THE PAST, MEMORY AND TRAUMA IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN WRITING

Katarzyna Agnieszka Baran

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Katarzyna Agnieszka Baran

THE PAST, MEMORY AND TRAUMA IN YOUNG ADULT DYSTOPIAN WRITING

DOCTORAL THESIS

Supervised by

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Department of English and German Studies (URV)

UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA i VIRGILI

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FAIG CONSTAR que aquest treball, titulat "**The Past, Memory and Trauma in Young Adult Dystopian Writing"**, que presenta **Katarzyna Agnieszka Baran** per a l'obtenció del títol de Doctor, ha estat realitzat sota la meva direcció al Departament **d'Estudis Anglesos i Alemanys** d'aquesta universitat.

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I STATE that the present study, entitled "**The Past, Memory and Trauma in Young Adult Dystopian Writing**", presented by **Katarzyna Agnieszka Baran** for the award of the degree of Doctor, has been carried out under my supervision at the **Department of English and German Studies** of this university.

The research and the thesis fulfil all the conditions for the award of a EUROPEAN DOCTORATE, in accordance with current Spanish legislation.

Tarragona, 27 d'octubre, 2015
Tarragona, 27 octubre, 2015
Tarragona, 27th October, 2015

La directora de la tesi doctoral
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ABSTRACT

The last twenty years have witnessed an unprecedented interest in dystopian literature for young adults. During the late 1980s and early 1990s the interdisciplinary field of memory studies began to gain a more widespread recognition. Within this eclectic area of research, trauma became one of the most significant points of focus. Moreover, since the early 1990s, there has been an increase in the publication of children's books on trauma. However, to date, there has been little scholarly research into the concepts of trauma and memory in dystopian literature for young adults.

The main aim of this dissertation is to analyse how the past, memory and trauma are reflected in recent young adult dystopian writing. The thesis examines a selection of novels by American and British writers: Lois Lowry, Doris Lessing, Ursula K. Le Guin and Ally Condie. With the use of theories from the field of memory studies, the thesis traces how, in these novels, memory, the past and history are used by repressive regimes to strengthen the status quo. The function of memory is ambiguous as it can be not only oppressive, but also liberating. The complexities of this process are examined together with the representation of trauma in young adult dystopias.

RESUMEN

En los últimos veinte años hemos asistido a un auge sin precedentes del interés por la literatura juvenil distópica. A finales de los ochenta y principios de los noventa el campo multidisciplinario de los Estudios sobre la Memoria comenzó a gozar de un reconocimiento generalizado. Dentro de este campo de investigación tan ecléctico los estudios sobre el trauma se convirtieron en uno de los aspectos que más atención ha recibido. Por otro lado, desde principios de los noventa el número de libros sobre trauma dirigidos a un público juvenil ha ido en aumento. Sin embargo, los estudios académicos sobre los conceptos de trauma y memoria en la literatura juvenil distópica son todavía escasos.

El principal objetivo que se marca esta tesis es analizar cómo se reflejan el pasado, la memoria y el trauma en obras distópicas juveniles de reciente publicación. La tesis analiza una serie de novelas de autores estadounidenses y británicos como son Lois Lowry, Doris Lessing, Ursula K. Le Guin y Ally Condie. Mediante teorías procedentes de los estudios sobre la memoria, en este trabajo se perfila el modo en que los regímenes represivos utilizan el pasado y la historia para fortalecer el estatus quo. Se analiza también la función ambigua de la memoria, que puede ser no solo opresiva sino también liberadora. Por otra parte, la presente tesis centra su atención en la representación del trauma en distopías juveniles.

RESUM

Els últims vint anys han estat testimonis d'un interès sense precedents en la literatura distòpica per als adolescents. Durant la dècada de 1980 i principis de 1990 el camp interdisciplinari d'estudis de la memòria va començar a guanyar un reconeixement més generalitzat. Dins d'aquesta eclèctica àrea d'investigació, els estudis sobre el trauma es va convertir en un dels punts d'enfocament. D'altra banda, des de principis del decenni de 1990, hi ha hagut un augment en el nombre de llibres per a nens sobre el trauma. No obstant això, fins ara, hi ha hagut poca recerca acadèmica en els conceptes de trauma i memòria en la literatura distòpica per als adults joves.

L'objectiu principal d'aquesta tesi és analitzar com el passat, la memòria i el trauma es reflecteixen en els recents textos distòpics destinats als adolescents. La tesi examina novel·les d'escriptores americanes i britàniques: Lois Lowry, Doris Lessing, Ursula K. Le Guin i Ally Condie. Amb l'ús de les teories del camp dels estudis de memòria, aquesta tesi traça com en aquestes novel·les la memòria, el passat i la història són utilitzats pels règims repressius per reforçar el statu quo. La tesi explora també l'ambigua funció de la memòria, que pot ser no només una eina d'opressió, sinó que també d'alliberament. D'altra banda, aquesta tesi se centra en la representació de trauma en distopies per a adolescents.

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The man that I named The Giver passed along to the boy knowledge, history, memories, color, pain, laughter, love, and truth. Every time you place a book in the hands of a child, you do the same thing. It is very risky. But each time a child opens a book, he pushes open the gate that separates him from Elsewhere. It gives him choices. It gives him freedom. Those are magnificent, wonderfully unsafe things.

Lois Lowry "*Newbery Medal* Acceptance Speech" for *The Giver*
1994

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INTRODUCTION

The choice of my field of research for my doctoral thesis has been highly conditioned by my personal background. I was born in Poland when the country was still in a strong grip of the communist regime. I come from a working class family in which politics was never a significant topic of conversation. The paradoxes of communist rule were frequently commented on at the dinner table but at the same time my parents came to appreciate the apparent stability provided by the socialist government. They were aware of the limitations, lack of freedom and the false sense of security but, compared to the calamities and famine of the post-war era which both of them suffered greatly, the conditions under socialist rule were not the worst of possible scenarios. To quote Margaret Atwood's words from *The Handmaids Tale*: "Context is all" (Atwood 1996:154).

I had the rare privilege of living during the era of one of the biggest transformations in recent history. I vividly remember the times of transition from socialist reality to the one driven by capitalism and dominated by a widely understood democratic spirit. What Francis Fukuyama defined as *the end of history* in his highly influential 1989 essay was for me, and many other citizens of the post-socialist block, an exciting and fresh beginning full of possibilities and hopes for a better future. Only after the communist regimes in Eastern Europe came to an end did I become conscious of, and began to analyse, the particular reality that shaped my childhood years. Coming to Tarragona within the Tempus and Erasmus exchange programmes made me even more aware of its particularity as I was finally able to compare my experience to that of people my age who had never faced limitations, contradictions and the anxieties of life under totalitarian rule.

This was also the time when the voices of previously silenced dissidents were finally heard. Many of them, like Adam Michnik or Bronisław Geremek, in my native Poland, Vaclav Havel or Milan Kundera in the former Czechoslovakia, or Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in Russia identified the regimes of Central and Eastern Europe as disastrous experiments in utopia. Many of the thinkers from this zone expressed their condemnation of utopian projects. At the same time, my stay in Tarragona and the classes I had the chance to attend at URV showed me a different face of utopianism as I began to discover a long tradition of utopian and dystopian writing.

The importance of memory and the past have always been vital to me as well. I still keep history books from my primary school which can no longer be used as reliable sources of information as their content was adapted according to the needs of the socialist government. The history I was taught in the first years of primary school was no longer valid when I started my secondary education. Two sets of books containing two different versions of history stand side by side on my bookshelf; witnesses to the instability and volatility of history. Therefore, when the time came to choose the field for my doctoral research, it was more than clear to me that I wanted to concentrate on dystopia and the theme of memory and the past.

Utopia and dystopia are hybrid modes of expression drawing from many different fields. They elude easy classifications; they are interdisciplinary and are present across many various fields such as philosophy, political science, literature, film, sociology, ethnography, anthropology and architecture. At the beginning of my research I planned not to limit my study to a single mode of expression but thought that I would instead look at two forms of the media: literature and film. This well-grounded intention was the outcome of my personal interests in both fields, and of the fact that the dystopian vision has always inspired various authors to use a variety of modes of

expression. The dystopian imagination has been represented in many different forms, both artistic and literary, and since the appearance of the 'moving image', almost as frequently in film as in literature. I thought that if narratives of contemporary dystopias were to be fully appreciated, neither of the above-mentioned modes of expression should be disregarded. However, I realised early on that the amount of material I wanted to study was simply too vast and that it would suffice not for one but a few projects. Therefore, I decided to focus my dissertation on literary dystopia, field still prolific enough to present a challenge when it came to the selection of texts to analyse.

I chose to concentrate on **young adult dystopia** (hereafter, YAD) for a number of reasons. First of all, this particular type of literary dystopia was slowly gaining attention among young readers. *The Hunger Games* craze was in full swing and more and more YA dystopias were being published and brought to the screen. Although YAD was marginalised by both critics and the publishing industry for a long time the trend has definitely changed as it has come to be one the most successful publishing phenomena of recent years. I was intrigued by this phenomenon and wanted to understand the reasons behind such an upsurge of interest in dystopian writing for teenagers. Additionally, YAD is a combination of two genres: dystopia and children's literature, which both faced a similar lack of recognition and a refusal to be included into any literary cannon for many years. Even though YAD was definitely on the rise, the research into this field was quite limited and there were just a few critical publications available. Thus, I found that scholarship in YAD was necessary. I was aware that limited number of previous studies could present difficulty at the time of finding materials. Furthermore, children's literature was a totally new field for me. I realised that the choice of YAD would present a challenge, but I chose to pursue this line of

investigation as – rather than being an area of difficulties – I saw it as being one of opportunities.

Although the importance of memory in dystopian literature has been the subject of some recent debates, especially by Raffaella Baccolini (1995, 1996, 2003, 2004), the main focus was on the role of memory and nostalgia in feminist critical dystopias. In the past, literary critics also analysed how suppression of history, and the erasure or appropriation of memory was used to subjugate societies in dystopian writings for adults (cf. Ferns 1999: 119-20; Baccolini 1995, 1996, 2003, 2004; Moylan 2003: 149, among others). However, it soon came to my attention that there was no previous work which would centre on the importance of the recovery of memory and the past in the fight against oppressive regimes in dystopias for young adults. Furthermore, in spite of rising interest in representations of trauma in literature for children, there was almost no research that would consider how trauma was portrayed in young adult dystopias. All these observations helped me narrow down the scope of my study. As a result, my dissertation sets out to examine the connection between trauma, the oppressive and subversive role of memory, and recent dystopias for young readers. Therefore, this dissertation adds to the scholarship on dystopia, literature for children and young adults, as well as memory and trauma studies.

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 specifies the main aims of this dissertation, the reasons for the inclusion of selected novels in the study, as well as their critical survey. Chapter 2 contextualises the genre of young adult dystopia. First, it provides a definition of YAD and explores its relation to *critical dystopia*, a mode of dystopian writing which emerged in the 1990s. After presenting the review of recent publications on YAD, a survey of main themes explored in YAD is presented. It is followed by a comprehensive analysis of the reasons for the recent growth of popularity

in dystopian writing for young adults. The chapter closes with the analysis of publishing market, and readership among children and young adults. Chapter 3 addresses the complex relationship between remembering, forgetting, and literary utopia and dystopia. It also emphasises themes related to memory that will form the main focus of this study. The chapter includes a survey of reasons for the recent rise of interest in the interdisciplinary field of memory studies. The concluding section offers a survey of the most important publications which focus on the role of memory, the past and history both in dystopian and utopian writing.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the comprehensive analysis of the novels in my corpus. Each of the chapters consists of two sections which complement each other. Chapter 4 focuses on twofold role of memory in young adult dystopian writing. The first part of the chapter uses theories of collective memory to show how memory is used by oppressive regimes to control the citizens. The second section examines the subversive role of remembering and how it is employed to fight oppressive social configurations. Michel Foucault's concept of *counterhistory* forms a vital background for the discussion. Chapter 5 analyses the representations of trauma in YAD. It begins by tracing the origins of the concept of trauma and its presence in writing for children and young adults. The two main complementary sections focus on representations of personal and collective trauma in YAD. The section on personal trauma draws from a variety of approaches to the concept of trauma and mourning as developed by Sigmund Freud, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, Jacques Derrida, Cathy Caruth, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer. The part which explores collective trauma uses theories of Dominick La Capra and Jeffrey Alexander as a key part of the theoretical framework. The final Chapter 6 offers conclusions and an outline of possible areas for further research stemming from this dissertation which may, on the one hand, contribute to an

even more complete understating of the examined field and, on the other, open new possibilities of investigation.

CHAPTER 1. Objectives and Critical Overview of Primary Texts

1. Introduction

This chapter addresses methods applied in this project. It also describes the criteria for the selection of my primary texts together with a corresponding critical survey.

2. Methods and Objectives

The first step in my project was to read as widely as possible in the area of utopian and dystopian studies. The background knowledge I acquired during my undergraduate studies proved a good starting point for this part of research. In order to obtain a more complete vision of YAD, I also needed to focus on literary criticism and theories related to literature for children and young adults. One of the major challenges was the selection of areas within memory studies which I wanted to include in my dissertation. When I started to examine present key debates related to memory, I found myself almost overwhelmed by the scope of this fast growing field. Finally, I decided to focus on two aspects. First of all, as has already been mentioned, the control of memory and the past have always been important themes analysed in dystopias written for adults. Therefore, I decided to centre on this intersection between memory and YAD. Further analysis in the field of memory studies and debates present in the criticism of children's and young adult literature drew my attention to the concept of trauma which was present in both of them.

The existing critical readings of the role of memory in dystopias for adults, and the very few in YAD, do not apply theories from the field of memory studies in the analysis. I decided to incorporate these debates into my dissertation. Therefore, some of the existing theories from this field, together with practices from utopian studies and

children's literature studies provide the context to support a close reading of my primary texts. In order to analyse certain aspects of selected novels, the above theoretical framework and methodology proved insufficient. Hence, I draw on Sigmund Freud, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, and also Jacques Derrida in the analysis of mourning. Michel Foucault's concept of *counterhistory* provides the tools necessary for the examination of the subversive role of memory.

I would like to point out that I abstain from examining how representations of memory and the past in YAD might be received by its readers. It is outside the scope of my study but I believe that such an analysis might be of great interest for reader-response critics.

First of all, this dissertation begins by providing a necessary contextualisation of young adult dystopia as well as of the relation between memory, the past and history, and dystopia. The main objectives however, are closely related to the representation of the present day debates on memory in YAD. Main research questions and objectives of this dissertation shall be detailed below.

This thesis attempts to address the way in which memory, the past and history are used by oppressive regimes (in selected young adult dystopias) to maintain the status quo. With the use of theories from the field of memory studies I set out to describe and analyse the exact mechanisms used by imagined coercive structures to achieve this goal. I also examine if memory has a liberating function in YAD, or if it is only used as a tool of subjugation. Furthermore, I study whether the past, history and memory are approached in the text with nostalgia or not. Moreover, what interests me is how the past is (re)constructed in YAD.

One of the main objectives of this dissertation is to analyse how trauma is approached in YAD; what types of experiences causing trauma are featured in the texts;

what types of trauma are present: personal or collective – or perhaps both; how young protagonists deal with trauma; are they portrayed as ultimate victims or survivors of trauma, or do they play an active part in finding solutions to traumatic scenarios.

3. Selection Criteria of Primary Texts

I selected the following texts for my project. I shall present them in order of the year of publication of the first instalment in each series.

1. ***The Giver Quartet* by Lois Lowry**

   The Giver (1993)
   Gathering Blue (2000)
   Messenger (2004)
   Son (2012)

2. **The *Ifrik* Series by Doris Lessing**

   Mara and Dann. An Adventure (1999)
   The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog (2005)

3. ***The Annals of the Western Shore* by Ursula K. Le Guin**

   Gifts (2004)
   Voices (2006)
   Powers (2007)

4. ***Matched Trilogy* by Ally Condie**

   Matched (2010)
   Crossed (2011)
   Reached (2012)

I focus my study only on literature in English. I have selected novels by American and British authors as they all form part of Anglo-American culture and therefore share many concerns. The writers of the selected texts have had very different literary careers. Lois Lowry is an American author of over thirty books for children and young adults. Among numerous awards, she has been given two Newbery Medals and The Hans Christian Andersen Award, the highest recognition given to an author of children's

books. *The Giver Quartet* is her only dystopian fantasy. Doris Lessing is widely considered one of the greatest British writers. She won multiple national and international awards for her work and is the recipient of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Literature. Her works include science-fiction *Canopus in Argos: Archives*, and a dystopian novel *The Memoirs of the Survivor*. The novels comprising the *Ifrik* Series are the only dystopian texts that can be classified as young-adult. American writer, Ursula K. Le Guin is one of the most acclaimed authors of fantasy, science fiction, dystopia and utopia to date. Throughout her prolific career, she has published texts not only for adults, but also adolescents as well as children. She has won multiple awards for her works and is the 2014 recipient of The National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Allyson Braithwaite Condie, known better as Ally Condie, is an American writer of young-adult fiction. Like Lowry, she focuses only on young readers rather than adults. Before publishing her first best-selling young adult dystopian trilogy, she wrote several books and stories for young adults.

In spite of having such diverse literary interests and different literary careers, all the authors at some stage chose to write YAD in which the themes of memory, history, the past and trauma play a crucial role. I am aware that not all of the writers share the same background, but what unites them, apart from geography and language, is exactly their appreciation of, and fascination with, the dystopian imagination. They opt to use young adult dystopia that has been continually challenged in the field of literary studies; the genre that has been all too often underestimated both for its content and form.

All the texts I have chosen to analyse, have achieved great levels of popularity. They have either been widely read or triggered a critical debate. In the case of some of the texts, both consequences are true. I have chosen these particular works for my analysis as they were all created within the last 20 years and therefore may show some

more general insights into the way the theme of memory is approached in dystopian texts at present. I have decided on this particular timeline for a variety of reasons.

First of all, the final decades of the twentieth century saw a change in the mode of portraying power relations in dystopian texts which resulted in the development of *the critical dystopia* (Moylan 1986: 10–12; Moylan 2000: 183–199; Baccolini and Moylan: 2003: 5–8). Such changes may be seen as a reaction to the political situation after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the gradual disintegration of the Soviet Union and the consequent transformations in the political panorama. Moreover, the treatment of memory in critical dystopia has observed to be different from the one employed in classical dystopia. Baccolini notes that "unlike in classical dystopia, where the *art of memory* remains trapped in an individual, regressive nostalgia, in […] critical dystopias the *culture of memory* allows for the formation of a collective resistance" (original emphasis, 2003: 127). Furthermore, although memory, history and the past have always been a point of focus of many disciplines, it was in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the widespread surge of interest in memory studies was observed (Nora 2002: 4, Misztal 2003: 2, Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 5, Olick 2011: 3). The recent interest in memory can be clearly illustrated by the example given by Rossington and Whitehead (2007: 4-5) who note that it was only in 2005 that the word *memory* was added to the updated version of *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* by Raymond Williams. The 1990s brought a major change not only in the field of memory and utopian studies, but also in children's literature. Kenneth B. Kidd (2005), among others (cf. Capshaw 2005, Higonnet 2005, MacCann 2005), observed that since the early 1990s, there has been a proliferation of children's books on trauma, as well as the scholarly research of those books.

4. A Critical Survey of Selected Texts

At this point, it will be useful to list the young adult dystopias relevant to this research together with the characteristics which foreground the main topics of discussion and analysis. These are, apart from the features typical of dystopian narrative: memory, trauma and the attitude towards the past.

Lois Lowry: *The Giver Quartet*

The Giver Quartet (*The Giver*: 1993, *Gathering Blue*: 2000, *Messenger*: 2004, *Son*: 2012) is a coming-of-age dystopian fantasy series written by the American writer Lois Lowry. The novels are set in a world composed of secluded settlements after an unspecified catastrophic event. The settlements differ substantially from each other and communication between them is limited. Although each instalment features a different community, some characters appear in more than one novel.

The inspiration for the first novel, *The Giver*, came after Lowry visited her father in a nursing home. Her father had lost most of his long-term memory and Lowry began to wonder what a society which had deliberately forgotten its past would look like. She came to the conclusion that enforced amnesia, and the resulting ignorance, would enable a newly-formed society to exclude all the anxiety and pain related to past events. However, along with the elimination of suffering, all other strong emotions would also gradually disappear and would consequently lead to a lessening of bonds within society and families, and would loosen the connections between historical as well as personal pasts.

The Giver soon became one of the most acclaimed books for young adults in the 1990s. It was one of the first fantasy/science-fiction dystopian novels to win a Newbery Medal, a literary award given by the American Library Association (hereafter, the ALA). The Newbery Medal is the first children's literary award in the world. It was first

given in 1922 and is now one of the two most prestigious prizes of this type in the USA. After it is announced each January, the winning book is added by many teachers to their lesson plans and to classroom discussions. It is then also translated into many languages and published outside the USA. Therefore, the winning book is important regarding standards of ethics, knowledge, the politics of gender, race and ethnicity. Today *The Giver* forms part of middle school reading lists in Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the USA. It has been adapted by many children's theatres and a film adaptation was released in 2014.

At the time when *The Giver* was first published, the debate over political correctness was at a peak (Madden 2003: 2). The novel tackles some of the topics the debate addressed, namely the issue of celebrating difference versus the importance of making everyone in the society feel included. It opposes the idea of an all-inclusive society where extreme tolerance is achieved at the expense of diversity. Other issues addressed in the book also mirror the social panorama of the early 1990s: anti-abortion rights, euthanasia, assisted suicide, reproductive rights and the nature of family. Some of these issues were linked to the advances in genetic engineering. The fact that Lowry decided to address such complex and polemic issues in a book for young adults made it one of the most disputed and controversial young adult books recently published in the USA.

In fact, *The Giver*, according to the ALA statistics, was one of the three most *challenged* books in 1995 and came fifth in 1998. The ALA offers its definition of a challenged book as follows:

> A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group. Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather, they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others. As such, they are a threat to freedom of speech and choice. [1]

[1] http://www.ala.org/advocacy/banned (accessed 8 June 2012).

The Giver was listed as the eleventh most challenged book by the ALA in the 1990s, and it ended up twenty-third in the years 2000-2009. It was on the lists of Banned Books Week, a yearly event co-organised by the ALA, from 2005 to 2008. So far, it has been challenged in at least nine American states, sometimes even more than once. *The Giver* has been banned or challenged for being sexually explicit, for dealing with occult themes, use of mind control, selective breeding, violence, graphic descriptions of euthanasia, infanticide, murder, suicide, and 'the elimination of the old and young alike when they are weak, feeble and of no more use' (Associated Press 2001 n. pag).

The novel narrates the story of a 12-year-old boy Jonas who lives in a highly-controlled community based on a doctrine called "Sameness", a lifestyle imposed by a totalitarian regime. The claim of this doctrine is that difference lies at the source of all conflicts. Hence, its eradication is treated as a precondition for achieving a stable and peaceful society. In order to get rid of all differences, citizens have to submit themselves to a set of strict rules that govern their behaviour, language, and relationships and whose main aim is the removal of all personal volition that might lead to conflict. The price they pay for such stability is ignorance, stagnation and an absence of free will. Opposing characteristics such as individual freedom, feelings and passions introduce chaotic elements to the society and so they (and even any memories of them) must be suppressed. Nevertheless, memory is not completely eliminated in Jonas's society. Historical and cultural memory are preserved within the mind of one person – called the Giver. This person holds memory and memories within the mind as if all of those past experiences had actually happened to him or to her. The main function of the Giver is to maintain the memory of the past intact and not to share it with the community under any circumstances. The Giver is consulted by high-ranking officials only on those rare occasions when a problematic situation cannot be solved in any other way. At a certain

time, the Giver transfers all memories to someone who has been chosen to be the *Receiver.* From then on, the Receiver becomes the new Giver. This is the responsibility assigned to Jonas. The memories he receives make him feel like an outsider as he begins to see the world and its people through memories and emotions. Jonas finally decides to give the memories back to his community so that its citizens can begin anew. Although this means a sacrifice on his part as it means he will have to abandon the settlement, he puts his plan into action. As the narrative progresses, Jonas becomes a socially-conscious individual capable of putting the common welfare of the group before his own.

Lowry's second instalment, *Gathering Blue,* is set in a secluded, underdeveloped, violent and almost illiterate society that marginalises the weak and disabled. After Kira, a teenage girl born with a deformed leg, is orphaned, she fears for her life. To her surprise, the Council of Guardians spares her as Kira's extraordinary skill as a weaver is needed to repair a ceremonial robe worn by the Singer on a yearly ritual: the Gathering. During the ceremony, another talented child, referred to as the Singer, sings the Ruin Song which tells the story of human civilisation from before the catastrophe, called "the Ruin". There are no records of the civilisation before the catastrophe, and the knowledge of the past is limited to this one song. At the beginning, Kira is comfortably housed in the Council Edifice and happily works on the robe. However, she soon discovers that she is almost a prisoner, on orders of the Council, and that her community is even less tolerant and compassionate than she has previously thought. Kira learns that all talented children are removed from their families, placed under the supervision of the Council and put to work on various projects related to the Gathering, such as the robe, the ceremonial staff or the song itself. The children's creativity is stifled as they are forbidden to develop their gifts freely and are forced

instead to work on the Gathering ritual only. In spite of the imperfections in her community, Kira dismisses the possibility of escaping and living in a nearby village which accepts everyone regardless of their disabilities and is home to Kira's blind father. As is revealed, he was rescued by compassionate villagers years before, but could not contact his family. Kira, like Jonas, makes a socially informed decision and decides to stay and try to improve her community.

Messenger is the third sequel and is set in a tolerant community already mentioned in *Gathering Blue* and simply referred to as Village. Several characters from the two previous novels live there: Jonas, who acts as its leader and Matty, a young boy and friend to Kira and her father, Christopher. Contrary to the settlements portrayed in the two previous novels, Village is highly tolerant, compassionate and welcoming. The community deeply values literacy, learning and the past and believes that ignorance, secrecy and a lack of knowledge are the root of oppression. Therefore, all children go to school, and two of the most prominent buildings are the Museum and the Library. Jonas notes: "That's why we have the Museum, Matty, to remind us of how we came, and why: to start fresh, and begin a new place from what we had learned and carried from the old" (*Messenger* loc. 325).[2] However, some citizens slowly begin to change from being considerate and generous to becoming impatient, secretive and selfish. This happens to all the inhabitants who trade on a gathering called Trade Mart led by an ominous stranger, referred to as Trademaster. The forest around the village starts to transform as well. More and more often it attacks and hurts the villagers. The only one capable of walking through it safely is Matty, who therefore acts as a messenger. The community grows increasingly intolerant and decides to close the village to all possible newcomers. This prompts Matty to travel and bring Kira to the village before it is too

[2] In the case of Kindle editions, locations instead of pages will be provided.

late. On their way back, the forest attacks them and it is only due to Matty's power of healing that Kira is saved. Matty sacrifices himself to heal the forest from the violence. Once again, Lowry features a child who chooses the good of the community over the child's own.

Messenger stands apart from the other three instalments in the series. Instead of defining it as dystopia, it may be defined as a *critical utopia,* a genre which emerged in the 1960s:

> A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream. Furthermore, the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated. Finally, the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives (Moylan 1986: 10-11; cf. also Sargent 1994: 9).

Although the described community is sympathetic, caring and unprejudiced, it is clearly conflicted and in need of further improvement. One of the features of a critical utopia is an almost balanced presentation of both societies: the negative original and the improved alternative (Moylan 1986: 44). *Messenger* lacks detailed descriptions of the societies its citizens came from. Nevertheless, if treated as part of a series, not as a separate novel, the first two instalments provide enough context and details related to the original oppressive societies.

The final instalment of *The Giver Quartet* is titled *Son.* It follows Claire, the mother of Gabriel who was the baby saved by Jonas in *The Giver.* The book is divided into three time parts: "Before", "Between" and "Beyond". The first part shares the timeline with *The Giver* and features Claire who lives in the same community as Jonas. She is assigned to be a Birthmother but as she cannot have more children due to complications experienced during her first delivery, she is reassigned to a mundane and unrewarding job at a fish hatchery. The instructions related to her taking emotion suppressing pills, administered to all the Society members, are overlooked. Claire stops

taking them and as a result, she begins to experience uninhibited emotions for the first time. Therefore, Claire finds it very difficult to part with her baby, who, like all other newborns, is to be transferred to a Nurturing Centre. She disobeys the rules and decides to volunteer there which enables her to spend time with her son. Unlike other citizens, she starts to feel curious about what lies beyond the settlement and becomes increasingly critical of the Society. As Gabriel is not growing as fast as other children, the authorities decide to euthanize him. He is however saved by Jonas, who takes the baby with him on leaving the community. Claire in a desperate attempt tries to follow them on a cargo boat which is shipwrecked in a storm; she is the only survivor. The "Between" part begins when she wakes up in a secluded coastal village cut off from the rest of the world by a high cliff. Claire suffers from amnesia, but soon recovers her memory and with it, a deep longing for her child. She manages to climb the cliff and encounters Trademaster: the enigmatic figure from *Gathering Blue*. She trades her youth in exchange for finding her son Gabriel. In "Beyond", all the main characters from former instalments come together. In Village, Claire observes her son from a distance. When Gabriel is told by Jonas who she really is, he finds it difficult to believe this at first. However, after Gabriel realizes that he is the only one who can save dying Claire and the whole community from the Trademaster, he decides to rise to the challenge and manages to defeat the Trademaster.

The novels in Lowry's series, much like many other young adult and children's texts, feature teenagers with special gifts who selflessly put the needs of the community over their own. *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* picture imagined communities intended to be worse scenarios than the real worlds of the adolescent readers. Nevertheless, they should not be classified as classical dystopias, but rather as critical dystopias[3] as they do

[3] A detailed discussion of the concept of *critical dystopia* is offered in the following chapter; pp. 32-35.

not reject the possibility of the existence of a better alternative. *Messenger*, as observed above, might be better defined as a critical utopia. *Son,* the most complex narrative in the series, portrays an array of various communities. Claire's homeland is clearly projected as dystopia, while the secluded coastal village can be read as an attempt at a utopian settlement, with Claire as a traveller through whose eyes we are shown the community. The novel ends with the utopian Village portrayed previously in *Messenger,* which is however, not problem-free. Village can thus be seen as a critical utopia; a desirable community but in need of further changes.

Doris Lessing: The *Ifrik* Series

Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann. An Adventure*, the first novel in the *Ifrik* Series, was published in 1999, the same year Lessing was presented with the Award "Premi International Catalunya" for her politically and socially involved work.[4] The novel has received relatively little critical attention so far. The reviews in the press on its publication were mainly not too favourable, Maggie Gee's article for *The Guardian* being one of the few exceptions. Gee praises the novel and the world depicted in it as "utterly strange, detailed and absorbing as a long bright dream". Other reviewers were less enthusiastic. Kakutani, writing for *The New York Times,* describes it as lacking in imagination, repetitious, annoyingly predictable, simplistic and riddled with easy symbolism. Michael Upchurch, also from the *The New York Times,* finds the narrative too slow, "inflated, repetitious and strangely devoid of surprise" and full of two-dimensional and uninvolving characters. Almost all the critics fail to notice however, that one of the greatest strengths of the novel does not lie in its themes of climate change or quest narrative but rather in its portrayal of the importance of memory, the

[4] Cf. http://pic.gencat.cat/ca/guardonats_anteriors/

past and history. Virginia Tiger is one of the few who seems to take this into account when she describes the text as a didactic "allegory concerned with those most persistent of her [Lessing's] preoccupations: survival and memory" (Tiger 1999: 1). Susan Watkins, in her book on Lessing, also notes that both Ifrik novels are an example of the author's growing interest in memory and history (2010: 120).

Mara and Dann. An Adventure (1999) is set thousands of years into the future when the world is going through yet another rapid climate change. Desolate Europe, referred to as Yerrup, is becoming increasingly cold while Africa: Ifrik, where the story takes place, suffers from a disastrous drought. The novel follows siblings, seven-year-old Mara and her younger brother Dann, the sole survivors of a palace coup in which their parents, belonging to the royal family of the Mahondi tribe, were killed. After Mara and Dann are advised to forget their real names and ancestry, they are taken to an isolated village where they are raised in hiding by a sympathetic Mahondi woman. Drought forces the siblings to begin a journey north, in search of their heritage and more hospitable living conditions. During the odyssey through Ifrik plagued with famine and war, the siblings experience many dangerous ordeals and encounter communities consumed by corruption, crime, slavery, power struggles and civil wars. On their journey from their comfortable and safe childhood towards adulthood, they learn about human nature and discover how societies function and are governed. They are both deeply affected by the remains of past civilisations either buried under sands or drowned under water. However, while Mara is driven by her thirst for knowledge about the present and the past, and the need to discover who they are, Dann's initial main concern is the search for a safe haven in the mythical North. The siblings finally reach the legendary "Centre" where they are given answers as to their heritage. However, they refuse to be defined by it. Instead, they settle down with their beloved ones on a nearby

farm. Lessing rejects big plans symbolised by the Centre and opts to end her novel with a small scale family utopia. It mirrors her opinion which she voiced in an interview with Susie Linfield in 2001. She stated: "It's just the big movements I distrust. I think that we should try to do small things that are achievable" (Linfield and Lessing 2001: 74).

The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog (2005)[5], the second and last instalment in the *Ifrik* Series, is like the first novel in that it is riddled with similar leitmotifs: maps, drowned cities, the crumbling Centre, palimpsests, knowledge both lost and found, books, never-ending power struggles as well as a fascination with the past. Many of the themes present in Lessing's Nobel Prize Lecture (2007) are reflected in the series. Both in the *Ifrik* Series and in her speech, she emphasises the importance of memories, tradition, education, literacy, reading, libraries and storytelling.

In the sequel to *Mara and Dann*, Lessing takes her readers on another odyssey. This time, however, Dann has to face his internal struggles and challenges of the outside world on his own, without any support from his beloved sister who dies in childbirth. After abandoning the farm, where the community started to fall apart due to internal power struggles, Dann comes back to the disintegrating Centre. Soon, survivors of the war and drought-stricken south begin to flow there. They are attracted by Dann's widespread, but unearned, fame as a former General and believe him to be able to find a new safe home for them. Dan is reluctant to take on this role as saviour but is encouraged eventually by his devoted companion Griot, a former child-soldier. After a while, Dann becomes restless and cannot bear his status – that is, as Dann the General, Dann the Saviour, and Dann the Prince. Driven by a growing interest in past civilisations, he decides to travel to the frozen cliffs of Yerrup. During this journey, he

[5] Henceforth *The Story*.

encounters various communities but is not fully satisfied with any of them. After coming back to the Centre, Dann learns about his sister's death. The death of Mara makes him heartbroken and he succumbs to a depression from which he never fully recovers. With the help of Griot and the scribe Ali, Dann tries in vain to save the contents of ancient Sand Libraries discovered at the Centre. At the end of the novel, Dann lives with Griot, Mara's daughter, Tamar, and the refugees who followed them, in a newly-established community which offers stability, peace and education at its core.

Lessing's *Ifrik* Series cannot be classified as a traditional dystopian narrative, although both texts contain certain features characteristic of it. They emphasise the connection between the imagined worlds and the present (cf. Ferns 1999: 107, 109 on characteristics of dystopian narrative) and serve as warnings about what the future might look like unless some changes are introduced. The series reads more like a post-apocalyptic dystopian fable on disintegration and the instability of culture and civilisation than a traditional dystopia. Neither of the books depicts one dysfunctional state as an extrapolation of problems affecting present day societies. Instead, Lessing shows a world almost annihilated by climate changes where civilisations are doomed to disintegration, decay and permanent war. She imagines a variety of states and communities which serve as possible alternatives to, or outcomes of, present day state societies. Some of them can be read as inclining towards the dystopian pole, while others are clearly more utopian.

Ursula K. Le Guin: *The Annals of the Western Shore*

Ursula K. Le Guin is best known for her fantasy and science fiction novels. She has been awarded some of the most prestigious fantasy and science fiction awards, such as Nebula, Hugo, Locus and World Fantasy Awards for not only Best Novel, but also

Novella, Novelette and Short Story more than once. Throughout her long career, she has published texts for adults, adolescents as well as children. Even though some of the publications for young adults managed to gain critical acclaim[6], it is her texts for adult readers that have been most frequently praised by both critics and literary communities. The few publications for teenagers to have been noticed gained recognition mainly due to their status as fantasy novels, while their status as texts for young adults has been rather neglected (Cadden 2006: 427). *Earthsea*, her first series of fantasy books and short stories for young adults was published between 1968 and 2001, the first novel being *A Wizard of Earthsea* and the last one, *The Other Wind*. The project first began a few years earlier, in 1964, with the publication of a short story "The Word of Unbinding". Le Guin comes back to literature for young adults with her recent YA dystopian fantasy trilogy *The Annals of the Western Shore*, a series that has not received the critical attention and recognition it definitely deserves. This is what Le Guin says about her YA fantasy trilogy:

> Most recently, my three books of *The Annals of the Western Shore* have been ignored by both the science fiction community and the literary critics, because they are published as "young adult." […] Publishers like it because it is a secure marketing niche. But the cost of security is exclusion from literary consideration. The walls of disdain around any book perceived as being "for children" are much higher than they were when I began publishing the *Earthsea* books, forty years ago. Oh, Joshua, won't you blow your horn? (Le Guin and Chee: 2008 n. pag).

The Annals of the Western Shore series consists of three fantasy novels – *Gifts* (2004), *Voices* (2006) and *Powers* (2007) – all set in a universe of the Western Shore. The books follow the story of gifted children and their coming of age. All the children have different gifts which set them apart: storytelling, interpreting the prophecies of an oracle or precognition. Moreover, the main protagonists also share a passion for words.

[6] *Tehanu. The Last Book of Earthsea* (1990): Nebula and Locus Award for Best Novel; *The Other Wind* (2001): Nebula and World Fantasy Award; *Gifts* (2004): PEN Centre USA Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature in 2005; *Voices* (2006): nominated for the Locus Award for Best Young Adult Book in 2007, *Powers* (2007): shortlisted for the Locus Award for Best Young Adult Book, winner of Nebula Award for Best Novel

All the books in the trilogy are also linked by two recurring protagonists: a poet Orrec Caspro and his wife Gry, who are main characters of the first volume, *Gifts*. Each of the remaining novels features different protagonists: *Voices,* a siege child Memer, and *Powers,* a runaway slave Gavir. All the main characters of the trilogy come together at the end of the last novel.

In *Gifts* the reader is introduced to the Uplands, a mountainous region of scattered clan-ruled farms, home to teenage friends: a boy named Orrec and a girl called Gry. In this culturally poor society members of certain clans possess gifts ranging from innocuous ones such as Gry's clan ability to communicate with animals to more sinister ones like Orrec's family gift of *unmaking*: an ability to destroy and kill with the use of glance and special enchantments only. Both teenagers at the beginning of the novel comply with the inflexible rules of the society. However, as they grow older, their dissatisfaction increases and they rebel against their heritage: Gry refuses to use her gift to help hunters kill animals and Orrec does not accept his violent power and chooses to blindfold himself instead. At the end of the novel they decide to leave the oppression and violence of the Uplands in search for moral integrity and self discovery unrestrained by prejudice.

Voices centres on a seventeen-year old girl Memer who lives in an occupied city-state of Ansul, once a prominent and rich town of merchants. Memer is one of many 'siege brats' and is deeply revengeful towards the invaders who raped her mother and destroyed her hometown. Before being conquered by the Alds, a desert tribe of warriors, Ansul was a hub of free thought, learning, creativity, literature and art. The Alds have no respect for the written word and forbid all written documents as they consider them blasphemous. Moreover, contrary to the polytheist citizens of Ansul, they worship one deity only: Atth, a fierce god of fire. At the beginning of the novel, in spite of her deep

resentment, Memer conforms to the rules of the aggressors. Like most of the citizens, she does not try to analyse in depth the overall situation her hometown finds itself in. Instead, she is consumed by a desire for revenge but does not act upon it. Memer begins to understand the nature of the oppression and to see possible solutions owing to the characters from the first novel, Orrec and Gry. They arrive in Ansul at the invitation of the governor of the Alds, Ioratth, who admires Orrec's gift for storytelling. He performs both for the enslaved citizens of Ansul and for the Alds. The stories and songs trigger a change in attitude on both sides and Orrec soon assumes the role of a mediator. Memer and Gry work closely with him and although they are unable to stop a violent uprising, they finally manage to convince both sides to establish a constructive dialogue, a truce and thus the process of negotiation begins.

Powers tells a story of a slave boy Gavir kidnapped as a baby together with his older sister Sallo from the distant region called the Marshes. The siblings are sold to a wealthy and respectable noble family of the city of Etra, one of many city states. Given Gavir's bright mind and extraordinary memory, he is trained to serve as a slave-tutor. At the beginning of the novel, both siblings act with deep loyalty towards their masters. Sallo, contrary to her brother, never questions their place in the society. However, as Gavir grows older, his dissatisfaction grows. One of the reasons for the siblings' different attitudes is Gavir's gift of precognition, a power encountered among some people in their native Marshes. He is capable not only of seeing the future, but also retains, even if only partially, a memory of the times before Etra. This reference allows him to establish a comparison between the past, their present situation and possible futures. His doubts are strengthened when he encounters a group of young slaves who introduce him to modern poetry and tell him stories about the world beyond the walls of Etra. He is further disheartened when Sallo is killed by one of the masters' sons, a crime

that goes unpunished. Gavir suffers from temporal amnesia due to the trauma after his sister's death and leaves Etra. After regaining his memory, he realises the depth of betrayal by his former masters and, as a consequence, instead of returning, he decides to search for his roots. In a Gulliver-like journey, Gavir travels through various regions and becomes familiar with different ways of life and attitudes towards power, freedom, literacy and heritage. He finally comes to terms with his past and arrives in the free university City State of Urdile, now home of Orrec, Gry and Memer.

Le Guin's *The Annals of the Western Shore* series, like Lowry's *The Giver Quartet*, features young protagonists with special gifts, who discover the limitations of their societies. Nevertheless, contrary to Lowry, Le Guin avoids involving her main characters in direct action aimed at introducing major changes. In *Gifts* and *Powers*, Gry, Orrec and Gavir choose to leave oppressive communities in search for more inclusive settlements. *Voices*, instead of a direct rejection and condemnation of one of the sides of the conflict, emphasises the importance of cooperation and dialogue. In her dystopian young adult fantasy novels, much as in many of her texts for adults, Le Guin rejects violence as way of reaching goals.

Ally Condie: *Matched Trilogy*

Matched Trilogy, which includes *Matched* (2010), *Crossed* (2011), and *Reached* (2012), is written by Ally Condie, a former high school English teacher. Although *Matched* is not her first book for young adults, it is her first dystopia. Foreign rights to the series have been so far sold to publishers in 33 countries all over the world.[7] The series has won several awards and was placed high up on various reading lists.[8] Although Disney

[7] Data according to Ally Condie's official website http://allycondie.com/faq

[8] *Matched*: One of YALSA'S 2011 Teens' Top Ten; Publishers Weekly's Best Children's Books of 2010; Number 1 Pick on the Winter 2010/2011 Kid's Indie Next List; YALSA 2011 Best Fiction for Young

and Offspring Entertainment optioned the film rights even before the first instalment was finished,[9] the exact release date is still unknown. The series was compared on various occasions to Collins' *The Hunger Games,* published two years earlier and Lowry's *The Giver*. *Entertainment Weekly* described it as "The hottest YA title to hit bookstores since *The Hunger Games*", *Winston-Salem Journal* stated "If you liked *The Hunger Gam*es then you should enjoy *Matched*", *Lincoln Journal Star* observed "Think *The Giver*, but sexier". Some critics, apart from paying attention to the series being aimed at young adults, also emphasised its dystopian features. *Booklist* noted: "The stunning clarity and attention to detail in Condie's Big Brother-like world is a feat", *The Wall Street Journal*: "…superb dystopian romance", *School Library Journal*: "In a story that is at once evocative of Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Condie introduces readers to the 'perfect' Society". *The New York Times* observed "Matched is a page-turning, dystopian love story, written with the soul of a poet. Finally, a brave new world that readers from *Twilight* to *The Hunger Games* will claim as their own".[10]

The trilogy portrays the earth after an unspecified apocalyptic event caused by an overreliance on technology. Therefore, in this new world, technology is reduced to the necessary minimum. At first glance, it gives an impression of a placid land where all the basic needs are catered for. There is no money; nothing to trade, except for work experience. However, as the narrative unfolds, the shortcomings of the system become increasingly evident. All the decisions related to the personal lives of citizens are made by Officials: marriage, profession, free time activities, food, clothes and even the time of death is carefully planned by the Society. Spouses are presented during the Match

Readers; YALSA 2011 Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers; Amazon Best Books of the Month, December 2010; 2010 Whitney Award Winner for Best Speculative Youth Fiction; *Crossed*: 2011-2012 Kids' Indie Next List Selection. Data according to Ally Condie's official website http://allycondie.com/reviews

[9] Data according to Ally Condie's official website http://allycondie.com/faq

[10] For more reviews cf. http://allycondie.com/reviews, or http://www.matched-book.com/news.html

Banquet after the citizens turn seventeen. The protagonist, Cassia Reyes is matched with her best friend, Xander. However, after she returns home she discovers that she has also been matched with another of her childhood friends, Ky. Although the Officials explain the mistake, Cassia starts to doubt the infallibility of the Society. Her unsanctioned relationship with Ky, who is much more conscious of the flaws of the regime due to his deceased parents' involvement in a clandestine opposition movement called the Rising, makes her more and more critical of the Society. After Ky is exiled to work in a dangerous war zone and prohibited any contact with his relatives and friends, Cassia decides to search for him. Like the protagonists of many other young adult novels, she abandons the familiar and protective home environment and ventures into the unknown and prohibited parts of the Society. During her quest, she changes from a complacent and uncritical adolescent into a self-aware and perceptive young adult. Cassia, together with Ky and Xander, joins the Rising and helps to bring down the oppressive regime.

Matched trilogy was written in the middle of the YAD boom and, within my corpus, is the most similar to other YAD series published recently, such as *The Hunger Games* or *Divergen*t trilogies. All of these series portray militant societies and include explicit violence by young protagonists who prefer not to seek more peaceful alternatives. Furthermore, Condie's trilogy, together with Lowry's *The Giver*, can serve as the clearest examples of young adult dystopian narrative within my corpus. They feature oppressive states, similar to the ones present in adult dystopias such as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) or Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). In all of them, the priority of the central government is uniformity, surveillance and the total control of all spheres of everyday life: work, leisure, family structure, sexuality and reproduction included.

> I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards – their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble – the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading."
>
> Virginia Woolf "How Should One Read a Book?"

Chapter 2. Contextualising Young Adult Dystopian Literature

1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a general overlook and introduction to the genre of young adult dystopia. The chapter begins by offering its definition. It then focuses on the main features of the genre, some of which are characteristic of young adult narrative, some, of dystopian writing, and others are common to both genres. Special emphasis is given to the relation between a *critical dystopia* and YAD. The chapter also outlines the most recent and relevant research in the area of young adult dystopia. A review of the scholarship to date is followed by an analysis of important themes in YAD as well as the reasons for its recent increase in popularity. Finally, the last part presents details on YAD readership among children and young adults in the USA.

2. Defining Young Adult Dystopia

Young Adult Dystopia is a hybrid genre that, apart from characteristic traits of dystopian narrative, includes elements of *Bildungsroman* or *Entwicklungsroman*. Mike Cadden defines *Bildungsroman* as a "novel of growth" while *Entwicklungsroman* as a "novel of character change" (Cadden 2011: 310).[11] This combination frequently results

[11] Roberta Seelinger provides a more detailed discussion of the difference between *Bildungsroman* and *Entwicklungsroman.* She describes *Bildungsroman* as a novel of development for young adults and adolescents in which the protagonist comes of age as an adult; *Entwicklungsroman*: a novel of

in a politically conscious narrative with child or adolescent protagonists who serve as main triggers of the action. In YAD the young protagonists involved in the quest for self-recognition and attempt to find their place in society, discover, and later question, the limitations of the ruling system. In this way the readers of YAD look at their own society in perspective and as a result are encouraged to analyse and question it. This pursuit of personal growth and autonomy are not merely typical features of young adult dystopian fiction, but are employed by the authors to show how the transitional period of adolescence can be used to emphasise the need of conscious political action (Hintz 2002: 255). Moreover, young adult dystopian texts also manifest that the status quo is not stable and that once it has been challenged, a new order can be established. Challenging the status quo is a frequent characteristic in all young adult fiction, not only in YAD. The role of dystopian literature for young adults and children is often compared to the one attributed to fairy tales. Critics of children's literature claim that both types of texts, with the use of metaphor and extrapolation, make their readers aware of and guide them through existing power relations.

Some of the themes present in YAD are common to both dystopian and young adult narrative. Both of them feature protagonists who are at first compliant and accept the rules of their society. However, as the story unfolds, they become increasingly dissatisfied; they begin to notice inconsistencies in the system and have doubts about its infallibility. The protagonists eventually rebel against the status quo, become less complacent, more socially conscious and more mature. Protagonists of both young adult and dystopian fiction are in a transition process from acquiescent to more politically and socially conscious individuals. Indeed, YAD thus provides a perfect space to show its protagonists in development. One of the main features of literature for children and

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development for young adults and adolescents in which the protagonist has not reached adulthood at the end of the novel (cf. Seelinger 2000: chapter 1, n. pag; Kindle edition).

young adults is its didactic nature (Hintz and Ostry 2003: 7; Basu et al. 2013: 5-6; Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 8). Utopian literature can also be highly pedagogical (Sargent 2003: 7). YADs have however, another objective in sight as well. They aim not only to instruct their readers but also to provide them with a sense of escape from the reality of their own lives (Basu et al. 2013: 5). Therefore, YAD should be viewed as a genre in which both the wish to educate and to entertain are priorities.

YAD also contains characteristics that are more relevant to young adult than dystopian narratives. YAD features young protagonists who move away from home to the outside world and then return. This movement exemplifies the hybrid nature of many children and of young adult narratives which combine domestic and adventure fiction (Basu et al. 2013: 7-8, Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 193-214). The main protagonists leave their homes and embark on a journey at the end of which they arrive at the domestic sphere, although it might not be the same place they once left behind. Young adult dystopian narratives also share certain elements with dystopias for adults.

Whereas utopian texts often focus on a traveller or visitor who comes from elsewhere, the dystopian texts tend to centre on a dissident member of the nightmarish society (Ferns 1999: 112; Moylan 2000: 148; Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 5). Sometimes, the worlds portrayed in dystopian narratives seem better than the real world of the readers and may offer some tempting alternatives to that real world. However, as the narrative unfolds, the reader realises that the fictional world is an oppressed world. As the narrative progresses, the protagonists' dissatisfaction and the need for resistance grow (Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 5). As Baccolini observes (Baccolini 1995: 293n; Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 6), dystopia is constructed out of the initial narrative of a dominant order and the developing oppositional counter-narrative. The struggle in dystopian narratives is twofold. First, dissidents go through an internal conflict which

then leads to a struggle between the individual and the oppressive state (Ferns 1999: 107). The protagonists in dystopia are far more complex than protagonists of classical utopias: they are doubtful, hesitant, question the state and oscillate between its initial, although sometimes only partial, acceptance, and final rejection. Therefore, dystopian narrative shows a process and is kinetic, unlike the static narrative in traditional utopia (Ferns 1999: 111). Hence, the didactic function of dystopia is achieved through the confrontation of increasingly dissatisfied protagonists with the inconsistencies of the described society (Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 6).

3. Not All Is Lost: Young Adult Dystopia and Critical Dystopia

One of the main characteristics of YADs is that even though they present grim worlds, they almost never end in despair. An acclaimed writer of books for children and young adults, Monica Hughes, points out that "You may lead a child into the darkness, but you must never turn out the light" (Hughes 2003: 156). She observes that dystopian worlds created for young audiences are to be exciting but "The end result must never be nihilism and despair" (2003: 156). The presence of hope within the text is one of the principal traits of writing for children and young adults in general. The convention of a happy ending seems to be one of the unwritten laws of this genre. Unlike literature for adults which may end on a pessimistic note, the writers aiming at a young audience avoid exposing their readers to too much despair and try to protect them from excessive gloom. Literary critics and researchers dealing with literature for children treat this feature as being one of the most important traits that differentiate children's literature from adults' (cf. Natalie Babbit in Sambell 2003: 165).

YAD is not an exception. YADs may lead both their protagonists and readers through dim worlds, but in spite of this seeming pessimism they will almost always

contain a glimmer of hope at the end of the story. Hence, dystopias for young readers are riddled with a conflict resulting from the characteristics of the two genres they belong to (cf. Ostry 2013: 109, Nikolajeva 2010: 73). They attempt to reconcile the despair and imperfect worlds of dystopia with the optimism and hope of children's fiction and young adult fiction. This conflict is even more present in YAD as its readers may still be teenagers but also young adults at the same time. This is one of the reasons why these texts narrate stories whose protagonists go through exceedingly violent ordeals more characteristic of texts for adults than children. Overt depictions of violence in many YADs are reasons why this genre has been challenged and objected to by numerous literary critics, scholars and parents.

Despite all the affliction and calamities which the protagonists of YAD are faced with, the writers are reluctant to envision endings that would not contain at least a tiny glimmer of hope. As Kay Sambell comments: "First, the [young adult dystopian] literature primarily cautions young readers about the probable dire consequences of current human behaviors. Second, […] it is driven by the impulse to counsel hope and present the case for urgent social change" (Sambell 2003: 163). She further notes that the writers of young adult dystopias often fear that young readers might fail to realize that their texts are warnings and should prompt people to action before it is too late. Moreover, they also "fear their writing may, instead, allow young readers to fall into the trap of an apocalyptic despair which merely disempowers those one seeks to reinvigorate" (Sambell 2003: 164). She claims that, contrary to classic dystopian writing for adults, where hope is completely extinguished, young adult dystopias hesitate to depict the total extinction of such hope. While I agree fully with her observations on YAD, I find her remarks on adult dystopia not entirely accurate. She fails to mention one of the most important recent developments in the field of adult dystopian writing,

namely the *critical dystopia.* I have found the same omission in other publications on YAD (cf. Hintz and Ostry 2003, Nikolajeva 2010: 73-88, Basu et al. 2013). Lyman Tower Sargent noticed as early as 1994 in his essay "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" the emergence of this new tendency. He observed that

> recent works such as Marge Piercy's *He, She and It* (1991) which are clearly both eutopias and dystopias undermine all neat classification schemes. The terms good place and bad place simply do not work for *He, She and It* and a substantial number of other utopias written in the past thirty years (Sargent 1994: 7).

In 2001 he defined the concept of critical dystopia as

> a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced by eutopia (Sargent 2001: 222).

Critical dystopia remained at the centre of scholarly debates and publications on utopia and dystopia in the years to follow (cf. Moylan 2000, Barr 2000, Baccolini and Moylan 2003, Mohr 2005, Jameson 2005: 198-202). This mode of dystopian writing that dominated the decades of 1980s, 1990s and 2000s has been analysed in depth from various perspectives. One of its main features noted by many scholars is exactly the presence of open endings that enable the utopian impulse to be included in the dystopian narrative. Raffaella Baccolini observes that critical dystopias, especially those 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 that contain both utopian and dystopian elements. Critical or open-ended dystopias are texts that maintain a utopian core at their center, a locus of hope that contributes to deconstructing tradition and reconstructing alternatives (Baccolini 2000: 13).

She further developed this thesis in the article published in 2004, "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science-Fiction", where she remarks that utopia is maintained within critical dystopia and as a consequence both protagonists and readers of critical dystopias are enabled to hope.

All the texts chosen for this study contain the aforementioned utopian impulse as they all end on a positive note. The ending of Lowry's *The Giver* has long been considered ambiguous, as it is not clear whether Jonas and Gabriel manage to survive their escape. However, the following novels in the series dispel all the doubts as we learn that both boys reach safety. In *Gathering Blue,* Kira inspires hope when she decides to stay in her community and together with other gifted children tries to improve it. Although Matty dies at the end of *Messenger*, his sacrifice does not go in vain as he manages to secure a better future for his community. Similarly, thanks to Gabriel, *Son* ends on a positive note, with Village set free of the evil Trademaster, and Gabriel and his mother, Claire, become reunited. Lessing chooses to end her first novel in the *Ifrik* Series with a utopian settlement where the siblings and their closest friends and loved ones finally find peace. Despite the fact that at the beginning of the sequel to *Mara and Dann* this utopian enclave falls apart, Lessing ends her second instalment, and hence the series, with yet another utopia. Similarly, Le Guin ends the series of *The Annals of the Western Shore* with all the main protagonists living in the free city of Urdile, a cradle of tolerance and scholarship available to everyone. The ending of the *Matched Trilogy* features the beginnings of a more inclusive society.

It seems, therefore, that most young adult fiction, YAD and recent dystopian writing for adults in the form of critical dystopia share the tendency to incorporate the utopian impulse into the text to inspire hope. When Lois Lowry, the author of *The Giver*, was asked by Carrie Hintz and Elanie Ostry, young adult and children's literature critics, if children and young adults could handle dystopia, she answered:

> Young people handle dystopia every day: in their lives, their dysfunctional families, their violence-ridden schools. They watch dystopian television and movies about the real world where firearms bring explosive conclusions to conflict. Yes, I think they [children] need to see some hope for such a world. I can't imagine writing a book that doesn't have a hopeful ending (Hintz, Ostry and Lowry 2003: 199).

4. Recent Scholarship on Young Adult Dystopian Writing

This section provides an outline of the critical literature on young adult dystopia which has served as a basis for my research. It is important to stress at this point that this thesis adds a new perspective to the existing academic research of this genre. As far as I have been able to determine, very little academic research has been done so far on the role of memory in young adult dystopias. What follows is the review of publications dedicated entirely to dystopian literature for children. This is continued by an outline of selected book chapters and articles which deal with the question of memory in YAD.

Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults (2003) edited by Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry and published by Routledge in the Children's Literature and Culture series is not a traditional collection of critical essays. Apart from articles by literary critics, it also offers four brief essays by well-known authors of books for children and young adults and an interview with Lois Lowry. Its major contribution to the genre is also an Annotated Bibliography of utopian and dystopian literature for children and young adults which is commended by Lyman Tower Sargent in a brief afterword. It complements Tower Sargent's own bibliography of adult dystopian and utopian literature from which dystopian and utopian writing for children and young adults was deliberately excluded. In the foreword, Jack Zipes emphasises the need for utopian and dystopian literature as it has the unique capacity to arouse hope. The editors of the volume enumerate various functions of YAD, stressing its didactic role in raising questions about political organisations and social systems, the role of the individual in them, and the limitations of freedom. The introduction provides a concise description of utopianism and outlines the reasons for the study of children and young adult utopian and dystopian narrative. The authors state that, first of all, it is wrong to believe that childhood represents a utopian space and time separate from the problems of adult life;

this is a myth and needs to be abolished. Secondly, they believe that utopian and dystopian writing can play a substantial role in children and young adults' educations and their introduction into the intricacies of social structures. They also state that dystopia can actually act as a metaphor for adolescence because of the oppressive role of authority both in dystopia and adolescence, and the subsequent need to rebel against it which is necessary to feel free. The volume is divided into four parts, each consisting of critical essays and one piece by a children's literature writer. Each of the parts tries to give a different perspective on YAD. The first section focuses on the role of trains, planes and other means of transport as vehicles used to reach utopia – as well as being utopian spaces in themselves. The second part comprises the analysis of the social foundations of utopias through cooperation and education. The next section focuses on the role of the child in utopian and dystopian narrative. It examines children's capacity to detect the flaws of social systems and to rebel against them. The last part of the essays focuses on utopias and dystopias written after World War II. None of the essays in the volume deals with the relation between memory and dystopia / utopia.

Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers (2013) edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz, the winner of Children's Literature Association Edited Book Award, is a recent valuable addition to scholarship on young adult dystopia. Contrary to the previously discussed volume, it centres exclusively on young adult dystopia, which confirms the growth of popularity and interest in this genre. The comprehensive introduction begins with an outline of the three major areas the volume aims to address: how YAD balance didacticism with escape, political change with conservatism and, finally, hope with despair. The editors also include a definition of YAD and concise descriptions of its central themes and possible sources of its recent considerable appeal. The publication is divided into four

parts. The essays in the first section address the interaction of generic conventions of utopian, dystopian and young adult literature, and adolescents' construction of identity within society. The second section focuses on texts dealing with post-apocalyptic and ecological themes. The essays discuss the promotion of political and ecologically informed activism presented in the novels as well as the interaction between nature and technology. The following section looks at the complexity of social critique and rebellion against the status quo as presented in YAD. The essays offer thought-provoking readings of various texts: they draw attention to a barely disguised and concealed conservatism which is presented as seemingly empowering and progressive. The last part of the volume analyses the impact of new developments in science and technology on adolescents.

In her book *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (2010) Maria Nikolajeva, a renowned scholar in the field of children's and young adult literature, devotes one chapter to dystopia: "Othering the Future: Stereotypes of Dystopia". She observes that during the 1990s and well into the twenty-first century young adult dystopia flourished. She finds the hybrid genre of YAD seemingly impossible as it tries to reconcile the optimism of narratives aimed at children and teenagers with the apparent pessimism of dystopia. However, this new hybrid is not as unlikely as it might seem at a first glance. Nikolajeva, like many other critics of literature for children and young adults, fails to notice the recent development in adult dystopian writing, the *critical dystopia*, which, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, always contains utopia within the narrative. Nikolajeva chooses a selection of recent YADs to describe, more than analyse, some of the recurrent dystopian features in YAD. All the traits she enumerates are typical of classical dystopia. First, Nikolajeva focuses on time-space of dystopia and observes that it is distanced from the reader's and

author's reality, a feature which creates an effect of alienation. She also notes the isolation of dystopian enclaves. She goes on to outline those features that create the feeling of apparent perfection of the portrayed totalitarian societies and how this initial vision is eventually questioned as the narrative unfolds. The article describes the portrayal of ethnicity, gender and class in the selected texts and also discusses questions regarding the control of language and knowledge. The author finishes off by describing the type of narration used in the novels and actions of main characters once the oppression of the totalitarian regime is revealed. Nikolajeva devotes only a few lines (2010: 82) to the issue of memory in *The Giver*. She notes that the novel features a society characterised by the absence of memory, but does not go further to analyse its implications.

In the 2012 collection of essays, *Contemporary Adolescent Literature and Culture*. *The Emergent Adult,* edited by Mary Hilton, the focus is on how adolescence - and issues related to it - are portrayed in literature. The essays deal with a variety of subjects ranging from nationhood, body politics, music, emotions, cross-dressing and teenagers' relation to the natural environment. Clémentine Beauvais essay "Romance, Dystopia, and the Hybrid Child" uses Homi Bhaabha's concept of *hybridity* to analyse two young adult dystopian narratives: Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* series (2001- 05) and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005-08) series. She observes that both texts address questions of trans-racial (or trans-species in case of *Twilight* series) romantic relationship which ends in an unplanned pregnancy and the birth of a hybrid female child. She links themes of hybridity and trans-racial romance to issues of political and social awareness by observing that the hybrid child can be seen as a form of political rebellion against oppressive social structures. Beauvais notes that the

authors of the discussed novels differ substantially in their attitude towards the hybrid child's power to reconcile opposite sides.

What follows below is an outline of scholarly articles and book chapters devoted to various aspects of memory as presented in novels within the corpus of this dissertation. It is beyond the scope of this study to present an overview of publications on young adult dystopias not included in the corpus and not related directly to the theme of memory, history and the past.

In *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature. Ghost Images* (2013) Anastatsia Ulanowicz in five comprehensive chapters explores narratives in which young protagonists are highly influenced by inherited traumatic memories. The first chapter in her book is the most relevant to the topic of my thesis as it discusses Lois Lowry's *The Giver.* Ulanowicz, drawing on Pierre Nora's arguments related to Western society's loss of its capacity for collective memory, sees the novel as an example of a generalised call for remembrance amidst the present culture of forgetting. The author sees both the family setting and emotional aspects of testimony as crucial parts in the process of transmission of second-generation memory. Consequently, she argues that the protagonist's development from an ignorant and complacent child into a more socially-aware teenager is awakened and fomented not only owing to the received memories, but also to the close relationship with the Giver. Ulanowicz emphasises Jonas' socially-conscious decision to share the memories in his attempt to heal the community. She also observes that the main character is not a mere receptacle but rather an active individual capable of making difficult decisions.

Carter Hanson in his 2009 article "The Utopian Function of Memory in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*" published in Journal *Extrapolation* explores a twofold role of memory which can be both subversive and suppressive. He uses Ernst Bloch's interplay

between memory and the Not-Yet[12] of utopia in the analysis. He reads the way memories are transmitted in the novel as a dramatisation of Bloch's concepts of recognition and the Not-Yet-Conscious. By doing so, the author wants to show that historical memory can trigger resistance and social change. Hanson does not analyse *The Giver* in the context of young adult culture and YAD, but rather reads it as a classical dystopia.

Susan Watkins in her monograph *Doris Lessing* (2010) in the part on the *Ifrik* Series employs the concept of the palimpsest from poststructuralist criticism as a mark of scepticism about the notion of origin. Watkins argues that Lessing shows how official histories are flawed and imperfect. According to the author, Lessing sees memory and history as productive for both the individual and the nation only if they acknowledge the importance of the imagination in the process of the transmission of memories.

Although the authors of many critical essays on YAD recognise the importance of themes such as surveillance, repression, resistance and struggle, among other themes, only a few of them have decided to analyse the crucial role that memory plays in YAD.

5. Major Themes in YAD

Although each YAD presents the readers with a particular set of concerns, observations, and political orientations and offers different ways of dealing with them, certain trends and recurring motifs within recent YAD can be observed. Two major publications on YAD, *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults* (Basu et al. 2013) and *New World Orders in Contemporary Children's Literature* (Bradford et al. 2008) identify these themes. The trends exemplify main concerns and preoccupations present in the

[12] The Not-Yet and the Not-Yet-Conscious are concepts developed by Bloch in *The Principle of Hope* (published originally in German 1954-59; English translation: 1986)

contemporary world and the ones that the authors of YAD consider crucial for young adults. A discussion and examples of these themes follow below. It should be noted that many of the trends identified in the aforementioned publications are typical for dystopian genre in general. I would like to point out that, although majority of the themes have already been defined and recognised by the critics, the actual examples listed below for these themes are the result of my own research. The novels I use to illustrate the present trends are not only the texts which form part of the core of my corpus, but also other YADs I have consulted in the course of my research.

One of the frequent themes in YAD is the concern with the state of the environment and the fear of environmental destruction. The worlds the authors portray exhibit a number of ecological preoccupations. Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann. An Adventure* and its sequel *The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog* envision the Earth in a new ice age caused by the recklessness of present-day society. Most of the globe suffers from serious prolonged drought. Lowry's *The Giver Quartet* portrays the world in the aftermath of a disaster referred to as "the Ruin". Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries 2015* (2008) and *The Carbon Diaries 2017* (2009) deal with the introduction of drastic measures in order to combat climate change. Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker* (2010) deals with the aftermath of global warming and worldwide flooding.

The post-apocalyptic YADs are concerned with world-changing events which are not necessarily limited to ecological disasters. As the authors of *New World Orders in Contemporary Children's Literature* note, the end of the Cold War was a turning point in the ways post-apocalyptic dystopias came to be represented (2008: 13-14). Moreover, the fear of potential pandemic gained more plausibility with the outbreaks of SARS, avian flu and Ebola virus. Thus, plagues, asteroid impacts, war, zombies and

aliens substituted nuclear warfare as the cause of the catastrophic event. Condie's *Matched Trilogy* envisions the civilisation after a catastrophe caused by overreliance on technology. In *The Maze Runner Series* (2009–2012) by James Dashner the world has been devastated by uncontrolled solar flares and by a deadly infectious disease called the Flare. *The Hunger Games Trilogy* (2008-2012) by Suzanne Collins features North America in the aftermath of mass death and destruction. *The Fifth Wave Series* (2013–2014) by Rick Yancey follows a teenage girl as she struggles to survive in a world destroyed by the waves of alien invasions.

Conformity is yet another of the major themes present in YAD, a feature present in adult dystopia as well (Ferns 1999: 113-15). The worlds inhabited by protagonists of YAD often treat difference and diversity as a possible cause of conflict and discord. Thus, they value uniformity and obedience more than versatility and free choice. In the acclaimed *Uglies Series* (2005–2007) by Scott Westerfeld one of the most cherished values is absolute equality. Therefore, every citizen has to undergo cosmetic surgery at the age of 16 which renders everyone an epitome of standardised beauty. Lowry's *The Giver* and *Son* also feature a highly controlled Society where almost everything that might lead to inequality, even colours and the memory of the past, has been eliminated. The doctrine called *the Sameness* was introduced in the past as a remedy against war and all the possible social ills. Ally Condie in *Matched Series* portrays a similar society where almost everything from jobs to spouses is controlled by a centralised government. All these novels revolve around the struggle of young individuals who try to maintain a balance between their personal freedom and values they were taught to obey and respect.

Many YADs feature societies in which information is manipulated by the government or other ruling bodies. They withhold crucial information from the citizens,

an act which may be seen as a reflection of the atmosphere of conspiracy present in contemporary political discourse (Basu et al. 2013: 4). Young protagonists manage to learn truths hidden from the rest of society and the discovery of them is frequently portrayed as the only way of fighting the regime. In *The Giver Quartet,* the society Lowry imagines has banned and erased all the information and memories of the past. The citizens live their day-to-day existence completely unaware of the past. It is only once memories are brought back that the change in the system is initiated. Condie's *Matched Trilogy* depicts a society in which almost no questions are asked and all the orders are obeyed blindly. However, there is a general feeling that not everything is as transparent and straightforward as it might seem at first glance. The main protagonists discover that they are being lied to and that their memories are being manipulated so that the society runs smoothly. This serves as one of the triggers for rebellion. In *The Maze Runner Series* the withdrawal of information is the main mechanism to manipulate the protagonists. Thus, one of the most important points of their resistance is trying to discover their identities and understand the workings of the system. Veronica Roth in the acclaimed *Divergent Trilogy* (2011-2013) also features a society which withholds crucial information from its citizens. They live unaware of the real reasons why all the population is enclosed within walled cities and why all contact with the outside is prohibited. The discovery of what caused this situation serves as a turning point and only after the truth surfaces, does the process of reconciliation begin.

Surveillance is also a highly featured theme in YAD, much as it is in dystopian fiction in general (Ferns 1999: 112). Surveillance is an important issue nowadays and is related to many concerns such as the limitation of personal freedom and agency or the disappearance of the difference between what is private and public. Both electronic surveillance and surveillance which is more reminiscent of Foucauldian panopticism are

featured in present YADs. The protagonists of *The Maze Runner Series* are being constantly monitored and observed through the use of sophisticated technology. Moreover, they are also controlled by the people who work directly for the organisation that holds the protagonists captive. In *The Hunger Games Trilogy* the participants of the games are actually taking part in a nationwide reality show. Their every single move is surveyed by the organisers and also followed by all the citizens on the screens of their televisions. The Societies in *The Giver* and *Matched Trilogy* are controlled down to the tiniest detail as well. Every single step in the lives of all the citizens is predictable and forms part of a routine known to everyone. In this way any erratic or irregular behaviour is easily spotted and the guilty person is instantly taken in.

A discussion of features common to many YAD but not mentioned by the authors of the aforementioned publications follows below.

A characteristic of young adult dystopia, which is also representative of dystopian writing in general, is the reappropriation of language and alternative ways of communication and their use in subverting and fighting totalitarian regimes (Moylan 2003: 148-49; Baccolini and Moylan 2003: 5-6). Language plays an important role in the novels in my corpus and that is why I chose to discuss it separately. Language precision is one of crucial tasks children in Lowry's *The Giver* and *Son* need to master. After Jonas stops taking pills to suppress his emotions and is then given memories, he realises that the language he has been taught is unfit to describe the experiences he has been exposed to. Similarly, Claire, after being rescued by the inhabitants of the coastal village, finds it difficult to communicate as she has never learnt to recognise and name basic concepts such as colours or feelings. In both novels, subversive language becomes a manner of discovering and describing reality beyond the world approved by the

state.[13] Cassia, the protagonist of *Matched Trilogy*, also feels frustrated as she finds the language used by the Society inadequate when it comes to expressing her feelings towards Ky and her changing attitude towards the regime. Prohibited poems given to her by her grandfather help Cassia find a way to voice her concerns and express her emotions. Since then Cassia and Ky begin clandestine communication with the use of poems not sanctioned by the Society. Additionally, Cassia starts to write her own poetry and Ky keeps on drawing and painting, activities prohibited by the state. Creativity and alternative manners of expression through various art forms become a part of political resistance in the novel. Similarly, gifted children in Lowry's *Gathering Blue* use their creativity to convey ideas beyond the scope of imagination of the rigid Council of Guardians. Orrec, the main character in Le Guin's *Gifts*, is supposed to use special language and incantations to "unmake" (a euphemism for "put to death") all the enemies of his clan. Gry, his best friend, is expected to use her gift of communicating with animals to help hunters. Both teenagers refuse to follow their legacy and decide to use language and their powers in different ways. Alternative uses of language and their powers make it possible for them to emancipate and leave the oppressive community. Gry uses her gift to train animals, while Orrec's gift for storytelling gains him widespread admiration and popularity. Gavir, the protagonist of *Powers*, also endowed with the gift for storytelling, chooses to learn poetry by modern writers which is frowned upon in his household. He shares these revolutionary poems dealing with themes of liberty and progress in various settlements he encounters on his way. When

[13] The subversive function of language, as well as the absence of it, is the main theme of Ursula K. Le Guin's short story "She Unnames Them" (published in *The New Yorker* in 1985). It is a brilliant rewriting of the part of Genesis which describes the creation of Adam and the subsequent naming of all the living creatures by him. Le Guin's Eve decides to free the animals and herself from the constraints and limitations of language. She achieves it by unnaming the animals one by one. Names in the story are viewed as a tool to categorise, control and divide. By rejecting them, the differences between the animals, but also between Eve and the living creatures begin to disappear. What is even more important, Eve regains agency and self-governance when she refuses to be referred to by the name imposed on her by patriarchal system represented by Adam.

Gavir finally reaches his homeland, he is disappointed to discover that men and women live separately. His disillusionment deepens when he learns that men despise the stories told by women who, in turn, are also prohibited from listening to the ancient tales shared only among men. He leaves this community and decides to settle in a city where communication is not obstructed by any stringent regulations. Memer, the main character in *Voices*, is endowed with the prohibited gift of communicating with and interpreting prophecies of an ancient oracle. Her power is successfully used to initiate a dialogue with the invaders. It also serves as an important step in the reappropriation of the forgotten legacy of her community.

Violence forms a crucial part of almost every YAD. Some of the novels include very explicit descriptions of various brutal behaviours and they are one of the reasons why YAD is among the most frequently challenged genres. While almost all the YAD protagonists are faced with some kind of violent situations, what I find most disturbing is that too often the violence comes at the hands of teenage characters. In *The Hunger Games* teenagers from different districts are grouped together and forced to participate in an annual show which becomes a combination of a reality show and gladiator fights. Participants range from 12 to 18 and are expected to fight to death until only one of them survives. The killing is done not by drones, foreign soldiers, aliens or undefined villains. These are children who are killed and who kill to the cheers of spectators. Similarly, in *The Maze Runner Series*, teenagers kill one another in most abhorrent manners in order to survive an eerie experiment that is being conducted by an unspecified organisation, in theory, for the greater good. In *Divergent Trilogy* adolescent protagonists also take the lives of other people as a part of a clash between different fractions. War and forceful conscription form part of the universe created by Condie in *Matched Trilogy.* While it is clear that many of these texts have been written

with the possible film adaptation in mind, it might be considered a poor excuse for including so many scenes of murder and so few of remorse, doubts and guilt. Furthermore, violence seems to be a resort for solving conflicts, while not enough importance is given to the possibility of dialogue and peaceful reconciliation. Le Guin's trilogy is a clear exception to this rule. Although Le Guin portrays violent worlds, aggression is never part of the solution to the problems featured in the novels.

Once the protagonists of YAD discover the hypocrisy of the regime, they decide to bring it down. In order to procure this aim, they often need to leave their families and their loved ones behind and look for help amongst other rebels. In the search for other people who are discontented with the regime they normally encounter a retreat in a secret enclave outside the reach of the establishment. These enclaves are presented foremost as spaces from which organised resistance is spread but also as places of free thinking, freedom of speech, acceptance and tolerance. Tally, the main character of the *Uglies Series* seeks refuge in the Smoke, a refuge for all the runaway people who did not undergo the beautifying procedure. Cassia and Ky, the protagonists of *Matched Trilogy*, escape persecutions of the Society and join a resistance movement of far-off villages distant from the reach of the central government. Jonas from *The Giver*, escapes to mysterious *Elsewhere,* a prohibited space where he finds refuge and acceptance. Le Guin finishes her trilogy with the main characters settling down far from their hometowns, in a city which favours learning and tolerance.

An important trait found in many YADs is the way marriage is portrayed. It is closely linked to the issues of control, surveillance and centralised power. The topic of marriage is one of main features in YAD as this very theme is of central importance for the implied readers or target audience of the genre. In YAD, marriage is treated as yet another part of the system and as such it is to be supervised and controlled not by

individuals but by the ruling bodies. In order to ensure that the status quo is maintained, the government or any other group in power takes on the job of matching individuals according to their own standards. Love is not contemplated as being a meaningful reason for the choice of the partner. The protagonists of YAD rebel against the establishment and its perception of marriage and family by reclaiming agency and choosing their own partners. In *Matched Trilogy* the "matching banquet" is the most important of all the ceremonies in the Society and is celebrated with great splendour. On that day couples are paired and the choice of the partner is based on how stable and peaceful the relationship is expected to be. Those citizens who for some reason are seen as unfit for matching are pitied by the rest of the population. In Lessing's *Mara and Dann*, the two protagonists, despite their strong objections, are almost forced into incestuous marriage in order to restore an old royal line. The two siblings decide against it and choose to settle down on a farm with their respective partners. The selection of spouses is controlled by the central ruling body in *The Giver* and *Son* as well. The relationship between the spouses in this dystopia has nothing to do with love and feelings. Being a wife or a husband is a role everyone has to perform and the main aim of every family unit is bringing up those children assigned to them. Once their role as parents is completed, they are moved to separate houses and live their lives as childless adults. The divorce or dissolution of marriage is unheard of and not even contemplated. Only after Jonas is given memories of family life from before the introduction of the doctrine of Sameness does he realise that family life may actually look quite differently and be based on love and caring. In Le Guin's *Annals of the Western Shore* series people are not free to choose who they spend their life with either. In *Gifts* young girls are often kidnapped by their future spouses and marriages within the same clan are encouraged in order to strengthen the power of the gifts. Family structure is shattered in

Voices when during the siege many women are taken captive or raped by the invaders. *Powers* features states where slaves are not permitted to form any relationships and where their children are instantly taken away from them.

The family structure is closely related to the way in which emotions are treated in YAD. Authors feature societies in which uncontrolled emotions seem to pose a direct threat to the system. Therefore, the regimes devise various strategies to keep their citizens' emotions contained. In *Matched Trilogy* citizens carry with them a set of pills which are to be taken under strict orders coming from the regime officials. One of the pills is a very strong tranquiliser to be administrated whenever a citizen becomes too emotional, another is a memory serum used whenever certain facts, considered inconvenient by the regime, are to be erased from the citizen's memory. In *The Giver* and *Son* everyone starts taking pills in their teens, when so-called "stirrings", which are strong emotional and sexual feelings, are observed for the first time. In this way, all citizens are obedient, complaisant and easy to manipulate. A similar situation can be observed in Lauren Olivier's 2011 novel *Delirium* and its sequel *Pandemonium* (2012). According to the doctrine and teachings of a totalitarian regime, love is a disease, referred to as *the deliria,* which has to be eradicated for the good and survival of humankind. Therefore, each individual has to undergo a mandatory operation at the age of 18.

6. The Rising Popularity of Young Adult Dystopian Fiction

It is only recently that an unprecedented surge of interest in young adult dystopian fiction can be observed. There were dystopian texts for young adults before the first decade of 2000, the most popular being Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), but there is no clear progression of this genre that would account for the recent fascination with it

(Basu et al. 2013: 2). Therefore, it does not seem right to define this as a revival as this is the first time in the history of both dystopian and young adult fiction that this hybrid genre has attracted so much attention from publishers, readers and critics alike.

The Giver became one of the most acclaimed books for young adults in the 1990s. It was the first dystopian novel for young adults to win a Newbery Medal, the oldest children's literary award in the world, awarded since 1922 by the American Library Association. Today *The Giver* forms part of school reading lists in middle schools in the USA and in lower grades of secondary schools in Great Britain, Australia and Canada. Since the date of its publication, it has established itself as a core text in the discussion of not only dystopian fiction for young adults but has also become interesting for academic scholarship. In spite of this general acclaim, Lowry waited till the year 2000 to publish the second book in *The Giver Quartet*, *Gathering Blue* and the last instalment, *Son*, came out in 2012. It was not till 2014 that *The Giver* was finally brought to the cinemas. There were many projects to make a film adaptation of this highly-acclaimed novel, but all of them failed. It was only 20 years after the date of its publication that, on the wave of the interest of the cinema industry in YAD, the project was finally brought to an end.

YAD has long been marginalised by both critics and publishing industry for two main reasons. First of all, science fiction, together with dystopia, utopia and fantasy fiction, have been put together under an umbrella term of speculative fiction and dismissed as genre fiction and a form of superficial entertainment (Connors in Garcia 2013: xi, cf Booker 1994a: 173-74). YA fiction has faced the same lack of recognition, a refusal to be included into any literary cannon and a similar rejection as speculative fiction for many years (Grenby and Reynolds 2011: 2; Garcia: 2013: xi; Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 2). Thus, YAD, a combination of both genres, came to represent, as

Daniels mentions "the low-person on the literary totem pole" (Daniels in Garcia 2013: xi).

It seems that after the fascination with *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series, the wizards and pale vampires that stirred the imagination of young adults have given way to dystopias, which are *the* publishing phenomenon for young adults (Basu et al. 2013: 1, Young 2011 n. pag, Cooper 2011 n. pag). Charlie Cooper (Cooper 2011 n. pag) mentions Sarah O'Dedina, a children's publisher at Bloomsbury who stated that this new tendency might be a reaction against the escapism of recent publications such as *Twilight* and other vampire-centred novels. YADs are, in turn, according to O'Dedina, "edgy, thought-provoking books which raise questions about what we're doing to our society and planet. They put the modern world under the magnifying glass" (O'Dedina in Cooper 2011 n. pag).

Numerous novels, such as *The Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins 2008 – 2010), *Matched* (Allyson Braithwaite Condie 2010 – 2012), *Divergent* (Veronica Roth 2011 – 2013) trilogies, *Uglies* (Scott Westerfeld 2005 – 2007), *The Maze Runner* (James Dashner 2009 – 2012), or *Lorien Legacies* (Pittacus Lore 2010 – 2014) series, to name the most popular ones, have been published. Most of them have been translated into many languages (*The Hunger Games* and *The Divergent Trilogies* into almost 30 different languages) and achieved bestseller status worldwide. Many of them have been nominated and subsequently won various literary awards.

Although there are just a few academic publications dedicated entirely to YAD[14], newspapers all around the world have recently published articles discussing the emerging phenomenon and those focusing on particular books. In the pages to follow I will attempt to map out the reasons why so many young readers are drawn to the

[14] Apart from the aforementioned publications, a 2014 collection of essays, *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction,* edited by Day, Sara K.. is a valuable addition to the literature on YAD.

dystopian genre. First, the motives will be traced as they are presented in the popular press by children's book critics, journalists and YAD writers. This will then be followed by an appreciation and discussion of the opinions by researchers of dystopian and children's literature.

7. The Reasons for the Rise in YAD Readership

There is a serious debate at present regarding recently published dystopian narratives for younger audiences. Questions are being raised about the appropriateness of the themes they tackle and the overall message they try to convey. Various children's literature critics, popular critics and journalists have expressed concern about the content, particularly about the way issues such as violence and sexuality are approached (cf. Freeman 2011, Gurdon 2011, King 2012). The article by Meghan Gurdon, a children's literature critic writing for *The Wall Street Journal* stirred a lot of controversy. Gurdon vehemently claims that:

> Pathologies that went undescribed in print 40 years ago, that were still only sparingly outlined a generation ago, are now spelled out in stomach-clenching detail […]Now, whether you care if adolescents spend their time immersed in ugliness probably depends on your philosophical outlook. […] No family is obliged to acquiesce when publishers use the vehicle of fundamental free-expression principles to try to bulldoze coarseness or misery into their children's lives. (Gurdon 2011: n. pag)

Throughout her article she expresses condemnation for present young adult literature and accuses it of normalising certain pathological behaviours and enticing its readers into practices they would otherwise disregard. The overt treatment of certain controversial themes and the presence of many kinds of violence in almost every post-9/11 YAD might be one of the reasons why, on the one hand, some critics and parents disapprove of this genre, and on the other, why it has become so popular among younger readers.

Such contentious themes in literature for children are nothing new, however. One only need consider popular and well-loved fairy tales, such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella* or *Hansel and Gretel*. Even children's literature of the Victorian era, during which the image of the child was much romanticised and idealised, included problematic socio-political issues (cf. Abate 2010). As Gurdon herself notices (Gurdon 2011: n. pag), a mayor shift occurred in many spheres of life in the 1960s and literature for young adults was no exception (cf. Abate 2010). Writers started to include subjects that once were considered taboo and thus had never been addressed before. Literature for children and adolescents then has a longstanding tradition of criticising established and traditional beliefs and concepts. What seems to disturb both parents and critics at present is not so much that new and contentious themes that are being tackled in young adult books, but rather the overtness with which some of them are addressed.

The inclusion of controversial topics might be one of the reasons why adolescents are drawn to reading YAD. However, the presence of contentious issues solely cannot account for such an interest in this genre as almost all literature for young adults is tackling such themes at present. Laura Miller, a book critic for *The New Yorker,* proposes another motive. She notes that "The world of our hovered-over teens and preteens may be safer, but it's also less conducive to adventure, and therefore to adventure stories" (Miller 2010). Hence, readers are drawn to dystopian writing as it features stories full on exhilarating adventures, journeys through unknown and exotic landscapes, dangerous and thrilling encounters, all of which result much more exciting and interesting than predictable, controlled and somewhat dull everyday-life revolving around school, homework, extracurricular activates and all too ordinary weekends.

Another reason for such an appeal of this particular genre seems to be the similarity of the worlds portrayed in YAD and the reality teenagers face on a daily basis

in high schools. Ruthless, conflictive and often hostile environments ruled by authoritarian entities may resemble restrictive middle and high schools controlled by teachers and parents. Teenagers both in YAD and in schools have to choose fractions, learn how to survive and adapt to new conditions, decide whether to be loyal to the ones in control, to their friends or to themselves. Various critics (cf. Young 2011, Eccleshare 2013) and YAD writers (cf. Westerfeld 2010) notice this resemblance. Other critics observe that it is not only the reality of high school that is mirrored in YAD, but the life of young adults in general:

> YA dystopias externalize the turmoil that's already taking place in adolescent minds, hearts, and bodies. The social, interpersonal, and biological phenomena that define teenage life—competition and jealousy, anxiety about exclusion and belonging, shifting alliances, first crushes, wet dreams—are codified and, in some way, dignified by their transmutation into fiction. (Stevens 2014; cf. also Bertagna 2011, Koplewicz 2011, Rhor 2012)

Teenagers clearly see their lives reflected in YAD. Novels, as well as their film adaptations, feature protagonists who are confronted with problems and difficult choices similar to the ones young adults face in their lives. They need to struggle to shape and control their own destiny, go through alienation, rejection and first disappointments, learn the pain and reward of sacrifice and discover that the world is far from perfect. As Lucy Mangan notes:

> Perhaps these stories – of unhappy societies teetering on the brink of disaster and redemption – articulate the modern teenage experience (albeit an extreme version) of living with a wide and perpetual unease. Apocalyptic but coherent, resolvable narratives are handbooks for mental survival (2012 n. pag).

Nevertheless, all these themes are common to almost all YA fiction and novels of development. How is it possible then that YAD proves to be more appealing than other genres? It might seem even more surprising if we take into account that YAD, much like its adult version, very often portrays worlds falling apart. The reality of YAD is seemingly even worse than the one in the real world. The answer to these two queries

seems to be the same. YAD, as gloomy as it might seem at a first glance, does inspire optimism and belief in better times. The lives of many teenagers, much as the worlds featured in YAD, are undergoing rapid and sudden changes, which often make them feel lost and powerless. Nevertheless, these texts hardly ever end on a totally dark note. They always include a glimmer of hope, although sometimes very faint. Rowe comments: "And so we read again and again about the child of dystopia who makes us feel hope for humankind, even if […] it turns out that the society is beyond repair" (Rowe 2011, cf. also Young 2011, Rudolph 2014). Although readers are shown a wide range of grim scenarios: worlds on the brink of destruction, highly controlled environments with no freedom, or worlds after some apocalyptic event, hopes are never totally dashed. Moreover, readers can relate to these situations, see their life and surroundings reflected in them and treat them as warnings which might, in turn, prompt them to action. YAD can be highly didactic then, in spite of some critics' opinions which maintain that YAD is in fact, the least didactic of all the genres for young adults (cf. Miller 2010).

Apart from raising hope, young adults engage actively in reading YAD for yet another reason. As Maggie Stiefvater observes (2011), this genre presents their readers with clear, even though sometimes difficult, choices. Contrary to the world outside, which can prove confusing and frequently offers too many possibilities, in YAD everything tends to be black or white and selecting the correct path to follow does not result as complex as real life choices. As Stiefvater notes: "Teenagers want to be able to fight for what's right – but finding out what's right is now 90 percent of the battle" (Stiefvater 2011). Additionally, teenage readers find the characters of YAD quite appealing (cf. Bertagna 2011, Rhor 2012, Rudolph 2014). They prove capable of deciding what is important to them, manage to challenge the oppressive regimes and

unite a group of people around them who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the right cause. Moreover, YADs often feature marginalised characters as protagonists. *The Hunger Games* trilogy highlights Katniss from an underdeveloped and poor district; *Divergent,* Tris who turns out to be a *divergent* as she does not confine to one of the government-approved fractions the society is divided into; *The Last Book in the Universe*, Spat who is an orphan suffering from epilepsy; *Matched,* Cassia who is unexpectedly matched with two young men or *The Giver,* Jonas, the only boy in the whole community who can see colours. In this way YA dystopian novels provide space for the outsiders, the rejected, the abject not accepted, the different and show that there can be place for everyone.[15] Additionally, many of the recently published novels feature strong and independent female figures[16] who manage to negotiate their ways in complicated contexts and know how to defend values important to them.

Moira Young in her 2011 article for *The Guardian*, mentions yet another factor. While she agrees with the opinions that the appeal of YAD might be coming from the fact that they somehow mirror the difficulties teenagers encounter in their everyday life, she is quite adamant in stating that the main appeal of YAD has a different source. She states that so many people, both teenagers and younger and older adults are drawn to YAD because this genre is simply exciting. She says that “It all comes down to the story. The story comes first, and the setting – extraordinary though it may be – is of secondary importance” (Young 2011 n. pag). She also notes that the characters of YAD are quite complex and that the journey on which they embark mirrors the internal transformations they undergo during their quest.

[15] Nevertheless, as Bacigalupi notes (2012) not all types of characters are foregrounded in YAD. GLBTQ and black protagonists are still very rarely present in this genre.
[16] However, some of the analyses of female characters in recent YAD show some of them are only seemingly liberated. In fact many YAD only strengthen patriarchal values (cf. Broad 2013).

The popularity of YAD is a combination of many factors. While I agree with all of the above reasons, I think that what should also be taken into consideration is the extensive marketing of many of the YAD novels and film adaptations. As Jack Zipes observes:

> Phenomena such as Harry Potter are driven by commodity consumption that at the same time sets the parameters of reading and aesthetic taste. Today the experience of reading for the young is mediated through the mass media and marketing so that the pleasure and meaning of a book will often be prescripted or dictated by convention (Zipes 2001: 172).

Reading books such as *Harry Potter* or *The Hunger Games* seems to be a social imperative, a "cool" thing to do, an attitude hardly ever associated among present day adolescents and young adults with book reading. The publishing industry does not limit itself to promoting books, but goes a few steps further. It is an immense marketing phenomenon: there are websites, online shops that sell T-shirts, action figures, stickers, stationery and many other merchandising products. Some books, like *Harry Potter* or *The Hunger Games* series are not solely books, but have been turned into brands. Daniel Hade describes the present day trends in publishing industry as follows: "[…] publishers understand that they are not in the book business; rather they sell ideas they call "brands," and they market their brands through "synergized" goods designed to infiltrate as many aspects of children's life as possible" (Hade in Texel 2011: 482). The way YAD books and films are promoted reflects the workings of global capitalism in the 21st century in which childhood is seen as a crucial stage in the formation of consumers.

Both publishing and film industries seem to have found a bestselling formula in YAD and do not spare money or energy on promoting it. They try to reach the widest audience possible and their efforts are reflected in the sales figures. Although the publishing industry has suffered a strong recession, YA market, including YAD, is stronger than ever. As Susan Carpenter, a book critic for *Los Angeles Times* notes:

> YA is one of the few bright spots in an otherwise bleak publishing market. Where adult hardcover sales were down 17.8% for the first half of 2009 versus the same period in 2008, children's/young adult hardcovers were up 30.7%. (Carpenter 2010)

Moreover, more and more adults take to reading YA novels (cf. Carpenter 2010, Scholastic Report 2010, Fitz-Gerald 2014, Stevens 2014). Fitz-Gerald observes:

> Circulation data from the Denver Public Library shows that between January and May, 68 percent of YA check-outs came from readers above the age of 18 (in 2013 it was near 70 percent, too). And according to a 2012 market research study, 55 percent of YA book consumers were older than 18, with the biggest segment slotted in the 30-44 age range. (Fitz-Gerald 2014 n. pag)

These are fantasy and dystopia genres that are thought to have started this tendency, especially *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* series. A 2012 survey[17] stated that the second largest group of buyers – 28 % of all sales – turn out to be between 30 and 44. The largest one 35 %, was composed of buyers aged 19 – 29. In both cases, the books were mainly (over 80%) bought not as gifts but to be read by the buyers. Ruth Graham mentions some of these findings in her article "Against YA" (2014). Although she discredits YAD as "transparently trashy" and "not serious", an opinion with which I strongly disagree, I do share her attitude towards both adult spectators and readers of YAD. While I believe that this genre is of great importance for young adults, I think that its characteristics are more adequate for young adults and not necessarily for adult audiences. Why does YAD draw such a wide readership among adults? Do the figures mean that although adults are interested in imperfect worlds and struggle to fight the oppressive regime, they somehow prefer to reach for YAD rather than its grimmer adult counterpart? Is it the certainty of a happy-ending that drives them to YAD? It is difficult to establish the reasons for such a wide readership of this genre among adults but I am certain that the themes tackled and the way of addressing them as well as the language

[17] "Understanding the Children's Book Consumer in Digital Age" a biannual study from Bowker Market Research and Bookiegee, INC. that explores the changing nature of publishing for kids presented at 2013 Bologna Children's Books Fair, http://www.slideshare.net/BKGKristen/understanding-the-childrens-book-consumer-in-the-digital-age-toc-bologna-2013

and sensibility of these texts are all aimed at teenagers and young adults, not at adult readers and viewers. For this reason, every critic of this genre should bear in mind that different categories of analysis and a different approach should be used in the critical reading of these texts.

Another important part of the present book industry and one of the reasons for such a popularity of YAD is its close relation to film industry. As Texel notes: "Transforming a book into a film invariably has a dramatic impact on book sales" (Texel 2011: 488). Film adaptations of YADs are overtly marketed for wide audiences, not merely for adolescents. Cinemas are filled with both teenagers and adults whenever YAD film adaptation is screened. While the book protagonists are usually in their teens, the actors who portray them are usually much older. The film adaptation of *The Giver* may serve as a clear example of this trend. Jonas is barely twelve in the book while the actor portraying him in the film was twenty-four at the time when the film was shot. Similarly, Tris from *Divergent* is portrayed by Shailene Woodley aged 22 and her love interest by Theo James, aged 29; Thomas from *The Maze Runner* is played by Dylan O'Brien, 22 while all the characters are teenagers in the books. Both YAD and their film adaptations are clearly marketed for a wide audience and there is an established parallel between adult readers of YAD and adult viewers of YAD film adaptations.

The reasons given by scholars of YAD for such a recent popularity of this genre vary from publication to publication. The authors of the most recent work on YAD *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults*. *Brave New Teenagers* (Basu et al. 2013), mention the simplicity and clearness of the message conveyed by YAD as one of the most appealing factors of the genre (Basu et al. 2013: 5). While I agree with the authors that the primary issues critiqued in the majority of YA dystopias can be quite easily discerned even by infrequent readers, I do not share their opinion that YAD

presents its readers with "the easily digestible prescriptions" (Basu et al. 2013: 5). Film adaptations of complex YA dystopian novels tend to oversimplify both the plot and the characters and hence may be justly accused of presenting the audience with superficial answers to sketchy problems. YAD novels, however, present a wide range of characters. While some of them know from the onset what to do, others are in doubt or need time to decide where they stand, still others change sides. It seems that this wide selection of possible paths to follow might be still another of the possible appeals of YAD. It shows young adults that uncertainty is sometimes a necessary step on the way to understanding and that nothing is written in stone: one might err but there is also time for reconsideration.

The possibility of escape from the restrictions of social conventions is considered a factor appealing greatly to the young readers of YAD (Basu et al. 2013: 5). They are given a chance, although only imaginary, to act against the constraints and impediments experienced in their day-to-day existence. YAD offers them a chance to enjoy freedoms impossible in real life. Adolescents are frequently well aware of the privileges of adult life, yet they are not allowed to enjoy them. This situation may result all the more frustrating as they are just one step behind; almost, but not quite there yet.

YAD also offers a space of acceptance for the ones who feel marginalised as discussed texts often feature characters who differ from the rest or find it difficult to adapt to social standards. YAD often feature solitary leaders who are misrecognised and not accepted at first, but manage to fight the obstacles and save their community / city / world from some grater evil (cf. *The Giver*, *The Last Book in the Universe* or *The Story of General Dann)*. It gives the ostracised ones hope and proves that one's status is not determined once and for all. In other texts, teenagers act in groups (Hintz and Ostry 2003: 10) and form alliances to resist the ruling system (cf. *Divergent, The Maze*

Runner Series, Matched Trilogy or *The Hunger Games*). It gives them a sense of belonging so much needed during adolescence. Moreover, regardless of whether they act individually or in group, they manage to defeat the oppressive system. In real life they are perceived as the most vulnerable and powerless. In YAD however, these young protagonists rise to be powerful and more effective and reasonable that the adults. They act as saviours and not merely as helpless figures to be taken care of and rescued.

YAD critics coincide with journalists writing about YAD (cf. Bertagna 2011, Koplewicz 2011, Young 2011, Rhor 2012, Eccleshare 2013, Stevens 2014) that YAD could be attractive for teenagers as it in itself may be seen as a metaphor for adolescence (Hintz and Ostry 2003: 9). Authority, be it represented by parents or school teachers, appears all too oppressive at this time in their lives. Teenagers often feel as if they live under constant scrutiny and are assessed on different levels for almost everything they do. This feeling of constant surveillance and control is one of the leitmotifs of dystopian writing. Therefore, YAD readers can relate to the world represented in these texts quite easily.

Texts for children and young adults share one very important feature with critical dystopia, a mode of dystopian writing that emerged in the 1990s. Although they may present the reader with grim worlds, they always leave a glimmer of hope. According to both journalists writing about YAD and YAD scholars this particular feature is thought to be highly appealing to the young adult reader. Moreover, YAD allows its teenage readers to explore alternative possibilities and question the world around them. Kay Sambell notes that YAD creates the space where adolescents are not afraid of "asking questions, discovering analyses, and hypothetically testing out solutions at their own pace in an imaginative environment that is affirming and supportive, but which also articulates dark truths" (Sambell 2003: 173).

8. Young Adult Dystopia and the Publishing Market

Recent years are described as a revival in YA fiction and it is observed that we are living a boom of YA fiction (Taxel 2011, Crandal 2006). However, none of the recent publications on YA fiction mentions any empiric data. This is why I attempted to determine whether the boom in YA fiction, and especially in YA dystopia, is somehow reflected in the number of books published in both the US and the UK. However, during my research I encountered various difficulties related to both accessing the relevant data and also to the type of data available in general. When researching the British publishing market, with the generous support of the British Library Personnel, I first completed a search in the British National Bibliography, which catalogues new books published in the UK. However, the classification used proved too unspecific, as YA books are frequently classified in the same ranges as adult fiction. The Publishers Association produces the *Statistics Yearbook* for the UK publishing industry each year. A close look at the statistics for 2013 revealed that they unfortunately dealt with sales rather than actual output, and did not separate young adult literature as a distinct group from either fiction in general or children's books.

One of the best sources for statistics on the UK publishing industry is Nielsen,[18] which provides statistics for sales charts in *The Bookseller*, and organisations like the Publishers Association and the Booksellers Association. A search in Nielsen *BookData* for books published in the UK in print and electronic formats, with the readership as Teenage/YA and the date range January – December 2013, brought up 2,630 results. A further search using the parameter of 'Teenage Fiction' resulted in 858 results. This includes a degree of duplication of titles, as books are frequently published first in hardcover, then in paperback or eBooks. The same search for paperback-only

[18] For further information, see: http://www.nielsen.com/uk/en/industries/books.html

resulted in 642 titles, although this is not a fail-safe method as a new book may be published in hardcover first, with the paperback not being published until the following year. This approach also excludes anything that may have been published only as an eBook. A search for 'Teenage Fiction' (all book formats) for January – December 2012 had 648 results, which went down to 504 when excluding hardcover and eBooks. The same search for January – December 2011 had 561 results, going down to 432 excluding hardcover and eBooks. The same search for January – December 2010 had 486 results, going down to 353 excluding hardcover and eBooks.

I also searched in the ProQuest database *Books in Print (Global edition)*, which similarly brought up 858 results for 'Young Adult Audience' within January - December 2013, although it could not be determined whether these results are exactly identical to Nielsen's. In this database searching paperback-only reduces the results to 509.

One factor to be wary of is that the results seem to increase very rapidly over a short period (going back to 2005 there are only 174 results for paperback-only). This would seem to confirm quite a large increase in the numbers of YA books published on the British market. However, I was made aware by the British Library Personnel that this could be due to a rise in popularity in Teenage fiction, or it could well be something to do with the database; e.g. if the classification system it is using for 'Teenage Fiction' was a relatively recent introduction and has been applied to more titles as it has become more established.

Moreover, there was no way to effectively search for Dystopian fiction in any of these databases; some genre parameters are available, but they include headings such as Science Fiction, Horror, and Thriller, any of which could include Dystopian fiction alongside non-Dystopian. And the category of YAD is, in all the databases, still nonexistent.

Having encountered all the above-mentioned problems, inconclusive figures, lack of information on second-hand book markets and, bearing in mind that the main purpose of my thesis is not an extensive study of the market, I decided to centre on readership rather than on the number of books published. In the course of my research I discovered that extensive surveys and studies have been conducted in the US and the results of them are available to general public. That is why I decided to focus on readership among children and young adults in the US and try to determine whether there has been any significant change in recent years.

9. Readership among Children and Young Adults in the USA.

The National Endowment for the Arts is an independent agency of the federal government of the US. Since it was established by Congress in 1965, it has offered funding to support artistic excellence, creativity and innovation.[19] In 2004, it published the results of an extensive survey of literary reading in the US. It offered a comparison of literary reading rates by region, gender, ethnicity, race, education and age, among others. The report was comprised of the comparison of data gathered in surveys at three points: 1982, 1992 and finally, 2002. Its title was quite telling: *Reading at Risk*. As were the first lines of the report:

> *Reading at Risk* is not a report that the National Endowment for the Arts is happy to issue. This comprehensive survey of American literary reading presents a detailed but bleak assessment of the decline of reading's role in the nation's culture. […]The key results of the survey are condensed in the "Executive Summary," which follows, but the report can be further summarized in a single sentence: literary reading in America is not only declining rapidly among all groups, but *the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young* [my emphasis] (Gioia *Reading at Risk* 2004: vii).

Not only did the report show the decline in readership, both among the young and adults, but it also successfully demonstrated that readers play a more active role in their

[19] For further information, see: http://arts.gov/

communities. Therefore, it claimed a parallel between the decline in reading and the retreat from the participation in civic and cultural life (cf. *Reading at Risk* 2004: vii). The Executive summary finished on quite a dire note:

> Literature reading is fading as a meaningful activity, especially among younger people. If one believes that active and engaged readers lead richer intellectual lives than non-readers and that a well-read citizenry is essential to a vibrant democracy, the decline of literary reading calls for serious action (Gioia *Reading at Risk* 2004: ix).

The next report, entitled *To Read or Not to Read* and published in 2007 was based on data collected between 2002 and 2006. It extrapolated and compared newly acquired data with the outcomes of the survey from 2004. The findings were quite similar. Some progress was noted in reading ability at the elementary school level, but it was observed to stop once children become teenagers (*To Read or Not to Read* 2007: 5). It was detected that reading was a declining activity among teenagers, voluntarily reading rates were diminishing from childhood to adolescence to the point that one in three college seniors read nothing at all for pleasure. The decline of reading rates was noticed to have declined substantially in a period of rising Internet use and was also linked to the amount of hours spent watching TV. Once again, the report emphasised the importance of reading for the development of self-conscious, productive and active adults. It stated:

> *To Read or Not To Read* is not an elegy for the bygone days of print culture, but instead is a call to action—not only for parents, teachers, librarians, writers, and publishers, but also for politicians, business leaders, economists, and social activists. The general decline in reading is not merely a cultural issue, though it has enormous consequences for literature and the other arts. It is a serious national problem. If, at the current pace, America continues to lose the habit of regular reading, the nation will suffer substantial economic[20], social, and civic setbacks (Gioia *To Read or Not To Read* 2007: 6).

Scholastic Corporation is an American book publishing company dedicated to publishing educational materials. It is also the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and it has the exclusive publishing rights to both the *Harry Potter*

[20] In tune with the spirit of American capitalism the necessity of reading in order to achieve the prosperity and economic growth was emphasised quite frequently. The economic consequences were often given priority over the social and civic ones.

and *The Hunger Games* series on the American market.[21] The Kids & Family Reading Report[22] is a national survey organised by the corporation and it examines the views of both children and parents on reading. It also analyses the influences that impact children's reading frequency and attitudes toward reading, with the special emphasis on television and digital media. It has been conducted every two years since 2006. In the survey about 1000 individuals – 500 children ages 5-17 and one parent or primary guardian per child are interviewed about their reading habits.

The 2006[23] most important findings were that although children did enjoy reading, the reading dropped off significantly after the age of eight and kept falling through the teen years (cf. "The Kids & Family Reading Report" 2006: 6, 9). Even though more than 40% of children ages 5-8 were found to be high frequency readers (reading every day), that proportion dropped to only 29% among 9-11 year olds. Almost half of the 15-17 year olds (46%) were found to be low frequency readers (reading less than once a week), compared with 14% of 5-8 year olds. Interestingly enough the top ranked reason given by children for not reading more was not too much homework, or not enough time to read, but the difficulty finding books they liked.

The 2008[24] report's findings were seemingly quite similar. However, certain changes began to be noticed: the number of children and teenagers who were classified frequent readers increased by three points. At the same time the numbers for low frequency readers decreased by the same number of points. Overall then, there were more children who were reading more frequently in 2008 than in 2006. It was suggested that part of this observed rise might have been due to *The Harry Potter Series* readership. 74% of children who had read *Harry Potter* stated that the series made them

[21] For further information, see: http://scholastic.com
[22] For further information, see: http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/research
[23] For further information, see: http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/news/KFRR_0207.pdf
[24] For further information, see: http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/news/kfrr08web.pdf

interested in reading other books and 47 % revealed that they did not use to read books for fun before starting *Harry Potter*. 69% of the children even noted that their confidence in their reading ability increased since reading the book and 63% believe that they do better at school after having read the book than before. The impact of this particular series was so significant all around the world that it has become to be known as the *Harry Potter effect*. The table below, included on page 49 of the study, shows some interesting findings related to the series.

Harry Potter Readership and Interest among Children

	Total Kids	Age 5-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	Boys	Girls
	(501)	*(158)*	*(114)*	*(151)*	*(78)*	*(250)*	*(251)*
Have read Harry Potter	58%	45%	63%	62%	65%	59%	57%
Read all seven Harry Potter books by myself	19%	8%	16%	18%	36%	19%	19%
Extremely/Very interested in reading/re-reading Harry Potter	67%	64%	73%	65%	65%	68%	65%

Table 1. *Harry Potter* Readership and Interest among Children. Source: *To Read or not To Read*, 2008: 49

In the table below I have gathered the data from three Scholastic surveys: 2006, 2008 and 2010. While the number of children who are defined as high frequency readers is slightly decreasing, the number of children who are classified as moderate frequency readers is definitely on the rise. It also clearly shows that the number of children who are low frequency readers is dropping.

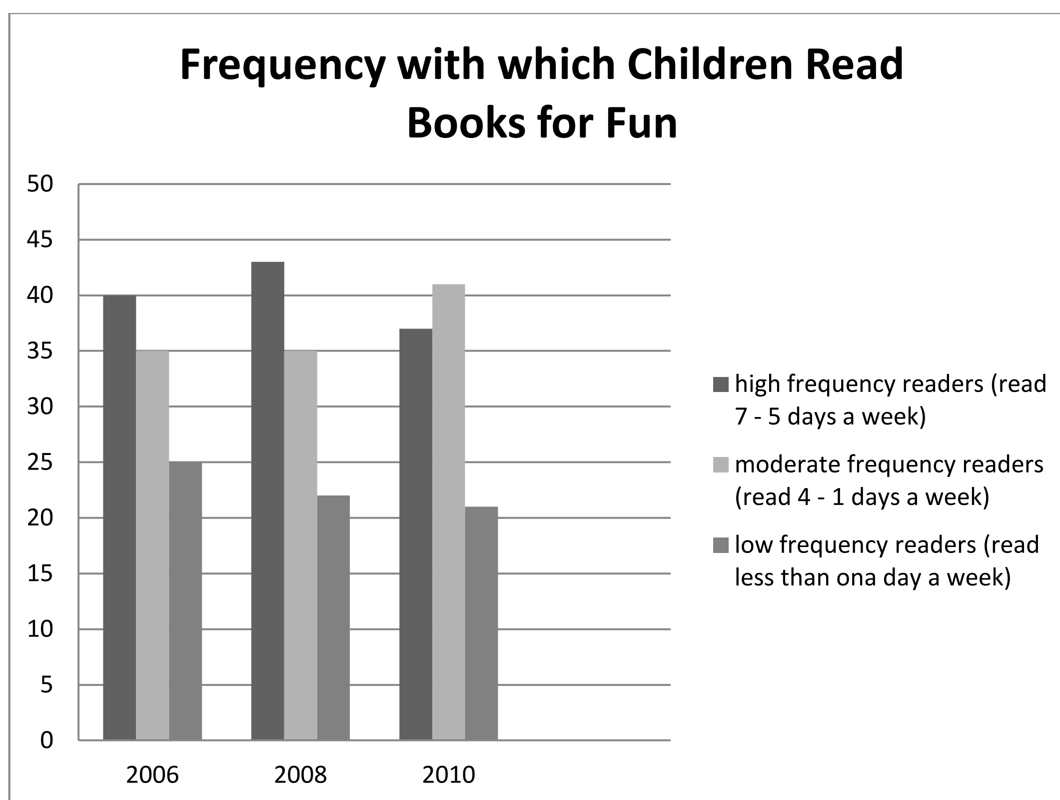


Table 2. Frequency with which Children Read Books for Fun.

This same positive tendency was observed by The National Endowment for the Arts in its 2008 report. Even its title *Reading on the Rise* mirrored the tendency and was overtly optimistic, contrary to the previous studies, 2004 *Reading at Risk* and 2007 *To Read or Not to Read*. What needs to be noted is the size of this particular study: the sample size was roughly 20 times the size of the average media poll. It was then both large and representative of the US population at that time. It is regarded as the most detailed and reliable on the subject. It was observed that for the first time in over 25 years literary reading was rising. The most significant growth was observed among young adults, the group that previously had shown the largest declines. The rate of the rise among them (+21 percent since 2002) was greater than for any other age group and three times the growth rate of all adult readers. The report stated:

> As the results make clear, the recent rise in reading is not a school-based trend but a broader, community-wide phenomenon. […] Reading became a higher priority in

> families, schools, and communities. Thousands of programs, large and small, were created or significantly enhanced to address the challenge (Gioia *Reading on the Rise* 2008: 2).

The rise of popularity in young adult fiction is further confirmed by Andria Amaral, the manager of the Charleston County Library's young adult department and a YALLFest board member. She notices that both publishing and circulation numbers reveal the enormous growth of the young adult fiction genre. She observes that:

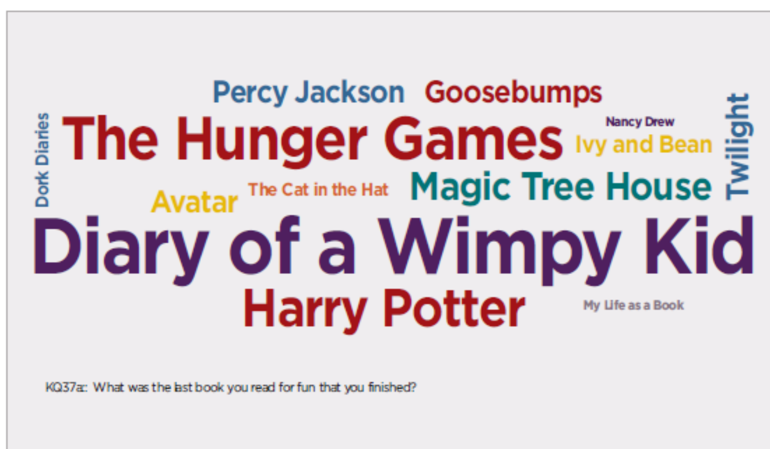
> In 1997, 3,000 young adult titles were published. In 2009, 30,000 young adult titles were published. In 1997, the circulation of young adult books at the Main Library was 5,000. In 2012-13, the circulation of young adult books reached 20,000. System wide, library circulation of young adult books is about 100,000 (Amaral, in Parker 2013: n. pag) .

The soaring interest in young adult dystopia might be then a part of a wider phenomenon: an increase of interest in young adult fiction, and resulting from it, the rise of readership among children, teenagers and young adults. It is difficult to establish, due to the lack of relevant data, whether the popularity of young adult dystopia might be responsible for this change.

The 2012 report by *Scholastic* on readership among children and young adults focuses more on the impact of eBooks, summer reading, children's reading attitudes and behaviours and, finally, the parents' views on reading. It does not present the same findings as the previous reports which included clearly marked categories of high, moderate and low frequency readers. This is the reason why the findings for the year 2012 are not included in table 2. However, the report offers three figures that are of interest for this study.

Last Book Read for Fun Among Children Age 6–8

Last Book Read for Fun Among Children Age 9–11



Last Book Read for Fun Among Children Age 12–17

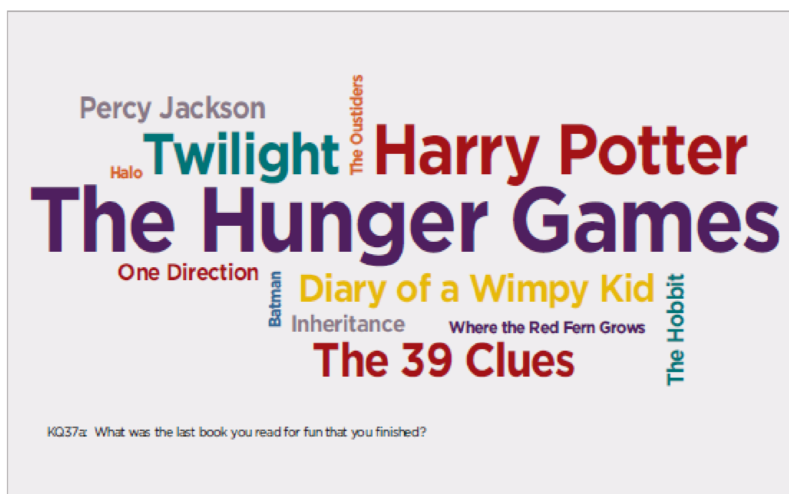


Table 3. Readership among Children and Young Adults. Source: *Scholastic Report* 2012: 51-3

The three images of book titles above illustrate, in the form of *a word cloud,* the titles of the very last book read for pleasure by children, according to different age groups. They clearly show that the *Harry Potter* series is still widely read among all age groups and that the *Twilight* trilogy is no longer the top choice. The two books that seem to stand out are *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *The Hunger Games*. It is quite surprising that *The Hunger Games*, a young adult dystopia, is read by, or read to, children as young as 8 or even 6. Such high rankings of this novel prove that YAD is an extremely popular genre widely "read for fun" among children of all ages, ranging from 6 to 17.

A report by Scholastic experts issued two years earlier, in December 2010 confirms that tendency. The editors from Scholastic, including children's literature experts from Scholastic Book Clubs and Scholastic Book Fairs, published a "List of 10 Trends in Children's Books from 2010". The top two were:

> 1. The expanding Young Adult (YA) audience: More and more adults are reading YA books, as the audience for these stories expands.
> 2. *The year of dystopian fiction* [my emphasis]: With best-selling series like *The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner*, readers can't seem to get enough of fiction that suggests the future may be worse than the present.
>
> (http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/node/404, n. pag)

> An increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good, a general perception that anything and everything may disappear – these indicate a rupture of equilibrium.
>
> Pierre Nora "Between Memory and History"

CHAPTER 3. Time, the Past and Memory in Utopia and Dystopia

1. Introduction

The relation of utopian and dystopian genres to the past, history, time and memory is the focal point of this study. This chapter provides an overview of how these concepts have been approached in literary utopias and dystopias. It also offers an outline of scholarly debates involving these issues. The chapter also emphasises the most important concepts related to memory, forgetting, the past and history that shall be explored later in this study. Furthermore, it traces the reasons for the recent growth of interest in memory across various fields.

2. Remembering and Forgetting

Lethe, in Greek mythology, was one of the five rivers flowing through the gloomy kingdom of Hades, the realm of the dead and the afterlife. It flowed around the cave of Hypnos, the god of sleep, and its sweet murmur was believed to evoke drowsiness and sometimes even deep slumber. Its other name was *Ameles potamos* – the river of *unmindfulness*. Moreover, Lethe was a deity, the personification of oblivion and forgetfulness (Roman and Roman 2010: 194-5). The very word *lethe* in Classical Greek means precisely 'oblivion', 'forgetfulness' or 'concealment'. It is directly related to the Greek word *aletheia* 'truth', meaning *un*-forgetfulness. It seems then, that only what is remembered is true and that by forgetting we undermine the boundary between truth

and falsehood. Everything that sinks into Lethe's waters of oblivion, everything that is not remembered, equals un-*truth*. Hence, such a great importance was ascribed to the alter-ego of Lethe: the goddess Mnemosyne.

Mnemosyne was the personification of memory. She was the goddess of time and, what is even more significant, was thought to be the creator of language and words (Roman and Roman 2010: 335-6). Mnemosyne was believed to have given names to all the existing objects, thus being, in this particular aspect, the Greek counterpart of the biblical Adam. She was the mother of the Muses, nine goddesses of scenic arts, music, patrons of poetry and the oral tradition. Mnemosyne was also thought to have discovered the use of the power of reason. Mnemosyne–Memory was perceived as being endowed in power to unite our intellectual and spiritual parts. Without her, they would merely exist, but not *co*-exist in harmony. In this classical view, our memories and thoughts are deposited within us, as if in a bank, and it is Mnemosyne's task to ensure a safely withdrawal of them whenever necessary. While Mnemosyne is light, reason, freedom, action and clear language, Lethe is much the contrary; darkness, constraint, lethargy, fallen mind and failed communication. However, if analysed further, she is not solely a purely negative deity. Virgil in the *Aeneid* mentions that only by having the memories erased by Lethe could the dead be reincarnated. Without her merciful waters the souls would be doomed to perpetuate in Hades forever. Hers alone was the power to ensure their possibility of a free return to the realm of earthly existence. Thus, forgetting may be liberating in some ways. It frees us from unwanted memories, ensures space for new things to occur, and, as paradoxical as it might sound, it enables us to remember.

The two concepts are interrelated; there is no remembering without forgetting, no Lethe without Mnemosyne. The relation between them is then by no means stable.

Quite the contrary; it is in constant process all the time. Similarly, the concept of memory was believed to be an active process from the very beginning of Western thought (Richards 2007: 20). In ancient Greece and Rome it was described by the activities of collection and recollection, of storing and retrieval. The beliefs as to where the memories were kept and whether or not they were transformed with the passage of time, have undergone many changes over the years, but the very idea of memory as a dialogue between the past and the present has always been maintained. Dialogue seems to constitute a crucial defining feature of memory as it is a constant dialectical relation between individuals and a social context they find themselves in that makes the very notion of memory possible (cf. Halbwachs 1992 [1952], Connerton 1989, Misztal 2003: 5). Although these are individuals who perform the process of remembering, they do not exist in a void, but form part of a community and thus, remembering is never merely a personal matter. It always occurs within a social context and as such, cannot exist without language. Even the origin of the word *memory* has a direct link to narrating. The act of narration or active recreating the past is what constitutes memory (Huyssen 1995: 3). The past does not simply exist given for granted but is rewritten and recreated every time a recollection is described. Moreover, when earlier actions and events are described, they cease to exist solely for the ones who participated in them, but begin to form a part of a wider (hi)story. Both the ones who narrate them and the ones who listen to them turn into witnesses. The action of narrating entails a doubt on the part of the listeners: there is never just one version, just one story, just one truth. What is revealed is only one particular interpretation, one among many, accompanied by an anxious urge to try to convince the others about its validity. Thus, the act of remembering and narrating the past is dialectical and rhetorical at the same time. What is remembered, and what is forgotten, is always a question of power (Misztal 2010: 30). There is always

a loss, a sacrifice of some kind; of one detail to another, of one version to another. This sacrifice is already rooted in the very word *memory*.[25] In Greek the starting point is *martus*, a witness, which in Late Greek came to mean 'a witness of God', 'a witness to one's faith'; hence Late Latin: *martyr*. In Germanic and Old English *murnan* meant to grieve, to mourn. The word memory can also be related to Greek *merimna*, solitude, anxiety; Cornish *mar* a doubt, *moreth* grief, regret; Breton *mār* doubt; Armenian *mormok* regret, sorrow. The concepts of grief, regret, sorrow and the act of being a witness all come together in the experience of trauma. In trauma the boundaries between the past and the present are destabilised. Moreover, the need to remember and forget relate to each other in many complex ways in trauma. It clearly shows that what is remembered is always a compromise, an outcome of the battle between what needs to be silenced and what is revealed.

The following chapters will explore how the concepts emphasised above are reflected in YAD. They will focus on the social dimension of memory, the constant dialectical relationship between past and present, the power structures it involves, traumatic loss, the role of listener and the importance of communication, and finally, the dangers but also the necessity of forgetting.

3. The Reasons for the Rise of Interest in Memory Studies

Memory has always been analysed by many disciplines and from different points of view, but it was only in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the widespread surge of interest in memory was observed (Misztal 2003: 2, Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 5). This came to be known as the *memory boom* (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 5, Olick et al. 2011: 3), *commemorative fever* (Misztal 2003: 2) or the *age of commemoration*

[25] Skeat, Walter. *An Etymological Dictionary of English Language* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), pp. 370, 508.

(Nora 2002: 4). It is clearly illustrated by the example given by Rossington and Whitehead (2007: 4-5) who observe that the word *memory* was never mentioned in Raymond Williams study *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* from 1976. However, it was added in the updated version *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* published in 2005.

The reasons given for a proliferation of interest in memory within various fields are manifold. They vary depending on the field of expertise and the approach taken by the authors of publications dealing with the issue. Although it can be attributed to many issues reaching as far back as the beginning of 20th century (Olick 2010: 5-7), it is generally linked to two underlying factors: the transformation in the understanding of time (Nora 2002: n. pag; Olick 2010: 13) and the democratisation of history (Nora 2002: n. pag), the latter being directly related with the decline of nationalism (Olick 2010: 14).

The Acceleration of History

Zygmunt Bauman in *Mortality, Immortality and Other life Strategies* (1992) argues that in modernity[26], life was defined by grand projects (or, to use Lyotard's term, meta-narratives). People then did not "seek legitimation in the original founding act, but in the future still to arrive, that is in the Idea still to be realised. […] The vision, the postulate of the finishing line […] has replaced the myths of the origins" (Bauman 1992: 162). The prevalent point in time did not exist in the present, but in some unspecified future. It was no longer *then* or *now* but it resided in the future instead. This future objective was constantly pursued, but without any assurance of ever reaching it.

[26] For Bauman, modernity is a period that lasted approximately from 16th century to late 20th century. It developed into liquid modernity, which is, for Bauman, still another phase of modernity. Other theorists, like Baudrillard or Lyotard, define the period that began in late 20th century not merely as another stage of modernity, but as a completely different epoch and name it postmodernity.

The approach towards time has changed and, as Bauman claims, nowadays "there is neither past nor future, all times have become present times. […] the world is one of the 'total present'" (Bauman 1992: 168). Bauman suggests that setting distant goals in a world, which is so prone to rapid change, does not make much sense anymore. What seems to be at stake is the present moment only, not some unknown future. At the same time, as everything is so volatile, no new moment appears to be more important than another. "Every present counts as much, or as little, as any other. Every state is as momentary and passing as any other, and each one is – potentially – the gate opening into eternity" (Bauman 1992: 168). Reality seems to be slipping through our fingers and appears impossible to grasp. This leads to a paradox: as attention is paid to the present moment, and this, by its very nature is constantly fleeting and continually changing into the past, we are caught up in futile attempts to freeze this ephemeral present-past. As a result, what we face is, to use Daniel Halévy's term[27], the acceleration of history. This same phenomenon is also observed, among others, by Pierre Nora (1989, 2002), or Paul Connerton (2009).

Pierre Nora (2002) uses this concept to account for the reasons behind the recent upsurge in memory. The direct outcome of the acceleration of history is the fact that stability is giving way to change: "And increasingly rapid change, an accelerated precipitation of all things into an ever more swiftly retreating past" (2002: n. pag). This quick change has broken the linearity of historical time and the interdependence of future, present and past. Nora states, similarly to Bauman, that previously it was future that occupied predominant role. The past served as a depository of possible options, as a narrative to learn and choose from. Nonetheless, it was the vision of the future that a given group had for itself that determined what was necessary to be remembered to

[27] Daniel Halévy was a French historian best known in social sciences for his 1948 "Essay on the Acceleration of History".

reach the objective. The present was treated solely as a connection between the two. The characteristics of future goals and a broader vision of the days to come shaped the way in which the past was approached. The future could be perceived as a revolution, progress, or a restoration of the past. Now, none of the former visions is at stake. The future seems to be an unimaginable void and every attempt at its visualisation appears to constitute an unattainable task. As there is no certainty what to make out of the future, no agreement as to what to preserve or what to forget can be reached. According to Nora, the end of the teleology of history leads to the need to remember as much as possible, to *duty to remember* (devoir de mémoire).[28] The acceleration of history results in an excessive accumulation of vestiges and items reminding us of the past, exemplified by the creation of archives, museums or the digitalisation of written and visual data.

The Democratisation of History

Along with the process of the acceleration of history, we are nowadays facing *the democratisation of history* related directly to the emergence of many groups within and across different countries. Nora recognises it as the result of three types of movements: domestic, ideological and international decolonisation (Nora 2002: n. pag). Domestic decolonisation is the rise of various minorities, be it sexual, social, religious or provincial. All these communities aim at recognition and visibility, at forming part of so-called mainstream cultures, but without losing difference and their particular identity. Once again, this cannot be accomplished without the recovery of their history/ies through remembering. Ideological decolonisation stems directly from the fall of totalitarian regimes: whether they be Nazi, communist or any other dictatorial ones.

[28] Paul Ricoeur uses another term to describe the present situation: "the effort to remember" (travail de mémoire)

This process is accompanied by the creation of national archives and bringing back to light documents and memories of events previously repressed. By international decolonisation Nora understands the process of emancipation and gaining independence by former colonies. These newly-formed states are in the need of actively rewriting their history which was formerly written for them. It is a crucial step in the formation of their national identity. In order to achieve this aim their collective memory has to be rescued and made known. Postcolonial studies are especially interested in the way the past and empires in the past shaped and continue to shape the present. Thus, postcolonialism is deeply concerned with the relation of the past and present. A growing interest in this field is also one of the factors contributing to the increase of importance in memory (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 8).

Further Factors

The acceleration and democratisation of history can be treated as some of the underlying factors for the upsurge in memory. However, there are other reasons for it as well. In their recent publication, *Theories of Memory,* Rossington and Whitehead trace the rising interest in memory to several factors (2007: 5-15).

The modes of preserving the past and past memories have been changing throughout the centuries and have always reflected technological progress of a given time. Wax tablets for writing were long ago substituted by paper, which in turn is nowadays being more and more frequently replaced with digital data storage. Latest technological advances make the digitalisation of visual and written records possible, thereby facilitating new ways of storing and accessing both old and new data. Documents related to the past are available to a broader number of people and are much more easily obtained. Better, faster and increasingly cheaper technology enables a great

number of people to record and store their past in the form of photos, blogs and profiles on various social network sites. Advances that were unthinkable outside science-fiction gradually entered everyday reality. Additionally, technological developments prompted a theoretical debate on the issue of virtual and digital data storage (Misztal 2003: 2; Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 5).

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall many archives were opened thus bringing to life facts and memories previously unavailable. All this led to the revision of the post-war history. The vision post-communist countries had of themselves and of their past had to be modified, adjusted and revised. However, this process was, and is not limited only, to the countries that were formerly under the communist influence. Their earlier adversaries were concurrently forced, or rather, had the opportunity, to look at their own past from a different perspective. Simultaneously, in many South American and Asian countries as well as in South Africa, a debate on reconciliation with the past was, and still is, taking place (Misztal 2003: 2; Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 5).

As a still another illustration of the *memory boom* may serve a great number of commemorative ceremonies as the 20th century drew to close (Olick 2010: 15; Misztal 2003: 29). It was caused not merely by the calendar but revealed a border pattern of the need to come to terms with a painful past. It can be seen as the outcome or, much the contrary, the cause of a growing interest in studies related to trauma (Olick 2010: 15; Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 7). The past that has remained repressed so far, is to be revisited and approached from a different perspective; not the one dictated by the dominant power but the one of the oppressed and victimised. The groups that previously were deprived of the right of expression, all those who were denied the voice, are finally finding ways to express themselves. History as such seems to insufficiently cater for these needs as it is associated with the dominant power. It is being substituted for

memory as by its very nature it allows for a multiplicity of individual voices to be heard. As Nora explains (2002: 6), while history has belonged to the realm of the collective, memory has been reserved for the sphere of the individual. Moreover, the very concept of communities sharing memories, and of those becoming emancipated, changes the ways in which questions of identity are to be approached.

Still another factor enumerated by Rossington and Whitehead is the development in Holocaust studies in the early 1990s. Recent publications, apart from drawing attention to the atrocities that took place in relatively widely known death camps and ghettos, also try to emphasise less known tragic World War II events. The objective is to raise awareness and provide a more complete vision of the Holocaust without undermining the importance of generally recognisable symbols of Nazi genocide, such as Oświęcim (Auschwitz), Dachau or the battle of Stalingrad. Another theme dealing directly with memory is related to the testimonies of survivors. The centrality of memory was highlighted in many of them. Furthermore, several works related to the topic published in the early 1990s dealt with the issue of authenticity and questioned to what extent it is possible to rely on the memory of events which took place over 60 years before. Moreover, they addressed the problem of remembering the traumatic past. Especially one publication gave rise to a heated debate on authenticity and its meaning (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 6). The author provides a testimony of a survivor of Oświęcim who misremembers the number of chimneys demolished in the rebellion that took place in the concentration camp. While this mistake renders her testimony inaccurate and invalid for historians, it makes it even more powerful for the authors of the publication as it exemplifies the way in which a painful past is remembered and recalled.

A debate on authenticity lies at the core of False Memory Syndrome (FMS), another issue that contributed to the *memory boom* (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 6). In the late 1990s a group of parents created the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF) in response to the results of psychological treatment received by their daughters. Parents claimed that in the course of the therapy false recollections of childhood sexual abuse originated. FMS is closely related to Recovered-Memory Therapy, a term coined by FMSF. It describes a series of techniques, such as hypnosis, used to trigger and evoke memories related to traumatic experiences. The debate surrounding FMS posed very serious questions related to the process of remembering and forgetting. At its core lies – much as in the case of Holocaust survivors – the authenticity of recollections, which in turn challenged the legacy of Freud's theories and the issue of repression, associated with his work. Moreover, it had serious legal implications because decisions had to be made about which recollections that surfaced during psychological treatments could, or should not, be used as evidence in court.

4. Time, History and the Past in Literary Utopia and Dystopia

The very word *utopia* entails impossibility: it is *eutopos*, a good place, which is at the same time *outopos*, a place nowhere to be found. At the beginning of the history of literary genre of utopia, the imaginary worlds described were located elsewhere, in a space different from the one occupied by their creators and possible readers. The authors visualised the unidentified land of Cockaigne, mysterious and distant islands such as the ones described in More's *Utopia* (1516), Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1624) and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) or far-away cities, as the one in Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1602). These early utopias were not only suspended from real space but also time. They were basically static, admitted almost no change and their origins were

hardly ever described. The readers were left with the sensation that the worlds presented in them had simply always existed in this very form. Stability and security was valued over process and change (Ferns 1999: 64, Moylan 1986: 6). Space dominated over time and as Chris Ferns remarks: "[…] the peculiarly static character of the utopian vision gives rise to a distinctive chronotope, in which plenitude in space seems designed to compensate for the virtual erasure of time. […] Time, no matter how extensive, is empty of content; whereas the *space* of utopia is full" (Ferns 1999: 65, original emphasis). These Renaissance utopias portrayed almost atemporal societies. Nevertheless, it is impossible to perceive any utopia without reference to history, the past and time. After all, they are products of their times, reactions to a specific historical and socio-cultural context. All the texts are answers to unsatisfactory conditions and thus the relation between them and the real contexts of the time they were created is of crucial importance. Furthermore, the very structure of Renaissance utopias weaves the past into the narrative. Highly influenced by the classical dialogue (Ferns 1999: 16), they feature a male traveller who on his return home describes the society he has been given the chance to see. The fact that he relates the story on his return places utopian society in the past; thus, whatever happened during his adventures serves as the framework for his tale and is already finished (cf. Frens 1999: 20-21).

At the end of the age of great geographical explorations in the eighteenth century, there was hardly any *terra incognita* left to be explored. As a consequence, utopian projects were moved from an unknown space and atemporal dimension to the imagined worlds situated somewhere in the future (Moylan 1986: 6, Ferns 1999: 69-70). The appearance of dystopia made the relation to history and past no less complex. Much like utopia, dystopia needs to distance itself from the present in order to present

an alternative vision, but its link to the history, the past and the present is even stronger than in case of utopia. This is how Tom Moylan describes dystopia

> From that early period, and throughout its varied and shifting history, this negative narrative machine has produced challenging cognitive maps of the historical situation by way of imaginary societies that are even worse than those that lie outside their authors' and readers' doors (Moylan 2000: x).

Classical utopian narratives emphasise the difference between the created world and reality while the aim of dystopia is rather to show the imagined worlds as a possible outcome of the present order. Therefore, dystopia stresses the connection between the present and the imagined worlds while utopia often obscures it (Ferns1999: 107, 109). Dystopia offers a reflection on the present conditions and the past and the historical reasons that led up to it. It presents possible, bleak, future scenarios which are to warn us and show what the future might bring if society does not change. It is then a direct criticism of the past that leads to unfavourable present conditions. In dystopia, both history and the past are also more directly present in the narrative. Contrary to classical utopia, the process leading to the new order is described. Moreover, the regimes portrayed in dystopian narratives frequently use the past and history as a means of control over society. This control is often exercised by erasing all the records that do not comply with the status quo.

The arrival of the year 2000 encouraged beliefs in the imminent end of the world and the vulnerability of the human race. The cinemas showed films and bookshops stored texts dealing with end-of-the-world scenarios in which the history of the human race was coming to an end or was being dramatically transformed. However, apocalypse ought to be understood not so much as the end of all things but as a transition, a means of reaching another level of existence. It is supposed to be the end of life on Earth, life as we know it, a mere prelude to what is awaiting us afterwards and what is meant to be everlasting and stable (Kumar 1993: 63). Christian tradition offers us a beginning in the

Garden of Eden and ends in a utopian vision of the city of Zion: a New Jerusalem (James 2000: 52). In the past, death and apocalypse were treated merely as a passage, indispensable steps on the way to redemption and a perfect world. No heaven without first passing through the doom. The idea is clearly expressed by Kumar:

> Previously good and bad, optimism and pessimism, fed off each other. The imagination of disaster, the apocalyptical imagination, usually carried with it […] a sense of hope, of something constructive emerging from the ruins. Similarly millennial hopes, or the utopian imagination, were commonly coupled with the belief that a great disaster […] must precede the emergence of the millennial kingdom or the good society (Kumar 1995: 205).

Although the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic films seem to offer the most radical break with history, the very fact that the majority of them actually present the Earth *after* some disaster confirms that the glimmer of hope is still there and that it is hardly possible to envisage the end of human race and its history. History is not stable and continues even after catastrophic events which in recent post-apocalyptic texts, with just a few exceptions, are but a passage to a different reality. Similarly, present-day critical dystopias, as mentioned in the previous chapter, manage to weave glimmers of hope into the narrative and, contrary to classical utopias, feature history as being dynamic and prone to change.

5. Recent Scholarship on the Relation between Utopia / Dystopia and Time, the Past, Memory and History

History, the past, time and memory have always been an important part of the utopian imagination, especially in literary dystopias (Baccolini 2003: 115). The authors of literary dystopias very frequently portray societies in the grip of repressive regimes which use an array of methods to subdue their citizens. One of the techniques most often used is control and the modification of the past. From Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (1937), Ray Bradbury's

Fahrenheit 451 (1953), Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) to Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Telling* (2000), the past is treated as a possible threat to the ones in command and therefore strictly controlled. The scholarship on memory and literary dystopia has been mainly twofold so far. On the one hand, it has focused on the themes of control over memory and also the past and history as means of maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, it has emphasised the subversive power of memory and its role in the battle against the oppressive regime.

George Orwell's slogan from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* referring to this practice is undoubtedly one of the most widely-known quotes from literary dystopia: "Who controls the past […] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell [1949] 1989: 40). Orwell's novel has achieved a lot of critical attention over the years and numerous articles related to the treatment of memory, history and the past have been published. One of the earliest ones dealing with this topic is Irving Howe's article "Orwell: History as Nightmare" (1956). The author observes that the totalitarian regime described in the novel destroys not only records of the past but also obliterates "the memory of the past through a disintegration of individual consciousness" (Howe 1956: 201). It analyses the destruction of social memory in the book and possible influence on Orwell coming from Stalinism and its terrors. Chris Ferns in his extensive study *Narrating Utopia. Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature* (1999) mentions the importance of Winston's memories as one of the few remaining standards by which he can judge the dystopian society (Ferns 1999: 112). He also emphasises the obliteration of memory and the past as one of the ways in which Oceania controls its citizens (119-20). Samuel Macey in his 1985 article and Carimo Mohomed in an essay from 2011 deal with themes of memory and the past in Orwell's novel. However, the

best analysis on this subject to date is by Theo Finigan in his 2011 article "'Into the Memory Hole': Totalitarianism and Mal d'Archive in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid's Tale*" published in Science Fiction Studies Journal. The author of this essay offers a comparative reading of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) in which he draws on Derrida's concept of *archive fever*. He also shows how totalitarian regimes in both novels use the control of the records to manipulate history, the past and memory thus subduing their subjects. Finigan contrasts suffocating fullness of Winston's daily routine to controlled emptiness of Offred's days to show how the regulation of personal time in both novels serves to manipulate citizens. He also focuses on control and the erasure of personal memory that results in the slow disappearance of any criterion for comparison. This, in turn, renders criticism of, and rebellion against, the reality the protagonists were forced to live in as increasingly difficult (439-40). In both novels perfect citizens hold no memory of the times from before the regime, they are ideally not remembered after they are gone and are but "mere receptacles for totalitarian ideology" (442). Finigan uses a powerful quote from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to illustrate his claim. This is what O'Brien says to Winston "You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves" (Orwell in Finigan 2011: 442). He also notes that "Both Orwell and Atwood figure totalitarianism as an attempt to manipulate and ultimately destroy the past as a means of completely dominating the present and future. Resistance to the totalitarian regime seems, in both texts, to consist largely in the obsessive search for fragmentary traces of the past as manifested in memory, language, gesture and materiality" (448). Finigan uses Derrida's reading of the archive in his analysis and stresses that in both novels main protagonists create personal archives which offer an alternative to the ones managed by states.

Chris Ferns in the aforementioned study also analyses the importance of memory and the past in Atwood's narrative (Ferns 1999: 136-38). He describes Offred's memory as an alternative by which the regime can be judged. The way the past is depicted in *The Handmaid's Tale* is, according to him, far less nostalgic than in Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Ferns states that Atwood manages to avoid simplistic and polarised alternatives, past / present, present / future, offered by earlier dystopian texts. Instead, she provides a more complex vision in which the past and future are interrelated. In this way she creates a self critical alternative which acts as an "impulse which may be seen to underlie a series of attempts to likewise transform the nature of the utopian vision" (Ferns 1999:138). Unfortunately, Ferns in his detailed study fails to mention the *critical dystopia*, the term introduced for the first time by Lyman Tower Sargent in his seminal article "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" (1994) and further analysed and developed by Moylan in *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* (2000) and by Baccolini and Moylan in their 2003 publication *Dark Horizons.* Moylan observes that one of the results of the reappropriation of language by the dystopian rebels is the reconstruction of memory. Recovered memories and the past enable dissidents in turn to question the status quo:

> […] the dystopian protagonist often reclaims a suppressed and subterranean memory that is forward looking in its enabling force, liberating in its deconstruction of the official story and its reaffirmation of alternative ways of knowing and living in the world (Moylan 2000: 149-50).

Although themes of memory and the past are very relevant to the discussion of dystopia, they also play an important role in utopian texts. As an example of the analysis of utopian texts with an emphasis on memory and history, there is Vincent Geoghean's article, "The Utopian Past: Memory and History in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*" (1992). The main presumption is that these two late nineteenth century socialist utopias present quite

distinct approaches towards both the past and memory. While Bellamy's text rejects the past by diminishing the importance of memory and previous epochs, Morris's utopia emphasises the positive role of both memory and the past. In *Looking Backward*, the dismissal of the possible positive aspects of the past and not opening itself to the new horizons it might offer creates a "space for anti-modern, historicist forms of right wing radicalism" (87). Morris takes a different approach: instead of rejecting the past and history altogether, he "saw the values embodied in specific historical cultures and personal memories, and realised that these had not been exhausted (87-88).

Memory, the past and history was also the main focus of a European Thematic Network Project ACUME: "Approaching Cultural Memory in European Countries: an Interdisciplinary Approach" which ran from 2003 to 2006. The project conducted by scholars from several European universities had as its aim updating and renewing the teaching and research in Europe at a university level as well as promoting a European take on the concept of cultural memory. The project as divided into five research areas: Cultural Amnesia, Bearing Witness, Places and Memory, Oral and Written History, Foundation Myths and Mythology. Two conferences organised within the research project invited, among others, papers combining the themes of memory and utopia. The first one, "Memory and Oblivion. Conception, Reception, Interception" took place in Lisbon in January 2005 and the second, "The Island and the Cultural Maps" in Madeira in September 2006. The papers on utopia and memory combined utopia with various themes from the field of memory studies such as collective and individual memory, the memory of religion, forgetting, nostalgia or testimony.

As has been observed, the main focus of scholarly debates on memory, history, the past and literary dystopia and utopia has been principally on the dual power of memory: its role in the process of subjugation, on the one hand, and the possible

subversive function on the other. The analysis of memory in young adult dystopia has been very limited so far. Anastasia Ulanowicz in her 2013 publication *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature: Ghost Images*. devotes one chapter to *The Giver.* Lowry's novel is also the focus of Carter Hanson's 2009 article "The Utopian Function of Memory in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*". To date, there has been however no publication entirely dedicated to the role of memory, the past and history in young adult dystopias.

> The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even.
>
> Milan Kundera *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

> What is horrifying in totalitarian regimes is not only the violation of human dignity but the fear that there might remain nobody who could ever again bear witness to the past.
>
> Paul Connerton *How Societies Remember*

Chapter 4. Control of Collective Memory and the Subversive Role of Remembering in Young Adult Dystopias

1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the study of selected aspects of collective memory as represented in YAD, specifically in the following novels: Lois Lowry, *The Giver; Son* and *Gathering Blue* and also Allyson Condie, *Matched Trilogy.* These texts emphasise issues of the control of memory and its subversive use in the fight for emancipation. A general introduction to the concept of collective memory and its control will be followed by an analysis of texts. The analysis will be twofold. First, it will examine how the oppressive regimes in YAD use the past, history and memory to strengthen their position. This will be followed by a discussion of how memory can take on a subversive role and thus form part of the struggle against those in command. The theoretical framework of the first part of this chapter will be based on the theories on collective memory by Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Connerton, while Michel Foucault's approach to power and resistance will be applied in the second part.

2. The Control of Collective Memory: An Overview

Although the concept of *collective memory* came to prominence only after the landmark publication *Social Frameworks of Memory* by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925,[29] the idea that practices of remembering are influenced and promoted by societies and cultures had long been a key referent before that (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 134-5, Olick et al. 2011: 5, 16). Indeed, this can be traced back to classical and medieval European thought (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 134). The interest in the way societies remember at the beginning of the twentieth century was not new but came as a reaction to the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century views which considered the act and practice of remembering as centred more on the individual (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 134). Important for the concept of collective memory is that remembering, even though performed by individuals, always takes place within a society as a response to social stimuli and is highly influenced by the dominant discourses (Misztal 2010: 27). Embedded in social contexts, the act of remembering is continually shaped by social factors such as commemoration practices, rituals, language, social milieu and recollections of other members of a given group. Collective memory is crucial in the construction of various types of collective identities as well as in securing social and political order.

One of the characteristics common to both young adult literature and dystopian narratives is the portrayal of worlds in which the status quo is not a stable construct but can be challenged. This is also characteristic in young adult dystopian narratives. In YAD there are children and young adults who become politically conscious and question the power of ruling regimes. The political quest of these young protagonists

[29] Only fragments of the publication *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* ([1925]1952) have been translated from French into English so far. In 1992, the sociologist and translator, Lewis Coser published them together with the conclusion to *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land* (1941) in the University of Chicago Press *Heritage of Sociology* series volume called *On Collective Memory.*

forms part of their personal and social development. The past plays a significant role in the construction of any nation or community and the understanding of a common history strengthens the identity of every group (Connerton 1989, Misztal 2003: 133-4; Lowenthal 2009: 44). Therefore, it is always a potential threat for the ruling regime which will not accept change from the outside, or from the inside. The past confirms that history is a kinetic process, not a static concept (Ferns 1999: 119). Therefore, control over the past and the erasure of political and collective memory is one of the ways of strengthening the position of the ruling regime (Ferns 1999: 119-20, 136-38, Moylan 2000: 149, Connerton 1989, 2008, 2009). In order to achieve this, regimes need to control not only what is remembered but also how recollection takes place.

2.1. Memory Control and Social Frameworks of Memory

The French social scientist Maurice Halbwachs' groundbreaking publication *Social Frameworks of Memory* in 1925 marked a shift in the way memory was perceived. Although at the time of its publication his study was met with a mixed reception, over the years it has proved to exert a major influence in social studies and shed a new light at the way memory is approached. Halbwachs, a pupil of the sociologist Émile Durkheim was also deeply influenced by the philosopher Henri Bergson and his research on time and memory. Halbwachs drew from Bergson's view that memory was not a passive and objective but rather an active, fluid and ever-changing process. Halbwachs however, addressed memory with the tools provided by Durkheim's sociological approach (Olick et al. 2011: 18). Halbwachs focused on the social and collective dimensions of memory, hence providing a perspective radically different from most of the approaches developed at that time; such as those by Sigmund Freud or Henri Bergson whose focus was mainly on individual aspects of memory. Moreover,

Halbwachs' work broke away from biological-essentialist models current at the time. Instead of turning to biology and medicine for the explanation of human behaviour, Halbwachs viewed it as socially determined (Apfelbaum 2010: 80, 84-85). Ways of remembering in view of his theory can be influenced by family, class, religion, media, school and any other factor participating in the creation of group identities. By analyzing mechanisms behind the sharing of collective memory Halbwachs provided social sciences with tools necessary in the analysis of the historical, social and individual elements of human behaviour (Apfelbaum 2010: 77, Olick et al. 2011: 16). He also established the connection between social groups, individuals and collective memory. According to Astrid Erll (2011: 14-18), his studies encompass three main areas. The first one is the dependence of individual memory on social context, the second, research into the forms of intergenerational memory and the third, inclusion of both cultural transmission and the creation of tradition within the concept of collective memory. These three areas of study were applied to social psychology, Assmann's theory of cultural memory and finally Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* accordingly.

The fundamental notion in Halbwachs' theory is the concept of *social frameworks of memory* (*les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*), substituted in his later work by the term the *frameworks of collective memory.* They are understood not simply as all the possible social groups an individual may come into contact with, but rather as "social mentality" (Cubitt 2007: 160). They are social ways of thinking, collectively shared norms and values that help to relate the past experiences of individuals to a more general social reality. "The *cadres sociaux de la mémoire* are a reflection, in other words, of our patterns of group involvement: individual memory is shaped by those patterns, and evolves as the patterns themselves are transformed" (Cubitt 2007: 162). They are not equal to social groups but there is an undeniable connection to them.

People belong to more than one social framework and social group concurrently and these affiliations keep on changing over time (Halbwachs [1950] 1980: 76-78). Social groups and frameworks operating in them are essential in the process of remembering as "[i]t is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection" (Halbwachs [1952] 1992: 39). Halbwachs claimed that although these are individuals who remember, they are capable of doing so only within a social context, during their interaction with other people. Thus, both memory formation and remembering are social processes depending on the interaction of individuals. What needs to be emphasised is the fact that social frameworks are not a simple combination of individual memories. Nor are they

> […] empty forms where recollections coming from elsewhere would insert themselves. Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society […] (Halbwachs [1952] 1992: 40).

Therefore, in order to remember, one must be part of a group or groups. Moreover, every individual participates in many social frameworks, shapes them and is at the same time influenced by them in a process of a mutual interaction.

> The two problems, moreover, are not only related: they are in effect one. One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories (Halbwachs [1952] 1992: 40).

The individual act of recollection is filtered through social frameworks of memory. Individuals belong to more than one framework and these affiliations are subject to change. This is one of the reasons why collective memory is not a stable construct, but rather an ongoing process and as such it becomes a potential threat for totalitarian regimes who do not want change. Regimes in the YADs limit the existence of social frameworks and therefore exert absolute control over their citizens.

Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and its continuation, *Son,* portray a community in which life follows a chain of clearly established stages and passage from one to another is celebrated by the community. There is absolutely no doubt as to the role each and every citizen is to play. Such absolute control undermines the functioning of social frameworks of memory and does not permit the construction of collective memory.

The family structure is controlled by the Committee of Elders that decides who each individual is to marry. Each year, fifty children are born to the so-called, *birth mothers*, women who are carefully selected for the role. Newborn babies are transferred to Nurture Centres, where they are taken care of until they are one-year-old. After that, they are transferred to the family units which have officially requested a child. Each family unit can have up to two children, one girl and one boy. Once children have grown up, their parents are transferred to the Childless Adults quarters and then, to the House of the Old. When the day of *release* (that is, active euthanasia) comes, a little ceremony is held in their honour. Nevertheless, only the elderly and the workers of the House of the Old participate in it. Children have no possibility of family contact once they leave their family units, therefore, they are unaware of what happens to their parents and never come to know their grandparents. In this way, the family genealogy is broken up and the few existing memories are limited to one generation only. Thus, memories shared by any generation become insulated. Remembrances of any unsettling events that might have been difficult to control, pose relatively little danger to the status quo, as they are unlikely to spread from one generation to another. If the claim is that the present can only be perceived through knowledge of the past, and the past is frequently used to legitimate any social order (Connerton 1989: 3), it follows that the eradication of both history and memory will maintain the existing state of affairs, in this case, the doctrine of Sameness.

Apart from family structures, other aspects of life are also strictly controlled. Every year in December the whole community takes part in the "Advance in Age Ceremony" which marks the children's passage from one age group to another. Time freezes after they become twelve years old as it is the last of the Advance in Age Ceremonies. After this ceremony, teenagers are assigned to a lifetime job, they start training and on completion they are considered full adults and are given their own dwelling. Since calendars do not exist, citizens have no knowledge of their date of birth. They do not know their age once they turn twelve, as age is no longer relevant. Jonas, the main protagonist, states: "After Twelve, age isn't important. Most of us even lose track of how old we are as time passes" (*The Giver* 31). This clear, transparent and orderly structure makes it easy to control the citizens. In this way, the creation of collective memories is under the control of the Society and as there is hardly any intergenerational contact, the formation of family memory and family history is almost impossible.

The dystopian world featured in Allyson Condie's *Matched Trilogy* is set in some indefinite post-apocalyptic future. As in Lowry's world, information is sanctioned and there is a lot of specialisation. Citizens are experts in very narrow and specialised fields but remain unaware of how the system works as a whole. It makes them highly dependent on the Society as they would not be able to survive on their own. Similar strategies are used in both YAD series to ensure control over family life. In Condie's fictional society, marriages are also meticulously arranged and citizens get to know their future spouses at the Match Banquet when they are seventeen. The manual of Matching describes this as follows: "The goal of Matching is twofold: to provide the healthiest possible future citizens for our Society and to provide the best chances for interested citizens to experience successful Family Life" (*Matched* loc. 476). Through careful

matching, the Society ensures obedience and tranquillity in day to day life. The matched couples go on with their individual lives till they are twenty-one, when the Marriage Contract takes place. Not everyone needs to be matched: the Society considers also the possibility of choosing to be a Single. However, children are only allowed to be born to the Matched individuals. The latest age a couple can have children is thirty-one. There is more intergenerational contact than in *The Giver* but in spite of this, there is little interaction between extended families. Women, after signing the Marriage Contract, have to move and start living with their husbands. As there is almost no free time and travelling is limited to work-related trips, and other forms of communication are underdeveloped, there is hardly any contact maintained between members of extended families. Here again, the creation of collective memories is under the control of the Society. Without intergenerational contact outside the closest family, the formation of family memory and family history are almost impossible.

In both fictional worlds work is also strictly supervised. In *The Giver Quartet* citizens do not choose their jobs, but are assigned their lifelong positions at the age of twelve. In *Matched Trilogy* there is no free choice in professions either. Work and free time are strictly supervised and citizens are kept occupied almost all the time.

The state also controls life and death. In *The Giver,* the words *death*, *dead*, *to die*, *to kill* do not form a part of their language as they were all substituted by the term *release*, which serves as a euphemism for euthanasia, infanticide and suicide. Under no circumstances can death occur outside the established norms and come unforeseen and without warning. Thus, special rules have to be obeyed as to when and who is to be released. Release may be the fate of anyone who is in the following situations: someone who commits the same petty crime on three occasions, the weaker sibling of newly born twins, any baby who is not strong or docile enough and does not live up to the

established standards, or finally all the elderly. The elderly live in the House of the Old and are euthanized when no longer needed but before they show signs of any serious illnesses. Only a few people, basically the inhabitants and the workers of the House of the Old, participate in a small Ceremony of Release, a substitute for a funeral. The few who know that the release does not mean going to a place called Elsewhere, remain unmoved by this fact. In the society of *Matched* the way elderly citizens die is very different, but equally controlled. All people die there on the day they turn eighty during a private ceremony called the Final Banquet. Only the closest family members gather around the elderly person, they share a final meal together, watch a film-summary of the person's life and achievements, exchange last gifts and then wait for the person to pass away. It is a quiet and personal ceremony, all things considered, during which the family has the opportunity to gather together one last time. Nevertheless, nothing is left to chance and banquets are always supervised.

As has been shown, in dystopian as well as in utopian narratives, there is a clear tendency to control social structures by suppressing all the institutions that might serve as mediators between the state and the individual (Ferns 1999: 54). This elimination results in a limited number of social frameworks of memory. According to Halbwachs, memory binds the groups together and ensures their continuity. Collective memory then plays a crucial role in the formation of collective identity. Images and recollections provided by collective memory have the power to unite a group, even if its members cannot stay together. It is also easier for people to comprehend the experience or a narrated event if they have a common background. Accordingly, the impossibility of sharing experiences with others may create a sense of alienation. Apfelbaum, in her discussion of Halbwachs' work *The Collective Memory* notes that for the communication to be most effective, narrator and listener should share social, historical

and physical context (Apfelbaum 2010: 87-89). The most meaningful of dialogues is then established between individuals who share a collective memory as otherwise there is a risk of misunderstanding or the communication might not be effective. By a strict supervision of social frameworks of memory, the Society in both YAD series manages to influence the manner in which collective memory is formed and consulted.

2.2. Suppression of Creativity and Emotions

As claimed by Halbwachs, memories cannot be described as simple stable imprints but rather are dynamic reconstructions of past events and experiences taking place in social contexts. New events shed new light on past experiences and new individual experiences alter the existing perceptions of reality in the same way as collective memory influences the way reality is perceived. The past and the present as well as individual and collective memory are in constant process:

> Every time we situate a new impression in relation to the framework structuring our existing ideas the framework transforms the impression but the impression also in turn alters the framework. This creates a new moment, a new place, modifying our sense of time and space; it adds a new dimension to our group, which we now see in a different light. Hence the continual work of adaptation (Halbwachs in Apfelbaum 2010: 90).

In the novels, in order to limit this constant influence of the present over the past, a strict control of the social context exercised by both Societies needs to include a suppression of creativity and emotions. Ruth Levitas and Tom Moylan in their analysis of Ernst Bloch and the utopian function of music recall Fredric Jameson's opinion on the issue. Jameson notes that, for Bloch

> there exist . . . existential experiences which may be understood as foreshadowings of what the plenitude of . . . an ultimate Utopian instant might be like: this . . . is the most genuine function of music as a limited and yet pure feeling of that unity of outside and inside which Utopia will establish in all the dimensions of existence. . . . [M]usic is profoundly Utopian, both in its form and in its content (Jameson in Levitas and Moylan, 2010: 205, original ellipsis).

Ernst Bloch, then "insisted that music had a particular utopian role in articulating the Not-Yet and, indeed, bringing the future world into being." (Levitas and Moylan 2010: 205). The role of music can be subversive as it can help envisage and express a future reality distinct from the present.[30] Art was already a controversial issue in Plato's *Republic* in which the author does not ban art altogether but rather advocates its strict supervision in an attempt to control the imagination and creativity. Similarly, in the discussed YAD narratives, music and art in general, are also brought under control of the state. Both Lowry and Condie portray worlds in which music is either non-existent or under supervision. In *Matched Trilogy* the Society limited the number of songs, poems and paintings to one hundred. All the remaining ones were destroyed. There are no work positions related to music and the citizens do not really enjoy listening to music. It is never performed live but pre-recorded and the songs are so complicated that it is impossible for an untrained individual to sing them. The Anthem is the only tune easy enough for people to sing. Art is controlled, not only by limiting songs, poems and paintings to a safe one hundred, but also by strictly prohibiting any form of artistic expression. In *Gathering Blue*, the Singer occupies one of the most important positions in the society and is responsible for singing the Ruin Song during the annual celebration. Nevertheless, whoever occupies the position is deprived of any chance of free expression as the Singer is not allowed to create any new tunes: only the Ruin Song is permitted. Other arts and crafts are also strictly supervised and any child who exhibits signs of artistic ingenuity is brought under the supervision of the Council of Guardians.

Although there are limitations imposed on almost all forms of artistic expression in *The Giver* and *Matched* universes, most individuals do not even feel the need to manifest their emotions. For Pierre Nora (1989), memory creates a direct link between

[30] A subversive role of art can be found in the following dystopian texts: Margaret Elphinstone *A Sparrow's Flight* (1989), Pat Murphy *The City, Not Long After* (1989), Suzette Haden Elgin's *Earthsong: Native Tongue III* (1994).

people's past and their present. It is a process of constant change, influenced by the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. In both YADs the debate between the two is highly controlled, ritualized and the handling of emotions lies at its core. In *The Giver* each day at dinner in every single household *the evening telling of feelings* takes place. Every citizen is to describe the events of the past day and if they happened to have caused an emotion of any kind, they are to share them with the others. It is against the rules to keep them hidden. Feelings are described in detail with the use of a very precise language and possible reasons for them are sought and always found. Another important daily ritual performed at home is *dream-telling*. Each morning, at breakfast all the citizens have an obligation to share all their dreams with the members of the family unit no matter how uncomfortable they might be. As the citizens are highly obedient, they follow the rule to the letter. It is used to detect when *stirrings* (the euphemism for sexual urges) appear at puberty and when pills suppressing them should be introduced. Furthermore, this ritual, like the evening telling of feelings, ensures that nothing potentially unsettling remains hidden. In this way emotions are rationalized and nothing obscure, unknown or disturbing remains. All possible tensions are released and hence not talked or thought about any more. The only two who actually *have* feelings are Jonas and the Giver. The rest of society only talks about them, but does not really feel them. Physical pain is also unknown, as whenever an accident happens, a dose of powerful painkillers is immediately administrated. Emotions are further controlled by a regular dosage of the abovementioned pills from the age of puberty. With their help, all strong desires and possible passionate behaviours are quenched. In *Matched* the citizens also take pills. They always have to carry three tablets with them: the blue one grants survival, the green one calms them down and the red one induces short-time memory loss. This last one is to be taken only under direct orders from high officials and its

effect is known only to a limited number of people. This is how Cassia describes them "Blue and red and green. Life and death and oblivion always at my fingertips" (*Matched* loc. 3643). Cassia realises the shallowness of her feelings only after she falls in love with Ky. In both series love and unrestrained emotions are revolutionary acts, much as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or *The Handmaid's Tale*. Emotions form a crucial factor in the construction of memory, which is described as "the child of both satisfaction and frustration" (Lowewald in Prager 1998: 187). It is important to note that "[t]he more an event provokes an emotion, the more it elicits social sharing and distinctly vivid, precise, concrete, long-lasting memories of the event" (Misztal 2003: 81). Such recollections are unlikely to be easily forgotten. In both novels, pills prevent citizens from experiencing intense feelings and consequently do not allow for the formation of long-lasting memories. In this way disruptive events do not last long and the equilibrium is maintained. As hardly any strong memories are formed, citizens have no need to recall past events and their lives are limited to an atemporal eternal present, to a here and now.

As has been described above, the regimes in the selected YADs implement sets of strict norms through which they manage to control the present and ensure stability and uniformity which is one of the paramount characteristics of dystopia (Ferns 1999: 113-4). As a consequence, citizens follow only a limited set of rules which result in a limited number of social frameworks of memory. Moreover, the state exerts an utmost control over emotions and creativity. Therefore, it has almost total control over how the past is recollected.

2.3. Introduction of State Sanctioned Rituals

How Societies Remember, published in 1989 by the British sociologist Paul Connerton, is a seminal text in contemporary social memory studies. Connerton distinguishes three types of memory: personal, cognitive and habit memory (1989: 21-23). He also differentiates between personal and social habit-memory. The latter is of special importance to him as it is social-performative and plays an important role in the formation and consolidation of any society. Influenced mainly by Halbwachs, Connerton analyses in his study the mechanisms in the transmission of collective memory. Instead of focusing on written documents, his main emphasis is on commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. The main premise of his approach is that social memory is reflected in commemorative ceremonies that, in turn, need to be performative in order to serve their function. Performativity, according to Connerton, implies the existence of habit which is based, among other things, on a notion of bodily habits. Connerton was the first to combine collective social memory, commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices in one theoretical framework of memory.

He attaches importance to rituals, commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices and their role in social memory transmission. They may vary from culture to culture, but they are a keystone of every society. Rituals (1989: 42-45) are acts which are formalised, stylised and repetitive. Rituals tend to be quite stable and are subject only to minor changes as any alteration to them is never impulsive but rather deliberate and does not occur very often. They possess an expressive value and are also felt to be obligatory and any interference with them is frequently met with a strong reaction as they give value and significance to the members of a community. On being repetitive, they imply a connection with the past. The significance of what is demonstrated in the ritual is maintained in a non-ritual context as well and it gives meaning to the ones who

act them out. Commemorative ceremonies share structural invariance, stability, performativity and formalism with other rituals. They differ from all other rituals by the fact that they always refer to some past event or persons that might have either a mythological or a historical existence (1989: 44-5, 61). Moreover,

> the feature they all share, and which sets them apart from the more general category of rites, is that they do not simply imply continuity with the past but explicitly claim such continuity. And many of them [. . .] do so by ritually re-enacting a narrative of events held to have taken place at some past time (1989: 45).

This re-enactment has a fundamental importance in shaping collective memory as commemorative ceremonies remind the community of its identity as represented in the re-enacted master narrative. They are more than a journal, memoire or a story; they are:

> a cult enacted. An image of the past, even in the form of a master narrative, is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances. And this means that what is remembered in commemorative ceremonies is something in addition to a collectively organised variant of personal and cognitive memory. […] My argument is that, if there is such a thing as social memory, we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies (1989: 70-71).

Commemorative ceremonies are an important manner of preserving the collective past. They are a representation of widely recognisable and socially significant past events and situations and they enable a given group to experience their return.

The authors of both *Matched Trilogy* and *The Giver* portray coercive social configurations which, in order to strengthen their position, try to break with the past and to control few selected memories of it that are preserved. Commemorative ceremonies, although crucial to almost any society's identity, are improbable in any of the series as there is virtually no past which they could possibly refer to due to the fact that the fictional communities described in the novels exist in an atemporal time from which the past is excluded. Instead of choosing to modify the past according to their needs, as was the case in earlier dystopias such as *Swastika Night* (1937), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) or *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), the solution is found in the glorification of the present. This can be seen as a part of a general present tendency related to the

acceleration of time.[31] As a result, the past is not a viable referent anymore, nor is the future. Instead, we seem to be immersed in a 'last minute' culture in which everything needs to be constantly updated as otherwise it becomes instantly obsolete. Accordingly, commemorative ceremonies are substituted for rituals in both series. Neither the collective past nor memories are at the core of these new rituals. Instead, they emphasise activities and events that help reinforce the status quo, which is centred on the present and the future only.

In *The Giver* and *Son*, the most important annual ceremony is the Advance in Age. Its main purpose is to give names to the newborns, mark the passage of children from one class to another and finally to distribute Life Assignments to twelve-year-olds. This marks different stages in children's lives and controls their upbringing. Although it is only one of a few memorable days in the life of the community, most citizens find the ceremony quite tedious. Only the Ceremony of Twelve is awaited with a certain dose of impatience as this is when children receive their Life Assignments which will bring a major change to their lives. The Advance in Age is a rite of passage and unites the community not through the recollection of some collective past, but rather through the celebration of the present, the ordinary and the mundane. It also allows for the transparency of the social structure and serves as an example of the power of the Elders who are responsible for appointing the assignments, which, needless to say, are never questioned.

Other rituals introduced by the Society are the abovementioned *evening telling of feelings* and *dream-telling*. The last ritual everyone participates in is the Ceremony of Release. Death is a carefully controlled issue in the Society and virtually no one dies of natural causes. All the elderly are given a lethal injection when the Committee of the

[31] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3, The Acceleration of History, pp. 77-79.

Elders decides that they should not form part of the Society any longer. Only other elderly people and the personnel of the House of the Old take part in the ritual.

A ceremony directly related to collective memory of the community is the Ceremony of Loss which is performed when a child dies unexpectedly. Jonas describes one such ceremony performed after the death of four-year-old Caleb. The whole community gathered and murmured the name of the deceased child "throughout an entire day, less and less frequently, softer in volume, as the long and sombre day went on, so that the little Four seemed to fade away gradually from everyone's consciousness" (*The Giver* 63). No grief or period of mourning is allowed and the ceremony serves to control feelings and memories of the community. As claimed by both Halbwachs and Connerton, collective and individual memory and identity are not stable concepts but are rather subject to continuous change and reinterpretation. The same event can be viewed differently at different times as the perception of every event is an outcome of the ongoing process known today as the politics of memory (Apfelbaum 2010: 90). Collective memory tends to be more stable than individual memory as it rests on many group members (Misztal 2003: 53-54). Thus, by dealing with the unexpected loss collectively, the same memory is being created and it is ensured that this traumatic event will be remembered in as uniform a way as possible.

In *Matched Trilogy* Christmas has been substituted by a different, secular celebration: Winter Holiday. A special traditional dinner is still held but there are no religious connotations.[32] All the other celebrations and ceremonies are, as in *The Giver*, used to mark the passage from one stage of life to another. There are no commemorative ceremonies referring to some mythical collective past that would serve as a socially

[32] Lowry was accused of presenting quite a biased society in her novel *The Giver:* everyone there is white and blue eyes are perceived as an exceptional feature. The epitome of happiness is represented by family gathering around the Christmas Tree. The world portrayed by Condie in her novels also includes only Caucasian protagonists.

unifying force. In both sets of novels the ceremonies represent a reverence of the present, not the past. According to Halbwachs, the most accurate reconstruction of past events takes place in a group when people transcend the domain of individual memory and when their memories are corroborated by recollections of other group members. Moreover, for individual memories to prevail, they need the support of a group, otherwise they will fade. Therefore, in both YAD series remembering occurs on a collective level and is heavily controlled.

For Connerton, the re-enactment of some master narrative forms an important part of every commemorative ceremony. Every ceremony is characterised by three modes of articulation: calendarical, verbal, and gestural. Calendars structure the time of a community and mark the difference between profane and sacred time. Periodical festivals and rituals take their participants to the realm of sacred time and space: an atemporal dimension of perpetual repetition. The passage of time in the discussed YADs is not marked by such ceremonies and is not treated as important in general. In *The Giver,* after the ceremony of Twelves, time almost ceases to flow, age ceases to matter and adults do not keep track of time. In *Matched Trilogy,* age is more important as all the elderly citizens die when they turn eighty. There are however, no annual celebrations that would mark the passage of time. Contrary to some earlier dystopias, such as Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* (1937) which introduces state sanctioned commemorative ceremonies, Societies in both YAD series eliminate any rituals that are not directly related to day-to-day existence.

In his analysis of commemorative ceremonies, Connerton observes that the language of the ritual is highly restricted, unchangeable, predictable and inflexible. A totally distinct language is often applied in a ritual, as exemplified by Latin in the Catholic Church, Hebrew in Judaism or Church Slavonic in Eastern Orthodox Church.

The use of a distinct language or one that is highly restricted, repetitive and invariable implies continuity, stability and a direct link to the sacred time of origin: "Verbal re-enactment is a special kind of actualisation, and it is in its sacramental aspect that liturgical language has its most evidently actualising quality" (Connerton 1989: 68). He also observes that oaths, blessings and curses are common in rites and that a repeated use of plural pronouns strengthens the bonds in the community. Although in the discussed YADs the commemorative ceremonies do not exist, the qualities of the language used by the communities in daily communication are reminiscent of the ones attributed by Connerton to ritual. In Lowry's universe the language used by the Society is not as controlled as in other dystopias such as Orwell's *Eighteen Ninety-Four* (1949), Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), or Le Guin's *The Telling* (2000) but can definitely be described as highly restricted, repetitive and almost invariable. One of the most important parts of education of young children is the *precision of language* and all those who do not take it seriously enough are chastised. Moreover, the citizens are to be especially careful when describing their feelings. In *Matched Trilogy* language is also strictly controlled, especially when it comes to the description of feelings, and any new poetry is banned and no new songs are allowed to be composed.

An aspect of social memory directly related to commemorative ceremonies and one that Connerton found of uttermost importance is bodily social memory. Connerton believed that the past could be preserved not only in images and words but also in the habits of our bodies: "In habitual memory the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body" (Connerton 1989: 72). He gives examples of various types of bodily practices through which social memory is manifested and also reinforced. He mentions group specific gestures, table manners, rules of etiquette, all of which are examples not only of power and social control but also of collective memory. He states

> The appropriate performance of the movements contained in the repertoire of the group not only reminds the performers of systems of classification which the group holds to be important; it requires also the exercise of habit-memory. In the performances explicit classifications and maxims tend to be taken for granted to the extent that they have been remembered as habits (Connerton 1989: 88).

Habits are very powerful forms of behaviour for Connerton as they form such an intimate and central part of both individuals and groups that they are performed automatically, almost involuntarily. Connerton underlines the difference between individual habits that bear no meaning for the others and social habits which are socially recognisable. Social habits are based on performance and thus he concludes that social habit-memory needs to be social-performative (Connerton 1989: 34-35). Postures and movements that form part of habit memory begin to form a part of bodily configuration. In any form of commemorative ceremonies language – and also gestures – are repetitive: "These ritual movements preserve: while physical existence is quintessentially transient, ritual gestures remain identical. […] the liturgy is, as it were, the permanent making present of that temporal situation" (Connerton 1989: 70).

The body is under continuous scrutiny in both YAD series. Emotions are not usually openly expressed in *Matched Trilogy* and when Cassia sees that Ky is crying in the cinema as a reaction to some images that remind him of his parents, she is shocked. She is used to everyone around being measured and restrained. One of the three pills everyone carries on is used whenever, on rare occasions, one becomes too agitated. In *The Giver* we can observe a similar attitude towards expressing emotions. Citizens are not allowed to touch others freely as body contact is kept to the necessary minimum. In both YADs the body is to be kept healthy and, in order to achieve this, exercise is encouraged. Food is delivered to each household and what every person eats is the outcome of careful planning. Clothes are also chosen by the regime and they serve to promote uniformity. As art is limited, there is no possibility of using the body as a means of expression through, for example, dance.

Both regimes introduce rituals that do not make any reference to the past. Moreover, no new history is recorded either. Both communities live in an eternal present. Such societies are totally artificial constructs and cannot progress or change. This is the very objective of the doctrine in both YADs. Stagnation, routine, similarity and a lack of choice are valued over development, free will and imagination. These are communities where children and adults alike are overprotected and controlled, thus hindering any possibility of personal growth. The rituals performed in these societies are empty, devoid of any deeper meaning and do not evoke emotions. Even though commemorative ceremonies are not present in the discussed YADs, certain characteristics typical of them, such as formalised language, are used in order to solidify the status quo through the control of social frameworks of collective memory.

Apart from his work on collective remembering, Paul Connerton is recognised for his scholarship on forgetting. In his publication *How Modernity Forgets* (2009) he describes forgetting on a massive scale that, according to him and other scholars, is happening nowadays. This is due to several factors. The most important ones enumerated by him are: an increasing speed of both travel and communication, cities growing in size, consumerism disconnected from production and labour process and, finally, the disappearance of walkable cites.

The authors of YADs described in this chapter envisage worlds that, on the one hand, try to either eliminate the past and collective memory or bring them under their control. They create worlds of cultural amnesia, which can be seen as a reflection of the present day culture of forgetting. On the other hand, however, the realities they create should, according to Connerton's 2009 publication foster remembering. In both series, the speed of communication is very limited: there is no internet, mobile telecommunication or even television. In *The Giver,* citizens use bicycles as their main

means of transport. There is a mention of planes, but these do not seem to be used on a regular basis, and there are no cars. In *Matched Trilogy* there are trains and also planes, but they are not in frequent use. Citizens do not travel, unless to work. The Society in *The Giver* is almost cut off from all the other communities and only a limited and supervised trade can be observed. In Condie's novel, the Society is composed of many settlements, but they never reach the size of large cities. Consumerism is non-existent and technology is kept to the necessary minimum in both series. A clash between the culture of forgetting and the culture of memory is present in both YADs. Moreover, both YAD series show that memory is becoming less and less important as a basis for national identity. This phenomenon is described by Barbara Misztal in her 2010 article "Collective Memory in a Global Age. Learning How and What to Remember" in which she observes the following:

> In the interconnected world, with its overflow of easily accessible information, where forgetting becomes all the more necessary, we witness the decline in the role of national memories as stable sources of identity. With post-national trends, such as the European unification, further enhancing the construction of 'solidarities below the level of identities grounded in histories' (Berger 2007: 17), the national past is no longer the sole site for the articulation of collective identities (2010: 26).

There is a certain nostalgia for the past and the times when collective memory was more present in both YADs. By portraying dystopian worlds devoid of a national past and collective memory both authors might seem to be suggesting the need for the revival of certain forms of memory and remembering.

2.4. Control over the Past: Forced Forgetting

Connerton distinguishes between social memory and historical reconstruction (1989: 13-5). Historical reconstruction does not depend on social memory but is based on the knowledge of the remains and traces of our past activities. Thus, historical

reconstruction can be subject to manipulation and in specific circumstances can shape social memory. Such a practice often takes place when a newly-formed totalitarian regime seeks to break with the past. In order to subjugate and exert control over its subjects, it will use forced forgetting.

Connerton in his 2008 article "Seven Types of Forgetting" states that forgetting should not be viewed as necessarily negative and that under certain circumstances it might be actually positive. He identifies seven types of forgetting, both positive and negative. I will concentrate only on those affecting memory at collective level as they are represented in the analysed texts. *Repressive erasure* is usually enforced by ruling parties, states or governments and it takes the most radical form under totalitarian regimes. *Humiliated silence* takes place when members of a society decide to silence certain undesirable facts or events from their past. Although this might look as a negative act of repression, Connerton states that under certain circumstances the wish to forget may actually be necessary for survival.

The authors of the analysed YADs portray regimes which use *repressive erasure* to ensure that only the records of the past that comply with their vision of the state are preserved. *The Giver* features one of the most radical examples of repressive erasure in all dystopian writing. The inspiration for this novel came after Lois Lowry visited her father in a nursing home. Her father had lost most of his long-term memory and Lowry started to imagine what a society which had deliberately forgotten its past would look like. She came to the conclusion that enforced amnesia and its resulting ignorance would enable a newly-formed society to exclude all the anxiety and pain related to past events. However, along with the elimination of the suffering, all other strong emotions would gradually disappear and it would consequently lead to a lessening of bonds within society and families, and would also loosen the connections between historical

and personal pasts. The Society portrayed in her novel has decided to eliminate its collective memory. Families are artificially created, family bonds are severed after children start to work and therefore no family memory and family genealogy can be formed. History and memory are not important for the effective functioning of the Society. Citizens lead childlike carefree existence and are treated just as replaceable parts of a bigger whole. The emphasis is on the present, commodity, peace and functionality. There are no details provided as to how exactly the Society achieved this level of collective amnesia.

Matched Trilogy provides the reader with more examples of how the state implements *repressive erasure*. The methods applied are similar to the ones used in other dystopias, both for adults and younger readers. As in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Le Guin's *The Telling* (2000) or *Voices* (2006), books that are not approved by the state are destroyed. The same is done with all works of art not sanctioned by the regime. At some point, the Society found their culture too cluttered and it decided to create commissions of *cultural historians* to choose the hundred best songs, paintings, stories, and poems and all the rest was eliminated. If any artefacts belonging to the past are found, they are to be destroyed or placed in Museums. Citizens are allowed to keep one artefact each, but only a few citizens actually possess them: only those whose ancestors kept and took care of things from the past. Cassia treasures a golden compact, her brother, a watch and Xander, cufflinks. However, at some point it is decided to confiscate all the artefacts as they are thought to have been creating inequality among citizens. The artefacts are placed in Museums which are found in every large town. They are grim buildings with almost no light inside and are almost never visited unless on school trips during the First School, when the past is still discussed. As children grow older, the emphasis is on the present and future. The past is forgotten. The

artificiality of Museums reflects present day concerns related to the disappearance of living memory and the fact that it is preserved only in museums, archives, monuments and on commemoration sites (Nora 1989, 2002; Huyssen 2003).

Humiliated silence is used in both YAD series to deal with an unexpected death of a child. In *The Giver* universe the abovementioned Ceremony of Loss is performed whenever a child dies. Its name is chanted over the period of one day, more and more softly. It creates a sensation of slow and smooth disappearance. This same name of the deceased child is not given to any newborns for some time to facilitate the process of mourning and forgetting. In *Matched Trilogy* we deal with *humiliated silence* when Ky's cousin is presumably killed. The killing of the child is treated as a failure of the state to provide safety and protect the most vulnerable members of the society. Thus, both the boy and all the details surrounding his death are to be forgotten. No one ever mentions what happened; no one talks about the boy. It is almost as if he has never existed. As in both societies, emotions as well as the time when the citizens die, are state-controlled, people are not used to dealing with the unexpected, especially with death. Moreover, death can be seen as a proof of human vulnerability and impotence (cf. Bauman 1992: 134). As there is no space for imperfection in either of the communities, *humiliated silence* and forced forgetting are used to deal with unexpected loss.

Connerton's study on collective memory acknowledges how the present is approached, interpreted and highly influenced by past experiences and that often the past is used to legitimise a present order. It is difficult to draw a sharp line between the past and the present as they continually influence each other and the present is affected by expectations based on memories (Connerton 1989: 2-3, 6). Therefore, in one of his most widely quoted statements he claims that "All beginnings contain an element of

recollection" (Connerton 1989: 6). An absolutely new order is unimaginable according to him.

In all the texts discussed in this chapter, the ruling regimes go to great lengths to break with the past and implement a new social order but they fail to erase the past completely. In *Matched Trilogy* the Hundred Songs, Poems, Stories and Paintings chosen by the state are preserved and museums hold some artefacts from the past. Although the Society of *The Giver* believes that the knowledge of the past is harmful and needs to be supervised, it does not eliminate collective memory altogether. The attitude towards the past and memory is ambivalent in the novel as the Society chooses to keep all the collective memory within the mind of the Giver. This person is a living record not only of all the cultural history but also of collective and, to some extent, personal memory. Furthermore, the Giver and his/ her knowledge of the past, is consulted whenever difficult decisions are to be taken. It seems then that picturing a society completely cut from the past is almost impossible.

3. Remembering as a Subversive Act

> The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.
>
> Milan Kundera *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

> Why should we look to the past in order to prepare for the future? Because there is nowhere else to look.
>
> James Burke *Connections*

The invention of tradition approach, also known as the *theory of memory politics,* or *the presentist memory approach* could be used to describe how supervision and control is achieved by the dominant groups. This theoretical framework was introduced by two British historians: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in the 1980s. They stipulate that

images of the past are sometimes the result of a conscious production initiated by the dominant sector in order to solidify the status quo (Misztal 2003: 56, Hobsbawm 2011: 271, 273). Hobsbawn defines invented traditions as "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with […] a suitable historic past" (Hobsbawm 2011: 271). An example of the invention of tradition can be found in the introduction of Scottish tartan in the nineteenth century which was meant to reinforce Scottish identity. Invented traditions are intended to strengthen the position of the state. This practice, according to Hobsbawm and Ranger, appeared in the late nineteenth century when newly emerging states with the use of education, newly created practices, uniforms, monuments, flags and anthems tried to secure the fidelity and obedience of their citizens (Misztal 2003: 56-7). Although the application of the invention of tradition approach to modern democratic systems has been questioned, it can be effectively applied to totalitarian states (Confino in Misztal 2003: 59, Misztal 2003: 59-61). It also proves useful in the analysis of methods used by regimes in dystopian narratives.

The oppressive groups in the discussed novels apply the aforementioned strategies and ensure in this way their control over the society. However, this theoretical framework cannot prove useful to explain how memory and alternative past are used to challenge the coercive power structures. Therefore, in the remaining part of this chapter I will be using Michel Foucault's approach to knowledge and history in the context of existing power relations. This will hopefully illustrate the mechanisms leading to movements of insurrection and emancipation in the selected novels.

Foucault, contrary to many traditional approaches, states in *History of Sexuality* that, power is not always repressive, uniform and coming always from the top (1990:

93-5). For him, "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (93). According to him, within every social formation there are multiple sources of power which consequently offer multiple lines of resistance. Power and resistance are not binary opposites; they do not form two opposing poles but are rather interrelated. Resistance, like power, is complicated, diverse and heterogeneous, and does not work outside power but within it. He writes: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (95). He goes on to add that in the power network, there actually is a multiplicity of points of resistance:

> each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations (96).

There is a constant battle within social structures and some of the structures, frameworks, organizations, groups become dominant and others are marginalised. Foucault introduces the concept of *subjugated knowledges*. They are for him all these forms of knowledge that are overpowered by the dominant discourse and therefore are silenced and pushed to margins (Foucault [1976] 2003: 7). He distinguishes two types of subjugated knowledges: "historical contents that have been buried or masked" and "a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity" ([1976] 2003: 7). The process of marginalisation makes both types of knowledge invisible and unattainable, thus rendering certain types of resistance impossible. One way of challenging the existing status-quo is by the *insurrection* of the marginalised. It involves giving voice to the silenced, local, forgotten, discarded and prohibited knowledges ([1976] 2003: 8-9). Not only knowledges, but also history and memory are

marginalised. Foucault pays special attention to *counterhistory*, which he defines as "the discourse of those who have no glory, or of those who have lost it and who now find themselves, perhaps for a time—but probably for a long time—in darkness and silence" ([1976] 2003: 70). It is this part of the history that did not enter the mainstream frameworks as it was neglected, underestimated, repressed or misrepresented. Nevertheless, it is not powerless. Quite the contrary: it can challenge the dominant discourse from the margins. Its existence is granted by the people and groups that remember and interpret the past differently from the available narratives.

As has been discussed in the first part of the chapter, the governing bodies in both series of novels use memory and the past to control society and strengthen their position. However, neither of the oppressive governments succeeds in subjugating its citizens completely. Nor are memory and the past completely erased and marginalised. Counter-memory and counterhistory are still present within the system and offer possibilities for the emergence of resistance.

In *Gifts* and *Powers,* Le Guin features characters who escape oppressive social configurations and settle in less repressive societies. In *Matched Trilogy,* Condie promotes a totally different attitude. Prohibited and underestimated knowledge and memories, as well as alternative history are used to fight the established forms of knowledge and the official version of the past. Points of resistance are found on the margins of the system, in the so-called Outer Provinces, Ky's homeland, where the Society cannot exercise such control. The Outer Provinces are inhabited by Aberrations: citizens who breached some of the Society rules, but who still did not get the status of Anomalies. Aberrations are not eliminated or expelled, but separated from the citizens and forced to live in difficult conditions. They have been in touch with the Farmers: a group of dissidents who separated from the Society in the early days of its formation.

The Farmers decided to live in hostile mountains and canyons surrounding the Society's territory, sacrificing commodity and comfort, but gaining freedom. The Farmers and Aberrations from the Outer Provinces have a similar function to the *proles* in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). They are the source of unsanctioned knowledge, subjugated knowledges, to use Foucault's term, alternative memories and counterhistory, and thus make change possible.

Both the Farmers and the inhabitants of the Outer Provinces preserve knowledge, abilities and forms of expression that are banned by the Society. Writing is one of them. The Society does not permit handwriting. Only typing on a computer is permitted and printing is brought to the necessary minimum. The paper on which only short writings can be printed is very delicate and does not last long. In this way almost all the documents are stored on the computers to which the Society has an easy access thus limiting privacy and fostering control. Therefore, everything written and read is under the scrutiny of the officials. The fact that handwriting is unknown, limits the possibilities of resistance: nothing can be composed in secret, in a space beyond the controlling gaze of the Society. Therefore, the fact that the Farmers can still write is one of the reasons why they are considered a threat to the established order. The Farmers teach some Aberrations, Ky's father among them, how to handwrite. Ky's father passes this knowledge onto his son. It gives Ky the possibility to create, express himself and also, teach Cassia. Cassia finds the act of writing liberating, and it also helps her structure her thoughts and to remember. She says: "For some reason, the act of writing them down makes me remember. Each word I write brings me closer to finding the right ones" (*Matched* loc. 4113). The Society places limits not only on how but also on what is written and read. As mentioned before, paintings, stories, novels, songs and poems are limited to a safe and manageable one hundred. Nothing new is created. That is why

the poems rescued from destruction and kept by some of the citizens are such powerful examples of subjugated knowledges.

The first two poems not belonging to the Society canon that Cassia reads are given to her by her grandfather in secrecy on his Final Banquet. They are *Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night* by Dylan Thomas and *Crossing the Bar* by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Cassia is shocked to learn that her grandfather was in possession of prohibited poems. She decides to destroy them as they put her at great risk. However, before burning them[33], she memorises them. They become her most treasured possession and serve her as a guidance and referent ever since. She shares them with Ky. Both acts, learning how to write and the reading the words of the prohibited poems, are partially responsible for Cassia's growing discontent with the Society. Moreover, as the narrative unfolds, it is revealed that there exists a whole underground network of traders, called Archivists, in prohibited artefacts, goods and literature. They are still another point of resistance as they allow for the banned knowledge and goods to circulate.

Cassia, Ky and their friends with whom they escape the Society, encounter a library in an abandoned Farmers' settlement. They take some of the books with them: some collections of stories, poems and some novels. They also manage to save some pamphlets. Although they neglect them at the beginning, the pamphlets prove to be of great value as they tell the history of the Rising: a rebellion against the Society. One of the most valuable parts of counterhistory comes then from the document that the dissidents themselves almost discarded as worthless. The Farmers and the Outer Provinces are not only the source of prohibited written documents. Their culture and oral tradition are a very important source of subjugated knowledge as well. People there

[33] In a scene reminiscent of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

managed to hold on to old songs, lullabies and stories. Moreover, contrary to the towns in the Society, Aberrations and Farmers still remember how to dance, an activity that helps in self-expression and strengthening of community bonds. Cassia becomes familiar with some of the stories, songs and dancing and it shows her a totally different perspective at what everyday life can look like.

Although the Society is so careful in its control of the past, it does permit everyone to keep one antique artefact. Even though the artefacts have no use-value, they are treasured by their owners because of the sentimental value attached to them. Xander describes his golden cufflinks as useless, Cassia does not know what the compact she owns was used for and her brother's watch has long stopped telling the time. In spite of that, the Society's decision to confiscate all the artefacts on the grounds that they promote inequality, comes as a shock to all of them and they find it very difficult to part with the objects. Bram, Cassia's brother, "does not go gentle" and answers back when his cherished watch is being collected: "You can take it, but it will always be mine" (*Matched* loc. 2318). Although he is still very young, the Society's decision to promote equality by taking away from him something he considers of value and his own, has a subversive underlining. He analyses the situation, finds the power oppressive and is not afraid of expressing his discontent. The novel shows that the resistance can come from anyone, even the youngest and seemingly meek. In this simple scene, children are shown not as compliant, but capable of thinking for themselves and making informed decisions. The fact that Bram's outrage is ignored and discarded as childish tantrum shows that the Society does not perceive children as a possible threat. If the same answer came from Cassia or her parents, the reaction of the officials would certainly be much different. It shows that ruling structures can be blinded by their power and underestimate possible points of resistance.

All the confiscated artefacts are placed in the Museums, although only some of them are on display. The Museums are almost never visited: only schoolchildren in *First School* go there on an official trip, when the official version of the past is taught. In *Second School* history is not mentioned anymore. The function of the Museums is to present the official history of the Society. However, in spite of this objective, they become sites of resistance, as the Archivists can be found there. They are usually the custodians working in the Museum. The secret sentence used by the Archivists to initiate a possible trade is "Would you like me to tell you more about the history?" The choice of this particular line is very telling as it hints that there is more to the past and to official history than there appears to be. Thus, the building constructed for the purpose of consolidating the official past is turned into a space of resistance, a source of subjugated knowledge and counterhistory. Similarly, the compact Cassia cherished, an object allowed, at least at a certain moment, by the Society, turns out to hold a secret compartment with two prohibited poems which her granddad gives to her. It shows that the dominant discourse can be fought against with the use of spaces and techniques meant to sanction the official past and status quo. In the same way, the action of sorting: analysing data by gifted individuals instead of computers, an activity crucial for the Society, becomes another point of resistance. The Rising uses Cassia and probably other sorters as well, to introduce confusing and subversive information and data into the general pool. Moreover, Ky, an Aberration who should not be taught how to sort, is clandestinely taught to do so by his uncle. Established and official knowledge is not being avoided. Much the contrary, in tune with Foucault's theory, it becomes mobilised and turned against the very system it was supposed to sanction.

The ultimate source of counterhistory in the novel is memory itself. The official history supported by the Society is generated by controlling the way that knowledge

about the past is produced. The dominant history constructed in this way fosters uniformity and unity, marginalises all the uncomfortable discourses and permits only certain interpretations of the past. Counterhistory in turn, offers a different perspective as it shows that the dominant history is full of omissions, silences and incoherence. The Society controls the past and promotes the official version of history not only by manipulating the past, but also by deciding what and who will remember certain present developments. That is why all the citizens are to carry red tablets inducing selective amnesia. However, medical officials supporting the Rising have been switching the first vaccine administrated to all the children. As a result, some citizens are immune to the red tablet. The rebels, by infiltrating the system, manage to use it to their advantage and disrupt the status quo from within. This practice has been going on for a number of years and thanks to it both Ky and Xander (Cassia's official Match) can keep their memories intact. These memories become a source of counterhistory which breaks the intended uniformity of the past and allows people to doubt. The creation of counterhistory breaks

> up the unity of the sovereign law that imposes obligations; it also breaks the continuity of glory, into the bargain. It reveals that the light—the famous dazzling effect of power—is not something that petrifies, solidifies, and immobilizes the entire social body, and thus keeps it in order; it is in fact a divisive light that illuminates one side of the social body but leaves the other side in shadow or casts it into the darkness (Foucault [1976] 2003: 70).

Counterhistory and counter-memories destabilise the Society by offering a different perspective to the ones who remember. The citizens who preserve their memories can note how inconsistent the narrative of the Society is and how parts of the history are omitted, altered and appropriated by the dominant discourse. Thus, counterhistory and resistance comes in the novel from a variety of sources: from the Farmers, the Outer Provinces, the Rising and the Society itself. This plurality of voices is crucial for Foucault as there is always the danger of counterhistory to be taken over by the

dominant order. That is why he talks about the insurrection of subjugated *knowledges*, not knowledge. Foucault sees danger in the fact that counterhistories, which were firstly disqualified and marginalised, might begin to form part of the dominant discourse (Foucault [1976] 2003: 11-12). The same doubts haunt Ky who is reluctant to join the Rising: "The Rising isn't what you imagine […] It's not Aberrations and Anomalies and rebels and rouges running free. It's a structure. A system" (*Crossed* loc. 3220). He is afraid that the Rising will become, or already is, just another form of repressive order. That is why he values the Farmers so highly as they remained a small community and chose to live outside any official structure. Oker, a doctor recruited by the Rising, shares his doubts. Oker had been working for the Society for many years and had the chance to observe how it functioned. After becoming a part of the Rising he soon realised that "They're no rebellion. They're Society, with a different name" (*Reached* loc. 3504). Oker, Ky and Xander become aware of the discrepancies between what the Rising says about the past and what really happened. The readers are shown how both the Society and the Rising use the past and history to justify their ends and to consolidate their position. As Foucault notes, power is not stable nor does it come from the dominant organism only but should rather be seen as

> the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another (Foucault [1976] 2003 : 92).

Both hegemonic and subversive ideologies use the same strategies to gain control.

Paul Connerton, in a now classical study on social memory *How Societies Remember,* mentioned in the first part of this chapter, points out that every new beginning inevitably refers, to a certain extent, to the past. This is because the absolutely new is hardly possible to conceive of (1989: 6, 13). Thus, whenever a group or a whole society intends to start over, the past always serves as a referent. Depending

on the aspirations of the new regime, certain parts of the past will be accredited while others will be omitted. Additionally, the more totalitarian the objectives of the new group in power the more radically will it enforce the break with the past and control over what is to be remembered (1989: 12). In Lowry's *The Giver* this era of *forced forgetting*, as Connerton names the process, took place many years ago and no one nowadays, apart from Jonas and the Giver, is aware of the fact that life used to be different.

The world Lowry portrays might appear seductive to the reader at the beginning (Levy 1997: 52) as the doctrine of Sameness was introduced to spare pain, toil and any inequality. Nevertheless, it soon becomes clear that the result is a community in which everyone is expected to be mature and responsible at a very early age while in fact, it fosters immaturity, and makes everyone unable to feel and think for themselves. There are almost no mirrors in the Society: "[…] they weren't forbidden, but there was no real need of them, and Jonas had simply never bothered to look at himself very often even when he found himself in a location where a mirror existed" (*The Giver* 35). This absence of mirrors can be read as a metaphor for the absence of the *mirror stage*, crucial according to Jacques Lacan in the early development of any individual. Only the Giver, owing to the memories he has, is mature enough to notice the defects and shortcomings of the system. By erasing collective memory, Lowry's society has not been given the opportunity to face its traumatic past. The result, as in the case of the character of Griot in Lessing's *Ifrik* narratives, is a numbing of feelings. The citizens cannot feel love, friendship, anger, joy or any other emotions. They do not even know that these emotions exist. After having had memories transmitted to him, Jonas starts to realise that the world is not limited to the present and to the Society only: "I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now" (*The Giver* 103). Moreover, he also starts to

experience real emotions: “But he knew he couldn't go back to the world of no feelings that he had lived in so long […] He knew that there was no quick comfort for emotions like those. These were deeper and they did not need to be told. They were *felt*” (*The Giver* 166, 168).

In Lowry’s *The Giver* and *Son*, as in *Matched Trilogy*, the resistance is found in the prohibited memories and unsanctioned past. The Committee of the Elders, the governing body in *The Giver*, underestimates the power invested in both the Giver and the Receiver. As they do not remember what the resistance is, they cannot even picture the possibility of any form of rebellion. Little do they imagine that the system will be challenged from within, with the use of memory they tried to marginalise and control. Memory in the book is the source of many types of subjugated knowledges. It lets Jonas and the Giver observe, analyse, compare, think critically and, most importantly, feel. The Giver transmits many different memories to Jonas, some painful and disturbing, others, positive and comforting. The most important memory the Giver gives to Jonas is the memory of a family gathering at Christmas. It teaches the boy about the importance of family and the meaning of love. New memories make Jonas more mature but at the same time alienate him from the rest of community, especially from his family and friends.

Memory, or rather its almost total eradication, in *The Giver* is used as a means of controlling and maintaining the society of infantile citizens. The book also shows that memory can be emancipating and it is through the resurrection of subjugated memories that the change is triggered. To achieve this, Jonas needs to leave the community, an act which will release all the memories he has received so far. The Giver, who stays behind, is supposed to help the community deal with the burden of the past known only to him and to Jonas. The Giver and Jonas hope that memories will help people realise that

another reality is possible and that facing the past means not only feeling pain, but also experiencing friendship, joy and love. As Levy observes (1997: 56), similar to the child from Le Guin's story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas", Lowry portrays the child as a scapegoat who is supposed to bear pain so that the others are able to live carefree lives. Jonas, however, makes an informed decision and rejects the role of scapegoat assigned to him by the Society. Instead of carrying the responsibility and the burden of the past alone, he decides to share his knowledge with the community and help them progress. In order to achieve this, he breaks many community rules, opposes the ruling power and ventures into the unknown, outside the safe boundaries of the Society. His actions motivated by subjugated memories and a newly discovered counterhistory are definitely subversive. However, the reality Lowry imagines beyond the borders of the community is far from progressive.

Although the book presents the past as possibly liberating, it treats it in a nostalgic way. It does not offer a fresh perspective on what the future might look like, but simply treats the return to the past as the only possible option. Svetlana Boym in her essay "Nostalgia and Its Discontents"[34] gives a general definition of nostalgia:

> […] it is actually a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress […] It could be merely better time, or slower time—time out of time, not encumbered by appointment books (Boym 2007: 8).

Her description of nostalgia can actually be used to describe the Society featured in *The Giver* with its atemporal reality, *a-historicity*, halted progress and childlike citizens. Lowry's idea of community is nostalgia incarnated. Nevertheless, the reality she envisions as an alternative to this nostalgic universe, reminiscent of the one presented in the films *Truman Show* or *Pleasantville*, is also embedded in an idealised past. Boym distinguishes between two types of nostalgia: restorative and reflective:

[34] The essay is an adaptation from Boym's book *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic, 2001).

> Restoration (from *re-staure*—re-establish) signifies a return to the original stasis, to the prelapsarian moment. While restorative nostalgia returns and rebuilds one homeland with paranoic determination, reflective nostalgia fears return with the same passion. Instead of recreation of the lost home, reflective nostalgia can foster the creation of aesthetic individuality (Boym 2007: 15).

Lowry's alternative world follows the principle of restorative nostalgia. It offers nothing new but a return to the pre-existing reality, reinforcing in this way many existing cultural values. The fact that Lowry chooses the memory of a family gathering at Christmas as the most significant recollection is quite telling. It reinforces the overall message of the book on the importance of the nuclear family, thus promoting quite traditional values. It is further strengthened by the very ending of the novel. The reader is left with the image of Jonas holding Gabriel in his arms, thinking about "the Elsewhere that held their future and their past" (*The Giver* 223). A family celebrating Christmas is actually the last thing Jonas is able to picture.

Both realities Lowry portrays do not bring anything new as they are rooted in the nostalgic past. This *return to normal* is criticised by Susan L. Stewart in her article "A Return to Normal: Lois Lowry's *The Giver*" (2007). The author observes: "The text ultimately returns readers to the ideals liberal humanism proposes without actually examining them and does little to challenge some concepts that under close inspection are problematic" (32). Stewart, like Susan G. Lea (2006), notes that the text draws the reader's attention to the politics of sameness and difference in which the dominant choose to ignore the existence of any type of difference, skin colour included. As Stewart rightly observes, it does little to undermine the present social conventions. Thanks to memories, Jonas starts to be conscious of the importance of difference and the possibility of choice. Moreover, he begins to be able to see colours. However, Lowry does not explore this interesting and promising aspect of the plot and what Jonas actually sees is quite disappointing in my opinion. The first colour to be noticed by him is the red of an apple, which could be read as a metaphor of the forbidden fruit (Lea

2006: 57). Later on however, when Lowry describes the Society seen through Jonas' eyes, it turns out that it is uniform not only because of the fact that people have lost their ability to see colour, but because everyone in fact has the same skin colour. The Giver matter-of-stately notices: "There was a time [...] when flesh was many different colours. That was before we went to Sameness. Today flesh is all the same" (*The Giver* 123). Even if the citizens regain the ability to see colour, their society will be composed of white skinned, dark eyed people. The only people with light eyes are Jonas, the Giver, Gabriel and one six-year-old girl. In Lowry's universe, those with light eyes are endowed with the ability "to see beyond", that is, they can act as receivers of memory. Therefore, these are light eyed, white males that are given most power in the narrative. Moreover, although the power of memory might prove to be liberating and enable the citizens to change their existence, the way the members of the community are given back their past is in reality very totalitarian. At no time are they given the chance to choose. They are instead left with no other possibility but to passively accept the incoming flood of memories. Two people decide for the entire community and in that way the very foundations of the possible new and better future are based on the lack of freedom of choice.

One of the strengths of the novel is its ambiguous ending. The reader can interpret the ending in a variety of ways. Jonas might in fact manage to reach a safe haven and save himself, Gabriel and the community. However, there is also a possibility of Jonas failing as the last paragraphs can be actually read as a metaphor of him slowly freezing to death. Although this last interpretation is most frequently rejected, the fact that the readers are given freedom to choose is quite empowering (Stewart 2007: 29-31). However, the publication of sequels to *The Giver* eliminates this ambiguity. It is more than clear that Jonas survives, not that I would wish otherwise, and becomes the leader

of a new settlement. Lowry gives the readers the freedom to doubt and interpret, only to take it away later on. In the end, the readers, like Jonas' community, are deprived of the possibility to choose.

Conclusions

Roberta Seelinger Trites (2000) observes that "In the adolescent novel, protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what they are" (loc. 120). In YAD these forces are even more visible than in other young adult novels. The readers are shown alternative universes in which citizens are deprived of various freedoms. Such settings are to draw the reader's attention, among other issues, to power relations surrounding them in real life. They intend to show how power is all-encompassing and that in order to become mature individuals one has to analyse and question existing power structures. In the discussed novels, much as in YA literature in general

> Power is a force that operates within the subject and upon the subject […]; teenagers are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them in these books (Seelinger Trites 2000: loc. 181).

In a similar way to teenagers who are liberated and repressed by their own power, the readers of the discussed novels are also shown that memory and the past can be used in a twofold manner. Memory and the control of the past can be used by coercive social structures to strengthen their position. However, the narratives demonstrate that the marginalised, repressed and underestimated parts of history can serve as possible points of resistance. It clearly illustrates the present day tendency towards the democratisation of history mentioned in the previous chapter.[35] Moreover, the novels show that the leading order can be fought with the very strategies it devises to dominate the society. Although in all the narratives the past and memories are a source of resistance, the overall attitude towards the past is sometimes somehow nostalgic. *The Giver* envisions

[35] Chapter 3. 3. Democratisation of History. pp. 79-80

an alternative reality which is in fact based on restorative nostalgia. However, its open ending, although nostalgic, can be seen as a source of empowering ambiguity as it gives its readers a chance to finish the narrative on their own. However, if treated as a part of a series, it can be interpreted in a different way. If read together with the sequels, its ending loses an empowering ambiguity. Nevertheless, the readers are freed from the stagnating nostalgia offered as an alternative to the Society in the first installment. Instead of a *return to normal*, they are presented in *Son* and *Messenger* a community which does not glorify the past but looks at it critically and learns from it. Interpreted as a whole, *The Giver Quartet* rejects restorative nostalgia and adapts a more reflective attitude. Boym describes reflective nostalgia as

> new flexibility, not the reestablishment of stasis. The focus here is not on the recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth, but on the meditation on history and the passage of time […]. If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space (Boym 2007: 15).

Even though *The Giver* is rooted in restorative nostalgia, Lowry, owing to the consecutive novels in the series, manages to find a more liberating and progressive approach to the past. Similarly, Condie in *Matched Trilogy* avoids an over-simplistic portrayal of the past as well as power relations. She envisions a world in which resistance against the dominant power draws from past experiences, but at the same time remains alert to the mistakes committed by both sides in the past. Moreover, it values many different marginalised discourses and counterhistories. Its readers are continuously reminded that they should question the reality around them. The motto for both series could be the words of the poem by Dylan Thomas chosen by Condie as one of the poems given to Cassia by her grandfather to guide her through life:

> Do not go gentle into that good night,
> Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

> Childhood – a temporary state – becomes an emblem for our anxieties about the passing of time, the destruction of historical formations, or conversely, a vehicle for our hopes for the future. The innocent child is caught somewhere over the rainbow – between nostalgia and utopian optimism, between the past and the future.
>
> Henry Jenkins "Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths"

CHAPTER 5. Trauma in Young Adult Dystopian Writing

1. Introduction

Trauma has become a crucial part of debates on memory and extensive research is being done on trauma and its links in many fields. Nevertheless, mainstream research has somewhat ignored the links between trauma and young adult literature and there are just a few recent publications on this topic (cf. Goodenough and Immel 2008, Tribunella 2010, Ulanowicz 2013). The objective of this chapter is to show how trauma is represented in the selected novels in this thesis. Furthermore, this chapter aims to establish whether the approach to trauma promotes the perpetuation of the myth of children as *innocent* or, quite the contrary, whether the texts break with this tradition. The chapter is divided into three major parts. The first section introduces the concept of trauma. It also shows a recent shift in children's and young adult narratives, from the literature which favoured protecting children from traumatic imagery to one defined by Kenneth Kidd as 'Children's Literature of Atrocity', which features explicit descriptions of violence and traumatic experiences. The second section deals with trauma experienced at a personal level. The discussion of texts is based on theories of trauma as developed by Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer. In my analysis, I also use approaches to mourning by Freud, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, and finally, Jacques Derrida. The last part discusses collective trauma. Although all the narratives in the corpus feature oppressed and traumatised societies, the focus of

this part of the chapter will be on a few selected novels in which the social constructions of collective trauma are most visible. The actual analysis of texts is preceded by the theoretical framework which includes the work of Dominick La Capra and his concept of historical trauma, as well as Jeffrey Alexander's notion of cultural trauma.

2. Origins and Development of the Concept of Trauma

The origin of the word *trauma* dates back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. It comes from the Greek word meaning *wound* and it was first used only in reference to serious physical injuries. The origin of this concept bears close relation to the beginning of modernity and the Industrial Revolution during which the growing use of machines and precarious work conditions led to increase in work-related accidents (Whitehead 2007: 186). Industrialisation also caused an unprecedented transformation in the way wars were fought but the scale of the change was not fully recognised until the First World War. It was then, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the word trauma became associated with deeply distressing and disturbing experiences.[36] Through medicine, trauma entered the fields of psychoanalysis and psychology and Sigmund Freud played a significant role in this transition. The next stage in the history of trauma was also initiated by war. A growing number of veterans of the Vietnam War were diagnosed with psychological problems and in 1984 the American Psychiatric Association officially recognised a condition known from then on as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Misztal 2003: 139, Caruth 1995: 150-51, 2007: 199, Whitehead 2007: 187). The symptoms PTSD patients manifested were related to a repeated experiencing of the traumatic event either through a sudden sensation of reliving the traumatic event triggered by some stimuli, or through recurrent and disturbing dreams

[36] *The Oxford English Dictionary. Vol. XI* (Oxford: OUP, 1970), p. 289.

or recollections (Callard and Papoulais 2010: 254). The concept of trauma also proved to be very helpful in understanding the psyche of survivors of sexual abuse, natural disasters, torture, slavery or near escapes from death. Trauma has been used across many disciplines, not only psychology, psychoanalysis or psychiatry, but also sociology, cultural, film and literary studies. Moreover, it began to be applied not only in cases of distressing events at an individual level but also in reference to disturbing situations affecting larger groups of people. In order to account for traumatic events on a larger scale the concept of *cultural trauma* was developed (Eyerman 2011, Alexander 2011). In spite of having been embraced by many scholars and throughout various fields, trauma has also suffered vented criticism, especially the concept of *cultural trauma*. It has been observed that collective memory and all the phenomena related to it should be studied with the use of appropriate methods of analysis and that some of the methodologies and concepts applying to the study of individual memory may result irrelevant when it comes to memory on collective level. One of these reservations was based exactly on extrapolating the use of psychoanalytical methods used in the study of trauma onto the realm of collective memory (Kansteiner 2011).

3. Trauma in the Literature for Children and Young Adults

Different models of childhood that have existed throughout history not only affected the way children were perceived and raised at a given time, but they also reflect how childhood was approached. One of the most influential and widely known views on childhood is the model of *the innocent child.* This widespread vision linking innocence and childhood is, to use Henry Jenkins' words "a palimpsest of ideas from different historical contexts" (Jenkins 1998 loc. 514).

Children were perceived as pure and unspoilt for the first time during the period of Romanticism when the figure of *the Romantic Child* was created. According to this view, children were embodiments of innocence (Jenkins 1998 loc. 161-227; Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 15). The foundations for such an idealised view were laid out by John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) and his 'tabula rasa' theory. The mind of a child was considered to be a blank slate ready to be filled in. This view on a child as innocent was further strengthened by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who in *Émile* (1762) portrayed children as naturally pure and virtuous. As Hintz and Tribunella note (2013: 17), Romantic poets continued this tradition. Children were linked with nature, happiness and purity and were to be spared all anxiety, worry and pain. The Romantics praised children's rich imagination and intended to free themselves from the constraints imposed by society in order to be able to engage with the world in a childlike manner (Jenkins 1998: loc. 585).

Although quite different approaches to childhood appeared later (Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 18 – 24), such as *the sinful child*, *the working child*, or *the child as radically other*, the vision of a child as free from any evil or guilt and to be protected returned in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The return to this approach was caused by the introduction of child labour laws, the slow removal of children from forced labour at factories and a gradual introduction of compulsory education (Jenkins 1998: loc 632, Grenby and Immel 2009: loc. 774, Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 22). Due to all these changes the model of *the sacred child* was adopted. As Calvert observes:

> Childhood was imbued with an almost sacred character. Children were pure and innocent beings, descended from heaven and unsullied by worldly corruption. The loss of this childish innocence was akin to the loss of virginity, and the inevitable loss of childhood itself was a kind of expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Calvert in Jenkins 1998: loc. 575).

Childhood was given a utopian dimension and once again children were perceived not as a source of cheap labour or parental security in old age, but rather as fragile beings to

be admired, loved and protected. The lives of children who began to attend schools differed radically from the lives of those who had not been granted this privilege. Children started to wear clothes appropriate for them and eat a diet aimed especially for them. They became more dependent on their carers, more protected from the ills of the adult world and hence more vulnerable than children before. This changing attitude was reflected in children's literature in books such as *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) or *Polyanna* (1913) (Hintz and Tribunella 2013: 24, 36-39).

As seen above, the overall tendency to shelter children from all possible ills is deeply rooted in western culture and has been one of the dominant views since the seventeenth century. Nowadays, more than ever, children in the western world are protected not only by general social conventions but also by many laws. According to some (e.g. Furedi 2001, 2010) we live in a society based on fear and overprotection in which the attitude towards children is, on the one hand, too permissive, and on the other, we try to shelter children and young adults from too many things. As Jenkins and Spigel note:

> By evoking the 'threat to children,' social reformers typically justified their own position as cultural custodians, linking (rather implicitly or explicitly) anxieties about violence, sexuality and morality to mandates of good taste and artistic merit. Within this protectionist rhetoric, taste distinctions get transformed into moral issues, with the desire to shelter children's "purity" providing a rationale for censorship and regulation (Jenkins and Spigel in Jenkins 1998: loc. 485).

Nevertheless, as Kenneth Kidd observes in his 2005 article *"A* is for Auschwitz: Psychoanalysis, Trauma Theory, and the 'Children's Literature of Atrocity'*"*, at the same time there has been a shift in children's literature from the idea that children should be protected from traumatic experiences at all costs (Kidd 2005: 120). He notes that "Since the early 1990s, children's books about trauma, especially the trauma(s) of the Holocaust, have proliferated, as well as scholarly treatments of those books" (2005: 120). Kidd also observes that many of the themes that were previously considered too

disturbing for young readers are now regarded suitable and even called for. The fiction he discusses in his article makes little or no effort to protect the readers from distressing events. Drawing from the work on trauma by scholars such as Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub or Cathy Caruth and researchers into children's trauma, he concludes that the emergence of a trauma literature for children stems from a general move to revaluate the concept of childhood (2005: 130-131).

In his article, Kidd analyses a variety of texts for young children and adolescents written in the last twenty years and describing both trauma related to the Holocaust and to 9/11. He finds the literature on 9/11 especially disappointing both in terms of style and the social commentary it offers. He observes that the majority of the texts portray an oversimplified image of the events, foregrounding the US as a wounded and innocent nation and failing to present the real complexity of the topic (2005: 138). He notes that both recent texts about genocidal trauma and about 9/11 are openly sentimental and appropriate the defenceless child as an epitome American citizen strengthening in this way both the image of an innocent and vulnerable child and oversimplifying these two traumatic events (2005: 124).

The texts Kidd discusses in his article and the message they convey seem to strengthen the ever-present myth of the innocent child. Although they raise difficult political and socially relevant topics, the way the themes of trauma are addressed diminish the possible value of the texts Kidd analyses. By adopting a complacent attitude they fail to open a space for a more critical approach. Thus, the opportunity of making their readers aware of the complexity of the topics in question is lost. The myth of *the innocent child* is still present in the texts analysed by Kidd. Children and young adults are again treated as if they belonged to the sphere outside the harsh realities of the real world, as immature subjects in need for overprotection. Jenkins also (1998: loc.

151-166) confirms Kidd's critique of childhood innocence and quotes James Kincaid who states that

> The myth of childhood innocence […] "empties" the child of its own political agency, so that it may more perfectly fulfil the symbolic demands we make upon it. The innocent child wants nothing, desires nothing, and demands nothing – except, perhaps, its own innocence (Kincaid in Jenkins 1998: loc. 166)

Both Kincaid and Jenkins reject the idea of childhood innocence as something pre-existing and affirm that it is a cultural construct forced upon children and society and resulting in the creation of an image of disempowered and vulnerable children and young adults incapable of deciding for themselves.

The only book dealing with trauma discussed by Kidd that manages not to infantilise the reader and presents a more responsible and mature citizen is Lowry's *The Giver*. Lowry's book has often been criticised for choosing a white, blue-eyed boy as the saviour figure of her novel, as well as for the nostalgic and over-romantic vision of the ideal family symbolised in the book by the image of a family gathering at Christmas. Although Kidd does recognise some of these limitations, he emphasises several themes that distinguish the book from other texts dealing with trauma; themes that make it a more valuable contribution to the array of trauma books for children and young adults. Kidd acknowledges that this text differs significantly from the others analysed as it is less historical and does not deal with any particular traumatic event (2005: 144). The choice of the genre of YAD might be one of the reasons why this book proves to be a more successful representation of children trauma narrative than other texts in Kidd's analysis. YAD allows for extrapolation and in this way offers a space for reflection on social and culturally important themes but without necessarily restricting itself to one particular historical event.

4. Personal Trauma in Young Adult Dystopia

> Maybe only parts of our stories can keep us safe. The whole can feel like too much to bear.
>
> Cassia in *Crossed* by Ally Condie

4.1. Repressing Traumatic Experiences

Sigmund Freud's role was crucial in the early history of trauma. He dealt with trauma during his studies on hysteria in the1890s. Hysteria was linked to traumatic experiences suffered earlier in life and it was assumed that these painful incidents were later repressed. As Misztal notes, "At the end of the nineteenth century, psychoanalysis started not with memory but with forgetting" (Misztal 2003: 139). Freud's interest in trauma and forgetting continued during and after the First World War when he worked with soldiers suffering from shell shock. It came to his attention that they developed symptoms disturbingly similar to those of his patients with hysteria. The result of this experience was the publication in 1921 of the essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle".

Memory constituted one of the main concerns for Freud to the point that majority of the notions crucial for psychoanalysis – desire, repression, neurosis, the unconscious – result to be directly linked to the phenomenon of remembering and forgetting (Terdiman 2010: 94). When Freud and Breuer were studying patients diagnosed with hysteria, they noticed that if patients were able to recall – usually under hypnosis – the first moment at which a given symptom occurred, the symptoms would frequently disappear. They came to believe that almost any symptom can be cured through this type of *catharsis* (Breuer's term). Also, they famously stated that "*Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences*" (Breuer and Freud [1893-1895] 1955: 7, original emphasis). Memory became ambivalent: the very cause of – and cure for – neurosis. Freud speculated that there must exist a mechanism suppressing all the

unpleasant, unwanted and shameful memories from consciousness. He named this mechanism *repression* and it became one of the most important concepts in the theory of neurosis and in psychoanalysis. Repressed memories of past emotions of a disgraceful, painful or frightening character, came to be seen as the cause of hysteria. This notion of the unconscious as a reservoir of repressed memories was highly influential for trauma studies.

In classical Freudian psychoanalysis, the human mind can be described with the use of the *topographic theory* (Berger 1995: 103–108). According to it, the psyche consists of three components: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The three elements can be represented by the image of a floating iceberg; the conscious mind being its clearly visible tip; the preconscious, the part right under the water surface; and the unconscious, the invisible part hidden in the depth of the waters. The conscious encompasses everything one is aware of, all the thoughts and perceptions that can be verbalised, described logically and talked about with no effort and inhibitions. The preconscious comprises all the memories, thoughts, knowledge and other mental components one is not aware of at a given moment. This part of the self is available for recollection and can be easily reached and brought back to consciousness. It is present, active and accessible, even though latent and not necessarily manifest all the time.

According to Freud, it is the unconscious that forms the biggest part of the psyche. One is not aware of its existence and thus its content cannot be recovered at will. In *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) Freud stated "What is suppressed continues to exist in normal people as well as abnormal, and remains capable of psychical functioning" (Freud in Terdiman 2010: 98). Freud maintained, and continually reaffirmed his belief, that the totality of the past is preserved in the unconscious. According to him, all types of memories are stored there: both benign experiences and

thoughts that were merely forgotten, and also the repressed ones, latent and possibly harmful ones leading to neurosis. All that is kept in the unconscious and has no access to our consciousness seems to acquire a life of its own; it is sealed off in the space from which it is capable of influencing and tormenting our conscious self but we have hardly any control over it.

Even though the authors of the young adult dystopias I selected for my study portray a variety of events resulting in personal trauma, the topic they most frequently engage in is trauma related to the death of a close relative: parents or siblings. I have therefore decided to pay closer attention to this particular topic. I am aware that by doing so, I have excluded other themes that are also worth exploring. According to Seelinger Trites (2000: loc. 1606) one of the most important features of children's literature is teaching the child about the process of separation from parents in reaching maturity. The fictional representation of death of a close family member plays a crucial role in this process. Seelinger observes that young adult literature focuses not only on the reader's acceptance of growing up and away from their parents but also on understanding and acknowledging death and everyone's mortality (2000: loc.1613). While in children's literature death frequently occurs offstage, death in young adult texts is portrayed in a more direct manner (loc. 1629).

The protagonists of Le Guin's *Powers*, Gavir and his older sister Sallo, suffer their first traumatic experience early in childhood when they are kidnapped and sold into slavery. They are separated from their parents, and their mother is probably killed during the kidnapping. The siblings have hardly any recollections of this distressful event as it occurred when they were still very small. Gavir and Sallo grow very close to one another and are almost inseparable. Sallo is especially important to Gavir as she is the only one with whom he can be completely sincere and free, to the extent that he

does not have to hide his gift of premonition. Sallo instructs him not to reveal it to anyone as it might bring him trouble: “Don’t ever tell them about remembering the way you do. They’ll say you have a power. And they don’t like people to have powers” (*Powers* loc. 68). Le Guin in this simple sentence, through the ambiguity the word “power” has in this novel, brings the reader’s attention not only to the possible problems Gavir’s power of premonition can cause. She also manages to make the reader aware of the repressive power structures in play. When Sallo is drowned by the Masters’ son Torm, Gavir’s world collapses. He feels betrayed by the Mother who, in spite of knowing about her son’s temper, allowed him to take Sallo and another girl to spend the night at the summer residence. Gavir trusted both his Masters completely and his almost blind devotion to them was one of the cornerstones on which his world was built. He is shocked and desolated even further when he learns that Torm will not be punished and when the Mother offers him money as a recompense for his sister’s death. He cannot bear to watch his sister’s motionless body and grey bruised face. Gavir banns this image from his consciousness and represses it. Although his conscious self is still registering parts of what is happening around him, Gavir falls into lethargy and becomes alienated from himself and his body. He feels as if everything was happening to someone else. Le Guin describes what is happening to Gavir with the use of a metaphor of a wall. Gavir constructs a wall across his mind and pushes all the memories related to his sister behind it, deep into his unconscious, as if anything linked to her had never happened:

> On the other side of the wall was what I couldn’t remember because it hadn’t happened. I had never been able to forget, but now I could. I could forget days, nights, weeks. I could forget people. I could forget everything I have lost, because I’d never had it (*Powers* loc. 1979).

His temporal amnesia protects him from the traumatic experience and the unbearable truth.

Mara and her younger brother Dann, the main characters of Lessing's *Ifrik* Series, also lose their parents early on. Much like Sallo and Gavir, their early childhood is marked by violent loss and uprooting. Just like in the case of their counterparts in Le Guin's novel, their heritage and identity are also considered dangerous. They are advised to forget their real names and go by newly-invented ones. For Dann the night of the palace coup is extremely distressing because of the twins who were involved in it. One of them is responsible for their brutal kidnapping, while the other saves them. Little Dann finds it deeply confusing. He forgets what happened on that traumatic night banning the distressful memories from his consciousness. As a result, although he does not fully understand why, he grows deeply anxious and listless near any people who look physically alike. Mara wonders: "Could one night, one terrible night in a child's life, mark him forever? So that he would never get free of it? Even though he couldn't – or wouldn't – remember it?" (*Mara and Dann* loc. 2650). All his life Dann will be haunted by the events of this one night. Mara proves to be the stronger of two siblings, saving Dann from himself on multiple occasions. She rescues him when Dann is forced to live in precarious conditions in Chelops, one of the cities they pass through on their way. This time, not only is he haunted by nightmares and hallucinations in which he sees twins, but he also becomes addicted to heroin. Once more, as Mara remarks on his repressing the painful events: "His memory had refused to accept a truth too painful to be borne" (*Mara and Dann* loc. 3783). The children, much like Sallo and Gavir, become almost inseparable, leaning on one another in times of distress. The journey through the dangers of Ifrik binds them even closer. Although Dann is recurrently disturbed by the painful memories he cannot face, this childhood trauma is not the only one he has to struggle with. When the news that Mara dies in childbirth reaches Dann, he remains composed for a few minutes, but then his speech collapses, he starts talking

nonsense, stumbles and begins to cry uncontrollably. He encloses himself in a room and starts drinking heavily in order not to remember or think. He represses this traumatic experience and locks himself out physically and psychologically. Much like Gavir, he chooses not to think or remember; he is not yet ready to confront reality.

Another character who suffers from the traumatic loss of his relatives is Griot, a former child-soldier who hero-worships Dann. He also constructs a wall separating his present conscious self from the memories of the distressing events of the night he was kidnapped. He does not remember his real name, his family or his childhood. His earliest memories end in the night of fire, shouting and killing. Much like Gavir, Griot represses all the memories related to his dead relatives, as he cannot face the loss. For him, Griot was born on a violent night when he was nine years old. All the memories related to his life from before that harrowing night are buries deep in his unconscious.

Ally Condie in *Matched Trilogy* also features a boy, Ky, whose parents were killed when he was still a child. Ky used to live with his parents in the Outer Provinces, a zone on the margins of the Society, where life is much harsher, less orderly, and less controlled. His father was part of a movement against the Society and he used to organise clandestine meetings for all the inhabitants of their home village. During one of such meetings, the Society bombs the village and everyone apart from Ky and another child is killed. Although Ky remembers some of the details of that day vividly, there are certain parts that are elusive and impossible for him to recall. He knows that he has blocked some traumatic memories of that day out and he finds it utterly difficult to express his feelings about this night.

4.2. Haunted by the Traumatic Past

Trauma for Freud was caused mainly not so much by a disturbing event in itself as by its reproduction in unconscious memories (Kennedy 2010:179). The idea of giving such

an importance to, precisely, that which cannot be remembered, has become vital for trauma studies. Cathy Caruth's introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and her book *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) are an analysis of the nature of trauma. She draws heavily on Freud and psychoanalysis in her discussion. Caruth challenges the common definition of trauma which is described as "a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes a form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event" (Caruth 2007: 200). According to Caruth, this definition is only partly true because it overlooks a crucial characteristic of every trauma. According to her, this pathology cannot be defined either by the event in itself or only in terms of its haunting power. Trauma, for Caruth, is a break in a sequential structure as it is caused by the fact that the event fails to be assimilated or experienced fully at the time of the traumatic experience. It is impossible to talk about a simple amnesia in the context of traumatic experiences: the events are not merely forgotten but they are actually experienced for the first time only through intrinsic forgetting (Caruth 1996: 17). Afterwards, the events return relentlessly and in an uncontrollable way, against the will of the survivors. The boundary between the past and the present is abolished as the past event which has never been properly registered haunts the present. Trauma is an event that is perceived too early or too unexpectedly and as such cannot be accessed by consciousness until it comes back in the nightmares and other disturbing forms (Caruth 1996: 4). It is fully perceived only at a later time and not just once, but repeatedly. For Caruth trauma is not a mere repression or distortion of reality, for her "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (2007: 200). Trauma is a repeated, insistent, belated return of events that are not symbolic, but quite the contrary, utterly literal.[37] Therefore,

[37] Ruth Leys in her groundbreaking publication *Trauma. A Genealogy* (2000) questions Caruth's stance on literality of traumatic recollections and dreams. Such theories are, according to Leys "not only

for Caruth, trauma is not so much related to the unconscious, but to history: "The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (2007: 201).

None of the characters in the discussed novels manages to register and comprehend the death of their beloved ones at the time of the traumatic event. Gavir, years after his sister's death, relates the story of his life. He acknowledges that the way he narrates it: neatly, sequentially, one event after another, is not how he experienced it during the period following Sallo's killing. He says: "I will tell you what happened in the order it happened, as historians do, but there is deep untruth in doing so. I did not live my life as history is written. My mind used to leap ahead, remembering what had not yet come to pass; now, what was past was lost to me" (*Powers* loc 1864). Much as Caruth notes, for Gavir the trauma of his sister's death is not only related to the fact of repressing it, but also to the failure to acknowledge it the moment it occurred. The trauma caused a break in chronology; the crisis of history, as the past, the present and the future became all intertwined. Gavir lives in an oblivious lethargy for a long time following the traumatic event. After he is found and taken care of by a hermit living in a forest cave, his notion of time and space are still disturbed. Gavir says: "Most of the time I lay in the low cave room, I had no memories of any other place or time. I was there, only there" (*Powers* loc. 2050). He blocks many of the details related to his past and refuses to bring himself to remember the trauma. He notes: "Remembering would kill me. Forgetting kept me alive" (*Powers* loc. 2333) In spite of his efforts, some images of Sallo return without his will and haunt him during the day (*Powers* loc. 2039) and in dreams, at night (*Powers* loc. 2158).

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theoretically incoherent but also poorly supported by the scientific evidence" (Leys 2000: 16). Despite Leys's argument, I still choose to use Caruth's framework on trauma as other aspects of her theory prove to be not only useful for my analysis, but also outside Leys's objections. Moreover, the texts analysed in my thesis are not to be read as an objective record of traumatic experiences, but rather as a literary attempt to convey a possible effect of trauma.

Dann, much like Gavir, has almost no memory of the traumatic night of the palace coup that marked him in such a powerful way. When Mara tries to corroborate her memories with Dann's, he apparently has no recollection of either that particular night or of the weeks following. When Mara nurtures him after the abuse he suffered in Chelops she recalls "How he had always refused to remember that first time, when two men became one" (*Mara and Dann* loc. 3795). The fact that her brother does not remember, or rejects memories of their early time together is very painful for Mara. The memories of taking care of her little brother are the strongest she has. For Dann, that period hardly seems to exist and his selective amnesia diminishes the importance she has ascribed to it. The traumatic events Dann failed to register at the time of their occurrence have great power over him. Because he refuses to remember, they are resilient and haunt him all his life. He suffers, just like Gavir, from terrible nightmares but also periods of depression and melancholia, fits of fierce and uncontrollable anger, and erratic behaviour.

The loss of Mara is the toughest and most painful event Dann has to face in his life. During his journey to the frozen Cliffs of Yerrup, he keeps on thinking about his sister and all the dangerous ordeals they went through. He longs to go back and share his experience with her. After Dann is given the news of her death, he falls into a long and severe depression. He suffers from a split personality, a condition which started already in Chelops: he is haunted by his other, which he calls "the Other One". His behaviour following the news of Mara's death grows increasingly unpredictable, ranging from violence and hostility to atonement and moments of lucidity. Time stops still for him and he keeps on reliving the events in Chelops and some of the experiences he shared with Mara. There is no order to the events that keep on haunting him. After Leta, Dann's Alb friend, nurtures him slowly back to life, she observes: "He's nearly

back with us, he's nearly here again. But he could slip the other way" (*The Story* loc. 1817). Dann manages to regain his past and the broken chronology, but there always remains the threat of him falling back into depression.

Griot's life has been full of violence from the moment his home village was burnt and he, kidnapped. He was later taught how to fight and kill and was forced to become a boy-soldier. This was his only reality during childhood. As a result, he is deeply scarred emotionally. In one of his heartbreaking inner dialogues, he admits that he has never loved anyone. However, his use of the word *never* describes only the time his conscious self has access to. It does not cover his life from before the traumatic night when his family was killed. His timeline is severed, there is no *before*, only a blurry, yet devastating night and then, the loveless and emotionless *after*. The price for not remembering the traumatic night is not only forgetting his family but also an emotional numbness. The walls he constructed protect him from the painful past, but also make it impossible to remember happiness, love and what it means to be a part of a family. That is why Griot finds it very difficult to understand the depth of Dann's despair after Mara's death. Griot does not remember how it feels to love and lose somebody. The barriers he erected are so strong that they make it impossible for the trauma not only to be fully registered, but also do not to allow for even the slightest recollection to surface. On one occasion, when Griot tries to think about his past "in Griot's mind, walls, barriers, screens of all kinds were shaking, threatening to collapse: he sat hunched there, […] holding fast to a little sense of his wholeness" (*The Story* loc. 2440). He chooses the numbness over pain and finds himself unable to remember the past.

Ky survived the bombing of his home village as he was outside on a plateau the moment the planes came. He had wanted to see the rain come down. From then on,

every time it rains, Ky relives the tragic moments. When Cassia realises what happened to his parents she says: "*His parents died. He saw it happen. Death came from the sky, and that's what he remembers. Every time it rains*" (*Matched* loc. 2513, original italics). When it rains, the past and the present, there and here, become one. Ky is again a shaken little boy who finds his reality fall to pieces in a matter of seconds. He becomes haunted by the images of his dead parents lying on the ground ever since. Ky was given a red tablet inducing amnesia after the bombing as the Officials wanted him to forget the event. However, he is immune to the pill and remembers it all. Nevertheless, as remembering is all too painful, he sometimes wishes that the red tablet had worked. However, some of the details of that day that he forgot are even more excruciating than the ones he does remember. Ky knows that his narrative is incomplete, that there is something missing in the story he has been telling himself all his life. He finally dares to remember and understands the origin of the feeling of guilt that has accompanied him all his life. After the village was bombed, Ky returned and saw bodies lying all around. Among them, he spotted his parents. He did not go closer, he did not try to carry them, and he did not bury them. He saw them and ran. Ky cannot forgive himself for leaving his parents unburied. Having remembered this painful moment, he finally understands his compelling need to bury all the fallen soldiers involved in the war in the Outer Provinces. It was not a priority for the Society, but Ky could not bring himself to leave them unburied.

4.3. The Impossibility to Represent Traumatic Events

Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer in their discussion of Holocaust in "The Witness in the Archive. Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies" (2010) pay special attention to the question of silence and the impossibility of representation. The authors describe an

incident during the Eichmann trial[38] when one of the witnesses fainted on the stand and had to be taken to the hospital where he fell into a coma that lasted a few weeks. Many other witnesses also found it utterly difficult to narrate their experience and their testimonies were riddled with silences, breaks and stutters. Hirsch and Spitzer ask a powerful question: "But what, one might ask, could he [an interviewed Holocaust witness-survivor] say that his moments of desperate silence and pleading not to go on did not already convey?" (2010: 396). They state that in those moments of silence the boundary and distance between the past and the present collapses. Silences also offer a direct access to the horrifying and unspeakable experience of trauma. Lack of historical accuracy, mistakes, silences and contradictions in the testimonies might actually serve as evidence of the impossibility to retell horrid events, which in turn, can be read as a confirmation of how deeply witnesses have been affected by trauma. They agree that the inaccurate testimony at times "communicates a more essential truth beyond the limits of words to the one who knows how to listen psychoanalytically: the truth of her [a female witness] enunciation lies in the affect she projects and provokes in her listeners" (2010: 401). Following Freud and Dori Laub, Caruth also emphasises the impossibility embedded in trauma (2007: 204). The impossibility, according to her, is related directly to the failure to witness and register the event when it occurred and to the incomprehensibility of what happened (1996: 6). Therefore, trauma forces us to face a particular type of witnessing; witnessing of impossibility.

Gavir finally manages to recover some of the memories related to his sister's death. He acknowledges that he is not sure whether the recollections he has of that period are real memories or rather products of his imagination. Newly recovered memories are a cause of great pain. Gavir describes pain as "unspeakable" on various

[38] Adolf Eichmann: one of the major organisers of the Holocaust; escaped to Argentina after war; captured in 1960; tried in Israel, found guilty and hanged in 1962;

occasions (*Powers* locs. 2851, 2866). When "the wall of forgetting" falls, he starts relating the events to Diero, his friend, confidant and a former lover of Barna. His story is composed out of "weeping", "broken sentences" which are all "out of order" (*Powers* loc. 2866). The loss he suffered and the circumstances of it affected him to such an extent, that even years after, when he is writing his autobiography, he is still incapable of recalling all the details. He never manages to walk out the darkness he stepped into after her funeral: "I walked on into the silence, the empty world. I walked under a low ceiling of raw black rock into the dark" (*Powers* loc. 2000). His past is therefore riddled with silences and blank spaces which will never be filled in. These silences however, much as Hirsch and Spitzer, and Caruth claim, are equally telling and powerful as they serve as proof of the depth of his loss.

Dann, on his way to the Cliffs of Yerrup, decides to stay for a while in a small peaceful settlement. He tells tales of his early adventurous life in exchange for food and a bed. This gives Dann a rare opportunity to look back at his life and try to reconstruct it. However, he realises, much like all the other characters, that there are gaps in his narrative, gaps he cannot fill with any memories. Moreover, the details he does remember are often too violent and unsuited for the audience. Dann censors his own past, shapes and reshapes it according to the circumstances. There are certain parts of his life that are so painful that he cannot bring himself to talk about them. Much like Gavir, the narrative of his past is full of gaps and silences. When he gets the news of Mara's death, he cannot speak coherently. Instead he mutters, stutters and is lost for words. Dann, like Gavir, finds language an insufficient tool to express his grief and despair. When Tamar asks him to describe her mother Mara, Dann becomes speechless again. He cannot talk about his sister at the beginning. It is only by changing the subject

and distancing himself from his painful memories that he finally starts talking about Mara.

Griot, much like Dann, has the possibility to tell his story. After they leave the Centre and settle in a town in Tundra, in the north, Griot is encouraged by his friends to sing. His friends are slightly disappointed when he chooses songs from a region foreign to him. They insist on him finding his own tales which relate to his own life's experiences. However, Griot is incapable of singing anything personal. He cannot narrate the story of his past. Instead, he composes songs about Mara and Dann. Only when alone, in the high moorland hills, can he express himself freely, but not in words: "Sometimes he let his voice go free, and sang without words or thoughts; […] the moment he was tempted into his wordless song his voice roughened into a yell, and then a howl" (*The Story* loc. 3201). He understands that there is a part of him and of his past he will never be able to verbalise.

Ky, like Griot, uses art and poetry to express his feelings and describe his past. He finds it impossible to talk about what happened to his parents. Instead, he chooses to draw scenes from his past and much later, write short poems about it. Only in this way is he capable of communicating with Cassia and telling her about his traumatic moments. The night when he remembers what exactly happened on the day his parents were killed, he also feels a sudden urge to paint. Again, Ky can initially express his loss, grief and guilt only through paintings. When Cassia asks him to finish narrating his story, he cannot bring himself to do it: "I close my eyes, trying to explain. What I say makes no sense. It's a string of words" (*Crossed* loc. 3881). Language cannot possibly convey his loss.

4.4. Trauma, Death and Mourning

In order to understand the mechanism of dealing with trauma, it is relevant to have a closer look at different approaches to the concept of mourning. As mentioned above, I shall concentrate on the theories as presented by Sigmund Freud, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, and finally, Jacques Derrida.

In "Mourning and Melancholia" ([1917] 1984) Freud elaborates a relation between successful and failed mourning, naming the latter *melancholia*. Although both represent ways of dealing with loss, the mechanisms underlying them are quite different. Freud defines mourning as a detachment of libido from a loved object or person in course of which

> Each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it. (…) when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again (245).

Melancholia in turn occurs when a part of the ego undergoes a process of identification with the lost object, and hence an object-loss is converted into ego-loss. Successful mourning then is based on a detachment from the other, while melancholia is viewed as a failure to do so.

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in "Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation" ([1972] 1994) elaborate the study on mourning and melancholia by Freud and combine it with the concept of introjection proposed by Sandor Ferenczi, a Hungarian psychoanalyst and Freud's associate. In their subsequent studies, Abraham and Torok further develop the concepts of introjection and incorporation. Introjection represents for them a successful mourning in which libido detaches from the lost object and is reabsorbed into the ego. They further suggest the concept of *incorporation* or *encryptment* which occurs when the mourning ego contains the lost object within itself.

In this endocryptic identification the ego fails to detach from the lost object and constructs a crypt in which the lost object is kept alive. Abraham and Torok state that

> Incorporation results from those losses that for some reason cannot be acknowledged as such. (…) The words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed – everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss. Swallowed and preserved. Inexpressible mourning erects a secret tomb inside the subject. Reconstituted from the memories of words, scenes, and affects, the objectal correlative of the loss is buried alive in the crypt as a full-fledged person, complete with its own topography ([1972] 1994: 130).

Derrida deals with the topic of mourning not only in *The Work of Mourning* (2001) but also in *The Politics of Friendship* (1997) and *Spectres of Marx* (1994). What is at stake in Derrida's study is not so much the concept of successful mourning, as understood by Freud, and Abraham and Torok, but rather the question of being faithful to the other. One of the chief features of bereavement, according to Derrida, is the fact that it leaves us speechless. Derrida's concept of friendship as presented in the *Work of Mourning* (2001) is crucial to understand his approach to mourning. For Derrida friendship is based on a dialectical exchange. It does not reside in the unity of two beings but in a free interchange between two distinct individuals. His concept of friendship is defined through difference, independence and dialogue. Derrida holds that along with death the possibility of a dialogue is inevitably lost and, as a consequence, there is no longer speaking *to* and *with* but only *of*: "Speaking is impossible, but so would be silence or absence or refusal to share one's sadness" (2001: 73). The exchange is halted, and the friend is only present in ourselves and in our memories but no longer is a person who can be referred to; the friend becomes a mere image. Hence, death for Derrida and the process of mourning result in an added and constant presence of the deceased.

The mourner has two strategies to choose from: one leading to introjection, the other to incorporation. Introjection results in a complete dissolution and assimilation of the mourned other and nullification of the distinction between *me* and *the other*. This

state is quite distressing and uncanny for Derrida as, by digesting the other, one takes part in the ultimate death of the mourned. In this "cannibalistic" feast the two turn into one making any exchange impossible. The other option is incorporation, and this, although described in negative terms as melancholia by Freud, or failed mourning / encryptment by Abraham and Torok, is perceived as more faithful by Derrida. If the mourned one is encrypted, no sin of complete assimilation is committed. Quite the contrary, a space for the other within one's self is created, a space which preserves the other's identity and allows for the other to exist, even if only in an altered form. Although the dialogue is not possible any longer, there survives the possibility of a monologue which, although imperfect, still permits some form of contact. Through the incorporation the other fails to be digested and this grants the survival of difference, a concept crucial for Derrida. It appears that it is the very negation of the possibility of detachment from the mourned that distresses Derrida more than the loss. In the process of introjection the other is fully assimilated and hence is transformed into an integral part of the mourning individual and cannot be rejected or detached from without his/her denying some element of themselves; introjection equals assimilation, annihilation and disappearance of difference. Through introjection, in the process of cannibalistic assimilation, the other is deprived of his or her unique self. Hence, incorporation: the failure to mourn (understood also as melancholia or encryptment) might be the only possible way to remain truthful to the other. The success of mourning turns into a failure to cherish the other, and the failure to mourn becomes a success.

> We can only live this experience in the form of an aporia: the aporia of mourning and of prosopopeia, where the possible remains impossible. Where *success* fails. And where faithful interiorization bears the other and constitutes him in me (in us), at once living and dead. It makes the other a *part* of us, between us – and then the other no longer quite seems to be the other because we grieve for him and bear him *in us*, like an unborn child, like a future. And inversely, the *failure succeeds*: an aborted interiorization is at the same time a respect for the other as other, a sort of tender rejection, a movement of renunciation which leaves the other alone, outside, over there in his death, outside of us (2001: 35).

Nonetheless, when I incorporate the other, whose voice will sound, whose words will be uttered, mine or theirs? There seems to be no possibility of faithfulness to the other and no manner to mourn the other successfully either. Hence, there exists no truthful mourning, such as would be loyal to both the mourner and the mourned. Both incorporation and introjection fail to some extent. The introjection is never successful as through the complete absorption it eliminates the border between the self and the other. The incorporation on the other hand might prove faithful to the mourned ones and enable them to retain autonomy, this time within the other, but here Derrida questions the very probability of any clear cut borders. According to him, on no occasion are we truly ourselves, self-identical and entirely self-governing: "*we* are never *ourselves*, and between us, identical to us, a 'self' is never in itself or identical to itself" (1989: 28). We constantly take part in the carnival of cannibalisation, of perpetual digestion of the other. Never do we cease to consume the other and thus at no time is a real encryptment possible.

Sallo's death represents such a trauma for Gavir that initially he cannot bear to register what has happened. Gavir describes it as follows: "I had known a love so dear to me that I could not bear to think about it, because when I lost it, I lost everything" (*Powers* loc. 2850). After leaving Etra, he falls into a lethargy and wanders for days reliving the day of his sister's funeral, but never actually registering having buried her. When people ask him what has happened to him, he keeps on repeating: "I'm going to bury my sister" (*Powers* loc. 2012). In this way, his sister is still with him, still present, still not totally gone. He does not manage to detach himself from her, but rather suffers from what Freud would define as melancholia, and Abraham and Torok, *encryptment* or *incorporation.* After that, he cannot bear his pain any longer and he forgets not only the funeral, but everything related to his sister and their life together. The rivers Gavir

crosses on his way seem to be filled with the merciful waters of Lethe, the river of forgetting. On rare occasions, he appears to be remembering something. Years after, he reflects on this time, his efforts to remember and the impossibility of doing so: "Coming out of the silence I'd lived in so long, the silence of the forest, the mute forgetfulness […] I came too near the wall. My mind went numb. Blank. Empty" (*Powers* loc. 2012). After the wall of oblivion finally gives in, Gavir is flooded with memories and with them, unspeakable pain. He acknowledges that in order to be able to grieve, he needs to remember: "I had to return to her and let her return to me. I could no longer deny her, my love, my sister, my ghost" (*Powers* loc. 2893). Gavir finally faces the past and gradually, lets it go. His mourning from encrypment transforms into introjection. For Derrida, it would mean partial betrayal, but only in this way can Gavir start thinking about the future.

After Dan receives the news about Mara's death, he falls into depression. He spends weeks locked up in a room, drinking and talking to himself. Much like Gavir, the loss of his beloved sister overwhelms him. The state of both Dann and Gavir can be described with the use of Freud's definition of *melancholia:*

> The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment (Freud [1917] 1985: 243).

Dann loses interest in the outside world and spends weeks on end grieving. He is incapable of feeling anything but emptiness, loss and absence of his sister. He finds it impossible to detach himself from Mara and he holds on to the memories of her tightly. By thinking about her all the time and talking to her, he keeps her alive, even if only for himself. Following Abraham and Torok's terminology, he incorporates her, constructs a crypt-like space in which she can keep on existing. In this way, although he fails to mourn, he remains, according to Derrida, faithful to the other. The communication,

although imperfect, is maintained. After Leta, his Alb friend, makes him think about the past and thanks to that he is finally able to focus on the present as well, he slowly starts to detach himself from Mara. He realises that Mara is gone and that any form of communication with her is impossible. He says: "She's not here and she doesn't say anything" (*The Story* loc. 1760). Instead of talking *to* Mara, he begins talking *about* her. From the phase of encrypment, he passes to the stage of introjection and a slow recovery of, at least a partial autonomy. The process, in Freud's and Abraham and Toroks' terms, of detachment, and in Derrida's, of assimilation of Mara, is painful for Dann. He realises that she is really gone when he talks to Griot: "That's the whole point. Someone is here. She was here. Then they aren't. *She isn't here*" (*The Story* loc. 2243, original emphasis). Soon after, he succumbs to melancholia once again. Years later, Dann seems to have to come to terms with his sister's death. On occasions however, he refers to her daughter Tamar as Mara, to which the girl patiently replies: "I'm not Mara, I'm Tamar. Dear Dann, someday you'll have to let me be Tamar. And let my mother go" (*The Story* loc. 3219). Dann never finishes mourning over Mara's death and never fully detaches himself from her. However, in spite of this, he manages to go on with his life.

Griot never manages to bring back the memories of his family. Although he knows they are dead, he cannot mourn them. The absence of any recollections related to them makes it impossible for him to feel either grief or love towards them. On one sole occasion the barriers he constructed start to crumble: "For the very first time he thought, *On that night, I've always taken it for granted my parents were killed. But suppose they are alive somewhere, wondering about me?*" (*The Story* loc. 2445, original emphasis). He finds this thought so disturbing that he dismisses it almost instantly and tries to convince himself: "Too much, it was all too much. No, it was a good thing he was

alone, had no child, no family" (*The Story* loc. 2445). Although Dann suffers deeply from Mara's death, it is actually Griot who is the most emotionally scarred of all the characters in the novel. He is incapable of feeling any deep emotions. He constructs a shield of rationality around him that makes it impossible for him to relate to anyone. Griot realises that there is something missing in him but he cannot define what it is. He cannot verbalise it and the only way he manages to express it is through singing wordless songs that keep on turning into a yell and a howl. Sadly enough, Griot does not share this experience with anyone. He does not allow for the walls and shields that protect and oppress him at the same time, to fall.

After Ky's village is attacked he is given a pill inducing amnesia to which he is immune. However, he instinctively knows that forgetting is what is expected of him and he pretends not to remember the event. Sharing his knowledge of that day with anyone becomes too dangerous for him and therefore he has to keep it all to himself. He bottles up his feelings of grief related to that day as well as anger against his father, whom he partially blames for the attack. After getting to know Cassia, he finally trusts someone enough to start sharing his suppressed emotions. In one of his poems he writes: "*they were too much to carry/ so I left them behind/ for a new life, in a new place"* (*Matched* loc. 2805, original emphasis). Although the words of the poem might suggest that he is at peace with what happened, the picture that accompanies it says something different. Ky includes in it, much as in the previous ones he gave Cassia, two versions of himself: Ky, a small, lonely and scared child, and Ky, a teenager. Although he has been trying to come to terms with his parents' death since the moment it happened, he is still so deeply affected by this life-shaping event that he chooses it to be one of the first things to share with Cassia. In his pictures, the little Ky holds words *mother* and *father* in his hands. As if they formed a part of him, as if he was not able to part with them. His mourning is

still in the phase of incorporation / encrypment. He is not yet ready to let the pain go. Only in later pictures do the words start to be detached from the figure of little Ky. He finally draws a picture in which they are no longer present. Cassia comments on it: "The younger Ky has dropped the words *mother* and *father*; they have vanished from the picture. Forgotten, or left behind, or so much part of him that they don't have to be written anymore. He looks at the older Ky, reaches for him" (*Matched* loc. 2806). His parents and the memories of them are slowly beginning to be detached / assimilated, yet not forgotten. In this way, moving away from incorporation towards introjection, Ky's two selves, his two lives, seem to be slowly becoming one. Although Derrida would claim it to be an unfaithful act towards the memory of his parents, by leaving the stage of incorporation, Ky is gaining more balance in his life. In his last picture, there is only one Ky: with a smile on his face in which Cassia notices both Kys united. His hands are empty again. But *empty* does not mean anything negative as having freed himself of the past, he has made space for the future. His hands are "open, and reaching a little" *(Matched* loc. 4090) again.

Although all the texts in the corpus feature death at some point, not all of them deal with it in the same way. In Lowry's *Gathering Blue,* official mourning is limited to four days the relatives spend with the deceased on the Field of Leaving. Four days are believed to be the time the spirit needs to leave the body. The way Lowry describes death, through Kira's words, is quite down-to-earth, almost all too rational for a book for children and teenagers. Kira's mother is described as "simply a body […] eaten by the clawing, hungry creatures that came at night. Then the bones would scatter, rot and, crumble" (*Gathering Blue* loc. 23). Kira admits her love for her mother, keeps on thinking about her but the community she lives in does not allow too much time for grief. In the world Lowry portrays, there is no space for long term mourning. Similarly,

the author does not leave much time to ponder over Matty's death at the end of *Messenger*. Kira and Jonas are grateful for him to have saved the village and the forest, but the last image is of Jonas carrying Matty's body in his arms with Kira walking beside him and carrying a lively fidgeting puppy in hers. The very last line reads: "In the distance, the sound of keening began". The image is so full of optimism and hope for the future, that it almost diminishes the importance of Matty's sacrifice and, more importantly and sadly enough, leaves little space for the reader to mourn his death.

In the societies portrayed in *The Giver* and Condie's *Matched Trilogy* death is rationalised, marginalised and, especially in *The Giver,* highly controlled. Both books include explicit and implicit images of death, killing and state sanctioned euthanasia. Contrary to *Matched Trilogy* however, *The Giver* does not offer examples of mourning and coping with trauma. This portrayal of death and the ways of dealing with it, mirrors how the question of death is approached in many dystopian texts for young adults. On the one hand, the market is flooded with novels which feature overt violence, death and killing, also by children protagonists (cf. *The Hunger Games Trilogy:* 2008-2010*, The Maze Runner Series:* 2009-2012*, The Divergent Trilogy*: 2011-2013). On the other, young readers are given few examples of how to constructively deal with loss and death. This explicit portrayal of death accompanied by the lack of a deeper treatment of trauma related to death is one of the reasons why YADs such as the *Twilight* series, *Hunger Games* and *The Giver* appear year after year on the American Library Association lists of the most challenged books.

Furthermore, treating death as a taboo topic to be silenced and forgotten exemplifies the way death is approached in present day society. According to the thesis Bauman proposes in *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* (1992), one of the main challenges humans have had to face is their mortality. It has been dealt with

differently depending on the epoch. Bauman claims that present day society instead of trying to accept the inevitability of death, focuses on immortality. It is exemplified by the cult of youth, the number of cosmetic surgeries performed every year, millions spent on cosmetics, diets or gym subscriptions. Bauman states that immortality is broken up into small and achievable goals. One of the ways leading to immortality at present is through being remembered and recognised. In the past, it was possible only to a few, while nowadays it is widely available to almost everyone. Owing to social media and reality shows everyone can be in the limelight, even though only for a day. Although present day immortality is attained easily, it remains ephemeral. As Bauman observes: "Each moment, or no moment, is immortal. Immortality is here – but not to stay. Immortality is as transient and evanescent as the rest of things" (1992: 164). Moreover, according to Bauman, less and less value is attached to things that are durable. Importance is given only to what is most recent, and nothing is meant to last for long. Death, previously treated as something irrefutable, changes, much like everything else, into something transitory. It is fragmented into manageable segments and thus is no longer perceived in its totality. That is why, whenever we are forced to face it directly, it appears even more dreadful and impossible to cope with. The fear of death and the way it is marginalised and avoided in present day society might have been one of the causes for such a strong response to *The Giver* on the part of parents. Through the explicit treatment of the issue of death in the book, both children and parents were made to acknowledge its existence. At the same time, little was done by the author to show her readers how to approach such a complex issue.

4.5. The Healing Power of Communication

One of the most important premises of curing neurosis according to Freud was an interaction with another person based on a dialogue. Recollection of the past trauma, of its origins, and of the memories haunting a patient with neurosis involves two individuals working together. Another individual is necessary in the process of this dialogic recollection because the therapist is not bound by the constraints that make it impossible for the patient to remember the repressed events and the memories of them. Patients need another person to listen to them, a person who can distance themselves from the patients' problems, a person who has a different memory, different experiences, and a different past. The recollection is based then on a dialogue and difference (Terdiman 2010: 95). Another important notion in the process of understanding and curing neurosis, according to Freud, was the task of interpretation. Past experiences and recollections of past disturbing events were not to be merely brought to light but also interpreted by the therapist (Kennedy 2010: 184-5; Terdiman 2010: 99-101). Psychoanalysis tries to trace the symptom back to its origins. This is possible due to the fact that an event or an experience is never fully forgotten, according to Freud. Some part of it always remains: it can be partially retained or exist in an altered form. Psychoanalysis then can be described as an art of dialogic mnemonic reconstruction. The past it seeks to reconstruct is built up of scarps of memories, dreams, silences, repressed emotions. Roger Kennedy calls this *a history of layers* and describes it as "full of shifting strata, fragments of living reality, absences more than presences, a mutilated, yet still living past, involving the elusive presence of the unconscious" (2010: 181). In order to cure trauma, the patient needs a listener with whom to share past events. Having heard the story, the listener acquires the position of a witness. Psychoanalysis seeks to bring peace by bringing painful memories to light and

thus depriving them of haunting repetitiveness. Traumatic recollections were to be substituted for conscious thoughts and the past was meant to lose its menacing influence (Kennedy 2010: 183). For Hirsch and Spitzer, the role of listener to oral testimony is also highly important. A good listener needs to be ready to hear silences, absences, hesitations and allow for the testimony to flow. Listeners should maintain a balance between being deeply involved in the act of listening and not letting themselves at the same time to appropriate it (Hirsch and Spitzer 2010: 402). Moreover, the act of listening might help victims restore the sense of identity lost during the traumatic event. Inappropriate listening, on the other hand, may lead to an unhelpful reliving of trauma.

In all the narratives discussed in this chapter the listener plays an important role. Listeners help the traumatised protagonists channel their grief and begin the process of slow recovery. Interestingly enough, all the characters who suffer from trauma are boys and they all lose either their parents or a beloved sister. The listener in turn, is always a woman. Dann talks to his Alb friend Leta, Ky to Cassia and later on his friend Indie and Gavir shares his despair with a former female slave Diero. Several conclusions might be drawn from this fact: women being stereotyped as listeners nursing men back to health; or women as more vulnerable due to their sex: after all, Mara dies in childbirth and Sallo’s death is a result of rape and violence by men. I, however, choose to read the novels as tales whose authors are brave enough to portray male characters not only as powerful and violent, but also vulnerable and suffering. They show their protagonists in pain, we see them struggle, ask for and accept help. These narratives feature not only societies, but also protagonists in transition. If read together, they enable their reader to discover an array of approaches to trauma. Some of the protagonists, like Dann or Griot, fail to recover from it fully. By not facing the ghosts of his past, Griot’s identity suffers from numbness. Lessing’s portrayal of Dann also shows that facing demons does not

necessarily mean recovering from trauma fully. The fictional characters in Le Guin and Condie manage to deal with trauma more effectively. All the authors emphasise the need of a listener, the necessity and benefits of reaching out to people. In all the narratives, suffering, although caused by others, is also healed with the help of others. The narratives show that we do not live in a void, but form part of complex networks, various groups which can be oppressing or/and supportive.

5. Collective Trauma in Young Adult Dystopia

> When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community. When loss is converted into (or encrypted in an indiscriminately generalized rhetoric of) absence, one faces the impasse of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through the past and its historical losses is foreclosed or prematurely aborted.
>
> La Capra "Trauma, Absence, Loss"

5.1 Dominick La Capra: Historical Trauma and the (Im)possibility of *Working Through*

Historian Dominick La Capra focuses on trauma on both collective and individual level. He emphasises the difference between traumatic event in itself and the experience of trauma. The latter is always linked with belated symptoms, which in turn make such an experience highly elusive. La Capra, following Freud, states that relieving traumatic events collapses the boundary between the past and the present, now and then, here and there (Goldberg and La Capra 1998: 1-2). All becomes one: there can be no remembering as in order to remember one needs to be aware of the difference between now and then. He describes trauma with the use of Walter Benjamin's terms of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung,* the first being an isolated experience, experience as something lived or

witnessed, while the latter is rather seen as wisdom drawn from experience. He compares trauma to *Erlebnis* and describes it as “an out-of-context experience that upsets expectations and unsettles one’s very understanding of existing contexts” (La Capra 2007: 206).

La Capra also distinguishes between historical and structural trauma. He relates historical trauma to some specific event not everyone has to go through. He includes in this category the Holocaust, slavery, apartheid, and sexual abuse, among others. Structural trauma is related to experiences and losses that are neither historical nor related to a specific event. As examples, La Capra suggests the individual’s entry into language or inability to form part of a community. According to the author, everyone is subject to this type of trauma at some stage of life (La Capra 1999: 721-2). While traumatising experiences related to historical trauma can be identified, as they form part of some historical event, structural trauma is never an event but rather a condition causing anxiety. La Capra states however, that it possible to represent structural trauma as an event, but if this happens “trauma is enacted in a story or narrative from which later traumas seem to derive” (1999: 725). La Capra connects historical trauma with loss and structural trauma with absence. If absence is approached as absence rather than loss, it offers more constructive possibilities for dealing with problems. It also allows for historical losses to be recognised and handled, as the author puts it, “without promising secular salvation or a socio-political return to a putatively lost (or lacking) unity or community” (1999: 706). La Capra notes that on the one hand, there is a danger in conflating structural and historical trauma, and on the other, absence with loss. This leads to the development of a false sense of some pre-existing completeness that needs to be recovered (1999: 703-4, 706-7). Therefore, if absence is converted into loss, there

is a risk of creating scapegoats that are blamed for the loss and are to be held responsible for it.

La Capra describes two forms of remembering trauma: *working-through* and *acting-out*. His concept of acting-out has to do with compulsive repetition and denial, whereas working-through has to do with attempts to gain a critical distance on problems (Goldberg and LaCapra 1998: 1-2). Working through trauma is for La Capra moving from *Erlebnis* to *Erfahrung*. This can be achieved, according to him, through expressing traumatic experience with the use of a wide range of forms of expressions such as narrative, song or dance (2007: 206–7). He holds mourning as a form of working-thorough and melancholia as a way of acting-out (1999: 713). He describes them as follows

> In acting-out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed. Mourning involves a different inflection of performativity: a relation to the past that involves recognizing its difference from the present-simultaneously remembering and taking leave of or actively forgetting it, thereby allowing for critical judgment and a reinvestment in life, notably social and civic life with its demands, responsibilities, and norms requiring respectful recognition and consideration for others (1999: 716).

He emphasises that “the socially engaged memory work” and working-through leads to a separation between the past and present, which is the precondition for recovery from any trauma. Mourning and working-through are also necessary for the victims to be given back the dignity taken from them by the oppressors (1999: 713).

La Capra believes that it is impossible to fully recover from structural trauma. Historical trauma, on the other hand, offers more possibilities of working through, although also only partially. La Capra believes that “Working-through means work on posttraumatic symptoms in order to mitigate the effects of trauma by generating counterforces to compulsive repetition” (2007: 207). However, “[…] working-through does not mean total redemption of the past or healing its traumatic wounds” (2007:

207). Instead of reaching total integration and changing past trauma into "a seamless narrative memory", working-through helps to break a vicious circle of endless reliving the traumatic event and by doing so, enables the victim to visualise possible futures (2007: 208).

Historical Trauma in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Voices*

Voices is the second volume in *The Annals of the Western Shore* trilogy. Apart from the setting and the characters of Orrec and Gry, certain leitmotifs bind the series together. The most prominent ones are the questions of family and self-discovery – themes common in almost all of YA literature, but also other themes such as justice (cf. Oziewicz 2010), choice (cf. Rochelle 2006), violence, literacy, storytelling, the past and memory. One of most recurrent themes in *The Annals of the Western Shore* is the question of slavery and subjugation. All the novels deal with oppression, overt inequality, and the damaging consequences of being an enslaved or overpowered group.

Ursula K. Le Guin's two acclaimed novels *The Dispossessed* (1974) and *The Telling* (2000) feature lone characters who try to bring two societies together. The figure of an observer from a classical utopia is substituted for a mediator who without resorting to any violence intends to open space for a constructive dialogue between two opposing sides. Le Guin uses the same motif in *Voices.* Two characters from a previous volume, *Gifts,* a bard Orrec Caspro and his wife Gry, try to establish channels of communication between the hostile groups in order to prevent another outbreak of violence.

The Alds, a tribe of desert warriors, have been occupying the city of Ansul for over eighteen years. They worship one god: Atth, also known as the Burning Lord. All good and righteousness belongs to and comes from Atth; all evil, from Obatth, the enemy of Atth. The Alds despise the earth, which is for them nothing more than an

unholy place of exile. They believe that Obatth resides in the Night Mouth: a deep, wet, cold and dark void in the earth.[39] According to their religion if a thousand true soldiers could be gathered and bear the Fire of Atth to the dwelling of Obatth, they would manage to destroy him. The darkness would be defeated and the earth would become a realm of eternal light ruled by the Alds. The Night Mouth, according to the old legends, is to be found in the city of Ansul. The religions and traditions of two sides of conflict could not be more different. The monotheism of the Alds is contrasted with the polytheism of the citizens of Ansul, singularity with plurality, control with freedom of expression, contempt for the written word and learning with a thirst for knowledge and admiration of literature. What seems striking to the Alds is that citizens of Ansul do not negate the existence of Atth and his godlike status. This is how Memer answers a question of an Ald boy asking her if she believes that Atth is god: “Of course he is. All the gods are gods. Why shouldn’t Atth be? […] I don’t know if I believe there are demons, but I do know the gods. I don’t understand why you have to ‘believe’ in only one god and none of the others” (*Voices* loc. 1431).

The Alds are on a mission to find and destroy the enemy of the Burning Lord. Their religion is based on the conversion of absence into loss and lack, as described by La Capra. He observes that this conversion lies at the core of many religions and their founding myths:

> When understood as lost, divinity becomes hidden or dead-lost because of some sin or fault that could be compensated for in order for redemption or salvation to occur, allowing a return to unity with the godhead. Paradise lost could be regained, at least at the end of time. One might ask whether the conversion of absence into loss is essential to all fundamentalisms or foundational philosophies (La Capra 1999: 72).

The Alds worship a god, whose real name is not known to them; it is prohibited and they are never to pronounce it. *Atth* simply means *Lord* in their language. He exists, but

[39] The Night Mouth is described as follows: “In that place, all the foulness of the earth gathers together, darkness drawing inward into earth, the reverse of light shining out from the sun. It is anti-sun that eats light. It is black, wet, cold, vile. As the sun is being, it is unbeing” (*Voices* 80-81). Connotations of the description are discriminatory. The Alds hold women in disrespect and limit them to the domestic sphere.

is out of their reach. They are convinced that in the past they lived in his divine presence. They also believe that the present situation of the earth is unworthy because they are denied the full presence of Atth, the Burning Lord. Therefore, they long to return from this exile on earth and be reunited with Atth. La Capra claims that any religious conviction that is based on an idea of an imaginary paradise, in which a unity with a divinity is experienced, can be dangerous. As it is imaginary, such a belief is based on absence, not presence. Anxiety generated by absence is not linked to anything concrete; it is impalpable and thus difficult to deal with (La Capra 1999: 706-7). This type of anxiety cannot be overcome completely and control over it is quite limited. However, if absence is transformed into loss or lack then this anxiety can be exteriorised and attached to something tangible. Consequently, the anxiety is dispelled once the object of worship believed to have been lost, is found. The Alds believe that encountering the Night Mouth, finding and defeating Obatth, will lead them directly to the recovery of lost Burning God.

As La Capra observes, treating the divine as what has been lost will create the belief that redemption or compensation are possible (La Capra 1999: 702). However, if it is believed that "there was (or at least could be) some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity which others have ruined, polluted, or contaminated and thus made "us" lose" (La Capra 1999: 707) then someone must be blamed for this apparent initial loss. Consequently, conversion of absence into lack or loss results in the creation of *the other* who acts as a scapegoat which is held accountable for the loss or lack (La Capra 1999: 707). The Alds project the blame for the supposed loss onto the citizens of Ansul. They need them in order to restore the putative unity with Atth and perfect existence they believe they were once part of. Hence, in order to regain the light of Atth, the Alds

need to encounter the dwelling of Obatth. Moreover, they also have to destroy everything and everyone they blame for the loss of their god.

The Ald invasion of Ansul is an example of La Capra's concept of historical trauma. The consequence of it is not absence on a transhistorical level, but loss on a historical one. According La Capra, loss is generated by some specific event, in this case, the Ald conquest. The citizens of Ansul are deprived not only of freedom, but also of almost everything that defines them: their religion, tradition, university, literature and the possibility to trade. At the beginning of the novel all the main characters: Memer's uncle Sulter Galva, her foster mother Ista, Gudit, the stableman and Memer herself relive the past and the times from before the invasion. Especially Ista and Gudit keep on referring to "The old days! The good days!" on many occasions (*Voices* 5, 14, 53, 66). Memer tries to reconstruct these "old days" she knows only from stories by using her imagination. They are also reliving the painful events of the siege and the distressing time after it. Their lives seem to have come to a halt and as a consequence, the characters exist in a timeless lethargy instead of living in the present. There is no working-through as they still seem to be in the acting-out phase of trauma. Acting-out is for La Capra:

> related to repetition, and even the repetition-compulsion – the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to exist in the present as if they were still fully in the past, with no distance from it. They tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence (La Capra 1998: 2).

The process seems to have taken a form of a melancholic suspension in the times gone by. They are still in the realm of *Erlebnis*, which is experience as something witnessed and lived through. In order to recover from the historical trauma they need to reach the state of *Erfahrung*, which is the wisdom resulting from a painful experience. La Capra claims that it is possible through expressing the trauma, be it through song, dance, poetry or any other form of expression. Literature and reading used to be widespread in

Ansul, but after the conquest, all the written texts found by the Alds were burnt and writing and reading banned. The citizens of Ansul were deprived of almost all the modes of expression known to them: religion, literature, song, dance and public gatherings were also prohibited. Working through the trauma on the level of society was hardly possible for them.

The arrival of Orrec seems to be the trigger that both sides of the conflict have been waiting for. His songs and stories, especially his hymn to liberty, rouse these citizens of Ansul who have been in lethargy and serve as an ultimate impulse for the ones who have been secretly planning an uprising. In spite of their thorough preparations, the rebellion against the Alds fails. It might leave some readers disappointed, but anyone familiar with Le Guin's texts and viewpoint will understand the necessity of this failure. Le Guin has expressed on multiple occasions her scepticism and even condemnation for violence as well as for dichotomies in general, and as a driving force of the narrative:

> Existence as struggle, life as a battle, everything in terms of defeat and victory: Man versus Nature, Man versus Woman, Black versus White, Good versus Evil – a sort of apartheid view of existence, and of literature. What a pitiful impoverishment of the complexity of both! (Le Guin 1989: 190).

Instead of violence and portraying one side as utterly bad and the other as righteous, she has always opted for a plurality of opinions, possibilities and solutions. Not all the Alds are presented as violent and blood-thirsty warriors. The very Gand Ioratth, the general and the highest in rank among the Alds in Ansul, is an example of such an ambivalent character. He is the one who invites Orrec Caspro to Ansul as he wants to listen to his songs and stories. He speaks and thinks very highly of the bard and does not reject his council. Contrary to his own son and the priests who are blinded by hatred and the will to power, Gand Ioratth is open to new possibilities and knows how to listen. For Le Guin listening is a crucial part of any process of dialogue and reconciliation.

> Mutual communication between speakers and listeners is a powerful act. The power of each speaker is amplified, augmented, by the entertainment of the listeners. The strength of the community is amplified, augmented by its mutual entertainment in speech. This is why utterance is magic. Words do have power. Names have power. Words are events, they do things, they change things. They transform both speaker and hearer; they feed energy back and forth and amplify it. They feed understanding or emotion back and forth and amplify it (Le Guin 2004b:199).

Stories form a crucial part in the process of communication in the novel. Orrec's audience during his storytelling and singing is composed of the Alds and later, of the citizens of Ansul as well. His words prompt a change in attitudes towards the other side. The citizens of Ansul move from *Erlebnis* to *Erfahrung* as they begin to learn from the past. Knowledge gained from the past experience generates possibilities for a better future. The Alds in turn, begin to be more receptive. Thus, slowly, the ground for a dialogue is being established. For La Capra, dialogue is an important part of working-through historical trauma. According to him, solutions can be found through "discussion and argument involving dialogic relations both to others and within the self. Dialogic relations are agonistic and nonauthoritarian in that an argument is always subject to a response or counterargument; it may be answered or criticized in an ongoing give-and-take" (La Capra 1999: 709). After the rebellion in Ansul fails and neither of the sides is victorious, Orrec struggles to open new paths for dialogue in order to avoid further escalation of violence. He manages to persuade both sides to listen and participate in a non-violent dialogue on the possible solutions to the crisis.

This particular way of directing the narrative, not opting for destructive ways and definitive answers, but rather for a peaceful verbal interchange and open ending, reflects Le Guin's deep belief in the power of reconciliation. This stance permeates many of her works and is probably most clearly seen in *City of Illusion* (1967), *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971) and more recently, in *The Telling* (2000). Le Guin chooses non-violent solutions, dialogue and communication. Much as James H. Thrall states: "While her peers were busy creating violent, action-oriented heroes, Le Guin's characters, male

as well as female, avoid violence at all cost, seek to maintain balance and equilibrium in their world, and prefer thought to action" (2010: 206). That is why the uprising was doomed to fail from the very beginning. The answers in Le Guin's universes are to be found through a slow dialogue, not a violent action. The process of working through the historical trauma of the citizens of Ansul is to be rooted in peace, not violence. Desac, a young leader of the failed rebellion cannot understand why Sulter Galva, Memer's uncle is against the uprising. Desac accuses him of living "among shadows of ancient times" (*Voices* loc. 2119). These shadows however, contain wisdom and experience which Desac all too hastily rejects. It is Desac who fails to see a change in attitudes happening among the Alds, while Sulter is well aware of it and of the possibilities it might entail. He tells Memer that "I have my first hope of regaining liberty by persuading them that we're more profitable to them as allies than as slaves. That would take time. It would end in a compromise not a victory. But if we seek victory now and fail, hope will be hard to find" (*Voices* loc. 1960). Sulter exemplifies a holistic view as he is capable of weighing all the possibilities and does not seek victory at all costs. Orrec and Gry share his vision. In a passionate speech Orrec implores the Alds to seek reconciliation and the citizens of Ansul to "claim freedom in peace, not in blood" (*Voices* loc. 2953).

The failed uprising and Orrec's pleas serve as a wake-up call for the Alds as well. After having spent over eighteen years searching for the Night Mouth in vain, many of them begin to question the sense of the invasion. When it is discovered that a group of fanatic followers of Atth has imprisoned the general Gand Ioratth, the Alds stand divided. Finally, a majority of them rejects the extremists and follows the general who is in favour of reconciliation. They seem to be slowly transitioning from the religion based on putative loss into one where the citizens of Ansul are no longer treated as scapegoats. Whether the Alds will continue the search for the Night Mouth in another

location and will choose to treat yet another community as a scapegoat remains unknown. Nevertheless, the readers are given an opportunity to witness a solution to a conflict based on a dialogue which initiates a slow process of reconciliation. It is shown that it is possible to try to work through past animosities and that historical traumas do not have to necessarily define the future of any of the sides.

Historical Trauma in Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann*

Lessing's novel offers an alternative view of the world in which climate change transformed the way Africa and Europe are perceived. In her narrative, a European-centred vision of the world is substituted for one with Africa at its core. During one of the Ice Ages, the climate change forced people out of Europe. In desperate attempts to save their civilisations and preserve as much heritage as possible it was decided to build replicas of some of the European cities all along the cost of northern Africa. Which cities and which parts of them were to be built was a question of power struggles for a long time. The project was further complicated by the fact that the cities were being built on the terrain which formed part of African heritage. The cities lasted for hundreds of years till the climate changed again, this time in a matter of a few years. It got so cold that the buildings started to crack and fall. A decision was made to reconstruct the same towns again, this time still further south. Most of them were later flooded, during yet another drastic climatic catastrophe. Lessing's novel should not be read however only as a warning about climate change, but also as a powerful narrative on the importance of balance between the respect for the past, the value of the present and a belief in a better future.

Mara and Dann encounter many settlements on their way through the drying Ifrik. None of them satisfies them enough to settle down and abandon their quest for the

mythical green lands of the north, still untouched by drought. One of the last communities they reach is the town inhabited by the Albs, the direct descendants of people who used to live in Europe, which is now completely under ice. The town is one of the two inhabitable replicas of European towns remaining. This particular one is a copy of a town in a northern part of Yerrup. The buildings are designed to suit the original conditions: they have steep roofs, thick shutters and walls. The siblings are startled to see people who live there: their pale skins, eyes and fair hair make them think of "bleached ghosts" or "wraiths" (*Mara and Dann* loc. 7090).

As La Capra notes, losses occur in any society, but what needs to be avoided is conflating them with lack (1999: 703) or with absence (1999: 712). He observes that

> Loss is often correlated with lack, for as loss is to the past, so lack is to the present and future. A lost object is one that may be felt to be lacking, although a lack need not necessarily involve a loss. Lack nonetheless indicates a felt need or a deficiency; it refers to something that ought to be there but is missing (1999: 703).

The predecessors of the Albs suffered a historical trauma when they were forced by climate change to abandon their homeland and struggle to preserve the remains of their civilisation. Not only did they lose their land and a great part of their heritage, but they were also deprived of any possibility of ever going back. Their cities are now either covered by a thick layer of ice or by water. The present day inhabitants of the Alb settlement are incapable of accepting that what was lost will probably never be recovered. Instead of working through the suffered trauma, they treat their long lost and half-forgotten past as something still lacking. As a consequence, they are never satisfied, fulfilled and content with what the present has to offer. They are indeed like ghosts suspended between two worlds: the lost and idealised past, and some blank future still to come. They are intolerant and live in a closed community that does not accept any outsiders and condemns anyone who feels the need to venture beyond its borders.

The Albs do not allow for the process of working-through to take place. La Capra sees mourning as a form of working-through, while melancholia as a form of acting-out (1999: 713). The Albs, instead of mourning the loss and trying to face the present, choose to live dominated by melancholia which makes it impossible for them to move on (La Capra 1999: 698). La Capra, much like Freud, sees melancholia as a

> characteristic of an arrested process in which the depressed, self-berating, and traumatized self, locked in compulsive repetition, is possessed by the past, faces a future of impasses, and remains narcissistically identified with the lost object (La Capra 1999: 713).

The Albs are paralysed and caught in a melancholic loop, reliving the glorified past endlessly. Thousands years after they had to abandon their lands, they still keep on chanting and dancing to the songs invented by the first refugees from the ice. The songs sung daily refer to the lost splendour and some idealised, yet hardly probable future to come after the ice melts. The distinction between the past, present and future seems not to matter to them. The Albs live completely absorbed in the past glory and are probably the most dysfunctional society Mara and Dann encounter on their way (Carter 2004: 19).

By portraying such a grim vision on European heritage and on Europe's future, and placing Africa at the centre of her narrative, Lessing forces her readers to abandon a safe and frequently taken for granted Eurocentric vision of the world. She also shows that history is a process and that existing power structures are susceptible to change. Lessing makes her readers aware that history is a cycle and that the acceptance of the present and the past are preconditions of any progress. The past is to be learnt from, but no one should be obsessively attached to it. Much like trauma, only by coming to terms with what happened can one envision a constructive and possible future.

5.2. Jeffrey Alexander: Cultural Trauma

Jeffrey Alexander, American sociologist, instead of looking at trauma from a point of view of an individual only, applies the concept to a wider collective. He chooses this wider perspective because, as he claims, neither remembering nor trauma appears in a social vacuum. Alexander focuses on the concept of cultural trauma which he defines as follows in his article "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma"

> Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (Alexander et al. 2004: 1).

Alexander holds that events are not intrinsically traumatic but that they rather begin to be perceived as traumatic through a process of social mediation. The opposite is also true: a possibly traumatic collective experience does not necessarily have to be viewed as an example of cultural trauma. It is the process of social mediation that holds the power of defining events as culturally traumatic. It may occur at the time when the trauma unfolds as well as afterwards. He emphasises that a traumatic status is ascribed to an event not necessarily because of an actual harm inflicted on a community, but rather due to the common belief that a given phenomena affected collective identity in a destructive way. Hence, the socio-cultural process involved in the creation of cultural trauma depends on human agency and is affected by power structures in play. Alexander describes the process as follows:

> Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors 'decide' to represent social pain as fundamental to their sense of who they are, where they came from and where they want to go (Alexander et al. 2004: 11).

Alexander applies Weber's concept of *carrier groups* to cultural trauma and defines it as "the collective agents of the trauma process" (Alexander et al. 2004: 11). Carrier groups are responsible for retrospective narrative to become a part of the public sphere. Their members need to be endowed in discursive talents to be capable of

articulating their claims in an effective way. Some scholars claim that the re-writing and re-working of the past are more likely to succeed if transmitted within high-prestige and socially recognised groups and organisations (Schudson in Misztal 2003: 12), whereas Alexander suggests that the carrier groups do not necessarily have to be elites, but can be composed of members of marginalised classes as well. Alexander analyses trauma, its construction and transmission in terms of discourse and compares the creation of cultural trauma to telling a new story. The aim of this storytelling is for a carrier group to persuade the wider audience that they too have been traumatised. According to the author, there are four factors necessary in the process of creating a new master narrative of cultural trauma. The nature of the pain, that is, what exactly happened, as well as the identity of the victim both need to be specified. Furthermore, the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience has to be established, and finally, the responsibility for the traumatic event needs to be attributed thus specifying the identity of the perpetrator (Alexander et al. 2004: 12-15). Cultural trauma leads to a revision of collective identity which in turn means the re-writing and re-interpreting of the collective past. After the reconstruction of the collective identity, the lessons that can be drawn from the traumatic experience are objectified through the construction of monuments, museums and memorials. Hence, a new collective identity is based on new rituals and on places that acquire a special new meaning. The experience of cultural trauma is by no means forgotten by the community but with time it evokes a different, less emotional, more measured response: it starts to serve as a crucial tool for resolving potential social problems. Moreover, to quote Alexander:

> By allowing members of wider publics to participate in the pain of the others, cultural traumas broaden the realm of social understanding and sympathy, and they provide powerful avenues for new forms of social incorporation (Alexander et al. 2004: 24).

For Alexander, each society needs to recognise the other society's trauma and be empathetic. Only in this way will societies foster solidarity and will not let others suffer alone.

Cultural Trauma in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Powers*

Powers focuses on a part of the Western Shore consisting of the City States with slaves. It follows Gavir, a boy slave, on his journey of not only self-discovery but also of social growth. Gavir and his sister Sallo are servants in the house of a noble family in the city of Etra. Slaves are either captured in raids or battles, or bred at home. They have no legal rights, cannot marry or claim children. Almost all slave children are interchanged as presents within the noble classes. Religion is based on the worship of ancestors. Slaves, however, can only pay tribute to the ancestors of the family that owns them.

Gavir and his older sister Sallo were captured as little children and have been slaves ever since. It is the only life they know. The house of Arcamand to which they belong is believed to treat their slaves considerably better than other houses: slaves are well fed, educated and not overexploited. Gavir and Sallo are completely devoted and loyal to their masters whom they refer to as their Father and Mother. Gavir idealises them, trusts them completely and does not question their position. He says: "A [slave] mother may believe the child she bore is hers, but property can't own property; we belong to the Family, the Mother is our mother and the Father is our father. I understood all that" (*Powers* loc. 614). Many slaves in City States share this view and do not consider their situation undesirable. This position is most common among the slaves who were born into slavery, were captured as very young children and finally the ones who have spent many years enslaved. All of them lack memories of a different life, or their memories have already faded and thus they cannot establish any comparison

between their situation and the possible alternatives outside the world known to them. Adult Gavir admits that he saw his experience in Arcamand "[…] as if it were the only way things could possibly be. Children see the world this way. So do most slaves. Freedom is largely a matter of seeing that there are alternatives" (*Powers* loc. 376).

As mentioned above, Alexander does not consider events in themselves as traumatic. They are ascribed this status through the process of social mediation initiated by carrier groups. Gavir and the majority of slaves in the House of Arcamand do not consider themselves to be victims of any traumatic experience and they take their position for granted. Given their fairly comfortable existence with basic needs covered and having nothing to compare it to, they do not regard their lives as undesirable. It is only when the Masters' son kills an innocent slave child in a fit of unjustified rage that Gavir and other slaves in the house begin to doubt. The foundations on which Gavir's world has been constructed, start to crack. He is tormented with doubts and decides to turn to Everra, a loyal slave responsible for teaching at the House. Gavir looks up to him, and the teacher also holds him very dear. They both share a passion for knowledge, literature, learning and teaching. Everra however, does not approve of modern writers and more progressive ways of thinking, but cherishes the past and tradition of Etra. He also worships the Mother and the Father, accepts all their decisions without ever questioning them. The answer Gavir obtains is a passionate speech: "Born wild as you were, a slave as you are, as I am, without family yet you've been […] given all you need – shelter and food, great Ancestors […] and the learning. You have been given trust. The sacred gift. Our family trusts us, Gavir. […] Behind you, in the wilderness you came from, there's nothing for you" (*Powers* loc. 374). He belittles the importance of Gavir's heritage. Sallo, Gavir's sister has no recollections of their past from before the kidnapping. The House is the only reality she remembers. Gavir however, has a rare

gift attributed to the tribe they come from: the Marshes people. Apart from having an excellent eidetic memory, he is also capable of remembering certain events from his very early childhood, from the time before they were kidnapped. Moreover, he is endowed with a gift of premonition, which he calls remembering. At times he has very clear visions of events to come which seem to him as true and real as the world around him. Both types of memory make him much more curious than his sister and compel him to question the reality around him. Contrary to his complacent sister, he longs to explore, see other cities, learn and also discover his roots (*Powers* 107-8, 147). Memory then stirs doubts and allows him to contextualise.

Le Guin does not disapprove of Sallo, Everra or other slaves who cannot visualise another reality. *Powers* can be read as a confirmation of her standpoint from the article "A War without End" (2004) in which she says "We will not know our own injustice if we cannot imagine justice. We will not be free if we do not imagine freedom. We cannot demand that anyone try to attain justice and freedom who has not had a chance to imagine them as attainable" (Le Guin 2004a: 218). She does not judge, does not try to present easily definable characters, there are few true heroes, even fewer true villains. As in other novels, also in *The Annals of the Western Shore*, she avoids simplistic labelling and classification.

Gavir's concerns and doubts grow even stronger during the siege of the city. He is sent, together with some educated slaves from other households, to help move precious manuscripts from a temple to a safer location. Other learned slaves introduce Gavir to a whole new world of modern literature Everra does not approve of. Gavir is especially influenced by Orrec Caspro's hymn "Liberty" and a poem "Cosmologies". He hears stories about savagely repressed slave revolts, communities of runaway slaves living in the forests and he realises that not all the slaves are as loyal and complacent as

the ones in his household. Although Gavir remains loyal to his masters, he admits that something has changed "For the words liberty, freedom, had come to have a presence, radiance in my mind, dominating it, like the great, bright stars" (*Powers* loc. 1654). He becomes more conscious of the inequalities and injustice riddling Etra.

The slaves Gavir meets during the siege act as a carrier group involved in the process of construction of cultural trauma. Owing to them, the first steps necessary in this process are clearly established. The nature of the traumatic event is defined, namely the institution of slavery. Furthermore, the identity of victims is established. Gavir is made aware that the community of slaves stretches far beyond the city of Etra. He realises that slaves are kept all through the Western Shore and that they do not come from one particular tribe or zone. Another factor necessary in the social creation of cultural trauma is defining the perpetrator. Some slaves are convinced that the whole system is faulty and that the masters are to blame. Nevertheless, many others, Gavir included, are not ready to accept this. Alexander compares the process of construction of cultural trauma to composing a new story based on a new understanding of the past and the present (Alexander et al. 2004: 12). Even though Gavir refuses to acknowledge the masters' responsibility in creating a society based on injustice, the conversations he has with slaves give rise to a slow process of re-writing and re-viewing both the past and the present. He begins to realise that his past is not as peaceful as he was made to believe. For traumatic experience to become cultural trauma the same process of re-interpreting the past needs to be completed on a collective level. The oppressed group needs to understand the nature of subjugation and the wider collective needs to acknowledge the existence of the inflicted trauma. As the narrative unfolds, the reader is offered a few examples of such attempts.

After Gavir's sister is killed by the master's son in yet another fit of violence and his act goes unpunished, heartbroken Gavir escapes the House. Gavir can be seen as a Gulliver-like character or an observer from a classical utopia: on his way, he gets to know different communities and ways of life. However, contrary to the utopian observer, he does not remain impartial, but gets involved in the life of every group he encounters.

After Gavir escapes Etra, he first joins the Forest Brothers, a small group of runaway slaves, where he assumes the role of storyteller. While some of the community members engage actively in the discussions prompted by his stories, the leaders are resentful of Gavir's popularity. They mock the gatherings and keep on expressing their utter contempt for anything related to knowledge, books and learning. Gavir does not understand their attitude: "How was a tale of warfare and heroism weakening the men who listened to it so hungrily every night? Didn't it draw us together in real brotherhood?" (*Powers* loc. 2423). Only after some time does he become aware that the leaders are afraid that Gavir's popularity might weaken their position in the group. He realises that the leaders of the Forest Brothers are no different from masters: they crave power and recognition. Although they are aware that slavery is unfair, they cannot visualise a life without it. They are dissatisfied with being the oppressed ones as much as with not having enough power over others. They are small-minded and cannot see that the whole system is unjust and in need of change. Hence, Forest Brothers cannot act as a carrier group, but they make Gavir conscious of the fact that slavery can take on many forms and that it is not limited to the relation between slaves and masters in City States only.

The carrier group needs to raise awareness among the traumatised, making them conscious of the suffered trauma. According to Alexander, it is achieved by

> telling a new story. Yet this storytelling is, at the same time, a complex and multivalent symbolic process that is contingent, highly contested, and sometimes highly polarizing. For the wider audience to become persuaded that they, too, have become traumatized by an experience or an event, the carrier group needs to engage in successful meaning work (Alexander et al. 2004: 12).

In order to be able to achieve such a goal and persuade the oppressed collective of the experienced trauma, the carrier group first needs to be able to communicate their message in a compelling manner. They need to understand the nature of the suffered trauma and then, be capable of explaining it to the others. One of the settlements Gavir finds on his way comes close to reaching this objective.

After leaving the disappointing community of Forest Brothers, Gavir encounters Barnavites, another forest settlement of escaped slaves. It is led by Barna, a charismatic runaway slave. The colony is presented at the very beginning as a utopian project granting everyone freedom, free choice, shelter and care as long as they contribute to the community. Barna appears to be open to suggestions and new ideas and therefore Gavir talks to him about the importance of education, especially teaching children. Education and dialogue are of vital importance in Le Guin's fiction and she treats them as "[…] keys to achieving the networking and solidarity necessary for any successful long term cultural movement" (Lindow 2012: 256). Education could prove to be of great value in the process of raising awareness among the escaped salves and making them understand the trauma they experienced. Gavir, although he is not yet fully aware of the scope of slavery, does understand the value of learning. However, his efforts to set up a school in the settlement are futile. In spite of his initial support, Barna fails to help Gavir to bring his plan to term. Additionally, the settlers show little interest in learning as it seems to offer no immediate gain.

Although Barna dismisses Garir's ideas related to education, he embraces his gift of storytelling. Much like Orrec in *Voices,* Gavir serves as a bridge between two different worlds: the community of uneducated and mostly illiterate slaves and the

world of literature and learning. Storytelling sessions are held almost every night. Storytelling and listening play a crucial role in Le Guin's novels. She uses stories to convey wisdom not only in the *Annals* trilogy but also in her last novel from the Hainish cycle, *The Telling* (2000). She treats telling and listening as important factors in strengthening the bonds within the community (Thrall 2010: 203). Le Guin believes that "Oral performance is a powerful bonding force, which while it is occurring bonds people physically and psychically" (Le Guin 2004b: 199). In all three novels in *Annals* series, stories have also an ethical function as by giving examples they invite listeners to ponder on what is right and wrong. While the transformative power of storytelling manages to bind the community together, raise awareness and initiate a constructive dialogue in *Voices*, it fails to achieve a similar outcome in *Powers*. Storytelling does not prove efficient as a tool to make a slave community conscious of their unfavourable situation and thus does not trigger change.

Although storytelling forms a vital part in all the communities Gavir visits, it never manages to involve all its members. Male slaves in the Houses are separated from women and little children and therefore slaves have very few opportunities to interact. In the house of Arcamand all children are educated together and it is at school where they listen to the poems and tales Everra finds appropriate. However, as soon as they grow old enough to take on more responsibilities, their teaching period comes to an end. Therefore, there is no time or space where all the slaves, or both slaves and masters can gather and listen to the stories which would, in turn, strengthen community bonds. Gavir's native tribe, the Marshes People also maintain a strict division between women and men. They lead separate lives and meet only on scarce occasions. Only women tell stories and sing story-songs. These activities are held in contempt by the male part of the community. Stories of scared nature are told by men and prohibited for women.

Because of such a tradition Gavir cannot share his tales with anyone. The act of storytelling serves as a dividing force rather than a unifying one in Gavir's home community.

Cultural trauma needs to be recognised, according to Alexander, not only by the victims themselves, but also by the wider public. The recognition of trauma by the oppressed is the first step and leads to a process where their collective identity can be reconstructed. Subsequently, the oppressed can draw lessons from the traumatic experience and use it constructively. The process of social mediation resulting in general awareness of the existence of a particular collective trauma among other communities is equally important. This may allow, according to Alexander, "[…] collectivities to define new forms of moral responsibility and to redirect the course of political action" (Alexander et al. 2004: 27). Cultural trauma may on the one hand, lead to healing the wounds caused by traumatic experience and, on the other, allow bonds to strengthen between different communities; bonds based on social understanding, empathy and sharing responsibilities. *Powers* does not offer an ultimate solution to the problem of slavery and it does not feature a complete process of cultural trauma construction. The class of masters and other free citizens in the City States never comprehend the injustice of the system they built. Runaway slaves, a possible carrier group, fail to raise awareness among them. Instead of establishing a dialogue, they opt for more violent solutions. The sociocultural process of the construction of cultural trauma is, according to Alexander, "the result of an exercise of human agency, of the successful imposition of a new system of cultural classification. This cultural process is deeply affected by power structures and by the contingent skills of reflexive social agents" (Alexander et al. 2004: 10). The existing power structures in *Powers* make it hardly possible for the slaves' trauma to be recognised by any other social group in the

City States. The masters are too powerful and the system they live in is far too comfortable for them to even try to notice the need for reforms. The slaves led by Barna in turn, resort to planning a violent rebellion during which they intend to imprison and kill most of the masters. They want revenge and after that, they want to rule. The future they picture is all but too similar to the present they so desperately long to change. Discrimination and subjugation are present even in their community although it is seemingly based on free choice and equality. The status of women there is no different from the one they occupy in the City States. Barna, like the masters, abuses power stemming from his position and is sympathetic only as long as the others do as he commands. He longs for Gavir to tell stories and recite poems, but he fails to learn from them. Moreover, Barna refuses to listen to suggestions that Gavir might join other runaway slaves in their efforts to gain more support among slaves outside their community. Gavir observes that his gift for storytelling might be very effective in making others aware of the social injustice and inequality on which the City States are based. However, Barna and the Barnavites treat Gavir's tales mainly as light entertainment to pass time. The Barnavites fail as a carrier group as they do not manage to construct a new narrative that would become, as Alexander describes it,

> a claim to some fundamental injury, an exclamation of the terrifying profanation of some sacred value, a narrative about a horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution (Alexander et al. 2004: 11).

They do not succeed in involving the whole slave community in their project. They also fail to establish a relation between the trauma group and wider audience and most importantly, instead of trying to establish dialogue, they resort to a violent uprising. Obviously, for a dialogue to be initiated, both parties need to be willing to participate in it. In *Powers*, unlike in *Voices*, neither the oppressed nor the oppressors seem to be ready for this.

Le Guin is quite reluctant to show only one possible solution in her novels. Nevertheless, if her characters reach a solution, the path leading to it is through dialogue and negotiation, never through violence. One possible reason for such a stance is Le Guin's devotion to Taoism. Le Guin has been a follower of Taoism for many years. She translated into English *Tao Te Ching*, one of its fundamental texts. There is extensive scholarship on Le Guin and Taoism (cf. e.g. Lindow 2006, 2012, Thrall 2010 or Somay 2010). James Thrall in his discussion of *The Telling* observes that this novel, like Taoism, offers a big range of possible life choices and paths to follow. It is plural, open and relative: "Rather than offer dogmatic directions as to what is either good or beautiful, the wide-ranging stories of the Telling demand ongoing efforts at discernment, and they often resist easy assessment by reason or common sense" (Thrall 2010: 203). The same can be said about *The Annals of the Western Shore*. Each novel features many possible solutions and only the ones based on injustice and violence are definitely discarded. In Taoism non-action is valued over the need to win at all costs, compassion and humility over aggressive approach and arrogance. Le Guin, like the Taoists, holds war and violence in deep contempt. Frederic Bender in his article on Taoism and Utopia mentions that in Taoism aggressive warfare is renounced altogether. He adds that, to engage in war is seen as one of the biggest misfortunes as it destroys compassion. War also promotes emotions of superiority over others (Bender 1990: 137). In *The Annals of the Western Shore,* instead of opting for one definite solution, Le Guin takes the readers on a journey through her universe and shows them an array of possibilities, approaches and ways. This is what she says about her texts:

> Utopia, and Dystopia, are intellectual places. I write from passion and playfulness. My stories are neither dire warnings nor blueprints for what we ought to do. […] To me the important thing is not to offer any specific hope or betterment but, by offering an imagined not persuasive reality, to dislodge my mind, as so the reader's mind, from the lazy, timorous habit of thinking that the way we live now is the only way people can live. It is that inertia that allows the institutions of injustice to remain unquestioned (Le Guin 2004a: 218).

Le Guin, like other writers of dystopia and utopia, forces her readers to abandon a stagnant and taken for granted viewpoint. Instead of familiar situations, she imagines various alternatives, allowing her readers to put their reality in perspective. The readers of *Powers* are shown a world in which most members of the oppressed group are initially unaware of inequalities of the system and trauma they are subjected to. Many slaves, including Gavir, do not question their place in a society. Only after Gavir begins to participate in the construction of cultural trauma, does he slowly start to discover the injustice of his position and that of other slaves. Young readers are thus made aware of the fact that their own status should not be taken for granted but rather carefully analysed. Gavir and young readers are taken on a journey which leads not only to self-discovery, but equally important, to a recognition of power structures present in the society. While children's literature focuses on learning about the protagonists' sense of selves and their personal power, young adult literature also emphasises the understanding of existing social forces (Seelinger 2000: loc 120, 188, 349). Gavir tries to comprehend his own power by being caught up in power struggles within various institutions and groups he encounters on his way.

Powers cannot be treated as an example of a narrative in which the construction of cultural trauma by the oppressed carrier group leads to recognition of discrimination by a wider collective. None of the Masters takes on the responsibility for the participation in constructing and maintaining a culture based on prejudice. Failure to acknowledge the suffering of others prevents them from "achieving a moral stance" and "restricts solidarity" (Alexander et al. 2004: 1). Nevertheless, although slavery is not abolished and the Barnavites are defeated, the novel enables its readers to observe gradual, even though not complete, empowerment initiated by slaves' recognition of suffered trauma and injustice. The novel shows not only power *over*, but also power *to*

and thus demonstrates the possibility of empowerment coming from within the oppressed group. Le Guin's narrative exemplifies Foucault's observation (Foucault 1978: 36-49, 1979: 195-228) that power can be both liberating and oppressive. Additionally, it shows that sometimes gaining power through internal struggle is more empowering than accepting a seemingly safe and comfortable position within existing structures.

Conclusions

According to some critics (Kidd 2005, Smith 2005), trauma narratives for children and young adults perpetuate the myth of an innocent child. Smith observes that there are basically two roles ascribed to children and young adults in this type of literature. On the one hand, the young protagonists are pictured as the ultimate victims of trauma who have to be protected by adults, and on the other, as the ultimate survivors of trauma, who manage to endure owing to their resilience and innocence, and serve as a model for adults. The portrayal of young protagonists in the narratives in the corpus differs substantially from the one mentioned by Kidd and Smith. Although all the protagonists live in oppressive societies, they manage to challenge them thus freeing themselves and sometimes improving conditions in their communities. Children and young adults are portrayed as saviours by Lowry in her quartet. Although this presentation is idealised to a certain extent, they still make difficult, socially oriented decisions and serve as examples not only to adults, but also their peers. Le Guin and Condie feature young protagonists who engage actively in the fight against the oppressive regimes and cannot be described as powerless victims. Their survival is not due to their innocence and resilience but rather to their informed choices, calculated risks and belief in the other

and themselves. Lessing's protagonists are most affected by the environment they grow up in. However, they also manage to survive and find their place in the world.

Eric L. Tribunella in his 2010 publication on trauma in children's literature observes that "most of the texts in which trauma figures most prominently are those texts that can be describes as realist ones" (2010: xxx). He states further that the conviction that realism, contrary to fantasy, is more useful for didactic purposes in children's and young adult literature enjoys a long tradition in literary criticism. I do not fully agree with either of the statements. As has been observed in this chapter, trauma is very much present in the narratives in my corpus, which cannot be classified as realist. I believe that not only realist literature, but also fantasy, science-fiction, dystopian and utopian narratives can prove to be effective for the instruction of younger readers. I am well aware that writers are conditioned by the socio-cultural context, which is further reflected in the novels. However, as Kenneth Kidd claims in the article mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the very fact that non-realist literature, dystopian literature included, does not refer to any particular historical event, might prove to be liberating for the readers regardless of their background. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, dystopian literature is uniquely suited to present conflicted characters in transition. In the analysed texts, personal and collective traumas of the protagonists, as well as the oppressive environment they inhabit, are not presented as impediments to progress. The hardships they go through are portrayed as empowering and necessary to achieve maturity. These narratives confirm Tribunella's observation that children's and young adult literature emphasise that to be mature is to be wounded (2010: xiv). Although his observations are based on a different corpus, the same stance can be applied to the narratives chosen for this dissertation. They feature both personal and collective trauma which makes the reader aware that traumatic events can affect not only individuals but

also communities and nations, which is of utter importance in the present political panorama.

The authors of the novels in the corpus include a variety of events causing pain and anguish on a personal level. In *Powers* Le Guin features school bullying when Gavir is intimidated and physically harassed by other classmates led by one of Masters' sons. However, this event forms part of the oppression of slaves by their masters and cannot be treated as an example of school bullying only. Sexual abuse is present in *Powers* and in Lessing's narratives. Unfortunately, Le Guin focuses more on Gavir's suffering after he loses his sister than on exploring the oppression suffered by female slaves and violence against women, which are the underlying causes of Sallo's death. Similarly, the female voice is partially silenced in Le Guin's series. Mara's death in childbirth makes her voice be heard only through Dann, through his trauma and his mourning. Control over the female body and reproduction is featured in the *Ifrik* Series, as well as in Lowry's *The Giver* and *Son*. Mara needs to choose between staying pregnant, and being able to go north to find a safe place for Dann and herself. Her decision to have an abortion is not further explored and the distress stemming from losing her baby is overshadowed in the narrative by the sibling's pursuit of safe haven. The absence of a space for female voices and mourning can also be noticed in Lowry's *The Giver* where almost no attention is given to birthmothers and their feelings after giving their children away. The authors' reluctance to devote more space to the topic of sexual abuse and birth control politics in the discussed young adult dystopias might be the result of the target audience they have in mind, which are perhaps more receptive to other themes. That is why I find the fact that Lowry in *Son,* a book for young adults, chooses to give such importance to the voice of Claire and through her, to the mother's perspective, surprising but also innovative and worth further study.

Despite featuring a variety of distressing situations, the one traumatic event present in almost all the narratives is death of a beloved family member: a parent or a sibling. Interestingly, these are brothers who mourn their sisters, not the other way round. The loss of the sibling is portrayed as far more traumatic than the loss of a parent or parents. Such a presentation of trauma after the death of a sibling can be caused by several factors. First of all, all the siblings in the novels were orphaned in early childhood. With no parents and with other relatives also absent, the siblings become the centre of the universe for one another. The bonds between them are very strong, as they are the only known relations left. As a result, after the death of the sister, the surviving brother is left with no other family members to fall back on. This creates great despair, feelings of abandonment and loneliness. However, the protagonists encounter people willing to listen to them and thus help them cope with the loss. As has been observed earlier, these are women who play the role of the sympathetic listener in the narratives.

The loss of parents is also portrayed as deeply painful, but not as traumatic as the death of the sibling. When Orrec and Memer lose their mothers, they have the support of their family and friends. Although the death of their mothers is painful, the fact that they can share their suffering and count on people close to them, seems to help ease their pain. When Mara and Dann lose both their parents, they are given almost no space or time to mourn. The same happens to Ky. They are either forced to forget their parents and the past or cannot talk about the tragic events. Although sharing their pain is hardly possible for them, they are not left alone. Ky is adopted by his aunt and uncle, and Mara and Dann have one another and Daima to take care of them. Ky later finds a patient and sympathetic listener in Cassia which helps him heal the wounds. In *The Giver,* Jonas realises before leaving the community, that his family is in fact an artificial and emotionless construct. However, it does not make his decision any easier, as he

does have feelings for them. The company of Gabriel eases his anxiety as he becomes genuinely attached to the baby. Gabriel is still too small to have been indoctrinated by the Society. Therefore, the emotions he experiences, contrary to the ones experienced by all the other family members, are still authentic and unspoilt. Gabriel becomes as important to Jonas as his own family. In Lessing's narrative, Griot, contrary to all the other protagonists who are also orphaned, is left with no support of either siblings, or other family members. He never manages to face, or talk about, the traumatic loss.

Although the narratives present an array of possible coping mechanisms, they all emphasise the importance of the support given by either family or community in the mourning process. In this way, not only do they show what steps to take in case of loss, but also how to help those who suffer. Therefore, they portray loss and suffering as an important part of learning and, at the same time, they highlight the possibility of growth through helping others. The narratives do not promote one type of mourning. Some characters go through melancholia / encrypment / incorporation and then reach the phase of introjection and manage to detach themselves from the lost relative(s). Others, like Dann, never fully recover from the trauma, in spite of all the support they receive. Lessing, through the figure of Griot, also shows the effects of not being able to face the trauma and the past. This leads to a numbing of feelings. Lowry reaches the same conclusion, but at the level of society when the community refuses to come to terms with the painful past.

The novels, like dystopian narratives, feature oppression not only on personal but also on collective levels. Although the authors take different approaches to solve conflicts, young protagonists always play an important role in it. Lowry's young protagonists in *The Giver Quartet* are faced with difficult choices when they have to decide between their own wellbeing and helping their society. All the main characters,

Jonas, Kira, Matty and Gabriel, make informed choices and prioritise the community above themselves. In this way, traumatised societies can start anew. Le Guin in *The Annals of the Western Shore* series takes a different position. Instead of trying to improve their societies, Orrec, Gry (in *Gifts* volume), and Gavir, walk away from their abusive communities in search of more inclusive spaces. *Voices* and *Powers* feature attempts to introduce changes in which young protagonists actively participate. Like in Le Guin's narratives for adults, any such attempt driven by violence fails. Le Guin shows that dialogue, reconciliation and an understanding of the past are the only ways to leave the collective traumas of the past behind and begin to construct less oppressive communities. Condie in *Matched Trilogy* presents society after some traumatic event, whose government continues to oppress its citizens. The initial solution proposed by Condie is a violent uprising in which young protagonists participate actively. In the end, like in Le Guin's *Voices*, the aggressive approach fails and is subsequently rejected in favour of collaboration between both sides. Lessing's overall attitude to collective oppression and trauma is similar. The world she pictures mirrors in an uncanny way the present-day reality of many regions. Lessing envisions the world succumbed to war and civil unrest with thousands of people escaping the violence which has destroyed their homelands. They are all on the move in search of safety and lost dignity. Like Le Guin and Condie, Lessing rejects initial plans to build a new community by conquering neighbouring nations. Instead, the inhabitants of the northern regions accept the first wave of refugees and work with them to construct a society which benefits from the natural resources of the area, and the knowledge and experience of the migrants. The newly-formed state with Dann and Griot at the helm, offers shelter to people fleeing from war and the droughts of the south. Lessing, through the voice of sceptical Dann

asks a powerful question: “The place is wonderful, Griot. But are we?” to which Griot answers: “Just wait and see” (*The Story* loc. 3113).

> To have a sense of history is, above all, to have a sense of one's own humanity, and without it we are nothing. For the child, it is a step toward an awareness of other people, which is the most vital step toward being not just an adult, but a mature adult.
>
> Penelope Lively "Children and Memory" 1973

CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

Utopianism was described by Lyman Tower Sargent in his 1994 article "Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" as "social dreaming – the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live" (Sargent 1994: 3). Both utopia and dystopia are expressions of anxiety about the present and the future. Therefore, YAD, like all the manifestations of utopianism, can reveal a lot about present day concerns, current debates and hopes for the future.

Young adult dystopias analysed for this project share many preoccupations. Their authors are apprehensive about the state of the environment, limitations to the freedom of expression, constant surveillance and excess of control by the ruling organisations, a growing uniformity and lack of choice, a disappearance of the difference between private and public as well as a numbing of the emotions.

Although dystopian writing for adults is not undergoing any spectacular revival, YAD has clearly been gaining in importance, not only among readers and publishers, but also literary critics. There are multiple reasons for such an interest in YAD among the readers. Teenagers and young adults alike are fascinated by the dystopian imagination as it lets them access worlds of exciting adventures, journeys into the unknown and escape from their day-to-day existence. However, the worlds featured in YAD are only seemingly different from the reality teenagers face every day. Part of

such an appeal of this genre is that it actually mirrors struggles young adults have to cope with every day at schools and outside them. Like the protagonists of YAD, they need to learn how to navigate in highly controlled environments, how to adapt to new circumstances or negotiate their place within various power structures. Young adults see the transformations they are going through reflected in YAD. However, the choices the protagonists are to deal with often seem much clearer than the ones readers of YAD novels face in real life. Therefore, YAD shows reality which is complex and challenging, but less confusing than everyday life. Moreover, even though YAD portrays worlds seemingly worse than the real world, it still manages to inspire hope and it almost never ends on a totally dark note. The protagonists may commit mistakes, feel overwhelmed and uncertain, but at the end of the narrative there is always the hope for a better future. In this way, young adult dystopian writing offers stability and optimism. YAD also provides a much needed space for the marginalised, the different and the misrecognised. All these factors make YAD such a popular genre among teenagers. What cannot be ignored, however, is the influence of marketing and ties with the film industry which have definitely had a considerable impact on the recent popularity of the genre.

YAD, apart from all the above-mentioned debates, also features concerns related to memory. Memory creates a direct link between people's past and their present. Memory is in a process of constant change, influenced by the dialectic of remembering and forgetting; it is not static and can be modified. Consequently, the past and memory are used by the regimes portrayed in dystopias for adults and teenagers alike to strengthen their position. In young adult dystopias selected for this dissertation, it is achieved through a variety of techniques: the control over emotions and social frameworks of memory, suppression of creativity, sanctioning of old traditions and

introduction of new rituals recognised by the state, the rewriting of history and finally, by forcing the individuals to forget their personal past and by controlling their collective memory.

Memory and the past are also shown in the novels as possible sites of resistance. Memory poses danger to the ones in control as it confirms the existence of an alternative past, different from the one offered by coercive regimes. In the discussed novels, both individual and collective memory serve as oppositional strategies in defying the oppressive regimes. At the same time, the past plays a significant role in all the novels. Counterhistory and countermemories are used to challenge coercive configurations and help the subjugated in the process of liberation. Additionally, in the *Ifrik* Series, *The Giver* and *Son*, as well as in *Voices*, the past serves as a blueprint for the reconstruction and improvement of fallen social formations.

The fact that young adult dystopias draw attention to this twofold usage of memory and the past is very significant. This treatment of the topic builds awareness of the importance of history, heritage, and collective as well as personal memory among their young readers. The readers of YAD may find the genre one of the first sites where such an importance is attached to the past and memory. Their age, contrary to adult readers of dystopia, can make it more difficult for adolescents to draw from their personal experience, which is in most of cases, still limited to a certain extent. YAD might prompt them to ponder over the importance of the past, and the role history and memory play in both maintaining and challenging power structures.

The relation between forgetting and remembering, as well as between the past and the present is by no means simple. The two concepts, like the Greek deities Lethe and Mnemosyne, are interrelated and complement one another. YAD analysed in this

project show what the outcome on the one hand, of too close an attachment to the past, and on the other, of its rejection, can be.

Gathering Blue, Gifts and *Voices* feature societies which value the past greatly and have very strong ties to their heritage. Their utter devotion to the past, disregard for any other culture and rejection of change all lead to intolerance and violence. The communities portrayed in the novels are not inclusive and treat aggression as a part of solution to both external and internal conflicts. The Marsh People in *Powers,* and the Mahondis residing in Chelops and the Albs in *Mara and Dann* serve in turn as examples of communities in which profound reverence for the past leads to regressive, restorative nostalgia. Instead of progress and development, the attachment to history and the past leads to stagnation, abandonment of any will to progress and immature attitudes towards the present and the future. The authors' portrayal of all these communities is a warning against too strong an attachment to the past and an uncritical approach to it.

Nevertheless, the novels offer also alternative scenarios. *The Giver, Matched Trilogy,* the Masters in *Powers* and several communities in the *Ifrik* Series show possible results of neglecting and rejecting the past, collective memory and part of the history. *The Giver* and *Matched Trilogy* feature societies whose lives on the one hand are most of the time carefree, safe, and devoid of problems and struggles. On the other hand, the result of such an attitude towards the past is similar to the one offered in the novels discussed above which featured societies obsessed with it. In both cases, the lack of critical approach and of balance in the treatment of the past results in lethargy and additionally, a numbing of feelings. As communities in *Matched Trilogy, Powers* and the *Ifrik* Series show, rejection of the past and collective memory can also perpetuate intolerance.

YAD and critical dystopias for adults alike do not end in despair. Quite the contrary, they "maintain a utopian core at their center, a locus of hope that contributes to deconstructing tradition and reconstructing alternatives" (Baccolini 2000: 13). All the discussed series of novels end with establishment of a utopian community. All the communities manage to maintain a balance between a respect for the past and collective memory, and its critical assessment. Lois Lowry envisions a settlement in which the past and the memory of it form a crucial part not only in the life of the community but also of all its inhabitants. Even though they come from different oppressive societies, they do not reject their past memories and experience but rather choose to learn from them. Similarly, Le Guin leads all her protagonists to the city of Urdile where slavery is prohibited, and learning and education fostered. Old poets and history are studied along with modern writers and present day customs. The past and the present, tradition and progress are all embraced. The balance between them is treated as a precondition of tolerance and a secure future. In Condie's *Matched Trilogy* it is owing to the joint effort of opposing fractions as well as to the knowledge from the past that the cure for the deadly plague is encountered. A new society is slowly being constructed and the foundations for it are built on an acceptance of the past and the present, forgiveness and a fundamental right to remember. Lessing ends her *Ifrik* Series with a community of people from various backgrounds and places who learn how to live together in peace, respecting their complex heritage and drawing from the knowledge of the past. The main building in the settlement has an inscription which reads "There was once, long ago, a shared culture covering the whole world: remember, we have only fragments of it" (*The Story* loc. 3151). Lessing seems to exhibit nostalgia for more a uniform culture but, at the same time, shows the advantages of multiculturalism and the importance of

tradition and the past. All the authors opt for all inclusive societies which do not reject the past and history but approach it critically.

The protagonists of the novels discussed go through the journey of self discovery during which they become aware of the power relations present in their society and of the limitations imposed on citizens by those in power. The narratives emphasise the importance memory, history and the past play in society, but they also focus on the role of these issues for individuals. Although all the novels highlight the importance of coming to terms with one's past, there is no one uniform message transmitted on what position should be adopted. Some novels portray protagonists who after discovering their roots and heritage refuse to be defined by it. Le Guin's protagonists do not follow the expected path. Orrec and Gry, in *Gifts,* reject part of their heritage and leave oppressive homeland in search for more inclusive communities. Memer, in *Voices*, refuses to live her life as an interpreter of the oracle, a task performed by the members of her family for generations. She says "I was determined to speak for myself, not to be spoken through – to say what I would say, to take control" (*Voices* loc. 1720). Finally, Gavir in *Powers*, travels to his homeland only to discover that it is full of prejudice and rules he cannot accept. Like Orrec and Gry, he rejects his gift and chooses to pursue a different path, not determined by his past. Lessing's protagonists of the *Ifrik* Series also refuse to be defined by the past. When Mara and Dan finally discover their real identities, to their surprise, they feel unmoved. They realise that they are *Mara* and *Dann*, not princess Shahana and prince Shahmand. Dann says at the end of the first instalment: "Can we just stop talking about the past?" (*Mara and Dann* loc. 7931). The protagonists of Ally Condie's *Matched Trilogy*, contrary to Lessing's and Le Guin's characters, embrace their past. Cassia is proud to discover that both her grandparents formed part of the resistance. Ky also comes to terms with his

past and does not reject it. Lowry in her novels proposes a similar approach. All her main protagonists accept their heritage, their past and integrate their past experiences into their present and build their future on them.

The texts in my corpus expose their young readers to collective as well as personal trauma. The young adult dystopias under discussion do not try to suppress pain in attempts to protect their audience. Moreover, the authors feature a variety of events that result in trauma. On collective level, the texts include various ecological disasters, slavery, armed conflicts, hunger, violence against women or aggressive disputes between families. On a personal level, the novels feature death of parents, siblings and children, conflicts within the family, peer victimisation, forced labour or kidnapping. The loss of a sibling is presented as the most traumatic of all experiences the protagonists go through. The recovery from trauma is by no means portrayed as an easy process. The protagonists who suffer from personal trauma are not presented as ultimate victims or passive survivors; quite the contrary. They are shown to struggle and suffer but in most of the cases, they finally manage to come to terms with the disturbing memories. The narratives highlight the importance of the support given by either family or community in the mourning process. In this way, they portray loss and suffering as an important part of growing up and, at the same time, they show that it is possible to grow also through helping others. When it comes to trauma on a collective level, young protagonists are not mere observers. They take an active part in conflict solution and frequently opt for non-violent alternatives based on dialogue and reconciliation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are several areas of research stemming from this dissertation that I would like to focus on in the future:

1. The relation between memory and history in dystopian writing, both for adults and young readers. The distinction between these two concepts is far from simple. Up to the nineteenth century, there seemed to be little concern for distinguishing between the two and it was assumed that history simply started where memory ended. From then on, both concepts have been redefined and boundaries between them have ceased to be so clearly marked (Misztal 2003: 99-103). Which of the two is promoted in the texts, memory or history? Is there a distinction between the two concepts clearly marked in the texts? Do the texts reflect a recent tendency for memory to prevail over history?
2. Film adaptations of YAD. Which young adult dystopias are brought to the screen and why; which themes are included and which excluded in film adaptations; are the film rights bought before the books are finished/ started? Are there young dystopian novels commissioned by film companies and written with film adaptations in mind? If so, how does it influence the narrative?
3. The similarities and differences in representations of the past, history, memory and trauma in YAD and dystopian writing for adults.
4. Representations of second-generation memory in YAD. This field of research is closely related to Holocaust and trauma studies. The burden of remembering and passing on the knowledge of what happened during WWII is gradually being handed over to the children and grandchildren of survivors of the Shoah. Furthermore, second generation memory has recently evoked a lot of interest among scholars, not only in the field of history, but also in literature, memory and

psychology. One of the most prevalent themes reappearing in the scholarly publications on the topic is related to the memories of children of Holocaust survivors. Among the terms stemming from this research we can find 'Mémoire des cendres' (Fresco 1981 [1984]), absent memory (Fresco 1981 [1984], Fine 1988, 1998), postmemory (Hirsch 1992-3, 1997), belated memory and vicarious witnessing (Zeitlin 1998), prosthetic memory (Lindsberg 2004) and second generation memory (Ulanowicz 2013). All the concepts centre on children's relation to their parents' past and emphasise the vicariousness of children's memories. They focus either on the emptiness and absence of memories of the survivors or, quite the opposite, the invasive presence of the past in their children's lives. Both approaches prove to be equally important for my future analysis. I would like to explore representations of second generation memory in Lessing's *Ifirk* series, Le Guin's *The Annals of the Western Shore*. Additional texts would also be incorporated into the corpus.

5. Prosthetic memories and their representation in science-fiction cinema. The concept of *prosthetic memories*, coined by Alison Landsberg, can serve as a powerful tool in the analysis of identities of clones. Prosthetic memories are defined as any type of memories not experienced by an individual directly, and thus include those memories clones are provided with at the time of their creation. Recent dystopian science-fiction films would be used in the analysis: *The Island*, *Moon* and *Oblivion*, among others.

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The Annals of the Western Shore official website: http://www.ursulakleguin.com/Index-WesternShore.html

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Website: http://www.dorislessing.org/index.html

Doris Lessing Society website: https://dorislessingsociety.wordpress.com/

Mara and Dann. An Adventure. British edition: http://www.dorislessing.org/maraand.html

Mara and Dann. An Adventure. American edition:
http://www.dorislessing.org/mara.html
The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog.
British edition: http://www.dorislessing.org/thedann.html
The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog.
American edition: http://www.dorislessing.org/thegeneral.html

Lowry, Lois.
Official website: http://www.loislowry.com/
The Giver Quartet official website:
http://www.loislowry.com/index.php?option=com_djcatalog2&view=items&cid=4:the-quartet&cid=4:the-quartet&Itemid=185

Children’s and Young Adult Literature

Bologna Children’s Book Fair
http://www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it/en/the-best-venue-for-childrens-publishers-to-meet/878.html
Children’s Literature Association
http://www.childlitassn.org/
International Research Society for Children’s Literature
http://www.irscl.com/new_members.html

Utopian Studies

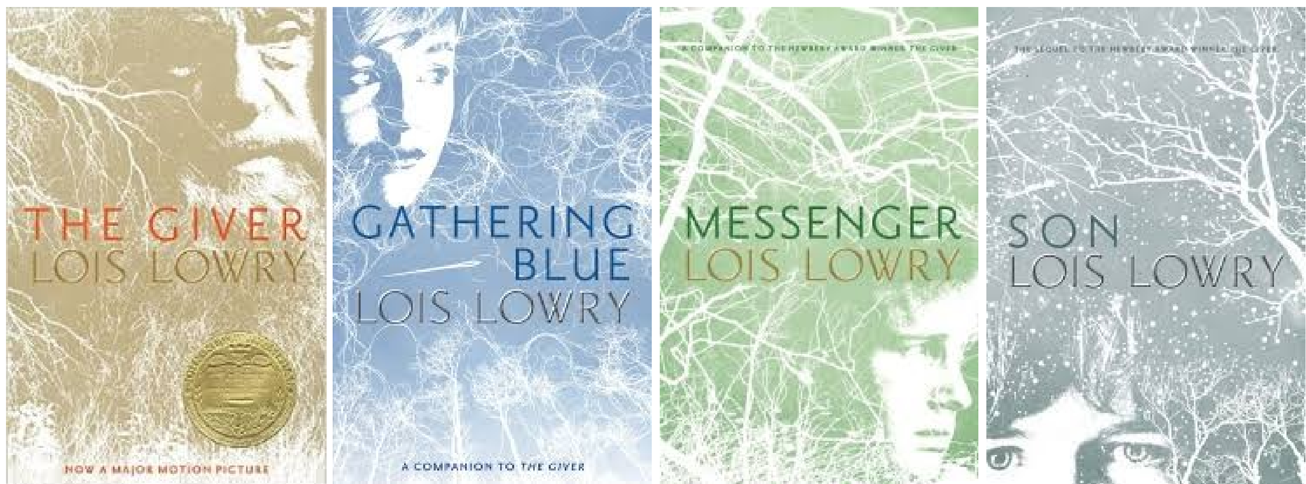
The Society for Utopian Studies
http://utopian-studies.org/
Utopian Studies Society
http://www.utopianstudieseurope.org/
Utopian Studies Journal
http://www.psupress.org/journals/jnls_utopian_studies.html

Memory Studies

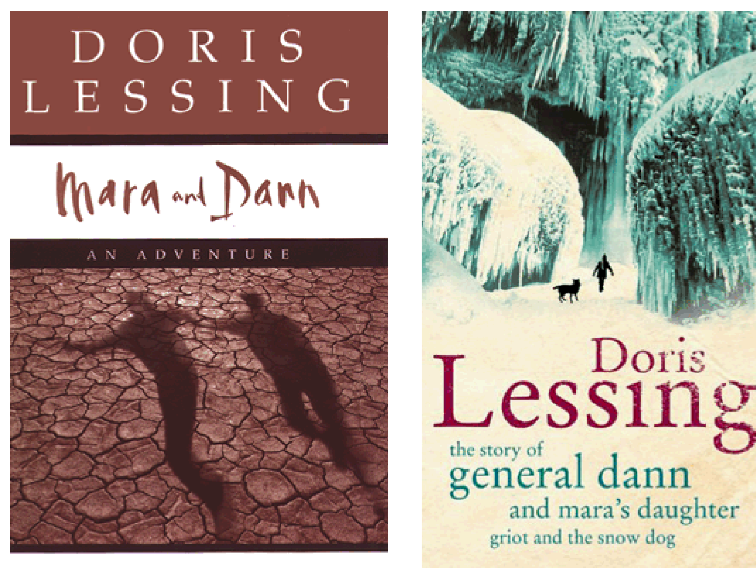
History and Memory Journal
http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/pages.php?pID=80&CDpath=4
Memory Studies Journal
http://mss.sagepub.com/

APPENDIX

Lois Lowry *The Giver Quartet*



Doris Lessing The *Ifrik* Series



Ursula K. Le Guin *The Annals of the Western Shore*

Ally Condie *Matched Trilogy*