a statement about the blog’s aims. If you want, include some background information about yourselves too.
- Throughout the reading process, write one new post together after finishing a section of the book (seven posts in total). Make sure you divide the work evenly. For example, one person can be in charge of writing the first draft and the other person can edit the post and then you can switch roles for the next post.
- You must include the following types of posts in the blog, but you decide the order you want to write them:

- a) A brief newspaper article about what it is like to be an adolescent mother in the world of the novel.
- b) An interview with Elin about her experiences of getting captured and locked up by the government. Include some pictures that visualise her feelings.
- c) An editorial about the role of violence in YA dystopian literature. Discuss how you think young readers relate to the depictions of violence in this popular genre. Use examples from *Krigarna*.
- d) A list of examples of abuse found in the novel, briefly explaining what kind of abuse this is (for example age-related, sexist, class-related, an intersection between different kinds of abuse).
- e) An awareness-raising article about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in which you compare the kinds of adult power abuse found in the novel with the listed rights, and exemplify how these rights are not ensured in the future version of Sweden in the *Blood Rain* series.
- f) A debate article about whether Elin's decision to kill the people who invaded her home and threatened her family was justifiable or not. Take a stand and try to convince your readers of your opinion.
- g) A poem about how you would feel if you lived in Elin's world.

Evaluation

Let the students discuss in their blog pairs how the collaboration and blog-writing worked out. What was hard? What was easy? Which blog post was the most exciting to write? The most difficult? Afterwards, the students individually write a brief evaluation of the benefits and challenges of collaborating with their fellow blog writer. Use a handout or a digital evaluation tool.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of previous research on teaching YA dystopian literature, introduced the concepts of critical literacy, narrative imagination and envisionment building, and presented teaching plans for the six YA dystopian texts that I analysed in depth in the previous two chapters. The motifs of the adolescent killer and the adolescent mother, as well as genre knowledge about YA dystopian literature and different examples of oppression, are at the centre of these teaching plans. I have suggested tools for teachers who want to actualise the educational potential of YA dystopian literature for addressing age-related power structures, as well as other types of oppression.

By applying a variety of teaching methods, it is possible to support the students' development of their narrative imagination, which equals taking on different characters' perspectives, as well as the exploration of their envisionments, which includes the five stances identified by Langer. This may enable students to expand their knowledge of oppression by analysing ideologies in literary fiction, which is in line with critical literacy. At the same time, the variation of individual, pair and group tasks, written and oral tasks, and different forms of artistic expression, all aim to give students the opportunity to express themselves in a way they feel comfortable with. The teaching plans suggested in this chapter can be adapted to fit other YA dystopian texts. The techniques, such as creating artwork that depicts characters and the world of the novels, or writing blog posts about a particular novel, can also be applied to other genres of literary fiction.

My hope is that the teaching plans have provided inspiration for how to address oppression in a school context, while also highlighting genre aspects of the popular genre of YA dystopian literature. The exaggerated power inequalities in YA dystopian literature allows the genre to highlight power aspects by shocking readers with these dystopian futures' blatant disregard for human rights, while also underlining how they may not be as different from contemporary soci-

ety's way of oppressing groups and minorities as people may think. The teaching plans aim to highlight these similarities using a range of means and thus suggest varied tools for activating the educational potential of YA dystopian literature in the classroom.

MOTHERS AND MURDERERS IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mothers and Murderers: Adults' Oppression of Children and Adolescents in Young Adult Dystopian Literature explores power differences between children and adolescents, on the one hand, and adults on the other. The corpus of primary texts includes 101 Anglophone and Swedish YA dystopian texts and two proto-texts for the genre. Throughout the study, I have applied an intersectional approach, underlining how the power category of age needs to be analysed in relationship to other power categories, such as gender, race, sexuality and (dis)ability¹³². I thereby argue that an analysis of age that *either* regards young people and young characters in children's literature as necessarily less powerful than adults and adult characters, in line with Maria Nikolajeva's understanding of the concept of aetonnormativity, *or* as more mighty than the adults, in line with Clémentine Beauvais' concept of the mighty child, needs to be nuanced.

As this study has shown, in YA dystopian literature, children and adolescent characters are repeatedly repressed and oppressed by adult forces, but they also rebel against and challenge these adult characters and institutions. Thus, they are repeatedly empowered and disempowered within the narratives. By conceptualising Nikolajeva's and Beauvais' theoretical positions as two different motifs, the controlled child/adolescent and the mighty child/adolescent, this study has interrogated the power relationships between the young and adult

132. For an explanation of the parentheses around "dis", see note 2, p. 18–19.

characters in different dystopian worlds. This has been done by analysing specific adolescent characters' ability to affect their own lives and the dystopian world they live in at specific times in the narrative. The study focuses on adolescent killers and adolescent mothers, analysing how these different motifs are used in YA dystopian novels to explore the relationship of power between the young generation and the adults.

In addition, the study has identified which ideologies about age-related oppression are communicated in specific YA dystopian texts through the adolescent killer motif and the adolescent mother motif. I have illustrated that YA dystopian literature has the educational potential to interrogate the power category of age, due to its use of hyperbole, in the power relationships between the young generation and adults in non-fictional societies. The YA dystopian works in my corpus establish allegorical links between future dystopian worlds and non-fictional societies. Using extreme examples of adult power abuse, the genre can illuminate the power structures that dictate what young people are allowed and expected to do and how adults' sometimes well-intended restrictions on young people's freedom can turn into a power abuse in non-fictional societies. The study provides six teaching plans that can be used in the classroom for working with YA dystopian literature, power and oppression, thus incorporating both textual analysis chapters and a chapter with practical teaching suggestions.

The first text analysis chapter on the adolescent killer motif includes an overview of the nine different types of adolescent killers I identified in my corpus. It also includes three case studies for the following protagonists in YA dystopian works: Red in American author Christina Henry's novel *The Girl in Red* (2019), Juliette Ferrars in Iranian-American author Tahereh Mafi's *Shatter Me* series (2011–2020) and both Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch in American author Neal Shusterman's *Arc of a Scythe* trilogy (2016–2019). An important aim of this chapter is examining how becoming an adolescent killer affects the protagonists' access to power in their dystopian worlds. An intersectional approach to power, which underlines how differ-

ent power categories intersect with each other and affect who has access to power and who does not, is used throughout the chapter. The overall conclusion is that adolescents are repeatedly forced to become killers in the YA dystopian literature in my corpus. They can either be forced by an adult, or an adult institution that uses them as a weapon, or by the dystopian circumstances of the society they live in, which may, for example, make it impossible for an adolescent to survive being attacked if they do not resort to lethal violence. Therefore, killing someone does not necessarily equal empowerment. Instead, being forced to kill by an adult force is a persistent function of adults abusing their power privileges. The adolescents who become killers are thus both empowered and repressed by the act of taking someone's life in relation to the adults and adult institutions in their dystopian society.

In the second textual analysis chapter, on adolescent mothers, I analyse Lyda Mertz in American author Julianna Baggott's *Pure* trilogy (2012–2014), Shari Chopra in American authors James Frey and Nils Johnson-Shelton's *Endgame* trilogy (2014–2016) and Elin Holme in Swedish author Mats Wahl's *Blodregn* [Blood Rain] series (2014–2017). One overarching aim of the chapter is to analyse how the position of being an adolescent mother is used to identify and to critique aetnonormative power structures in a dystopian society. These mothers constantly go to extremes to protect both their child and themselves from adults and adult institutions that are prepared to hurt, abuse and use them for political purposes. Because the adolescent mother is both an adult authority for her child and an adolescent who is affected by how the adults in her society treat adolescents, the adolescent mother occupies a liminal position in terms of age-related power. She is neither the child nor the adult. One conclusion from the chapter is thus that paying critical attention to a character's age in an analysis of adolescents' power position in YA dystopian literature is not enough. Age is not a simple binary between young people and adults. Instead, an intersectional approach that considers the adolescent mother's (dis)ability, class and job position in society, for example, as well as gender norms, is crucial.

I begin the chapter on classroom applications by describing my own teaching experience and my overall approach to learning. One central theoretical underpinning for both my personal teaching profile and the suggested teaching plans is the sociocultural approach, which emphasises how learners need to interact with both their teacher and other students for their learning development to evolve. In this chapter, I thus combine my two professional roles as an academic and a teacher in the subjects of Swedish and History for secondary and upper secondary schools. The overall aim of the chapter is to support teachers and trainee teachers who want to actualise the educational potential of YA dystopian literature vis-à-vis age and other power categories in their classrooms. The chapter includes an overview of previous research on educational aspects of YA dystopian literature, a section on my theoretical framework for the teaching plans, and the six teaching plans. I also summarise the ideologies about oppression found in my case studies and discuss some classroom challenges associated with the taboo subjects of adolescent killers and mothers. The theories used to support the teaching plans are *critical literacy*, Martha C. Nussbaum's concept of *narrative imagination* and Judith A. Langer's notion of *envisionment building*.

In this study's overviews of previous research on YA dystopian literature, I state that there are not many monographs. Instead, scholars tend to use the article format and essay collections when working with this genre. Consequently, there are rich and varied contributions on various aspects of YA dystopian literature, but the studies are generally brief. I want to urge scholars to devote monographs to the genre in future research, which will make it possible to delve deeper into a genre that is widely read by people of various ages and which can provide many insights about the contemporary world and the types of futures humanity wants to avoid. The genre also possesses many educational opportunities.

Future research that explores teaching processes for when teachers introduce YA dystopian literature in the classroom would be valuable, as it would facilitate the leap from potential learning outcomes and educational aspects of the novels themselves to what happens in

the classroom when students explore future dystopian worlds. Considering the impact that the environmental crisis and the coronavirus pandemic has had and will continue to have on future generations, the world of 2021 is, in many ways, similar to the dystopian nightmares of YA dystopian literature. As the protagonist Red in Henry's novel illustrates, knowledge of dystopian narratives may sometimes prepare people for a crisis by demonstrating the necessity for preparation and for tracking the development of, for example, a pandemic in detail. By analysing young readers' reactions to YA dystopian novels in the classroom, scholars can both give young people a voice in academia and compare their analysis of a specific YA dystopian text with its target audience's interpretations. In this sense, the gap between adult scholars' privileged position, one that I occupy, and young people, can hopefully be bridged or at least lessened.

Another area of research I intend to explore further is the depiction of adult roles in YA dystopian literature. In this study, adolescent characters have been the lens through which I have approached YA dystopian literature, but by focusing on the depiction of adults as literal or metaphorical monsters, or societies in YA dystopian literature without adults, age-related power structures can be analysed from a different vantage point. I regard age as a power category in need of much more critical attention, not the least because restrictions on young people's freedom and decision-making are viewed as natural and necessary in contemporary society.

As Nikolajeva states, today's children will eventually grow up and become adults. Consequently, they will transition from the non-normative group, that of children facing oppression due to their youth, to the normative group, that of adults with the power to oppress children due to privileges that are only available to adults. While Nikolajeva focuses on an analysis of children's and YA literature, she bases her argument about the specifics of aetionormativity on how children in non-fictional societies will grow up and become the adults of the future. On reaching adulthood, they have usually become accustomed to the power that adults have over children, and will therefore most likely use and sometimes even abuse the power that adulthood

gives them in relation to the new generation of children. Nikolajeva uses the adult Harry Potter in J. K. Rowling's series as an example of a young character who finds the adult rules unfair during his childhood and adolescence, but who later enforces these rules in relation to his three children ("Theory" 18).

In a different study, I have compared the adult Harry in the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016) with the portrayal of the young Harry in the Harry Potter novels (1997–2007). My conclusion is that

[w]hen the previously oppressed become the oppressors in *Cursed Child*, adult normativity re-establishes itself from one generation to the next like an ever revolving wheel of power. Harry is indeed 'prepared to oppress his own children,' just as Nikolajeva predicted, and it is in this sense that *Cursed Child* is cursed by aetonnormativity. (Alkestrand, "Harry" 55)

The young Harry, who used to challenge the adults and their rules, has become an adult who controls his own children and does not regard limiting his children's freedom as problematic.

In a similar vein, Coriolanus Snow, from Suzanne Collins' prequel to *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008–2010), *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (2020), is initially appalled by how young people are abused in the Hunger Games. He even participates in one of the Games himself. However, when he sets out to become the future leader of Panem, he decides to continue the annual Games: "People would call him a tyrant, ironfisted and cruel. But at least he would ensure survival for survival's sake, giving them a chance to evolve. What else could humanity hope for? Really, it should thank him" (Collins, *Ballad* 516). Here, Coriolanus justifies the oppression of children, which he formerly regarded as amoral, with the greater good of making people better adapted to survive in a harsh world. He thereby decides to continue this severe form of oppression of the young and to use innocent children to make a statement. The wheel of power has gone

full circle and, over time, Coriolanus will become one of the most cruel and power-hungry adults in Panem.

Coriolanus' justification of the Hunger Games is a frightening demonstration of the logic behind adult oppression of children and adolescents, showing how the oppressed can become oppressors. Most adults—including most teachers—have young people's safety and well-being at heart when they establish rules and restrictions. However, the line between protecting the young from elements of reality they should not yet have to deal with, on the one hand, and the abuse of adult power privileges, on the other, can often be blurred and slippery in non-fictional societies. This is the reason why the use of hyperbole in the YA dystopian literature I explored in this study has profound educational potential for highlighting, interrogating and challenging age-related power structures in non-fictional societies, through the lens of future dystopian worlds.

WORKS CITED

Primary Texts

TEXT CORPUS

Proto-Texts

Atwood, Margaret. 1986. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Anchor Books, 2017.

Orwell, George. 1949. 1984. Signet Classics, 1977.

YA Dystopian Literature

Baggott, Julianna. *Burn*. Headline, 2014.

— . *Fuse*. Headline, 2013.

— . *Lyda*. Published online 2015. www.wattpad.com/155866776-pure-lyda-extra-material-lyda [2 Apr 2020].

— . *Pure*. Headline, 2012.

Blackman, Malorie. 2005. *Checkmate*. Penguin, 2017.

— . 2008. *Double Cross*. Penguin, 2017.

— . 2004. *Knife Edge*. Penguin, 2017.

— . 2001. *Noughts & Crosses*. Penguin, 2017.

Bray, Libba. 2011. *Beauty Queens*. Scholastic, 2012.

Bracken, Alexandra. 2014. *In the Afterlight*. Quercus, 2016.

— . 2013. *Never Fade*. Quercus, 2016.

— . *The Darkest Legacy*. Quercus, 2018.

— . 2012. *The Darkest Minds*. Quercus, 2016.

Collins, Suzanne. 2009. *Catching Fire*. Scholastic, 2013.

— . 2010. *Mockingjay*. Scholastic, 2013.

— . *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*. Scholastic, 2020.

— . 2008. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2013.

- Dashner, James. 2011. *The Death Cure*. The Chicken House, 2013.
- . 2016. *The Fever Code*. The Chicken House, 2017.
- . 2012. *The Kill Order*. The Chicken House, 2013.
- . 2009. *The Maze Runner*. The Chicken House, 2013.
- . 2010. *The Scorch Trials*. The Chicken House, 2011.
- Day, Anna. *The Fandom*. The Chicken House, 2018.
- . *The Fandom Rising*. The Chicken House, 2019.
- Edfeldt, Lizette. *Brännmärkt* [Branded]. Louise Bäckelin Förlag, 2017.
- Ewing, Amy. *The Black Key*. Walker Books, 2016.
- . *The Jewel*. Walker Books, 2014.
- . *The White Rose*. Walker Books, 2015.
- Frey, James, and Nils Johnson-Shelton. 2014. *Endgame: The Calling*. Harper Collins UK, 2015.
- . 2016. *Rules of the Game: An Endgame Novel*. Harper Collins UK, 2017.
- . *Sky Key: An Endgame Novel*. Harper Collins UK, 2015.
- Grant, Michael. 2012. *Fear*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- . 2008. *Gone*. Harper Collins, 2014.
- . 2009. *Hunger*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- . 2010. *Lies*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- . 2013. *Light*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- . 2011. *Plague*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- Henry, Christina. *The Girl in Red*. Titan Books, 2019.
- Lowry, Lois. *Gathering Blue*. Delacorte Press, 2000.
- . 2004. *Messenger*. Bantam Books, 2009.
- . 2012. *Son*. Harper Collins Children's Books, 2014.
- . 1993. *The Giver*. Harper Collins Children's Books, 2008.
- Lu, Marie. 2013. *Champion*. Speak, 2014.
- . 2011. *Legend*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- . *Prodigy*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- Mafi, Tahereh. *Defy Me*. Electric Monkey, 2019.
- . 2014. *Ignite Me*. Harper Collins, 2015.
- . *Imagine Me*. Electric Monkey, 2020.
- . *Restore Me*. Electric Monkey, 2018.

- . 2011. *Shatter Me*. Harper Collins, 2018.
- . *Unravel Me*. Harper Collins, 2013.
- Malley, Gemma. 2007. *The Declaration*. Bloomsbury, 2012.
- . 2010. *The Legacy*. Bloomsbury, 2012.
- . 2008. *The Resistance*. Bloomsbury, 2012.
- McCafferty, Megan. 2011. *Bumped*. Balzer+Bray, 2012.
- . 2012. *Thumped*. Balzer+Bray, 2013.
- Melamed, Jennie. 2017. *Gather the Daughters*. Tinder Press, 2018.
- Morgan, Kass. *Day 21*. Hodder, 2014.
- . *Homecoming*. Hodder, 2015.
- . *Rebellion*. Hodder, 2016.
- . *The 100*. Hodder, 2013.
- Nordin, Sofia. 2013. *En sekund i taget* [One Second at a Time]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2016.
- . *Om du såg mig nu* [If You Could See Me Now]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2017.
- . 2015. *Som om jag vore fantastisk* [As if I Were Fantastic]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2016.
- . 2014. *Spring så fort du kan* [Run as Fast as You Can]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2016.
- O'Brien, Caragh. 2010. *Birthmarked*. Roaring Brook Press, 2011.
- . 2011. *Prized*. Roaring Brook Press, 2012.
- . 2012. *Promised*. Roaring Brook Press, 2013.
- O'Neill, Louise. 2014. *Only Ever Yours*. Quercus, 2015.
- Reeve, Philip. 2006. *A Darkling Plain*. Scholastic, 2018.
- . 2005. *Infernal Devices*. Scholastic, 2018.
- . 2001. *Mortal Engines*. Scholastic, 2018.
- . 2003. *Predator's Gold*. Scholastic, 2018.
- Roth, Veronica. *Allegiant*. Harper Collins, 2013.
- . *Carve the Mark*. Harper Collins, 2017.
- . 2011. *Divergent*. Harper Collins, 2012.
- . *Insurgent*. Harper Collins, 2012.
- . *The Fates Divide*. Harper Collins, 2018.
- Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*. Walker Books, 2016.

- . *The Toll*. Walker Books, 2019.
- . *Thunderhead*. Walker Books, 2018.
- . *Undivided*. Simon & Shuster, 2014.
- . *Unsouled*. Simon & Shuster, 2013.
- . *Unwholly*. Simon & Shuster, 2012.
- . *Unwind*. Simon & Shuster, 2007.
- Söderberg, Marta. *Athena*. Gilla Böcker, 2015.
- Söderlund, Mats. *Flykten* [The Escape]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2020.
- . *Hotet* [The Threat]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2018.
- . *Kampen* [The Struggle]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2018.
- Wahl, Mats. *De levande* [The Living]. Natur & Kultur, 2016.
- . *De älskande* [The Loving]. Natur & Kultur, 2017.
- . *Krigarna* [The Warriors]. Natur & Kultur, 2014.
- . *Lagstiftarna* [The Lawmakers]. Natur & Kultur, 2015.
- . *Ryttarna* [The Riders]. Natur & Kultur, 2014.
- Westerfeld, Scott. 2007. *Extras*. Simon and Shuster, 2012.
- . 2005. *Pretties*. Simon and Shuster, 2012.
- . 2006. *Specials*. Simon and Shuster, 2012.
- . 2005. *Uglies*. Simon and Shuster, 2012.
- Young, Moira. 2011. *Blood Red Road*. McElderry Books, 2012.
- . 2014. *Raging Star*. McElderry Books, 2015.
- . 2012. *Rebel Heart*. McElderry Books, 2013.

ADDITIONAL PRIMARY TEXTS

- Charbonneau, Joelle. 2014. *Graduation Day*. Hot Key Books, 2017.
- . 2014. *Independent Study*. Hot Key Books, 2017.
- . *The Testing*. Templar Publishing, 2013.
- Poznanski, Ursula. *Sammansvärjningen* [The Conspiracy]. Translated from German by Sofia Lindelöf, Opal, 2015.
- . *Slutet* [The End]. Translated from German by Sofia Lindelöf, Opal, 2016.

- . *Sveket* [The Betrayal]. Translated from German by Sofia Lindelöf, Opal, 2014.
- Stivers, Carole. *The Mother Code*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2020.
- Tegby, Gustaf. *Beröringen* [The Touch]. Rabén & Sjögren, 2019.

Secondary Sources

- Abate, Michelle Ann. *Bloody Murder: The Homicide Tradition in Children's Literature*. John Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Alexander, Jonathan, and Rebecca Black. "The Darker Side of the Sorting Hat: Representations of Educational Testing in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction." *Children's Literature*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2015, pp. 208–234. *JHU*, doi:10.1353/chl.2015.0019 [27 May 2021].
- Alkestrand, Malin. "Adolescent Killer and Politician: Age-Related Ideologies in the Dystopian Future Sweden of Mats Wahl's *Blood Rain* Series", *HumaNetten*, vol. 43, 2019, pp. 207–229. *Open.lnu.se*, doi: 10.15626/hn.20194312 [2 Apr 2020].
- . "Bristen på social hållbarhet i framtiden: Ungdomsdystopin Eleria-trilogins didaktiska potential" [The Lack of Social Sustainability in the Future: The Educational Potential of the Dystopic Eleria Trilogy for Young Adults]. *Didaktiska perspektiv på hållbarhetsteman i barn- och ungdomslitteratur* [Didactic Perspectives on Sustainability Themes in Children's and Young Adult Literature], edited by Corina Löwe and Åsa Nilsson Skåve, Natur & Kultur, 2020, pp. 164–185.
- . "(De)Stabilizing the Boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them': Racial Oppression and Racism in Two YA Dystopias Available in Swedish." *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*, edited by Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Meghan Gilbert-Hickey, University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp. 93–110.
- . "Harry Potter and the Curse of Aetonnormativity: Age-Related Cognitive Scripts and a Disruption of 'the *Harry Potter* Literary Schema' in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2020, pp. 43–58. *Muse*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.2020.0003> [27 May 2021].
- . *Magiska möjligheter: Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl och Cirkeln i skolans*

- värdegrundsarbete* [Magical Possibilities: Teaching Values in Schools through Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl and The Circle]. Makadam, 2016, doctoral thesis.
- . “Righteous Rebellion in Fantasy and Science Fiction for the Young: The Example of Harry Potter.” *Hype: Bestsellers and Literary Culture*, edited by Jon Helgason, Sara Kärrholm, and Ann Steiner, Nordic Academic Press, 2014, pp. 109–126.
- Ames, Melissa. “Engaging ‘Apolitical’ Adolescents: Analyzing the Popularity and Educational Potential of Dystopian Literature Post-9/11.” *The High School Journal*, vol. 97, no. 1, 2013, pp. 3–20. Muse, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2013.0023> [2 Apr 2020].
- Attebery, Brian. *Strategies of Fantasy*. Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Baccolini, Raffaella. “Gender and Genre in the Feminist Critical Dystopias of Katharine Burdekin, Margaret Atwood, and Octavia Butler.” *Future Females, The Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*, edited by Marleen S. Barr, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, pp. 13–34.
- . “‘A useful knowledge of the present is rooted in the past’: Memory and Historical Reconciliation in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Telling*.” *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, edited by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, Routledge 2003, pp. 113–134.
- Baccolini, Raffaella, and Tom Moylan. “Introduction: Dystopia and Histories.” *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, edited by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, Routledge 2003.
- Bach, Jacqueline, Melanie Hundley, and Emily Tarver. “Unwinding Ethical Questions.” *Children’s and YA Books in the College Classroom: Essays on Instructional Methods*, edited by Emily Dial-Driver, Jim Ford, and Sara N. Beam, McFarland, 2015, pp. 127–135.
- Bach, Jacqueline, Emily Peters, and Joshua Bourgeois. “Teaching Students the ‘What-Ifs’: Conversations on YA Speculative Fiction.” *English Journal*, vol. 109, no. 2, 2019, pp. 39–46. ProQuest, https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lnu.se/docview/2328348304?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2F-sid%3Aprimo [26 Mar 2020].
- Barclay, Bridgette. 2014. “‘Perpetually Waving to an Unseen Crowd’: Satire and Process in *Beauty Queens*.” *Female Rebellion in Young Adult*

- Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 141–153.
- Baril, Alexandre, and Kathryn Trevenen. “Exploring Ableism and Cisnormativity in the Conceptualization of Identity and Sexuality ‘Disorders.’” *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2014, pp. 389–416. Google Scholar, https://scholar.google.se/scholar?hl=sv&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=Exploring+Ableism+and+Cisnormativity+in+the++Conceptualization+of+Identity+and+Sexuality+%E2%80%98Disorders%E2%80%99&btnG= [11 Jan 2021].
- Basu, Balaka. 2013. “What Faction Are You In? The Pleasure of Being Sorted in Veronica Roth’s *Divergent*.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge 2014, pp. 19–33.
- Basu, Balaka, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz (eds.). 2013. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, Routledge, 2014.
- Basu, Balaka, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz. 2013. “Introduction.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge 2014, pp. 1–15.
- Beach, Richard, Deborah Appleman, Bob Fecho, and Rob Simon. *Teaching Literature to Adolescents*. 3rd edition, Routledge, 2016.
- Bean, Thomas W., and Karen Moni. “Developing Students’ Critical Literacy: Exploring Identity Construction in Young Adult Fiction.” *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, vol. 46, no. 8, May 2003, pp. 638–648. JSTOR, <https://about.jstor.org/terms> [20 Oct 2020].
- Beauvais, Clémentine. “Romance, Dystopia, and the Hybrid Child.” *Contemporary Adolescent Literature and Culture*, edited by Maria Nikolajeva and Mary Hilton, Routledge, 2016, pp. 71–86.
- . *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children’s Literature*. John Benjamins, 2015.
- Bonnevier, Jenny. *Estranging Cognition: Feminist Science Fiction and the Borders of Reason*. Engelska institutionen, 2005. Uppsala University, doctoral thesis.
- Borsheim-Black, Carlin, Michael Macaluso, and Robert Petrone. “Crit-

- ical Literature Pedagogy: Teaching Canonical Literature for Critical Literacy.” *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, vol. 58, no. 2, Oct. 2014, pp. 123–133. Wiley, doi: 10.1002/jaal.323 [20 Oct 2020].
- Boston, Carol. “The Concept of Formative Assessment.” *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, vol. 8, no. 9, 2002, pp. 1–4. Umass, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7275/kmcq-dj31> [20 Oct 2020].
- Bradford, Clare. “Race, Ethnicity and Colonialism.” *The Routledge Companion to Children’s Literature*, edited by David Rudd, Routledge, 2010, pp. 39–50.
- Bradford, Clare, Kerry Mallan, John Stephens, and Robyn McCallum. 2007. *New World Orders in Contemporary Children’s Literature: Utopian Transformations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Braithwaite, Elizabeth. “‘The hope—the one hope—is that your generation will prove wiser and more responsible than mine.’ Constructions of Guilt in a Selection of Disaster Texts for Young Adults.” *Barnboken: Journal of Children’s Literature Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1–14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/clr.v35i0.15316> [8 Dec 2020].
- . “‘When I Was a Child I Thought As a Child’: The Importance of Memory in Constructions of Childhood and Social Order in a Selection of Post-disaster Fictions.” *Papers: Explorations into Children’s Literature*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2005, pp. 50–57. Deakin, <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30003342/braithwaite-wheniwasachild-2005.pdf> [9 Dec 2020].
- Braun, Heather. “Invisibility and (Dis) Embodiment in Louise O’Neill’s *Only Ever Yours*.” *The Embodied Child: Readings in Children’s Literature and Culture*, edited by Roxanne Harde and Lydia Kokkola, Routledge, 2018, pp. 70–82.
- Broad, Katherine R. 2013. “‘The Dandelion in the Spring’: Utopia as Romance in Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games* trilogy.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 117–130.
- Brost, Molly. “Who are You When No One is Watching?: *The Hunger Games*, Surveillance, and the Search for Self.” *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, edited by Louisa MacKay Demerjian, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 91–100.

- Brown, Jeffrey A. *Beyond Bombshells: The New Action Heroine in Popular Culture*. University Press of Mississippi, 2015.
- Bruins, Marieke. "Female Rebels and Role Models: The Construction of Gender Identity in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction." 2018. Radboud University, master's thesis. <https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/handle/123456789/5735> [26 Mar 2020].
- Bugajska, Anna. *Engineering Youth: The Evantropian Project in Young Adult Dystopias*. Ignatianum University Press, 2019.
- . "Tomorrow's Kin: Intergenerational Solidarity after The Genome." *Literatura Ludowa*, vol. 62, no. 3, 2018, pp. 50–62. <https://apcz.umk.pl/czasopisma/index.php/LL/article/viewFile/LL.3.2018.004/16251>, doi: 10.12775/ll.3.2018.004 [26 Mar 2020].
- Buggy, Sara. *Disciplining Dystopia: Power and the Body in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. 2015. University of Limerick, doctoral thesis. https://ulir.ul.ie/bitstream/handle/10344/4777/Buggy_2015_power.pdf?sequence=6 [2 Apr 2020].
- Burke, Brianna. "'Reaping' Environmental Justice through Compassion in The Hunger Games." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2015, pp. 544–567. Doi: 10.1093/isle/isu099. Version used: Pre-copiedited Pdf published via *Iowa State University Digital Repository*, http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/engl_pubs/3 [22 Apr 2020], pp. 1–32.
- Cahill, Susan. "A Girl Is a Half-formed Thing?: Girlhood, Trauma, and Resistance in Post-Tiger Irish Literature." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2017, pp. 153–171. *Taylor & Francis*, doi:10.1080/10436928.2017.1315550 [2 Apr 2020].
- Campbell, Joseph W. *The Order and the Other: Young Adult Dystopian Literature and Science Fiction*. University Press of Mississippi, 2019.
- Childs, Ann M. M. 2014. "The Incompatibility of Female Friendships and Rebellion." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 187–201.
- Claeys, Gregory. "The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, edited by Gregory Claeys, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 107–134.

- Clement, Lesley D. "Introduction: Flying Kites and Other Life-Death Matters." *Global Perspectives on Death in Children's Literature*, edited by Lesley D. Clement and Leyli Jamali, Routledge, 2015, pp. 1–19.
- Coleman, Micah-Jade M. "Decolonizing the YA North: Environmental Injustice in Sherri L. Smith's Orleans." 2016. The University of Southern Mississippi, master's thesis. *The Aquela Digital Community*, https://aquila.usm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1210&context=masters_theses [2 Apr 2020].
- Connors, Sean P. "I Have a Kind of Power I Never Knew I Possessed': Surveillance, Agency, and the Possibility of Resistance in YA Dystopian Fiction." *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2017, pp. 1–23. *Google Scholar*, https://scholar.google.se/scholar?hl=sv&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=i+have+a+kind+of+power+connors&btnG= [2 Apr 2020].
- Coste, Jill. "New Heroines in Old Skins: Fairy-Tale Revisions of Young Adult Dystopian Literature." *Beyond the Blockbusters: Themes and Trends in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction*, edited by Rebekah Fitzsimmons and Casey Alane Wilson, University of Mississippi Press, 2020, pp. 95–108.
- Couzelis, Mary J. 2013. "The Future is Pale: Race in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Novels." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 131–144.
- Curry, Alice. *Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Fiction: A Poetics of Earth*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Curtis, Claire P. 2013. "Educating Desire, Choosing Justice? Susan Beth Pfeffer's Last Survivors Series and Julie Bertagna's *Exodus*." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 85–100.
- Day, Sara K. 2014. "Docile Bodies, Dangerous Bodies: Sexual Awakening and Social Resistance in Young Adult Dystopian Novels." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 75–92.
- Day, Sara K., Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz (eds.). 2014. *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, Routledge, 2016.

- Day, Sara K., Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz. 2014. "Introduction." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 1–16.
- Deszcz-Tryhubczak, Justyna, and Mateusz Marecki. "Understanding Motherhood as Maturation: Maternity Scripts in Lois Lowry's *Son*." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2015, pp. 190–205. *Springer*, doi:10.1007/s10583-015-9249-z [2 Apr 2020].
- Demerjian, Louisa MacKay. "What Makes a Young Adult Dystopian Hero?" *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, edited by Louisa MacKay Demerjian, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 129–139.
- Dillon, Jade. "The Politics of the Female Body in Louise O'Neill's *Asking For It*." *Sibéal Feminist and Gender Studies Network*, 2014, pp. 28–39. *Google Scholar*, https://scholar.google.se/scholar?hl=sv&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=dillon+the+politics+of+the+female+body&btnG= [11 Jan 2021].
- Donawerth, Jane. "The Feminist Dystopia of the 1990s: Record of Failure, Midwife of Hope." *Future Females, The Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*, edited by Marleen S. Barr, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, pp. 49–66.
- Dreyer, David R. "War, Peace, and Justice in Panem: International Relations and the *Hunger Games* Trilogy." *European Political Science*, vol. 15, 2016, pp. 251–265. *ProQuest*, doi: 10.1057/eps.2015.68. Published online 2015 [20 Oct 2020].
- Duchamp, Timmel L. "Something Rich and Strange: Karen Joy Fowler's 'What I Didn't See'." *Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Justine Larbalestier, Wesleyan University Press, 2006, pp. 340–380.
- Dudek, Debra, "Love: it will kill you and save you, both': Love as Rebellion in Recent YA Dystopian Trilogies". *Affect, Emotion, and Children's Literature: Representation and Socialisation in Texts for Children and Young Adults*, edited by Kristine Moruzi, Michelle J. Smith, and Elizabeth Bullen, Taylor & Francis, 2018, pp. 161–174.
- Du Plessis, Nicole. "The *Hunger Games* in the Arena of Dystopian Literacy." *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, edited by

- Louisa MacKay Demerjian, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 101–127.
- Dyer, Richard. *White*. Routledge, 1997.
- Elmgren, Maja, and Ann-Sofie Henriksson. *Universitetspedagogik* [University Pedagogy]. 3rd edition, Studentlitteratur, 2013.
- Elmore, Chelsea. “Young Adult Literature: The Reality on the Page.” *Selected Honors Theses* no. 88, 2017. *Firescholars*, <https://firescholars.seu.edu/honors/88> [9 Dec 2020].
- Encyclopædia Britannica, “miscegenation”. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/miscegenation> [16 June 2020].
- Fitzsimmons, Rebekah. “Exploring the Genre Conventions of the YA Dystopian Trilogy as Twenty-First Century Utopian Dreaming.” *Beyond the Blockbusters: Themes and Trends in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction*, edited by Rebekah Fitzsimmons and Casey Alane Wilson, University of Mississippi Press, 2020, pp. 3–19.
- Fjellestad, Danuta. “Dancing with the Digital: Cathy’s Book and S.” *Gamma: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, vol. 23, 2016, pp. 76–91. EISSN: 2529-1793 [2 Apr 2020].
- Foucault, Michel. “Entretien avec Michel Foucault.” *Dits et Écrits II. 1976–1978*, edited by Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange, Gallimard, 2001, pp. 140–160.
- . “‘Panopticism’ from *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1–12. *JSTOR*, https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lnu.se/stable/25594995?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [26 Mar 2020].
- Fritz, Sonya Sawyer. 2014. “Girl Power and Girl Activism in the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young.” *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 17–31.
- Gilbert-Hickey, Meghan. 2014. “Gender Rolls: Bread and Resistance in the ‘Hunger Games’ Trilogy.” *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 95–106.
- . *Reductive Reproduction: Intersectional Maternity in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. 2016. St. John’s University, doctoral thesis.

- Gillis, Bryan, and Joanna Simpson. *Sexual Content in Young Adult Literature: Reading between the Sheets*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
- Giroux, Henry A. 2000. *Stealing Innocence: Corporate Culture's War on Children*. Palgrave, 2001.
- Glenn, Wendy J. "Athletic Girls on Fire: Representations of the Female Athlete in *The Hunger Games* and Sports-Related Media." *Teaching Girls on Fire: Essays on Dystopian Young Adult Literature in the Classroom*, edited by Sarah Hentges and Sean P. Connors, McFarland, 2020, pp. 19–34.
- Godhe, Michael. "Hopeful Dystopias? Figures of Hope in the Brazilian Science Fiction Series 3%." *Broken Mirrors: Representations of Apocalypses and Dystopias in Popular Culture*, edited by Joe Trotta, Zlatan Filipovic, and Houman Sadri, Routledge, 2020.
- Green-Barteet, Miranda A. 2014. "'I'm beginning to know who I am': The Rebellious Subjectivities of Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 33–49.
- Green-Barteet, Miranda A., and Jill Coste. "Non-normative Bodies, Queer Identities: Marginalizing Queer Girls in YA Dystopian Literature." *Girlhood Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2019, pp. 82–97. *Academia.edu*, doi: 10.3167/ghs.2019.12010 [12 Nov 2020].
- Green-Barteet, Miranda A., and Meghan Gilbert-Hickey (eds.). *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*, University Press of Mississippi, 2021.
- Gunn, James, and Karen Hellekson. "Foreword." *Future Females, The Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*, edited by Marleen S. Barr, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000, pp. ix–xi.
- Halsall, Alison J. "'Girl Talk' with Katniss and Tris: The Politics of Identity in Collins's *The Hunger Games* and Roth's *Divergent*." *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 52–71.
- Harde, Roxanne. "'[I]t's my skin that's paid most dearly': Katniss Everdeen and/as the Appalachian Body." *The Embodied Child: Readings in*

- Children's Literature and Culture*, edited by Roxanne Harde and Lydia Kokkola, Routledge, 2018, pp. 57–69.
- Hardstaff, Sarah. "Candytown and the Land of Cockaigne: Gastronomic Utopia in *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* and Other Children's Literature." *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2020, pp. 39–52. *Muse*, doi: 0.13110/marvelstales.34.1.0039.
- Harrison, Jennifer. "Bread and Circuses: Sustainability vs. Commodity Culture in the *Hunger Games*. *International Research in Children's Literature*, vol. 12, no. 2, December 2019, pp. 154–166.
- . *Posthuman Readings in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction: Negotiating the Nature/Culture Divide*. Lexington Books, 2019.
- Hemphill, Kara E. "Gender and the Popular Heroines (and Heroes) of the Young Adult Dystopia." *Honors Research Projects*, no. 132. 2015. The University of Akron, 2015. http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/132 [2 Apr 2020].
- Hentges, Sarah. *Girls on Fire: Transformative Heroines in Young Adult Dystopian Literature*. McFarland, 2018.
- Hentges, Sarah, and Sean P. Connors (eds.). *Teaching Girls on Fire: Essays on Dystopian Young Adult Literature in the Classroom*, McFarland, 2020.
- Hentges, Sarah, Elaine Brum, Petra Ilic, and Romaine Berry. "Teaching/Learning YA Dystopia's Girls on Fire in Denmark's Educational System and International Community." *Teaching Girls on Fire: Essays on Dystopian Young Adult Literature in the Classroom*, edited by Sarah Hentges and Sean P. Connors, McFarland, 2020, pp. 171–189.
- Herz, Marcus, and Thomas Johansson. "The Normativity of the Concept of Heteronormativity." *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 62, no. 8, 2015, pp. 1009–1020. Taylor & Francis Group, doi: 10.1080/00918369.2015.1021631 [27 May 2021].
- Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd edition, Routledge, 2000.
- Hintz, Carrie, and Elaine Ostry (eds.). *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*. Routledge, 2003.
- Hintz, Carrie, and Elaine Ostry. "Introduction." *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*, edited by Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry, Routledge, 2003, pp. 1–20.

- Howe, Andrew. "Survival of the Fittest: Gendertopia and the Women of *The 100*." *Handmaids, Tributes, and Carers: Dystopian Female's Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 166–182.
- James, Kathryn. *Death, Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Adolescent Literature*. Routledge, 2009.
- Kennon, Patricia. "'Belonging' in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction: New Communities Created by Children." *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2005, pp. 40–57. http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/8625/1/Papers_2005_v15no2_p40.pdf [2 Apr 2020].
- Knutsen, Karen Sue Patrick. "Understanding the Psychological Reading Process: Preparing Pre-service ESL Teachers to Become Reading Teachers." *Acta Didactica Norge*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2018, pp. 1–22. *Acta Didactica Norge*, doi:10.5617/adno.6144 [20 Oct 2020].
- Kokkola, Lydia. *Fictions of Adolescent Carnality*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013.
- Kullmann, Thomas (ed.). *Violence in English Children's and Young Adults' Fiction*. Shaker Verlag, 2010.
- Lauer, Emily. 2013. "Coming of Age in Dystopia: Reading Genre in Holly Black's Curse Workers Series." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 35–49.
- Langer, Judith A. *Envisioning Literature: Literary Understanding & Literature Instruction*. 2nd edition, Teacher College Press, 2011.
- Laurillard, Diana. *Teaching as a Design Science: Building Pedagogical Patterns for Learning and Technology*. Routledge, 2012.
- Levy, Michael, and Farah Mendlesohn. *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Littig, Beate, and Erich E. Griesler. "Social Sustainability: A Catchword between Political Pragmatism and Social Theory." *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2005, vol. 8, no. 1–2, pp. 65–79. Postprint, *SSOAR*. http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/2005_littig_61193241.pdf [29 Apr 2020].
- Lucey, Thomas A., Kara Lycke, James Laney, and Christopher Connelly. "Dimensions of Citizenship through the Lens of *The Hunger Games*:

- Fiction and the Visual and Performing Arts as Springboards for Citizenship Education.” *The Social Studies*, vol. 104, no. 5, 2013, pp. 190–199. *Taylor & Francis Online*, doi: 10.1080/00377996.2012.725110 [20 Oct 2020].
- Löwe, Corina. “Sköna nya värld, men vad ska vi äta?: Matmotivet i framtidsskildringar för barn och unga” [Brave New World, but What Should We Eat? The Food Motif in Portrayals of Future Societies for Children and the Young]. *Didaktiska perspektiv på hållbarhetsteman i barn- och ungdomslitteratur* [Didactic Perspectives on Sustainability Themes in Children’s and Young Adult Literature], edited by Corina Löwe and Åsa Nilsson Skåve, Natur & Kultur, 2020, pp. 60–79.
- . “Vilse, förtvivlad, ond: Att skriva fram det oskrivbara” [Lost, Despairing, Evil: To Write the Unwritable]. *Att skriva barn- och ungdomslitteratur* [On Writing Children’s and Young Adult Literature], edited by Helene Ehriander, Studentlitteratur, 2019, pp. 151–167.
- Malo-Juvera, Victor, and Paula Greathouse. “Introduction.” *Breaking the Taboo with Young Adult Literature*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, pp. 1–5.
- Manter, Lisa, and Lauren Francis. “Katniss’s Oppositional Romance: Survival Queer and Sororal Desire in Suzanne Collins’s The Hunger Games Trilogy.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2017, pp. 285–307. *Muse*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/chq.2017.0029> [27 May 2021].
- Marshall, Elizabeth. “Representations of Youth, Schooling, and Education in Dystopian Young Adult Novels.” *Teaching Young Adult Literature*, edited by Mike Cadden, Karen Coats, and Roberta Seelinger Trites, The Modern Language Association of America, 2020, pp. 191–199.
- McDonough, Megan, and Katherine A. Wagner. 2014. “Rebellious Natures: The Role of Nature in Young Adult Dystopian Female Protagonists’ Awakenings and Agency.” *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 157–170.
- McDuffie, Kristi. 2013. “Technology and Models of Literacy in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young*

- Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 145–156.
- McEvoy-Levy, Siobhan. “The Hunger Games: Theorizing Opportunities for Peace Education.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2017, pp. 23–30. *American Psychological Association*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pac0000203> [20 Oct 2020].
- McRuer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York University Press, 2006.
- Mendlesohn, Farah. *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Wesleyan University Press, 2008.
- Merriam-Webster, “adolescent”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adolescence> [7 Dec 2020].
- . “ableism”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ableism> [13 Jan 2021].
- . “miscegenation.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/miscegenation> [2 Oct 2020].
- . “nonbinary.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nonbinary> [15 Jan 2021].
- . “scythe.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scythe> [18 May 2020].
- . “sexism.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexism> [13 Jan 2021].
- . “speciesism.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/speciesism> [13 Jan 2021].
- . “theme.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/theme> [15 Feb 2021].
- . “transphobia.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transphobia> [15 Jan 2021].
- Mijares, Loretta M. “‘A Romance of England and India’: Miscegenation as Metaphor in Colonial British Fiction.” *South Asian Review*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2004, pp. 304–326. *Taylor & Francis*, doi: 10.1080/02759527.2004.11932335 [12 Nov 2020].
- Minico, Elisabetta Di. “Spatial and Psychophysical Domination of Women in Dystopia: Swastika Night, Woman on the Edge of Time and The Handmaid’s Tale.” *Humanities*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2019: 38, pp. 1–15. *Mdpi*, doi:10.3390/h8010038 [2 Apr 2020].

- Moane, Geraldine. 1999. *Gender and Colonialism: A Psychological Analysis of Oppression and Liberation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Molloy, Gunilla. *Svenskämnets roll: Om didaktik, demokrati och critical literacy* [The Role of Swedish as a School Subject: On Didactics, Democracy and Critical Literacy]. Studentlitteratur, 2017.
- Moore, Tara. "Violent Girls: Power, Predation, and the Use of Weapons in Young Adult Narratives." *Handmaids, Tributes, and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 114–130.
- Moran, Mary Jeanette. 2014. "The Three Faces of Tally Youngblood: Rebellious Identity-Changing in Scott Westerfeld's 'Uglies' Series." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz, Routledge, 2016, pp. 123–139.
- Morrissey, Thomas L. 2013. "Parables for the Postmodern, Post-9/11, and Posthuman World: Carrie Ryan's *Forest of Hands and Teeth* Books, M. T. Anderson's *Feed*, and Mary E. Pearson's *The Adoration of Jenna Fox*." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 189–201.
- Morton, Lindsay, and Lynnette Lounsbury. "Inertia to Action: From Narrative Empathy to Political Agency in Young Adult Fiction." *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2015, pp. 53–70. *ResearchOnline@Avondale*, http://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1048&context=arts_papers [2 Apr 2020].
- Muller, Vivienne. "Virtually Real: Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* Trilogy." *International Research in Children's Literature*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2012, pp. 51–63. *EUP*, doi: 10.3366/ircl.2012.0043 [27 May 2021].
- Muraveva, Ekaterina. "Beauty Magazines' Discourse in the Dystopian World of Louise O'Neill's *Only Ever Yours*." *Estudios Irlandeses-Journal of Irish Studies*, Special Issue, vol. 13, no. 2, 2018, pp. 120–138. <https://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/DEF-MU-RAVEVA.pdf> [2 Apr 2020].
- Murphy, Sarah Outterson. "The Child Soldier and the Self in *Ender's Game* and *The Hunger Games*." *Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy*, edited by Mary F. Pharr

- and Leisa A. Clark, *Critical Exploration in Science Fiction and Fantasy* 35, McFarland & Co., 2012, pp. 199–208.
- Newcomb, Erin T. 2013. “The Soul of the Clone: Coming of Age as a Posthuman in Nancy Falmer’s *The House of the Scorpion*.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 175–188.
- Nicol, David. “Good Designs for Written Feedback for Students.” *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, 14th edition, edited by Marilla Svinicki and Wilbert J. McKeachie, Wadsworth, 2014, pp. 109–124.
- Niederhoff, Burkhard. “Focalization.” *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, 2011, revised 2013. <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/node/18.html> [16 Dec 2020].
- Nikolajeva, Maria. *Barnbokens byggklossar* [The Building Blocks of Children’s Literature]. 3rd edition, Studentlitteratur, 2017.
- . “Harry Potter and the Secrets of Children’s Literature.” *Critical Perspectives on Harry Potter: Second Edition*, edited by Elizabeth E. Heilman, Routledge, 2009, pp. 225–241.
 - . “Harry Potter: A Return to the Romantic Hero.” *Harry Potter’s World: Multidisciplinary Critical Perspectives*, edited by Elizabeth E. Heilman, Routledge, 2003, pp. 125–140.
 - . *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*, Routledge, 2010.
 - . “Theory, Post-Theory, and Aetonormative Theory.” *Neohelicon*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2009, pp. 13–24. *Springer*, doi:10.1007/s11059-009-1002-4 [2 Apr 2020].
- Nilson, Maria. “Budskap och tolkning: Om dystopier” [Message and Interpretation: On Dystopias], Modul 5, del 5: Lässtrategier för skönlitteratur [Module 5, part 5: Reading Strategies for Literary Fiction] with an appendix written by Marie Wejrums and Zara Hedelin. *Skolverket*, October 2015. https://larportalen.skolverket.se/LarportalenAPI/api-v2/document/path/larportalen/material/inriktningar/5-las-skriv/Grundskola/014_lasstrategi_for_skonlitt/del_05/materi-

- al/Flik/Del_05_MomentA/Artiklar/M14_4-9_05A_01_budskap.docx [2 Apr 2020].
- . “Fairy Tales Transformed: Analyzing a New Wave of Feminist Retellings of Fairy Tales.” *The Enduring Fantastic: Essays on Imagination and Western Culture*, edited by Anna Höglund and Cecilia Trenter, McFarland, 2021, p. 173–187.
 - . “Mammor, monster och maskiner: Representationer av kvinnor i science-fiction film [Mothers, Monsters and Machines: Representations of Women in Science-fiction Movies].” *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*, vol. 4, 2004, pp. 39–51. <http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/tgv/article/view-File/2321/2075> [20 Nov 2020].
 - . “Reproduction and Family in Fantastic Fiction.” Conference paper presented at the University of Gävle, Sweden, 19–20 April 2018.
- Nilson, Maria, and Linda Piltz. “Jag, du och alla andra: Individ och kollektiv i Divergent-trilogin [Me, You and all the Others: Individual and Collective in the Divergent Trilogy].” *Didaktiska perspektiv på hållbarhetsteman i barn- och ungdomslitteratur* [Didactic Perspectives on Sustainability Themes in Children’s and Young Adult Literature], edited by Corina Löwe and Åsa Nilsson Skåve, Natur & Kultur, 2020, pp. 141–163.
- Nilsson Skåve, Åsa. “Dystopiska och utopiska drag i svenska ungdomsromaner [Dystopian and Utopian Traits in Swedish Young Adult Novels].” *Samtida svensk ungdomslitteratur: Analyser* [Contemporary Swedish Young Adult Literature: Analyses], edited by Åsa Warnqvist, Studentlitteratur, 2017, pp. 95–108.
- . “‘När det tar slut och börjar om igen’ [‘When it Ends and Starts Over Again’].” *Barnboken: Journal of Children’s Literature Research*, vol. 38, 2015, pp. 1–13. *Barnboken*, doi:10.14811/clr.v38i0.200 [20 Oct 2020].
- Nordlinder, Eva. “Fantasyomslag för alla åldrar [Fantasy Covers for All Ages].” *HumaNetten*, no. 39, Autumn 2017, pp. 69–81. *LNU Open*, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15626/hn.20173908> [17 Dec 2020].
- Nussbaum, Martha C. “Democratic Citizenship and the Narrative Imagination.” *Why Do We Educate: Renewing the Conversation*, edited by David A. Coulter, John R. Wiens, and Gary D. Fenstermacher, *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* 107:1, 2008, pp. 143–157.

- . “Introduction: Form and Content, Philosophy and Literature.” *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 3–53.
- . *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. “Resistance is Futile?: A Response to Feagin and Elias”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 36, no. 6, 2013, pp. 961–973. *Taylor & Francis Online*, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2012.715177 [27 May 2021].
- Ostry, Elaine. “Is He Still Human? Are You?: Young Adult Science Fiction in the Posthuman Age.” *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 222–246. *JHU*, doi:10.1353/uni.2004.0024 [27 May 2021].
- . 2013. “On the Brink: The Role of Young Adult Culture in Environmental Degradation.” *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 101–114.
- Owen, Christopher. *Systemic Oppression in Contemporary Children’s Fantastika Literature*. 2019. Anglia Ruskin University, doctoral thesis.
- Owen, Christopher, and Scott Lauchlan-Ford. *Visible Inclusivity: An LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Handbook*. Salford City Council, 2021.
- Parent, Robin A. “A Feminist Examination of How Girls and Women Engage with a Female Protagonist in Dystopian Young Adult Literature”, 2015. Utah State University, doctoral thesis. *Digital Commons*, <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5516&context=etd> [2 Apr 2020].
- Parker, Benjamin C. “‘Wye Knott’ a Prior Katniss?: Revolutionary Women in Dystopian Fiction.” *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females’ Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 214–230.
- Persson, Magnus. *Varför läsa litteratur?: Om litteraturundervisningen efter den kulturella vändningen* [Why Read Literary Fiction? On the Literature Education after the Cultural Turn]. Studentlitteratur, 2007.
- Pettersson, Torsten (ed.). *Jag gör med dig vad jag vill: Perspektiv på våld och våldsskildringar* [I Do What I Want With You: Perspectives on Violence and Depictions of Violence]. Makadam, 2019.

- Phillips, Cassandra. "Re-imagining the (Dis)Able Body." *Journal of Medical Humanities*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2001, pp. 195–208. Springer, doi: 10.1023/A:1016612116909 [12 Nov 2020].
- Pigmans, Eva. "The Feminist Dystopia: A Literary (Sub) genre?" 2018. Master's thesis. theses.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/5746/Pigmans%2C_E._1.pdf?sequence=1 [2 Apr 2020].
- Poladian, Laura. "Narrating Trauma: The Value of Violence in YA Dystopian Fiction." *The Age of Dystopia: One Genre, Our Fears and Our Future*, edited by Louisa MacKay Demerjian, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 73–90.
- Polish, Alex. "Eugenics and the 'Purity' of Memory Erasure: The Racial Coding of Dis/ability in the *Divergent* Series." *Race in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*, edited by Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Meghan Gilbert-Hickey, University Press of Mississippi, 2021, pp. 165–184.
- Rodríguez, Rodrigo Joseph. "'We End Our Hunger for Justice!': Social Responsibility in *The Hunger Games* trilogy." *The Politics of Panem: Challenging Genres*, edited by Sean P. Connors, Critical Literacy Teaching Series: Challenging Authors and Genre, Sense Publishers, 2014, pp. 157–165.
- Ryan, Devin. "Emerging Themes in Dystopian Literature: The Development of an Undergraduate Course." 2014. *Honors Theses*, Paper 2466, Western Michigan University. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3460&context=honors_theses&sei-redir=1&referer=https%253A%252F%252Fscholar.google.se%252Fscholar%253Fhl%253Dsv%2526as_sdt%253D0%25252C5%2526q%253Demergent%252Bthemes%252B%252Bin%252Bdystopian%252Bliterature%252Bryan%2526btnG%253D#search=%22emergent%20themes%20dystopian%20literature%20ryan%22 [2 Apr 2020].
- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1980.
- Salomonsson, Anna. "Vatten som liv och död: Ekokritiska och didaktiska perspektiv i Mats Söderlunds ungdomsroman *Hotet*" [Water as Life and Death: Ecocritical and Didactic Perspectives in Mats Söderlund's Novel *The Threat*]. *Didaktiska perspektiv på hållbarhetsteman i barn- och ungdomslitteratur* [Didactic Perspectives on Sustainability Themes in Children's and Young Adult Literature], edited by Corina Löwe and Åsa Nilsson Skåve, Natur & Kultur, 2020, pp. 186–208.

- Sambell, Kay. "Presenting the Case for Social Change: The Creative Dilemma of Dystopian Writing for Children." *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*, edited by Carrie Hintz, and Elaine Ostry, Routledge, 2003, pp. 163–178.
- Santaularia Capdevila, Isabel. "'Typescript of the Second Origin' and Current YA Dystopian and Post-Apocalypse Fiction in English: Pre-figuring the Female Hero." *Alambique: Revista académica de ciencia ficción y fantasía*, 2017, vol. 4, no. 2, art. 5, 2017, pp. 1–20. Scholar Commons, doi: 10.5038/2167-6577.4.2.5 [27 May 2021].
- Schillereff, Megan. "The Post is Female." *Digital Literature Review*, vol. 5, 2018, pp. 69–83. *Google Scholar*, https://scholar.google.se/scholar?hl=sv&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=megan+schillereff+dystopia&btnG= [19 Mar 2020].
- Seymour, Jessica. "'Murder me ... become a man': Establishing the Masculine Care Circle in Young Adult Dystopia." *Reading Psychology*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2016, pp. 627–649. *Taylor & Francis*, doi: 10.1080/02702711.2015.1105336 [2 Apr 2020].
- Shabanirad, Ensieh, and Mahtab Dadkhah. "Utopian Nightmares: Disciplinary Power and Panoptic Society in George Orwell's 1984 and Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island*." *Cinema and its Representations: Poetics and Politics*, edited by Hossein Keramatfar and Maryam Beyad, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, pp. 79–94.
- Simmons, Amber M. "Class on Fire: Using the Hunger Games Trilogy to Encourage Social Action." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 56, no. 1, September 2012, pp. 22–34. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23367757> [22 Apr 2020].
- Snell, Heather. "Ready Made for the Market: Producing Charitable Subjects in Dystopian and Voluntourist Young Adult Novels." *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2016, pp. 96–126. *Informit*, <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=704921012865819;res=IELHSS> [2 Apr 2020].
- Sprenkels, Floortje. "*Come Play With Us*": *The Liminal and Communal Participation in Intermedial World-Making*. 2016. Master's thesis. https://scholar.google.se/scholar?hl=sv&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=sprenkels+come+play+with+us&btnG= [2 Apr 2020].
- Stewart, Susan Louise. 2013. "Dystopian Sacrifice, Scapegoats, and Neal

- Shusterman's 'Unwind'." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge, 2014, pp. 159–173.
- Strader, Ryan K. "The Hunter, The Garden, The Democracy: Agrarian Ideals and *The Hunger Games*." *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 194–213.
- Suvin, Darko. "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre." *College English*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1972, pp. 372–382. *JStor*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/375141> [7 Dec 2020].
- Tan, Susan Shau Ming. "Battling School: Death as Education in Ender's Game." *Global Perspectives on Death in Children's Literature*, edited by Lesley D. Clement and Leyli Jamali, Routledge, 2015, pp. 244–254.
- . "Burn with Us: Sacrificing Childhood in *The Hunger Games*." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2013, pp. 54–73. *JHU*, doi:10.1353/uni.2013.0002 [27 May 2021].
- Theis, Mary E. *Mothers and Masters in Contemporary Utopian and Dystopian Literature*. Peter Lang, 2009.
- The Oxford English Dictionary*, "motif." <https://www-oed-com.proxy.lnu.se/view/Entry/122686?redirectedFrom=motif#eid> [5 Feb 2021].
- . "post-human." <https://www-oed-com.proxy.lnu.se/view/Entry/263433?redirectedFrom=posthuman#eid> [9 Dec 2020].
- Thomas, Ebony Elizabeth. *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. New York University Press, 2019.
- Toliver, S. R. "Eliminating Extermination, Fostering Existence: Diverse Dystopian Fiction and Female Adolescent Identity." *Beyond the Blockbusters: Themes and Trends in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction*, edited by Rebekah Fitzsimmons and Casey Alane Wilson, University of Mississippi Press, 2020, pp. 187–202.
- Trites, Roberta Seelinger. *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*. University of Iowa Press, 2000.
- . "Teaching Feminisms: Triumphs and Failures in the *Hunger Games* Trilogy." *Teaching Girls on Fire: Essays on Dystopian Young Adult Liter-*

- ature in the Classroom, edited by Sarah Hentges and Sean P. Connors, McFarland, 2020, pp. 51–68.
- Van Melckebeke, Stefanie. *Young Adult Dystopian Literature. Didactic Benefits of Its Use in the English Subject Classroom in Norway*. 2018. Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, master's thesis. https://brage.inn.no/inn-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2568797/Van_Melckebeke.pdf?sequence=1 [2 Apr 2020].
- van Raalte, Christa. "The *Femme Fatale* in the Aftermath: The Older Female Antagonist in *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* Film Franchises." *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 88–112.
- Vega, Stephanie. *Havoc-making Heroines in Young Adult Dystopian Literature*, 2015. McMaster University, master's thesis. https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/18385/2/Vega_Stephanie_G_FinalSubmission2015Sept_MA.pdf [2 Apr 2020].
- Ventura, Abbie. "Predicting a Better Situation? Three Young Adult Speculative Fiction Texts and the Possibilities for Social Change." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2011, pp. 89–103. *JHU*, doi:10.1353/chq.2011.0006 [27 May 2021].
- Von Mossner, Alexa Weik. 2013. "Hope in Dark Times: Climate Change and the World Risk Society in Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries* 2015 and 2017." *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz, Routledge 2014, pp. 1–15.
- Wilhelm, Jeffrey D., and Michael W. Smith. *Reading Unbound: Why Kids Need to Read What They Want and Why We Should Let Them*. Scholastic, 2014.
- . "The Power of Pleasure Reading: The Case of Dystopias." *Voices from the Middle*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2016, pp. 55–61. *ProQuest*, <https://search.proquest.com/openview/51e95fddb339e347097d609911259293/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=33274> [22 Apr 2020].
- Wilkie-Stibbs, Christine. "The 'Other' Country: Memory, Voices, and Experiences of Colonized Childhoods." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2006, pp. 237–259. *Muse*, doi: 10.1353/chq.2006.0055 [2 Apr 2020].

- Wilkinson, Rachel. "Teaching Dystopian Literature to a Consumer Class." *English Journal*, vol. 99, no. 3, January 2010, pp. 22–26. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40503477?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [22 Apr 2020].
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2006, pp. 193–209. *Sage Journals*, doi: 10.1177/1350506806065752 [27 May 2021].
- Åström, Berit. "Negotiating Motherhood in *The Hunger Games*." *Handmaids, Tributes and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, edited by Myrna J. Santos, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2018, pp. 2–17.
- Öhman, Anders. *Litteraturredaktik, fiktioner och intriger* [Literary Didactics, Fictions and Plots]. Gleerups, 2015.

INDEX

INDEX OF TOPICS

- able-bodied 18, 19, 25, 98, 99, 140, 188, 189, 198, 203, 216
- able-bodiedness 99, 114, 140, 141, 142, 188, 189, 198
- ableism 101, 278
- ableist 101, 102, 106, 116, 186, 281
- adolescent 185
- adolescent fathers 165
- adoptive parent/s 115, 117, 129, 178
- aetonormativity 37
- allegorical 19, 251, 254, 256, 268, 273, 288, 304
- apprentice 91, 145, 146
- apprentices 137, 140, 142, 144, 146
- authorial intention 21, 22

- biological parents 129, 131
- biracial 25, 98, 100, 183, 278, 279

- care circle 59, 74, 79, 108, 110, 156, 207, 216, 218, 276
- childhood innocence 38
- child soldier 75
- child soldiers 75
- cis-gender 25
- cisgender 25, 58, 98, 100, 113, 115, 141, 189, 207, 216
- cognitive scripts 43, 75, 218
- compulsory able-bodiedness 99, 114, 140, 141, 188, 198
- controlled child, the 42
- Cough, the 95, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 109, 278, 279
- critical literacy 262

- deadish 144, 156
- Detonations, the 81, 84, 187, 188, 191, 194, 195, 197
- (dis)ability 18
- disciplinary domain 46
- dystopia 26

- ecocritical 50, 51, 52, 245
- ecological sustainability/ecological-ly sustainable 51, 194, 212, 226, 228, 229, 232, 245, 247
- educational potential 19–22
- Endgame 78, 87, 166, 203–213, 228, 229, 230, 295, 296, 297
- envisionment 268

- fake pregnancy 169, 170, 178
- Flare, the 82, 83, 90
- focaliser/s 114, 186, 213, 296, 297
- forced pregnancy 164, 169, 170, 173, 174, 176, 179, 185
- formative assessment 285, 286, 292, 293, 294, 299
- fused 84, 187, 188, 191, 195
- fusing 189, 194, 198

fuzzy set 26, 31, 32, 33

Girl on Fire 172, 258

"Girls on Fire" 258, 292

gleaned 83, 91, 136, 137, 140, 147

gleaning/s 91, 136–139, 145, 146,
148, 149, 153, 155, 157, 284

hegemonic domain 46

heteronormativity 58

hyperbole 19

ideology 21

interpersonal domain 46, 47

intersectionality 25

matrix of domination 44

mighty adolescent, the 42

mighty child, the 42

miscegenation 103, 104, 182, 198

motif 24

narrative imagination 266

non-binary 141

paid surrogacy 169, 170, 174, 176,
177, 178, 184

panopticon 143

paratext 284

patriarchy 56

planned pregnancy 169, 170, 176,
184, 185

post-human 52

racism 102

scaffolding 237, 238, 292

Scythes 138

sexism 112

social sustainability/socially sus-
tainable 127, 136, 160, 163, 194,
204, 211, 212, 226, 228, 229, 232,
245, 246

sociocultural 237, 238, 306

structural domain 46

substitute mother 110

summative assessment 285, 286

themes 28

transgender 55

transphobia 115

unplanned pregnancy 169, 170,
179, 180, 182, 183, 185

utopia 26

white privilege 45, 54, 216

wretches 187

zone of proximal development
(ZPD) 237

INDEX OF PERSONS AND TITLES

- 1984 23, 34, 49, 143
- Abate, Michelle Ann 74
- Alexander, Jonathan 244
- Alkestrand, Malin 20, 22, 39, 43,
45, 48, 75, 82, 190, 216, 218, 223,
226, 229, 245, 246, 267, 308
- Ames, Melissa 249
- Appleman, Deborah 262
- Arc of a Scythe* trilogy, the 23, 53, 54,
63, 68, 71–74, 91, 136, 138, 140,
149, 154, 155, 157, 236, 254, 276,
277, 284, 304
- Athena 23, 73, 87, 88, 89
- Attebery, Brian 31
- Atwood, Margaret 22, 34, 98, 170,
171, 172, 173, 244
- Baccolini, Raffaella 161, 170–173,
196
- Bach, Jacqueline 139, 140, 254
- Baggott, Julianna 22, 33, 63, 71, 72,
73, 79, 82, 84, 117, 162, 170, 187,
189, 193, 201, 202, 236, 288–291,
305
- Barclay, Bridgette 55
- Baril, Alexandre 115
- Basu, Balaka 26, 27, 29, 30, 61,
242, 243, 245
- Beach, Richard 262
- Bean, Thomas W. 263
- Beauty Queens* 22, 55, 71, 72, 78, 255
- Beauvais, Clémentine 40, 41, 42,
68, 159, 180, 182, 197, 202, 227,
232, 303
- Berry, Romaine 255
- Beröringen* [The Touch] 85
- Birthmarked* trilogy, the 23, 72, 80,
170, 172, 176, 184, 208
- Black, Rebecca 44, 80, 85, 244
- Blackman, Malorie 22, 32, 35, 170,
182, 183
- Blodregns-serien* [the Blood Rain se-
ries] 23, 45, 50, 52, 64, 71, 72, 75,
79, 128, 162, 167, 170, 213, 218,
219, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 234,
236, 287–290, 298, 300, 305
- Bonnevier, Jenny 172
- Borsheim-Black, Carlin 262, 263
- Boston, Carol 285
- Bourgeois, Joshua 139, 254
- Bracken, Alexandra 22, 73, 86, 234
- Bradford, Clare 27, 182
- Brave New World* 253
- Bray, Libba 22, 55, 71, 72, 78, 80,
255
- Broad, Catherine R. 26, 27, 29, 30,
61, 242, 243
- Brum, Elaine 255
- Brännmärkt* [Branded] 23, 71, 73,
77, 88, 89
- Bugajska, Anna 53, 54, 139
- Buggy, Sara 243
- Bumped* duology, the 23, 170, 177,
178, 179
- Burke, Brianna 256, 257
- Cahill, Susan 175
- Campbell, Joseph W. 251, 256

- Carve the Mark* duology, the 23, 72, 73, 80, 84, 86
- Childs, Ann M. M. 56, 135, 166
- Claeys, Gregory 26
- Clement, Lesley D. 76
- Coleman, Micah-Jade M. 51
- Collins, Suzanne 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, 31, 32, 35, 36, 46, 47, 48, 52, 54, 57, 61, 67, 72–75, 77, 85, 87, 96, 100, 114, 137, 168, 172, 173, 186, 187, 189, 208, 225, 226, 239, 240, 248, 255, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 308
- Connelly, Christopher 259
- Connors, Sean P. 248, 249
- Coste, Jill 25, 58, 98, 111
- Couzelis, Mary J. 54
- Curry, Alice 51
- Curtis, Claire P. 55
- Dadkhah, Mahtab 143
- Darkest Minds* series, the 22, 73, 86, 234
- Dashner, James 22, 71, 72, 73, 75, 78, 79, 82, 83, 248, 252
- Day, Anna 22, 72, 85, 97
- Day, Sara K. 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 50, 56, 60, 118, 119, 122, 128, 135, 196
- Declaration* trilogy, the 23, 35, 136, 170, 183
- Demerjian, Louisa MacKay 57
- Den gröna cirkeln* [The Green Circle] 245
- Deszcz-Tryhubczak, Justyna 174
- Dillon, Jade 175
- Divergent* trilogy, the 23, 48, 49, 54, 57, 61, 71, 77, 78, 172, 243, 246, 248, 298
- Donawerth, Jane 171
- Dreyer, David R. 259, 260
- Duchamp, Timmel L. 172
- Dudek, Debra 49
- Du Plessis, Nicole 244, 245
- Dust Lands* trilogy, the 23, 72, 73, 74, 80, 84, 87, 90, 95, 169, 170, 176
- Dyer, Richard 103, 189, 197
- Edfeldt, Lizette 23, 71, 73, 77, 89
- Die Eleria Trilogie* [the Eleria trilogy] 45, 82, 88, 190, 245
- Elmgren, Maja 238
- Elmore, Chelsea 61, 62
- Encyclopædia Britannica* 103
- Ender's Game* 75, 76
- Endgame* trilogy, the 23, 63, 71, 73, 78, 82, 87, 162, 166, 167, 170, 180, 203–208, 212, 213, 227, 229, 236, 288, 289, 290, 295, 296, 297, 305
- En sekund i taget*-serien [the One Second at a Time series] 23, 32, 170, 180, 246
- Ewing, Amy 23, 72, 80, 85, 164, 170, 176
- Exodus* 55, 255
- Family Guy* 253
- Fandom* duology, the 22, 72, 85, 97
- Fecho, Bob 262
- Feed* 60, 253

- Fitzsimmons, Rebekah 26, 31, 33
 Fjellestad, Danuta 166
Flykten 78, 79, 81
 Foucault, Michel 45, 143
 Francis, Lauren 57, 58
 Frey, James 23, 63, 71, 73, 78, 162, 170, 204, 236, 288, 289, 290, 295, 305
 Fritz, Sonja Sawyer 201

Gather the Daughters 23, 170, 184
 Gilbert-Hickey, Meghan 54, 57, 61, 168, 193, 196, 200
 Gillis, Bryan 49
 Giroux, Henry A. 38
Giver quartet, the 23, 31, 33, 35, 49, 53, 54, 77, 170, 174, 250
 Glenn, Wendy J. 258, 259
 Godhe, Michael 171
Gone series, the 23, 73, 74, 90, 94, 170, 172, 183, 293
 Grant, Michael 23, 73, 74, 90, 94, 170, 183, 293
 Greathouse, Paula 275
 Green-Barteet, Miranda A. 24–27, 29, 54, 56, 58, 98, 128
 Grießler, Erich E. 127
 Gunn, James 172

 Halsall, Alison J. 57
Hansel and Gretel 61, 98
 Harde, Roxanne 52
 Hardstaff, Sarah 61
 Harrison, Jennifer 52, 53
Harry Potter series/novels, the 19, 20, 35, 39, 40, 43, 54, 74, 98, 267, 308

 Hellekson, Karen 172
 Hemphill, Kara E. 191
 Henriksson, Ann-Sofie 238
 Henry, Christina 9, 23, 38, 63, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 78, 80, 95–98, 115, 153, 154, 158, 160, 182, 222, 236, 275–278, 304, 307
 Hentges, Sarah 35, 36, 57, 60, 130, 169, 172, 173, 174, 176, 255, 258, 261
 Herz, Marcus 58
 Hill Collins, Patricia 44–47, 69, 96, 100, 114, 137, 168, 173, 186, 187, 189, 226
 Hintz, Carrie 26–30, 242, 243
 Howe, Andrew 92
 Hundley, Melanie 254

 Illic, Petra 255

 James, Kathryn 22, 23, 63, 75, 76, 78, 141, 162, 172, 196, 236, 248, 259, 295, 305
 Johansson, Thomas 58
 Johnson-Shelton, James 23, 63, 71, 73, 78, 162, 170, 204, 236, 288, 289, 290, 295, 305

Kennaquhair 60
 Kennon, Patricia 60
 Knutsen, Karen Sue Patrick 255, 256
 Kokkola, Lydia 163, 164, 174
 Kullmann, Thomas 74

 Laney, James 259
 Langer, Judith A. 64, 234, 238,

- 239, 261, 264, 268–272, 277–286,
291–294, 296, 299, 301, 306
Last Survivors series, the 55
Lauchlan-Ford, Scott 25, 55, 141
Lauer, Emily 61
Laurillard, Diana 238, 297
Legend trilogy, the 23, 85
Levy, Michael 35
Littig, Beate 127
Little Red Riding Hood 96, 98, 107,
108, 111, 279
Lone City trilogy, the 23, 72, 80, 85,
164, 170, 176
Lounsbury, Loretta 248
Love in the Time of Global Warming
58
Lowry, Lois 23, 31, 33, 34, 35, 49,
54, 77, 170, 174, 176, 250
Lu, Marie 23, 85
Lucey, Thomas A. 259
Lycke, Kara 259
Lyda 22, 202
Löwe, Corina 74, 246, 247

Macaluso, Michael 262
Macbeth 98
Mafi, Tahereh 23, 30, 63, 68, 69,
72, 73, 74, 80, 85, 86, 94, 95, 112,
113, 115, 116, 117, 132, 134, 137,
146, 153, 156, 157, 158, 160, 199,
236, 275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 304
Mallan, Kerry 27
Malley, Gemma 23, 35, 136, 170,
183
Malo-Juvera, Victor 275
Manter, Lisa 57, 58
Marecki, Mateusz 175
Marshall, Elizabeth 244
Maze Runner series, the 22, 71, 72,
73, 75, 78, 79, 82, 87, 90, 248, 252
McCafferty, Megan 23, 170, 177,
178
McCallum, Robyn 27
McDonough, Megan 50, 51
McDuffie, Kristi 61
McEvoy-Levy, Siobhan 260
McRuer, Robert 18, 99, 114, 140,
141, 188
Melamed, Jennie 23, 170, 184
Mendlesohn, Farah 31, 35
Merriam-Webster 18, 27, 28, 101,
112, 115, 182, 285
Mijares, Loretta M. 103
Minico, Elisabetta Di 175, 190, 193
Moane, Geraldine 56, 164
Molloy, Gunilla 263, 264
Moni, Karen 263
Montz, Amy L. 24, 26, 27, 29, 56,
128
Moore, Tara 107, 109
Moran, Mary Jeanette 56
Morgan, Kass 23, 67, 74, 92, 93,
170, 179, 180
Morrisey, Thomas J. 242
Mortal Engines quartet, the 23, 35,
53, 71, 72, 74, 93, 95, 170, 180,
225
Morton, Lindsay 248
Moylan, Tom 196
Muller, Vivienne 61
Muraveva, Ekaterina 175
Murphy, Sarah Outtersen 75

Newcomb, Erin T. 53

- Nicol, David 238
 Niederhoff, Burkhard 295
 Nikolajeva, Maria 10, 33, 37–42,
 67, 68, 159, 163, 164, 182, 197,
 206, 232, 303, 307, 308
 Nilson, Maria 10, 34, 96, 111, 167,
 175, 246, 247, 250
 Nilsson Skåve, Åsa 50, 214, 216,
 245, 247
 Nordin, Sofia 23, 32, 170, 180, 181,
 182, 246
 Nordlinder, Eva 284, 285
Noughts & Crosses sequence, the 22,
 32, 35, 170, 182
 Nussbaum, Martha C. 64, 234,
 238, 239, 261, 264–267, 269, 270,
 272, 306

 O'Brien, Caragh 23, 60, 72, 80,
 170, 172, 176, 177, 208
 Omi, Michael 102
 O'Neill, Louise 23, 170, 175
Only Ever Yours 23, 170, 175
Orleans 51, 255
 Orwell, George 23, 34, 49, 143
 Ostry, Elaine 26, 28, 30, 51, 52, 53
 Owen, Christopher 10, 25, 41, 44,
 45, 55, 141

 Parent, Robin A. 59
 Parker, Benjamin C. 57
 Persson, Magnus 267
 Peters, Emily 139, 254
 Petrone, Robert 262
 Pettersson, Torsten 74
 Phillips, Cassandra 19

 Pigmans, Eva 184, 185
 Piltz, Linda 246, 247
 Poladian, Laura 77
 Polish, Alex 54
Pure trilogy, the 22, 33, 63, 71, 72,
 73, 79, 80, 82, 84, 90, 117, 162,
 166, 170, 180, 186–199, 210, 227,
 229, 231, 236, 288–294, 305

Rash 60
 Reeve, Philip 23, 35, 53, 71, 72, 74,
 93, 95, 170, 180, 182, 225
 Rodríguez, Rodrigo Joseph 257
 Roth, Veronica 23, 48, 49, 57, 61,
 71, 72, 73, 77, 78, 80, 84, 86, 172,
 243, 246, 248
 Ryan, Devin 57, 250, 251

 Said, Edward W. 188, 189
 Salomonsson, Anna 247
 Sambell, Kay 171, 227, 241, 242,
 243
 Santaularia Capdevila, Isabel 56
 Schillereff, Megan 118, 119
 Seymour, Jessica 59, 74, 75, 76, 79,
 108, 123, 207, 216, 218
 Shabanirad, Ensich 143
Shatter Me series, the 23, 30, 63, 68,
 72, 73, 74, 86, 112, 113, 118, 122,
 127, 130, 132, 141, 152, 155, 156,
 216, 236, 276, 277, 280, 283, 304
 Shusterman, Neal 23, 35, 53, 54,
 60, 63, 68, 69, 71–74, 78, 80, 83,
 85, 86, 88, 91, 94, 95, 136, 137,
 139, 140, 153–158, 160, 170, 185,

- 236, 254, 275, 276, 277, 284, 285,
286, 304
- Simmons, Amber M. 75, 257
- Simon, Rob 262
- Simpson, Joanna 49
- Sleeping Beauty* 152
- Smith, Michael W. 49, 51, 238, 251,
252, 253, 255
- Snell, Heather 60
- Sprenkels, Floortje 166
- Stephens, John 27
- Stewart, Susan Louise 60, 73, 86
- Strader, Ryan K. 57
- Suvín, Darko 32
- Söderberg, Marta 23, 73, 87, 88, 89
- Söderlund, Mats 23, 71, 72, 78, 79,
81, 246, 247
- Tan, Susan Shau Ming 60, 76, 77
- Tarver, Emily 254
- The 100 series* 23, 67, 74, 92, 93,
170, 179
- The Airdancer of Glass* 76
- The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* 16,
17, 22, 308
- The Girl in Red* 9, 23, 63, 68, 71,
72, 74, 95, 97, 182, 236, 276, 277,
278, 304
- The Giver* 23, 31, 33, 35, 49, 53, 54,
77, 170, 174, 250
- The Handmaid's Tale* 22, 34, 98,
170–173, 244
- The Hunger Games* trilogy/novel/s
16, 18, 22, 24, 26, 31, 36, 40, 46,
49, 54, 57, 60, 61, 72, 73, 74, 84,
86, 94, 127, 217, 225, 244, 256,
258, 259, 260, 292, 298, 308
- The Lab* 59
- The Lord of the Rings* 31
- The Mother Code* 35
- The Simpsons* 253
- The Testing* trilogy 35, 244
- Theis, Mary E. 174
- Thomas, Ebony Elisabeth 54, 55,
71, 72, 73, 78, 82, 83, 84, 90
- Toliver, S. R. 58, 59
- Trevenen, Kathryn 115
- Trites, Roberta Seelinger 21, 22,
37, 49, 76, 80, 127, 160, 258, 259
- Uglies* series, the 23, 35, 50, 51, 54,
56, 74, 94, 243, 247
- Under tiden* [Below the Time] 245
- Unwind* series, the 23, 35, 60, 74,
88, 94, 170, 185, 254
- Van Melckebeke, Stefanie 247, 248
- van Raalte, Christa 57
- Vega, Stephanie 56
- Ventura, Abbie 60
- Von Mossner, Alexa Weik 51
- Wagner, Katherine A. 50, 51
- Wahl, Mats 23, 50, 64, 71, 72, 75,
76, 79, 162, 170, 214, 215, 217,
218, 221, 225, 236, 243, 288, 289,
290, 298, 305
- Westerfeld, Scott 23, 35, 49, 50, 54,
56, 74, 94, 243, 247
- Why Weeps the Brogan* 60

- Wilhelm, Jeffrey D. 238, 251, 252, 253, 256
 Wilkie-Stibbs, Christine 182
 Wilkinson, Rachel 253
 Winant, Howard 102
 Young, Moira 15, 20, 23, 24, 26, 32, 38, 48–51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 60, 62, 63, 66, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74, 80, 84, 128, 139, 162, 164, 169, 170, 176, 180, 182, 235, 240, 241, 242, 244, 250, 252, 254, 258, 272, 278, 280, 282, 285, 296, 299, 303
 Yuval-Davis, Nina 25
Z for Zachariah 60
 Åström, Berit 225
Ättlingarna-trilogin [The Descendants trilogy] 23, 71, 72, 78, 246
 Öhman, Anders 239, 259

PICTURE SOURCES

- p. 17: Suzanne Collins, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.
Cover design © Tim O'Brien.
- p. 81: Mats Söderlund, *Flykten*. Cover design © Sara R. Acedo, 2020.
- p. 89: Lizette Edfeldt, *Brännmärkt*. Cover photo © Justina Hüll, 2017.
Cover design © Lars Sundh, 2017.
Marta Söderberg, *Athena*. Cover design © Vendela & Valentin, 2015.
- p. 181: Sofia Nordin, *Om du såg mig nu*. Cover design © Jonas Lindén, 2017. Cover illustration © Dreamstime.com/Shutterstock, 2017.
- p. 215: Mats Wahl, *Ryttarna*. Cover design © Sara R. Acedo, 2014.
- p. 221: Mats Wahl, *Krigarna*. Cover design © Sara R. Acedo, 2014.

*Studies Published by the Swedish Institute
for Children's Books*

ISSN 0347-5387

Information about earlier titles is available at www.barnboksinstitutet.se

- 100 *Vänbok till Sonja Svensson*. Stockholm: Opal, 2008.
- 101 Kriström, AnnaKarin: *De gränslösa böckerna. Om Hans Alfredson och Barbro Lindgren i 60- och 70-talens alläderslitteratur*. Stockholm: Eriksson & Lindgren, 2008.
- 102 Svensson, Conny: *Pli på pojkar. Från Dumas till Kar de Mumma*. Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008.
- 103 Druker, Elina: *Modernismens bilder. Den moderna bilderboken i Norden*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2008. Diss. Stockholm.
- 104 Hoffmann, E.T.A.: *Det främmande barnet*. Translated by Barbara Knochenhauer. Stockholm: Svenska barnboksinstitutet, 2008.
- 105 Nordström-Jacobsson, Monica: *Peter Pohls litterära projekt. En tematisk studie med utgångspunkt i debutromanen Janne, min vän*. Luleå: Umeå universitet, 2008. Diss. Luleå.
- 106 Franck, Mia: *Frigjord oskuld. Heterosexuellt mognadsimperativ i svensk ungdomsroman*. Åbo: Åbo Akademis förlag, 2009. Diss. Åbo.
- 107 Ingemansson, Mary: *"Det kunde lika gärna ha hänt idag". Maj Bylocks Drakskeppstrilogi och historiemedvetande hos barn i mellanåldrarna*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2010. Diss. Lund.
- 108 Andersson, Maria: *Att bli människa. Barn, sedlighet och kön i Amanda Kerfstedts, Helena Nybloms och Mathilda Mallings författarskap 1880-1910*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2010. Diss. Stockholm.
- 109 Meerbergen, Sara Van: *Nederländska bilderböcker blir svenska. En multimodal översättningsanalys*. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2010 (Stockholm Studies in Scandinavian Philology, nr 54). Diss. Stockholm.
- 110 *Aktuell nordisk barnlitteraturforskning*. Stockholm: Svenska barnboksinstitutet, 2010.
- 111 Hellsing, Lennart: *Brev från Lennart Hellsing. Ett urval 1944-2011*. Stockholm: Lennart Hellsing-sällskapet, 2011.

- 112 Hellström, Martin: *Förpackningens förvandlingar. Konsumtion och karneval i barnboken*. Stockholm: Carlssons, 2011. Diss. Linköping.
- 113 *I litteraturens underland. Festskrift till Boel Westin*. Eds. Maria Andersson, Elina Druker & Kristin Hallberg. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2011.
- 114 Wahlström, Eva: *Fria flickor före Pippi. Ester Blenda Nordström och Karin Michaëlis – Astrid Lindgrens föregångare*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2011. Diss. Göteborg.
- 115 Gunnarsson, Annika: *synligt/osynligt. Receptionen av det visuella i bilderböckerna om Alfons Åberg*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2012. Diss. Stockholm.
- 116 Paulin, Lotta: *Den didaktiska fiktionen. Konstruktion av förebilder ur ett barn- och ungdomslitterärt perspektiv 1400–1750*. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2012. Diss. Stockholm.
- 117 *Till en evakuerad igelkott. Festskrift till Maria Nikolajeva*. Eds. Maria Lassén-Seger & Mia Österlund. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2012.
- 118 Bengtsson, Lars: *Bildbibliografi över Astrid Lindgrens skrifter 1921–2010*. Lidingö: Salikon, 2012.
- 119 *Barnlitteraturens värden och värderingar*. Eds. Sara Kärrholm & Paul Tenngart. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2012.
- 120 Pålsson, Yvonne: *I Skinnstrumpas spår. Svenska barn- och ungdomsböcker om indianer, 1860–2008*. Umeå: Institutionen för kultur- och medievetenskaper, Umeå universitet, 2013. Diss. Umeå.
- 121 Lindskog, Gerda Helena: *Norrbarn. Norrland i 1900-talets svenskspråkiga barn- och ungdomslitteratur*. Umeå: h:ström – Text & Kultur, 2013.
- 122 *En fanfar för bilderboken!* Eds. Lena Eriksson, Ulla Rhedin & Oscar K. Stockholm: Alfabeta/Nordiska akvarellmuseet, 2013.
- 123 *Flicktion. Perspektiv på flickan i fiktionen*. Eds. Bodil Formark, Eva Söderberg & Mia Österlund. Malmö: Universus Academic Press, 2013.
- 124 Druker, Elina: *Eva Billow. Bilderbokskonstnär och författare*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2014.
- 125 Emanuelsson, Lars & Ekman, Oskar: *Gustaf Tenggren – en biografi*. Stockholm: Kartago, 2014.
- 126 Andersen, Jens: *Denna dagen, ett liv. En biografi över Astrid Lindgren*. Stockholm: Norstedts, 2014.
- 127 *Kalejdoskopiska läsningar. Vänbok till Janina Orlov*. Eds. Maria Andersson, Elina Druker, Maria Lassén-Seger & Mia Österlund. Åbo: Juvenes Print, 2015.
- 128 Axell, Cecilia: *Barnlitteraturens tekniklandskap. En didaktisk vandring från Nils*

- Holgersson till Pettson och Findus*. Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 2015. Diss. Norrköping.
- 129 Widhe, Olle: *Dö din hund! Krig, lek och läsning i svensk barnboksutgivning under 200 år*. Lund: ellerströms, 2015.
- 130 Törnqvist, Lena: *Man tar vanliga ord. Att läsa om Astrid Lindgren*. Lidingö: Salikon, 2015.
- 131 Boglind, Ann & Nordenstam, Anna: *Från fabler till manga 1. Litteraturhistoriska och didaktiska perspektiv på barnlitteratur*. Malmö: Gleerups, 2015.
- 132 Boglind, Ann & Nordenstam, Anna: *Från fabler till manga 2. Litteraturhistoriska och didaktiska perspektiv på ungdomslitteratur*. Malmö: Gleerups, 2016.
- 133 Kulla-Gulla och alla de andra. *Martha Sandwall-Bergström 100 år*. Eds. Helene Ehriander & Eva Söderberg. Växjö: Linnaeus University Press, 2015.
- 134 *Nya läsningar av Astrid Lindgrens författarskap*. Eds. Helene Ehriander & Martin Hellström. Stockholm: Liber, 2015.
- 135 Hellström, Martin: *Pippi på scen. Astrid Lindgren och teatern*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2015.
- 136 Räder, Andréa: *Bröderna Grimm. En biografi*. Göteborg: Tvilling, 2016.
- 137 Alkestrand, Malin: *Magiska möjligheter. Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl och Cirkeln i skolans värdegrundsarbete*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2016. Diss. Lund.
- 138 *Mångkulturell barn- och ungdomslitteratur. Analyser*. Eds. Maria Andersson & Elina Druker. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2017.
- 139 Öhrn, Magnus: *Pojklandet. Pojken i svensk barn- och ungdomslitteratur*. Stockholm: CKM Förlag, 2017.
- 140 *Samtida svensk ungdomslitteratur. Analyser*. Ed. Åsa Warnqvist. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2017.
- 141 Wistisen, Lydia: *Gångtunneln. Urbana erfarenheter i svensk ungdomslitteratur 1890–2010*. Lund: ellerströms, 2017. Diss. Stockholm.
- 142 Choi, Sun-Kyoung: *Kraften att älska, makten att tjäna. Religion, emancipation och den kvinnliga skapande kraften i Jeanna Oterdahls sagor 1908–1927*. Umeå: Två Förläggare Bokförlag, 2017. Diss. Umeå.
- 143 Theander, Birgitta: *Till arbetet! Yrkesdrömmar och arbetsliv i flickboken 1920–65*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2017.
- 144 Wallner, Lars: *Framing Education. Doing Comics Literacy in the Classroom*. Linköping: Linköpings universitet, 2017. Diss. Linköping.
- 145 *Linnéuniversitetets sommarkurser 10 år. Jubileumsnummer*. HumaNetten 39/2017. Linnaeus University Press, 2018.

- 146 Svensson, Sonja: *Barnavänner och skolkamrater. Svenska barn- och ungdomstidningar 1766–1900 sedda mot en internationell bakgrund*. Stockholm: Carlssons, 2018.
- 147 Jakobsson, Hilda: *Jag var kvinna. Flickor, kärlek och sexualitet i Agnes von Krusenstjernas tidiga romaner*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2018. Diss. Stockholm.
- 148 *Att skriva barn- och ungdomslitteratur*. Ed. Helene Ehriander. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2019.
- 149 *Astrid Lindgrens bildvärldar*. Eds. Helene Ehriander & Anette Almgren White. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2019.
- 150 Källström, Lisa: *Pippi mellan världar. En bildretorisk studie*. Lund: Lunds universitet, 2020. Diss. Lund.
- 151 Boëthius, Ulf: *Vart längtar min fot. Om Barbro Lindgrens författarskap*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2020.
- 152 Andersson, Maria: *Framtidens kvinnor. Mognad och medborgarskap i svenska flickböcker 1832–1921*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2020.
- 153 Haglund, Tuva: *Tillsammans i Engelsfors. Socialt fiktionsbruk i Engelsförstrilogins digitala fangemenskap 2011–2016*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2021.
- 154 Leden, Laura: *Adaption av flickskap. Normbekräftande och normbrytande i flickböcker översatta från engelska till svenska och finska 1945–1965*. Helsingfors: Helsingfors universitet, 2021. Diss. Helsingfors.
- 155 Alkestrand, Malin: *Mothers and Murderers. Adults' Oppression of Children and Adolescents in Young Adult Dystopian Literature*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam, 2021.