



Fighting for a Fairy Tale

Elements of Dystopia and Fairy Tale in Young Adult

Dystopian Fiction



Date: July 8, 2018

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Abstract

Young adult dystopian fiction seems to have combined the genres of utopian fiction and fairy tales as elements from both genres are present in contemporary young adult dystopias and interact with each other. The aim of this study is to find out how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction. The genres of dystopian literature and fairy tale are defined and the elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist, the savage, the prince and princess, the quest and the happy end are analysed. To do this, passages from the young adult dystopian series *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *The Selection* by Kiera Cass, and *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer are discussed. Four conclusions can be made. First, the fairy tale elements in young adult dystopias make the dystopian setting less cruel. Moreover, there is a distinction between *The Maze Runner* and the other series, as it has a male author and a male protagonist, and fairy tale elements are absent. Furthermore, there still is a reluctance to subvert all dominant mores as, it seems that the fairy tale norm of heterosexual romances, forming families and shunning sexuality are prevalent in this genre. Finally, although the totalitarian regime is of great importance in all series, this setting seems to influence in which way the fairy tale elements are incorporated.

Key words: young adult dystopian fiction, young adult fiction, dystopia, fairy tale, gender

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“This is not the fairy tale you remember, but it’s one you won’t forget”

- Meyer, *The Lunar Chronicles*

Young adult dystopian fiction is hot. Nowadays, writing a big, imaginative epic aimed at children or young adults will get you plenty of money and status. It seems almost certain it becomes a ‘New York Bestseller’ and will be turned into a big Hollywood movie (Dean). While dystopic young adult fiction is not new, the success of titles such as *The Hunger Games* and their motion picture counterparts is a clear illustration of the genre’s current popularity with both adolescents and adults. Like *The Hunger Games*, other trilogies – dystopian young adult fiction is usually written in series consisting of three novels – have been adapted for the screen. *The Divergent* trilogy (2012) and *The Maze Runner* (2009) are examples of these contemporary novels-turned-films, but due to the popularity of the genre, older young adult dystopias such as Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* (1993) have been given a motion picture reboot as well.

Like young adult dystopias, fairy tale retellings have been gaining popularity as well. Series such as *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), and live-action remakes of popular Disney films like *Cinderella* (2015) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) spark both interest in the original tales and debates about issues in the adaptations. Moreover, following fairy tale criticism, books such as *Bedtime Stories for Rebel Girls* have been published to show girls that there are better role models than princesses. Fairy tales have been part of culture for centuries, but new versions of old tales are appearing with rising frequency, especially in young adult novels such as *The Lunar Chronicles*. These young adult fairy tales are often dystopian as well. In fact, in young adult dystopian fiction both dystopian and fairy tale elements can be distinguished. The dystopic

stories have incorporated elements such as princes and princesses and fairy tale retellings take place in dystopian worlds.

Young adult dystopian fiction seems to have combined the genres of utopian fiction and fairy tales. Elements from both genres are present in contemporary young adult dystopias and interact with each other. These elements are, among others, a totalitarian regime, a young adult protagonist, a savage, a princess and prince, a quest and a happy end. Not only are these elements often present, they are linked to the histories of both genres and the time they are written in. Because of feminist criticism, utopian fiction and fairy tales have changed in the past forty years. Gendered stereotypes in fairy tales were identified and criticised and utopias have become a means to portray an ideal society with equality between men and women. Are these changes in gender established in young adult dystopian fiction as well?

This research will try to answer the question how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction. By outlining the dystopian and fairy tale genres, and choosing three dystopic and three fairy tale elements, five popular works of young adult dystopian fiction will be analysed. The presence of a totalitarian regime, a young adult protagonist, the savage, a princess and prince, a quest and a happy end will be looked for in five young adult dystopias. The elements will each be examined and its purpose and meaning will be evaluated. These elements will be analysed from a gender theory approach to see how the genres intersect.

Corpus

To make a statement on the genre of young adult dystopia, a corpus of five texts has been chosen. It has been compiled of best-selling and genre-setting novels, based on the Goodreads 'Most popular YA dystopias' and 'Young Adult Dystopias' lists to form an adequate sample of this genre. By creating this sample, a gender bias and a bias on where the novels are written has

to be taken into consideration; however, this fits in with the genre. As the Goodreads lists show, roughly 80% of young adult dystopias have been written by women. Three of the five writers in this sample is female, which corresponds with the gender bias in the genre. Moreover, all writers in this sample are American, and this also corresponds with the overall corpus, as only one non-American writer has made the top-50 of the Goodreads list. The sample that will be examined consists of: *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld (written 2005-2006), *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (written 2008-2011), *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner (written 2009-2011), *The Selection* by Kiera Cass (written 2012–2014), and *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer (written 2012-2015). These series consist of 3 to 4 novels each and important passages will be analysed, in order to discuss the dystopian and fairy tale elements in these texts.

The most well-known series in this sample is Collins's *The Hunger Games*. The series consists of *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*, and focuses on Katniss Everdeen, a sixteen-year-old girl who lives in District 12 in the country of Panem. Every year, each district must elect two children who will compete in the Hunger Games, a televised battle with only the winner surviving the match. Katniss must compete and wins, in the meantime becoming the face of a revolution.

Westerfeld's *Uglies* was published a few years before *The Hunger Games*. In *Uglies*, the main character is Tally Youngblood. In her world, age defines the social group someone belongs to and as she is fifteen, Tally is an Ugly. On their sixteenth birthday, Uglies are turned into Pretties through an operation that makes them beautiful and healthy. However, it turns out that during the operation, people are not only turned pretty, but lesions are added to their brain to make them less violent and thus to create a more peaceful society. The first novel is called *Uglies*, the second *Pretties*, and the third *Specials*, following Tally's journey.

The Maze Runner focuses on protagonist Thomas, who is left in the Glade with other teenage boys. Beyond the walls of the Glade is an ever-changing maze where horrifying

creatures called the Grievors live. The goal of the Gladers is to find their way out of the maze, but when they do so at the end of the first novel *The Maze Runner*, they find out that they were part of an experiment, that the real world is scorched by the sun (*The Scorch Trials*) and people are dying of an infection called the Flare. In the final instalment, *The Death Cure*, the Gladers try to find a cure for this disease.

In *The Selection*, crown prince Maxon Schreave is looking for a bride and a Selection is organised where women from all castes can compete for his hand. Protagonist America Singer is a Five and she is picked to join the Selection, along with thirty-four other women. The novels follow her journey from being a part of the Selection to the final ten called *The Elite* to *The One*; her being selected as Maxon's wife and queen of Illéa. Throughout the competition, the palace gets attacked, America learns about the true history of the country, and finds out how two groups of rebels both try to influence the monarchy.

Finally, in *The Lunar Chronicles*, every novel follows the life of a fairy tale character. In the first instalment, this is the Japanese cyborg mechanic *Cinder* (Cinderella), in the second, it is the French spaceship pilot *Scarlet* (Red Riding Hood), in the third book the main character is the computer hacker *Cress* (Rapunzel) and the final novel focuses on the Lunar queen's stepdaughter *Winter* (Snow White). They all live in a futuristic world that is being taken over by the evil queen of the moon, Levana.

Literature review

Because the genres are old, and much research has been done on fairy tales and dystopias, many choices have had to be made in choosing theories as well. Literature on gender, dystopian fiction, fairy tales and young adult dystopian fiction will be consulted. The most influential writer on fairy and folk tales is Jack Zipes. He has written numerous articles and books on the subject and has compiled anthologies such as *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. In his

works, Zipes focuses on both original tales and contemporary retellings, and his research will form the basis of this research into fairy tale elements. Moreover, Zipes has discussed gender in fairy tales at great length.

Like fairy tales, utopias have been around since the beginning of time, with Genesis' *The Garden of Eden* being one of the early examples of an utopian society. However, the word 'utopia' was coined by Thomas More in 1516 and the concept of dystopia was added in the eighteenth century, although dystopias only came into common use in the twentieth century (Claeys and Tower Sargent 1). Because of this rich history, much has been written on dystopian fiction as well. In 2017, *The Utopia Reader* by Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent was published, and this anthology has gathered the whole history of utopian fiction, ending with a brief note on the emergence of young adult dystopias in the twenty-first century. However, as it is still a new genre, there is little research done on dystopian young adult fiction, or "the New Dystopia of the 2000s and 2010s", as Jesse Kavadlo calls it (135). The research that has been done focuses mainly on gender aspects. Claeys and Tower Sargent even introduce the genre as "most [young adult dystopias] are written by women, have a female protagonist and are aimed at a female audience" (525), stressing the fact that this is an original feature. Despite of the many young adult dystopias that are published, research on dystopian young adult fiction focusses mainly on *The Hunger Games* and has not been often applied to other works of dystopian young adult fiction.

This thesis will analyse five works of young adult dystopian fiction. Not much research has been done on this genre, and four of these works have not been extensively researched before at all. Thus, this thesis will add more body to research on young adult dystopian fiction, which has mostly been focused on *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, as most claims about the genre and the importance of gender in this genre are based solely on research of one series, this research might be able to confirm or challenge these claims. Except for filling a gap in research

on young adult dystopian fiction, this research will also shed light on the genres of utopian fiction and the literary fairy tale. It seems that these genres show many likenesses, but this claim has not been present in literature concerning these genres. Finally, a unique feature of this research is that not only the gender and dystopian aspects of young adult dystopian fiction will be analysed. By also looking into fairy tale elements in this genre, the limited definition of the young adult dystopia genre might be expanded or altered.

Thesis outline

To answer the research question, first, a theoretical framework will be defined in the next chapter. In this framework the histories, definitions and elements of dystopian fiction and fairy tales will be described. Following this framework, the five young adult dystopias will be analysed. In chapter 3, the subquestions *How are dystopian elements incorporated in young adult dystopian fiction? How do these dystopian elements relate to gender?* and *How do these works of young adult dystopian fiction fit in with the genre of dystopian fiction?* will be answered. In chapter four, these same questions will be asked in relation to the fairy tale elements. These subquestions are: *How are fairy tale elements incorporated in young adult dystopian fiction? How do these fairy tale elements relate to gender?* and *How do these works of young adult dystopian fiction fit in with the fairy tale genre?* Finally, these insights will be combined and concluded in chapter 5. The similarities and differences between the young adult dystopian novels and similarities and differences between original dystopic fiction and fairy tales and young adult dystopian fiction will be discussed to be able to answer the subquestion *How does the focus of the story correlate with the way elements are utilised in a traditionally or contemporary gendered manner?* To conclude, the research question *How do elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction?* will be answered.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical framework

To be able to analyse the young adult dystopian novels in this thesis, a theoretical framework will be employed. This chapter will outline the histories of the dystopian and fairy tale genre and gender, and will look at the principal elements and functions of these genres. Because of the scope of these genres, the long history of the genres and the numerous elements that have been identified, many choices had to be made and in this chapter these choices will be defended as well.

Dystopian fiction

Thomas More coined the word ‘utopia’ in 1516 as the name of the imaginary country he described in his book *De Optimo Reipublicae Statu deque Nova Insula Utopia*, now commonly known as *Utopia*. The word is derived from the Greek language, the literal meaning of utopia being no place. However, More punned on the word “eutopia”, which means good place. With utopia, he indicated place that is both good and non-existent (Achterhuis 14). In the eighteenth century an opposition of the utopia was added, dystopia, meaning bad place. Since then, several other subgenres have been identified (Claeys and Tower Sargent 1). In common use, utopia is defined as “a nonexistent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived”. In contrast, a dystopia is “a nonexistent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived” (Claeys and Tower Sargent 1).

However, since the late twentieth century, utopia and dystopia are not seen as a dichotomy anymore (Tower Sargent 208). Utopia and dystopia, the imagined perfect society and its opposite, are often combined as each contains a latent version of the other (Achterhuis

85). For example, Jonathan Swift's Country of the Houyhnhnms in Book Four of *Gulliver's Travels*, utopian and dystopian elements of the fictional world can appear and vanish with only the slightest change in perspective (Greenberg and Waddell 7-8). Isaac argues that "in each utopia, there is a secret dream of power or even a wish to absolute power. This becomes clear through the violence with which each individual that disagrees with this utopia will be punished" (330) and Hans Achterhuis also stresses the "objective of power" that is evident in every utopia (21). Even Thomas More ordained severe punishments for deviant behaviour in his utopian island. This secret dream of power too often ends with the dystopian opposite of cruel repression of the scapegoats of any utopia (Isaac 330).

Utopias have been in existence from the beginning of time, but they have undergone many changes. Moreover, the impulse to create images and writings about utopian existence can be found in virtually every culture (Lensing 87). Utopias both bring about changes in society and reflect shifts in how a society sees itself (Claeys and Tower Sargent 6). Although Thomas More coined the name of the literary utopia genre, descriptions of imaginary places that were viewed as better existed for much longer. Some tales originated in ancient oral traditions, as the first utopian visions were expressed in mythology and religion, with examples such as Asgard or Eden-like earthly paradises (Lensing 87). In the sixteenth century, the voyages of discovery encouraged a debate about the virtues, vices and morals of other people (Claeys and Tower Sargent 6). The savage became an important theme in utopias, for example in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and, much later, Huxley's *Brave New World*.

In the seventeenth century, England encountered a rich and complex period, with, for example, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, James Harrington, and the Civil War (Achterhuis 16). This era saw intense religious debate and modern scientific thought began to emerge slowly. As such, the seventeenth century was a perfect setting for the growth of utopianism (Claeys and Tower Sargent 119). In the eighteenth century, the idea that ideal

societies could be formed spread, and more utopias are set fictionally in the future. Especially after 1776 and 1789, moral renewal became connected with revolution (Claeys and Tower Sargent 159). In the nineteenth century, the dystopian genre emerges. Fuelled by revolution, capitalist crisis, and the promises and threats alike of the new sciences and technologies, “an unparalleled outpouring of utopian writings attempted to confront the new realities of modernity” (Claeys and Tower Sargent 209). The “canonical dystopian trilogy” (Jameson qtd. in Greenberg and Waddell 6) Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* (1924), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), were written in the twentieth century. These modern dystopias reflect the anxieties that increasingly accompanied the onward march of progress and are still seen as the forefathers of every dystopia written since. Dystopian fiction has become a powerful strand of current writing (Adisheshiah and Hildyard 12). In the twenty-first century, the most obvious phenomenon in the utopian genre is the young adult dystopia. These are often published as trilogies, or longer series. Most are written by women, have a female protagonist, and are aimed at a female audience. Although the young adult dystopia existed earlier, the subgenre exploded since the last quarter of the twentieth century (Claeys and Tower Sargent 525).

Gender in utopian fiction

Since the 1970s, utopian fiction has started to focus strongly upon the role of gender in the process of creating a better, or even an ideal, society (Lensing 87). However, this does not mean that gender was of no concern in utopian fiction that was written before. In fact, utopian with feminist ideas can be found as far back as the seventeenth century. Examples include Margaret Cavendish’s *The Convent of Pleasure*, Sarah Robinson Scott’s *Millennium Hall* and Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Cranford* (Kraus 198, Lensing 88).

The nature of the famous works of More and Huxley, especially considering their treatment of women, makes it hard to understand the appeal of the utopian genre to women writers. Huxley's society is "rigidly patriarchal" and a "patriarchal power structure governs sexual behavior in the *Brave New World*" (Greenberg and Waddell 111) and this is not unusual in utopias, as patriarchy and the suppression of women is often a theme (Achterhuis 17). Moreover, the previous examples of utopias written by women are much less known than the counterparts written by men. However, the genre of utopian fiction was, and still is, highly useful to develop various social visions, feminism included. In this, the power of Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* cannot be denied. They incorporated mechanisms of gender, and what this gender system implies for sexuality, reproduction, family life, and so on. From the 1970s onwards, feminist utopian fiction took these mechanisms and changed them to create an ideal society for women as well (Lensing 87).

However, the gender systems that are proposed in each novel is quite varied and the myriad of approaches to gender show the different solutions offered and dangers foreseen. Nonetheless, they all share the common awareness that gender relations are significant to a vision of the future (Lensing 101). According to Lensing, a remarkable consistency in modern utopian fiction exists: "utopias invariably insist upon at least gender equality, [...] while dystopias always seem to involve some degree of oppression" (101).

Young adult dystopian fiction

Young adult dystopian fiction is a relatively young subgenre of utopian literature, and thus it has not been greatly researched. In their overview of the genre of utopia, Claeys and Tower Sargent only dedicate a few lines to the young adult dystopia. They do not wholly define the genre, but note that, remarkably, most of the novels in this genre are written by women, have a female protagonist, and are aimed at a female audience. In "Monica Hughes, Lois Lowry, and

Young Adult Dystopias”, Carrie Hintz comments on the aspects of young adult dystopian fiction. She claims that in young adult dystopian fiction, “readers encounter dystopian elements such as a rigorously planned society, charismatic leaders or masterminds, control of reproductive freedom, and the prioritization of collective well-being over the fate of the individual” (254). Moreover, in utopian writing for children and young adults there are several unique elements: “the child or young adult often becomes the central character in the utopia or dystopia. [Also, the] political and social awakening is almost always combined with a depiction of the personal problems of adolescence” (Hintz 254-5). Hintz defined the genre in 2002, before popular young adult dystopian novels such as *The Hunger Games* had even been published. In 2015, Jesse Kavadlo also defines the genre, coining the term “The New Dystopia” and basing his definition mainly on aspects of *The Hunger Games*. Kavadlo interprets the New Dystopia not by contrasting it to dystopian or utopian literature, but by putting the genre opposite pre-9/11 novels of magic worlds, such as *Harry Potter* and *Narnia*. “In Suzanne Collins’s *Hunger Games* series [...] the new YA genre is not secret worlds but the world’s end. [...] *Narnia*, *Harry Potter*, *Neverland*, and *Oz* were all utopian worlds, if also utopias in peril. But the postmillennial books are different. They are dystopian, not just apocalyptic but post-apocalyptic” (Kavadlo 138). Kavadlo claims that the *Harry Potter* books began as light reading, and the theme grew up when their readers did. As Harry and his Hogwarts friends made their way into the upper grades, the stories themselves became darker and more sophisticated. *The Hunger Games* and other New Dystopias, however, start off dark (Kavadlo 138). According to Kavadlo, “the New Dystopia first revolves around terror: treats of starvation and death; loss of self, mind, and identity; and the loss of freedom and the end of the current social order” (137). However, despite this darkness, the New Dystopia is also filled with wishes: “escape from a stultifying social order; to be chosen and recognised as special; given clothes, food and servants; allowed -

encouraged! - to remove one's rivals; and the fantasy of saving one's self, family, and society just by being true to one's authentic identity" (Kavadlo 137).

Elements and functions

Since the beginning of time, people have envisioned utopian places that are better than where they are now. When people grew afraid of the future, they began writing dystopias. In these dystopias, the downsides of progress were illustrated in a bleak worldview. Utopias and dystopias bring about changes in society and reflect on how a society sees itself. When looking at the definitions and histories of utopia, dystopia and young adult dystopias, common elements can be found. Three elements are chosen so that they can be analysed in the five works of young adult dystopian fiction. In the following paragraphs the elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist and the savage will be elaborated on.

Totalitarian regime

Kavadlo argues that the New Dystopia is about the loss of freedom and the hope of escaping from a "stultifying social order" (137) and Hintz also stresses the appearance of "a rigorously planned society, charismatic leaders or masterminds, control of reproductive freedom, and the prioritization of collective well-being over the fate of the individual" in young adult dystopias (254). This element is not only important in young adult dystopias, but it is also one of the main characteristics in dystopian fiction in general. Allan Weiss argues that "while utopian societies feature harmonious relationships among citizens, and between the society as a whole and the natural world, classic dystopian societies are ruled by totalitarian regimes that carefully control the people" (285). Christopher Collins adds that dystopias "are usually set in remote time or space, are generally preceded either by disastrous world wars or by a period of decay, an age of confusion" (356). According to Collins, only after such a catastrophic event, mankind

understands that the hope for survival lies in a new social order and Hans Achterhuis agrees, claiming that “only a radical fresh start can show perspective” (69).

A dystopian totalitarian regime tries to eliminate conflict in and among its citizens. Most often, this happens through discouraging individualism and self-awareness. Psychic and social harmony is enforced, and the goal of the society is to move towards the ideal (Collins 358). The rulers of dystopian totalitarian regimes have various means to keep order. Examples in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* include the language Newspeak and constant surveillance by ‘Big Brother’. Also, as stated by Lensing and Hintz before, totalitarian regimes often control the sexuality of its inhabitants through the incorporation of mechanisms of gender. Achterhuis adds that love and sexuality do not have a place within utopias (73). In the *One State* in Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*, sexuality is controlled by the state: ciphers must sign up to get a ticket with which it is possible to plan sex. Feelings are illegal, and people are not permitted to claim exclusive possession of one sexual partner, but rather to rotate lovers occasionally. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* has eliminated childbirth, as children are produced on the assembly line. In fact, even the words associated with families are treated as obscenities.

The analysis of the totalitarian regime element in the young adult dystopias will focus on how the country or world of the protagonist is formed and ruled. Do they live in a totalitarian regime, or not? Who are the rulers, and how are the inhabitants kept in check? Finally, mechanisms of gender will be analysed.

Young adult protagonist as central character

The greater part of Kavadlo and Hintz’s definitions of young adult dystopian fiction coincide as next to the existence of a totalitarian regime, they also agree on the protagonist of the young adult dystopia. They both claim that young adult dystopian fiction has a young adult protagonist the same age as the intended reader who lives in the totalitarian regime, as a central character.

This protagonist sees the terrors of the society he or she lives in and has the wish to escape from this social order (Hintz 255, Kavadlo 137). Kavadlo adds that the protagonist has “the wish to be chosen and recognised as special”, often concretised in the goal of wanting to remove their personal rivals and saving themselves, but also their family and society, just by being themselves (137). Moreover, Kavadlo claims that the protagonist of a young adult dystopia is involved in a love triangle (137). Finally, in the analysing of the young adult dystopias, the remark of Claeys and Tower Sargent, that the protagonist is most often a female, will also be taken into consideration.

The savage

As stated previously, the savage became an important theme in utopias from the sixteenth century onwards. The voyages of discovery from the sixteenth century on encouraged a debate about the virtues, vices and morals of other people (Claeys and Tower Sargent 6). In *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*, Joep Leerssen argues that “a community is not in the first instance merely a sense of ‘belonging together’ as that it involves a sense of being distinct from others. [...] A community constitutes itself by distinguishing itself from the world at large, in the process also excluding from its constituent membership all those that do not belong to it” (17). The savage has become a stock character and a portrayal of the Other from which the community is distinguished. The savage is a person or community who is seen as less civilised than the ruling society. According to Achterhuis, by excluding Others from a community, a rigorous distinction can be made between good and bad (79, 81). There are many examples, including the Yahoos in *Gulliver’s Travels*, and John the Savage in *Brave New World*.

In Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, the differences between the Old World and the dystopian World State are shown by actively preserving a part of the Old World in Savage Reservations. In these reservations, people live as in the old way: there is no soma, people can

get married and women can bear children. These reservations are treated as museums and research facilities and sometimes visited as a holiday destination. By contrasting the Fordian World State civilisation, full of hedonism and materialism, with the primitive Savage Reservations in which complex values survived (Beauchamp 60), the differences between two communities are shown. Moreover, in *Brave New World*, Huxley has created the character John the Savage. According to Beauchamp, through this character, Huxley constructed “a visitor to the utopia who asks all the right questions but is at the same time a character that functions as a moral norm” (62).

Like in *Brave New World*, in utopian and dystopian fiction the savage is often used to show differences between communities and between the old world and the new world. Moreover, it illustrates how someone is supposed to behave and what happens to a cast-out. In the analysis of this element in the young adult dystopias, the savage will be identified and its role in the story will be determined.

Fairy tales

The fairy tale genre is old and closely intertwined with folk tales, myths and stories of wonder. The fairy tales we know now have evolved from multiple cultures and are sometimes centuries old. At first, a fairy tale was a simple, imaginative oral tale containing elements of magic and miracle. These wonder or magic tales underwent many transformations before they were written down and became fixed texts with conventions of telling and reading. Even then and up to the present, fairy tales continued to be changed (Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* 135). Given its many intertextual borrowings among authors and versions, the fairy tale is a vague and slippery genre. The fairy tale is also a capacious umbrella term and it is hard to accommodate its various plot trajectories, common motifs, and narrative functions (Carney 5).

Many researchers have tried to categorise fairy tales. Vladimir Propp and the Aarne-Thompson classification systems are useful for comprehending textual structures and signs of the tales (Meder 126), but they provide no overall methodological framework for locating and grasping the essence of the genre (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 4). The most famous contemporary researcher in the fairy tale genre is Jack Zipes. He has written numerous books and articles on the topic of fairy tales and often focusses on gender and subversion in the specific tales and the genre as a whole. Therefore, his theories will shape this theoretical framework. Because the chosen young adult dystopian works of fiction originate in the United States, only the western fairy tale tradition will be examined.

The fairy tale genre was created and cultivated by adults and became a literary genre among adults first. Only from the eighteenth century onward, fairy tales were published for and distributed to children. In the sixteenth century, the Italians Giovanni Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile helped initiate the genre of the fairy tale in Europe. Their work, among other folk tales, was rediscovered by the German Brothers Grimm in the nineteenth century, while Charles Perrault and the French writers had started collecting stories from the 1690's onwards. Although it would be wrong to talk about a diachronic history, as every folk tale has its own history, it does make a historical frame of this genre. Within this frame, the parameters of the literary fairy tale were set and fairy tale characters, topoi, motifs, metaphors and plots became institutionalised (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 15-6).

Almost all critics who have studied the emergence of the literary fairy tale in Europe agree that educated writers purposely appropriated the oral folktale and converted it into a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children and adults would become civilised according to the social code of that time (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 3). This means that the tales we are now still familiar with, were already filled with symbols and configurations that were marked in that time, and that these meanings have been changed throughout time.

Denise Escarpit stresses that the fairy tale was a means to both instruct and amuse, the tales “should make moral lessons and strictures palatable” (qtd. in Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 10). Perrault even explicitly noted the lessons he tried to convey through his fairy tales (Perrault). The shape of fairy tale discourse and the meanings internalised in the tales is linked closely to the European civilising process. For example, Charles Perrault, most famous for the first written-down versions of fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Puss in Boots*, was seen to reinforce the standards of the civilising process set by the upper-class French society he was part of (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 42). And the Brothers Grimm distinguished themselves by rewriting German oral folktales to add the bourgeois socialisation process, while Hans Christian Andersen created a canon of literary fairy tales for both children and adult that praised essentialist ideology (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 81). While these writers set the standard for European fairy tales, Walt Disney appropriated the tales to the American Dream, and consequently, he set a worldwide standard against which all fairy tale films, whether animated or live action, were measured (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 211).

We see fairy tales as universal, ageless, and eternal as the literary fairy tale is an old genre, but we still know the stories (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 5). The genre is still used to civilise children and adults nowadays, although the entertainment merit has become more important. Fairy tales are not only told by our mothers or nannies, but media such as film, music, theatre, and the internet has spread the tales but also the debates on the notions of for example gender and violence (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 28).

Fairy tales as utopia

Not many researchers have explicitly stated it, but the genres of utopia and the literary fairy tale are quite similar. In his books and articles, Jack Zipes occasionally drops the word utopian or dystopian, for example in *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, where he states that “visual artists [...]

have endowed the fairy tale with a more profound meaning through the creation of dystopian, grotesque, macabre, and comic configurations” (136). In addition, Zipes has written a chapter on the utopian and dystopian functions of Walt Disney’s fairy tales in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (193-212). However, other references are hard to be found. Nonetheless, great likenesses exist between the genres. Both genres have a long history and are a product of their time; they change with the passing of centuries and ruling ideas and movements. Additionally, through both genres ideas, morals and gender roles are subverted. Utopias sketch a better worldview, opposed to the society the writer lives in. Literary fairy tales include mores, values, and manners so that children and adults would become civilised according to the social code of the time.

According to Zipes, Walt Disney used his stories and films to push through his utopian vision and mission:

[Disney] was relentless in his pursuit of the perfect clean and orderly world that was mirrored in all the fairy tale films and books he created while he was alive and envisioned in his theme parks. His utopian vision and spirit were so powerful that, even after his death, the Disney corporation continued to operate as though he were alive and as though it still had to shape the fairy tale to fulfil his wishes, realise his dreams and spread his ideology. (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 193)

Zipes argues that Disney’s civilising process caused many of the liberating aspects of the fairy tale be tamed and that this actually leads to the degeneration of utopia and is more like a dystopia. Disney managed to domesticate the fairy tale and restore its conservative features so that it lost its rebellious and progressive tendencies (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 193). He did not look forward but back in history and his ideology was conservative. For example, he took the nineteenth-century patriarchal notions of Grimm’s fairy tales and preserved and carried on their stereotypical attitude toward women (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 204). Moreover, through his

fairy tales, Disney communicated messages such as: “don’t be curious, don’t take risks and know your place in the order of things” (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 202). His civilising process urged people to look back and stay where they were, instead of dreaming and changing the world.

Not only Walt Disney’s fairy tales can be seen as dystopian, Perrault’s and Grimm’s literary fairy tales are a form of utopia too. The literary fairy tale was used to educate children and adults alike and the mores and values that were inferred through the fairy tales were often those of the ruling class. These “utopian wishes” have changed, always dependent on the sociocultural temper of the times (Zipes, “Why Fantasy Matters Too Much” 79). Moreover, the world of the fairy tale is inhabited by kings, queens, princes, princesses, soldiers, peasants, animals, and supernatural creatures. Zipes argues that “the main characters and concerns of a monarchist, patriarchal and feudal society are presented” (*Art of Subversion* 7). The stories focus on a struggle between classes, for example in ‘rags to riches’ stories like *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, and aristocrats compete for power among themselves and with the peasantry, like in *Sleeping Beauty* (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 7). Besides the goal of literary fairy tales being utopian, the characters and subject of the tales, namely power struggle in society, are also utopian.

Elements and functions

The fairy tale is an old genre, and although many researchers have tried to classify the tales, their motifs, topoi and characters; not one single system is all-encompassing. Therefore, it is difficult to choose just three elements on which to focus on, as there are so many. Hence, to analyse fairy tale elements in the five works of young adult dystopian fiction, elements are chosen that have been prevalent throughout the history of the fairy tale and are focused on in

contemporary research. In the following paragraphs, the elements of the prince and princess, the quest and the happy end will be elaborated on.

Prince and princess

Most well-known fairy tales, such as *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, all focus on the lives of a princess or princess-to-be. Much research has been done into these tales, and especially the gender aspect of these tales has been critiqued. Most criticism focuses on the princess who is depicted as a damsel in distress. The movement toward autonomy, that women should govern their own destiny and write their own history, has been a dominant tendency in feminist literary criticism and fairy tale criticism as well (Zipes, *Don't Bet on the Prince* 8). Following this movement, many feminist fairy tales have been written that actively subvert the fairy tale stereotypes, for example Angela Carter's adaptations of traditional fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. In this way, feminist contemporary fairy tale retellings "pulsate with utopian fervor", as the goal is to better the genre and the world that reads it (Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* 136).

Zipes argues that fairy tales show a specific view of women, especially through the depiction of the princess and prince characters. He argues that in Perrault's fairy tales heroines are elevated. However, this composite female is ideally upper class, beautiful, polite, graceful, industrious, properly groomed and knows how to control herself at all times. The woman should show reserve and patience, and she should be passive until the right man comes along to recognise her virtues and marries her (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 194). For example, Cinderella is described as gentle, sweet and diligent. She is dressed properly at the ball, and her beauty is recognised by the prince, who marries her. If a woman fails in being this composite female, for example by showing disobedience like Red Riding Hood does, she is punished (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 41). Moreover, changes were made to fairy tales to fit the bourgeois standards of

Perrault's time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the open display of sex and bodily functions gradually became curtailed (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 48). In Perrault's version of Red Riding Hood, she is eaten by the wolf because she talked to strangers, while she is warned not to. This is different from the earlier versions, where she is raped, and newer versions, such as Grimm's, where she is saved by the huntsman. Instead of warning girls against the dangers of predators in forests, Perrault's tale warns girls against their own natural desires, which they must tame (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 45).

While the heroines were beautiful, passive, obedient and self-sacrificial, Perrault's heroes were cunning, fortunate, adventurous and daring (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 194). Looking at the composite male, brains and ambition are more important than beauty and modesty (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 41). While for women their main goal is to get married, the composite male hero in Perrault's fairy tales should be ambitious and social success and achievement is more important than winning a wife. Heroes should not always be good looking, but be smart, courageous and show manners (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 42). Examples include characters such as Puss in Boots, Ricky of the Tuft and the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*.

The literary fairy tale changed over time, and so were the notions of gender that it incorporated supposed to. However, not much has changed since Perrault's versions. Walt Disney retained Perrault's patriarchal notions and stereotypical attitudes towards women in his fairy tales (Sumera 40, Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 204). Disney's versions of the fairy tales are still the most well-known, and most contemporary critique focuses on his depiction of the passive princess and courageous prince who saves his damsel in distress. Contemporary Disney films such as *Brave* and *Frozen* are praised for slowly changing the stereotypical gender roles, but the fairy tale in general is still a source for feminist criticism. Findings indicate that gender, racial, and cultural stereotypes have persisted over time in Disney films (Towbin et al. 19) and the patriarchal worldview in Disney fairy tale films has continued to reflect biases (Pershing

and Gablehouse 145). For example, in 2007, Disney released the film *Enchanted*. This film incorporated hundreds of allusions to earlier Disney movies and motifs of literary fairy tales (Pershing and Gablehouse 142). It was marketed as a parody of the classical princess fairy tale, and the initial scenes seemed a good-natured spoof of the outdated gender relations represented in earlier Disney fairy tale films. However, Pershing and Gablehouse argue, “in the end *Enchanted* follows a pattern of faux feminism, in which fragments of feminist ideas are trivialized or subsumed within a dominant discourse of traditional gender roles” (154). On the contrary, the *Shrek* films, produced by Dream Works, are greatly admired for changing classic fairy tales and its gender roles. In these films, handsome princes do not save helpless virgins, and the unusual qualities of fearless young women are fully represented (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 211).

The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, written in 1979 by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, examines Victorian literature from a feminist perspective and the influence of this book has been undisputed, not only in feminist criticism but in fairy tale studies as well (Joosen 280). In *The Madwoman*, Grimm’s *Snow White* is taken as an example to show how male writers use two female archetypes: the idealist image of the angel, the woman who is selfless and pure, and on the other hand the female monster, the woman who is active, aggressive and unfeminine (Gilbert and Gubar 17). According to Gilbert and Gubar, in *Snow White* these two extremes are embodied by Snow White and her evil stepmother and this story provides insight in how the two female archetypes are constructed and how they may be subverted. The two women are juxtaposed to each other through a beauty contest. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the enchanted mirror in the tale is an embodiment of the patriarchy that shows the male judgement and male gaze upon these women. In the beauty competition that takes place in the dialogues between the queen and her magic mirror that tells her “who is the fairest of them all”, the mirror prefers Snow White’s innocence,

beauty and passivity to the active queen (Joosen 217). Marcia Lieberman argues that his beauty contest is a constant and primary device in many fairy tales. Lieberman's *Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale* was published in 1972 and one of the first articles on female fairy tales. Lieberman argues that beautiful girls are never ignored in a fairy tale and the focus is on beauty as a girl's most valuable asset. In this way, good-temper and meekness are associated with beauty, and ill-temper with ugliness (Lieberman 188).

In the analyses of the young adult dystopias, the characters of the princess and prince will be investigated. The characters will be analysed to find out whether the woman is portrayed as a passive and obedient damsel in distress and the man as smart, cunning and ambitious, or if these characters subvert these fairy tale stereotypes. Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar's female archetypes will be evaluated as well and special attention will be given to the aspect of beauty in the stories.

The quest

Researchers such as Vladimir Propp and Max Lüthi tried to categorise fairy tales. Propp tried to find out what constitutes the magic of a folk tale, and he identified a number of functions in fairy tales that have an identical succession of events (Meder 126). In this narrative structure, the hero of the tale lacks something or faces a problem and goes in search of aid to achieve happiness, most often marriage. According to Propp, the structure of every magic folktale conforms to this quest (Meder 126, Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 4). Max Lüthi defined several characteristics of fairy tales and he sees the hero of the folktale as a wanderer charged with carrying out a task, or quest (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 4). Moreover, Jo Eldridge Carney claims that the "familiar characteristics" of the fairy tale genre "include quests [and] happy endings" (5), also stressing the importance of this fairy tale element.

Propp and Lüthi agree that in a fairy tale, the hero goes out in the world to look for something and carry out a quest or a task. In analysing the young adult dystopias, the quest that is laid out for the protagonist of the story will be scrutinised. Not only the quest will be studied, but also the thing that is lacking and the reward will be investigated.

Happy end

The stock phrases “once upon a time” and “they lived happily ever after” are well-known fairy tale tropes, popularised by Disney (Kustritz 5), that are closely linked to the element of the quest. The familiar formula “once upon a time” generally launches the fairy tale (Tatar 31) and lays out the quest, and the tale ends with the fulfilment of this quest. Steven Swann Jones argues that the successful solving of a problem facing the protagonist is essential to the plot of the fairy tale, and the happy ending can be seen as another basic and important element of the genre (16). He argues that the whole objective of the fairy tale quest is personal happiness (Jones 17). Zipes agrees with Jones and adds that fairy tales are a “repetition of a pattern that repeat the same romantic happy endings” (*Art of Subversion* 209). At the beginning of the twentieth century, fairy tales were optimistic, and had plots with closure and a happy end and Walt Disney went along with this utopian wish (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 194). Moreover, in *Don't Bet on the Prince*, Zipes elaborates on the marriage as an achievement of happiness. He argues that marriage is the “fulcrum and major event” of almost every fairy tale (200). For women, it is their reward, but sometimes their punishment. When a man wins the hand of the princess he gets power as well as a beautiful wife. For both genders, marriage is associated with getting rich: the woman turns into a princess and the man often gets (a part of) a kingdom (Zipes, *Don't Bet on the Prince* 189).

In the analysis of the happy end element in the young adult dystopias, the presence of the stock phrases “once upon a time” and “they lived happily ever after” will be noted and the

ending of the story will be examined. Moreover, questions such as: does the tale end with marriage? Do the protagonists achieve personal happiness? Did the plot have closure? will be answered. Moreover, the differences with dystopian fiction will be noted through the analysis of this element, as traditional dystopias have a bleak ending instead.

Conclusion

Through examination of the genre of literary utopia and the genre of the literary fairy tale, many likenesses between the genres were discovered. Both are old and clearly a product of their time; the genres change with the passing of centuries and ruling ideas and movements. Additionally, through both genres ideas, morals and gender roles are subverted. Utopias sketch a better worldview, opposed to the society the writer lives in. Literary fairy tales include mores, values, and manners so that children and adults would become civilised according to the social code of the time. Moreover, feminist criticism focused on the genres of utopia and the fairy tale. Although the utopia had been a means for women to express their ideas for an ideal society from the sixteenth century onwards, since the 1970s, women portrayed more radical societies in utopias, where they were equal to men. In the fairy tale genre, the gendered stereotypes were identified and criticised, which lead to feminist fairy tales being written in which the utopian vision of female equality was verbalised as well.

Because of the similarities between these genres, the combination of elements from both utopian fiction and fairy tales in young dystopian fiction seems logical and appropriate. Although the six elements are grouped by belonging to either utopian fiction or fairy tales, they may be present in both classifications and elements might overlap. Nonetheless, the chosen elements will be analysed as belonging to the genre they are mentioned in, in the relations indicated in this theoretical framework. The presence of a totalitarian regime, a young adult protagonist, a savage, a princess and prince, a quest and a happy end will be looked for in the

five young adult dystopias. The elements will each be examined and its purpose and meaning will be evaluated.

Chapter 3 – Dystopian Elements

To answer the main research question on how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction, these elements must be analysed first. This chapter examines the dystopian elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist and the savage. These elements have been defined in the theoretical framework, and these definitions will be used to see how these three elements are incorporated in the sample of young adult dystopian fiction. Important passages of *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *The Selection* by Kiera Cass, and *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer will be analysed to discuss the dystopian elements in these texts. The subquestions that will be answered in this chapter are how are dystopian elements incorporated in young adult dystopian fiction? How do these elements relate to gender? And how do these works of young adult dystopian fiction fit in with the genre of dystopian fiction?

Totalitarian regime

As stated in the theoretical framework, an element of both young adult dystopian fiction and traditional dystopias is that societies are ruled by totalitarian regimes that control the people in it. Carrie Hintz stresses the “rigorously planned society and charismatic leaders or masterminds” (254) while Jesse Kavadlo underscores the “loss of freedom and hope of escaping” (137) that are part of these totalitarian regimes. The analysis of the totalitarian regime element in the young adult dystopias will focus on how the country or world of the protagonist is formed and ruled. Do they live in a totalitarian regime, or not? Who are the rulers, and how are the inhabitants kept in check? And how are the mechanisms of gender incorporated in the regime?

Christopher Collins argues that after a catastrophic event, such as a world war or period of decay, mankind understands that the hope for survival lies in a new social order. In the young adult dystopias, this is the case in all five researched young adult dystopias, as a totalitarian regime is installed as a new social order. Panem, the totalitarian state in *The Hunger Games*, comes into existence after some unknown natural disaster has eradicated the United States as we know it (Kavadlo 138). *The Selection*'s Illéa is a future version of the United States as well: when the USA became bankrupt and China and Russia colonised it, Gregory Illéa fought against the colonisers and found the monarchy of Illéa (Cass, *Selection* 210). In *Uglies*, almost three centuries ago, a bacterium blasted up all petroleum products and killed many people in the over-populated world. The survivors built smaller cities instead. Only few reminders to the past remain, among them the Rusty Ruins, "the remains of an old city, a hulking reminder of back when there'd been too many people, and everyone was extremely stupid. And ugly" (Westerfeld 47). In *The Lunar Chronicles*, there are two world orders. Since the catastrophic Fourth World War, Earth has seen peace:

Though there were two monarchies in the Earthen Union – the United Kingdom and the Eastern Commonwealth – Scarlet had grown up in Europe, a democracy made up of checks and balances, voter ballots, and province representatives. She generally figured, to each his own, and clearly the countries of the Union were doing something right to have gotten through 126 years of world peace. But that wasn't the case with Luna, something was broken with their system. (Meyer, *Winter* 258)

Although Earth has become more or less utopian, the moon Luna became colonised and the rulers there set up a totalitarian regime. Finally, in *The Maze Runner*, the world is in the middle of a catastrophic event. In order to overcome this, the regime has become totalitarian.

In the young adult dystopias, most totalitarian regimes' rigorously planned societies take the form of a big city with surrounding districts, sectors or provinces. In *The Hunger Games*,

Panem's seat of power is the Capitol. This city is filled with technological advancements, while most of the 12 districts surrounding it are struggling with poverty and famine. To prevent rebellion, the Capitol organises the annual Hunger Games. A lottery called 'the reaping' chooses two teenage tributes from every district, elevates them to celebrity status, makes them smile and wave on state-run television, and then broadcasts their gory fight to the death, with a single 'victor' rewarded permanent income and safety. The name Panem is derived from the Roman expression "panem et circenses". This means that "if the poor are given enough to subsist on and a healthy distraction from their own penury, they will not rise against the system. Or if the poor are kept struggling, they will not have the strength to rebel even if they wanted to" (Fisher 29, Kavaddo 141). In Panem, the Hunger Games work as a powerful metaphor. The Games embody fear: not just fear of being chosen as a tribute, but also fear of not being chosen and a loved one being chosen instead, the fear of killing, and the fear of being killed. And these fears come back every year. Moreover, the power and control of the Capitol is spectated. The twenty-four tributes are placed in a sealed arena and forced to fight until only one remains alive. Katniss, as a tribute from District 12, functions as a typical citizen of Panem. Her body is regulated and put to function into the system of control (Byrne 45).

When Katniss is first brought to the Capitol for her participation in the Hunger Games, the differences between the seat of power and her district are illustrated. Katniss remarks on the Capitol:

The cameras haven't lied about its grandeur. If anything, they have not quite captured the magnificence of the glistening buildings in a rainbow of hues that tower into the air, the shiny cars that roll down the wide paved streets, the oddly dressed people with bizarre hair and painted faces who have never missed a meal. (Collins, *Hunger Games* 59)

Commodities are everywhere in Panem, but no corporate shops, logos or brand names appear. The state owns everything and exerts its power through the Peacekeepers, an authoritarian police force in white uniforms. Meanwhile, in District 12 there is a black market, but other commercial activity is not mentioned. Peeta works in his parents' bakery, but the majority of District 12 does manual labour, leisure activities are few (Fisher 29). The districts are each responsible for one speciality. For example, District 12 does the coal mining and other districts are responsible for agriculture, grains, or graphite. This leaves the citizens of the Capitol to engage in various kinds of service industry such as food preparation, styling, and entertainment, but above all: consumption (Fisher 30). The people in the Capitol are well fed, unlike the people in the districts who are starving. When Katniss gets her first meal in the Capitol, she thinks that "the basket of rolls they put before me would keep my family going for at least a week" (Collins, *Hunger Games* 55). In the second book, Katniss and Peeta arrive at a party in the Capitol after finishing their victor's tour through the districts. There is so much food on the tables that Katniss and Peeta cannot even taste everything. "Why aren't you eating?" asks Octavia. 'I have been, but I can't take another bite,' I say. They all laugh as if that's the silliest thing they ever heard" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 97). At the party, they serve drinks that make you puke. "I'm speechless, staring at the pretty little glasses and all that they imply" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 97), Katniss thinks.

Like Panem in *The Hunger Games*, *The Selection's* Illéa is divided up in castes that, like the districts, are based on the work that the inhabitants do. Ones are royalty, Twos are celebrities and soldiers, and the castes become poorer towards the end, with Eights being the lowest. However, the castes live all mixed up, instead of geographically divided like in *The Hunger Games*. When it is time for the heir to the throne to find a wife, all eligible women in Illéa can compete in the selection. One woman from each of the 35 provinces will be sent to the Palace, where Prince Maxon will choose his bride. There is unrest in Illéa as the people are not happy

with the caste system, the country is at war with its neighbours, and rebels often attack the Palace. The Southern Rebels are trying to kill everyone, while the Northern Rebels want to dissolve the castes and support prince Maxon over his father, King Clarkson. Illéa is ruled by one King, but it is less totalitarian and dystopian than the other fictitious worlds. Apart from America's comments on her being poor and the occasional attack on the Palace, the focus is on the love story. During a rebel attack, America remarks, "the worst attack I'd gotten at home was Gerard trying to steal my food. The girls here didn't care for me, the clothes were stifling, people were trying to hurt me, and the whole thing was uncomfortable" (Cass, *Selection* 156). If a dystopian totalitarian regime is uncomfortable, it must not be all that horrible.

In *The Hunger Games* and *The Selection*, the totalitarian regime and the way it is upheld is clear to everyone in the system, and the protagonist has a clear idea of who the bad guy is. The other young adult dystopias take more time to build the world and explain to the reader and protagonist who the rulers are. In *Uglies* no-one knows that they are controlled, mainly because of the secret lesions in everyone's brains. Only after Tally meets Dr. Cable, she realizes that Specials ("cruel pretties") and rebels exist. In *Uglies*, all sixteen-year olds get compulsory full-body plastic surgery. The "prioritization of collective well-being over the fate of the individual" and the "discouragement of individualism and self-awareness" Carrie Hintz (254) and Christopher Collins (358) mention are most evident in this young adult dystopia. Through surgery, every physical flaw is eliminated, but people's brains are altered as well. Lesions are added to their brains so that their authentic identities are wiped out and they cannot think critically any more. The individual is erased, as the Pretty Committee decides how everyone should look and what they should think. Through the operation, both men and women lose their agency and individuality. Scott Westerfeld's novels portray a society "that uses advances in biotechnology to make physical perfection the norm, rather than a biological coincidence", Victoria Flanagan argues in her article "Girl parts: The female body, subjectivity and

technology in posthuman young adult fiction” (42-5). The goal is social harmony, as Tally explains: “no one can be considered privileged because of a random twist in their genes” (Westerfeld, *Uglies* 277). Like in *The Hunger Games*, the inhabitants of the world are segregated. People do not live in districts based on jobs, but in different cities based on age. Uglies, Pretties, Middlies and Crumblied all are divided and live in different sections. Although communication is allowed, each group sticks to its own. Everyone is quite content with this way of life and no great differences between standards of living exist. Through various kinds of technology, the inhabitants of *Uglies* are watched. In *Pretties*, Tally finally realises how her world works:

The city interface brought you pings, answered your questions, reminded you of appointments, even turned the lights on and off in your room. If Special Circumstance wanted to watch you, they’d know everything you did and half of what you were thinking. (Westerfeld 65)

When something out of the ordinary happens, Special Circumstances shows up to take care of it. These group of Specials, led by Dr. Cable, make sure that everyone is kept in check and follows the rules. Like in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Special Circumstances is watching you.

In *The Lunar Chronicles*, every novel has another protagonist and focuses on another part of its world. Therefore, the way in which the world is ruled, and by whom, is quite unclear for a time. The story of the *Lunar Chronicles* is set in a future world where new empires and alliances are formed, and the moon is colonised. The moon Luna is a totalitarian regime ruled by the charismatic Queen Levana. Levana wants to marry the emperor of the most powerful country of the Earthen Union, Prince Kai of the Eastern Commonwealth. By forming this bond, she would rule both Earth and Luna. Lunars have special powers, glamours, to appear beautiful and manipulate people and Levana’s lunar gift is the reason the Earthens object to the alliance between Kai and her at first. However, to make Earth abide her wishes, Levana has unleashed

a plague on Earth called letumosis. The full extent of Levana's regime and danger to Earth is only revealed in the final novel in the *The Lunar Chronicles* series:

We thought this war began when her special operatives attacked those first fifteen cities, but we were wrong. This war began when letumosis was manufactured in a Lunar laboratory and brought to Earth for the first time. All these years, she's been waging biological warfare on us, and we had no idea. (Meyer, *Winter* 122)

Only the moon-people, the Lunars, are immune to this disease, and although Levana has manufactured a cure, she will only give this if Kai agrees to marry her. Through this disease, she holds enormous power over Kai and Earth. Levana is gifted in her glamour and she has turned Lunar into a totalitarian regime much like that of *The Hunger Games*. The country is divided in sectors that, like the districts, are specialised in one kind of job. The inhabitants are poor, underfed and most of them cannot use their lunar gift. "The white city of Artemisia, with its enormous crater lake and towering spires, had been built upon a solid foundation of brainwashing and manipulation", Jacin, a member of Levana's Royal Guard, claims (Meyer, *Winter* 63). When Cinder and her friends come to Luna for the first time, they arrive in the capital of Artemisia and travel to the other sectors afterwards:

Cinder had constructed an image in her head of how beautiful Luna must be. But it soon became clear that the outer sectors received none of the capital's luxuries. Each platform they passed held new signs of neglect – crumbling stone walls and flickering lights. Graffiti scribbled onto the tunnel walls spoke of unrest. (Meyer, *Winter* 204)

This system is as rigorously planned as, and almost an exact copy of, *The Hunger Games*, with a rich Capitol and districts under its control. Also, like Katniss, Cinder immediately realises Levana's reasoning and is critical of it. "[The media and transportation were] all controlled by the government, of course. Levana didn't want the outer sectors to have easy communications with one another. The less interaction her citizens had with each other, the more difficult it

would be for them to form a rebellion”, Cinder thinks (Meyer, *Winter* 207). And when Cinder spotted a “RM-9” tattoo on the forearm of Wolf’s mother, in the same place where Wolf had one marking him as a special operative, “it reminded Cinder of how someone might mark their pet, to be returned home in case it got lost” (Meyer, *Winter* 212).

Although most series take some time to explain everything, of all the examined young adult dystopias, *The Maze Runner* is most unclear about the totalitarian regime. Throughout the three novels, James Dashner’s dystopia is focused on uncertainty and not knowing what is happening. A group of teenage boys have been living in dystopian environment the Glade for two years, but no one knows why they have been sent there or by whom, and no one remembers their life before the Glade. In the Maze surrounding the Glade live mechanized monsters called Grievers. To make the best of their lives, the Gladers have created a community with various jobs, such as cooks and butchers. Runners go out to explore the maze, hoping to discover patterns that might lead to an exit. “The Glade is a realm of rules, hierarchies, and secrets”, Amy Elliot argues in “Power in Our Words: Finding Community and Mitigating Trauma in James Dashner’s *The Maze Runner*” (184). Alby, the leader of the group, gives commands but refuses to give answers. For example, when Thomas, *The Maze Runner*’s protagonist, continues to ask how he arrived at the Glade, Alby yells, “No interruptions, boy!”, adding that the “Old life’s over, new life’s begun” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 10). Thomas must “Learn the rules quick, listen, don’t talk” and “accept the change” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 10-1). Thomas parallels the Glade to a prison and finds that “the secrecy was very annoying” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 45). The rulers of *The Maze Runner*’s totalitarian state are not identified until the very end of the first novel, when the Glade is revealed to be one of many observation centres. However, while the boys are in the Glade, they speak about the Creators watching them through “beetle blade spies”, implying that they do already think they are being observed or tested (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 303). Chancellor Ava Paige is the head, or “mastermind” as Carrie Hintz would call

her, of World In Catastrophe: Killzone Experiment Department (WICKED), the organisation conducting the experiments on the Gladers. WICKED is looking for a cure for the Flare, a plague that turns people into zombie-like killers called Cranks. However, at the end of the third and final instalment of *The Maze Runner* series, Ava Paige reveals that the Flare had been created by the government in order to control overpopulation. Unfortunately, the plague spread, and they had not developed a cure. Although the Gladers fight against this totalitarian regime throughout the three novels, they never know what they are up against, as the real extent of the regime only becomes clear on the final pages of the series.

David Lensing argues that utopian fiction incorporates mechanisms of gender, and that this gender system implies rules on sexuality, reproduction, family life, and so on (87). In traditional dystopias, these mechanisms are often shown through the control of reproductive freedom, which Carrie Hintz also comments on (254). However, this is not a major issue in the five researched young adult dystopias. Although Achterhuis remarks that love has no place in utopias, romance and love play a key role in all series, and in all the totalitarian regimes love is possible and celebrated. Both *The Maze Runner* and *Uglies* deal with overpopulation and thus it seems probable that they control the reproduction of its inhabitants. However, in *The Maze Runner* nothing is mentioned about it as the Flare plague seems to be the only solution and problem, and the *Uglies* regime has less strict rules than for example *We, Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In *Uglies*, Middlies are supposed to have only one child every decade but family life is still celebrated. Because of the segregation based on age, children only live with their parents until their twelfth birthday and are then separated. They do keep in contact, as, for example, the Pretties who pulled a trick received “alarmed calls from crumbly parents who had seen the whole thing replayed [...] on every channel” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 113). However, strong family bonds do not exist, and, because of the one-child-per-decade rule, most families only have one child and there are almost no sibling ties. In *The Maze Runner*, the

Gladers do not even remember their families. This is very different from *The Hunger Games*, *The Selection* and *The Lunar Chronicles*. Here, people have large families to have as many hands as possible to work and bring home money. In *The Hunger Games*, children are problematic as, although they provide, there is also a chance they are taken away by the reaping. Because of this, Katniss proclaims “I never want to have kids” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 9). On the contrary, America “would have lots if [she] could” (Cass, *Selection* 143). However, she also stresses the fact that children have to work: “I was the oldest left now that Kenna was married and Kota was gone, and I did my best to contribute” (Cass, *Selection* 6). In Illéa, “the law was that you wait until marriage. It was an effective way of keeping diseases at bay and it helped keeping the castes intact” (Cass, *Selection* 65). Love is a key theme in all young adult dystopias, but sexuality is less visible. Only *The Selection* mentions some of the things America experiences when she is with her boyfriends. Besides, this series is also the only one that comments on sex openly. When America is chosen for the Selection, she must confirm that “you are, in fact, a virgin” (Cass, *Selection* 60) and when she is briefed on the rules of the Selection and Palace, she is told that “when you are invited to do something with Maxon, you do not refuse. No matter what it is. Dinner, outings, kisses, more than kisses, anything. You do not turn him down” (Cass, *Selection* 64). Reproductive control is much less visible and strict in young adult dystopias than in traditional dystopias. However, sexuality is often not part of the stories at all, indicating that it still is a taboo in young adult literature.

As stated before, David Lensing argues that “utopias invariably insist upon at least gender equality, [...] while dystopias always seem to involve some degree of oppression” (101). In the young adult dystopias, this is often different. In most totalitarian regimes, both genders are treated more or less equally. Men and women both work feminine and masculine jobs. In District 12, women work in the mines also and both genders compete in the Games, and in the Glade, the all-male community takes on feminine jobs as well – and no-one comments on the

absence of women. Only *The Selection* has a clear distinction between the two genders. Not only do the Selection girls sign a contract in which they state they become Maxon's property, men have masculine jobs such as ruling the country or being a guard, while the women are maids or amuse themselves in the Women's Room. Yet, most series do not explicitly engage with gender equality, only *Uglies* comments on it. When Tally is stuck in the reservation in *Pretties*, she realises the female villagers merely do housework and can eat only after the men have. She explicitly comments on the villagers' oppression of women when her travel companion Andrew Simpson Smith makes a sexist remark: "being born into a culture that assumed women were servants didn't make it okay to go along with the plan" (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 291). In "Girl Parts: The Female Body, Subjectivity and Technology in Posthuman Young Adult Fiction", Victoria Flanagan argues that Westerfeld's use of the adjective "pretties" for both men and women, is a clever critique of gender politics (43). "The world has become less fixated on gender difference, but this has not produced the type of gender equality feminists might have hoped for" (Flanagan 43). In *Uglies*, all Pretties are nice, obedient and beautiful because of operation and the lesions in their brains. Being Pretty limits the agency of both men and women, making them equal.

Young adult protagonist as central character

Both Jesse Kavadlo and Carrie Hintz claim that young adult dystopian fiction has a young adult protagonist, the same age as the intended reader, as a central character who lives in the totalitarian regime. Moreover, this protagonist is most often female, and part of a love triangle.

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen is not only the main character, but also the first person narrator, the protagonist and the hero (Kavadlo 146-7). Katniss tells us her story, and we feel her pain. According to Kavadlo, Katniss is tough and cunning, but not book-smart, and she is skilled at traditionally masculine tasks like hunting. She is self-preserving, and she

is altruistic, even if she seems to sacrifice herself for her sister and others whom she loves (Kavadlo 147). President Snow, the ruler of *The Hunger Games*' totalitarian state, does not only wish to control all people of Panem, he also wishes to control Katniss personally. After Katniss's act of rebellion at the end of her participation in the Hunger Games, Snow is afraid she will cause an uprising in Panem. He tries to dictate what she does, and even chooses the dress she wears on television. However, Snow is unable to control Katniss. To kill her, the 75th Hunger Games are organised, and the tributes are reaped from the existing victors. This means that Katniss and Peeta must compete in the arena again. However, Snow's plan backfires as Katniss becomes the Mockingjay, the face of the rebellion. Yet, Katniss is not only controlled by President Snow, but also by the Rebellion. "Another power player who has decided to use me as a piece in her games. [...] First there were the Gamemakers, making me their star and then scrambling to recover from that handful of poisonous berries. Then President Snow, trying to use me to put out the flames of rebellion, only to have my every move become inflammatory. Next, the Rebels ensnaring me [...] and making me their Mockingjay. And now Coin" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 70). In *Catching Fire*, Katniss is ordered to wear a wedding dress by President Snow. Her stylist Cinna comprises; however, the dress turns to fire when Katniss spins. The result is a black feathered dress, and when Katniss raises her arms, she looks like a mockingjay spreading its wings. By dressing Katniss in this outfit, Cinna predestines Katniss's role as the figurehead of the rebellion. However, Katniss has had no say in this costume. While the flames mark Katniss as a dangerous revolutionary, her role is forced on her, rather than chosen (Byrne 56). Everything Katniss does or says, influences what happens in Panem. In the first novel, Katniss has agency. She volunteers as a tribute to save her sister, and she saves herself and Peeta in the Games by almost eating the poisonous berries. However, from this spark of rebellion onwards, she is seen as a threat by the Capitol, and a figure of hope for the rebellion. Although people want to control her, she still has her own agenda, she wants to save her friends

and loved ones. Kavadlo argues that the protagonists of young adult dystopias want to remove their personal rivals and save themselves, but also their family and society, just by being themselves (137). In the *Hunger Games*, Katniss does exactly that.

The kind of personal control that President Snow tries to have over Katniss is apparent in *Selection* and *Uglies* as well. Like Katniss, in *The Selection*, America Singer is the main character, first person narrator, protagonist and hero. America is not afraid to speak her mind and winds up in trouble because of it. Although she sees the terrors of the society she lives in and she is quite critical of the caste system, America has no explicit wish to escape or be chosen and recognised as special, as Kavadlo argues (137). However, America's acts, like those of Katniss, inspire the nation and gives hope to the rebels, although she "wasn't trying to be a hero" (Cass, *The One* 45). During an attack of the Palace, America makes sure her maids are safe. When a guard sends them away, she replies "'No! They're with me. They're staying,' with authority" (Cass, *The One* 301). America is celebrated by the lower castes for her thoughtfulness and kindness towards them: "you acted for those who couldn't speak up for themselves. That's special, America" (Cass, *The One* 45). In this way, she does become special, just by being her authentic self. America being herself is already stressed during her make-over on arriving at the Palace: "Everyone else looked like a One. I looked like a Five in a nice dress [...] But at least I looked like me" (Cass, *Selection* 122). The control that King Clarkson exerts over America Singer in *The Selection* is based on the same principle as *The Hunger Games*. King Clarkson threatens to hurt America's family so that she does not speak about dissolving the caste system on national television. Also, he tries to keep Maxon from choosing her as his bride, so that Illéa will not go along with her ideas. When King Clarkson is killed by the rebels, the control he has is immediately gone as Maxon and the whole country do support America's ideas.

In *Uglies*, Dr. Cable tries to control Tally. She blackmails Tally into infiltrating the rebels in the Smoke, she trails Tally and destroys the Smoke. In *Pretties*, Dr. Cable is intrigued by Tally's actions as her mind has dissolved its lesions on its own: "You resist conditioning very well. [...] Somewhere in there, you still are a tricky little ugly, aren't you? Most impressive. I could use you, I think" (Westerfeld 125). Following Kavadlo, Tally really is special just by being herself, as she is the only one who does not need a cure to remove the lesions as her brain gets rid of the lesions on its own. Unlike President Snow and King Clarkson, who see Katniss and America as threats to their system, Dr. Cable sees Tally as her protégé. Although she resists at first, in *Specials*, Tally decides to become an elite special anyway, and she enjoys this immensely as she can think for herself but has heightened senses and powers. When in the end, everyone is operated to become 'despecialised', Dr. Cable saves Tally from the operation and Tally becomes the only true special left, following Dr. Cable's wishes. Although Tally gets rid of the totalitarian regime and thus saves the world by being special, she is different from the other young adult protagonists. Throughout the novels, she is obsessed with becoming prettier and more special. Though her brain gets rid of the lesions, she keeps looking down upon her friends and is repulsed by people less pretty or special like her. She betrays her friends a few times as well, and not only because she is blackmailed by Dr. Cable. During one of their fights, Shay shouts at Tally that "no cure is going to make you any different – you were busy betraying people a long time ago. You didn't need any operation to make you selfish and shallow and full of yourself. You already were!" (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 138). Unlike the other protagonists, Tally does not want to save her friends, she herself comes first. It seems like Tally only rebels against the lesions because she wants to think more clearly, not because she wants to save the world.

The Lunar Chronicles has not one, but several protagonists; one for each of the four novels. Cinder is a cyborg mechanic in New-Beijing, Scarlet is a farm girl from France trying

to find her missing grandmother, Cress is programmer with extremely long hair, locked away in a satellite, and Winter is Levana's beautiful stepdaughter who is plagued by hallucinations. Although the story starts out with Cinder and she becomes the face of rebellion, the other women are also given a voice, backstory, and agency. Through various circumstances, these women meet and team up to fight the Lunar queen. Following Hintz and Kavadlo, the protagonists see the terrors of the society they live in and most of them have the wish to escape from this social order. Their wish was never to be chosen and recognised but when Cinder realises that her ancestry and gift are special, she chooses to act upon it herself. Unlike Katniss, America and Tally, who were forced into the role, Cinder deliberately chooses to rebel. Cinder and her friends carefully plan the rebellion, and although Prince Kai is not looking forward to do his part, he realises "this was the only way to give Cinder the chance she needed to face Levana and start her rebellion. Cinder's success would rid them all of Levana and her tyranny. No more plague. No more war" (Meyer, *Winter* 140). Kavadlo argues that the goal of a protagonist is wanting to remove their personal rivals and saving themselves (137), and Cinder explicitly comments on this when she muses "[t]his wasn't about assassinating Levana. This was about giving the citizens of Luna a voice and ensuring it was heard" (Meyer, *Winter* 168). Cinder's rebellion focuses on removing Levana from power and saving society, not a personal vendetta between her and Levana. This is unlike Katniss's goal; her main focus is killing Snow: "All that keeps me going is Coin's promise. That I can kill Snow. And when that's done, nothing is left" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 411). A protégé-like link does not only exist between Tally and Dr. Cable, but also between Cinder and Levana in *The Lunar Chronicles*. Although Cinder does not agree with the way Levana rules, this is not Levana's main reason for wanting to kill Cinder. Cinder is actually the long-lost princess Selene of Luna, the niece Levana tried to kill when she was still a baby. Levana and Cinder both have an incredible gift, and Levana is afraid Cinder will claim her right to the throne. Moreover, like Katniss, Cinder is a symbol of hope for the

rebellion. Although she is a cyborg and has nothing yet to prove herself, the sole idea of an heir to the throne being alive, gives the people hope.

Claeys and Tower Sargent argue that the protagonist of young adult dystopian fiction is most often female, and this holds true as *The Maze Runner* is the only novel with a male protagonist. Like the women in the other series, Thomas has rebellious tendencies and decides not to follow the rules. When he realizes that Minho and the injured Alby will not return out of the Maze on time, “he squeeze[s] past the connecting rods at the last second and step[s] into the Maze” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 112). Thomas disobeys the rules, opting for self-sacrifice, in order to save the lives of his fellow Gladers. Although hierarchy is imposed on him, Thomas values community and brotherhood over the sanctions he knows he will receive (Elliot 189). Like Cinder, Thomas also knows he has a special role to play that he chooses himself. From his first days in the Glade, Thomas knows that he wants to be a Runner (Elliot 187). The other boys are afraid of entering the maze, but Thomas feels that “inexplicably, it [...] call[s] to him” (Dashner, *The Maze Runner* 96). Although Thomas knows the dangers, “the desire to become a Runner [is] the only thing driving him on” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 101). Through this desire, Thomas wants to save, not only himself, but all Gladers: “I just... feel like I need to save everyone. To redeem myself” (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 316).

Finally, Kavadlo adds that the protagonist of a young adult dystopia is involved in a love triangle (137). In *The Selection*, the focus is on America choosing between Aspen and Maxon, and in *The Hunger Games*, Katniss has to choose between Peeta and Gale as well. Moreover, a love triangle exists in *Uglies*, as Tally also must choose between David and Zane. Even *The Maze Runner*'s Thomas gets involved with both Teresa and Brenda, albeit this is less focused on than in the other novels. However, in *The Lunar Chronicles*, all characters are evenly matched up with just one love interest. Nevertheless, four out of five young adult dystopias feature a love triangle.

The savage

Like in *Brave New World*, in utopian and dystopian fiction the savage is often used to show differences between communities, between the old world and the new world and how someone is supposed to behave and a cast-out. In the analysis of this element in the young adult dystopias, the savage will be identified and its role in the story will be determined.

In the young adult dystopias, not many savages can be distinguished as these stories seem more complex than traditional utopias. The worlds are not divided in two groups like in *We*, *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. There is not just the ruling class and the rebellion, or the new world and the savages. The characters are mixed up in different communities and different roles. *The Hunger Games* and *Selection* series are written from the point of view of the lower district or caste. Katniss and America, and their family and friends, are purposefully kept poor and dirty. Fisher argues that “the Capitol’s oppression of the districts is perhaps most obviously read in terms of colonial domination. In the Games, the colonized are forced to celebrate their own defeat and to acknowledge the unassailability of their colonizers’ power” (30). Although, as a colony, they are part of the system and when they are taken in by the ruling class, they are dressed in their clothing and treated equal in the Selection and Hunger Games. When looking for a more traditional savage, in *The Hunger Games* we might look towards the rebels in District 13, who have a similar function to the savages in Zamyatin’s *We*. District 13 is closed off from Panem and its inhabitants imagined dead, however, they do this voluntarily and they are by no means savage in their ways. In *Selection*, the Southern rebels fit the definition of savage better. Not much is said about them, except that “their attacks are much more... lethal” opposed to the Northern rebels and that they are “dingy, mostly men, lean but strong, no sort of emblem as far as we can tell” (Cass, *Selection* 158). While the Northern rebels just want to dissolve the castes, the Southern rebels are bloodthirsty killers, set on eradicating the monarchy by force.

All protagonists in *The Lunar Chronicles* are peculiar and do not fully fit in with their community, be it on Earth or on Lunar. Therefore, they can all be seen as an individual Other in their own surroundings, but they do not form a coherent group as in the original dystopias. Cinder is treated as a non-human because she is a cyborg. She is cast out by her family because of what she is and she has less rights because of her cyborg parts. Cress is cast out as well, because she is a shell (non-magic lunar) she is sent out on a spaceship to circle Luna, alone. The Crew the women get together to invade Lunar is essentially a band of misfits. Thorne is a wanted thief, Iko is an android, Jacin is a royal guard, and Wolf is a genetically manipulated special operative. As Taylor Swift would sum up: "a band of thieves in ripped up jeans got to rule the world". However, although these separate groups exist, Earth is at peace and no real savage groups exist. On Lunar though, Artemesia and the sectors surrounding it can be read like the colonial oppression in *The Hunger Games*, as these regimes are built up the same way.

In book two of the *Maze Runner* series, *The Scorch Trials*, Thomas encounters the Cranks, who are described as "savages" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 367). These citizens are infected by the plague, and through the disease they are turned into crazed zombie-like killers. In order to contain the disease, WICKED put them in Crank Palaces, facilities where Cranks are kept from the outside world: "a place where they send the infected and try to make it bearable for them until they reach the Gone" (Dashner, *Death Cure* 168). For example, the Denver Crank Palace was set up as a small town where the Cranks lived in huts, and there even was a bowling alley to provide them with entertainment. A guard explains: "You can't just leave 'em hanging out with the healthy folks in the fortified cities. You can't just dump 'em in a place full of Cranks way past the Gone and let 'em get eaten alive. And no government's gotten desperate enough yet to start killing people as soon as they catch the Flare" (Dashner, *Scorch Trials* 173). Although the Crank Palaces start out like a small community with nice facilities,

closed off like a reservation, when they get more ill, they become mad and it turns in a place of kill-hungry savages.

In *Uglies*, two kinds of savages can be distinguished. In the Smoke, the rebel Smokies live like the 'Rusties', the people from before the operations. They have no electricity, grow their own food, kill animals, cut down trees and use fire to cook and boil water. Moreover, they have a library with books and magazines from the Rusty ages. But the most remarkable aspect of the Smokies is that some of them do age, as they have escaped before getting the operation. When Tally first meets the Smokies, she is disgusted by their savage ways. Her experiences with the Smokies gradually change her point of view, but, as Flanagan argues "also act to strengthen the binary relationship between natural and organic human bodies of ugly Tally and the Smokies and the unnatural, technologically altered bodies of the pretties" (45). This difference is especially evident as Tally has "memories of the aging uglies' faces that still brought [her] awake screaming sometimes" (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 20). Next to the Smokies, *Uglies* also features Andrew Simpson Smith and his villagers. He lives in a reservation that Special Circumstances uses to study human nature. Andrew still lives like the Pre-Rusties, speaks a language Tally does not recognize, and worships Pretties as Gods because they are so beautiful. "Tally saw it then, why the Specials could allow the village to exist. This wasn't just a few stray people living in the wilderness; it was someone's pet anthropology project, a preserve of some kind. Or... what had the Rusties called it? This was a reservation" (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 281). This reservation used for experiments and study closely reflects the savage reservation in *Brave New World*. Like that savage reservation, Andrew's village is used as "an educational tool to highlight oppositions between it and the mores of [Tally's world]" (Greenberg and Waddell 63).

Conclusion

To answer the main research question on how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction, this chapter examined the dystopian elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist and the savage.

In the young adult dystopias, all totalitarian regimes came into existence after a natural disaster or world war. Most rigorously planned societies take on the same form: a big rich city with poor and oppressed surrounding districts, sectors or provinces. In *The Selection*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Lunar Chronicles*, it is immediately clear who the regimes' mastermind is, but in *Uglies* it takes more time, while in *The Maze Runner*, the extent of the dystopia only becomes clear in the final pages. Reproductive control is less visible and strict in young adult dystopias than in traditional dystopias. Sexuality is often not part of the stories at all, indicating that it still is a taboo in young adult literature. When looking at gender, it seems that there is a relation between how dystopian the story is. In *The Selection*, dystopia is not the dominant narrative register, and in Illéa men and women are not equal. However, the other series have a much more dystopian setting, and the genders are more equal. It seems that the world coming to an end, influences which roles society needs to fill. However, only *Uglies* actively participates in the feminist debate by commenting on gender equality.

In the researched dystopias, all protagonists turn out to be special and indispensable. The protagonists emerge as the face of the rebellion and the hero of the story. They are essential in bringing down the totalitarian regime and saving themselves and their friends, although Tally is more selfish. However, not all protagonists have a wish to be chosen, as Katniss, America and Tally are all forced into this role by the regime's leader. However, Thomas and Cinder do take control themselves. Fitting Kavadlo and Hintz's definitions, all protagonists are young adults who turn out to be special, just by being themselves. Also, the claim that this genre

favours female protagonists holds true, as Thomas is the only male protagonist. Finally, love triangles are a prominent feature of young adult dystopias as well.

The young adult dystopias feature various kinds of savages, and there is no binary opposition as in the traditional dystopias. These savages fulfil several roles. In *The Lunar Chronicles*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Selection*, the systems of cities with surrounding districts are a form of colonial oppression. In *Uglies*, the Smokies and *Brave New World*-like reservation show the differences between the dystopian ideal and the horrible past. On the contrary, in *The Maze Runner* the Cranks are a warning of what will happen in the future if a cure cannot be found.

Chapter 4 - Fairy tale elements

To answer the main research question on how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction, these elements must be analysed first. This chapter will examine the fairy tale elements of the prince and princess, the quest, and the happy end. These elements have been defined in the theoretical framework, and these definitions will be used to see how these three elements are incorporated in the sample of young adult dystopian fiction. Important passages of *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *The Selection* by Kiera Cass, and *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer will be analysed to discuss the fairy tale elements in these texts. The subquestions that will be answered in this chapter are how are fairy tale elements incorporated in young adult dystopian fiction? How do these fairy tale elements relate to gender? And how does young adult dystopian fiction fit in with the original fairy tale?

Prince and princess

The main characters of the young adult dystopias will be investigated to find out if they can be seen as the princes and princesses of the story. Special attention will be given to whether the woman is portrayed as a passive and obedient damsel in distress and the man as smart, cunning and ambitious, or if these characters subvert these fairy tale stereotypes. Also, Gilbert and Gubart's female archetypes will be evaluated. Finally, the importance of beauty will be analysed.

The Lunar Chronicles novels are explicit rewritings of fairy tales, with recognizable story lines, references to the original fairy tales and other adaptations, and literal quotes. Each novel follows the life of a fairy tale princess. All characters have clear references to their recognizable and original stories. For example, Cinder lives with her stepmother and stepsisters

since her father has died, and she is invited to prince Kai's royal ball, where she loses her foot. Scarlet lives with her grandmother, but when her grandmother disappears she goes looking for her and meets Wolf. And princess Winter is the most beautiful person on Lunar, although she does not use her glamour to appear this way. To become the most beautiful and beloved queen, Levana asks one of her royal guards to kill Winter. Next to the story lines closely resembling the original fairy tales, the love interests are also included, and many funny little references are made. For example, Cress's love interest is Captain Carswell Thorne, who has stolen a spaceship called The Rampion and who becomes blinded when he tries to save her from her satellite. In the Brothers Grimm version of the tale, Rapunzel's mother wants to eat rampion from the neighbour's garden, and this is the reason she must give up her baby. Also, Rapunzel's prince falls from the tower and gets blinded by the thorns he falls into. The fact that Thorne is a handsome thief may be a reference to Disney's *Tangled*, where Rapunzel's saviour Flynn Rider is also a good-looking thief. Finally, each novel is divided in several parts, and each part starts with a quote from the original fairy tale. In *Scarlet*, for example, part four starts with "the better to eat you with, my dear" (Meyer 341) and *Cinder*'s second part starts off with the sentence: "There was no bed for her, and at night when she had worked herself weary, she had to sleep in the hearth by the ashes" (Meyer 85). Through these literal quotes, Meyer explicitly engages with the classical fairy tales.

In *Art of Subversion*, Jack Zipes argues that the classical fairy tale reinforced the patriarchal social order based on rigid notions of sexuality and gender (194). The heroines were beautiful, passive, obedient and self-sacrificial. Walt Disney retained these patriarchal notions and stereotypical attitudes towards women in his fairy tales as well. Most fairy tale criticism focuses on the princess who is depicted as a damsel in distress (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 194, 204). In *The Lunar Chronicles*, Cress resembles this traditional princess most. Although she initiates contact with Cinder, to warn her of Levana's plan to kill Kai after the wedding, she is

passive and dependant. Because she has been isolated for so long, with only a computer to keep her company, her social skills are not well developed, and she is shy and quiet. In her satellite, she amused herself by playing games against her computer and watching drama series. Because of these drama series, she is a hopeless romantic. When Thorne and Cress are lost in the desert and they are dying of dehydration, Cress's greatest regret is that she did not experience love:

Misery washing over her, she crumpled against his side. Her head spun. "I'm dying", she murmured, struck by the certainty of it. "I'm going to die. And I've never even been kissed [...] We were going to have such a passionate romance, too. Like in the drama's. But no – I'll die alone, never kissed, not once." (Meyer, *Cress* 204)

From the moment Cress saw his handsome picture, she was in love with Thorne and although he is a thief and quite selfish, she refuses to acknowledge his bad side. When they first meet, when Cinder and Thorne come to rescue her from the satellite, Cress says "I prefer damsel in distress" when Thorne claims "But you're a prisoner" (Meyer, *Cress* 48). Cress explicitly identifies with a traditional fairy tale princess. Further in the novel, when she is in trouble again, she thinks to herself: "Thorne would come for her. He was a hero. She was a damsel. That's how stories went - that's how they always went" (Meyer, *Cress* 293). Cress not only thinks of herself as a damsel that needs to be rescued, she also views the other women this way: "With a quick twist of the heart, Cress's fear of [Wolf] began to subside. She'd been right back at the boutique. He was like the hero of a romance story, and he was trying to rescue his beloved [Scarlet]" (Meyer, *Cress* 419). As the story progresses, Cress becomes less passive and scared and she starts to show more agency. As an accomplished programmer and hacker, she proves her worth to the rest of the crew, and she gets more confident with them. When they get to Luna and are caught, she sacrifices herself to help them get away from Levana. Moreover, when Jacin wants to help her get out of Artemesia, she declines, as she decides she is of better use in the palace, as she can hack from there. Although she is sacrificial and rather hides than fights, she

becomes brave and uses her brains to help. At the end of the series, Cress's personality has become like that of the other protagonists in *The Lunar Chronicles*. Like Cress, these women have jobs or talents that are usually seen as masculine as Cinder is a mechanic, and Scarlet is a pilot and oversees her grandmother's farm. Cinder, Scarlet and Winter are all disobedient and ambitious. They know what they want to do in life and strive to achieve this, Winter even does this through battling her hallucinations. The women are smart and creative and give orders instead of following them.

Jack Zipes argues that the composite male hero in fairy tales should be ambitious and social success and achievement is more important than securing a marriage. Heroes should not always be good looking, but be smart, courageous and show manners (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 42). In *The Lunar Chronicles*, all women have a male love interest. Cinder and Prince/Emperor Kai are matched up, Scarlet and Wolf, Cress and Thorne, and Winter and Jacin become a couple and all relationships are evenly matched. Cinder kidnaps Kai, in order to save Earth, but they work out a plan together. When Levana is defeated, she decides to stay on Luna to build up the country instead of joining him back on Earth. Only after Luna is left in good hands, she agrees to marry Kai and become his empress. Therefore, their marriage does not include expanding their rule, like the original fairy tale princes do. However, all men are smart, courageous and show manners. In Winter's story, Jacin follows the rags to riches arc, a poor guard dating the princess. However, because he is Winter's personal guard, he insists on being well-mannered and professional around her, while she tries to get closer and is more emotional. Kai is a prince with the entire world swooning about him, Thorne is a handsome thief and Jacin a good-looking guard. Scarlet and Wolf's romance is an allusion to *Beauty and the Beast* as well as to *Red Riding Hood* as Wolf is the only man who is not described as handsome. Although Wolf is big and strong, he is genetically altered to be wolf-like with sharp teeth and has scars all over. Because of his alteration, he feels extremely protective of Scarlet, calling her his "alpha female"

(Meyer, *Scarlet* 446). Wolf becomes even more of a beast when he is turned into a mutant soldier by Levana:

He could see the difference in his bone structure when he looked at his hands and feet. He could feel the difference in his protruding mouth, his enlarged teeth, his malformed jaw. They'd altered his facial bone structure, making way for the implanted canine teeth. There was a new curvature to his shoulders and an awkward flex of his feet, which looked more like paws now, made for running and bounding at great speeds. His hands were enormous, now fixed with reinforced, claw-shaped fingernails. (Meyer, *Winter* 561)

The mental alterations cause him to be even more loyal to the people he loves, causing him to defer from Levana's orders and protect Scarlet and her friends. Although he is turned into this ugly beast, Scarlet still loves him, and does not care that he is not handsome. The women in *The Lunar Chronicles* resist the fairy tale stereotype of the obedient and passive heroine, but the men all fit in with the composite male hero.

In *The Selection*, America Singer closely follows the Cinderella rags to riches fairy tale arc. As a poor girl from a low caste, she steps up the ladder and ultimately becomes queen. She is quite feminine, working as a musician and helping with housework. Moreover, when she is at the Palace, she is expected to wear beautiful dresses (93) and heels (100), do needlework, and converse nicely. Through lessons on "conduct and protocol" she learns how to behave like a princess (Cass, *Selection* 124). The goal of these lessons is that the future queen becomes just as "lovely and delicate" as the present Queen Amberly, who has stereotypical feminine fairy tale traits appointed to her character throughout the series (Cass, *Selection* 149). However, passive, obedient and self-sacrificial are not words to describe America's personality. Although she must adhere to certain rules in the Palace, she is quite rebellious, which is a trait that Prince Maxon is attracted to. America's first words to Maxon are "I am not your dear" (113) and on

their next meeting, she “knead His Majesty in the thigh. Hard” (Cass, *Selection* 145). Zipes argues that in fairy tales, a woman knows how to control herself at all times, but America still has a lot to learn. Like a true prince, Maxon shows manners and is smart. Moreover, he is masculine in being uncomfortable dealing with emotions. Him “get[ting] confused by crying women” is repeated throughout the series (Cass, *Selection* 145). In *The Selection* series, the characters fit in with the traditional fairy tale stereotypes.

Although Katniss is nothing close to a real princess, Jesse Kavadlo does describe her by comparing her to a fairy tale character. “Unlike many fairy-tale heroes, Katniss seems to have learned more from her father than her mother” Kavadlo claims in *American Popular Culture in the Era of Terror* (149). Katniss is tough and resourceful, she hunts and takes care of her family. Her father is important in forming Katniss, as he taught her important skills: “There is food, if you know where to find it. My father knew and he taught me some before he was blown to bits in a mine explosion [...] five years later, I still wake up screaming for him to run” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 5). Katniss thinks of him and hears his voice in her head frequently. She inherits her bow from him (5), tells us that her father “was particularly fan of mockingjays” (43) and she learned to shoot rabbits “with my father’s guidance” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 51). At the end of her first Hunger Games, her father’s voice even saves her and Peeta’s life: “not these, Katniss. Never these. They’re nightlock. You’ll be dead before they reach your stomach” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 318). Katniss does not have a fairy godmother looking out for her, but has her father filling that role. Not only her upbringing is un-fairy tale like, also her hunting goes against the stereotypical fairy tale princess. As a result of Disney’s films, animals are seen as princess’s assistants. For Katniss this is different, as “I finally had to kill the lynx because he scared off game. I almost regretted it because he wasn’t bad company. But I got a decent price for his pelt” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 7). However, Katniss does sing with mockingjays, like Disney princesses such as Snow White, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella do. In Katniss’s first

Games, she uses four notes that she whistles to communicate with her friend and fellow tribute Rue from district 11. Mockingjays repeat these tunes to her. When Rue dies, the whistling of the notes becomes a way of communication between the rebels. In *Mockingjay*, Katniss sings “The Hanging Tree”, together with mockingjays, on camera for a promotional video (Collins 144).

Because her father died, and her mother succumbed to depression, Katniss assumes the role of the masculine protector of the family (Kirby 468). Although she is only eleven years old when her father dies, she takes on the same masculine roles as her friend Gale Hawthorne, who also lost his father in the mining accident. If Katniss had not taken on these roles, and instead acted as was expected from women, her family would not have survived in District 12 (Manter and Francis 290). In “Katniss's Oppositional Romance: Survival Queer and Sororal Desire in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* Trilogy”, Lisa Manter and Lauren Francis argue that, as a result, “Katniss’s concepts of gender, family, and expressions of love, and her role vis-à-vis all three, become tied to the need to ensure safety and provide basic necessities for those in her immediate circle who cannot protect themselves” (290). Many read Katniss as a powerful feminist protagonist who subverts gender roles because of the protective masculine role she takes on (Manter and Francis 286). For example, Ellyn Lem and Holly Hassel observe that Katniss “challenges our traditional understanding of the heroic modernist narrative” (123) by being physically fit, bold, and a hunter. Following this, Jennifer Mitchell calls Katniss powerful because of her “ability to perform—both consciously and unconsciously—various genders” (129) by taking on both masculine and feminine roles. In the trilogy, Katniss has two suitors, Peeta Mellark and Gale Hawthorne, but she frequently reminds them both that she has no time for relationships. Instead, she wants to focus on her fight against the Capitol. Both Philip Kirby and Jesse Kavadlo argue that Gale and Peeta are opposites of each other (Kirby 469, Kavadlo 148). Like Katniss, Gale is outdoorsy, active and hunts (Kavadlo 148-9). On the contrary, Peeta

is passive and protects himself in the Hunger Games by hiding and painting himself. As a baker's son, he is skilled in decorating "fancy cakes with flowers and pretty things painted in frosting" (Collins, *Hunger Games* 96). When Peeta's leg is injured in the Games, he becomes a real liability to Katniss. She has to protect and rescue him, subverting their gender roles. On the other hand, Gale is the masculine warrior, a rebel who is willing to sacrifice everything to succeed (Guanio-Uluru 222). Kavadlo argues that "unlike her Victorian counterparts in fairy tales, Katniss marries the nice guy who has always loved and sustained her when she was hungry" (Kavadlo 152). Gale himself states that "Katniss will pick the one she can't survive without" (385), and Peeta is the one who saves her from her attempted suicides and "is the dandelion in the spring" (436), which she needs to survive because "Gale's fire is kindled with hate and rage. And I have plenty of fire myself" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 453). Peeta is celebrated for his gentleness; his caring and loving personality trumps over Gale's aggression (Kirby 469). Although Peeta and Katniss subvert their gender roles in their relationship, the romance elements of the novels are seen to undermine her independence and agency. Katniss's romantic relationships are seen as passive and forced upon her by the discourses of power that surround her (Manter and Francis 287). Alison Bewley argues that "despite [Katniss's] masculine and androgynous traits, her relationships with other characters in the trilogy show that she is an object acted on or against more than she is an actor in her own right" (375). Katniss herself realises this as well: "Every emotion I have has been taken and exploited by the Capitol or the rebels" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 386). According to Lykke Guanio-Uluru, Katniss is coerced by Panem's patriarchal structures and by Haymitch and Peeta to act more feminine to increase her chances of surviving the Games (212). Haymitch and Peeta think up a scheme to make Katniss appear more desirable. During the televised interviews before the Games, Peeta says he is in love with Katniss and that his goal is to get her out alive. During the Games, Katniss realises that the people of Panem sponsor her when she shows feelings towards Peeta, so she goes along

with this game, professing her love to him and helping him, so that they can both survive. In *Catching Fire*, Katniss and Peeta claim to be engaged in order to appease their fans. In a last attempt to get Katniss out of their second Games, Peeta says Katniss is pregnant during an interview. Although their relationship is forced upon Katniss at first, when Peeta is taken away from her and tortured into hating her, she realises how much she loves him and takes back agency in order to save him and remind him of their past. In short, although Katniss starts out as a masculine character and her and Peeta's gender roles are reversed in their relationship, she is coerced by others to appear more feminine and ultimately is saved by a man.

The only male protagonist, *The Maze Runner's* Thomas, is described as a composite male fairy tale hero. Thomas is seen as smart, and his rationality is stressed. When looking for a solution to the Maze, he thinks "it was the only explanation his rational mind could accept" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 219). Thomas's thinking process is stressed as well, as he speaks or makes decisions "after a lot of deliberation" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 221). His rationality is apparent in his love triangle as well. Unlike the other series, feelings and emotions are barely mentioned. When, for example, Thomas and Teresa hold hands, this is mentioned matter-of-factly and there are no thoughts about what this means. Next to Thomas being depicted as smart and thoughtful, he is also courageous. When sacrificing himself to save his fellow Gladers, Newt calls Thomas "half brave and half bloody stupid" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 301). The first time Thomas meets Teresa, "she smiled for the first time, and he almost had to look away, as if something that nice didn't belong in such a glum and gray place, as if he had no right to look at her expression" and a line further, Teresa tells him "I'm scared" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 235). Although she is depicted as a scared, pretty fairy tale princess at their first meeting, Teresa quickly proves herself to be just as tough as the boys. When Thomas tells her to stay close when running from Grievers, she responds "Ah, my Knight in Shining Armor. What, you don't think I can fend for myself?" (Dashner, *Maze Runner* 329). Teresa is just as strong, courageous and

smart as the boys. Moreover, the series does not comment on her looks or beauty, it is not important to the story.

In *Pretties*, Tally has various “bogus” dreams about a princess “locked in a high tower, one whose smart walls would give her [...] anything she wants. And best of all, there was this mirror on the wall, so that the princess could look at her beautiful self all day long” (Westerfeld 230). Like in *Sleeping Beauty*, this tower has a dragon with “jewelled eyes and hungry, cruel features” (43) guarding the princess, and the chapter in which Tally meets Dr. Cable is fittingly called “The Dragon” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 121). Tally’s first dream ended “with one big kiss, a classic happy ending. Except for one thing. The prince was totally ugly” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 44). However, in a later dream “it was pretty clear that no prince was showing up, or at least that he was really late” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 231). Tally’s dreams mirror her love story and predict her happy ending with David. Although Tally dates both Zane and David (“How lucky is that? [...] Sleeping Beauty with two princes” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 325)), unlike Katniss or America, Tally does not really have to choose. When Tally is a Pretty, she is repulsed by David’s ugliness and loves Zane because he “was special [...] and that made him even prettier than the others, somehow” (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 54). When she becomes a Special and Zane is ill, she becomes repulsed by his weakness instead. When Zane dies, Tally chooses to stay with David. However, she does not choose him out of love, she thinks “he wasn’t an Ugly anymore, to her he was just David. And maybe he had been right. She doesn’t have to do this alone” (Westerfeld, *Specials* 346). While her dreams make their romance sound like a fairy tale, the truth is less happy as she chooses for an easy way out, as “she doesn’t need a handsome prince, or an ugly one, for that matter. After all, Tally had cured herself”, throwing off the stereotypical fairy tale dependency (Westerfeld, *Pretties* 326).

In *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that male writers use two female

archetypes: on the one hand the idealist image of the angel, the woman who is selfless and pure, and on the other hand the female monster, the woman who is active, aggressive and unfeminine. Although the young adult dystopias are almost all written by women, this theory is based on a reading of Snow White and the Evil Stepmother. In *The Lunar Chronicles* these characters are rewritten and updated, however, the archetypes are still there. Levana is cruel, power-hungry, manipulative and vain. On the contrary, Winter is portrayed as good, pure, selfless and optimistic. Throughout the novels, Levana is depicted as a monster. Winter stops using her gift, because she does not want to become like her, even though it gives her hallucinations and she is slowly going crazy. “That day I swore to never manipulate anyone again. Even if I believed I was doing good – for who am I to presume what is good for others?” (Meyer, *Winter* 269). Like Winter, Cinder has a distrust of her gift because of Levana. Although she does not stop using her gift and even actively trains it, she cares about the people she manipulates. In *Scarlet*, she accidentally controls a police officer, who guards her and then dies (Meyer 357). Cinder then realises that she can easily become a monster like Levana, and from then on, she always asks people first before she glamours them. Apart from *The Lunar Chronicles*, these archetypes do not appear in the young adult dystopias. In *The Selection*, although the girls are all striving for Maxon’s hand in marriage, they are quite civil towards each other and Marlee and America even become best friends. The only monstrous character is Celeste, who harasses and manipulates the others to appear more likable herself. In *The One*, she even calls America “you slut!” when the girls confess their experiences with Maxon to each other (Cass 21). However, Celeste comes clean in the end and repents. President Coin in *The Hunger Games*, Dr. Cable in *Uglies* and Ava Paige from *The Maze Runner* are all depicted as the antagonist, however, they are given a back story that explains their choices and shows their redeeming qualities. Because of this, they are seen less as a monster than Levana, whose backstory underscores her evil

personality. Moreover, Katniss, Tally and Teresa all have their negative traits as well, and thus the archetypes do not work on either side.

As stated before, fairy tale heroines are supposed to be beautiful. In *The Lunar Chronicles*, an important theme is Levana's jealousy:

“The prettiest girl, Aimery?” Levana's light tone almost concealed the snarl beneath. Aimery slipped into a bow. “Prettiest only, My Queen. But no mortal could compare with your perfection”. (Meyer, *Winter* 10)

Levana is extremely jealous of Winter's beauty, so much that she tries to maim Winter's face, and even orders Jacin to kill Winter. The Lunar gift makes it possible for lunars to change their appearance and become more beautiful. However, beauty is only important for Levana and her court, not for the other women in the series. Although Winter, Cinder, Scarlet and Cress are adored by their significant others, their beauty is not prized by others. Cinder is even discriminated because of her cyborg arm and leg, and she wears long pants and gloves to conceal her body. When Kai first sees Cinder using her glamour, which she does instinctively to hide her cyborg foot, he even refrains from her, because her beauty is too cruel. None of the women care about looks, not even Winter, who is naturally beautiful. Cinder is always dirty because of her work, and Scarlet wears the same old red hoodie every day because she got it from her grandmother. On the Rampion, the whole crew wears old uniforms, because they are comfortable in those.

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss does not care how she looks either, her hunting gear and braided hair are useful and comfortable to her. In “Dressed for the Part: An Analysis of Clothing in Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* Trilogy”, Deirdre Byrne compares Katniss's story to *Cinderella*: “*Cinderella* is a popular fairy tale amongst young girls because of its implied promise that an ordinary girl can be transformed by the flash of a wand into a beauty in a ravishing ball gown” (55). The rags to riches story, and especially the transformation from a

masculine hunter to a celebrity in a mockingjay dress, is alike to Cinderella's story. To Katniss, the practice of beautification is alien, but she is grateful for it:

The team works on me until late afternoon, turning my skin to glowing satin, stencilling patterns on my arms, painting flame designs on my perfect nails. Then Venia goes to work on my hair [...] my dress, oh, my dress is entirely covered in reflective precious gems [...] for a while we all just stare at me. 'Oh Cinna,' I finally whisper. 'Thank you.'

(Collins, *Hunger Games* 139-40)

This Cinderella myth is repeated every time Katniss has to appear in front of the cameras. Whether for the contestant interviews, for the Victory Tour after winning her first Games, the photo shoots of bridal gowns in her own home after Peeta's proposal, or for the Quarter Quell makeover (Guanio-Uluru 213). Like Cinderella, Katniss's true self and inner worth are revealed through the beauty transformation. By wearing Cinna's creations, she is presented as a mockingjay and the face of a rebellion, and she shows how dangerous she is to President Snow's regime. Cinder's story is similar. When Cinder shows her glamour at the ball, her Lunar power is revealed. She demonstrates that she is lunar and has a powerful gift, and, also, she shows that she is the lost Princess Selene and is therefore a danger to Levana.

Like Katniss and Cinder, *The Selection's* America follows the rags to riches Cinderella transformation. She is chosen, dressed up like a princess and can show the world who she is and what she wants. Although America likes the pretty dresses, like Katniss she still prefers comfortable clothes, such as when she exclaims "I hate running in these shoes" (Cass, *The One* 2) when running for safety on high heels and, on her first day at the Palace, she bets Prince Maxon for a pair of pants (Cass, *Selection* 137). When America is afraid to lose Maxon to one of the other girls, she decides to dress and act sexier to seduce him. However, this plan backfires, as Maxon bursts out laughing at her attempt "I always wondered what it would like to see you try" (Cass, *The One* 13). America realises that "It was way too much. Even Celeste would not

have gone this far. My hair was too perfect, my makeup too heavy. He knew what I was trying to do from the second he walked through the doorway” (Cass, *The One* 13). Maxon chooses America because he likes who she is: down-to-earth, stubborn and strong. Although beauty is seen as a way to enhance America’s power, beauty is not a goal in *The Selection* series.

In *The Lunar Chronicles*, *The Hunger Games* and *Selection*, beauty is not essential to the female hero, but a beauty transformation helps in showing their true self and inner worth, and reaching their goal. *Uglies*, however, is dominated by beauty and it is a requirement for success. Tally is obsessed with becoming pretty, and although she has learned about the lesions, she still wants to undergo multiple operations to become a Pretty and a Special. In *Uglies*, a Pretty equals a good citizen. Like the angel archetype of Gilbert and Gubar, a Pretty is selfless, pure and obedient because of the lesions in its brain. However, this archetype does not restrict itself to women. Being Pretty limits the agency of both men and women, making them equal. Yet, this equality prevents them both from thinking critically and being cunning and ambitious. In *Uglies*, Westerfeld has forced the archetype of the beautiful, passive, and obedient female princess on everyone. Every Pretty, male or female, is a damsel in distress until they are given a cure for their lesions.

The quest

Both Propp and Lüthi agree that in a fairy tale, the hero goes out in the world to look for something and carry out a quest or a task (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 4). In analysing the young adult dystopias, the quest that is laid out for the protagonist of the story will be looked at.

Zipes argues that in fairy tales the women’s main goal is to get married, while the composite male hero in Perrault’s fairy tales should be ambitious and social success and achievement is more important than winning a wife (Zipes, *Art of Subversion* 42). Following this, the quest for the female protagonists should be seeking a husband. This aspect of the young

adult dystopias has been commented on in the previous section on the prince and princess element too, but will be expanded here. In *The Lunar Chronicles*, the women all end up in heterosexual romances, however, marriage is not their goal. The couples all discuss their future together, but they put their personal dreams before marriage. For example, Cress wants to travel the world, so Thorne and she decide to become ambassadors for Cinder. Cinder and Kai do want to get married eventually, but Cinder decides to first put Lunar back in order before she becomes Kai's empress. In the *Uglies* and *Maze Runner* series, marriage is also not something the protagonists strive for. Tally does end up in relationships, but marriage is never commented on, and although *The Death Cure* ends with Thomas and Brenda sitting close with their arms wrapped around each other, Earth's survival is of more pressing matter than their relationship.

The goal of heterosexual love is commented on by Katherine Broad in *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*, as she analyses Katniss's quest in *The Hunger Games*. Broad argues that although "readers rave about the ways Katniss can inspire young female readers [...] a closer reading suggests that her character also imparts a very different message, one that tells girls the importance of growing up to find satisfaction in heterosexual love and the nuclear family" (117–18). Although Katniss does not actively seek marriage, on the contrary, she decides she is not fit for love and motherhood (Collins, *Hunger Games* 9), at the close of the narrative, she has settled down as a wife and mother. Guanio-Uluru describes this as Katniss succumbing to the "romance ending of the happily ever after" (215). An interesting aspect of this is that in all the young adult dystopias, heterosexual love is found. No homosexual or bisexual relationships, or characters are mentioned in the series. This goes against the genre of young adult literature, as "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) young adult literature is increasing in popularity" (Jiménez 406). It seems that in dystopian young adult fiction, the conservative fairy tale romance plot is favoured over subverting sexuality.

The only female protagonist seeking marriage is America in *The Selection* series. The first novel starts off with her secret relationship with Aspen Leger, and when he lets her know she does not deserve him as a husband, she enters the selection in order to win Prince Maxon. Although the three novels are filled with America's indecisiveness between Aspen and Maxon, it is clear throughout the series that she will marry one of them eventually. In this way, *The Selection* fits in perfectly with the traditional fairy tale quest.

Only one of the five researched young adult dystopias has seeking marriage as a quest. Although these series do not fit in with the traditional fairy tale quest, the heroes do all go out in the world to look for something and carry out a quest. Furthermore, this quest is the same for all these series, as all the protagonists go looking for freedom. For Katniss and Thomas, seeking freedom means literally escaping from an arena and the totalitarian state that has put them there. Tally, Cinder and the other *Lunar Chronicles* protagonists also strive to become free from the totalitarian regime that is imposed on them. This quest to freedom perfectly fits in with Kavadlo's description of the New Dystopia, which is, according to him, "filled with wishes [such as] escaping from a stultifying social order" (137). All characters lack freedom, fight for it, and manage to destroy the social order they are put in. Even *The Selection*'s America helps to fight the totalitarian regime. Interestingly, this quest fits with the goal of the composite male fairy tale hero. Social success and achievement are the things the female protagonists acquire as they successfully complete their quest.

Most protagonists' goals to save the world are closely linked to saving friends and family. Their quests for freedom are motivated by saving others from the regime. Katniss sacrifices herself for Prim and wants to overthrow and kill Snow in order to save Prim from his cruelties. When Prim is killed, her vengeance is directed to Coin instead, as she has ordered the attack on the children. For Cinder, her first incentive is to save Peony, then Kai, and only then does she decide to save the universe. Thomas and Tally are more egotistical. Thomas is

intrinsically motivated to escape the maze, the scorch trials and the Flare. He instigates the fight for freedom because he wants to get out himself. Nonetheless, he takes his fellow Gladers with him on this quest. On the other hand, Tally wants to become Pretty and she even wants to exchange her friends' freedom for this. Although she changes her mind when she is with the Smokies and is then also motivated by saving her friends, when she becomes Pretty, she keeps betraying and sacrificing her friends for her own goal.

Happy end

In the analysis of the happy end element in the young adult dystopias, the presence of the stock phrases "once upon a time" and "they lived happily ever after" will be noted and the ending of the story will be examined. Moreover, questions such as: does the tale end with marriage? Do the protagonists achieve personal happiness? Did the plot have closure? will be answered. Moreover, the differences with dystopian fiction will be noted through the analysis of this element, as dystopias often have a very bleak ending instead.

In the previous section on the quest, the protagonist's goals of the young adult dystopias have been discussed. *The Selection* and *The Hunger Games* both end with marriage, although this was only a goal for America and not for Katniss. For America, this is a happy ending with closure, as *The Selection* series conclude with "This isn't happily ever after. It's so much more than that" (Cass, *The One* 322). *The Lunar Chronicles* also concludes with a happy end. Levana is defeated, and a new and better social order is being put in place, and thus the quest is completed. Moreover, the happy couples all have new goals in life. In true fairy tale style, and like *The Selection*, the final words of the series are "And they all lived happily to the end of their days" (Meyer, *Winter* 823).

In the epilogue of *The Hunger Games*, Katniss and Peeta are married and have kids and also the quest of dissolving the totalitarian regime has been completed. Following fairy tale

theory, this should be a happy end as well. However, this is not the case. Katniss and Peeta have lost their friends and family and are deeply scarred by the events they have been put through. Katniss's relationship with her children is affected by her traumas and is haunted by the ghosts of Prim, Rue, and the others whom she has lost (Manter and Francis 301). Not only does it take her "five, ten, fifteen years for [her] to agree" to have children, she is also "consumed with terror" while pregnant with them (Collins, *Mockingjay* 389). Although Panem has a happy end as the dystopia is gone, *The Hunger Games* stresses the effect this has on its inhabitants and this makes it a lot bleaker.

Although series such as *The Selection*, *The Lunar Chronicles*, and *Uglies* seem to have a happy end and closure, short stories and spin-offs have been published since. In *Uglies* the story ends with nobody having lesions anymore and therefore the totalitarian regime is done with. However, the final page shows a letter from Tally in which she explains that she and David will be the new special circumstances who will keep the world in check. A spin-off called *Extras* is published since, focussing on the future and postponing the closure. For *The Selection* series, next to short stories, three more books have been added. These centre on America and Maxon's daughter and her Selection, and delve deeper into the dissolving of the castes and the problems that arise. Finally, *The Maze Runner* has received two prequels since the series was finished. In *The Kill Order* and *The Fever Code* it becomes clear what actually happened with the Flare and who was in control. Through this, the reader has closure and the dystopian system is dissolved. Although Thomas was not able to save the world in the way he wanted as there was no cure, the world's population is reduced, "There are over two hundred of us and we're all immune. It'll be a good start" (Dashner, *Death Cure* 324). In this instance, the spin-offs do not postpone the closure, but add some background information to the *Maze Runner* universe.

Conclusion

To answer the main research question on how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction, this chapter examined the fairy tale elements of the prince and princess, the quest, and the happy end.

Although only *The Lunar Chronicles* is explicitly made up of fairy tale retellings, most other young adult dystopias incorporate recognizable fairy tale elements. Stock phrases as “they lived happily every after”, explicit references to fairy tale princesses and the rags to riches Cinderella arc are added to *Uglies*, *The Selection* and *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, in secondary literature on *The Hunger Games*, Katniss is often compared and contrasted to fairy tale characters.

For the element of the prince and princess, the main characters of the young adult dystopias have been investigated, Gilbert and Gubar’s female archetypes have been evaluated and the importance of the beauty of women has been analysed. Overall, the women in young adult dystopias have acquired the personalities traditionally associated with male fairy tale heroes. Most female protagonists are smart, courageous and natural leaders. Also, they have masculine jobs or hobbies and are ambitious. Only Cress starts out as a passive and obedient damsel in distress, but she grows stronger eventually. Like Cress, Katniss changes throughout the series, but does so in the opposite direction. Katniss starts out as a masculine character and her and Peeta’s gender roles are reversed in their relationship. However, she is forced by the patriarchal system to appear more feminine and ultimately is saved by a man. Although the women are unlike fairy tale princesses, most men still fit in with the composite male hero: well-mannered, smart and courageous. Most of them are also described as handsome, except Wolf, who is instead compared to Beauty’s Beast. Gilbert and Gubar’s female archetypes of the angel and evil queen only appear in *The Lunar Chronicles*. By copying the Snow White and Evil Queen

story line into Winter and Levana, the archetypes have been replicated as well. In the other young adult dystopias, female antagonists exist but because both the antagonists and protagonists have extensive backstories, redeeming and less-valued qualities are explained, and the opposition is not as starkly contrasted. In *Lunar Chronicles*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Selection*, beauty is not a girl's most valuable asset, but a beauty transformation helps in showing their true self and inner worth and reaching their goal. In *The Maze Runner*, beauty is of no importance at all. In *Uglies*, Westerfeld has forced the archetype of the beautiful, passive, and obedient female princess on everyone. Every Pretty, male or female, is a damsel in distress until they are given a cure for their lesions. The writers of these young adult dystopias seem to have taken fairy tale criticism to heart and have written stories that appeal to fairy tale lovers but with more contemporary gendered characters.

In all young adult dystopias, the quest of dissolving the totalitarian regime has been completed. Following fairy tale theory, this achievement should conclude with a happy end. However, in *The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner*, the end is much bleaker as it is clear how the characters and world is influenced by the dystopian cruelties. Although most young adult dystopias have a happy end and closure, short stories and spin-offs have been published since that postpone closure. Although only *The Selection's* America goes onto a quest for marriage, all protagonists end up in a heterosexual relationship. Even Katniss is forced into marriage. It seems that in dystopian young adult fiction, the conservative fairy tale romance plot is favoured over subverting sexuality.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

To answer the main research question on how elements of fairy tales and dystopian fiction intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction, a total of six elements have been defined and analysed. In the theoretical framework, the genres of dystopian literature and fairy tales have been explained and, of each genre, three elements have been chosen and expanded on. In chapter three and four, the dystopian elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist and the savage, and the fairy tale elements of the prince and princess, the quest and the happy end have been analysed. To do this, passages from the young adult dystopian series *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *The Selection* by Kiera Cass, and *The Lunar Chronicles* by Marissa Meyer have been discussed. This chapter will summarise the findings from the previous chapters and provide an answer to the research question. Finally, limitations of this research will be described and recommendations for further research will be given.

End results

By studying the relations between genres that are conventionally treated as separate, common features were discovered in the genres of dystopian fiction and fairy tales. Both utopias and fairy tales have always had the power to subvert ideas, morals and gender norms. Moreover, fairy tales often deal with power struggles in society, which is a utopian subject as well. However, traditional fairy tales are seen as dystopian because fairy tales by, for example, Perrault, Grimm and Disney promote conservative instead of progressive values, especially in regard to gender. In the more contemporary utopian writings and fairy tales, equal societies were constructed, and the gendered stereotypes were identified and criticised. Because of the

similarities between the genres, the combination of elements from both utopian fiction and fairy tales in young adult dystopian fiction seems logical and appropriate.

First, the three dystopian elements of the totalitarian regime, the young adult protagonist and the savage were investigated. In all five young adult dystopias, the totalitarian regime is an essential element of the series and constitutes the series being dystopian. Following research, the regimes all came into existence after a world war or natural disaster, and rulers control their inhabitants through intricate systems. In *The Hunger Games*, *The Lunar Chronicles*, *Uglies* and *The Selection* a system of districts, sections or castes is used to segregate the people into different communities based on jobs or age. These regimes are like those in traditional dystopias, keeping people apart from each other to avert them from rebelling, and using surveillance techniques to spy on them. *The Hunger Games* has the most elaborate means of control, as the Hunger Games both instil fear in the nation and celebrate the power of the Capitol. Although love is not supposed to be part of utopian fiction, in young adult dystopias this is a key feature. Four out of five series include a love triangle, and in *The Selection* romance instead of dystopia is the dominant narrative register. Moreover, most young adult dystopias have a more or less equal society, although only *Uglies* explicitly engages with gender equality. Although systems of gender have been developed in the series, sexual control is less strict and visible than in traditional dystopias. When looking at the protagonists, all five series feature a young adult protagonist, four of them female. *The Lunar Chronicles* even has five female protagonists in its story. All protagonists become the hero of the story and are essential in bringing down the totalitarian regime. However, only Thomas and *The Lunar Chronicles* women are in control and actively choose to rebel. Katniss, America and Tally are chosen and controlled by someone else to fulfil this role and have little say in becoming the face of rebellion. Therefore, the wish to be chosen and recognised as special is not apparent in most of the researched series. However, all protagonists are special just by being themselves. Finally,

the savage element seems to have changed in young adult dystopia. No longer can two distinct groups be distinguished, the communities in the researched series are more varied than in traditional dystopias. Only in *Uglies*, the savage is alike to novels such as *Brave New World*. In *Uglies*, the old world and the new are separate and a savage reservation still exists. The other series can be read as colonial domination where the rebels are part of the oppressed in the system. *The Maze Runner* features yet another kind of savages, as they have created zombie-like Cranks to roam their world. Although a savage can be found in every series, they are all different from each other and from the traditional savage element and serve various functions.

Second, the three fairy tale elements of the prince and princess, the quest and the happy end were analysed. The women in young adult dystopias have acquired the personalities traditionally associated with male fairy tale heroes, but most men still fit in with the composite male hero. Gilbert and Gubar's female archetypes of the angel and evil queen only appear in *The Lunar Chronicles*, but *Uglies* has forced the archetype of the beautiful, passive, and obedient female princess on men and women alike, making an equal society. Moreover, in *Lunar Chronicles*, *The Hunger Games* and *Selection*, beauty is not a girl's most valuable asset, but a Cinderella-like beauty transformation helps in showing their true self and inner worth and reaching their goal. Furthermore, it turned out that in traditional fairy tales, the prince and princess stereotypes were linked to their gendered quest and intended happy ending and therefore these elements are closely connected. Although the female protagonists were unlike the composite female heroine and, except for America, their quest was not to find a husband, all series end with happy couples. Moreover, all series end with the downfall of dystopia, and can be seen as a happy end as the quest was completed. However, because the aftermath of the dystopia is clear in *The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner*, this ending is much bleaker. Additionally, young adult dystopias often receive spin-offs or prequels which postpone closure.

So how do dystopian elements and fairy tale elements intersect in relation to gender in popular contemporary young adult dystopian fiction? Four conclusions can be made.

First, the dystopian elements are all present in the young adult dystopias, although the way the elements are used, have changed from traditional dystopias. Only the totalitarian regime is still a recognizable element, and therefore this is the most important classification of making the series dystopian. A significant difference between the original dystopias and the young adult dystopias, though, is that these series all end with a glimmer of hope. The fairy tale elements in young adult dystopias make the dystopian setting less cruel. While traditional dystopias have bleak endings, the young adult protagonists all succeed in overthrowing the totalitarian regime and finding love. It seems that the “they lived happily ever after” fairy tale element is more important than the dystopian setting. However, the happy end is not always overtly positive, as the protagonist usually has to give up a vital part of his or her life or loses something or someone who is significantly important to him or her.

Next, a distinction can be made between *The Maze Runner* and the other series. Although beauty is no longer a girl’s most valuable asset, all series have incorporated the aspect of beauty as a device to enhance the protagonist’s true self. On the contrary, *Uglies* has built a whole society of pretty people without agency. However, *The Maze Runner* ignores the whole aspect of beauty, taking a more rational stand toward characters’ appearance. Moreover, all young adult dystopia’s have references to fairy tales through a Cinderella arc or explicit mentions of princes and princesses, except for *The Maze Runner*. The reason for this distinction might be that this series has both a male author and a male protagonist, and therefore these fairy tale elements are absent. However, further research into young adult dystopias with a male protagonist must be done before this conclusion can be made.

Furthermore, young adult dystopia is a genre dominated by female protagonists, and the portrayals of female characters in these texts often subvert the gender binary by performing

masculine traits. The strong, ambitious and smart qualities of their personalities allow them to take charge and overthrow the totalitarian regime. Dystopia seems to force women and men alike to take on non-traditional roles in order to survive. This is a trait often applauded by researchers and reviewers alike. However, although characters in young adult dystopias seem to subvert the traditional gender norms, the characters still form traditional relationships and the romance aspect is conservative, adhering to fairy tale stereotypes. None of the young adult dystopias feature gay or bisexual relationships or characters. Moreover, unlike traditional dystopias, reproductive control is not as much an issue in these works of fiction. The whole aspect of sexuality seems to be taboo, although other 'grown up' themes such as violence, murder, and depression are not evaded. Like traditional fairy tales, the young adult dystopias seem to warn young adults against their own natural desires. For a genre that advocates progressive gender roles, it seems that the fairy tale norm of heterosexual romances, forming families and shunning sexuality is still prevalent. There still is a reluctance to subvert all dominant mores.

Finally, although the totalitarian regime is of great importance in all series, this setting seems to influence how the fairy tale elements are incorporated. This is especially evident when comparing *The Selection* and *The Lunar Chronicles*. While most of the series focus on dystopia, *The Selection* is different. Although Illéa's regime can be seen as a totalitarian state, the main focus is on the romance aspect of the series. The unrest in Illéa is just a background, and not much attention is given to the dystopian elements. While the other series centre on the control and oppression of the regime, *The Selection* only occasionally mentions rebel attacks or the caste problems. Moreover, the way the system is upheld is not fully explained and therefore hard to analyse. Interestingly, *The Selection* series seem to focus more on the fairy tale elements instead. America is a bit more rebellious than the composite female heroine, but her quest is to look for a husband and the series end in a happily ever after marriage. This is unlike the other

series and especially *The Lunar Chronicles*, a series that is an explicit fairy tale retelling which uses traditional princesses as protagonists. While *The Selection* can be seen as a fairy tale set against a dystopian background, *The Lunar Chronicles* is a fusion of dystopia and fairy tale. This series shows how both genres can be evenly incorporated and elevate each other. The application of female criticism can be deduced as although recognizable fairy tale characters are used, their gender roles are subverted.

Reflection on theory

On the whole, research into dystopian fiction and fairy tales is so extensive, in relation to gender as well, that my results can be expressed in the theory that is available. However, no theory exists on the combination of utopian and fairy tale fiction. I gradually noticed this overlap during my research, as researchers do use words such as “utopian wish” and “fairy tale romance”. This overlap between the genres should be investigated further, as this would have focused my theory more and made it easier to choose relevant elements.

Because so little research is done into the genre of young adult dystopian fiction, Jesse Kavadlo’s definition of the New Dystopia was taken as a guide into analysing its elements. Although his definition was based solely on *The Hunger Games*, for the greater part, it fit in with the other young adult dystopias. One crucial difference is the fact that most young adult protagonists did not have the wish to be recognised or chosen as special, not even Katniss. Moreover, when looking at secondary literature on gender in *The Hunger Games*, researchers have opposing views. Most researchers applaud Katniss’s masculine traits, and this view is taken over by readers, reviewers and media as well. Only a few articles mention her development throughout the novels towards a traditional feminine character, which I think is an important view to stress instead. Moreover, it turned out that *The Maze Runner* and *Uglies* have indeed been part of research before as well, however not at all as extensively as *The Hunger*

Games, and this helped form my arguments, although the overall literature on young adult dystopian fiction is still lacking.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

Following the reflection of used theory, as previously stated, not much research has been done into the genre of young adult dystopia. This has several implications. First, this means that most secondary literature on young adult dystopia is derived from just a few novels, most notably *The Hunger Games*. This leaves a lot of room for new research into novels that have not been investigated before, and to improve and expand the little research that has been done. By providing an extensive introduction to both genres and taking a gendered approach to the elements, this thesis has become a concise introduction to the topic of gender in young adult dystopian fiction and its roots in dystopian fiction and fairy tales. A unique feature of this research was that not only the gender and dystopian aspects of young adult dystopian fiction were analysed, but also the fairy tale elements were taken into consideration.

However, much further research is recommended. Further in-depth research on the individual elements, but also expanding the research to other young adult dystopias is worthwhile. Especially other series with a male protagonist and male author should be looked at, to be able to make a statement on the relation of a male protagonist and the absence of fairy tale elements in a series. Moreover, elements such as the totalitarian regime and the prince and princess could have been complete theses on their own, as there is so much to look at when researching five young adult dystopian series. Furthermore, many other dystopian or fairy tale elements could have been chosen to be investigated, for example magic or the character of a fairy godmother. Finally, the resemblances and overlap between the genres of dystopia and fairy tales should be further investigated.

The absence of sex, the subversion of gender roles and the ideal of the family in young adult dystopias was most striking to me. None of the researched series feature gay or bisexual relationships, or successful single parents. As dystopian fiction and fairy tales are praised for their ability to be subversive, it is remarkable that none of the most popular series seem to promote anything other than the heterosexual norm. My utopian wish is that research into other young adult dystopias will conclude otherwise, or that young adult dystopias written in the future will indeed subvert this as well.

“Long live all the magic we made, [...] I had the time of my life fighting dragons with you”

- Taylor Swift, “Long Live”

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