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DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

Horrific Epiphanies:

The reader's and the character's journey through contemporary
Dystopian Young Adult Fiction

Verfasserin

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angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2013

MY HUMBLE GRATITUDE GOES TO

- my supervisor, Assoz. Prof. Mag. Dr. Professor Susanne Reichl, for supporting me in my choice of topic, for being accommodating in view of my tight schedule, and for making writing a thesis seem far less intimidating than it actually is.

- Julia, for proofreading this paper and easing my nerves from a distance of 18.000 kilometres.

- my friends, for bearing with me during my self-imposed confinement and for still spontaneously meeting me for a walk, a talk, and something sugary.

- Martin, for always knowing when to be there for me and when to keep his distance.

- my parents, for continuously providing emotional and financial support throughout my whole studies, for never stopping to believe in me, and for always encouraging me in my decisions.

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1 Introduction

Since the release of Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* Trilogy, Dystopian Young Adult Fiction, short DYAF, has become a thriving genre in the contemporary book market for adolescent readers, popularising existing DYAF novels such as Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, and stimulating the publication of new and hyped book series like Beth Revis' *Across The Universe*, Ally Condie's *Matched*, Veronica Roth's *Divergent,* or Lauren Oliver's *Delirium*. Such novels typically portray a young person, who is entrapped in a restrictive future social system without initially being aware of his or her entrapment, and depict the protagonist's journey to the realisation of the negative nature of his or her society, as well as, in many cases, the revolt against the system. My fascination with this genre that combines social critique with Fantasy and problems of growing up has inspired my choice of topic.

Upon reading DYAF novels, I was especially intrigued by how seamlessly I, as a reader, was guided into discovering the dystopian nature of the society depicted before the character does so him- or herself, despite the term "dystopian" not being featured anywhere in the book. Out of this deliberation, my research question was formed: In how far do the reader's and the character's journey through a Dystopian Young Adult Fiction novel differ? In order to answer this question, I will firstly analyse how the reader is made aware of a book's dystopian nature and whether his or her journey to that discovery is the same as the protagonist's way to the moment of realisation, which I refer to as the moment of epiphany. If the two journeys and moments of epiphany prove to be non-congruent, as I anticipate, I will illustrate what distinguishes the way to their respective epiphanies, and which elements guide them along their way. Secondly, I will ascertain the reader's and the protagonist's reaction to epiphany, disclose how the character is moved to revolt or stay passive, and how the reader is either repelled by the book's premise or compelled to reconsider his or her own reality as well as the possibilities for the future it holds.

For the purpose of collecting conclusive evidence, I aim to analyse a diverse selection of DYAF novels by choosing three novels that differ in terms of their protagonists' characteristics, their endings, their way to epiphanies for character and reader as well as the reactions to it, and their future sociological, political and ecological setting. Through this diversity, I intend to prove that the evidence I gained from my analysis is indeed applicable to the whole genre of DYAF, and not just to individual novels. I have thus chosen to analyse these issues in Gemma Malley's *The Declaration*, Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, and M.T. Anderson's *Feed*.

In order to analyse these novels according to my research question, I will first draw on reader response theory, wherein I focus on the theories of Wolfgang Iser. Second, I will dissect DYAF into its individual components of Young Adult Fiction and Dystopian fiction and give an account of their respective structures and motifs, which will allow me to compare and contrast them to those of the hybrid genre that is DYAF. I will then look at the characters' journey and trace their development to the point of their epiphany and their consequential reactions to it. Subsequently, I will analyse the reader's journey to the epiphany about the dystopian nature of the novel as well as the text's intended appeal to the readership by means of reader-response theory.

2 Reader-response criticism

I chose to dedicate the first chapter of my thesis to reader-response criticism, since it is the theoretical aspect that is superordinate in my analysis of contemporary Dystopian Young Adult Fiction. By applying it in my paper, I will attempt to pinpoint on the one hand ways in which authors conceptualize and make apparent the world in the novel as dystopian and on the other hand how readers recognise signs for dystopia. It will also help me to analyse how contemporary references are included and understood, and how form and structure change the reading experience. Most importantly, though, I am interested in finding out if and in how far the reader's and the character's journey towards epiphany are congruent in the novels I have chosen.

Before going into a discussion about the various branches of reader-response criticism, I will give an account of how this theory came into existence. Before reader-response theory came into being, the prevalent concept was that author, text, and reader were different entities, wherein the reader was the passive consumer, the author the creator, and the text the work of art. Thus, the reader, and especially the critic was to be void of subjective feelings during the reading process, and merely provided the author's literary achievement with an audience. In the course of the 20th century, a new theory began to emerge; a theory which was first to not only acknowledge the role of the reader as active, but to perceive the reader as a subjective being with subjective emotions and responses towards the literary work of art (Freund 1-6). However, the degree to which the reader is seen as active and necessary for the text's meaning, its existence even, varies greatly among the different scholars, as reader-response criticism cannot be pinpointed to having a common set of rules, mindset or direction. "It is not a single agreed theory so much as a shared concern with a set of problems involving the extent and nature of readers' contribution to the meanings of literary works" (Baldick 184). In fact, the different viewpoints vary so much that if one intends to apply one branch of reader-response theory to a certain case, it is necessary to select a scholar as well as a direction. Therefore,

I will give a short overview of the most important branches before going into detail about Wolfgang Iser, my scholar of choice.

George Poulet, who was part of the Geneva school of consciousness (Freund 136), sees the consumer of the text as necessary for its existence; however, Poulet states that when reading, the reader assumes the thoughts of the author's creation (Poulet 42-43). Consequently, the object, which is not the author, but the work itself, and the subject merge (Freund 138-139). Therefore, the reader can be said to be "dead" while reading, so that the text can come alive within him or her (Tompkins xiv). Essentially, Poulet depicts the consciousness of the reader as the vessel through which the literary work of art can unfold; the vessel itself, though, stays passive (Poulet 42-43).

In contrast to that, the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, who is seen as having created the basis for modern theory of reception (Warning 10), insists that while a text in its plain form exists separately from the reader, it cannot come into full existence without the reader's concretisation, since texts are "heteronomous" objects that need a relationship between a subject and an object in order to fully exist (Freund 139). He denounces further that a literary text's statements, judgements, and questions do not represent finite real views, but are to be modified by the reader. Only when the reader engages in reading the text does it gain meaning and reality (Ingarden 42-43). Clearly, Ingarden grants the reader a very active role in the author-text-reader relationship. His view stands in stark contrast to that of Wolfgang Iser, who argues that the text's full existence does not depend on a reader, nor is the concretisation by a reader the end product. Rather, he hypothesises "that the work itself cannot be identical with the text or with the concretization, but must be situated somewhere between the two" (Freund 142). A view that Iser, who will be the topic of great concern in the subsequent chapter, and Ingarden share is that the text offers "gaps which must be filled or completed by a reading consciousness" (Freund 140).

Stanley Fish provides the reader with an even greater freedom, since he not merely allows him or her to fill in or complete the author's work, but to change it

altogether. This will not happen if the reader is only faced with what Fish calls a "rhetorical" representation, in which a reader's expectation and needs are met. He also claims that a different kind of work, called "dialectical" presentation,

> [...] is disturbing, for it requires of its readers a searching and rigorous scrutiny of everything they believe in and live by. It is didactic in a special sense; it does not preach the truth, but asks its readers to discover the truth for themselves, and this discovery is often made at the expense not only of a reader's opinions and values, but of his self-esteem. (Fish qtd. in Freund 98)

Fish calls the end result of reading a dialectical text a "conversion" and sees a sentence on a page as "a ploy in the strategy of conversion, impressing upon the reader or hearer, the insufficiency of one way of seeing in the hope that he will come to replace it with something better" (Fish qtd. in Freund 99). Through that, Fish bestows upon the reader the power to change what is said on the page, thus providing the content him or herself. This is what Elizabeth Freund means when she explains the difference between Fish and Iser as follows: "Iser's theory [indicates] that *something* is determinately given. For Fish, nothing is given, and the reader supplies *everything*" (Freund 149). As I will discuss in greater detail in chapter 5, DYAF novels actually *need* to provide "something", as Freund put it, since in this genre it is crucial that the reader perceives and constructs the text as dystopian. Thus, the author needs to present the reader with some form of guidance, which I will discuss in the two following subchapters.

As can be seen, the movements within reader-response criticism differ greatly, since this theory "is not a conceptually unified critical position" (Tompkins ix). Differences aside, though, all these branches share an inherent goal, which Elizabeth Freund formulates as follows: "In its variegated forms, reader-response criticism undertakes to narrativize, characterize, and personify or otherwise objectify the reading experience and its conditions. It undertakes, in short, to make the implicit features of 'reading' explicit" (Freund 6). In my thesis, I will draw on the theories of Wolfgang Iser, whose disquisition on the role of the reader and on the act of reading has been influential in English as well as in German literary theory.

2.1 Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory

Having introduced the idea behind reader-response theory as well as some of its major branches, I will move on to examine Wolfgang Iser's theory, on which I will concentrate in my analysis of my selected DYAF novels. Iser is a representative of the theory of aesthetic reception, which sees itself as the pragmatics of literary studies, the origins of which go back to the "Konstanzer Schule" (Warning 10). Rainer Warning (9-10) explains it as a discipline that takes a close look at the relationship between literary work and its addressee by concentrating on different angles of conditions, modalities, and results.

Iser is most famous for his publications *The Implied Reader* (1974) and *The Act of Reading* (1978), of which I will cite essays that have been republished in reader-response anthologies. I chose to base my analysis on his publications because I argue that his theories are applicable in the practice of both adult dystopias and DYAF, and, in addition, help with my distinction between the reader's and the character's journey. Furthermore, I prefer Iser as a scholar of reader-response theory since he does not reject other scholars' views like Poulet's, Ingarden's, or Fish's, but incorporates certain aspects of their theories whilst bringing them into the context of the participating and evolving reader. In the following, I will attempt to explain Iser's theories in more detail.

2.1.1 What happens during reading

Wolfgang Iser takes a phenomenological approach to reading, which is based on the idea that the written text is equally as important as the steps made in response to it. Furthermore, he bases his approach on that of Roman Ingarden's theory of "schematised views", which are offered by the author, and "Konkretisation", meaning realization, done by the reader. He then goes one step further and explains that the literary work itself is situated between the two poles of the reader's realization, which he calls the "esthetic pole", and the author's text, the "artistic pole". This theory alone is a disclosure of how Iser

sees the reader: he or she participates in the creation of the work by contributing something him- or herself. However, this also implies that the text offers something for the reader to contribute to, which Iser calls the "virtuality of the work" and "its dynamic nature" ("Phenomenological" 50).

In the following paragraph Iser describes what happens due to this dynamic nature when we read:

> As the reader uses the various perspectives offered him by the text in order to relate the patterns and the "schematised views" to one another, he sets the work in motion, and this very process results ultimately in the awakening of responses within himself. Thus, reading causes the literary work to unfold its inherently dynamic character. ("Phenomenological" 51)

According to this passage, what makes the reader active is that he takes what the text has to offer, connects ideas and as a result creates his or her own response. Iser goes on to argue that a literary text must give the reader room to engage so as to activate his or her imagination. This can only happen if the text is incomplete and wants for parts that are "unwritten" (51), which the reader can then complete. While the text has "outlines" (51) that anchor the book, the reader can animate these, which becomes a dynamic process when these animated outlines "influence the effect of the written part of the text [but] the written text [still] poses certain limits on its unwritten implications in order to prevent these from becoming too blurred or hazy" (51-52). In short, the text provides the reader with fixed features as well as open gaps, both of which the reader will fill or alter with his or her imagination through which in turn the written text and its implications will change as well. All this results in an end product of the reader-text relationship, which Iser sees as an "enduring form of life" ("Phenomenological" 52).

Like Fish, Iser examines the effects of sentences on the reader, though while Fish sees the sentences as bad examples of viewpoints that challenge the reader to conceive his or her own version, Iser employs Ingarden's concept of "intentional sentence correlatives" which perceives sentences as "component parts" that do not make up the text in its entirety ("Phenomenological" 52). Said intentional sentence correlatives reveal abstract links, which are not as clear-cut as written statements. Nevertheless, the latter need their correlatives to interact

in order to unfold meaning (52). Such instances which others have simply called "reading between the lines" (Patterson 7), Iser denounces as "points at which the reader is able to 'climb aboard' the text" ("Phenomenological" 52). He explains Ingarden's theory further: "[t]he sentence does not solely consist of a statement – which, after all, would be absurd as one can only make statements about things that exist – but aims at something beyond what it actually says" (53). Patterson describes this aiming as "writing between the lines", of which she says *reading* between the lines depends on (7). This, again, stresses the correspondent cooperation between author and reader in which they together create a literary work of art. I will return to this point of discussion when I consider contemporary references that carry an indirect appeal to the reader in chapter 5.2.5.

Furthermore, Iser claims that by reading a text and linking sentences to form meaning, readers also create expectations of what the text will bring. However, when these expectations are fulfilled, the audience becomes aware of the book's didactic nature. In order to avoid that, literary texts are not supposed to fulfil our expectations, but modify and even disappoint them along the way, so that new meaning can be created and retrospective consideration can take place in the reader. Through it, the reader remembers things he or she has read before, now set against a different background of knowledge and meaning, and thus creating new connections about what he or she has read so far. In turn, this evokes new connections about what is to come, rendering the whole process dynamic ("Phenomenological" 53-54).

This dynamic process of forming connections, being disappointed, and going into retrospection only to form new connections and anticipations, is what Iser calls "the process of anticipation and retrospection" ("Phenomenological" 56), which provides the answer to the mystery of "why the reader often feels involved in [the] events [of a novel]" (54). Iser sees the aforementioned process as proof that the reader takes on an active part in the creative process, and he reinforces this claim with the example of the common phenomenon of readers engaging and reacting differently to one and the same text (54). It is also what distinguishes Iser's theory so clearly from Poulet's: While both agree that there

is a tight correlation between reader and literary work, rather than reader and author, Poulet sees the reader as a passive consumer of the written text while Iser perceives him or her as an active reactionist and thus also co-creator of meaning. Iser even goes one step further and claims that the aforementioned process of anticipation and retrospection "is closely akin to the way in which we gather experience in life" (56), thereby stating that the reading experience resembles the real life experience. I argue that it does even more than that and venture to say that reading can influence our thoughts about as well as our actions real life. I will refer to this argument in chapter 5.2.5, in which I discuss contemporary references in DYAF and how reading inspires the readership to act.

Another point in the discussion that Poulet and Iser share is that the reader changes during the reading process. While Poulet states that the reader gives him- or herself up or even dies so that the work can live through him (Iser, "Phenomenological" 66), Iser takes a less dramatic stance when claiming that when we read, our own personality "recedes into the background" (67) because it is "occupied by the thoughts of the author" (67); the latter he names "alien 'me'", the former "virtual 'me'" (67). This allows us to gain new experiences that we have not yet experienced ourselves, while at the same time remaining the person that we are. Through this process of indirect experience we also learn, evolve, and change our opinions (67). Iser orientates his theory on D.W. Harding when he says that this process of learning and evolving through becoming the "alien 'me'" is not to be confused with identification. Rather, "fictions contribute to defining the reader's or spectator's values, and perhaps stimulating his desires" (Harding qtd. in Iser, "Phenomenological" 67).

I have mentioned before that Iser claims that a book is didactic once it does not leave the reader anything to fill, complete or imagine. However, he also states that reading books makes us learn, evolve, and even redefine our morals. The question is consequently how a book or indeed the author is able to give us, the reader, the opportunity to grow without straightforwardly teaching or preaching. Iser's answer is that "[t]he author's aim, though, is to convey the experience and, above all, an attitude towards that experience" ("Phenomenological" 65). I

will explain this in further detail in the next subchapter in which I give an account of how Iser interprets the "Appellstruktur der Texte". For the time being though, it suffices to say that the reader's evolvement does not depend on the author's didactic skill to force-feed the readership knowledge or viewpoints, but on his or her ability to leave certain decisions, viewpoints and gaps to the reader. In short, "no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the *whole* picture before his reader's eyes" (57).

While I see Wolfgang Iser's view as the most apt analysis of the reading process, I disagree with him when he says that we can only evolve and learn through reading if we leave our own experiences and backgrounds completely behind ("Phenomenological" 57). I do agree that we have to "recede to the background" (67), as he puts it, in order to immerse ourselves in the thoughts presented in the text. However, I claim that only when we allow the book to affect our emotions and we pause our reading in order to think about the text and its message in relation to our own selves and our own world, do we undergo a process of evaluation and consequently of evolution and development. As I see it, we otherwise only follow the path of development of the character described. Therefore I argue that the question is not: "What happens while we are reading?" but rather: "What happens after we have read?". Based on this, I agree more with Iser's final statement of his essay on the reading process, in which he uses the same terminology as Fish when he says that reading is dialectical, and goes on to explain that

> [t]he need to decipher gives us the chance to formulate our own deciphering capacity [...] it also entails the possibility that we may formulate ourselves and so discover what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness. These are the ways in which reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated. (68)

In chapter 5, in which I analyse character development in contrast to reader development, I will return to this point of discussion. In the upcoming subchapter, I will give an account of Iser's essay "Appellstruktur der Texte" in order to be able to analyse my three selected novels in terms of degree of indeterminacy, criticism of the reader's environment and him- or herself, as well as literary quality.

2.1.2 How texts communicate

I have chosen to include a second essay of Wolfgang Iser's, since the two combined deal with the two components I need in order to be able to analyse my selected works of DYAF according to reader-response theory. While the first of Iser's essays, entitled "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach", gives insights into the role of the reader and the reading process, this essay, called "Appellstruktur der Texte", focuses on the role of the text and how it communicates with the reader. In my analysis, I will investigate both the role of the reader and the effect of a text.

The theory of how texts communicate is based on the fact that "die Kunst der Interpretation" ("Appellstruktur" 229), meaning "the art of interpretation", is wrong when it assumes that a text's meaning lies hidden within it for the reader to find. If that were the case, only one possible interpretation would be possible, which goes against Iser's theory of readers' diverse responses (229), as I have illustrated above. Hence a text has the potential to be interpreted in different ways, depending on its "Unbestimmtheitsgrad" (230) or "degree of indeterminacy".

The first issue that Iser addresses in his essay is the question of the difference between a factual and a fictional text. Here, he leans on Austin and calls a factual text "language of statement", a mere exposition of something that exists, and a literary text "language of performance", the designing of something new (qtd. in Iser, "Appellstruktur" 231). However, he claims that this is not entirely correct and that further distinctions need to be made, since there are factual texts that *do* create matters, e.g. texts that are designed to raise demands, pose questions, or explain a purpose (231). Literary texts, Iser contests, do not create new matters, nor do they depict matters of the real world; they rather react to matters that already exist (231-232). Although the text itself may only be a reaction to issues in reality, what it offers is an attitude to the world it has designed (232). This statement ties in with what I have argued earlier, namely that an author indirectly teaches the reader by providing him with attitudes towards a subject matter. However, because these subject matters are fictitious

and mere reactions to real subject matters, the reader has no way to fully relate it to a situation in reality, which amounts to the aforementioned degree of indeterminacy that is inherent in all fictional texts.

The reader will thus only be able to relate the text's subject matter to his or her own general experiences. Iser argues that if he or she does that, then the fictitious text will either seem too fantastic, going against everything we know, or too banal, portraying excerpts of our daily lives (232-233). I argue that this differentiation cannot necessarily be found in Dystopian fiction, where a combination of both cases takes place: Through the element of the banal, Dystopian fiction manages to ground the fantastic in our reality, which creates the feeling of uneasiness that is common in reading Dystopian fiction. For instance, *Uglies* features obligatory complete overhaul plastic surgery that seems too fantastic; fascination and obsession with, as well as exploitation of looks is, however, very common in our society. In *Feed*, a world owned by corporations and almost completely destructed by waste and negligence seems far-fetched, while ignorant and incompetent people unwilling or unable to act, because they are occupied with the pleasure of consumerism and the entertainment industry, appear familiar and real to us.

However, despite providing us with an opportunity to draw conclusions about our reality from a fictitious text, a non-factual text will not depict reality itself, as I have explained above. Nevertheless, Iser also ascertains that we can "normalise" while reading in so far as the world in the book appears to be mirroring reality. The consequence of this process of normalisation, though, is the quality loss in the literary work, since said degree of indeterminacy is why various interpretations of one text are possible. Hence, the less this degree becomes, the less the text counts as freely interpretable and thus loses its literary quality. (233) In spite of that, "normalisation" ("Appellstruktur" 233) is not negative in general, for if a reader's world experience conflicts with the world in the text too much, it is possible that the reader rejects the book altogether or adjusts his or her own value system accordingly. Here, indeterminacy has truly enabled the reader to come to a conclusion about his or her own interpretation. If, however, there is no indeterminacy to begin with, Iser sees it as a non-literary

text (233-234). To sum up, what Iser says about the quality of literature is that a good text is incomplete and indeterminate; it allows the reader to form connections and fill gaps and it does not show absolute congruence with reality, although it will react to real life subject matters.

In chapter 2.1.1, I have mentioned "schematised views" and "Konkretisation" (Ingarden qtd. in Iser, "Phenomenological" 50), though so far I have only explained the latter, and have yet to go into detail on the former, which deals with the text's and the author's side of reader-response theory. Just like "Konkretisation", "schematised views" is a term created by Roman Ingarden and is used to describe the numerous views that are unravelled during the course of the reading, revealing the text's subject matter(s) to us. Since these views follow immediately one after another, there can be cuts in between, usually brought on by more complex plot devices, e.g. two overlapping story lines that have to be told in sequence. The cut between these leaves gaps which offer room for interpretation on the part of the reader. The more gaps there are, the more room for interpretation, and, as Iser continues to stress, the more is left to the imagination of the reader, making for a good reading experience through which the reader can grow on a personal level. Iser elaborates on this by explaining that these gaps provide an "offer for participation" to the reader, without which he would quickly become bored ("Appellstruktur" 234-236). Possible ways of inviting the reader to participate that way is the use of plot devices such as twists, cliffhangers, or the introduction of new characters. As I will analyse in more detail in chapter 4 when discussing the benefits of DYAF, these kinds of devices often occur in dystopian literature for adolescents, because the books of that genre are designed to keep an inexperienced and fairly new reader interested.

I have now illustrated in depth how an author manages to make room for the reader to participate. What I have yet to explain is how he or she manages to encourage the reader to move into a certain direction. After all, authors who write a Dystopian fiction novel do not want their readers to confuse their text with a utopian story or another genre entirely. Hence, the author must steer the reader onto the right course, which happens when the author eliminates gaps

by filling them with a commentary, like an illustration, a comment on the action, or an explanation of some sort. While in theory this may seem didactic or at the very least guided, Iser claims that by doing so, the author actually distances him or herself from the text: the gaps that open up as a consequence are not between the schematised views in the text, but between the text and the possibilities of evaluation and judgement. The author does not dictate a certain view, but may comment on the events or the characters in the text from different points of views on various occasions, thus not providing the reader with one finite evaluation but with a variety of "evaluation offerings", from which to choose (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 238-240).

Hence the offer for participation and the evaluation offerings go hand in hand in order to give the reader the freedom to discover the text and its meaning in his or her own way, while at the same time providing guidance. All the same, in certain situations the author may decide that he or she needs to guide the reader to such an extent, that there is only one possible way of reaction. According to Iser, this is best done by placing an author's comment in the text that feels so shockingly and obviously *wrong*, that the reader has no other option than to reject it completely ("Appellstruktur" 240). In these cases what is said in the text cannot possibly be meant and leads to a "Totalkorrektur einer falschen Beurteilung" (240) or a "complete correction of wrong evaluations"; one might compare this technique to reverse psychology. I argue that this is exactly the device that dystopian novels employ in order to make the reader reject the dystopian regime or society, as well as their villains. In chapter 5.2, I will discuss both options and will pay close attention to the said complete correction of false evaluations in terms of my selected works of DYAF.

In this chapter, I have given an account of the most important points in the reader-response theory of Wolfgang Iser. I have explained how authors can guide their readers and provide them with evaluation offerings or fixed interpretations of characters, societies, and events, as well as how literary quality is determined by the degree of indeterminacy and how authors need to provide gaps for the reader to fill. In addition, I have mentioned that while fictitious texts are never exactly mirroring reality, they *do* react to issues in

reality, thus accounting for contemporary references in novels. Moreover, I have explained how the reader feels involved in the narration and might ultimately arrive to change his perspective on certain aspects of life or be even led to instances of self-criticism. Having explained the system behind my analysis of my selected novels, I will now turn to an analysis of the hybrid genre that DYAF represents. In order to do so, I will first examine Young Adult Fiction and then move on to outline the genre of Dystopian fiction and how it differs for adults and young readers.

3   Young Adult (and Children's) Literature

Before I begin discussing contemporary Dystopian Young Adult Fiction, I first have to look at the genre of Young Adult and Children's Fiction, in order to establish its distinguished motifs, plots, target group, and language. In this genre, the relationship between text and reader is, Thomas Kullmann argues, not as easy to pinpoint as with adult literature, since there is an asymmetry in the literary communication, resulting from the fact that it is adults who write, critique, and mostly also buy the books that children read. He states that youth lacks the means to express literary critique, and claims that trying to reconstruct our past reading experiences from the position of an adult will only lead to fallacy (15-16). If this were true, then it would also account for writing about being a child. Still, authors of Young Adult Fiction manage to successfully and believably portray young adults in their texts. I therefore reject this view about literary communication in Young Adult Literature.

Additionally, I argue that Kullmann's view contradicts Iser's reader-response theory, since it does not focus on the meaning that is created by the reader, but on the interpretation a reader must find inside a text. It also re-evokes beliefs by the wave of the old tradition, then called New Criticism, of critics having to be emotionally detached and completely objective in order to be able to critique literary work (Freund 5). What I attempt to discuss in this chapter are tendencies of YA Fiction concerning motifs, plots, and language; however, I am not assuming to know every young adult reader's possible interpretation of the text. Rather, I will keep in mind Iser's theory of the existence of countless

readers with countless different readings. Therefore, I will concentrate on how the text is constructed in order to give the reader guidance through the reading process but at the same time the freedom to interpret events and characters his or her own way. I do, however, base my explanation on Kullmann when I say that while I have chosen a text-based approach, I will use this approach to get information about the communication between text and reader as well as some compulsory and optional interpretations of it (19). I will now take a look at what Young Adult novels have in common, so as to later compare their characteristics to DYAF and see which of these the latter has kept, changed, re-designed or disbanded completely.

3.1 Characteristics of YA fiction

First, I want to stress that I am concentrating on fiction written for adolescents, not children, and am leaning on Karlan Sick when saying that Young Adult Literature novels are considered "to be those published specifically for readers between twelve and eighteen" (601). I am basing this collection of common traits and motives in YA fiction on the work of Thomas Kullmann, whom in my opinion has created an apt summary. Illustrations are, of course, a popular feature in Children's Literature (Kullmann 59), though they rarely occur in YA fiction and will hence not be discussed here further. I will also refrain from commenting on the question of intertextuality, since I rather concentrate on contemporary references in dystopian fiction in chapter 4.3, and in DYAF in chapter 5.2.5.

The first indicator of a Young Adult book is the age of the protagonist, which roughly mirrors the age of the intended reader, making the protagonist a teenager. This has the effect of "substitutional experience" (Kullmann 31), in which the character experiences something in the place of the reader, giving the latter access to other viewpoints and hence also to knowledge. In addition, the issues of family, upbringing and childhood are broached, wherein the protagonist is usually gifted with something that sets him or her apart from adults. As a rule, protagonists are richly drawn individuals who explore differences between age groups as well as between male and female

characters (30-35). The focus of the story is generally the process of the character's physical and intellectual maturation (34). I argue that in DYAF, this process is reflected in the journey towards epiphany, wherein the character has to mature to a level where he or she can detect the society's negative nature.

Not surprisingly, another major feature in literature for growing readers is the question of upbringing and education. Kullmann mentions that children's books from earlier centuries tend to be more didactic than books nowadays. However, he also explains that didactic did not mean the preaching of one truth, but the display of a variety of viewpoints and situations including moral choices that have to be made (40). I later argue that dystopian YA fiction plays with this notion of didacticism in a new way, while managing not to be prescriptive at the same time. I claim that the purpose behind it is the "process of development and maturation" (34), in both character and reader. Even though they are not to be confused with didactic texts, it is the goal of YA Fiction to bring forth this maturation in young adults. For this reason the genre employs said substitutional experience so that the reader may gain knowledge and judgement about intense and sometimes even borderline experiences such as birth, love, loss, and death (90).

In order to create a backdrop for fundamental questions of life and morals, protagonists, together with the reader, are often sent to exotic places (Kullmann 45). Kullmann states that the choice for such a setting serves the YA trope of metaphor and relation (46), as opposed to metonymy in adult fiction (21-22). This principle states that adult fiction tends to be closely related to our reality, whereas YA fiction depicts very different worlds that are nevertheless akin to ours on several levels. In such an exotic place, both reader and protagonist discover a novel world, which demands a high level of abstraction and reflection in order to relate what is being learnt to their own world (45). Here, I want to remind my reader that Iser's argument is that in such a case literature loses its quality, while at the same time teaching us something about ourselves. I argue that in DYAF, the dystopian everyday world the protagonist lives in constitutes the exotic place, which is thus not novel to him or her, only to the reader. However, DYAF employs the trope of a journey or a quest so as to go to other

exotic places, both physically and psychologically. Quests, journeys or expeditions are common motives in YA fiction, according to Kullmann, since they depict a protagonist's character being put to the test. Usually, they also bring forth a hidden quality within the character. In addition, they provide the plot with a clear structure, where suspense is built up during the journey, and is released once the protagonist has reached his or her destiny or goal. During the quest, there is room for various episodes of different kinds and purposes (78).

Kullmann observes that nutrition is a recurring topic in YA fiction. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that eating and drinking are part of infantile pleasure and that the literary description of it can be stimulating for the reader too. Sometimes, good and bad food is compared and contrasted (72). Especially the latter often takes place in DYAF: for instance, one need only look at the popular *The Hunger Games* series by Suzanne Collins. I argue that depiction of bad food or food deprivation is employed because dystopian societies represent a state of deprivation and/or even show an opposing utopian society living in a state of plenty. For example, in *Uglies*, much of Tally's journey to awareness has to do with having to acquire eating habits different from the ones she is used to. In addition, I observe that in dystopian fiction it is usually the villains who have an abundance of good food at their disposal, whereas the heroes and heroines have to live off little or bad food. I am ascribing this to the fact that such an incision into basic human needs and childlike pleasures is guaranteed to enrage the reader, thereby forcibly making him or her perceive the society as dystopian. Strong feelings of sympathy and animosity do not only feature in DYAF. As Kullmann reminds his readership, the battle between good and evil has long since allowed for philosophical discussions in YA texts (79). The point here is that good and evil are neither clear-cut nor initially obvious to the protagonist. Rather, knowing what constitutes evil and good or even just right and wrong is the result of the process of development and maturation that I have mentioned above (83-84), which ties in with the journey towards epiphany in DYAF.

Lexis and syntax in YA fiction, Kullmann argues, are adjusted to that of the language of teenagers (58). Sick agrees when he discusses trends in teenage

fiction and says that language in films and books for teens nowadays reflects the language of real conversations (601). A good example of this can be found in *Feed,* where the author imagined a future youth talk and wrote his novel employing this language in the first person narrative, which I will discuss further in chapter 5.2.4. Kullmann concentrates more on the lexis when he says that foreign words occur rarely. However, there are also complex forms of narrations, like the *stream of consciousness*. Moreover, archaic words and sentence structure sometimes also find their way into children's literature. This serves the purpose of deliberately confronting children with such linguistic phenomena in order to make room for exciting and fun discoveries. Another common feature is "die parodistische Vermengung heterogener Prätexte" (58), where everyday events or utterings are interspersed and enriched with content and linguistic phenomena of a different world (58). What is more, dystopian fiction takes this one step further by introducing an abundance of neologisms or words that have been diverted from their intended use. I also want to mention that, since a shift in time is usually accompanied by a shift in youth language, and dystopias inherently feature a temporal gap to our present day, authors invent new vocabulary for youth's expressive words like "awesome" or "cool", i.e. "unit" for "dude" in *Feed*, or "bubbly" for "cool" and "great" in *Uglies*.

Kullmann also mentions traditional narratives in YA fiction, which he divides into realism and phantasm. Within the first category he includes school stories, leisure time stories as well as stories of families or orphans. The second category includes myths, fairy tales and their parodies, time travelling, secondary worlds, stories of puppets and animals, as well as Fantasy. While the statement by the creator of *The Twilight Zone,* Rod Serling, that "Fantasy is the impossible made probable. Science Fiction is the improbable made possible" (Serling qtd. in McLean) has been adapted into mainstream usage, Kullmann opts for a different distinction. He does not mention Science Fiction as a separate category, but includes it into the category of Fantasy (Kullmann 159), a division of genre that Chris Baldick supports in his entries in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (81-82, 200). The reason behind this is that the category 'secondary worlds' represents what is commonly viewed as Fantasy because it deals with fantastic elements such as magic and magical

creatures, and plots that take place in alternate worlds (Kullmann 152). However, the genre of Fantasy typically has a realistic frame structure that is broken up by a fantastic element that contradicts the laws of nature (159), which is not necessarily of magical nature. What is missing in Kullmann's extensive list are dystopias, which is surprising considering the book's publication date in 2008, when the trend for DYAF had already begun and bestsellers like *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Unwind* (2007), or *The Giver* (1993) had already been published. The hype of this genre then developed further in the last few years when books and series such as *Matched (2010), Across the Universe* (2011), *The Water Wars* (2011), *Delirium* (2011), and *Divergent* (2011) broached the YA Fiction market.

I also want to draw on Kullmann's book to discuss two other features that are important in terms of dystopian fiction. Firstly, he mentions complex background stories (54), such as the story of Harry's parents and the rise and fall of Voldemort in *Harry Potter*, which are often crucial in dystopian fictions, since they describe how the present has moulded the future the protagonist is living in. Secondly, he mentions narrations of orphaned children (118): While contemporary dystopian fictions rarely feature orphans, I found the absence of parental figures striking. Mostly adolescent protagonists in DYAF *do* have parents, although they are either separated from them because they do not share the same living quarters due to the dystopian society's class system, as in *The Declaration* and *Uglies*, or they are very passive and ignorant pawns of the dystopian society themselves, as is the case in *Feed*. In any case, I argue that what DYAF has in common with tales of orphaned children, are the effects their situation has on the protagonists' development and characteristics: Kullmann denounces orphans in YA literature as outsiders, who are therefore all the more interesting to the reader: They are often at a disadvantage, thus gaining the reader's sympathy, and they usually gain strength of character along the way. Curiously, such protagonists tend to be girls, which Kullmann claims has to do with the fact that female heroines face more social challenges and are more at risk of danger than their male counterparts. This also allows for them to meet their prince charming, helping them either physically or psychologically, allowing for a romantic element to be included into the cruelly

depicted social realism (122). While this is hardly a feminist approach, I have found that it is applicable to the majority of dystopian novels of the last decade, since from the dystopian titles I have numerated above only two feature male protagonists. Thereby, DYAF also shows a tendency to depict young women's struggle to find their place in society and change society as they know it in order to create better living conditions for everyone. Looking at DYAF from this perspective, though, I argue that this genre has the potential to become a new feminist genre for the young reader. Whether or not that potential is fulfilled, depends on the plot and the depiction of the characters of the individual novel.

What is striking about Kullmann's summary is that in over two hundred pages of analysis of children and teen fiction motifs and plots, he does not once mention romance as a separate motif, plot or even tradition. While I agree with Sarah Cornish that "R[omance]s have historically been treated as a lesser genre" (612), surely this is no reason to avoid mentioning the fact that "[c]learly, teenagers read romance" (612). The reason for that is that romantic questions and feelings "are virtually universal during adolescence" (614) since they play an essential part in the process of maturation (613). The plot in a romance novel, according to Cornish, centres around a budding or continuing love relationship that culminates on an optimistic note (613). While this is true for many romance novels, I do not agree with Cornish in all points. When thinking about the nowadays popular trope of the love triangle, at least one person is bound to walk away disappointed. Bad endings for romantic couples of course also have to do with a mix of genres and motifs. DYAF, for example, makes frequent use of romance. In the subsequent chapter on dystopian fiction, in which I also discuss such novels for young adults in more detail, I will come back to the tradition of romance, and will make clear how integral it is to the evolvement of the character and the progression of the plot.

In this subchapter, I have enlisted motifs and structures common in YA Fiction and have contrasted them to and compared them with those of DYAF. Hence I have examined the motif of journey, the process of maturation, romance, quests, orphan stories, the language employed, and even the status of the quality of food. I concluded that, in general, motifs and structures of YA fiction

are followed in DYAF, even though the latter modifies them in certain places to fit the new genre. I have argued about DYAF's alleged didactic nature and the substitutional experience it provides for the reader. I claim that, in practice, it becomes clear that motifs cannot clearly be separated from each other in individual books as we usually find many motifs within one story; the structure of dystopian novels, for instance, has a mix of these inherent in its nature, an issue I will address further in chapter 4. Before doing so, I will discuss the motif of alienated youth separately and will analyse it in terms of DYAF.

3.2 DYAF as troubled teens' fiction

"[T]he adolescent struggle [is] symbolic of the broader human problem of accommodating the uncertainty of contemporary life" (Curnutt 9)

In my last subchapter I have discussed the motif of rebellious orphans and the similarities to the rebellious youth in DYAF who is often also separated from his or her parents for a variety of reasons. Kirk Curnutt would comment on the situation of youth in DYAF differently. According to his thesis, rebellious youth who is separated from adult influence belong to a group he calls "alienated-youth" (3). Dystopian novels would thus be part of the category of "Alienated-Youth Fiction", which also includes the categories of coming-of-age stories or the initiation novel, all of which depict "troubled teens" (3). I am now going to explain Curnutt's theories in more detail, relating them to the adolescents depicted in DYAF.

Curnutt relates the adolescents in Youth Fiction to actual youths, their problems to actual youth problems, and their status in the novel to their real status in society. He roots his claims in child psychology and anthropology when saying that coming of age is a new and often frightening and confusing experience for teenagers (4), making them "at once troubled and troubling" (5). He also states that growing up has become progressively more alienating since the beginning of the twentieth century: Rapid social and technological change is to blame for a decline in values and traditions of the past, and the struggle depicted in youth fiction is the mirror image of society's struggle in real life, effectively making youth the mouthpiece of a discontented society (8-9).

The topic of adult figures is discussed as well, though while I argued before that parents are mostly absent or passive, Curnutt states that adults in general are mostly seen as youth's evil counterparts, who are depicted as corrupt and untrustworthy. I agree that the villains in YA Fiction are usually adults trying to make youth conform to society's rules (11-12). Keeping in mind Curnutt's previous observation on youth fiction mirroring society's struggle, I claim that villains in DYAF as well as their oppressive regimes can be seen as reflecting authority figures in which society has lost faith.

As far as narrative form is concerned, Curnutt mentions three distinctions, and says "authors blend elements from [...]: the quest narrative, the picaresque tale, and the bildungsroman" (59). In a *bildungsroman*, the protagonist's development and maturation is the focus. The difference between the quest, upon which Kullmann has also reflected as I have illustrated above, and the picaresque tale is that the latter is without a set goal and is thus "episodic rather than sequential" (60); in addition, the main protagonist does not significantly mature on his journey (60). As becomes evident when looking at my three selected DYAF novels, they represent a blend of these three types of narratives.

DYAF also includes another type of genre defined by Curnutt. The initiation story features "an adolescent [that] comes to a new realization of the complexity of human relations through a sudden, unexpected revelation known as an epiphany" (75). These often happen when a young person has passed a rite of passage in order to be accepted as part of a group or as an adult (75). The term "epiphany" derives from an entire different point of origin, though:

> [T]he term is used in Christian theology for a manifestation of God's presence in the world. It was taken over by James Joyce to denote secular revelation in the everyday world [and is defined] as 'a sudden spiritual manifestation' in which the 'whatness' of a common object or gesture appears radiant to the observer. (Baldick 72)

In DYAF, these epiphanies take place when the protagonist first becomes aware of the oppressiveness that governs his or her society; often there are then further epiphanies on the way to rebellion. The differences to Joyce's

definition of epiphany to my definition of epiphany in DYAF is that the aspect of spirituality is missing. Since, however, the reader experiences a revelation that encompasses his or her society as a whole, as well as his or her role within this system, I argue that "epiphany" is an apt term for this event. As I see it, the *reader* of DYAF also has an epiphany about the dystopian nature of the society and the indoctrination of the characters on the one side, and the references to his or her own reality on the other. Pinpointing all of these epiphanies, analysing them and contrasting them with each other is the aim of this paper. I also see the moment of the epiphany as going hand in hand with the point of culmination of the process of maturation in a character that social scientist G. Stanley Hall has addressed in his work on adolescence (qtd. in Curnutt 4).

In terms of plot structures, Curnutt has distilled three types, of which two are relevant for my discussion. First, there is "the journey of self-discovery [...] whose journey narrative follows a protagonist who sets out from home in search of some salve for a befuddling personal dilemma" (83). Here, an aimless journey can turn into a quest, or a quest can change into a quest for the greater good. *The Declaration* and *Uglies* both feature such journeys that start out as simple short-term goal oriented missions, which soon turn into greater quests. Second, "the rehabilitation story" is about a protagonist with physical, or frequently also mental health problems and his journey to recovery (85). Third, "the youth-at-risk narrative", much like the other two, "depicts adolescent alienation as symptomatic of society's ills. But whereas those story lines focus on introspective protagonists grappling with their problems, the youth-at-risk story involves detached young people who indulge in destructive behavior" (88). All three of my selected novels are examples for plot hybrids of these three types, though the second type features only marginally. For instance, in *Uglies*, the protagonist's friend, Shay, is captured and made compliant via brain surgery, but this only happens close to the end and the resolving of this issue is the focus of the second instalment in the series, which is not in the selected works of this thesis.

In alienated-youth fiction, Curnutt argues, youth is "stereotyped as a potential threat to cultural stability" (99), which is a statement I find transferrable to youth

in DYAF. Whereas in realist youth fiction, youngsters are depicted as such metaphorically, in DYAF, the young protagonist, along with his or her adolescent associates, are the actual enemies of the oppressive regime. Curnutt argues further that alienated-youth fiction communicates to its readers that confronting their problems is a better solution than a retreat from rebellion; teaching them to engage in, not withdraw from, confrontation (100). Thereby Curnutt employs the motifs of "flight and fall" (106) that he claims usually occur in teenage fiction. He states that while the option of flight seems to offer relief from the agony of the aforementioned awakening, the fall offers compulsory escape from innocence (109). The latter can, however, also bring forth change in society and a level of personal progress and maturity, which is worth the loss of innocence; even more so as the motif of flight also offers no escape from their alienation (111). Curnutt also observes that novels which do appeal to their readers to act, do so because they "recognize the value of the fall [by showing] that maturation leads to growth, not loss" (112). True enough, an abundance of DYAF novels, while showing the bleakest outlook into our futures at first, end on a happy or at least hopeful note. *Feed* is the exception, ending in hopelessness and defeat. I argue that it therefore has the potential to motivate readers even more to choose the fall, since the depiction of the consequences of flight is too gruesome to accept. I will address the issue of positive and negative endings in chapter 4.6.

In this subchapter I have demonstrated that what is true for alienated youth fiction in the genre of realism is also true for the Fantasy genre of DYAF: youth poses a threat to the system, and adults are the antagonists leading the oppressive regime. I argue that DYAF novels and alienated youth fiction both include forms of initiation stories wherein the protagonist reaches an epiphany about his or her world. In addition, I state that the motif of flight and fall is paramount in the structure of DYAF, where the plot revolves around a character who discovers the truth about his dystopian society and then has to decide for either the option of flight or fall. In comparison to Curnutt, I state that flight has the greater potential for reader motivation than fall, an argument I will combine with the argument of hope in my next chapter and ultimately analyse in terms of reader response theory in chapter 5.2.5. Having compared Young Adult Fiction

to Dystopian Young Adult Fiction, I will now discuss dystopian fiction in general and analyse the difference between novels of this genre that are written for adults and for young adults. In this discussion I will compare positive and negative endings in both genres and will answer the questions of why dystopian fiction is a popular genre among adolescents.

4 Dystopian fiction

Having discussed common features of Young Adult Fiction, I am now going to take a closer look at the common motifs, plots, and themes of dystopian fiction. First, though, I will take a closer look at the term *dystopia* itself. I have said in my last chapter that dystopia belongs to the genre of Science Fiction, which is often seen as part of the Fantasy genre. A more detailed distinction between dystopia and Science Fiction is given by Marion Spies: She says that utopias (and hence also dystopias) deal with future change in society in general, whereas Science Fiction focuses primarily on future change in technology (143); Hubertus Schulte-Herbrüggen agrees with her in that statement, when he says that Science Fiction interprets progress in terms of scientific and technological advancements, whereas utopian stories see it as a change in politics and society (10). According to this distinction, dystopias as well as contemporary DYAF appertain to the general category of Fantasy rather than to the more specific subgenre of Science Fiction, since one can also find dystopias with low-technology, or so called "neoprimitive" (Sambell 163) societies, as can be seen on the examples of *The Giver* or *The Water Wars*. Although there are many modern DYAF novels that heavily feature technological change in their novels, I argue that technological advancement is usually not at the heart of dystopia's problem: it is its misuse and social implications that lead to trouble.

When trying to pinpoint what *dystopia* exactly is, it is necessary to consider the term's origin, which in this case is also its antonym, *utopia*. Here, I first have to distinguish between *eutopia* and *utopia*; the former being a counter-model to a negative reality, the latter representing a type of narrative with pre-defined forms and rules (Mergenthal 130). I will provide a more detailed definition and

brief history of the latter in this following subchapter. Subsequently, I will define the term *dystopia* in more detail and give an account of how contemporary references and the notion of sexual relationships influence a dystopian society. Furthermore, I will discuss changing language in dystopian fiction, as well as the endings of dystopias for adults and adolescents. Lastly, I will argue why dystopia is a suitable genre for young adults.

4.1 Utopia

For a clarification of the term and its various meanings, I will lean on Hubertus Schulte-Herbrüggen's paper on "Utopie und Anti-Utopie". The father of utopia is considered to be Sir Thomas More, who in 1516 published his famous novel entitled *Utopia*. In this book the term is the name of an island where people live in perfect peace and happiness, but in the course of time, the term extended its meaning to refer to the genre we today know as *utopia*. When tracing back the Greek roots of the word, one finds that it denotes a non-place (3-4). Today, however, the word has various definitions, since the connotations of the word utopia have changed and augmented over the years. Utopia, on the one hand, describes Sir Thomas More's island, the name of his novel, the idea of a perfect society, a far-away land, as well as seemingly unattainable social growth in a society (5). In terms of literature, Schulte-Herbrüggen defines utopia as an ideal literary image of an imaginary form of government and claims that if its focus does not lie in the aesthetic aspect, it belongs to the category of didactic literature (12). Commonly, utopia is known as "an imagined form of ideal or superior [...] human society; or a written work of fiction or philosophical speculation describing such a society" (Baldick 235). In that respect, however, one has to distinguish between utopia as *political fiction* – when its intention is to prepare or bring forth change in public matters (Heckel qtd. in Schulte-Herbrüggen 12) – and utopia as *social literature* – when it deals with social discrepancies (Benzmann qtd. in Schulte-Herbrüggen 12). I claim that both forms of utopias can occur in the same novel since such borders tend to become blurry, and I venture to say that in the works of DYAF I have chosen, both indeed feature. Schulte-Herbrüggen claims further that dystopia has developed out of utopia as a variety, since, after centuries, utopian novels had

exhausted their possibilities (118). The general notion is that dystopia is employed "for the inverted or undesirable equivalent of utopia, [...] as it is for works describing such a 'bad place'" (Baldick 235). The subsequent section gives an account of the term and the genre of dystopia.

4.2 Dystopia – the wolf in sheep's clothing

In fact, Schulte-Herbrüggen calls dystopia "anti-utopia", which distinctly marks the genre as a descendant of and counterpart to utopia. The genre came into existence when authors began to depict a utopia as it should not be, which is called a "negative ideality" (119). However, one should not make the mistake of making a clear cut between these two genres, saying that "utopias eliminate affliction while dystopias increase it; this is a false dichotomy [since] one person's ideal world may be dystopia for another" (Totaro 127). According to Schulte-Herbrüggen, even in the early days of dystopian fiction, societies are depicted to hide their interior corruption by their outer mask of perfection (123-124), which is not surprising, seeing as dystopia is often created out of utopian intent, as Raymond Williams argues: "[T]he superficies of utopia – affluence and abundance – can be achieved, at least for many, by non-utopian and even anti-utopian means" (qtd. in Pordzik 10), which effectively explains how dystopia is born out of utopia.

In addition, even in as early as the 18th century, doubt as to the blessing of scientific advancements is apparent in literary works. Especially DYAF often, but not exclusively, focuses on presenting a world with technological riches that at first seem desirable. All three of my selected novels share this tendency: A risk-free, painless but obligatory plastic surgery performed on one's 16th birthday, rendering the subject completely transformed and utterly beautiful, features in *Uglies*. Chips in one's head that replace phones, computers, televisions, and even pen and paper, are at the base of *Feed*'s society. Medicine that not only repairs damaged cells, curing one of any illness, but that also prolongs life spans, creates the setting in *The Declaration*. The fact that these so called blessings at the same time alter the brain to make people complacent, render whole populations uneducated, and rob people of the

possibility to have children, is only discovered after some time into the book. Consequently, Schulte Herbrüggen argues that dystopia appearing to be utopia, a wolf in sheep's clothing as it were, is what forms the core of dystopian fiction (134).

Even though the plots of dystopian fiction novels seem different, according to Schulte-Herbrüggen there is an inherent progression in all of their plots. In addition, these plots carry principles of structures that can be realised in various ways: the features of "isolation" and "selection" (123) as well as the principle of "negative ideality" (203). In Thomas More's *Utopia*, isolation occurs because he places the events on an imaginary remote island. In modern dystopian fiction, isolation is usually achieved by setting the events in the far future (123), or on remote and so forth undeveloped land (138). Selection can be achieved by unfair division of power (123), advancement in sciences (133) or eradication of the individual in favour of a new sense of community (145). Andreas Mahler called the latter "globale Monokultur" that represents a warning sign to society (28). In short, negative ideality names the fact that bad forms of political, social and belief systems have taken over (119).

Dystopian stories' inherent structure becomes apparent when Schulte-Herbrüggen recounts the plot of *Caesar's Column* (1890) written by Ignatius Donnelly, an early dystopian novel that reads like a generic plotline for dystopias, also for those belonging to YA Fiction: The person new to the supposedly utopian society (I claim that this can be either the character and the reader at the same time, or only the reader, if the character has lived in this society all his life) first gets the opportunity to marvel at the accomplishments of the modern world, only to come face to face with its inner darkness and corruption. When the protagonist tries to prevent a calamity from happening, he or she acquires enemies from the side of the oppressive regime, as well as friends from the side of the rebellion. A tender budding love story stands in stark contrast to the cruel society. After a final battle, the hero and his or her friends escape while the villains meet their fate (123). Of course, it cannot be said that all works of dystopian fiction progress *exactly* like that; undoubtedly, though, this structure is a good guideline and is also true for my selected novels. *Feed*,

however, is the exception that ends in a negative outlook, which is striking considering I have so far not encountered a DYAF novel that ends in hopelessness.

In old dystopian stories, the protagonist who discovers the new world was a guest or time traveller, hence the trope of the escape at the end of the story. Isolation in dystopias nowadays is achieved through the future setting as well; selection, however, occurs due to man's misuse of technological advancements (Schulte-Herbrüggen 133). The endings of former dystopias include a return to the present that suddenly seems preferable to any conceivable future (127), resulting in a didactic moral (133). Modern dystopias tend to start with a protagonist who has grown up in the dystopian world, realises the fault in the system and tries to change it. I argue that along with the defective system, its beginning in the present is depicted, accounting for contemporary references in DYAF and also resulting in a cautionary tale that *can* be interpreted as didactic, depending on the individual novel. As a consequence, I will now discuss contemporary references in dystopian novels in greater detail.

4.3 Dystopias' references to contemporary life

Since dystopian worlds often bear resemblance to our present day life, it is a fair assumption that contemporary times have influence on dystopian themes and plots. The question is in how far dystopias reflect our society, criticise our present society, or warn us from possible consequences if we either continue along our present path or stray from it. This can only be answered when looking at the individual novel. A fact that remains clear is that dystopian society is made to appear undesirable to the reader.

Schulte-Herbrüggen sees dystopia not as "a world that should not be", but rather as "a world that must not be" (135). The message seems to have evolved from a reinforcement of present states and values to a warning or an appeal to change our ways, which *can* be seen as didactic. I, however, prefer Iser's justification that such a reading experience provides a chance for the reader to evolve and learn something about him- or herself and, in the case of dystopia, his or her society. After all, the advancements that have been achieved in

dystopian futures are often, like in the example of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, but a further development of tendencies that already exist in the present (Schulte-Herbrüggen 140). So the success of dystopian fiction can be said to lie in what Schulte-Herbrüggen defines as its tenor: humanity's underlying fear of a hell that has already begun to develop in the present (199). He nevertheless sees it simultaneously as a satire on utopia (200). Whether dystopias are written with that intention in mind or not, whether or not the text is perceived as satirical rather than horrific is ultimately also dependent on the reader's interpretation.

When it comes to dystopia's references to contemporary life, Harold Berger takes on a view that is on the one hand very pessimistic, but on the other hand ties dystopian novels to our present reality more than theories of other scholars do: He leans on Chad Walsh when he says that dystopian writers are prophets who do not merely create phantasies but cast socially scientific predictions (102). According to him, dystopian works are "more than a literary genre: [they are] a syndrome, the multiple symptoms of a world disease" (ix), making our present "a time of caution, a time for contemplating the organism" (145) comprised of nature, society and man. Dystopia then "instils a sense of urgency upon a large public, [and] might be an important step toward the recovery of a world headed for breakdown" (xi). While Berger's view on dystopia and its meaning is very bleak and harsh, at its core it declares dystopia to be a pessimistic genre. This is a statement I agree with, whereas I disagree with Berger's consistent stress on technology as the bad agent or even the villain of dystopian novels (ix). It is true that technology usually plays a big part in a dystopian society's wrongdoings, though I argue that this only makes it the instrument of evil, not evil itself. In fact, in some cases technology has helped the protagonist and is often also a source of wonderment and excitement for readers. Carry Hintz and Elaine Ostry talk about technology in DYAF, though I claim that when they say "technology [...] can represent both darkest fears and brightest hopes, as young readers are exposed to anxieties about technology while being shown the wonders that it can perform" (11), they aptly describe the role of technology in any work of high tech dystopian fiction. They continue to say that this portrayal of technology serves as a warning that "it must be used

wisely" (11). This opposes Berger's theory of technology as the villain and blames man's misuse of it.

I still agree with Berger on the one point that a frequent message of dystopian fiction seems to be "that if man has the capacity to do something preposterous but not immediately or obviously hurtful to him, he will likely exploit that capacity" (189). This message is highly negative, since opportunities to do right and wrong are omnipresent in novels as well as in reality. The point, however, is not how bleakly a future, or the possibility for a bad future, is drawn, but with what kind of outlook and with which ideas for rebellion the reader is presented. In connection to that, it is also essential to look at the main motivation for rebellion in the protagonist, which, as I have stated before, is a love interest. Thus, the following chapter deals with the persuasive power of romantic feelings in dystopian fiction.

4.4 "There is trouble in paradise, and that trouble is sex" [1] – epiphany triggering powers and events in dystopian fiction

Every hero or heroine needs sources from which to draw his or her power. In this chapter, I aim to illustrate which powers are at a protagonist's disposal in a dystopian society. First, I will discuss the power of knowledge and the importance of the past. Consequently, I will shed light on the significance of loyalty, friendship, and romantic relationships, which, I argue, are the driving force behind a character's motivation for rebellion.

It is clear that a protagonist, in order to rebel, must first acquire knowledge that makes him want to rebel and in addition gives him the tools to do so. This knowledge can take on different forms: It can mean knowledge about how the society really operates, or about its dark secrets, which reveal utopia as a dystopia. The accumulation of knowledge can also take the form of a to date unknown experience, like feelings of self-awareness, of friendship, or of

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[1] Rabkin 4

romantic relationships. As Eric S. Rabkin observes about characters in utopias and dystopias:

> What they are forbidden is the knowledge of self, the kind of knowledge that leads to the assessment of responsibility, that is, the knowledge that would be necessary for self-assertion and thus potentially for disobedience and shame. To feel shame, one must know that one could make things or do things other than the way they are. (*Atavism* 6)

In this statement, Rabkin makes clear that knowledge and experiences of self-awareness and ensuing responsibility are the enemies of enclosed and tightly controlled regimes. Should any of their subjects manage to make experiences leading them to such insights, it usually causes them to take a huge step in their development as individuals. This is the cornerstone of their epiphany about the fault in their dystopian society and the starting point for their rebellion. In DYAF, this step is also an important step in the process of their maturation into adulthood.

What ties in with the importance of knowledge in dystopian fiction is the importance of the past, which is the reader's present. Kumar calls this the theme of "importance of memory, and the past" (297). Dystopian societies either reject the past and its teachings and knowledge about it altogether, or they distort its image, making past experiences seem undesirable, a lesson to be learnt, and the dystopian society its saviour. To which degree the past is distorted or portrayed accurately, depends on the individual novel. In *Brave New World*, Huxley blows the industrial revolution and Henry Ford's significance out of proportion and buries literature and art in oblivion. History, as one of the world leaders later admits, is dangerous and has to be altered. In *Uglies*, Scott Westerfeld describes the reader's present as undesirable due to economic waste. People from the past are called Rusties, and are known to have suffered a dreadful fate by an oil bug, whereas the future society is presented as ideal in the ecological aspect; parts of history and of today's society are nevertheless kept a secret. In *The Declaration* it is stressed that before the Longevity drug was invented, humans suffered from illnesses and early demises, whereas in the future no one has to be sick or die. The downside of the new regime is that the happiness of bearing and raising children is taken away from people, though this is counteracted by the government via anti-child propaganda. These

plot structures tie in with the earlier mentioned fact about dystopias first appearing to be utopias. The reader is first reminded of the flaws of his or her own society and shown a seemingly idyllic alternative only to later find out that the alternative is too radical and brought about without the consideration of fateful consequences.

One of the most deciding factors in changing a protagonist's mind about the dystopian society is the introduction and ensuing acquaintance, friendship, or relationship with a new character. Very often, feelings of loyalty, emotional closeness, and love, either amorous or amicable, are the catalyst for opening up to other views and for revising one's opinion (Rabkin 4). One might even go as far as to say that sexual awakening triggers social awareness. This is why "passions, in many utopian societies, are considered dangerous to stability and therefore antagonistic to the public good" (Matter 97). For instance, in *1984*, Winston only really becomes reckless and insubordinate when he enters into a sexual relationship with Julia. In *Brave New World*, one of Bernard's driving forces are his feelings for Lenina. In both cases, romantic feelings and sexual passion drive the characters to rebellious thinking.

I agree with Matter and Rabkin and argue further that in DYAF novels, the first experiences with tender emotions go hand in hand with the sexual awakening of the character. After all, the protagonists are children on the brink to adulthood, and sexual maturity marks a cornerstone on that way. I state that in DYAF, sexual awakening and romantic interest in another person serve the plot structure, since they deliver a motif for a character's budding awareness: In *The Declaration*, for instance, Anna only ceases to be a dutiful Surplus once Peter, whom she finds attractive and intriguing, plants the seed of doubt in her. In *Feed*, Titus becomes more aware of his surroundings and grows more critical of his friends' behaviour when he meets and develops an interest for Violet. In the beginning of *Uglies*, Tally is neither convinced by her independently thinking female friend Shay, nor does she grow suspicious of her former best friend Peris' behaviour towards her, which suddenly changed after his beauty surgery. She does not even see what is right in front of her when the menacing Special authorities force her to go on a spy mission. She is repelled by every other ugly

she meets on her way, and has no sympathy for the Smoke's lifestyle. Only when she develops feelings for the Smoke's leader, David, does she open her mind to other possibilities and in the end even sacrifices herself for the cause of bringing down the dystopian society.

Clearly, the power of knowledge, love, and passion are driving forces in inducing epiphanies about right and wrong (Rabkin 3). Young adults can relate to this situation in any time, may that be the present, past, or the future; the feelings discovered in puberty do not change over time. Other things, like language, for example, do undergo change. Linguistic evolution, for instance, plays a big role in dystopia for adults *and* for adolescents, which is why, for my next subchapter, I will look at morphing language in dystopian fiction.

4.5 The employment of linguistic change in dystopian fiction

A change in time is usually characterised by a change in language, which is why authors tend to combine this issue when they depict global change (Spies 143). It is therefore not surprising that dystopian fictions present us with either isolated and scattered new terms, for old *and* for new things, or sometimes even a change in the whole lexis. These changes can have both social and political value. The intention can be to simply make the reader aware that he or she is now in a future setting, indicating that times have indeed changed. In this case, things known to the reader in the present will be renamed and new inventions or subject matters will carry telling or referential names. While discussing dystopian features in *Brave New World*, William Matter calls this system Huxley's "naming game" and "linguistic witticism" (106). I argue that in DYAF, naming usually takes on the form of telling names; referential or satirical names are very rare. For instance, in *The Declaration* the drug that can repair cells and prolong lives is called Longevity, children who are born despite the law for preventing overpopulation are called Surpluses, declining to sign the Longevity drug contract is called to Opt Out. All of these terms do already exist and name their subject so perfectly that the reader does not have any trouble understanding their meaning. Upon reading dystopian fictions I discovered that

these terms are often, but not always, capitalised. If one compares this to *Uglies* and *Feed*, however, one discovers that here only names of people and places are capitalised, as is the usual lexical tradition in English. Other coined words for future inventions, expressive lexical items etc. start with a small letter. I therefore claim that telling names with capitalisation in other DYAF novels, such as in *The Declaration,* simply serve the purpose of making the reader aware of the new term and concept.

A linguistic change might also carry evaluative value. For example, when discussing Newspeak in the novel *1984*, Krishan Kumar suggests that its employment in the novel is strictly satirical, comedic even. Nevertheless, he considers language change in *1984* as portraying "the fundamental seriousness of Orwell's concern" (321). Other critics have deduced that a correct usage of language stands for a utopian society, whereas a regression in language is a sign for a dystopian society: Jerome Meckier concludes that "precise use of language [is] a safeguard against [dystopian] societies" (Meckier qtd. in Matter 106). Kumar goes as far as denouncing the depletion in *1984*'s language as a "perversion and diminution" (320) and argues that proper syntax and vocabulary "enlarge [the] range of meanings and enhance [the] possibilities of thought and expression" (320). One might thus conclude that a negative change in language, such as the alteration of terms or a recession and degradation in expression, goes hand in hand with a negative change in society. This, at least, is true for adult dystopias. I will now turn to DYAF and examine that aspect of linguistic change in terms of youth talk.

A change in lexis is generally first visible in the language of adolescents, who quickly find new words and phrases to express emotions or to otherwise dub a certain subject matter. It therefore comes as no surprise that DYAF should alter the language of teens in the future setting. In *Uglies*, for example, Scott Westerfeld introduces the new word "bubbly" for "cool", "great", "tough", "alert", or "happy", and the new term "bogus" meaning "bad", "stupid" or "lame", as well as the terms "happy-making" and "sad-making" to describe either positive or negative effects on one's emotions. The fact that these simple words all stand for a range of emotions indicates a diminution in lexis. Seeing as these terms

are not used by uglies but are exclusively employed by the part of society who has had the surgery, and thus also the secret brain deformation, I claim that in this novel a simplification of language is a sign for dystopia. While this regressive speech occurs frequently in the second instalment of the *Uglies* series, it is nevertheless only scattered pieces of vocabulary that have been affected by language change. In *Feed*, however, not only the lexis has changed, also correct syntax is often ignored, which can be observed by the usage of unfinished sentences and the narrator's stream of consciousness. While in *Uglies* the change in lexis does not fully rob the characters of their capabilities to articulate themselves, in *Feed*, people can rarely express deep emotions or even sentiments. This "vacuity of language", which William Matter also observes in dystopias for adults (105), keeps them from successfully communicating with each other. This phenomenon encountered in *Feed* goes hand in hand with Benjamin Lee Whorf's linguistic theory which suggests that if people lack the words to express something, they also lack the capabilities of thinking about it (qtd. in Matter 105-106). Thus the decline of language has imprisoned the characters in *Feed*; if they cannot think about certain subject matters, they are also not able to act upon them. Rebellion and revolution are thus left for the reader to contemplate, since the characters do not have the tools for them.

In the end of *Feed*, loss of language and loss of expression mirror the loss of hope, which is exceptional since this goes against the tradition of DYAF endings, where usually a hopeful outlook onto the future shows protagonists preparing for rebellion; grim endings, however, are rare. If one compares these to adult dystopian novels, one will find stark differences. In my next subchapter, I will therefore compare how dystopian texts for adults and for teens are concluded.

4.6 Hope as the dividing factor in dystopias for adults and teens

The question to what end dystopias present our future as pessimistic is not universally clear; firstly, because this can be different for every book and

secondly, because the reason behind it differs between dystopias for adults and dystopias for adolescents. I agree with Jack Zipes when he says that, in general, it is safe to say that both "emanate from a [...] strong impulse for social change" (ix). However, the general sentiment is that dystopias for adult readers differ from those written for young adults in one major aspect: the ending of the former is much darker. Kay Sambell argues that protagonists in adult dystopias are initially presented as potential heroes, only to fail in the end (165-166). The underlying reason being that "[t]hese bleak visions rely on the absolute predictability of their unhappy conclusions to corroborate their imaginative hypotheses" (165), meaning that these characters are ultimately presented as the victims of dystopian society who have been conditioned to such an extent that victory against the regime is an impossible feat (166). "The plot is inexorably driven in the single direction of decline and defeat" (167) and any crucial society-altering stray from that direction would seem contrived. The hopeless outcome of such novels serves to stress the urgency that change needs to happen if we as readers do not want our present society to suffer a similar fate (166).

In comparison, young adult dystopias often focus on ending on a hopeful note (Zipes, xi). They too make a point of issuing a warning about the consequences of our actions in the present, though they provide us with a hero or heroine who actually achieves to rebel against his or her dystopian society. This focus on hope stems from the tradition to treat "hope [as an] animating force in children's books" (Harrison qtd. in Sambell 165), and authors tend to stress the importance of always delivering a sense of hope in children and YA Fiction (Hintz and Ostry 16). Sambell slightly reprimands DYAF authors for their hesitancy to give young adults the same bleak endings that adults get (164, 168, 169). He says that unhappy endings "require highly independent responses [and] demand the implied reader reject the imaginative world and assume a role of responsibility to rewrite the social world" (167). Authors who do not dare burden their young readers with such an ending show "reluctance to place absolute trust in child readers' capacities to grasp the didactic impulse underpinning the extinction metaphor of the dystopia without being guided by overt authorial comment" (169). What Sambell criticises most, though, is not the

fact that DYAF books rarely feature hopelessness, but that authors provide positive endings on the expense of credibility (173).

I am in agreement with Sambell that DYAF authors occasionally present their readers with unrealistic and illogical turns of events and sudden changes in lifelong conditioned characters. It is for this very same reason that I have chosen to focus on three novels that oppose this tradition to various degrees. I will address the issue of hopeful and hopeless endings in chapter 5.2.5 of this paper. The question that remains is when authors stress hopeful endings in DYAF, why do they opt for the depiction of dystopian societies in the first place? There are scholars who see bleak futures in children's books as implied "social critiques" that construct "alternative futures" for "children as citizens in the making" (Bradford et al. 3). This point of view is much less pessimistic, though also seemingly more didactic – hinting on additional educational material for growing individuals – and as such deserves to be discussed separately in the subsequent subchapter.

4.7 Dystopian literature for young adults – matching Fantasy with realism

Contemporary teenage fiction shows a trend for depicting dark matters such as rape (Sick 601), violence, or racism (Milner Halls 77). Even though Kelly Milner Halls concentrates on the genre of realism in YA fiction, I agree with her that the aim of today's books is to "realistically tackle the brutality of human evil from a distinctively teenage point of view" (77). The question of the why remains and shall be answered in this chapter.

Fact is, that "young people handle dystopia every day: in their lives, their dysfunctional families, their violence-ridden schools" (Lowry qtd. in Zipes xi). In addition, they are witnessing national or even global crises like war, terrorist attacks, the destruction of the environment, or the dangers of overpopulation (Hintz and Ostry 12). Dystopias not only deal with such topics and give teenagers food for thought; they also often feature teenagers as the heroes who bring about change in their dystopian society. That way, these books provide

readers with a hopeful outlook and with proposed solutions. In addition, such novels often feature societies that value conformity wherein anyone potentially opposing them is seen as a threat; heroes and heroines in these texts are thus often characters that are outsiders or at least somewhat distinct from their peers. In the end, these traits are what help them in their victory. So with that as their model, "young readers faced with the pressure to conform in their own lives can learn from these texts not to be ashamed of how they may differ from the norm" (Hintz and Ostry 8).

While this answers the question of why bleak books for teenager are even being written, one might still wonder why a negative outlook on society is depicted in a fictitious dystopian society, when books could just as well deal with the same topics in a society mirroring our present. In answering this question I turn to the genre of Fantasy, which also includes Science Fiction and dystopian fiction, as I have mentioned before, and quote Terry Pratchett when he says: "Here's to [F]antasy as the proper diet for the growing soul. All human life is there: a moral code, a sense of order and, sometimes, great big green things with teeth" (qtd. in O'Keefe 234). The way I interpret Pratchett's statement is that Fantasy books encompass everything essential about human life just as realism does, with the added bonus of something novel and exciting. O'Keefe has an apt answer to the legitimate question of why Fantasy books would even want to contain realistic everyday items: The reason is that these items are what link the books to their readers. In discovering a new world inside a book, young readers go through the same motions they experience in real life upon going through the stages of maturation on their way to adulthood (232-233). What is more, young adults do not simply want to be taught new things, they want to discover and be entertained. After all, reading should be fun, and, as Totaro puts it:

> [W]hat better way to entertain a reader than by creating a wondrous or even monstrously curious new world? What better way to educate than by creating a kinship between protagonist and reader through common enemies and shared, practical solutions? [...] Writers of young adult novels have always carried this identical burden, educating their readers through the pains of social and physical metamorphosis while entertaining them. (135)

In the case of dystopia, the novelties are not monstrous creatures or even the plotline as such; it is the background of the future society and its rules. The common enemies are authority figures, which in dystopian fiction are usually adults in cooperation with the oppressive regime. In addition, rebelling against a dystopian society can be seen as an allegory to real adolescent life. O'Keefe mentions that during puberty, youth "questions everything, especially authority" (232). Whether this authority is represented by a parent or another relative, the law, teachers, or the authorities of dystopian society, depends on the genre of the book. Since in DYAF, rules and societies representing the villain part often stem from wrongdoings that have already begun in the present, the youthful reader gets a chance to discover something that is new but not all unfamiliar. As I have mentioned above, according to Bradford's interpretation, dystopia is not a warning about humankind's corrupt side, but it provides the possibility for young adults to explore alternative worlds and judge these themselves. The point of DYAF is thus not to teach about wrong or right, but to let youth explore their own mental capabilities of shaping opinions and forming judgements, for "during adolescence, one is indeed faced with decisions that mirror those made by society as a whole" (Hintz and Ostry 10). That way, reading dystopian fiction can be seen as a trial run for real life.

I have now answered why bleak books for teens are written and why teens might profit from reading them. The question why teens would be interested in reading such books in the first place, though, has yet to be answered. After all, adolescents do not pick up fiction because they aim at being taught about and prepared for life, responsibility, and adulthood. The question is best answered by Deborah O'Keefe, who considers the success of the *Harry Potter* series not in spite of but *because* of its dark features: "Today's readers cannot believe in a benign 'school-story' universe, and they cannot deny the existence of horrible, threatening forces and dreary, deadening conventional life; so they appreciate this generous, energetic series that acknowledges all three layers" (234). According to this statement, we can observe that what young people like about dark topics is their candour, meaning that youth appreciates honesty and the sentiment that they can bear the burden that comes with it. This then leaves the question whether DYAF novels do their readers any favours in trading hopeless

endings against hopeful outlooks. I state that the decision between hopeful and hopeless endings depends as much on the author's choice as it depends on the reader's. Sambell even puts a tag on these choices and names the first "authorial hesitation" (168), meaning that the author shows either reluctance to depict an ending where the hero fails or leaves it ambiguous altogether. The second he calls "reader hesitation" (171), meaning that the reader chooses how to interpret whether an ending is to be seen as hopeful or not. This view ties in with Iser's reader-response theory that claims that the reader contributes something to the work and interprets it his or her own way.

In this chapter, I have collected the motifs and structures commonly employed in dystopian fiction. I have traced the origin of the word and the genre back to utopia and Thomas Moore, and have given an account of how the term has changed its meaning over time. I have then moved on to explain how the decline of language and linguistic change in general are deployed in dystopian fiction both for adult and young readers. Furthermore, I have compared DYAF typical hopeful endings to adult dystopian bleak outlooks on the future and contrasted critics who see dystopian texts as either prophetic, warning or didactic. Lastly, I stated that dystopian fiction is an appropriate genre for adolescent readers since it incorporates struggles of daily life that the reader can apply to his or her own reality, as well as fantastic elements that add the experience of discovering a new world. In my last three subchapters I have given an account of reader-response criticism, Young Adult Fiction in general as well as dystopian fiction for adult and young readers. I will now apply the insights gained in these three chapters to the three novels of DYAF I have selected, and analyse the journey to epiphany for the reader and the protagonist, as well as the ascertainment of involvement of and appeal to the reader in DYAF, with the help of Iser's theory of the degree of indeterminacy and normalisation.

5 The journey towards epiphany for characters and readers

Having given an overview of the most important points of analysis of my thesis, I will now apply these in my disquisition on the three DYAF novels I have chosen, which are Gemma Malley's *The Declaration*, Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, and M.T. Anderson's *Feed*. I have already addressed the reason for this diverse selection in my introduction. In order to determine congruence and dissonance in the journeys to the epiphany about the nature of the depicted society, I will divide my analysis into two main parts, and will first address the character's, then the reader's journey.

The investigation of the protagonist's path to realisation will be dissected into two parts: The journey towards the moment of epiphany, including the moment of epiphany itself, and the reaction that follows. Similarly, the first four subchapters in the analysis of the reader's journey will deal with the reader's journey to epiphany, while the last subchapter 5.2.5, will address the text's appeal to the reader as well as the reader's participation and reaction to the text, according to Wolfgang Iser's theory of reader-response criticism.

5.1 The protagonists' amorous journey to awakening

As I have mentioned in chapter 3.1, orphan stories (Kullmann 122) share a common trait with dystopian novels, in that they have a tendency to depict an adolescent girl's struggle towards independence because it allows room for a romantic plotline with a male hero. The main argument in this chapter will be that a romantic relationship is paramount to a character's awakening and epiphany, independent of the main character's gender. Given that the employment of romance has a tradition in utopian writings (Priessnitz 50-51), it is not surprising that romantic motifs serve to counteract dystopian regimes. To prove that the theory applies for all forms of dystopian teenage fiction, I have thus deliberately included *Feed* in my selection, which depicts an indoctrinated boy protagonist who develops a relationship with a liberally thinking girl.

I will begin this chapter by taking a close look at the three protagonists' ways to epiphany. I have addressed such sudden revelations about the nature of a society or humankind when I examined the tradition in initiation stories in chapter 3 (Curnutt 75). I will not discuss the signs for and the degree of the character's indoctrination now, since these will be addressed in more detail in the chapter 5.2.5. My hypothesis as to the nature of the trigger that leads the protagonists to regard their society as dystopian is that protagonists begin to broaden their worldviews, and are thus more susceptible to alternative viewpoints, as soon as they develop romantic feelings towards another character. Feelings of friendship and loyalty also play an important role in this development. I will therefore analyse the friendships and romantic relationships of the protagonists in my three selected works.

Not all of the protagonists in the novels selected go through a full change of their perspectives, an option which Curnutt denounces as the motif of "fall" (109); Titus, though, decides to reject the insights he has gained to go back to a world of oblivion, which is the option of "flight" (Curnutt 111). What all three have in common, though, is the underlying reason for becoming more open-minded: Romantic feelings and loyal devotion prepare the ground for a different way of thinking and pave the way for epiphanies about the dystopian society they live in. They may still see their friends and crushes through rose-tinted glasses, but in return they finally shed the rose-coloured spectacles they had been wearing towards their society and surroundings. Thus they trade one proverbial visual aid for another and gain important insights in the process.

5.1.1 Love is not blind after all

I have mentioned in chapter 3 that romance novels might not carry too high a reputation, but they are an important subgenre of teenage fiction nevertheless. In addition, I have argued that dystopian fiction is usually a mix of genres, often combining a quest with a bildungsroman and a dystopian future. In chapter 3.4, I have argued that even in non-adolescent dystopian literature classics like *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty Four*, romantic relationships are depicted to provoke the character to rebel against the authorities. As can be seen,

romantic feelings as motivators are certainly not a new trope, though I discovered that, with few exceptions such as in Eric S. Rabkin's as well as William Matter's work, they are often left at the sidelines of literary analysis. While I am aware that romantic matters do not generally lend themselves for academic analysis, I now want to prove that due to their motivating force in characters, they are deserving of close analysis in DYAF.

The first relationship to look at features in Gemma Malley's *The Declaration*. When Peter comes to Grange Hall as the oldest Surplus ever to be found by the Catchers, Anna is curious about him and finds him physically attractive (32). She also remarks that his eyes and his comportment give away his confidence, which is a highly unusual trait in a Surplus (32, 36). This shows the reader that Anna harbours feelings for the new arrival, although it does not immediately change her behaviour: While she keeps feeling intrigued by him, especially when he tells her details from life on the Outside (36), she is still strongly under the influence of her education, and thus tries to make him see reason and teaches him Surplus conduct (37, 39). When he won't listen, she rejects his stories completely: "Anna clamped her hands on her ears [...] 'no, I don't want you to tell me anything'" (40). Her strong reaction shows her high degree of indoctrination, which indicates that Peter's subsequent impact on her behaviour is very powerful. Peter does not give up, and this dynamic between the two continues until one particularly violent student publicly threatens Peter. Consequently Anna starts to break rules in order to attempt to warn him because she admits to herself that "Peter was her friend now, however much she tried to deny it. And Anna, who had never before allowed her heart's voice to be heard, was now unwillingly and unavoidably in its thrall" (97). As I see it, the text itself already indicates that it is due to the relationship to Peter that Anna starts disobeying rules. Incidentally, when regarding this statement in terms of reader response theory, the second sentence is the author's added commentary in order to stress to the reader the beginning change such feelings of loyalty have struck inside the protagonist. The fact that the text specifically draws attention to it affirms my argument about the link between amorous feelings and protagonists' changing attitudes.

From this moment on, the reader can also detect Anna's physical reactions towards Peter, revealing her attraction to him. She feels "herself redden" (102) and "her face flush slightly" (101), and for the first time secretly imagines what it would be like to leave Grange Hall and be with Peter (106). However, when he tries to tell her that Mrs Pincent is planning on terminating him, she still is not ready to accept the truth and tells him: "You just dreamt it, that's all" (105). This demonstrates to the reader that Anna is still choosing flight over fall, since she is reluctant to sacrifice her innocence (Curnutt 111). Due to her feelings for Peter, she nevertheless grows more humane in other areas of her life and even places more importance on loyalty to others than on her duties as Mrs Pincent's Prefect. For instance, she covers up for Surplus Sheila and lets her misdemeanour slide, although her role as a Prefect means that she has the duty and pleasure to report delinquencies and even punish them (109). Even shortly before Anna can admit to herself the impact Peter has on her, there are already signs pointing in that direction. For example, Anna no longer participates in the cruel dorm power games where Surpluses play master and slave to humiliate each other: "The real reason that Anna could not bear to watch the tormentor or tormented was that recently, she had begun to lose her appetite for the infliction of pain" (75). She still preaches Surplus conduct at her peers (84-85), though she only does so "on autopilot" (84). She also acts tough when breaking up the games, and threatens to beat up Surplus Tania for her disobedience (82), but when Mrs Pincent orders her to actually hit Tania, Anna, contrary to her reputation as a fearful Prefect up until this moment, is suddenly unable to obey to this command (84). The reason behind this is left as a gap for the reader to fill, but it is clear that her change in behaviour and her display of morals only started once Peter came into her life. It also stresses William Matter's theory of relationships being threatening to dystopian stability (97).

A further change in Anna's behaviour can be seen in her refusal to divulge Peter's secrets when Mrs Pincent questions her in her office (121). Already, she is loyal to Peter even though this puts herself at risk. As she leaves the office and overhears a phone call by Mrs Pincent, she finally realises that she had been lied to all her life. The following statement finally triggers Anna's moment of epiphany: "Yes, Anna. Prefect. No, she couldn't tell me a bloody thing. Stupid

girl's got no mind of her own, she's been indoctrinated so well. [...] [W]hat matters is that I want rid of him, [...] And it's got to look natural. A stress-induced heart attack, maybe" (123-124). When analysing the meaning behind this statement for Anna, I argue that finding validation for one's worth in a relationship raises one's sense of self-awareness and self-worth. Anna was by then not only confident that she deeply cared for Peter and had subsequently experienced that loyalty, respect, and mercy towards other human beings were important, she also regarded herself differently in that she suddenly developed feelings of pride and self-worth. So it comes as no surprise that the moment of her epiphany occurs when both her self-worth and Peter's safety are threatened:

> Bile was rising up her throat [...] She closed her eyes briefly, trying to think of some way that she could have misunderstood what Mrs Pincent had said; some way to make things OK again, but she knew it was futile. And the worst thing, Anna realised – to her shame, because surely nothing could be worse than Mrs Pincent wanting Peter dead – the thing that hurt most of all, the words that had cut into her like a knife, were the ones Mrs Pincent had used to describe her. She had used the word 'indoctrinated' with vitriol, as if it was a bad thing. As if being a good Surplus, a Valuable Asset, everything that Anna had spent her life trying to be, was something Mrs Pincent held in contempt. Anna had never known the feeling of hatred before, but now it raged through her body like a rampant cancer, filling her with strength of emotion that she had never known before, and had no capacity to express or handle. [...] Mrs Pincent would not get away with it, [...] Anna, the stupid girl with no mind of her own, was going to make sure of that if it was the last thing she did. (124-125)

Mrs Pincent, who had made Anna her spy as a Prefect, who had told Anna her whole life that the girl was a dutiful Surplus, Knew Her Place and was set to be a Valuable Asset, all of which used to be compliments in Anna's mind, has now clearly stated that she held Anna in no high regard and, on top of it, plans on having her crush killed. In addition, Mrs Pincent had used the word "indoctrinated", the meaning of which Peter only explained to her earlier (66). Anna feels the pain of disappointed loyalty, a trait she had only learned from Peter in the first place. It is thus ascribable to Peter's impact on Anna's code of morality that she is able to not fall back into denial about what Mrs Pincent said, but to let the actual facts fuel her with enough anger to choose the option of fall and decide to rebel. The subsequent section "Shedding the rose-tinted glasses"

will deal in more detail with Anna's behaviour in the wake of her epiphany and her growing awareness due to that.

In *Uglies*, Tally's relationships are more complicated. First of all, there is Peris, who used to be her best friend, but has now turned pretty and lives in New Pretty Town. From the get-go, the reader realises that Peris is more than just a friend to Tally. She risks sneaking into New Pretty Town for him (9), is loath to think about him making use of the pleasure gardens with someone else (14), and mentions that he has had girlfriends before without her being able to do anything against it (29). Taken from these facts and concessions the reader can already detect Anna's crush on Peris. In addition, she does not get mad when he flinches at the sight of her "ugly" features; instead she now has an additional motivation to become pretty other than for herself. She does not even become suspicious of his indifference towards their friendship when she asks him: "'But we're best friends, right?' He sighed, dabbing at a brown stain. 'Sure, forever. In three months.'" (20). Because of her crush on Peris, she forgives him his cold behaviour and does not ponder it further, even though she is sad about it (30). Instead it encourages her to follow the path that has been laid out for her by her society: "She had to become pretty for him" (25). The text never specifically mentions her crush on him, but due to her actions being motivated by him, I argue that her feelings linked to her resulting resolutions are unmistakably communicated to the reader.

Then there is Shay, her new best friend who tries to open her eyes about the restraining nature of the plastic surgeries. Shay also urges Tally to be more rebellious and try out new things, like leaving the city in order to visit the Rusty Ruins of an old city by night. Tally admits only agreeing to come along because she feels like being best friends with Shay (51); so again Tally's action for and against the rules depend on her relationship to another person. When Shay tries to convince her that there is something amiss with the surgery and the way the city is run, Tally refuses to believe her. However, when they once again escape their dorms in order to play tricks, Tally notices "[t]he pattern of shadows that led away from the dorm seemed so convenient, almost intentional. As if uglies were supposed to sneak out every once in a while. Tally shook her head.

She was starting to think like Shay" (54). Shay had never spoken of the shadows, but through their friendship she obviously managed to get through to Tally on some level, because for the very first time, Tally notices suspicious details in her surroundings herself. Later, after the girls had a fight, Tally still cannot help but think about Shay's views: "Tally figured that Shay was right about one thing: Being in the city all the time made everything fake, in a way" (74). Once they make up and reunite, Tally observes that "[f]or a moment, Shay's ugly face looked perfect" (87). This is a crucial moment for Tally, since it is the very first time that her emotions for another person let her forget her upbringing for at least one moment. Nevertheless, her friendship to Shay is apparently not yet intense enough to completely convince Tally – she refuses to run away to the Smoke with Shay because she does not see how one can want to live as an ugly in the wilderness when they can be pretty in the comfortable civilisation (95). This proves to the reader that Tally is not yet ready to accept the loss of innocence that the option of fall would bring, and for the moment chooses flight, which in Tally's case literally "appeals to the promise of endless youth" (Curnutt 111) in the form of the operation.

The impact of their friendship is not one sided at all. Tally has a positive influence on Shay as well. Before Shay departs she admits that despite talking about rebellion, she was always scared to act on it. Only her conversations with Tally, who told her to finally grow up, convinced her that running away was the right thing to do (90-91). Shay even admits: "All of a sudden I wasn't alone anymore. I wasn't afraid [...]" (91), thereby stating that her close friendship with Tally has opened her eyes and gave her the courage to follow through with her plan.

Although Shay fails at convincing Tally about the city's corrupt system, she nevertheless instils enough liberal thought in her to make her defy the authorities in Shay's name for at least a little while. She made Tally promise to not give away her secret (94), and initially, Tally stands by that despite the cruel threats of the Specials to never turn her pretty if she refuses to help them (109). This is very surprising, considering that nothing in the world seems as important to Tally as being turned into a pretty. She suffers greatly under the shame of

staying ugly even after her 16th birthday (113, 120), and will not even let herself be convinced to surrender to the authorities by her parents (117). The degree to which her actions depend on her feelings to Peris, though, becomes even clearer then: He unexpectedly pays her a visit and suddenly behaves much warmer towards her. He even takes her in his arms (127), to which he objected before due to her appearance, and this time gives her the promise of friendship unconditionally: "'You promised [...], Tally. That you'd be with me soon. That we'd be pretty together. [...] Best friends forever, Tally'"(126). Without thinking that maybe the Specials had sent him to convince her, Tally decides then and there that "[s]he had it now, an excuse to break her vow. She'd made that promise to Peris, just as real, before she'd ever met Shay. [...] And Peris was right here [...] and was looking at her with those eyes... 'Of course'" (126). This is already proof enough that her motivation to betray her friend stems from her motivation to be reunited with her crush. However, the text stresses this point by adding another definite statement: "[...]acting on her decision couldn't wait. She knew that with Peris gone, the doubts would come back again and haunt her" (127).

Finally, there is David, leader of the Smoke, which is the community in the wilderness that Shay flees to. There, everyone is free to come and go as they please and no one gets the operation. David ends up becoming Tally's ultimate love interest upon which she even forgets about her feelings for Peris. She only meets David upon arriving at the Smoke, when she was forced to infiltrate the place by the Specials. By that time Tally has had her taste of the wilderness and longs to go back to the city. When looking around the Smoke, she is scared by the old uglies with their wrinkles (197), and shocked at the Rusty-like behaviour of its inhabitants; they burn wood, eat meat, make their clothes themselves, and do not have proper toilets. All this puts her off, though in relation to David, the clothes made of animal skin do not seem to bother her that much, since she keeps noticing that he looks good in them (192, 213, 231). As she spends more time in the Smoke without activating the transmitter, she grows to like David, whom she perceives to be different from anyone she had ever met (253), and finally realises that she is falling in love with him (241). A major step in her awakening also takes place when he tells her about how he

grew up in the Smoke. It is then that she first realises what betraying the Smoke to the Specials would do:

> David's revelation had suddenly made everything much more complicated. The Smoke wasn't just a hideout for assorted runaways, she realized now. It was a real town, a city in its own right. If Tally activated the tracker, it wouldn't just mean the end of Shay's big adventure. It would be David's home taken from him, his whole life stripped away. [...] She still hadn't activated the pendant, and since her conversation with David, she wasn't sure she could. (219-223)

This proves that it is her feelings for David that make her stop and consider the consequences of her actions, something that Tally, having grown up very sheltered in a city where her every move was guided, is not used to doing. As she comprehends in that moment, the reason she is so fascinated by him is that "[h]e took the world more seriously than any other ugly she'd ever met – more seriously, in fact, than middle pretties like her parents" (246). It is later revealed that the ability to understand the gravity of things is what David treasures about Tally and that is what makes him perceive her as attractive: "You're different from the rest of them. You can see the world clearly, even if you did grow up spoiled. [...] That's why you're beautiful, Tally" (276).

Tally's interest in David in connection with her change in morale can also be observed by how she perceives his looks. From the moment she first met him she keeps noticing positive things about his appearance despite him being an ugly: "The boy smiled again. He was an ugly, but he had a nice smile" (189). Even though she sees the technical faults in his features, the positive aspects she finds in his looks grow more prominent until suddenly she catches herself having missed a major feature: "Tally realized that David's nose was much bigger than any pretty's. Why hadn't she noticed that before now?" (256). During an intimate moment where David entrusts Tally with his secret (that his parents were runaway doctors and he has grown up away from civilisation), Tally actually perceives him to be good-looking despite not having had the operation: "But it was as if something had changed inside Tally's head, something that had turned his face pretty to her" (250), and she even compares the effects of his looks on her to the ones a pretty's face would have (250, 276). It is a common phenomenon that people we like or fall for appear better looking to us. In Tally's case, however, this is quite extraordinary, since for her whole

life she has been trained to respond to certain features and reject others. The changing perception of his looks to her occurs due to her feelings for him. With it, she also becomes more accepting of the Smoke – she now even enjoys hard work and the peaceful sleep and hearty meals that go with it (229) – and is more open to the potential faults in her city's system. After her epiphany, the feelings about David's looks only grow stronger. Her affection for David and acceptance of his non-pretty looks also open her up to accept a different kind of beauty: "Tally had spent the last four years staring at the skyline of New Pretty Town, thinking it was the most beautiful sight in the world, but she didn't think so anymore" (209). In addition, she secretly admits to herself that "[n]ature, at least, didn't need an operation to be beautiful. It just was" (230). Thus, David's influence on her has changed her whole view on beauty.

In the end, she even considers staying in the Smoke without even having found out the horrible truth about the operation yet: "Maybe the Smoke was where she really belonged" (244). David finally trusts Tally enough to take her to visit his parents, from whom she learns the truth about the operation:

> "I found that there were complications from the anaesthetic used in the operation. Tiny lesions in the brain" [...] "The lesions aren't an accident, Tally. They're part of the operation," [...] "Maybe the reason war and all that other stuff went away is that there are no more controversies, no disagreements, no people demanding change. Just masses of smiling pretties, and a few people left to run things."
> Tally remembered crossing the river to New Pretty Town, watching them have their endless fun. She and Peris used to boast they'd never wind up so idiotic, so shallow. But when she'd seen him... "Becoming pretty doesn't just change the way you look." she said.
> "No," David said. "It changes the way you think." (263-268)

Tally neither hesitates nor feigns disbelief. She even draws the conclusion herself and can retrospectively analyse Peris' and other pretty's behaviour accordingly. We find out much later that other uglies are not so keen on accepting the truth (406), which only proves Tally's special case. Even though she did not even believe Shay that changing your looks is not necessarily a good thing, she is now, after having gone through the change of falling in love with someone from the other side of society, quick to accept that the authorities give people brain damage in order to keep them compliant. In addition, she thinks back to Peris' strange behaviour as a pretty, which only confirms the

theory. Thus, her feelings towards David have prepared her to accept the horrible truth the authorities of her city are concealing and have given her the courage to accept the fall from innocence.

The main relationship to focus on in *Feed* is that between the protagonist Titus and Violet. What distinguished *Feed* from the other two novels is that it is written in the first person narrative, which gives the reader an inside look into Titus' mind and his perception of his experience. When Violet and Titus first meet, he immediately changes his behaviour; part of it is deliberate, because he is consciously trying to impress her, part of it happens on an unconscious level. For instance, he actively rejects going in mal (letting your feed malfunction in order to experience a high, similar to taking drugs) with his friends, because he has the impression that Violet objects to that practice: "Violet looked really uncomfortable now. It was pretty obvious she really didn't want to be with us. [...] 'Drop it, Link,' I said. 'We're not going in mal.'" (33). The reader, however, knows that this is just for the benefit of the girl, since a few pages prior Titus admitted to having been in mal the night before (6). Titus continues with being on his best behaviour concerning that matter throughout their relationship and even specifically lists Violet as a reason why he does not want to join his friends in what they perceive as fun: "'I don't think Violet's into the mal'" (87). He also does not want to tell her about his friends going in mal because he "didn't want her to look at them as if she was sorry" (89). The same is true for a round of spin the bottle at a party when he feels Violet cannot stand playing that game: "Violet and I sat down. I didn't need to chat her to tell she didn't want to play. [...] I really didn't want her to get spun to, because I thought she might get really pissed by the stupidity of the whole game" (198). Consequently, he tries to de-escalate the situation by casually pronouncing the game "not fun" (201). Further proof that he only abstains from things he normally enjoys is that once he is no longer with her, the first thing he does is to go back to his old ways: he even suggests to his friends to go in mal (237). So in that respect, Violet did not change his thinking, but only influenced his actions for a little while.

However, at one point we can witness Titus being genuinely annoyed at his friends for going in mal and playing childish games. Only shortly before he has

had a talk with Violet where she had pondered whether now their group of friends would behave differently (80). After all, they had experienced something as momentous together as having no feed. At that time, Titus had not even been wondering about that subject (80), but Violet's view on it seems to foster a desire for change within him, given that once he is at the party and his friends keep bugging him about joining them in going in mal, he gets really angry with them: "'What is this, shitheads?' I said. 'Cut the *ABC Afterschool Special*.' [...] 'What did we just go through? Unit?' I whapped myself on the back of the head. 'Remember? Like, what did we just...? Huh?'" (87). This outburst is not his attempt at holding back for Violet's sake, it is real anger at realising that his friends do not give their experience any credit. He then even tells Violet disappointedly: "People have just gone so quickly back to like before" (89). I argue that this scene can be seen as proof that Titus has evolved due to Violet's influence, even though he opts for the easy way out in the end, where he decides to stay ignorant and oblivious to the deteriorating state of Earth and humankind. Upon having the possibility to compare Violet's evolved way of thinking and his friends' backward and ignorant reaction to grave situations, he has his first realisation that the way they are all going about their lives is wrong. Thus, his Violet-induced deliberate change of behaviour has, for the time being, changed his point of view for real.

He also deliberately rebels against the system together with Violet, though as a reader I doubt that he is aware of the implication and the impact of his actions. At the beginning of their relationship, Violet takes him to the mall and tells him that her new project is to create a customer profile that the feed will have difficulties catering to (97-98). Initially Titus does not understand the motivation behind that, but then Violet seduces him into joining him in her plan: "She ran her fingers along the edge of my collar, so her nail touched the skin of my throat. I waited for an explanation. She didn't tell me any more, but she said to come with her" (98). After she demonstrates in a shop what being a difficult customer entails and again flirts with Titus, he comprehends the rules of the game: "She winked at me. It was kind of a turn-on. [...] but then she didn't buy it. [...] and I was starting to get the picture and think it was all pretty funny" (100). He follows her in rebelling, though whereas she is serious about her project and

states: "I'm not going to let them catalog me. I'm going to become invisible" (98), he answers her serious question: "What do you think about resisting?" (103) with a reference to an insider joke of theirs (103). As I argue, this proves that resisting the feed is nothing but a fun way to pass the time for him, and he participates in it because it is an opportunity to flirt with his crush. Thus, Titus is coerced into resisting due to his feelings for another character, without being even properly aware of it.

In my last example, Violet's independent thinking was a way for the both to connect. However, her obvious intellectual supremacy and her evident divergence to his friends also becomes a problem, despite it having initially spiked his interest. Upon first meeting her, Titus is impressed by Violet's distinct looks, since she is dressed in gray wool instead of brightly coloured, shiny plastic (17). Then there is also the question of her significantly higher intellect and level of education, which is obvious to him and his friends from the start, as can be seen in their reaction after her three first utterances towards them: "We were all kind of stunned [...] We were all just kind of staring at her like she was an alien. [...] Of course, he didn't have any idea what the hell she was talking about either, but he started laughing while the rest of us were looking up 'suppuration' on the feed English-to-English wordbook" (23). Again, one can observe the interest in the other person due to their clear distinction from other people, as was already the case in *Uglies* and *The Declaration*. Violet's intellect is at once attractive and repellent to Titus, since he is intrigued by her, but at the same time feels stupid in comparison to her. Initially, he is also ashamed of his friends: "I just wanted them all to shut up somehow, I mean nicely, because suddenly I realized that we didn't really sound too smart. If someone overheard us, like that girl, they might think we were dumb" (20). This also causes him to avoid speaking with her at first: when Violet is clearly waiting for Titus to say something, he can only think about how smart she seemed and admits to himself: "But I had nothing to say" (24-25). Over time, he feels slightly better regarding that issue since he realises that there is a lot he can teach her about being a regular teenager with a feed and a peer group, which she knew little about (107).

After a certain amount of time, however, his reaction to her intelligence becomes more subconscious. Titus gets angry when Violet talks about issues about which he has been ignorant so far, for instance when she tells him that the U.S. are not a democracy but a republic (111-112). Only after she reasons with him more gently does he believe and understand:

> Then she was like, really gently, *No, please, I'm not trying to be an asshole. It's not a democracy.*
> I was like*, Then what is it?*
> *A republic. It's a republic.*
> *Why?*
> *Because we elect people to vote for us. That's my point.*
> *So why is it like that?*
> *Because if it was a democracy, everybody would have to decide about everything.*
> I thought about that. *We could have everybody vote. From the feeds. Instantaneous. Then it would be a democracy.*
> *Except*, she said, *only about seventy-three percent of Americans have feeds.*
> [...]
> *I'm sorry, I said. [...] For not knowing. You know, that so many people don't have them.* (112-113)

This excerpt shows that on occasion he is now even curious to know the true state of things, which becomes evident as he keeps asking questions of why and how. Once he has opened up to the subject he is even capable of forming his own opinion about the subject matter. On his own, he draws the conclusion that a democracy is better than a republic and thinks about how to theoretically bring about that change in society. He is, of course, not well informed about the subject and has naive views about the world as he does not even know that not everyone has the feed. He is also not ready to jump on the band wagon for it, but this discussion is a far cry from the usual debates he has about trends on reality TV shows. The following conversation takes place a week after the group of friends all get their feeds back working, and is an example of what Titus perceived to be a well rounded discussion before Violet's considerable influence:

> We had this major debate going on because we watched the *Oh? Wow! Thing!* and there was this part where Organelle asked Jackie whether she had meg hips and he was like, "Since you ask, we both could work out more," and she was like, "You shithead, you should've lied," and so all the guys were saying, *no way, if she asked him this complete question he should answer it,* and the girls were like, *if you ever insult how I look then you're completely shallow,* and we were like, *but she asked,* and

they were like, *omigod, you don't get it,* and Link said if they really didn't want to know how they looked, then how come they asked so much, and then I said this thing, and Calista said this thing, and it was like, *da da da da da, da da da da da, da da da da da,* all day. It was kind of fun. I like debates where you argue about different points of view. (76)

The divergent quality of both conversations is obvious to the reader and the fact that at this stage he even discusses a topic of actual importance to society and contributes independent thought is proof enough that his relationship with Violet has a positive effect on him and makes him think outside the box. As will be discussed in the next sub-chapter, this development will not last.

Subsequently to this step in his personal evolution he experiences an up and down in his independent thinking: When his dream gets hacked, he hardly realises it and forgets about it immediately (93). However, during the dream he is aware that the hackers breaching his dream are not police officials, which accounts for his independent thinking (93). When he and Violet are both hacked for the second time, they react completely differently: Violet panics and contacts him on the feed in the middle of the night and tries to contact a life operator on the feed for help (154), while Titus is far too sleepy to care about someone hacking into his conscience: "*Oh, unit. Oh, unit. I'm ... Do you know how asleep I was? [...] Oh, okay. Shit. Okay. So can I go like back to sleep?*" (153). He might be aware of the fact that dream hacking is worrisome, though as we can see when looking at the example of Titus, being aware of something and acting on it are two very different stages in becoming an independent thinker. Here, Titus proves that he has yet to evolve further.

Consequently, however, he proves himself to be a potential rebel when at one point he finds out that the hacker, who prompted their feeds to malfunction on the moon and whom they had planned on suing, was dead by now. Titus' father had not thought about informing him, and although Titus openly addresses the issue, his dad does not even find it worth discussing. Titus, freshly fuelled with the thirst for knowledge, states:

 "It's my feed. [...] I want to get worried. If there is like some meg thing wrong." [...]
"You're acting out of line," said my father, pointing at me. "I'm really disappointed."

> "Doing what?" I said. "I'm just asking."
> "Dude, I just bought you an upcar, and you're being a brat."
> *You're not being a brat*, Violet chatted. (127-128)

Violet m-chats him that what he is doing is right, while his father is angry with him for bringing up the matter in the first place. Titus' statement clearly shows that he refuses to stay in the dark about things of his immediate concern any longer. As can be seen, Violet not only sparked that kind of behaviour in him, she also encourages it now.

There is one more instance where Titus proves he is now capable of independent thinking thanks to Violet, which is when he finds himself face to face with artificial lesions. This happens in two stages; first he discovers the fake lesions on Calista, who has undergone an operation to acquire a lesion because they are en vogue now. Titus is absolutely disgusted by it, especially when he sees her boyfriend fondle it:

> Link came in and was kissing Calista on the forehead, with his hand behind her skull, and then he tickled her lesion.
> *Oh! Unit!* I grabbed Quendy's wrist. *Oh, unit, this is like – whoa – total error message. Major system error!*
> [...]
> *Whoa! I got to tell Violet about this, she'll go crazy.* [...] *She's always looking for like evidence of the decline of civilization.* (184)

His instinct upon seeing something he thinks is wrong is to contact Violet and tell her. Whether this impulse stems from him needing positive reinforcement from her, or from wanting to find another person who understands what he is going through, fact is that when Titus is confronted with something unprecedented, he shares it with Violet. In this case, his friend Quendy was right next to him and he still opted to contact Violet. This once more proves my theory that romantic relationships and beginning understanding about the dystopian nature of one's society go hand in hand. When Titus sees the artificial lesions for the second time, they are on Quendy's body. This comes to an even greater surprise to him since it was her with whom he discovered Calista's lesion and inveighed against it behind Calista's back. Now, however "her whole skin was cut up with this artificial lesions" (191). This time Titus is not too shocked about it, and merely states towards Violet: "*No, it's sure not too attractive*" (193). Violet, in comparison, "had her face in her hands" (192) and

gravely remarks to him "*It's the end. It's the end of the civilization. We're going down*" (193). I will discuss her subsequent violent outburst in the following section; however, I declare this moment to be Violet's true moment of epiphany: "*The only thing worse than the thought it may all come tumbling down is the thought that we may go on like this forever*" (193). As I see it, this is not only her sudden comprehension, but it is the novel's overall message. My main point of argument about this statement, though, is that Violet has only reached this epiphany by spending time with Titus and his friends. Being sheltered and well educated has given her the tools for independent thought. Apparently though, triggering an epiphany was not enough to induce Curnutt's option of the fall (111), since it is often stated, by her and by Titus, that she is constantly trying to fit in and have a normal live and be a teenager like everyone else. Only by becoming involved with Titus and having her wish granted does she see that this was not what she wanted after all. The stark contrast between her and this peer group is what gets her to come to this conclusion.

While Titus is initially not as concerned about Quendy as Violet, later on he is disgusted by his friend's positive comment about her appearance:

> *Hey,* chatted Marty to the guys, *don't you think Quendy looks good?*
> Link was like, *Just shut up and play.*
> I was like, *I think it looks stupid.*
> *It's a good look,* Marty chatted, *and kind of fun.*
> I was disgusted, like *Huh? You can see her like muscles and tendons and ligaments and stuff through the lesions.*
> *Yeah,* said Marty, *which makes you kind of think about what's inside, huh? Which is sexy.* (199)

Compared to Violet, who has her moment of outraged epiphany as a reaction to Quendy's self-mutilation, Titus' mild disgust seems rather subdued. However, compared to his friends Link and Marty, who find either Calista's or Quendy's lesions attractive, he proves himself to have grown enough to be able to think against the current. However, as can be seen, his initial reaction of mild aversion to his full-out disgust has changed due to Violet's comments about how this is a sign for the downfall of civilization. We can also make out Titus' evolvement when looking at his two different reactions to Violet's failing feed. When she first tells him that it is getting more serious and that she was unable to move her limbs for several hours, he does not even want to hear it: "*Oh shit.*

Don't tell me this. Oh shit" (180). This proves that Titus is loath to be confronted with any serious problems, even when they are of immediate concern to his girlfriend. After Violet's violent fit at the party, however, when her body stops working completely and she has to be picked up by an ambulance, he reacts differently: "I went with them. And the feed whispered to me about sales, and made all these suggestions about medical lawyers and malpractice, and something happened, and I was sitting beside her in an ambulance, and suddenly I realized, *The party is over. The fucking party is over*" (203). These are the final words in the chapter entitled "utopia" and mark Titus' sudden awakening from his feed-induced stupor. However, as will be analysed in the subsequent chapter, an epiphany about one's dystopian society is not a guarantee for rebellion.

While it must be said that Titus may not agree with Violet or even understand what she is saying for that matter, I state that the sentence above clearly indicates that he suddenly awakens from his stupor and understands that Violet's deteriorating condition is serious. He comprehends that Violet's brain is gravely damaged by the feed and that the simple life is now over. While this epiphany does not gain Titus insight into how the world works, like it happened with Anna in *The Declaration* and Tally in *Uglies*, it does position him at a crossroads. The boy, who his whole life has been taught to ignore the bad and inconvenient things in life in favour of indulging into the easy life of materialism and parties, has now, through Violet's fit, been confronted with the harsh reality. He has to decide whether he wants to face the truth and grow up, or choose to ignore the facts and go back to blissful oblivion. I will examine his reaction and decision to this insight in the upcoming chapter.

It was a challenge to pinpoint the moment of epiphany for Titus, since there is a constant back and forth within him, until in the end he decides not to resist the feed and its pull into oblivion. I argue that there is a moment that shows his understanding for reality, but it is very fleeting indeed. It closely coincides with Violet's moment of epiphany and thus serves me as the main reference point for the *before* and *after* part of the epiphany. This also proves to be useful because after Violet's big revelation, their relationship starts to crumble and

Titus regresses, whereas before that incident, when he was with her, he used to thrive intellectually. Thus, as I see it, *before* and *after* the epiphany is also *before* and *after* their relationship, which ties in with my theory of romantic feelings in connection with the process of awakening. In addition, the novel is divided into four parts. Right after their respective moments of epiphanies, the part entitled "utopia" ends, and the last part of the novel, "slumberland", begins, also marking a breaking point in the narration. The title of this part can also be seen as an anticipation of the passiveness in the characters that is about to follow.

Up until now, I have looked at the basis for and the process leading up to the epiphany itself. In all three selected novels, the trigger that led the characters to even be able to reach their epiphany, was their amorous feelings towards another character. Anna used to be indoctrinated to such a degree that she acted as an executive of the system herself by being the House Matron's dutiful Prefect. She even refused to listen to any other kind of opinion until she fell in love with Peter and accepted him as her guide to freedom. Tally could not imagine a life without the beauty a plastic surgery would grant her and was even prepared to betray her friends for her own benefit. Only once she develops love for David and comprehends the negative ideality prevalent in her city does she rebel and infiltrate the system in order to save her friends and her society. Titus is ignorant of his surroundings and leads a carefree life together with his friends. While he notices demonstrations and political unrest, he used to ignore them. As soon as he becomes romantically involved with Violet, though, he starts to question his friends' behaviour and comprehends the gravity of Violet's malfunctioning feedware. Clearly, all three protagonists were lead to be more open-minded by their respected love interest.

It has to be noted, though, that the realisation that there is something amiss in their worlds is not the end of the characters' journeys by far. In fact, in all of the three selected books their revelations do not take place after two thirds into the book at the earliest. So at least one third of the book remains, where, as I argue, the DYAF novel depicts a protagonist's reaction following their respective epiphany, as well as the subsequent rebellion and/or regression to

their old ways of thinking, representing the option of flight and fall. I will therefore discuss the character's journey after his or her epiphany in the subsequent chapter, wherein I hypothesise that both in the journey towards epiphany as well as in the part following their epiphany, the change is brought about by feelings of affection towards another character. In addition, as I have stated before, in most cases it causes them to shed their rose-tinted glasses vis-à-vis their afore presumed utopian world in order to recognise them as a negative form of society in hindsight. In this following chapter, I will therefore consider the character's resulting changes in behaviour due to their epiphanies.

5.1.2 Shedding the rose-tinted glasses – epiphanies in retrospection

Reaching the epiphany that the world is not what it seemed to be is only the first step in the process of enlightenment of the protagonist, which is why in this subchapter I will look at what follows an epiphany. Whether a protagonist choses flight or fall is decisive in regard to the question whether the he or she turns into a rebel, a leader, or disappoints as a rebel due to his or her regression and passiveness. That is precisely what differentiates the character's journey from that of the reader: the character is unable to see what was right in front of him and now has to consider his or her world in retrospection to the epiphany and re-evaluate everything he or she has been brought up to believe. In fact, it is very similar to the reader's "process of anticipation and retrospection" (Iser, "Phenomenological" 56), which I have discussed in chapter 2.1.1, but while this happens throughout the book for the reader, the protagonist only deals with it after his or her moment of epiphany. Shedding your rose-tinted glasses is not easy, though fortunately, DYAF protagonists have a partner to support and guide them.

After her epiphany that causes her to finally state: "Peter, you were right" (134), Anna still continues to find strength in Peter's companionship. When they plan their escape and Anna manages to fulfil the first step all on her own, her feelings are described with reference to him: "With Peter, she was invincible" (160). This, again, represents a guiding comment to the reader that she is only

growing stronger through her connection to her crush. The fact that she needs Peter in order to escape her dystopian fate is stressed several times throughout their journey. In the beginning, Peter helpfully offers: "I'll give you a leg up" (164), which is symbolic for the dynamic in their relationship. He is the leader that guides her into freedom. Anna apparently does not object to this hierarchy since it is pointed out in the text that "Anna followed him, feeling happier now that Peter was in front" (173) and towards the end "Anna could only follow, abandoning any desire for control..." (226). Thus it is obvious that Peter acts as Anna's guide to freedom because Anna is not yet ready to be independent. The reader can also clearly locate her drive for rebelling when she states: "She was going to prove herself worthy of Peter" (164), effectively proving that she believes rebellion would make her deserving of his affection. The reader can also spot definite signs for her devotion towards him since she ponders: "[S]he would follow Peter anywhere" (167), making it clear that her escape is not entirely self-motivated. Even when she is freed by her parents' sacrifice, she calls out for the Catchers not to take away Peter and tells him: "I need you" (293). This proves, as I argue, that Anna feels as if she cannot overcome her upbringing and survive in this dystopian world without having Peter by her side. The text also depicts Anna's two biggest revelations after her escape, both of which deal with feelings of love. She encounters the first one while getting closer to Peter on a physical level:

> 'If it wasn't for you, I'd just be Surplus Anna. [...] I'd never have even known what it's like to have a friend...' She trailed off, unable to express what she felt so strongly inside, unable to explain that her feelings for Peter had made her angry with the world, because it had allowed him to grow up without love, made her angry with Longevity because no one deserved to live more than him. [...] And as she stared at him, Anna realised just why Surpluses were trained to keep their eyes cast downwards at all times, because she felt at that moment as if she knew everything there was to know. [...] and as Anna felt him kiss her awkwardly, she knew that she wasn't a Surplus any more. And nor was Peter. Surplus meant unnecessary. Not required. [...] You couldn't be a Surplus if you were loved. (265-266)

In this passage Anna openly admits that had it not been for Peter, she would have never come to realise the truth about her world. Loving Peter also instilled in her the spirit to "strive to change society for the better" (Curnutt 111) by revolting against the authorities, because through her feelings for him she

realised how precious a young life was, and that declaring children Surplus and raising them as guilty slaves is wrong. Because she feels loved, she states for herself for the first time that she is no longer a Surplus, which she has not been able to think her whole life. So her relationship with Peter is clearly the driving force behind her awakening and her rebellion. In fact, the text so evidently states her dependence on Peter and his impact on her that the reader of this DYAF novel cannot interpret it any other way; I will discuss fixed reader interpretation in comparison to "evaluation offerings" (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 238-240) in more detail in chapter 5.2.

The second revelation after her epiphany takes place when Anna discovers love and wonderment for her baby brother Ben:

> Protectively, she held him to her, and smiled at him, feeling an incredible spark of love and exhilaration when he smiled back at her. He was the most perfect thing in the whole world, she thought. How could he be Surplus? Why would Mother Nature make something so beautiful if She didn't need it and want it? It didn't make any sense. (274)

Although she has only shortly before realised that she and Peter were not Surpluses because they were loved, Anna now understands that *no* child can be considered Surplus; otherwise, the theories about Mother Nature that she had been taught would prove to be nonsensical. As I see it, this is the most important epiphany Anna has in the whole book, since she does not realise something just about herself, but rather about the world as a whole. Simultaneously, she suddenly notices that her education has not only been cruel but outright wrong; something that she did not see when Peter tried to tell her. In the end, it is revealed that Anna has decided against taking the life prolonging Longevity drug, which shows the reader that she has accepted the consequences and now employs the "wisdom and perseverance acquire through the experience" of the fall (Curnutt 111). Even though she still suffers from her upbringing, she now proudly admits her name and purpose: "*I also know that I'm not Surplus Anna any more. I am Anna Covey: Opt Out*" (301), showing the reader that she is now proud of her existence and has even acquired the strength to oppose the system by opting not to take the Longevity drug.

In *Uglies*, Tally is not confronted with sibling love, but is driven by romantic love and loyalty to her friends. Once she has learned the truth, she keeps listening attentively to what else David's parents, Maddy and Az, have found out, how they had managed to escape and why they had found it necessary to return to their ugly state and to found the Smoke. Tally gets the impressions that "[a] few hours of conversation had changed her life" (273), though I argue that this does not reflect the impression the reader has of her transformation, since arguing with her and telling her facts that contradict her education certainly did not change her way of thinking before she had fallen for David. Now, however, she employs the knowledge she has gained in her epiphany in a process of retrospection as she speculates herself about the operation, the brain lesions and the reason behind it: "Tally wondered which had come first: the operation or the lesions? Was becoming pretty just the bait to get everyone under the knife? Or were the lesions merely a finishing touch on being pretty? Perhaps the logical conclusion of everyone looking the same was everyone thinking the same" (273). As can be seen, Tally, now equipped with knowledge and independent thought, is able to draw conclusions, philosophise and act independently. The process of decision making also seems to become easier for her, since after the talk with his parents, she and David have a separate conversation, in which David reassures her that the reason he likes her is that she believed without hesitation. Thus, the motif of the fall indeed compensates Tally for her loss of innocence, as Curnutt suggests (111).

After Tally's epiphany, David calls her beautiful because of her quick acceptance and subsequent fall, and even though Tally protests at first, since uglies being beautiful stands in complete contrast to what she has been brought up to believe, she finally admits to holding similar thoughts about him: "A strange thought crossed her mind, and Tally said, 'I'd hate it if you got the operation.' She couldn't believe she was saying it. 'Even if they didn't do your brain, I mean.' [...] 'I don't want you to look like everyone else'" (279). After these words they share their first kiss, and Tally, moved by her feelings for David and fuelled by what she has just learned, finally makes a decision to stay and not betray the Smoke to the Specials. Hence she throws the transmitter into the fire so as to eliminate the temptation to call for the Specials: "Suddenly,

it seemed important to get there fast, before her certainty faded, before the warm feeling inside her could give way to doubt" (281). This deliberation is very similar to when she had the impressions that with Peris gone, her decision to betray her friends might falter. Again, the feelings for a boy influence Tally's actions. This time, though, she is completely aware of the consequences and comprehends that the act of rebellion empowers her, since she acts by "forcing into her own mind the almost unthinkable fact that she might really remain an ugly for life. But somehow not ugly at all. She opened her hand and threw the necklace into the centre of the fire" (281). After that "[s]he was free. Dr. Cable would never come here now, and no one could ever take her away from David or the Smoke, or do to Tally's brain whatever the operation did to pretties'. She was no longer an infiltrator. She finally belonged here. [...] It wouldn't be easy, but Tally knew she could face anything now" (283). Thus it becomes clear to the reader that Tally is consciously opting for freedom and a new life away from her dystopian city. As Raymond Williams has observed, once a character is aware of the dystopian conditions in his or her society, they will opt "to drop out and join the excluded; [...] to take the poorer material option for a clear moral advantage" (qtd. in Pordzik 11). The marginalised group in Tally's case is the Smoke, which has little technology, little comfort, and no parties to offer, but provides people with the opportunity to live in freedom. I also argue that her decision to stay at the Smoke is also influenced by her relationship to David, since when she had pondered running away from the decision of betraying the Smoke, she had contemplated that another life in another city was impossible because she would not have any friends there. Clearly, relationships of friendship and love are important enough for Tally to have the power to change her life completely.

Thus, her feelings have finally given her the motivation and strength to actively defy the authorities. This is Tally's first act of rebellion, though in the course of the novel many more can be encountered. For instance, when the village is finally attacked by Special Circumstances, and Tally finds herself face to face with a Special, she wonders whether she will be able to escape "[e]ven if it turned out David had already been caught and she'd never see him again... The thought unleashed a sudden torrent of anger inside her, and she ran straight at

the woman" (293). This scene shows that her feelings now even provide her with the courage to physically attack the authorities. After she escapes and finds David, she is afraid to tell him the truth about her initially being a spy, though. She is scared of losing him and feels ashamed (321). Because she wants to be worthy of David's trust (219) and repair the damage she had inflicted (322), she decides to go on a mission to infiltrate the department of Special Circumstances. This second journey in the book can be considered a true quest according to Kirk Curnutt (60), since this time Tally has a specific goal in mind and intrinsic motivation to fuel her. With David by her side, Tally discovers and realises many things about her upbringing and the city authorities in retrospection. For example, upon seeing another bunch of Rusty Ruins, she grows inquisitive and recognises that the city school has only ever taught her parts of the truth behind them (344-345). In a conversation with David, in which she first automatically starts to defend her city's economic lifestyle, she ultimately accepts that every society has a weakness that can be its downfall (346-347).

When David asks her about the exceptional condition of one particular city of Rusty Ruins, Tally explains: "'They sprayed it with something to keep it up for school trips.' And that was her city in a nutshell, Tally realized. Nothing left to itself. Everything turned into a bribe, a warning, or a lesson" (351). In that instance, Tally finally realises the true nature not only of the operation but of her city as a whole and recognises it as a dystopia. As a consequence, she also considers her much too sheltered life up until now and is amazed by how her life has changed; especially when she remembers wearing the interface ring that used to track her every move: "How had she worn that stupid thing for sixteen years? It had seemed such a part of her back then, but now the idea of being tracked and monitored and advised every minute of the day repelled Tally. [...] But back then her world had been pathetically tiny" (354-356). The full realisation as to how dystopian her city really is comes when it is discovered that David's father has died in an operation experiment intended to take away his memories of the lesions (388), and when Tally experiences Shay's behaviour after having been turned into a brainless pretty: "You go to parties, Shay? While everyone here is locked up?" (384). The powerlessness she feels

when Maddy discovers a cure and is unwilling to test it on the now naive Shay, finally leads Tally to confess her former involvement with the Specials to David and to volunteer to get caught by the authorities in order to be turned pretty and then take the cure as a test subject. This, to her, is now the ultimate sacrifice, whereas before she had met David it used to be the fulfilment of her dreams. I argue that this development in her shows how much Tally has grown; before, she would not have sacrificed her dream for anyone or anything because she was indoctrinated so well that she could not even comprehend other options. However, she has now grown into an independent thinker and as such decides for her own suffering in order to help her friends, her crush and her society. Tally's initial journey to the Smoke changed into a quest when she decided to save her friends from the Specials, and has now morphed into a quest for the greater good, an issue I have addressed in chapter 3.2. She thus has turned into a true rebel and, despite difficulties, will continue to be one during the other instalments in the *Uglies* series.

Unfortunately, *Feed* does not provide its readers with such a distinct hero or heroine. In order to analyse the reason for that, one needs to discuss two epiphanies in greater detail. First, there is Violet, who has detected the underlying problem of her society, namely that despite catastrophic events everyone continues their lives unfazed and even incorporates tragedies in fashion trends. While Titus manages to take this off her mind for a short time, it does not take long until Violet gives in to the fall and erupts in a sudden outburst, giving an angry speech at the party of Titus' friends:

> "Stop it," said Violet, standing up. "Stop it all."[...]
> Violet was completely white. She was shaking. Her head. I mean, it was bobbing. She suddenly was yelling, "Can I tell you what I see? Can I tell you? We are hovering in the air while people are starving. This is obvious! Obvious! We're playing games, and our skin is falling off. We're losing it, and we're making out. And you're talking – you're starting to talk in a *fucking sestina! Okay? A sestina! Okay? Stop it! Fuck you! We've got to all stop it!*" [...]
> Violet was screaming, "*Look at us! You don't have the feed! You are feed! You're feed! You're being eaten! You're raised for food! Look at what you've made yourselves!*" She pointed at Quendy, and went, "*She's a monster! A monster! Covered with cuts! She's a creature!*" (201-202).

As the passage shows, Violet is finally able to sum up all that is wrong with the world and the way people treat each other and themselves. She has made the connection before (193), but now she communicates it to others. Moreover, she tries to appeal to the party guests to change their ways. When Titus tries to calm her down, she screams at him too and suddenly looses control of her bodily functions (202). She cannot breathe and has to be brought to a hospital in an ambulance (203). Though her feed has been failing at times before, feed experts now inform her of her imminent deterioration. Thus, she suffers the consequences of her rebellion. She and her father then try to appeal to the feed corporations to compensate them for her medical bills and begin research on her problem (219) though they receive a negative reply with the following reason for refusal: "We *don't feel that you would be a reliable investment at this time. No one could get what we call a 'handle' on your shopping habits*" (247). Here it becomes apparent that her former harmless act of rebellion to create an inscrutable user profile is endangering her life.

One will anticipate that a character with Violet's vigour and intelligence will now start a campaign to inform people about the injustice she is suffering, and the danger the corporations put people at, though while she admits to Titus that "*[i]t felt good. Really good, just to scream finally*" (218), she still apologises to him and Quendy and quietly goes on living her life. This behaviour is not only contrary to reader expectations, but also contradicts typical rebel conduct. Seeing as throughout the whole book Violet was less indoctrinated and more alert than Titus, readers' hopes for the dystopian society to be overthrown are automatically based on her. As a rebel, however, Violet ultimately disappoints: She still stays alert to all the news and is shocked at the events happening around the world, but she does not act upon them and just passively takes them in. All she is concerned with now is *dreaming* of a better life and trying to seize the moments she has left (230). She even tries to rekindle her relationship with Titus numerous times, even though she realizes that he is avoiding her: "*I won't remember watching you stand by my bed [...] waiting to feel like you've stayed long enough so that you're a good person and you're allowed to leave*" (233). Even after he calls her a zombie and refuses to sleep with her, she still sends him declarations of love (276) and begs: "I didn't want to go out [of this world]

alone" (270). In a way, Violet disappoints as a potential rebel just as Titus does. Although unlike him she does not choose blissful oblivion, she still opts for knowing and doing nothing. She then finds her miserable end as the feed slowly stops working. According to her father the worst thing for her is to be alert in a malfunctioning body, to know what is going on, but to be powerless to change anything. As I see it, the way her body stops working can be seen as an illustration of her role in society – she is aware of what is happening but cannot or chooses not to do anything about it. Thus, through the motif of the fall, Violet was able to "withdraw from a way of life that offers little stimulation" (Curnutt 111), but was robbed of the opportunity to "change society for the better" (Curnutt 111) due to the overwhelming dystopian conditions.

Titus, on the other hand, reacts differently to his epiphany. When he waits for her results in the hospital, he cannot even be consoled by his feed: "There was nothing I wanted to watch on the feed. It made me feel tired" (210). This shows that upon realising that he has to face facts, he grows listless and disillusioned. As a consequence, he then chooses to concentrate on the effects of her outburst on his own small world and refuses to accept the grand scope of feeds malfunctioning. As a result, he is not angry at FeedTech and other corporations, but at Violet for her outburst: "I wanted Violet to be uninsane again, just a person who would touch my face" (211). This clearly states that he was not ready for what Violet now knows about the world and longs for is personal bliss, which already indicates his flight into innocence. He also cannot handle seeing her sick and so he soon leaves the hospital (212). Once at home, he immediately goes back to his old ways, watches the feed, falls into a trance and eats junk food with his family (213), showing that, disconnected from Violet, Titus is again lost in the oblivion the corporations foster in people. As he has now chosen his path, he is not interested in rekindling his relationship with Violet as well as the complications that are tied to it. When Violet tries to reassure him that their relationship will endure her illness, he reacts listlessly: "*No matter what, we'll still be together. – Oh,* I went. *Yeah.*" (216) and all he can think about is that he does not want her with him "in a big group, where she might go insane again" (217). He also does not support her in her appeal to FeedTech, but sits idly by while she and her father contact various companies

(219-220), which proves his disinterest in her cause. Whether this results out of the feeling of powerlessness or because he is simply overwhelmed by the gravity of the situation is not clear. On numerous occasions he receives her messages and either does not respond or deletes them altogether (227-237, 253, 277). The less he has to do with her, the more he regresses into his old habits and views: He even goes in mal with his friends voluntarily (238). Only while intoxicated does he try to restart his relationship with Violet (241), but is disappointed that she only aims at a conversation while his intention is to get closer physically (250). This proves that he is once again only concentrating on the convenient and oblivious parts of life. When Violet cajoles him into going on a romantic getaway with her, he first admits to himself that he felt good about being the man and taking charge of the luggage, the drive and the reservations (265), but then turns the offer of sex down because the gravity of her medical state is too much for him: "I keep picturing you dead already [...] It feels like being felt up by a zombie, okay?" (269). He finally admits to her that he cannot handle her serious commitment to him, since he was only planning short term: "I can't field any of this [...] I was just thinking about going out with you, and we would have some fun for a few months" (271), which shows how very pleasure-oriented and short-lived his plans usually are. Violet m-chats him one last time to tell him that she does not think of him as stupid: "*I always thought you could teach me things. I was always waiting. You're not like the others. You say things that no one expects you to. You think you're stupid. You want to be stupid. But you're someone people could learn from*" (276). Rather, she thinks he deliberately chooses oblivion. Clearly, she is disappointed because she thought he had potential for independent thinking and rebellion in him. I claim that this way of thinking mirrors the disappointment the reader feels with Titus as well.

Titus, however, is simply overwhelmed by what Violet needs from him and continues to return to a life of oblivion: He does not pay attention to the news, even though there are catastrophes happening and a war is starting to wage (241-243, 272-273). While he was disgusted that his friends ignored the gravity of life via intoxication when he was with Violet, he now voluntarily joins them in their mal-induced oblivion. Additionally, he is not repulsed when his father goes

on a works outing to slay a whale (280) despite the sea and sea life having died long ago (179). Before, Titus was appalled that Link stroked Calista's fake lesion, but then it is revealed that Titus himself is now in a relationship with Quendy (277), who has the highest number of artificial lesions of his friends. He also ignores the bad news of other people starting to get symptoms similar to Violet's (278), and keeps on going to parties on other planets and generally continues with his carefree life (278-279). This is proof that he has chosen flight before fall and is back to his state of oblivion in which he was before Violet became part of his life. It is only at the very end of the novel that we see a small glimpse of awareness in him: As he visits Violet on her death bed, he tries hard to get hold of news from the outside which he can tell her (296) and tries to console her by reminding her of their love story (297) as she had previously wanted him to (253). He admits that finding access to knowledge and news is difficult for him (296), but it shows the reader that he could be a rebel at heart if he decided to be one. However, being a rebel would prove rather challenging for him, considering that he is indoctrinated so far that he cannot even differentiate between pressing news and old snippets of trivia: "I told her that there had been rioting in malls all over America, and that no one knew why. I told her that the red-suited Santa Claus we know – the regular one? – was popularized by the Coca-Cola Company in the 1930's" (296). Without Violet, he is left without a person in his life to teach him the distinction. Since he is planning to go back to Quendy after his visit to Violet, the reader knows that he has decided against the option of rebellion anyways and has instead chosen oblivion. Fittingly, the book ends with the outlook on Violet's certain death and a feed commercial (299), also signalling to the reader that without Violet, Titus will not revolt and things will just continue the way they are. I will discuss the question of hope and its effect on the reader in chapter 5.2.5, but it can be stated now that *Feed* is the only contemporary DYAF novel I have encountered so far that dares to end on a hopeless note.

After having now discussed the protagonists' journey through DYAF in great detail and having extensively proven that a character's growing awareness and subsequent rebellion is closely linked to their romantic liaisons. I now move on to the reader's journey and analyse if and in how far these two can be

assimilated or differentiated. My hypothesis is that, since the character in a dystopian novel is usually under the influence of life-long indoctrination, it is hard for him or her to perceive and comprehend what is right in front of them. Here, the reader is at a clear advantage: He or she can detect negative elements more easily and even gets the opportunity to differentiate between a society's many levels of dystopian nature and the degree of a character's indoctrination. To ascertain how this is brought about will be the focus of this subsequent chapter.

5.2 Will you point me the way? On raising readers' awareness in DYAF

In my last subchapter, I have illustrated how the protagonist comes to the epiphany that his or her society is in a negative social, political or ecological state and how he or she chooses the option of flight or fall in reaction to that revelation. In this section, I concentrate on analysing the reader's journey through DYAF novels and how he or she comes to the conclusion that the depicted society is dystopian. This question is particularly interesting bearing in mind that, after all, the terms *dystopia* and *negative ideality* are not mentioned once in these novels. So how does one interpret the society in a novel as dystopian? I argue that it is the task of DYAF authors to establish elements in their novels that signify dystopian features to the reader. I further claim that the authors thereby employ stylistic techniques as well as specific content to lead their readers along the path to revelation.

Since the former will be the superordinate theory in my analysis, I first want to draw attention to how authors of DYAF eliminate gaps in order to provide the reader with guidelines for interpreting their novel as belonging to the dystopian genre. As I have already explained in chapter 2.1.2, Iser calls these markers "evaluation offerings" ("Appellstruktur" 238-240) when they represent interpretation suggestions to the reader, or a "complete correction of wrong evaluations" ("Appellstruktur" 240), when the view depicted stands so obviously in contrast to the reader's belief system that the only acceptable interpretation is an opposition to the view. I have argued before that the latter is common in

dystopian fiction, since the depiction of a society as negative is essential in this genre. Thus, I have noticed that authors of dystopian fiction represent the future in ways that readers automatically react to with contempt or repulsion. Often, the beginning of the DYAF novel is an exception to this rule as authors frequently try to depict glimpses of utopia in the society in order to initially lead the reader astray, or so as to present both sides of a society, as I have already argued in chapter 4.2. I will thus also employ Iser's theory of the "process of anticipation and retrospection" ("Phenomenological" *56*) in order to explain how readers change their views about the presented society. In my analysis, I will discuss all three DYAF novels and determine to which degree they feature evaluation offerings by the text or instances of complete corrections for the reader.

In addition, I will analyse the content part of the authors' guidelines by discussing which conventions indicate "negative ideality" of the dystopian world to the reader. As I have stated in chapter 4.2, this term stands for a negative state in sociological, political and ecological areas (Schulte-Herbrüggen, 119). In my three selected books I will investigate what form this negative ideality takes and how it is brought to the reader's attention so that he or she is able to interpret the society depicted in the novel as dystopian. In the three novels I have chosen, several categories of depicting a negative ideality can be found, so I decided to divide this analysis in terms of faults in the social, political, and ecological system, signs for character indoctrination, as well as oppression caused by the education system and inappropriate forms of punishments. In addition, I will comment on implicit and explicit references to contemporary issues and how that will influence a reader's understanding of the text as well as his or her own society.

Before starting this chapter, though, I first have to point out that analysing reader epiphany is unequal to analysing character epiphany, because the kind of awakening of awareness is not the same. First, the reader detects bad things as they happen in the book because he or she has not been indoctrinated and can therefore use his or her full mental capacity and moral judgement to make the connection between negative events and dystopian regimes. The

characters, on the other hand, have usually been indoctrinated all their lives, and thus have difficulties seeing things that happen right before their pink shade clad eyes. Second, characters' epiphany is limited to their world in the book and themselves, whereas a reader's epiphany is two-fold: he or she gains epiphanies about the world in the book and the characters in it, as well as insights about his or her own world, its potential future course and maybe even their own person. I will subsequently focus my attention on the reader's journey to realisation about dystopian society, characters' indoctrination and resemblance to the reader's own person and reality.

Furthermore, while the main moment of character epiphany is commonly concentrated on one event, as I have proven in chapter 5.1, reader epiphanies, I claim, generally result from the combination of various insights into this society. As Iser emphasises numerous times, there are an indefinite number of readers and readings, so the moment of epiphany occurs at different points for different readers ("Phenomenological" 54). I therefore see my task in finding instances in the book that point to negative ideality for the reader as well as instances that are potentially shocking enough for the reader to change his or her opinion about the society, which he or she has initially been led to perceive as utopian or at least neutral. It is thus inappropriate to attempt a chronological account of the journey towards reader epiphany, which is why I structured my analysis by said indicators only. In doing so, I will be able to maintain an overview of the different sections of world building dystopian elements that are hidden or laid bare for the reader to find, and see which faults in which category of indicators may be shocking to the reader at certain stages in the book so as to lead him or her to gain new insights on the featured society.

5.2.1 Uncovering the fault in the system

This first subchapter concentrates on those sociological, political and ecological features of the future world that give the reader an indication of the system's negative ideality. In the three novels in my selection, there is a difference in how soon into the book the reader is confronted with such faults in the system. In

The Declaration, for example, it does not take long for the reader to realise that the world being described is in a state of negative ideality.

Already in the very first pages, children in the foster home Grange Hall are described as *"Surplus to requirements. Surplus to capacity"*, and as not being granted a surname apart from the generic "Surplus" which indicates their status (9). These statements are unusual enough to trigger a reader's suspicion, whereas the following protagonist's comments on these habits confirm them completely:

> *People like me don't need more than one name, Mrs Pincent says. [...] In some countries Surpluses are killed, put down like animals. They'd never do that here, of course. In England they help Surpluses be Useful to other people, so it isn't quite so bad we were born. Here they set up Grange Hall because of the staffing requirements of Legal people, and that's why we have to work so hard – to show our gratitude. [...] Probably, being put down is the best thing for everyone – who would want to be the straw that broke the back of Mother Nature?* (8-10)

This excerpt clearly depicts the pillars a dystopian society stands on: authorities that do abominable things but cover them up as acts of goodwill, and innocent people who have been indoctrinated to believe that these actions are just. In addition, as any reader will recognise, the rules for Surpluses clearly go against the laws for human rights. Surpluses are stripped of their individuality by not being granted a surname, are in some cases denied the right to exist, or are raised for domestic slave labour. The fact that the class of Legal people are mentioned at all, already indicates to the reader that there is a class system that puts one part of the population at a clear disadvantage, which contradicts the right for equality. Thus, these rules represented in this passage alone would be indication enough that one is reading about a negative ideality in terms of social and political aspects. However, the text uses the technique of complete correction by demonstrating that the protagonist is in agreement with these regulations despite being a victim to them. Anna even pronounces that one needs to be thankful for being given the opportunity to live and work for free. These conclusions drawn by the character are so clearly wrong that the reader has no other option than to object to these offered insights and consequently connect them with dystopian dogmatism.

Thus, *The Declaration* already sets the dystopian mood on its first ten pages. The reader's journey through this dystopian society does, of course, not end here. After all, there are more indicators for negative ideality to discover, some of which only occur halfway through the book or even towards the end and have the potential to shock the reader so profoundly, that he or she will suddenly deem this society to be in a worse state than initially thought. What will convince the reader further in this context is the sheer implausibility behind the cruel treatment the Surplus children receive. It is claimed continuously that they are punished for being a burden to Mother Nature and are therefore not allowed the life-prolonging drug: "Surpluses are stretching Mother Nature's generosity simply being here in the first place; it is absolutely right that they should live short lives, ending with disease or old age" (150). As if that statement and the included commentary "it is absolutely right" were not enough to repel the reader, one discovers that Mother Nature does not stand for a spiritual entity representing habitat untouched by civilisation, but rather names the world of Legals, which is quickly running out of space and resources due to overpopulation (14, 51). The fact that children who are born in violation of the law are innocent of their parents' crime is ignored in favour of creating free labour for the people who legally inhabit the Earth. The author has thus presented negative ideality in a form the reader will classify as dystopian due to a complete correction of wrong evaluations.

Another important point in detecting dystopian elements is the way these children's spirits are systematically broken. The techniques used to achieve this are laid open by the House Matron later in the book:

> But there were tried and trusted tools and techniques to deal with them. Beating. Humiliation. Making them feel so wretched that they started hating their parents for putting them in this position, for bringing them into this awful world. You had to get them to hate their parents; that was the key. (55)

The reason for why this proves to be the most effective technique is not revealed but is left for the reader to ponder and as such represents an evaluation offering. I offer one possible answer: He or she may consequently conclude that love for one's parents might cause a child to wish for them to come and rescue it. If that optimism is taken away, there is nothing else it can

hope for. And once hope is destroyed in a person, their will to resist vanishes too. I will consider how the children in these novels are indoctrinated more closely in chapter 5.2.5. What makes a reader reject Mrs. Pincent's statement is the sheer inconceivability to train a child to ignore its natural instincts of finding hope in the love and care or even in the memory of their parents. Therefore I argue that an ideology that is built on taking away a child's natural instinct for maternal and paternal love will be rejected by the reader in the form of a complete correction of wrong evaluations.

Another indicator to the reader that the society is not only negative in certain situations, but is organised as a dystopia, are the strict regulations on its citizens. For example, Surplus children are not granted central heating or hot water (24, 34) and it is mentioned that due to overpopulation and space restrictions, old buildings with high ceilings are a privilege of the rich (51). Banal everyday items are also strictly rationed by regulations: Surpluses are only allowed one tube of toothpaste and one bar of soap every four weeks and await severe punishment if they exceed their limit or lose an item (22). Additionally, Surpluses are not meant to have private possessions apart from their uniforms, toiletries and blankets. Anna fears that her possessing a diary would be considered an exceptionally grave offence against that rule, since "reading and writing were a dangerous business; they made you think, and Surpluses who thought too much were useless and difficult" (16). All of these rules are incisions in private habits that the reader will reject and connect to the negative ideality of a dystopian regime.

As I have said, not only the lower class of Surpluses but society as a whole is organised in a dystopia, which the reader comprehends when it is explained that the upper class of Legals also face restrictions due to a shortage in resources. They cannot book flights freely due to petrol shortage (14) and are not supposed to plant flowers, seeing as these are a useless "Indulgence" (13). As the reader will come to realise upon having read about all the regulations, the text suggests an overly rational society that does not place any importance on art or emotionality of any kind. If things do not have a rational use, they are either called Wasteful (22) or Surplus (9). The clinical tone that informs the

reader as well as the comment by Anna that "flowers can be just as important as food, sometimes. I think it depends what you're hungry for" (13), triggers within the reader the instinct to disagree with authority regulations, resulting in a complete correction of wrong evaluations; the society is henceforth conceived as dystopian.

As the reader continues with the book, he or she discovers more rules affecting citizen's private lives: couples are allowed to have children, if one of the parents decides to Opt Out of Longevity (30), "A life for a life" (31) being the slogan. This law might sound reasonable enough to some readers, since resource shortage drove people to pass this bill in the first place. However, what the character does not know but the reader soon finds out is that Opting Out is not a safe option for one's child either. On the example of Surplus Sheila, who was captured despite being a Legal child, told from the point of view of Mrs Pincent, one can see that Opt Out parents are powerless if the authorities decide to take away their children:

> There had been a situation recently with a Surplus called Sheila who, it turned out, was actually the progeny of two Opt Outs. [...] The fact was that you couldn't start sending children back after every little mistake; there would be no end to it. [...] It would have stirred up the other Surpluses. Given them hope" (56).

The injustice illustrated by this passage does not even need an author's commentary for the reader to reject it. However the text still adds such a commentary ensuring a fixed reader interpretation by telling the reader that Sheila's mother "had broken down, clutching at Mrs Pincent's ankles and begging for her little girl back" (57) of which Mrs Pincent remembers, "it had been embarrassing, really. Uncomfortable." (57). I argue that this emotionless reaction to a highly emotional issue causes the reader to reject Mrs Pincent's point of view and the system behind it as dystopian.

Moreover, the reader's agitation on that subject is reinforced when Mrs Pincent later on reveals that certain government officials *are* allowed a Legal baby without having to Opt Out at all (253). The corruptness and inequity within the system will again draw the reader's attention to this society's negative ideality. Furthermore, at the beginning of the book Anna states that having a kid "meant

you would get ill and then die, so Opting Out wasn't very popular" (31), because she has been taught that children pose a threat to Legal people's immortality. As is exposed towards the end of the book, Opting Out of taking the Longevity drug has to happen until the age of 16, at which age people are either not ready to make such a decision or do not know of that rule until it is too late (276). Since this is told to Anna by her mother, who finally explains why they tried to have her illegally, the reader and the protagonist simultaneously come to a better understanding of the corruptness of the system of Opting Out. Both have known all along that Legals in general are not fond of a new generation, since it has even been stated that people are scared of young people (200). What is not said in the explanation of this rule, but implied in a gap, is that the government uses the law to manipulate its citizens in order to prevent them from legally having children. Thus, reader and character here share one moment of realisation about the society's negative condition.

In comparison, what the protagonist is not aware of but what makes matters worse for the reader is that it becomes clear that Longevity+, the unofficial new and improved drug, is made using young stem cells (57). The irony and dilemma of the situation (Legals fighting against the existence of young people but at the same time needing them to stay alive and healthy) is not lost on the reader. The cruelness of it only becomes clear when the reader realises that acquiring the stem cells is neither official nor are the subjects compensated: "It was a difficult job, collecting stem cells from unwilling patients, but the rewards more than made up for it" (170). This excerpt illustrates that Longevity does not only allow the old generation to stay in a position of power, it is also a reason to physically attack young people. The intentional harming of one class of society in favour of the comfort of the other class, as well as the commentary that a gain in riches makes an exploitation of one class desirable, is clearly abhorrent enough for the reader to regard this habit as part of a dystopian regime by rejecting it via a complete correction of wrong evaluations.

Lastly, *The Declaration* includes two features a negative regime seldom lacks: a corrupt and violent police unit as well as propaganda. Anna discovers the latter in form of posters once she manages to flee Grange Hall: "[There] was one that

had a picture of a Small on it. The Small was chubby and it was eating, pushing food into its mouth with its little hands, and across the picture, in large black letters, was written 'Surpluses are Theft. Stay Alert'" (175-176). The slogan's stark contrast to Anna's difficult escape from exploitative slavery stresses the opposite view so as to make the reader reject the propaganda as dystopian. The police unit is mentioned several times throughout the novel, but not until the end do they actively feature in the text. Before, the Catchers are only described as efficient finders of hidden illegal children (30). Then, however, the reader witnesses how the Catchers treat Legals suspected of assisting and hiding escaped Surpluses: "If you refuse, then I'm afraid, Mrs Sharpe, that you will be detained under the Surplus Act 2098, and your husband's career will be over. It's really up to you" (232-233). The catchers also prove that they have physical violence at their disposal: "Slowly, Bill brought the knife down on Mrs Parkinson's little finger, and Mr Parkinson shouted out. 'No! Please, God, no! [...] That's all I know'" (280). I argue that the cruelty and violence exhibited by the Catchers alone is enough to make the reader reject their methods, but there is an additional statement given in confidence by a government official labelling the Catchers as the state's assassins of children: "'Well, they'll be punished. Locked up. If they make it, that is.' Julia frowned 'Make it?' she asked. Anthony sighed, 'If they're still alive,' he said. '[...] Catchers do have leeway [...]'" (212). This information clarifies that a government employing and giving power to such a violent and unapologetic and partly even secret executive authority is in fact an oppressive police state, which effectively marks the society as dystopian in the reader's eyes.

In *Uglies*, it takes the reader longer to be fully certain of the dystopian nature of the society depicted. This is due to the fact that in the beginning of the book, the emphasis mainly rests on the positive side of society. While the start of the novel is, of course, interspersed with some dystopian features, they are at first so subtle that only a watchful reader is able to identify them. In the beginning, the reader learns that the protagonist lives a sheltered life in an ecologically friendly city and will soon be turned into a stunning beauty (8), who will henceforth live to party (12) – an outlook that one can at first only interpret as positive. The first situation in which we encounter the city is when Tally is on a

mission to find her friend Peris, whom she has been missing since he underwent the beauty surgery (3). Consequently, she has to cross the river to the part of town that is home to the pretties, which is the name of people who have already undergone the operation. This short-term quest gives the reader the opportunity to discover and learn about the new world step by step as Tally moves in the shadows and observes. The reader discovers that there are pleasure gardens for lovers (3), riverboat cruises (5), hot air balloon rides (3), safety fireworks (3), impromptu parades (9), and white tie parties (13), all of which sound pleasant and utopian. There is not even danger of excess and harm, considering that fireworks with safety devices are equipped as standard, and pretties on boats and hot air balloons have to wear safety vests (11). I claim that, in general, this sounds like a place to have fun without any risks. The reader further discovers people laughing and partying (4) and moving around freely (9), sees that the city automatically recycles discarded objects (10, 19) and uses magnetism for eco-friendly building and transportation (12). Even the wardens, from whom Tally hides, are described positively when at one point in her nightly stroll, Tally contemplates to turn herself in and "throw herself on the wise mercy of the warden. If she just explained, the warden would understand and fix everything" (26). In this statement the wardens, who are usually part of an oppressive violent regime in dystopian societies, are depicted as responsible, fair, and trustworthy. So, as I argue, in the first few pages there is little to point the reader towards dystopia.

Slowly, though, the border between utopian and dystopian elements starts to blend when the reader receives information on the reason behind the plastic surgery. Due to the fact that the operation is first described by Tally, who is ecstatic and impatient about it, readers may feel that, while unusual, such an operation could actually introduce more fairness and harmony to the world:

> There was a certain kind of beauty, a prettiness that everyone could see. Big eyes and full lips like a kid's; smooth, clear skin; symmetrical features; and a thousand other little clues. Somewhere in the backs of their minds, people were always looking for these markers. No one could help seeing them, no matter how they were brought up. A million years of evolution had made it part of the human brain. The big eyes and lips said: I'm young and vulnerable, I can't hurt you, and you want to protect me. And the rest said: I'm healthy, I won't make you sick. And no matter how you felt about a pretty, there was a part of you that thought: *If we*

had kids, they'd be healthy too. I want *this pretty person*. It was biology, they said at school. Like your heart beating, you couldn't help believing all these things. Not when you saw a face like this. A pretty face. (16-17).

This excerpt tells the reader that in a world full of stunning beauties, no one is at a disadvantage because of their looks, making the choice of partners and friends fairer. However, I argue that it is feasible that some readers will already foresee problems in the application of a system that so ferociously holds on to biological claims and does not take emotions into account. Readers who are critical of plastic surgery in general might have even rejected this politics of beauty prior to this passage. Later on, it is even revealed that even the world of work and politics are positively influenced by this new system of equal beauty.

> "Everyone judged everyone else based on their appearance. People who were taller got better jobs, and people even voted for some politicians just because they weren't quite as ugly as everybody else. Blah, blah, blah."
> "Yeah, and people killed one another over stuff like having different skin color." Tally shook her head. No matter how many times they repeated it at school, she'd never really quite believe that one, "So what if people look more alike now? It's the only way to make people equal." (44-45)

This conversation between Shay and Tally makes the new world appear very utopian, since by changing people's appearances, authorities have managed to eradicate racism and other forms of inequality. Despite this clearly very positive outcome, an attentive reader will already have spotted the first signs of a doctrine before that, and will thus not be convinced by this presentation of the new system: For example, Tally describes herself over-critically in the light of New Pretty Town: "Of course, Tally was nothing here. Worse, she was ugly. [...] She put her fingers up to her face, felt the wide nose and thin lips, the too-high forehead and tangled mass of frizzy hair" (7-8). At that stage, a reader thinks that this statement represents Tally's extreme self-consciousness about her looks; after all, teenagers tend to be very sensitive on that subject in our society as well. However, Tally goes on to say that "[s]he should be back in the darkness of Uglyville, awaiting her turn" (8). I argue that this comment is designed in order to be rejected by the reader, as it reveals that the city provides a special place for people who still have their natural looks, which suggests inequality and a segregational class system. Moreover, the place name contains the world "ugly", denouncing its inhabitants inferior to the ones living in New Pretty Town. Combined with the information on the teaching that

Tally has received, the reader realises that Tally is brought up to reject her own natural looks in favour of an artificial, systemised and generic aesthetic, which marks the first realisation that Tally lives in a well concealed dystopian society.

As the reader is now aware of the fact that he or she is presented with a dystopian regime, finding further clues that reveal its exact nature becomes easier. Tally, for instance, describes newly operated pretties as "clueless" (7) and also mentions that her and her friend Peris always used to make fun of "all the stupid things the pretties said and did" (7). Tally also remembers Peris' verdict on newly turned pretties: "[T]he worst kind, Peris always used to say. [...] [Their] dorm didn't have any rules. Unless the rules were Act Stupid, Have Fun, and Make Noise" (12). Nevertheless, when Tally finally finds Peris, he behaves in the same fashion as every other pretty that Tally has met so far, who are all only concerned with appearances: "This is white tie! [...] She's got no manners looking that way" (13-14). It is thus made clear to the reader that the pretties are to be considered shallow since they are only concerned about looks. Peris in his pretty state also instantly draws back on the sight of Tally's natural features and inappropriate clothing (17) and does not intend to continue their friendship until Tally has not turned pretty as well: "'Go!' 'But we're best friends, right?' He sighed, dabbing at a brown stain. 'Sure, forever. In three months'" (20), which gives the reader reason to believe that either the one-minded social setting or the surgery has changed Peris' behaviour. This suspicion that pretties behave in a strangely shallow manner is reinforced when Tally describes a pair of lovers who are first alarmed about a disturbance but are then quickly calmed down by a warden: "The couple jumped, but the warden chuckled and apologized. Tally could hear her low, sure voice, and saw the new pretties relax. Everything had to be okay if she said it was" (26). According to Iser ("Appellstruktur" 238-240), the very last sentence represents an author's commentary on the events in the book. It underlines and legitimises the couple's unconditional trust towards the warden and in doing so, draws the reader's attention to the strangeness of it, leading to a complete correction of wrong evaluations. The reader thus becomes suspicious of the pretties' behaviour and is led to think that their compliance might be of artificial nature and that the dystopian society does not

only rely on looks, segregation, and teaching of biology, but also on mind control.

The dystopian nature of the city is also found in the obvious indoctrination of uglies who have yet to become pretties. It is revealed that morphological software that lets one play with one's facial features so as to create pretty computer images of oneself, is also used by little children: "Everyone made morphos, even littlies, too young for their facial structure to have set" (40). I argue that since such a convention is unthinkable in our society, this revelation will shock the reader into realising that the beauty craze in Tally's society has reached the level of indoctrination. Furthermore, there is not as much freedom with one's looks as one would find in a utopian society. In fact, no matter how many different morphos of themselves the uglies create, in the end doctors decide on their looks (41). While this process makes sense in the argument about equality, I claim that even readers with an affinity to plastic surgery will reject this view, considering that deciding on how to change one's look is the point of plastic surgery in our society.

In addition, the reader is then confronted with the compulsory nature of the surgery. First, only Tally's view is presented to the reader, and in the view of Tally's euphoria at the prospect of the surgery, one has no reason to believe that it would be forced on her. Then, however, the reader discovers that Shay is opposed to the idea of changing her looks: "Maybe I think my face is already right! [...] The last thing I want is to become some empty-headed new pretty, having one big party all day" (44-83). Shay then plans to run away in order to escape the surgery: "It's not like here, Tally. They don't separate everyone, uglies from pretties, new and middle and late. And you can leave whenever you want, go anywhere you want. [...] And... you never have to get the operation" (89). Shay's comment shows that simply abstaining from the operation is not an option in the city. Moreover, Shay clearly states that living in the city means not having the freedom to leave it, which the reader will know to be true, since Tally and Shay always had to sneak out in order to go on adventures outside of the city. While this could have simply been a measure taken in protection of minors, the reader is now clear on the fact that everyone is free to move around the city

as they please, but that going outside is punishable. These two facts, the restriction of place and the obligation to get plastic surgery, are designed to be rejected by the readers and to turn the society into an oppressive regime in their eyes.

Up until now, although authorities (39) and wardens (26) have been mentioned, the reader has never witnessed anyone being punished or threatened by them so far. Then, on Tally's sixteenth birthday, the reader and the protagonist simultaneously come face to face with the city's executive authority for the first time. Previously, neither the reader nor the protagonist knew of their existence, which means that in this case, they both discover a negative element of this society together. The experience is nevertheless different for both, considering that Tally, even though she is scared of the officers and even defies them at first, is still indoctrinated enough to accept them as part of the system and does not question their motives. The reader does not only see the emotional cruelty with which the executive authority treats Tally, but ascribes this event to the dystopian nature of society. The Specials' appearance alone is made to intimidate: "He was beautiful, without a doubt, but it was a terrible beauty. [...] [T]he man looked cold, commanding, intimidating, like some regal animal of prey. [...] The woman was a cruel pretty. Her nose was aquiline, her teeth sharp, her eyes a nonreflective gray" (100-104). Opposite of them, Tally "felt like a littlie again, jerked along by a minder on an invisible string. All her ugly senior's confidence had evaporated the moment she'd seen him back at the hospital. Four years of trick and independence gone" (103). Tally clearly realises that the Specials are meant to scare her, but that does not lead her to believe in a corruptness of the system. The reader, however, notices that the frightening features of the Specials are especially selected to intimidate sheltered uglies who so far have only seen docile looking pretties.

To the reader, the following scene is proof that the Specials are an oppressive police force: At first, Dr. Cable patiently explains to Tally the function of the Specials, claiming that they are here to protect the city from any outside influence (107). She then even complains that the uglies that have run away had been stolen from the city (108) and implores of Tally: "Help us, Tally. [...]

Find her. Find them all" (109). When Tally is still hesitant to comply with this request, Dr. Cable instils the seed of doubt in Tally by arguing that the runaways would need help because they were possibly lied to about life on the outside (109). During this conversation, the reader is aware of something the protagonist does not contemplate, as Tally is used to staying in one city for all her life and does not have the desire to leave its safety. To the reader, however, the claim that people steal youngsters from cities is incomprehensible, because people are not the property of cities and can therefore not be stolen. It proves to the reader once more that in this city, people are not free to leave or lead independent lives, which accounts for its dystopian nature. When Tally still refuses to help them, the Special shows her true face: "Dr. Cable bared her teeth. [...] The woman became nothing but a monster, vengeful and inhuman. 'Then I'll make you a promise too, Tally Youngblood. Until you do help us, to the very best of your ability, you will never be pretty. [...] You can die ugly, for all I care'" (109-110). The reader now sees that the initial kindness with which Dr. Cable has treated Tally was only a way of manipulation. The final statement clearly represents blackmail, though, and is designed for the reader to reject in a process of complete correction of wrong evaluation, because clearly, a police force blackmailing innocent citizens is an indicator of negative ideality in socio-political terms.

Furthermore, the reader realises that Dr. Cable has the power to manipulate pretties, since Tally's parents and even Peris are sent to Tally in order to convince her to co-operate. When Tally finally agrees to tell Dr. Cable all she knows about the runaways, the latter is not satisfied and reveals that in order to redeem herself, Tally has to follow Shay to the uncivilised community, called the Smoke, and act as a spy for the Specials (133). Tally is scared by the prospect of spending several nights alone out of the city (134), but Dr. Cable repeats her former threat and then even resorts to emotional torture:

> Dr. Cable pointed at the wallscreen, and an image appeared. Like a mirror, but in close-up, it showed Tally as she looked right now: puffy-eyed and disheveled, exhaustion and red scratches marking her face, her hair sticking out in all directions, and her expression turning horrified as she beheld her own appearance.
> "That's you, Tally, Forever."
> "Turn it off..."

"Decide."
"Okay, I'll do it. Turn it off." (135)

This excerpt indicates that, clearly, the Specials are willing to sacrifice Tally's safety by sending her into the wilderness alone and pressure her into co-operating by emotionally agonizing her, which to the reader exhibits the true nature of the police and reveals their degree of dystopian cruelty. While Tally finds herself defeated by the Specials, she still opposes the Smoke and the way people live outside the city. For her, it takes a romantic interest to open her eyes to the dystopian nature of the city. The reader however, is already fully convinced that the city is run by a police force which unjustly oppresses its citizens. The reader has now, at the latest, reached his or her epiphany about the dystopian society; what is left to discover for him or her is on the one hand the character's journey to the same realisation and on the other hand more details about the dystopian regime. For instance, while later on it becomes clear that the Specials are hired to protect pretties and uglies alike – "The Special had thrown himself off the roof to save her" (311) – it is also made clear that in doing so they are allowed to resort to violence: "We don't want to hurt you. But we will if we have to" (294). Tally then discovers that they also kill in order to keep their citizens from escaping (332). This proves that the city and the police not only use emotional blackmail but also physical violence to detain people, showing the dystopian society in an even darker light.

As I have said, the reader is already convinced of the degree to which the dystopian society indoctrinates and controls its citizens, so the character's epiphany and the revelation that plastic surgery also includes brain surgery to make pretties compliant and docile (268) by then only confirm the reader's suspicion that the pretties' behaviour has somehow been manipulated. What I argue will stress the rottenness of the dystopian society in the reader's eyes, is when he or she finds out that the city risks people's lives in experimental brain surgery during which they intend to manipulate their memories (413). Lastly, the reader gets confronted with a close-up view of a singled out product of this society when Shay is turned pretty against her will and now behaves completely out of character. What Tally observes: "You go to parties, Shay? While everyone here is locked up?" (384) also shocks the reader, as does Shay's

blithely attitude in the face of an oppressive system and mortal danger: For instance, while Tally and Maddy contemplate a plan to counteract the brain surgery, Shay is proud to have managed to build a brush out of twigs and clay, so that she may untangle her hair while staying in the wilderness (413). When in the end Tally decides to sacrifice herself and infiltrate the system by becoming pretty, I claim that the reader already approves of the revolt, since, as I have argued before, he or she has realised the dystopian nature of this society long before the protagonist.

A similar situation occurs in *Feed*, where the reader is also faster than the characters in recognising the signs for dystopia. However, the socio-political and ecological indicators are only of secondary concern, as the reader will first notice the their low level of education of Titus and his friends, as well as their depleting language, and their high level of indoctrination due to their dependence on this society's revolutionary piece of technology, called feed. I will consider all of these points in the subsequent sections; for now, though, I am analysing the social, political and ecological indicators that show the gravity of this dystopian society that are only the second layer of the negative ideality presented in the book.

The opening sentence of the book: "We went to the moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck" (3) already serves as an indicator that civilisation has spread to other planetary realms than earth, which is later confirmed by mentions of vacations on Mars (37), Venus (140), and moons of Jupiter (277). It is also a sign for how this world differs from ours, where travels to outer space are only possible for trained astronauts and simply unaffordable for regular citizens. The future moon, though, is no longer a destination for exploration, but a recreational destination for spring breakers (3), as is already alluded to by the word *fun*, which is revealed to be an unspectacular experience for future adolescents after all, as one can see on the employment of the word *suck*. The starting sentence indicates dissatisfaction in youth despite having the opportunity to discover the universe, which is also confirmed by Titus later on: "*I've been to Mars,* I said. *It was dumb*. [...] *Omigod*, she said. *Mars is a whole planet*. [...] I said, *Yes, dumb*" (37). In addition, it is explained that the moon has

many "craters all being full of old broken shit, like domes nobody's using anymore and wrappers and claws" (4), which signifies that the moon has at least in part become Earth's extended landfill, signifying negative ideality in terms of ecology. What also becomes evident on the first three pages already, and what I will consider more closely in the upcoming subchapter, is that lexis and grammar have gravely deteriorated. All these are signs for negative elements in the future, but they are not indicators that immediately evoke the notion of dystopia.

However, I argue that the casual reference to epidemic wounds, that people are obviously getting in the future, instantly strikes a reader as perverse: "We had the lesions that people were getting, and ours right then were kind of red and wet-looking. [...] the arm lesion [...] had broke open and was oozing" (11-12). This sentence sheds light on the fact that people have begun to show signs of illness and that this is not treated with fear and caution, but with emotionless disinterest. Such a complete disregard for a wide-spread medical issue is so negligent of people's health that the reader will automatically reject this casual commentary in a process of a complete correction of wrong evaluations. Further into the book, it becomes clear that the lesions *are* an issue of common interest after all, but that people are only concerned about their impact on aesthetics. For instance, when Quendy complains about the growing lesion on her forehead, Loga's comforting reply is: "No one will notice" (21), and when Titus first observes Violet he finds the lesion around her neck "beautiful" (22). Even Violet addresses the aesthetics of lesions, although she is clearly of superior intellect than Titus and his peer group, as I have mentioned in chapter 5.1 and will also consider in 5.2.5: she tells Quendy that her lesion lends a frame to her face and admits: "I want mine to go all the way around. I want it to be like a necklace, but right now, it's just a torque" (23). I state that incorporating serious medical issues into fashion trends is a definite sign of a social and ecological negative ideality and will cause the reader to reject this view as a wrong evaluation.

Another item that is turned into a fashion trend by the feed and its dutiful followers are the riots that break out all over America (151). Even though no

one is aware of the reasons behind the riots or even interested in them, every one of Titus' friends acquires items of clothing called "Riot Gear" (159). Crazes for quirky fashion trends were mentioned in the book before, when the clique remembers when "everyone wanted to dress like they were in an elderly convalescent home, [including] stretch pants, [...] accessory walkers [and] a cane" (60). The lesions as well as these fashion trends signify that this society has a talent to ignore the gravity of certain issues by trivialising them in the form of trends. While this is a feature of dystopian society that initially seems harmless, there are other indicators of socio-political and ecological downfall, which portray characters' ignorance about their surroundings as an indicator of dystopian societies.

For instance, when the group of friends is on the moon, they pass by a group of people demonstrating against the feed and the American annexation of the moon (31-32), portraying for the reader that the law for free speech is intact and that there are indeed people who are critical of their environment. However, these people are disregarded as "Eurotrash" (31) or weird outsiders (111) by Titus, his parents, and his friends. Through Titus' comments, it becomes clear that America is the main villain in the destruction of the Earth whereas Europe (31), as well as the "Global Alliance" (119), which seems to be spearheaded by Britain, are trying to fight them, and in the end even wage war against America (296). As the reader continues with the story, it becomes clear why the rest of the world is so adamant on stopping America in its industrial pollution: It is revealed that there are no forests or other natural habitats for animals any more (94); parks have been eroded as well as the last trees, in order to make room for air factories (125). The land is now covered with either cities or suburbs, which consist of several levels of suburbs stacked over one another, each house in its own bubble with its own controls for artificial weather and sun (77, 134) between which one has to navigate through "columns of smoke" (169) emanating from factories. If one wants to go to the topmost suburb to see the real sun, one needs to fly above the clouds, which are owned by corporations and are now called Clouds[TM] (79). All this indicates to the reader that civilisation has expanded to such an extent that natural areas do not exist anymore and that humans have truly taken over the world with negative consequences on

nature, indicating negative ideality in terms of ecology. The fact that apart from Violet none of the characters are concerned about their living conditions and the Earth's deteriorating state, makes the reader reject the society by a correction of wrong evaluations of its representation.

Said expansion of civilisation also affects the ecological state of the planet: The only areas that are not brimming with layers of suburbs are meat farms, where meat is produced artificially (141), and the sea, which is described to be dead and oil-infested (179). One can only visit these places when wearing protection gear, so as to be shielded from the smell and possibly toxic materials (179). These descriptions are only casually mentioned by Titus, but I argue that the reader cannot overlook them, seeing as how negative human influence on nature is portrayed. I state that a world that has been rendered uninhabitable for profit and corporate greed is to be considered a dystopian society. So far, there is no oppressive regime to be found; nevertheless, the reader can still spot the signs for indoctrination in characters. I will discuss these in greater detail in the subsequent chapter; however, due to their connection with pollution I want to mention a few of them now.

The question the reader will have raised by this point is "How did it come so far?". The novel answers this question by expressing throughout the whole book that materialism and consumerism are the number one addiction and that the feed reinforces this dependence in the form of a constant stream of commercials for bargain shopping. At the example of Titus' family, the reader also sees that not only cutlery is disposable, but that tables are now disposed after every meal as well (129). The reader thus understands that he or she is faced with a true throwaway society that has managed to destroy its own planet with its waste and carelessness. Since there is no mention of an advanced recycling system, but instead landfill crates are erected on the moon, the reader fills this gap by assuming that the increase in pollution and the decrease in active rebellion against it is the cause behind the state of *Feed*'s dystopian world setting.

The reader is by now long aware of the fact that this society represents negative ideality in all three areas of social issues, politics, and ecology. Nevertheless, there are two incidents that I denounce to be the most shocking signs for the negative sides of this society. First, there is the problem of vermin: as a salesperson tells Violet and Titus:

> I was flying along at night and I shined the light down at the ground, to look at the tops of all the suburb pods? And all over the top of them, it looked like it was moving, like there was a black goo [...] and it turned out [that it] was all these hordes of cockroaches. There were miles of them, running all over the tops of the domes. (99)

Through this excerpt, the reader recognises that the eco-system has been harmed to such a degree, that vermin has become overpowering. Yet, there are no official reports about that situation, signalling that the society prefers to stay ignorant of things they cannot change effortlessly. This carelessness of the people about their own habitat as well as the planet's bad ecological state is another indicator for negative ideality. The second issue is that of infertility: What is universally known in Titus' world but what no one seems to worry about is that due to the damage to nature's balance, humans can no longer procreate naturally, but have to use a conceptionarium instead (116). Here, they have the advantage of choosing their baby's looks and traits (116, 168) which the characters portray as positive, though I argue that the reader will see this in a negative light since humans unable of procreation is a sign for the natural extinction of the human race. This signifies the planet's cry for help and leads to a complete correction of wrong evaluations in the reader.

So far, I have argued that the book has revealed the society as dystopian to the reader, however, other than the general population itself there has not yet been a villain to blame. Traditionally, a dystopian society is spearheaded by a regime that gains some sort of advantage from its position and from its citizens' subjection, as I have alluded to in chapter 4.2. I will therefore now consider the political aspects of negative ideality in *Feed*. As I have mentioned above, freedom of speech still exists; however, simultaneously there are also signs of oppressiveness. When the group of friends gets hacked in a club on the moon, half of the club loses control of their feeds and their bodily functions (38-39). Consequently, the police intervenes and stops the aggressor: "[A]nd the police

were by our side, hitting the man over the head again and again with stunners and sticks, and he fell on one knee" (40). The scene that Titus describes is very violent, though no one is bothered by this brutality during or after the event. I argue that this scene poses an evaluation offering since, if the reader pauses here, he or she will realise that it is odd that a society so advanced in their technology that they can substitute a computer with a chip inside people's brains, has no better option of detaining a rogue hacker other than by employing pure physical violence. This becomes even clearer when the police secures the victims' safety by shutting off their feeds: "'We're going to have to shut you off.' And then they touched us, and bodies fell and there was nothing else" (40). Through this action it becomes apparent that simply immobilizing people by de-activating their feeds is an option as well. The fact that this technique was not used on the hacker shows that the police chose to attack the criminal physically. Later on in the book, it is revealed that the hacker has died from the consequences of the beating he received by the police, yet no one is alarmed by that matter. However, to the reader the fact that a person can publicly be mishandled and killed by the police without causing a scandal is a sign for negative ideality in politics.

Furthermore, when the US president's speech reveals that the leader of a nation is just as indoctrinated and a slave to the feed and its deteriorating language as adolescent citizens, the reader has no other option than to reject this political system:

> It is our duty [...] to stand behind our fellow Americans and not cast... things at them. Stones, for example. The first stone. By this I mean that we shouldn't think that there are any truth to the rumors [...]. The people of the United States know, as I know, that that is just plain hooey. We need to remember [...] that America is the nation of freedom, and that freedom, my friends, freedom does not lesions make. (85)

In this passage, the president of the United States of America exhibits communication difficulties in expression and grammar just as Titus' teenage friends. He is clearly employing phrases like "throwing the first stone" and "a nation of freedom" to underline his arguments, but renders them void of meaning with his inability to transport a message at all. I argue that this signals to the reader a leader that is just as indoctrinated and part of the dystopian

system as the regular citizen, which leads the reader to reject the politics of this dystopia. For if the leader of a nation is not the villain, then the culprit must be found in other areas, and, as becomes clear to the reader, Titus' comment about corporations early in the book was intended to lead the reader in the right direction:

> Of course everyone is like, *da da da, evil corporations, oh they're so bad*, we all say that, and we all know they control everything. I mean, it's not great, because who knows what evil shit they're up to. Everyone feels bad about that. But they're the only way to get all this stuff, and it's no good getting pissy about it, because they're still going to control everything whether you like it or not. Plus, they keep everyone in the world employed, so it's not like we could do without them. (49)

In this passage, Titus names the villain of his society; however, his lack of interest in the gravity of the corporations' impact on society is striking. As he says, everybody is aware that global corporations control society, yet it seems that as long as they provide people with what they desire, they achieve power over them in exchange. As the feed states at one point: "We are a new people. It is now the age of oneiric culture, the culture of dreams. [...] What we wish for, is ours" (149). I argue that the combination of this comment and the passage makes the reader realise that this dystopian society does not need brain surgery, as in *Uglies,* or immortality drugs and oppressive education, as in *The Declaration,* in order to enslave its people. The reader sees that as long as people are given what they desire on a material level, incapacitation is in progress and the power is there for the corporations to take.

Having unveiled the negative ideality in the system as well as the villainous leaders of the society, the reader has yet to discover this leadership's repercussions on society. As I have said before, at the beginning of the novel, the right of freedom of speech is still in place, and considering that the feed shows regular morsels of news, freedom of press has not been discriminated. However, as the book progresses – when it becomes clear that pollution and industrialisation are the main reason for people's sicknesses, natural catastrophes, and even riots, Titus remarks on the changing quality of news: "[Violet] told me about how things were getting really bad with some things in South America, but she couldn't really tell exactly how bad, because the news had been asked to be a little more positive" (111). I argue that this

comment makes it unmistakable to the reader that not only politics but also the press is in the hands of the corporations and that freedom of press has been subverted. In addition, people do not mind that the news are not delivered to them in full (111), which is a sign for indoctrination. The reader will thus reject this dystopian element via a complete correction of wrong evaluations. I will address the corresponding issue of the characters' indoctrination in greater detail in chapter 5.2.5.

In the course of this subchapter, I ascertained the issues in which the reader could detect negative ideality in the socio-political and ecological system of the society presented. In *The Declaration*, negative ideality constitutes a rigorous class system of Surpluses and Legals, in which the former is either killed or raised to become a slave and the latter takes drugs in order to acquire immortality. Both classes suffer from intrusion in the private daily lives via strict regulations due to space and resource shortage. Strict regulations are designed to benefit Legals and can be waived for high ranking officials, causing another level of inequality in the system. A violent executive authority force is given leeway in order to maintain the status quo and capture or eradicate delinquents. In *Uglies*, the reader is first led to believe that the world presented to him or her is of utopian nature, though, while ecologically ideal, the class system of pretties and uglies causes people to reject their natural looks in favour of modified aesthetics. In addition, it becomes apparent that people are not free to come and leave as they please, and pretties are made compliant via brain surgery. The executive authority of the city usually stays in the background, but becomes violently aggressive when challenged. In *Feed*, it first seems as if people are free to do as they please, even though they portray an unusually high tendency for consumerism. It then occurs to the reader that the eco-system of the planet has been destroyed in favour of expansion and corporate gain. It becomes apparent that the political leaders are puppets in the hands of the true villains, the corporations, and that freedom of press is non-existent. The reader discovers that corporations make people compliant and indifferent to negative events by fulfilling their material desires. Apparently, the characters in these three novels have been indoctrinated to accept these forms of society,

which is why, in the following section, I will analyse how the reader can detect signs for indoctrination in characters.

5.2.2 Signs for indoctrination

In my last subchapter, I have given an account of indicators for socio-political and ecological negative ideality in DYAF. While that part of my analysis dealt with world building, this section concentrates on character profiles. I will now discuss signs for character's indoctrination, as this represents another important indicator for a reader in determining a society as dystopian to him or her. In order to identify signs for indoctrination in a character, I will first clarify the definition of the word indoctrination. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, to "indoctrinate" means „to often repeat an idea or belief to someone in order to persuade them to accept it"[2], whereas The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term as to „teach (a person or group) to accept a set of beliefs uncritically"[3]. In my analysis, I will employ a combination of both definitions, because I argue that the continuous repetition of ideas as well as the uncritical acceptance of these are both essential in the indoctrination of the characters in my three selected works of DYAF. I thereby deduce that indoctrination results in the obstinate and unquestioning adherence to beliefs and rules in a character. I further argue that the protagonist's indoctrination will in addition become evident to the reader when non-indoctrinated characters try to reason with him or her to no avail.

In *The Declaration*, the reader discerns the protagonist's indoctrinated state already on the first page. Anna's statement: "*My name is Anna and I shouldn't be here. I shouldn't exist. [...] I didn't ask to be born. But that doesn't make it any better that I was. They caught me early, though, which bodes well*" (7) signals low self-esteem and gratefulness to a system that apparently instilled feelings of guilt about her mere existence in her, which I argue the reader will associate with doctrinaire behaviour. When she denounces that: "*People like me don't need more than one name, Mrs Pincent says*" (8), she demonstrates

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[2] <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/indoctrinate?q=indoctrinat>
[3] <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/indoctrinate?q=indoctrinate>

that she sees herself as belonging to a lower class and simultaneously reveals her allegiance to an executive of the dystopian system. The phrase "Mrs Pincent says" occurs numerous times in the first chapter and is also interspersed in the whole book, denouncing Mrs Pincent as Anna's main indoctrinating influence as well as Anna's uncritical obedience towards her. When Anna defends Mrs Pincent's and says that she "was always quick to punish, but afterwards she would always explain why" (119), I argue that the reader takes this as evidence that Anna has been manipulated into willingly supporting her tormentor, which points the readership towards dystopian oppression.

In addition, upon describing her status, Anna does not complain, but willingly adheres to the rules and finds them just, since she confidently states: "*I'm very lucky to be here, actually. I've got a chance to redeem my Parent's Sins, if I work hard enough to become employable. Not everyone gets that kind of chance, Mrs Pincent says" (9).* Anna describing herself as "lucky" despite contrary evidence shows the reader that she has been indoctrinated into believing that her bad living conditions are justified. Consequently, the reader will disagree with Anna's views about herself and her world in a process of complete correction of false evaluations and will define her comportment as doctrinaire.

Anna can frequently be witnessed to repeat the beliefs and rules that she has been taught: for example, she tells Peter: "Surpluses don't help each other; we're here to help Legals" (41), and preaches to her dorm: "Go and brush your teeth, [...] Surpluses need good teeth, [...] [n]o one's going to pay for dental treatment for a Surplus" (84). In doing so, Anna has become the extension of Mrs. Pincent's control on the Surpluses, which is also proven when Anna is made a Prefect: "[S]he and the other Surpluses in her dormitory used to talk to each other, [...] sharing secrets and thoughts. But then Mrs. Pincent had appointed her Dormitory Monitor, which meant that she had to report any secrets or wrongdoings of any one in the dorm" (45-46). Subsequently, Anna is even proud of her status, which becomes apparent when another Surplus challenges her: "She was a Prefect. She wasn't a weak Surplus ripe for

bullying" (95). This proves that Anna is not only indoctrinated into submission, but has also been made part of the system that oppresses her, which the reader will attribute to a dystopian regime.

Further proof for Anna's indoctrinated mind is that other characters find it impossible to reason with her. When Peter arrives at Grange Hall and tells Anna that he is acquainted with her parents (32) she does not grow curious but instead refuses to listen to him (40), she describes him as "difficult" in her journal (43), and regrets that he has not been caught earlier (44). She regularly rebukes him and, unfazed by his objections, recites to him the rules about Surplus conduct that she has learned: "Please don't use words from the Outside in Grange Hall. [...] Surpluses aren't here to like things, Peter, they're here to do things. [...] You have to eat your food, Peter. It's our duty to stay strong" (35-40). I argue that the reader will sympathise with her refusal to indulge in Peter's point of view, since up until this point, Peter has only offered complaints about the conditions at Grange Hall, but has failed to offer relief from them. Consequently, Anna is loath to accept the truth about her poor living conditions if there is no possibility for escaping them. However, when Peter finally suggests flight and offers her a home, Anna *still* remains stubborn:

> "Anna Covey, I have to tell you about your parents," he whispered. "They wanted me to find you. You've got to get away from that evil Mrs Pincent. I've come to take you home, Anna."
> Anna pushed him away and her eyes narrowed. "You do not know my parents and I have no home," she hissed. "My parents are in prison. My name is Anna. Just Anna. I'm a Surplus. And so are you. Get used to it, and leave me alone." (48)

In this scene, Anna refuses to believe Peter even though he intends to safe her from her destiny as a Surplus. Instead, she recites the truths she knows, which indicates that she has been programmed to accept her inferior status. Later on, the statement: "Anna answered without thinking. 'Of course I hate them'" (65) lends weight to the argument that Anna has been raised to be uncritical. When Anna stays obstinate, Peter announces that he knows about her butterfly-shaped birthmark (48). Anna, shocked by that revelation, immediately perceives this as a possible test by Mrs Pincent: "Perhaps right now, he was reporting back to Mrs Pincent and working out new ways to trap her into saying something or doing something wrong" (49-50). She then calms down only to

conclude that "[s]omeone must have told him about her birthmark. They were probably laughing about it right now" (50). The fact that Anna is more inclined to suspect a scheme to test or humiliate her rather than to believe in salvation by a loving family, is proof that Mrs Pincent's dogmatic regime has successfully indoctrinated her.

As Anna begins to awaken and becomes fully conscious of the negative conditions in her world, the reader realises that the impact of her indoctrination cannot simply be shed. I argue that Anna's constant cycle of progress and partial regression proves that overcoming one's doctrinaire upbringing is not a linear process. Thus, after her epiphany, Anna has moments of doubt about her status, the world order, and Mrs Pincent's corruptness. Even during her very moment of epiphany, she switches between realisation and denial: "There had to be an explanation, she thought to herself desperately. Mrs Pincent would never say those things. She just wouldn't. She couldn't. But she had" (124). Later on, she is excited at the prospect of freedom, but is scared by it nevertheless (131). When she actively rebels against a teacher, she initially feels exhilarated by it: "Anna realised to her surprise that, now that she had overcome her fear, she was rather enjoying herself. [...] This was her first taste at challenging the doctrine, and it was absolutely delicious" (150-151). However, as soon as Mrs Pincent impedes her plans, Anna immediately regresses: "Gone was her defiant stance, gone was the elation at finally challenging the Grange Hall doctrine, and back was the familiar feeling of submission and humility" (153), which is proof that her instinct of obedience is so deep-rooted that she regresses at the smallest obstacle.

This dynamic continues after her escape, when she is finally with her parents, and is treated very gently (246), and nevertheless still keeps thinking in terms of her upbringing and wonders whether she is allowed to ask questions (247). When the news arrive that the Catchers are pursuing them, she immediately evokes in herself the guilt of having broken Grange Hall's rules by possessing a diary: "And then, suddenly, she [...] [k]new that her First Sin had caught up with her, that her fate had been sealed the first time she broke the rules of Grange Hall" (249). This proves to the reader that despite Anna's previous epiphany,

her instincts cannot be repressed but instead resurface perpetually. Even at the very end, when Anna is finally free to live her life as a Legal, she admits: "She loved going out [...] [b]ut then the garden was safe territory for Anna; walls and fences protected her. She'd physically left Grange Hall behind, but she still felt safest within boundaries, even self-imposed ones" (298). It is thus evident that Anna's dogmatic education will accompany her, if only on a subconscious level, for the rest of her life, which proves the high level of her indoctrination to the reader.

While Anna's inner struggle against her indoctrination continues long after her epiphany, Tally in *Uglies* changes her comportment towards doctrinaire issues as soon as she hears the truth and falls in love with David; for her, the time after the epiphany is marked by rebellion and more insights into the city's corruptness. While she still considers operated pretties as beautiful, "Tally's heart almost stopped at the beauty of her confusion. [...] She tried to see past the beauty"(381), she is shocked that, evidently, they have been brainwashed and does not desire to share the same fate (383); regression into her old instincts or views is thus not an issue that concerns Tally's further journey in the book. I argue that the reason behind the difference between Anna and Tally is that the dystopian society in *The Declaration* indoctrinates with pure oppression and emotional torture in order to instil feelings of guilt and inadequacy in the Surpluses. The dystopian city in *Uglies*, however, mainly employs the promise of wish fulfilment; while uglies are raised to believe that their looks are inferior, they are always presented with certain relief for their situation once they turn 16. I argue that while negative reinforcement instils fear in the subjects to contradict the doctrinaire regime, positive reinforcement creates reluctance in characters to choose the option of fall, since flight according to Curnutt's definition (111) promises comfort and ignorant bliss. In addition, I claim that while characters subjected to positive reinforcement are loathe to choose the fall, after the epiphany, the outlook of bliss is easier to overcome than the promise of fear.

For instance, Tally's society does not threaten uglies' self-worth in aspects other than beauty, since, as Dr. Cable puts it: "This city is a paradise, Tally. It feeds

you, educates you, keeps you safe. It makes you pretty" (106). Furthermore, the city advocates arts and recreation, which is indicated by the mention of school facilities like an art school department (77), a drama room (79), and even dorm team jackets (47) signifying sport competitions. Furthermore, as I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, punishments are discussed but never carried out, and physical violence is not mentioned at all. These are all signs of a utopian setting that primarily works with positive instead of negative reinforcement.

Hence, while Anna has to overcome the guilt about her existence, her feeling of low self-esteem, a life of deprivation of love, creativity and nutrition as well as a history of physical assault, Tally's only element of indoctrination to conquer is the urgent need to change her looks and her prejudices against life outside of the comfort of her highly mechanised city. This, however, initially proves to be sheer impossible, as Tally opposes every argument Shay brings forth with a refutation that stems from the belief system she has been taught: Shay constantly tries to convince Tally that their natural appearance is *not* ugly: "Maybe I think my face is already right!" (44), but Tally refuses to see reason: "Don't be weird, Shay. I'm an ugly, you're an ugly. We will be for two more weeks. It's no big deal or anything" (81). Her retort signifies that uglies have been indoctrinated to such an extent that they do not mind being denounced ugly since they are constantly reminded of their prospect of becoming pretty (40). Tally also gives automated answers when Shay tells her about rebels who have invented tricks that Tally enjoys and sadly adds "But they all get pretty in the end" (67), from which Tally deduces not a tragedy but a "[h]appy ending" (67). The reader thus realises that Tally has an automated response to the notions of pretty and ugly, which also becomes clear when Shay asks Tally to join her in her escape and the following is given in response: "'No,' Tally said without thinking" (91), thus indicating that Tally has been raised to be uncritical of the city's belief system.

This argument is proven further when Shay explicitly tells Tally that she has been brainwashed and Tally only recites her teachings in reply:

> "But it's a trick, Tally. You've only seen pretty faces your whole life. Your parents, your teachers, everyone over six-teen. But you weren't born expecting that kind of beauty in everyone, all the time. You just got programmed into thinking anything else is ugly."
> "It's not programming, it's just a natural reaction. And more important than that, it's fair. In the old days it was all random – some people kind of pretty, most people ugly all their lives. Now everyone's ugly.... until they're pretty. No losers." (82-83)

This passage proves to the reader that reasoning cannot alter Tally's obstinate insistence on her society's view on biology. In fact, as I have mentioned in chapter 5.1.1, only her feelings for David broaden her horizon so that factual reasoning is possible. Until then, however, Tally is impatient to undergo her operation (45) because "looking like a real person is the first step [to happiness]" (84), which indicates to the reader that Tally's doctrinaire education has led her to believe that her natural looks are undesirable, but also that natural looks are *un*natural. I argue that this comment will make the doctrinaire nature of Tally's teaching apparent to the reader and will lead him or her to reject this view via a "Totalkorrektur according to Iser ("Appellstruktur" 240).

The reader will also realise how Tally's indoctrination modifies first expressions when she meets someone new: "Her name was Shay. She had long dark hair in pigtails, and her eyes were too wide apart. Her lips were full enough, but she was even skinnier than a new pretty" (28). When Tally meets David, she is first inclined to describe him positively as having "a nice smile" (189), but then she admits: "Of course, David was hardly a pretty. His smile was crooked, and his forehead too high" (189). In addition, when she meets David's friend Croy, she immediately renders harsh judgement about his looks: "He also looked older than sixteen, but it didn't suit him like it did David. Some people needed the operation more than others" (190). These scenes illustrate to the reader that Tally's objectiveness in connection with new acquaintances has been compromised by her indoctrination. Furthermore, the reader discovers that uglies even create nicknames to taunt each other with their most striking negative feature, calling Tally "Squint" (36) because of her narrow eyes, Shay "Skinny" (36) due to her weight and Peris formerly "Nose" (18). I state that this tradition of bringing attention to the flaws in one's appearance on a quotidian basis will induce a complete correction of wrong evaluations in the reader and

will render his or her view on Tally's education and consequent behaviour as doctrinaire.

Furthermore, Tally's indoctrination about biology and civilisation weakens her general judgement about the world: For instance, when Dr. Cable tells Tally that the Smoke steals uglies from the city and deceives the runaways about living conditions on the outside, Tally does not ponder that people are not belongings and can therefore not be stolen, but immediately starts to wonder: "Had Shay really been stolen? What did Shay or any ugly really know about the Smoke?" (108), whereas without her indoctrinated upbringing, I argue that Tally would realise, as the reader does, that Dr. Cable is interpreting the circumstances to suit her own cause. Since Tally has admitted to Shay before, when they had to carry heavy hover boards outside of the city's convenient hover grid: "I kind of like being fooled about some things" (59), the reader sees that Tally has also been indoctrinated by the convenience that this dystopian city has created in order to imprison its citizens without their resistance.

In *Feed*, the society works with similar techniques as the one in *Uglies*; positive reinforcement here also achieves the compliance of its subjects. In this case, however, the common obsession is not beauty surgery but computers inside people's heads, called feed. Whereas in *Uglies*, pretties are made compliant via brain surgery and uglies are controlled with the promise of the operation, in *Feed*, instant gratification is used to achieve the indoctrination of the citizens. As the feed aptly sums up: "It is now the age of oneiric culture, the culture of dreams. [...] What we wish for, is ours" (149). The difference to *The Declaration* and *Uglies* is that this society is aware of the role the villain plays: "we all know [evil corporations] control everything. [...] But they're the only way to get all this stuff" (49). This explanation draws the reader's attention to the fact that these citizens know they are being subjected, but that they comply nevertheless because they are rewarded for it with the fulfilment of their material wishes. As the reader will realise, people are not merely obsessed with the feed; it defines people's lives: Titus, for instance, thinks in terms of the feed when he dreams about having a new girlfriend: "It would be good to have someone to download with." (5). In addition, people let their feed interrupt their most intimate

moments, for instance, the feed banners Titus (feeding him advice and commercials on a high rate) when he rides in the ambulance with Violet (203) and when he is about to become intimate with her for the first time: "My feed was like, *Tongue-tied? Wowed and gaga? For a fistful of pickups tailored extra-specially for this nightmarish scenario, try Cyranofeed, available at rates as low as –*" (174). The fact that people do not care about these interruptions shows that the doctrinaire feed is fully integrated in their daily lives.

The feed is also used to follow the latest trends, called "the big spit" (5), and causes Marty to buy a metallic bird and the girls to change their hairstyles on a moment's notice (20, 52). I argue that it becomes clearly noticeable that these trends are followed uncritically, due to the fact that no one ponders the option of forgoing a trend (60, 159), which indicates indoctrination to the reader. Another sign for the feed's persuasive power becomes apparent when the group of friends go shopping on the moon out of boredom: "Quendy bought some shoes, but the minute she walked out of the store she didn't like them anymore. Marty couldn't think of anything he wanted, so he ordered this really null shirt. He said it was so null it was like ordering nothing" (31). This passage shows that due to their indoctrination to the feed, these adolescents are seeking a high, and prefer a bad shopping experience to no shopping experience at all. This, I argue, goes beyond the notion of just indoctrination, but is a clear sign for addiction to the feed, which I will analyse closer in the following passage.

Further proof that the indoctrinating device has also become people's addiction is unveiled when Titus' clique has to live without the feed for several days, due to the hack that happened on the moon: When Titus wakes up without a feed (43), he first feels the absence of his feed's credit, indicating a shopping addiction. He then tries to contact people via chats, signifying a media addiction, and tries to find his GPS coordinates on the feed so as to make sense of his surroundings, illustrating a complete dependence for basic actions. When all of these attempts fail, Titus gets scared and finally does what would have been the obvious option for the non-indoctrinated reader: "So I opened my eyes" (43). Him and his friends then spend their first day without their feed staring at blank hospitals walls, without any conversation (45-51), since they

apparently do not know how to socialise and be entertained without their feeds: "Everything in my head was quiet. It was fucked. 'What do we do?' she asked. I didn't know" (44). The second day, they start to invent simple games and even talk to each other about their childhood (57-67), but as soon as their feeds start working again, they all bask in its present: "And the feed was pouring in on us now [and] [w]e were dancing in it like rain, and we couldn't stop laughing, and we were running our hands across our bodies, feeling them again, and I saw Violet almost hysterical with laughter" (70-71). This excerpt suggests to the reader a high induced by the return of their feeds. The fact that the first things they receive from their feeds are commercials signifies corporate indoctrination, and the speed at which they restore their habit of living through the feed (75) denounces their addiction to the indoctrinating device.

I argue that this dependence can already be observed in this society's children: for instance, people claim that toys are no longer fostering children's intellect (97) and Titus' little brother shows undeniable deficiencies in the ability to concentrate and communicate; throughout the whole book he can be witnessed running through the house (256-257), repeating his favourite feedcasts at high volume (176, 260), and not paying attention to his surroundings (128). As his mother is powerless to change his behaviour, the reader realises that children's education now happens through the feed, which indoctrinates them from an early age on. Since Titus and his friends have been raised in a similar fashion, it becomes clear why they cannot even resist the feed for a simple Coke promotion: although they try to trick the system by talking about the beverage's flavour in order to win a six-pack, they soon forfeit and buy cola instead (162), which the reader will attribute to their indoctrination.

In view of the fact that the feed's technology has been established several generations ago (47), it is not surprising that the now adult generation is also suffering from indoctrination; after all, they have been raised by the feed. I argue that authoritative adults behaving like adolescents is such a novelty in the reader's reality, that it nevertheless comes as a shock to him or her when Titus' father, a businessman, speaks in the same manner as Titus and his friends (55). This, I claim, is designed to make the reader aware of the deteriorating

language and intellect of this future society and will lead to a complete correction of false evaluation, making the reader perceive this society as negative. The actions and arguments of Titus' father also prove that every generation has been indoctrinated to the point of being uncritical: for instance, Titus' father defends the clearing of forests for the construction of an artificial air factory with the argument "You got to have air" (125), which the reader will identify as nonsensical because, as Violet stresses: "Trees make air" (125). Titus' father also goes whale hunting with his company (280), even though the sea and most animals inhabiting it have already died, which I argue the reader will again identify as a sign for the deep-rooted indoctrination that causes people to be indifferent to the planet's condition.

Even an independently thinking person like Violet cannot escape this society's indoctrination, which becomes clear when the reader discovers her desire to belong to a group like Titus' friends despite their deficiencies: "God, I'm so excited to be going to a real party. [...] Will it be like it is on the feed?" (79). Her statement indicates that despite her superior education, she has been indoctrinated by the feed to aspire an ignorant life of partying, which she also admits in the end: "You lead this life like I've always wanted to – just, everything is normal" (267), for which Titus ultimately reproaches her: "You wanted to mingle with the common people. Just latch on to this one dumbass, and make fun of his friends for being stupid, while all the time, having this little wish that you could be like us" (271). This proves that Violet is just as indoctrinated by the feed's record of ideality as everyone else, which becomes clear to the reader when she is prepared to surrender her principals: For instance, at a party, Violet is ashamed for sounding too smart (83). Also, in order to regain her status in the group, she complies after a fight with the girls: "They weren't being jerky. I was being pretentious" (172), even though she knows that this is not true: "It's not like I was saying something mean or stupid" (164). Afterwards, Violet agrees to go to another party because she still desires to be included: "*Okay, I want to live a little*" (188). It thus becomes clear to the reader that Violet is prepared to sacrifice her integrity to satisfy a wish the feed has instilled in her. However, the difference between Violet and the other characters is that she is aware of her indoctrination and addiction but is still unable to fight it: When she imagines how

she wants to spend the rest of her days, she realises that she is retelling feedcasts and trailers. Consequently, she is disappointed in herself for having to identify the concept of living an ideal life with what is happening on the feed, and wonders: "My God. What am I, without the feed? It's all from the feed credits. My idea of real life" (217). The reader thus recognises that there is no escape from the feed and its indoctrination, even for alert characters like Violet.

This also becomes evident when in the course of the novel, the lesions gain more positive attention among the characters, since celebrities have begun to portray them on television shows, which causes Violet to intentionally wear low-cut shirts to show off her open sore (96). In addition, a new trend to undergo procedures to get lesions artificially emerges, and even mimics suppuration with latex (183). While this shocks Titus in the beginning (184, 199), his friends quickly grow accustomed to fake lesions and are not even disturbed (199) that Quendy proceeds to cover her body with lenticels in order to follow the fashion trend (192). However, I argue that Violet's shocked reaction to these artificial forms of mutilations mirrors that of the reader: "*It's the end. It's the end of the civilization. We're going down*" (193). At that point, the reader has already accumulated plenty of evidence for this society's state of negative ideality so that this event seems like the culmination of ignorance, recklessness, and indoctrination. Reader and character have previously been informed by the feed that America's ongoing industrial pollution is rumoured to be the reason behind the existence of these lesions (85), through which the reader has realised that fashion trends are not harmless anymore. The characters, however, show no sign of interest for this new piece of information. The fact that people now intentionally inflict pain and illness onto themselves instead of demonstrating against and fighting pollution is truly evidence for a society gone awry, with little to no hope of recovery. Violet then adds: "*The only thing worse than the thought it may all come tumbling down is the thought that we may go on like this forever*" (193), by which she again reflects the reader's thoughts, who, as I argue, will have a similar reaction to the event. He or she will already have drawn connections to our own reality, which I will address in more detail in chapter 5.2.5, and will have made the observation that continuing life in such an ignorant fashion is a nightmarish prospect. I therefore state that Violet's

epiphany of her world as a negative place, which I have previously ascribed to this scene in the book, coincides with the reader's epiphany that this world is beyond saving. The other characters, including the protagonist, do not share this insight, but instead continue along their familiar habits, clearly indoctrinated to the point of no return.

In conclusion, all three novels offer the reader insights into people's indoctrinated behaviour, which allows him or her to attribute these features to a dystopian society via the process of complete correction of false evaluation. I have illustrated how in *The Declaration*, children are brought up to believe that they are unwanted and a burden to the world whereas in *Uglies*, people are controlled via brain surgery. In comparison, people's indoctrination in *Feed* takes on the subtlest as well as the most permanent form: here, people are trained not to care. Thus, no matter what negative and dystopian situation they are confronted with, they simply continue their lives unfazed. As indoctrination includes characters' tendency to accept inappropriately severe punishments without further question, it is necessary to address the issue of consequences for misdemeanours and rebellion. Consequently, I will give an account of how punishments serve to indoctrinate citizens and discipline potential rebels in DYAF societies in order to make the reader realise the negative ideality of the presented world.

5.2.3 Keeping the peace – punishment in DYAF

While indoctrination leads to complacent acceptance of rules, as I have mentioned in the previous subchapter, there are methods to ensure that characters do not waver in their obedience. Dystopian societies, I state, use penalisation in order to indoctrinate characters as well as to discipline them for rebellious behaviour. I further argue that DYAF employs physical force to detain its characters in the dystopian society and simultaneously depicts it so that the reader may be repelled by the doctrine's methods and consequently denounce the society as dystopian. In this section, I will therefore analyse the forms of punishment, their uses for indoctrination and their effects on the character's perception of the presented society.

In *The Declaration*, Anna's incredulous comment on her internship with Mrs Sharpe is proof that frequent and inappropriately severe punishments for minor misdemeanours are distributed on a daily basis: "She didn't hit me even once" (14). This comment signifies that Anna expected to be hit at some point during her short stay with Mrs Sharpe and that she is surprised that it did not happen. The reader thus concludes that unfair punishment is on a Surplus' daily agenda and connects this to negative ideality. Harsh treatment and physical abuse are also dispensed in order to remind the Surplus children of the doctrinaire rules and their status: For instance, when Anna wonders if she could adopt Mrs Pincent's surname, since she is not allowed one herself, Anna describes that Mrs Pincent *"hit me hard across the head and took me off hot meals for a whole week"* (9), and when Surplus Tania obstreperously claims: "Maybe *My Place* is in another dormitory. Or on the corridor. Or on the Outside. Maybe *My Place* is somewhere completely different. What then?" (81), Mrs Pincent not only punishes her but also the girl Tania was arguing with as well as the girls in the dormitory who had been listening: "Surplus Tania will spend the rest of the night in Solitary, as will Surplus Charlotte, after spending some time in my office. The rest of you will forfeit breakfast tomorrow and will have additional chores every evening this week" (84). The reader can see that a simple statement against the doctrine can lead to beatings and solitary, as well as food deprivation and additional work, which will lead him or her to reject the system behind the control for Surplus conduct.

This notion increases when the reader forms the connection between Mrs Pincent's office and the prospect of beatings, as becomes evident when Anna admits that she "[...] had been in that room enough times for a beating or some other punishment to feel an instinctive fear every time she crossed its threshold" (18). It is thus not surprising to the reader that children at Grange Hall try to evade punishment by strictly abiding to rules and eventually come to accept them, as well as the underlying belief system, as true. Further proof that punishments are employed to indoctrinate the Surpluses becomes evident when the girls are punished for having their period:

> When female Surpluses were menstruating, they had to wear a red cloth around their neck to show everyone that they were unclean, that their bodies were dirty, flaunting their fertility which was shameful and evil. [...] [T]hey were no longer victims of their Surplus existence, but potential perpetrators; [...] Any Surplus who dared to soil her sheets with the tiniest speck of blood was beaten and scrubbed with a wire brush to wash away these Sins. [...] Many girls preferred to sleep on the cold, hard floor when they were menstruating to make quite sure that their sheets remained unstained [...] (129-130)

This passage shows that the girls are taught to be ashamed of their body's natural functioning because it signifies that they were able to produce children, which is against the law. The fact that in order to avoid severe physical punishment they have to suppress their instincts of protecting their health and thus sleep on cold stone will be especially shocking to female readers, and will lead to a "Totalkorrektur einer falschen Beurteilung" (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 240). The reader also realises that the Surpluses are so accustomed to being punished, they even find comfort in it; for instance, when Anna is with her parents and confesses a mistake she has made, "[s]he braced herself, waiting to be beaten" (250) and when they do not beat her "she wished they had. Anna knew how to deal with beatings and harsh words. [...] [T]hey felt almost like a release, like a penance" (261). This proves to the reader that, first of all, Anna has been programmed to a degree that makes her welcome physical pain and, second of all, that Anna's parents are not part of the dystopian doctrine, since they abstain from the same kind of violence.

The highest form of punishment can only be detected by readers who can fill the gap in the following scene: When Mrs Pincent murders her husband, she contemplates his dead body lying "on the floor in a pool of blood. Just where Surplus Sheila had lain earlier in the day, Mrs Pincent observed" (285). This statement signals to the alert reader that Sheila has been killed in order to guard Mrs Pincent's secret that two Surpluses have managed to escape her care. Even though this ultimate punishment is only alluded to and not made explicit, the reader will reject this action as a sign for a dystopian leadership. Furthermore, as I have mentioned above, severe punishment also awaits Legal people should they decide to assist Surpluses in their flight or hiding, making it apparent to the reader that, in a dystopian regime, no one is safe from punishment, irrespective of their status.

In stark contrast to *The Declaration*, *Uglies* first presents the reader with the utopian side of society, where it initially seems as though punishment is non-existent. As I have mentioned before, Tally has to be careful not to get caught by the wardens, though she also contemplates giving herself over to them, since she is sure they would understand and help her (26). This depiction of wardens alludes to a fair and accommodating executive authority, which the reader will interpret as a sign for utopia. Tally is afraid of being refused the operation due to her rule breaking (25), but it is shortly afterwards revealed that this form of punishment is unheard of (55), which again indicates that punishment is virtually non-existent. In addition, when Tally and Shay play a trick on the freshmen uglies, they also remark that despite an increase in misdemeanours at the end of term, there has been no sign of punishment (79). These events illustrate to the reader that this society is very tolerant with its delinquents. However, it is soon revealed that the leeway that uglies are granted is only an illusion of freedom in order to detain citizens (107), seeing as leaving the sanctuary of the city alerts the city authorities and has severe ramifications.

Consequently, the reader discovers the city's true executive authority, the Special Circumstances department. It becomes clear that refusing to assist them, as Tally does (109), leads to the withholding of the operation: "Until you do help us, to the very best of your ability, you will never be pretty" (110). The reader will attribute the refusal to turn Tally into a pretty to the deprivation of happiness and community that she has been raised to desire. In addition, in order to convince Tally to cooperate, Dr. Cable reminds her of her appearance (135), which Tally perceives as undesirable due to her doctrinaire education about laws of biology (8, 16). The reader is aware that the Special applies emotional cruelty to reinforce the effects of Tally's indoctrination, and thus the dystopian cruelty of the Specials is unveiled. In addition, uglies who are captured after their flight receive the operation against their will, as in the case of Shay (383). Special Circumstances even use rebels like David's father for surgical experiments, which ends deadly in the case of Az (413). These actions prove that the city changes people's looks and brains to indoctrinate them by

force if necessary, and even risks their citizens' lives, in order to maintain a highly doctrinaire society that appears utopian from afar; a view that the reader will reject in the process of a complete correction of wrong evaluations.

While the society in *Feed* is also prone to risk the lives of its citizens, punishments are not on the daily agenda. In fact, the only instance of physical violence is portrayed in the scene of the feedhack on the moon (38-40): As I have mentioned in the section about negative ideality, the police brutally detain a rogue hacker who has caused the feeds of a group of people to malfunction. What will shock the reader is that despite the police's unnecessarily violent attack on the hacker and his subsequent death (127), neither bystanders nor the press are appalled by the incident. I therefore argue that this is an indication that brutal assaults by the police are condoned or common in this society, and that its citizens have been indoctrinated to react with indifference.

It soon becomes evident that this society does not need to control its citizens with active punishment, because potential rebels are unable to reach other people with their ideas. This becomes apparent when the rebel group "The Coalition of Pity" hacks into Titus' dream to force-feed him negative news on the Earth's desolate state (151-152), and Titus remains indifferent to both the mind assault and the events depicted: "*Can I go to sleep*? [...] *I had these really weird dreams*" (155). This proves that Titus is unable to even conceive of what he has seen and that the rebel group's effort has hence been in vain. In addition, when Violet tries to contact FeedTech to help with these mind assaults, she cannot reach a live operator to even listen to her request and gets shopping advice instead (154). This proves that the leaders behind this dystopian society can trust the influence of their indoctrination to such an extent that they do not even bother to stop potential revolts, which is also apparent when reports from countless riots reach the news, and no one is moved to act (152, 284, 296). Instead of being concerned, people start to incorporate the news into their fashion: "It's Riot Gear. It's retro. It's beat up [and i]t's been big since earlier this week" (159). While at a certain point censorship is introduced to the press (111), I claim that this does not serve to relinquish rebellious thinking but instead counteracts people's bleak mood, as can be seen in Titus' statement: "I

said to her that she should stop reading it, because it was just depressing"
(111). I argue that the indifference towards revolt also signifies that this
society's goal does not lie in the severe control of its citizens. Rather,
accumulation of profits in spite of ramifications on nature or people's health is
their sole aim.

This argument is proven further with the example of Violet. As I have pointed
out before, the reader has come to know Violet as a rebellious character, as
she successfully resists the feed's data mining by creating an inscrutable buyer
profile and attempts to keep informed about current events despite the
censoring of the press. Although the feed attempts to accommodate to her
wishes, no punishment or even reprimand is given. However, when Violet's
feedware deteriorates due to the hack on the moon, she is forced to ask the
same corporations, whom she blames for the Earth's bad condition, for help
(219). Despite the life-threatening circumstances that are caused by the
feedware said corporations have implanted into her body, her requests for
financial and medical support are declined: "[We] reviewed your purchasing
history, and we don't feel that you would be a reliable investment at this time.
No one could get what we call a 'handle' on your shopping habits" (247). The
reader thus realises that while revolt against the feed has no immediate
repercussions, rebels are eliminated via passive but deliberate neglect. In fact,
Violet is not the only one who is treated in this fashion: whole areas are
attacked (296) or simply vanish (273) with no one coming to their aid. People's
lesions keep spreading due to industrial pollution: "My mom had lost so much
skin you could see her teeth even when her mouth was closed" (284). Still
neither corporations nor inhabitants introduce change, which proves to the
reader that in this society punishment is unnecessary, as neglect similarly
serves the dystopian society's cause and requires less effort. Once more,
positive reinforcement of wish fulfilment has rendered the dystopian subjects
reluctant to choose the fall in favour of the comfort of flight.

In this section, I have analysed how DYAF novels use punishment in order to
indoctrinate citizens or penalise rebels so as to maintain the equilibrium in the
dystopian society and draw the reader's attention to its state of negative

ideality. In *The Declaration*, this is mostly done by the infliction of physical pain through beatings, hard work, and food deprivation, whereas *Uglies* uses brain lesions, imprisonment, and obligatory operations against people's will so as to keep the city at peace. The society in *Feed*, in contrary to the other two novels, has indoctrinated its citizens to such a degree that punishment is rarely necessary, and when it is, the only consequence is to simply withhold any form of compensation or assistance. What all of these three societies have in common, though, is that they use doctrinaire education and the withholding of books and documents about the world and its history in order to indoctrinate their citizens from an early age on, thus creating social stability by ensuring the characters' uncritical faithfulness to the doctrinaire system. This is why, in the following section, I will analyse the education system in DYAF novels.

5.2.4 *How educational systems indoctrinate characters in DYAF*

In the preceding subchapter, I have analysed how punishment can serve to trap a character in his or her indoctrinated state, how it is used to penalise rebels and how it signifies indoctrination and negative ideality to the reader. As the reader will comprehend upon reading the three selected DYAF novels, education is responsible for characters' independence or lack thereof: a well-rounded education enables characters to think independently and challenge ideas of the political system, whereas the teaching of limited world-views and one-sided knowledge makes characters susceptible to indoctrination and imprisons them in their dystopian society. In this section, I will take a brief account of how indoctrination is realised through the system of education in dystopian fiction for young adults. In addition, I claim that the restriction to a certain locality is liaised with dogmatic tuition in order to restrain the characters physically and psychologically, as I will prove in this section. I further argue that in a dystopian story, the level and type of education is connected to the citizens' use of language. I have already discussed the issue of language in dystopian fiction in chapter 4.5, concentrating on dystopian deterioration of grammar and lexis, which Matter denounced a "vacuity of language" (105), and how it serves to keep the dystopian power distribution stable (105). In this chapter I will thus illustrate how the features doctrinaire education, diminution of language, and

local confinement are designed to make a reader reject the educational system and ascribe them to a dystopian regime via Iser's process of complete correction of false evaluations.

Looking at Anna's schooling in *The Declaration*, the reader immediately sees that there is an imbalance of content: Anna's lessons include "Managing Supplies Efficiently" (47), "Cookery Practical" (146), and "Decorum", where she learns traits such as "Invisibility" as a servant (87). I contrast to that, the reader finds that she is not taught "about countries" (14) and has no knowledge of the world's geography until Mrs Sharpe first shows her England on a map (14). This restriction in knowledge of the world coincides with her restriction to the locality of Grange Hall: Apart from her short time as Mrs Sharpe's substitute servant, she has not yet left the grounds of this place and is usually not allowed to go or even look outside to see the snow (106) or the stars (173), because Mrs Pincent claims that Surpluses are "easier to manage inside" (106). It becomes apparent that Anna's imprisonment means that she is unable to discover the world for herself and instead has to believe others' account of it, which is why it is easy for the Instructors of Grange Hall to successfully teach her to accept dogmatic worldviews.

In addition, although Anna is not left illiterate, it is stressed that "reading and writing were a dangerous business; they made you think, and Surpluses who thought too much were useless and difficult. But people wanted maids and housekeepers who were literate" (16). Consequently, if Surpluses desire to read, they only have access to pre-approved books, all of which deal with Surplus conduct or Surplus Sin and serve to further their indoctrination, as I claim (63). I argue that this proves to the reader that the dystopian society regards reading and writing as liberating, which poses a threat to their system of indoctrination and thus also to social stability. Naturally, writing journals is forbidden altogether, but Anna feels that her journal gives her a "little fragment of peace" (17) and writing in it allows her to "make sense of her world and [vent] her frustrations" (62) and gives her the feeling of having "made her mark" (24). These comments make it clear that the text stresses the importance of literacy, and additional justification for this argument is found when Peter tells Anna

about his education on the outside where "[h]e'd been taught to read, write, use a computer, and to 'question things'. He had read books and newspaper and been encouraged to 'form opinions'" (62). Since Peter is obviously not indoctrinated, since he constantly contests the system and ultimately flees together with Anna, this is a sign for the reader that independent thinking is a product of education and literacy, which ultimately protects against indoctrination. His education stands in stark contrast to Anna's tuition, which the reader will consequently deem doctrinaire. What lends weight to the argument of language imprisoning Anna in her doctrinaire world is that when Peter accuses her of being brainwashed, she retorts: "That isn't even a word" (66). Matter claims that a depletion in language serves to insure a society's stability (105), which signifies that as Anna is not aware of the term and its implications, she is also unable to conceive its concept and apply it to her situation, rendering her imprisoned by the restricted language she has been taught.

The case of Tally's education in *Uglies* is similar. While Tally has been taught about history (61), biology (16), and even astronomy (71), her education withheld certain information and supplemented additional doctrinaire ideas. For instance, Tally learns that Rusties, which is the name given to the *reader's* generation, were relying on the usage of oil and steel, thereby polluting the Earth and inciting their own demise (61-62). Later, though, Tally realises that: "It's funny. At school, they never talk much about how it happened – the last panic, when the Rusty world fell apart" (344-345), and also finds that positive information about the last generation has been withheld from her: "I didn't know the Rusties used wind power" (341). The fact that Anna's society is "descended from Rusties, and [is] still using their basic technology" (341) has not been stressed in Tally's classes either. It can thus be concluded that the city's educational system stresses negative information on the past so as to mark the past generation as the villain and the future generation as its saviour, signalling to the reader a dogmatic worldview that he or she will associate with dystopian societies. Moreover, the high-tech city has instilled in Tally the belief that everything apart from civilisation is wild, dangerous, and "not a place for human beings" (58), and since cities are self-sufficient, learning about other customs and languages is not in the curriculum; even contact to other cities is unheard

of. To readers of our globalised world, this type of confined living will seem extremely restrictive and imprisoning and will be rejected as dystopian. The fact that not adhering to city limits is monitored and punishable (54) lends weight to this argument.

Nevertheless, uglies' schools allow for their students to experience the outer world for themselves, as they take their classes for school trips to old Rusty cities, so that the students may see the destruction. This, however, serves only the city's own purpose of fostering hatred towards the former generation, as Tally concludes herself at the end of the book: "Nothing left to itself. Everything turned into a bribe, a warning, or a lesson" (351). She also realises that she has not been taught the whole truth about the Rusties' downfall (345). I claim that the reader has detected the limited depiction of his or her generation before and is now confirmed in the suspicion that the initially seemingly well-rounded education of Tally's world has subtly indoctrinated its students. In addition, Tally and David discover that the Specials have burned down the Smoke's library during their invasion, and thus destroyed old magazines and documents from Rusty days that depicted natural looks. David concludes that the Specials "don't want people to know what it was like before the operation. They want to keep you hating yourselves. Otherwise, it's too easy to get used to ugly faces, normal faces" (330). David thus claims what the reader will realise as well: the city authority uses the withholding of truth in order to ensure their citizens' indoctrinated status, effectively marking the society as dystopian.

When it comes to the use of language, the uglies which the reader encounters bear no striking linguistic differences to adolescents of our own society. Pretties, however, communicate with their own expressions. In fact, their lexis is very limited and reduces the meaning of *happy, exciting, great, wonderful,* and *alert* to the one term *bubbly (386)*, and the meaning of *sad, bad, stupid, boring,* or *pointless* to the one word *bogus (18)*, the noun of which becomes *bogusness* (401). Due to the fact that Tally only encounters two pretties, Peris and Shay, their usage of vocabulary is only a small example of how language deteriorates once people have undergone brain surgery. In the second instalment of the series, though, Tally is a pretty herself and henceforth frequently employs said

terms as well as expressions like *happy-making* or *sad-making* in order to describe impacts on her emotions. This employment of simplification ties in with Whorf's theory of communication and Matter's application of it as a stabilising power in dystopian fiction (105), since through the stark contrast between the language of ugly Shay and pretty Shay, as well as ugly Tally and pretty Tally, it is proven to the reader that this dystopia uses simplification of language in order to deprive its citizens of the capability to think in terms that are complicated enough for revolutionary ideas, securing the social stability of the dystopian regime.

In *Feed*, the education system is less subtle in its dogmatism but, as I argue, is even more effective due to the high level of indoctrination by the feed, which I have mentioned in the previous section. As the name School™ (65) signifies to the reader, schools are now owned by corporations, who bought them "so that all of them could have computers and pizza for lunch and stuff, which [the corporations] gave for free" (110). Titus stresses that this development is "good because that way we know that the big corps are made up of real human beings, and not just jerks out for money, because taking care of children, they care about America's future" (110). I argue that due to that statement the reader notices that the corporations have managed to indoctrinate their society via the school system, where they raise the young generation to be trusting towards their indoctrinators. This becomes even more prominent when Titus gives an account of his lessons' content: "[W]e do stuff in classes about how to work technology and how to find bargains and what's the best way to get a job and how to decorate our bedroom" (110), which signals to the reader that this corporate school system stresses the importance of materialism and consumerism in favour of general knowledge. Thus, by raising trusting future consumers, the corporations really have made "an investment in tomorrow" (110), as the reader realises when looking at Titus and his friends' compulsive consumption that I have analysed in chapter 5.2.2.

How little this corporate education system follows a traditional western curriculum of the reader's present day is also clear when the reader, having now been introduced to the concept of School™, goes into retrospection about

an earlier scene, where it is revealed that Titus cannot write and can only barely read. It becomes evident that this is considered normal when also Violet admits that she can write but is "a little embarrassed" about it (65) and subsequently asks Titus "Do you know how to read?" (65), as if this cannot necessarily be expected. While none of this information is explicitly mentioned, I argue that, through Iser's process of "anticipation and retrospection" ("Phenomenological" 56) that I have mentioned in chapter 2.1.1, the reader is able to fill the gaps of the text to come to the conclusion that reading and writing are no longer a requirement. Furthermore, Titus reveals that he has little reading skills as he "kind of protested it in School^{TM}. On the grounds that the silent 'E' is stupid" (65), which signifies that the school's focus does not lie on the basic skills of writing and reading and that the system is remiss in terms of assertiveness and strictness. However, Titus' claim that he "could tell the numbers fine" (66), which, together with the newfound knowledge of corporate schools that raise future consumers, insinuates that the reason behind his knowledge of numbers is that it is needed for purchasing goods. Thus, the reader realises that school has lost its original meaning since it now only serves to indoctrinate its students, not to teach them to evolve, in order to secure social stability in the dystopian society.

The repercussions of this school system become evident when the reader realises that people are no longer able to tell commercials from trivia or news. Having never learnt about the difference, the distinction is impossible for Titus to make, even though he attempts to humour Violet on her deathbed by providing her with information she used to desire:

> I told her stories. They were only a sentence long, each one of them. That's all I knew how to find. [...] I told her that the Emperor Nero, from Rome, had a giant sea built where he could keep sea monsters and have naval battles staged for him. I told her that there had been rioting in malls all over America, and that no one knew why. I told her that the red-suited Santa Claus we know – the regular one? – was popularized by the Coca-Cola Company in the 1930's. I told her that the White House had not confirmed or denied reports that extensive bombing had started in major cities in South America. (296)

This passage shows that Titus finds the origin of Santa Claus as pressing as matters of immediate concern such as the beginning of a war. In addition, he

entitles all the information as "stories", thereby denouncing that he is not aware of the significance or even the reality of them. The reader realises that having "*encyclopaedias at their fingertips, closer than their fingertips*" (47) is futile if one does not know how to interpret the information, which, I argue, is also the reason why the dystopian regime of this world still broadcasts the news to its citizens: it rests assured that they will not be perturbed by it, due to their indoctrination via the educational system.

In order to analyse *Feed's* employment of language, I need to refer back to chapter 3.2, in which I addressed Sick's theory that YA fiction portrays a trend to reflect authentic language of teenagers' conversations (601). Considering the dystopian trope of a diminution in lexis, it is not surprising to discover that in DYAF, authors combine these two language concepts to create what I call a fictitious youthspeak for the future generation of teenagers. In the novel of the *Uglies* series analysed for this thesis, this only becomes evident in the lexis of two pretties the reader encounters, but features prominently in the subsequent instalments of the series. However, while *Uglies'* youthspeak only changes on a lexical level, *Feed* employs a language that is deformed in vocabulary as well as syntax and grammar, as I will now demonstrate.

From the beginning of the novel, *Feed*'s diminution of language, which I argue was fostered by the careless system of School™, is evident since it is portrayed that the people in this society have lost their ability to communicate complex thoughts. The change in lexis is immediately obvious as the group of friends use "unit" instead of "dude" and "meg" instead of "very" (3-6). Deterioration in communication is indicated by faulty grammar as in the sentences "It had broke open" (12) and "By this I mean that we shouldn't think that **there are any truth** [emphasis added] to the rumors [...]" (85). In addition, there is the issue of a frequent ignorance of vocabulary which becomes evident when Titus attempts to describe their adventure in low gravity: "For a while [...] we were twirling all over the place, and **we were like, what it's called when you skim really close over the surface of something, we were that** [emphasis added] to the floor" (13). It is obvious that Titus' limited vocabulary prevents him from describing the event conclusively. When he shortens his accounts of someone

else's utterances with the use of "da da da", as in this scene: "He was all, *da da da be removed from the premises, da da da, express instructions, da da. [...] Da da da, liability, da da da, think you're doing*" (18), the reader realises that Titus is also unable to employ reported speech. Moreover, his friend Marty constantly fails to express his thoughts or even feelings of excitement: "'It will be a, a, you know, fuckin', it will...' He kind of wiggled his hand" (30). As this poor use of language stands in contrast to the reader's own abilities, I argue that he or she will reject this deterioration of language as a dystopian feature and will ascribe it to society's way of maintaining social stability by depriving people of the ability to form complex thoughts.

Furthermore, Titus' thoughts are presented to the reader in the form of a stream of consciousness, which is a frequent choice in YA fiction according to Kullman (58), highlighting the fact that Titus has difficulties forming coherent, precise thoughts due to a lack of vocabulary:

> She was the most beautiful girl, like, ever. [...] Her face, it was like, I don't know, it was beautiful. It just, it wasn't the way – I guess it wasn't just the way it looked like, but also how she was standing. With her arm. [...] She was looking at us like we were shit. Her spine. Maybe it was her spine. Maybe it wasn't her face. Her spine was, I didn't know the word. Her spine was like...? The feed suggested "supple". (13-14)

In this passage, where Titus sees Violet for the first time and tries to describe her in his head, it becomes apparent that the inability to talk also restricts his ability to think. Consequently, Titus needs the feed to assist him, though I argue that the reader will later on realise that it is *due* to the feed and School™ that Titus is unable to express his thoughts in the first place. The gap in Titus' vocabulary also becomes noticeable when he tries to describe Violet's clothes: "They were as gray as, I don't know. They were just gray, okay?" (169), or the sound level at a party: "It was meg big big loud" (34). This signifies degradation to basic vocabulary, whereas complex structures with a higher register are only apparent when he talks about shopping: "It was too bad, because **I would have liked to have been able to take the opportunity** [emphasis added] to check out these great bargains," (50). Clearly, Titus is quoting advertising speech, which the reader realises since sometimes feed commercials employ unnecessarily detailed product descriptions such as "sand, persimmon and

vetch" (50) as the colour description of shirts. In this sector, vocabulary seems to have grown, which can be attributed to the indoctrination by the feed. In all other areas, higher registers are condemned: For instance, when Violet uses the word "incited" while conversing with Titus' peers, she gets bullied for it:

> Loga said, "Put *that* in your metizabism."
> Calista said, "What's a metizabism?"
> "Oh, sorry. I thought it was good to use stupid, long words that no one can understand."
> Calista laughed and looked backward, going, "Shhh. She'll hear you and have an alpoduffin... fleatcher." (164)

This excerpt proves to the reader that even the attempt to educate this generation would fail, as they are unwilling to learn and reject difficult vocabulary due to their doctrinaire education that has not stressed the importance of expression. Again, Benjamin Lee Whorf's theory, suggesting a link between vocabulary and thought (qtd. in Matter 105-106), applies and signifies that the population in *Feed* is indoctrinated to the point where rebellion has become an inconceivable concept to the people.

I have mentioned that Young Adult Fiction novels tend to reflect the lexical change of their target audience, which are teenagers (Kullmann 58). In *Feed*, however, it is striking that the adult generation is employing the very same language as their offspring: The reader is introduced to Titus' father when he is asked how his wife has received the news that Titus was hacked on the moon: "She's like, whoa, she's like so stressed out. This is... Dude, [...] Dude, this is some way bad shit" (55). The shock that authority figures make use of the same register as adolescents becomes greater when doctors and nurses display the same behaviour: "Okay. Could we like get a thingie, a reading on his limbic activity?" (69). Moreover, the president proves to communicate in the same fashion in his official speeches (85, 119). I conclude that the fact that authority figures in sensitive positions of power are just as unable to communicate as the adolescent generation is proof for the successful indoctrination by the feed and School[TM], and will lead to a complete correction of wrong evaluations within the reader, thereby marking the society and its educational system as dystopian.

In this section, I have given an account of how education is used to indoctrinate characters in DYAF and how this contributes to the reader's realisation that he or she is presented with a dystopian society. In *The Declaration*, school operates as a training course for servants and aims at diminishing its students' self-worth; by omitting general knowledge about the world in the curriculum and imprisoning the students, the education system ensures that students cannot form their own independent opinions about the world. While the curriculum in *Uglies* seems to be balanced at first glance, it is revealed that the facts are only presented from the point of view of the dystopian society, guaranteeing that students reject the past and cherish their current social and ecological setting. In addition, deterioration in the language of pretties suggests the inability for rebellious thought for the sake of social stability. School^{TM} in *Feed* is owned by corporations who have abandoned general knowledge as well as reading and writing in favour of consumer conduct training, thereby rendering the students uneducated, compliant participants in the feed's consumerist network. As this system has been operating for two generations, adults and authority figures illustrate the same depletion in communication as adolescents. Also, as I have mentioned before, the feed has indoctrinated people to be indifferent about grave situations as long as they are rewarded with materialistic wish fulfilment and instant gratification. I argue that a dystopian society built on people's complacency is the most fearful prospect because it offers the reader glimpses into his or her own society. Consequently, I will dedicate the following subchapter to the analysis of contemporary references in contemporary DYAF and consider its implied appeal to the reader.

5.2.5 Contemporary reference and the hidden appeal to the reader

In the last subsection, I have illustrated how dystopian society employs the educational system to indoctrinate the characters and make readers aware of said indoctrination. Now, I turn to the importance of the history in DYAF and analyse how the readers' present is portrayed in the future dystopian society and what conclusions about their own world and themselves the readers will infer from the resulting image. In my analysis I will employ Wolfgang Iser's

theory of "Appellstruktur" and "normalisation" (233), which I have discussed in chapter 2.1.2. Moreover, I will analyse implicit and explicit references to contemporary society, and will explain how both forms differ in their design to issue an appeal to the reader and what implications on literary quality the accompanying "degree of indeterminacy" (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 230) suggests. Lastly, I will address DYAF endings and what message the reader deduces from the character's decision for flight or fall.

First, I will look at the reasons for and the effects of explicit contemporary references and claim that they primarily provide the opportunity for background stories, which, as I have illustrated in chapter 3.1, are a common feature in YA fiction (Kullmann 54). Referring back to my argument in the previous section, dystopian educational systems hide important facts about the world and its past from their indoctrinated citizens so as to represent past generations as the villain. I now argue further that by supplying selected information about the past, DYAF fiction novels gain an opportunity to explain to the reader how the dystopian future came into being and in what way past and future are distinguishable. For instance, in *The Declaration*, Anna comments that before Longevity was invented, "[p]eople used to die. All the time. From horrible diseases. And they looked awful too" (28). This is explicit information about the past from the character's point of view, which simultaneously functions as a world-building element for the reader, indicating in how far the future world differs from his or her own. Thus, by contrasting the two areas of time, the text accomplishes to explain the setting to its reader. Further on, the text gives an account of how the drug came to be distributed worldwide and why the Declaration bill was passed (28-31), providing the reader with a better understanding of how the dystopian society came into existence.

In *Uglies*, an explicit reference is made when Tally crosses a bridge to New Pretty Town and remarks what she has been taught about the previous generation's ecological footprint:

> The old bridge stretched massively across the water, its huge iron frame as black as the sky. It had been built so long ago that it held up its own weight, without any support from hoverstruts. A million years from now, when the rest of the city had crumbled, the bridge would probably remain

like a fossilized bone. Unlike the other bridges in New Pretty Town, the old bridge couldn't talk or report trespassers, more importantly. (5)

This passage indicates an explicit reference to the past done by the character as well as information on the future society for the reader: It signifies that future constructions are created from recyclable material, and sheds light on the city's advancements in technology by referring to magnetic force and intelligent alarm systems. Further into the novel it becomes clear that the Rusties were too dependant on oil and steel, which resulted in both their demise as well as the formation of a new ecology-friendly society, the one which Tally calls home (62, 345). This signifies that the past is perceived as the villain, indicating to the reader that his or her own society is flawed, which, I argue, can be interpreted as an appeal to ponder the ecological footprint of the reader's respective society. Support for my argument can be found in the writings of Hans Ulrich Seeber, who also claims that by portraying problems of contemporary society, dystopian novels employ "erkenntnisbezogene[...] Verfremdung" (Suvin qtd. in Seeber 170), which means that they illustrate known problems and distort them in the future setting, so as to make the reader aware of the similarities and thus enlighten him or her about the current state and possible future of society (Seeber 170). I affirm that *Uglies* achieves this via explicit and implicit references to the past, which I will further prove in the course of this subchapter.

Moreover, when Rusties are mentioned, it is explicitly stated that they were naive or backward, as can be demonstrated when Tally talks to Shay about the current and former notion of beauty: "Back then, they had weird ideas about beauty. They didn't know about biology" (40), as well as in the following statement:

> The Rusties had been stuck down in these streets like a horde of rats trapped in a burning maze. [...] every building was squat, crude, and massive, and needed a steel skeleton to keep it from falling down. [...] [Tally] almost couldn't believe people lived like this, burning trees to clear land, burning oil for heat and power, setting the atmosphere on fire with their weapons. (61-62)

These comments on the past suggest our current lifestyle is retrograde and questionable in terms of pollution, and yet again informs the reader about the future via a character's account of past conventions. Furthermore, the explicit reference to Rusties such as "Rusty cities weren't self sufficient, and were

always trading with one another, when they weren't fighting over who had more stuff" (146) serves another purpose: the novel counteracts these negative explicit statements with other positive passages in the book which indicate that some of our technology was used to build *Uglies'* ecologically utopian world (341). Through this dichotomy, the dystopian novel has managed to both portray fantastic elements of the future society (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 232) and still form the connection to the reader's reality via a process of normalisation (233). While Iser argues that normalisation lowers the "degree of indeterminacy" that is connected to a decrease in literary quality, he also agrees that if the text induces reader epiphanies about reality, then the reader evolves by reading the text, rendering its literary quality high. I thus claim that by *ex*plicitly mentioning the past, *Uglies* is *im*plicitly raising the reader's awareness about his or her own time and society, allowing the reader to evolve during the reading process. In addition, it has also been argued that dystopian fiction that draws attention to the past allows readers to learn to differentiate between good and bad forms of society and thus help them "come to a greater understanding of whether the society their elders have created for them is utopian or dystopian" (Hintz and Ostry 13).

In *Feed*, the past is not as frequently explicitly referred to as in my two other selected novels, which I attribute to the fact that, first of all, the main character, whose perspective the narration adapts, does not have extensive knowledge about the past and, second of all, this future society is very closely linked to the reader's own world so that implicit references to contemporary life suffice as explanations. I argue that when *Feed does* feature explicit references to the past, the main reason for it is to highlight the contrast between past and present conventions. For instance, Titus contemplates: "Before [the feed], they had to use their hands and their eyes. Computers were all outside the body. They carried them around outside of them, in their hands, like if you carried your lungs in a briefcase and opened it to breathe" (47). This deliberation of the past operates as an explanation about the feed and its integration in everyday life to the reader by contrasting it to his or her own habit of using technology and the media. Hence, like *Uglies, Feed* also inspires the reader to ponder his or her

reality during the reading process, thus, according to Iser, increasing the text's level of literary quality via the process of normalisation.

It is interesting to note, however, that in all three novels, I also found explicit *positive* references about the past*,* which I see as either a celebration of the reader's present, or a clouded critique of it. *The Declaration*, for example, features the thoughts of the Legal Mrs Sharpe, who remembers the past fondly:

> She remembered a time, when she was young, when energy was still plentiful and people thought that recycling was enough. Before islands started to be submerged by the sea, before the Gulf Stream changed Europe into the cold, grey place it was now, with short summers and long, freezing winters. Before politicians were driven to action because infinite life meant that they, not some future generation, would suffer if the world's climate wasn't protected. (196-197)

This segment glorifies an idyllic past and stresses the future turmoil. However, at the same time, the past is criticised for insufficient action against pollution and a careless attitude towards it, which is, as I claim, designed to function as a warning: upon reading this passage, the reader is supposed to reconsider his or her society's ecological footprint and become motivated to actively protect the planet so that the positive state of the reader's present world will prevail.

In *Uglies*, Tally is positively surprised to find out that Rusties had used sustainable energy like wind power, to which David replies: "'They weren't all crazy. Just most of them.' He shrugged. 'You've got to remember, we're mostly descended from Rusties, and we're still using their basic technology. *Some* of them must have had the right idea'" (341). In this statement it is once more stressed that the past generation was deeply flawed, but for the first time positive aspects are referred to as well. I argue that by stressing the word "some" and by claiming that our present technology can be used as a basis to create an ecological utopia, the author obviously accentuates the importance of sustainable energy and covertly advises his readers to campaign for it in the present.

In *Feed*, Violet is the only character who highlights positive aspects about the past when, her life being threatened by her malfunctioning feed, she imagines a future for herself that is reminiscent of the reader's present:

> I would like to actually be from [...] a small town [...]. We won't have the feed, and we'll go to 'movies' on dates. We'll kiss in the upcar. And then, when I'm in my twenties, I'll go east to the big city, to find my first job. [...] And I want to go into "the office" every day, sometimes even on weekends, in some kind of suit, and be someone's administrative assistant [...]. We'll sit by the lake, which won't steam like lakes do and won't move when the wind isn't on it, or burn sticks. (230-231)

I argue that by imagining and longing for past values and conventions, Violet contrasts the future with the past for the reader's benefit. Thus, the reader is informed or reminded that in the future there are no offices as people work from home, there are no small towns or big cities since all of America has been turned into areas of living quarters called suburbs, and there are no unpolluted waters as well as no cinemas, since the feed has substituted them for feedcasts. Furthermore, it makes the reader aware that Violet is nostalgic for the past, potentially motivating him or her to take action in order to preserve our present world. I argue that the reason why *Feed* does not feature more explicit positive references about our contemporary world is that the implicit references indicate that the world's downfall has already begun in the reader's present world, which is why the reader does not need further explicit information in the form of a background story.

Having given an account of how explicit contemporary references inform the reader about future conventions and inspire him or her to ponder reality in contrast to the events in the book, I will now illustrate the effects of implicit references by again drawing on Iser's theory of the appeal in texts, which I have already addressed in chapters 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. He claims that a statement or a gap between statements in a literary text "aims at something beyond what it actually says" ("Phenomenological" 53). Iser also calls this a "Beteiligungsangebot" ("Appellstruktur" 236) to the reader, meaning that he or she is prompted to contribute independent thought and interpretation to what the author suggests, rendering the work of art a collaboration between author and reader. I state that *The Declaration* features primarily explicit references, and thus includes more world building than offers of participation. However, certain issues are only alluded to: for instance, while the future fixation with beauty is not explicitly brought into context with the past, I claim that it still implicitly refers to it, seeing as the same issue is topical in our reality.

Comments such as: "People used to die. All the time. From horrible diseases. And they looked awful too" (28) as well as: "Longevity kept you young on the inside, but only regular facelifts could keep you truly young on the outside" (189-190) indicate that people are not satisfied with the drug's life-prolonging effects but are also deeply concerned with appearances, which is why regular plastic surgery has become a usual procedure. In addition, the illegal drug Longevity+, which promises to have an effect on appearances as well, becomes people's new obsession, despite the knowledge that its production exploits young people for their stem cells (190-191). Since the fixation with beauty is emphasised in a negative way, I argue that readers will realise that this issue already exists in their present and that the obsession with appearances has the potential to become harmful to society as a whole. In addition, the curing and life-extending effects of the Longevity drug will, I state, remind the reader of the continuing increase in medical advancement of our time and will act as a caution about the repercussions a success in cell renewal might have. I claim that *The Declaration* intends to operate as a warning that positive technical advancements can also have negative consequences if misused. The text hence presents readers with a value system that conflicts with their own, leading them to reject the dystopian society and adjust their value system accordingly. Thus, through the reading process, the readers evolves on a personal level, since the author's offer for participation allows for a process of normalisation through which the readers relate the fantastic events of the book to their own life.

The implicit references to our contemporary society in *Uglies* initially show habits of the present society that appear to be positively realised in the future. For instance, I argue that when Tally explains about her future life as a pretty where she will be able to sleep as long as she pleases (5), party and meet friends every day (12), and gorge on alcohol and food without having to suffer the repercussions (9), a teenage reader will contrast this outlook to his or her own life: He or she may wish for or may have attempted to lead a similar lifestyle, but will have had to suffer the consequences as well, rendering this part of the book utopian. I further claim that when it is revealed that in order to be eligible for a pretty's life, one needs to undergo brain surgery that makes

people complacent and shallow (268), the reader will realise that everything in life has consequences. When the book divides the characters in uglies who believe Tally's stories and others who chose to ignore her warnings (406), it becomes obvious that in the book, as in real life, it is the choice of the individual whether he or she deems the ramifications for material bliss acceptable. Concerning the topic of beauty surgery, I state that the reader will notice the absurdity of the present and future fixation with appearances, when Tally comments that: "Shay [...] was hardly a natural-born pretty. There'd only been about ten of those in all of history, after all" (78). This statement indicates that while adolescents might consider themselves as deviant from the standard of beauty, said standard is based on a very small percentage of humanity, rendering the striving for this type of look unnatural and unreasonable. In addition, when in the end Tally is loved for her imperfections (278) and her courage and intelligence (279), the reader will conclude that attraction ultimately does not depend on appearances alone. Thus, the text provides the reader with offers for participation, leading him or her to consider the present society in terms of the issues the book addresses, thereby raising the reader's awareness of the imperfections in his or her respective society without explicitly mentioning the past.

I claim that the process of normalising fantastic elements in a novel by bringing it in connection to one's own reality is an ongoing process in the reading of *Feed*, since the author bases the future world on the reader's present and simply exaggerates major contemporary issues in social, political, technological, and ecological areas; no evil regime or novel executive force is added. These issues are explained or portrayed in the novel, but are hardly ever explicitly brought into connection with the past, as implicit references suffice to both account for society's dystopian condition and issue an appeal to the reader. I will now give three accounts of how *Feed* manages to pose a "Beteiligungsangebot" (Iser, "Appellstruktur" 234-236) to the reader via implicit contemporary references.

Firstly, I ascertain that teenagers' incessant use of the feed for entertainment, shopping, music, and social networking alludes to computer- and internet

addiction and obsession in the present, as becomes apparent during a scene at a party: "Everyone was nodding their heads to music, or had their eyes just blank with the feedcast. It was just a party. Nothing but a party" (83). This passage indicates that social gatherings do not mean interaction anymore, since everyone experiences something different on their own feeds, which conflicts with the reader's view of a social event to such an extent, that he or she will re-evaluate society's obsession with electronic engagement. Thus, the fantastic element of the feed and its usage incites a comparison to the reader's own reality via the process of normalisation according to Iser, and will lead to an adjustment in the readers' value system, rendering the text's literary quality high in this aspect.

Secondly, the current obsession with consumerism and bargain hunting is exaggerated to the point of addiction in *Feed*, as I have discussed in chapter 5.2.2. This can also be witnessed during a care ride where the atmosphere between Titus and Violet is tense and Titus resorts to buying a jersey on the feed as a diversion (274), indicating that bargain hunting is no longer a means for requiring necessities at a low prize, but has, in fact, become a form of addictive pastime. Moreover, when Titus is upset about his inferior intellect, his parents decide to present him with his own upcar, to which Titus reacts ecstatically: "[a]nd I was hugging them, and I was like holy shit, by tomorrow I would be driving to pick up Violet in my own goddamn upcar, and suddenly, suddenly, I didn't feel so stupid anymore" (118). Titus' reaction, as well as his parents' action, reveals that in the future people are easily consoled for their problems with materialistic gifts. I argue that through an offer for participation, which this gap between text and reality provides, the reader will realise that consumerism reaches the level of addiction in the future, which he or she will compare to the consumerist society of today, where shopping as a diversion and the importance of material gifts has already begun to form. In doing so, I claim that via a process of normalisation the reader will readjust his value system on that topic, which increases the text's literary quality in accordance with Iser's theory.

Thirdly, I argue that the exaggerated indifference of people towards the decay of themselves and of their environment reflects the present issue of a deteriorating ecology and the passiveness with which this problem is met in the general population. While such instances can be witnessed in the whole book, the novel's ending represents an accumulation of shocking situations in this context: Titus casually remarks that people's health condition worsens to such an extent that they lose skin and hair (278); Titus' father goes whale hunting despite the fact that most of marine life has already been killed by human-induced pollution (280); war has started to wage between Earth's great political powers (296); and all the while, the characters' everyday lives are defined by vacations and parties (277). I claim that the reader will draw the connection to present people's reluctance to confront grave issues in favour of simply enjoying life. *Feed's* ultimately pre-apocalyptic state will signify the consequences of such actions to the reader, inducing, I argue, a change in the readers' value system, by which Feed's literary quality is deemed high, according to Iser.

Feed's ending thus provides hopelessness, not only because of the world's downfall, but also due to the fact that neither Titus nor Violet aspires to rebel against the dystopian regime. In chapter 4.6 I have alluded to this point and highlighted Kay Sambell's theory that bad endings "require highly independent responses [and] demand the implied reader reject the imaginative world and assume a role of responsibility to rewrite the social world" (167). This statement indicates that *Feed* challenges its readers in their literary understanding as well as their reactions towards it. Jack Zipes argues that a novel that ends in such hopelessness stresses the urgency for change in the readers' society (166). Thus, the positive endings of *The Declaration* and *Uglies*, in which the protagonists proclaim to revolt against their system, are considered of lesser literary quality according to Sambell, and portray a less realistic ending with a less urgent appeal for change to the reader, according to Zipes. However, since I argue that, so far, *Feed* is the only negatively ending dystopia for young adults that I have encountered, DYAF authors seem to deliberately choose positive endings to portray the chance of hope to their readers (Hintz and Ostry 16), thereby keeping the tradition of employing hope at the end of books for a young

audience (Harrison qtd. in Sambell 165). Monica Hughes even argues that bleak outlooks at the end of DYAF novels are not "desirable" since positive conclusions are the driving force behind the plot and the reader's interest in the story. As I have ascertained that the main appeal of DYAF novels to the reader is to rethink his or her own society and value system, I argue that both motifs of flight or fall, as declared by Curnutt (111), have the effect of animating the reader to ponder or react to the events presented in the book: If the protagonist chooses the fall, the reader has a role model to aspire to; if the main character opts for the motif of flight, the consequences are drawn so severely that the reader will desire a change in society so as to avoid a similar situation. Whether it is positive or negative reinforcement which appeals more to a DYAF reader, will depend on the reader's respective preferences.

In this subchapter, I have illustrated how DYAF novels use contemporary references in order to establish a background for the dystopian society as well as to provide the reader with a contrast to his own society, thereby animating the reader to adjust his or her value system via the process of normalisation. I have argued that explicit references primarily serve the explanation of the novel's setting whereas implicit references covertly address issues of the reader's world by creating a gap between the text and the reader's reality that the reader is invited to fill. Lastly, I addressed hopeful and hopeless endings, arguing that while the former is the tradition in YA and Children's Fiction and the latter poses a greater challenge to the reader, both versions serve to animate the reader to consider his or her society from a new perspective.

6 Conclusion

The objective of this thesis was to analyse the reader's and the character's journey through contemporary Dystopian Young Adult Fiction novels by determining congruence and dissonance in their way to epiphany about the negative ideality of the portrayed society as well as their consequential reaction to this realisation. In the course of this analysis, it has become evident that the two journeys are not congruent, seeing as protagonist and reader derive from different backgrounds and have varying degrees of previous knowledge about their own world and the past. I have discovered that the main characters are usually under the influence of life-long indoctrination by the dystopian regime and can therefore only become aware of their society's negative nature once the romantic interest for an independently thinking person causes them to broaden their horizon. Whether, in the end, they choose to rebel against their dystopian society, known as the motif of fall, or return to a state of blissful ignorance, also called motif of flight, depends on the nature and level of their indoctrination as well as the depth of their commitment to their love interest.

Employing Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory, I have ascertained that the reader's journey to epiphany is determined by thematic references to negative ideality in combination with a text's instances of fixed evaluations that are designed to be rejected and thus connected to the dystopian genre. I have exposed that the moment of reader epiphany cannot be pinpointed to one scene in the book, as for the readership it is the culmination of negative events and comments that induces the realisation about a society's dystopian nature. Furthermore, I have continuously stressed that this moment of realisation will be different for every reader, but have also concluded that the text's structure intends for the reader to always reach the epiphany before the main character. Concerning the reader's reaction to the dystopian nature of the novel, I have determined that both implicit and explicit references to the past induce realisations about the reader's own society and serve to readjust his or her value system accordingly. Moreover, I have illustrated how hopeful or hopeless endings can both motivate readers to ponder their respective society in terms of social, political, and ecological aspects.

During the research for this paper I have discovered further issues worth investigating: For instance, a compelling fact is that every novel in my selection includes at least one prominent metaphor about the society and/or the protagonist's role in it. For instance, in *The Declaration*, Anna has an insect-shaped mole that is at one point interpreted as a moth (49), thereby reflecting Anna's inferior status as a Surplus, and at other times construed as a butterfly that is meant to be free (48, 142), indicating Anna's unjust imprisonment at Grange Hall. I argue that it would be intriguing to investigate whether such metaphors are a yet undiscovered trait that DYAF novels share and in how far these are explained to the reader or left open as a gap for the reader to fill, through which literary quality according to Iser can be determined. Thus, I would be interested to see further research into this area that considers whether or not the two aspects of high literary quality and didacticism are mutually exclusive. In addition, considering that all three of the novels in my selection showed different linguistic tendencies that are nevertheless interlinked with their dystopian society, I claim that an interdisciplinary approach, applying both linguistics and literature, would result in interesting findings in DYAF literature.

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English abstract

The objective of this thesis was to analyse the reader's and the character's journey through contemporary Dystopian Young Adult Fiction novels by determining congruence and dissonance in their way to epiphany about the negative ideality of the portrayed society as well as their consequential reaction to this realisation. The primary literature for this analysis is comprised of Gemma Malley's *The Declaration*, Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, and M.T. Anderson's *Feed*.

In order to analyse the reader's journey, I first examined Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory. Subsequently, I considered motifs and structures of the genres of Young Adult Fiction and dystopian fiction, and consequently compared and contrasted them in order to treat the hybrid genre that is Dystopian Young Adult Fiction. It became clear that a romantic interest in another character provides the incentive for protagonists to become open to other worldviews, to overcome their doctrinaire education and to realise that their world is one of negative ideality. The reaction to this epiphany depends on the degree of involvement with the character and the level of indoctrination in the protagonist.

The result gained from the analysis of the reader's journey to epiphany was that it is incongruent with the character's journey, seeing as protagonist and reader derive from different backgrounds and have varying degrees of previous knowledge about their own world and the past. I have discovered that the main characters are usually under the influence of life-long indoctrination by the dystopian regime and can therefore only become aware of their society's negative nature once the romantic interest for an independently thinking person causes them to broaden their horizon. The reader, however, has to recognise certain elements of content and style laid out by the author, so as to be able to construct the presented society as dystopian.

While I was careful to stress that the moment of epiphany is not the same for every reader, I ascertained that the reader's moment of realisation always takes

place before that of the protagonist. Upon examining the novels' contemporary references, I discovered that they serve to contrast the future setting with the reader's present so as to highlight their differences, and to motivate the reader to gain new insights and values about his or her own society.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Zielsetzung dieser Diplomarbeit war es, die Reise der LeserInnen sowie der der Charaktere durch zeitgenössische dystopische Jugendliteratur zu untersuchen, wofür Gemeinsamkeiten und Gleichheiten in ihren Wegen zur Epiphanie über die negative Idealität der dargestellten Gesellschaft aufgezeichnet, sowie die jeweilige Reaktion auf diese Erkenntnis erläutert wurde. Als Primärliteratur dafür dienten die folgenden Romane: *The Declaration* von Gemma Malley, *Uglies* von Scott Westerfeld und *Feed* von M.T. Anderson.

Zum Zeck der Analyse der Reise der LeserInnen wurde damit begonnen, Wolfgang Isers Rezeptionstheorie näher zu beleuchten. Im Folgenden wurden die literarischen Gattungen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur sowie dystopische Literatur separat betrachtet, und die jeweiligen Handlungsstrukturen und Motive erörtert, um diese anschließend miteinander zu vergleichen und so das hybride Genre der dystopischen Jugendliteratur zu diskutieren. Dabei zeichnete sich ab, dass Passion und romantische Gefühle der vorrangige Grund dafür sind, dass ProtagonistInnen für andere Weltanschauungen offen werden, ihre doktrinäre Erziehung überwinden und so zur Erkenntnis gelangen, dass ihre Welt den Regeln negativer Idealität unterliegt. Die Reaktion auf diese Einsicht hängt daraufhin von dem Grad der Bindung an den romantischen Helden/der romantischen Heldin, sowie von der Intensität der Indoktrination des Charakters ab.

Darauffolgend wurde die Entwicklung der Leserschaft bis hin zur Epiphanie zur Diskussion gestellt, und ergab, dass diese inkongruent zur der des Charakters verläuft, zumal der Charakter die Folgen einer dogmatischen Erziehung zu überwinden hat, während die LeserInnen die inhaltlichen sowie stilistischen Mittel des Textes deuten müssen, um die negative Idealität der im Buch portraitierten Gesellschaft zu erkennen. Während sorgfältig betont wurde, dass der Moment der Epiphanie nicht derselbe für jeden Leser/jede Leserin ist, so wurde auch der Schluss gezogen, dass die Erkenntnis der Leserschaft immer vor jener der Hauptcharaktere eintritt. Weiterhin wurden die in den Romanen

vorhandenen Referenzen und Anspielungen auf die Vergangenheit behandelt, wobei sich ergab, dass diese einerseits der Leserschaft als Kontrast und Ursprung für die in der Zukunft angesetzten dystopischen Gesellschaft dient, und andererseits den/die LeserIn dazu anregen soll über seine/ihre eigene Welt neue Aufschlüsse zu gewinnen und dabei Werte neu zu überdenken.

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