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"Between empowerment and confusion – young adult dystopias and Foucault's regimes of truth"

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Mariana Vidovic

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Declaration of Authenticity

I, Mariana Vidovic, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this diploma thesis and that I have not used any sources other than those listed in the bibliography and identified as references. I further declare that I have not submitted this thesis at any other institution in order to obtain a degree.

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Mariana Vidovic

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1. Introduction

Michel Foucault, one of the most influential critical thinkers of the twentieth century (see Dreyfus & Rabinow; Smart), contemplated general notions of popular concepts such as tradition or evolution and offered the following radical piece of advice:

> We must question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination, those links whose validity is recognized from the outset; we must oust those forms and obscure forces by which we usually link the discourse of one man with that of another; they must be driven out from the darkness in which they reign. (Foucault, *Archaeology* 22)

Foucault, it seems, criticises our unquestioning acceptance of dominant discourses because he feels that it influences our thinking to the extent that we remain particularly susceptible to the subconscious internalization of certain theories and cultural processes. This valuable advice of his encouraged me in my decision to analyse two young adult novels (YANs), namely Dashner's *The Maze Runner* and Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*, even though the genre as such has been attacked for its alleged unsuitability for critical engagement by vociferous opponents, who do not believe that young adult literature (YAL) should be taken seriously (see Coats; Daniels). Since popular attitudes about the genre have already started to shift, YAL is gradually establishing its place in the literary community (see Coats 316). Even though it is beyond the scope of this study to examine a range of critical theories to demonstrate YAL's suitability for serious literary engagement, my analysis of the two aforementioned YANs should be a demonstration of the great potential of YAL with regard to power. While the protagonists in *The Maze Runner* seem to be forced to live without any adult guidance and constantly have to prove their perseverance to an omniscient enemy, the main characters in *Noughts and Crosses* are part of a society that is dominated by a superior race, which is enforcing racial segregation. By analysing the social structure of those dystopian worlds and their protagonists' attempts to stop the restriction of personal freedom, I would like to address how adolescent protagonists negotiate power relations with authoritative adults in their society. Foucault's initial advice that has critical thinking at its very heart, thus, will form the basis of my analysis because dystopian YANs seem to centre around the adolescent's use of his or her own reason in order to become empowered (see Nikolajeva 73).

Since the primary aim of this diploma thesis is to analyse the negotiation of power relations between adolescents and adults in dystopian YAL, this paper will begin by providing a theoretical framework, which will form the basis for the structure of my analytical work in the second part. In the second chapter succeeding my initial introduction, I will focus on Foucault's dynamic concept of power and establish a connection between his work and Kant's essay "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'". A discussion of Kant's central proposition that one needs to make use of one's own reason in order to leave immaturity will be necessary in order to understand how the philosopher's text has influenced Foucault's notion of power that is based on critical thinking. Subsequently, the third chapter of my diploma thesis will discuss common misconceptions about YAL that have made it particularly difficult for the genre to establish itself as serious literature. By elaborating on the central role of power within YANs, I will seek to dispel false ideas about the genre and demonstrate the great need for critical texts on YAL. The second part of my paper will form my analyses of Dashner's *The Maze Runner* and Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*, in which I will analyse the fictional societies of the protagonists by using Foucault's (*Power* 344) five points for the analysis of power relations. In addition, I will also analyse the unique ways in which the central characters become empowered by referring to various theoretical concepts of my initial theoretical discussions, such as Kant's "exit" (Foucault, *Reader* 34). By doing so, I will not only answer my primary research question but also demonstrate that even a complex issue of social concern such as power, as illustrated by Foucault's (*Power/*Knowledge; *History of Sexuality*) various texts on its dynamic nature, can in fact be addressed through YAL and enhance our understanding of social injustice in the real world.

2. Michel Foucault

In this section of my thesis, I will provide the theoretical framework that will form the basis for the analysis of power structures in two selected young adult novels. First of all, I will briefly introduce Foucault and his work, which quite frequently seems to be a subject of discussion due to its interdisciplinary nature (see Smart; Dreyfus & Rabinow). For a better understanding of his work, I will provide an overview of some reoccurring concepts and notions. Afterwards, I will address Foucault's innovative approach to power, commonly known as "the new economy of power relations" (Foucault, *Power* 328), which is essential to my diploma thesis due to its dynamic character. Foucault, as this diploma thesis will show, offers a unique way of analysing power because he describes it as an omniscient force that circulates around the members of a society. While it could be argued that his approach may not have novelty value any more, I still consider his contribution to the analysis of power relations invaluable to any human society because he views power from a broader perspective and does not perceive it as a matter of right or wrong. Additionally, I will demonstrate that Foucault's analytical approach to power can easily be applied to dystopian fiction, in which adolescents question common power structures and attempt to stop the abuse of power through personal empowerment. Before I actually elaborate Foucault's innovative approach to power, an introduction to Kant's essay "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" will be given. It seems to me that one should not try to make sense of "the new economy of power relations" (Foucault, *Power* 328) without having understood the importance that Foucault attaches to Kant's definition of enlightenment. Subsequently, I will demonstrate that the objectification of human beings and not power sparked Foucault's strong interest in power relations. In addition, the role of the modern state and its influence on the members of a society will be discussed. Finally, five points which Foucault considers to be essential for the analysis of power relations will be presented, which will also form the basis for the structure of my analysis.

2.1 Foucault's influence

According to Smart, who has studied Foucault's work intensively, Foucault is widely considered to be one of the leading thinkers on "modern forms of social existence" (xii) due to his significant contribution to our understanding of power structures within human

societies. The fact that his work is interdisciplinary in nature makes it all the more applicable to various fields, such as "feminism, [or] cultural studies" (Smart xiii). This characteristic, on the other hand, also contributes to the difficulty of placing Foucault's work into a specific theoretical approach of the human sciences (see Smart 18). Foucault himself did not want to attach any labels to his work and underlined that by saying the following: "I am not a structuralist, and I confess, with the appropriate chagrin, that I am not an analytic philosopher. […] But I have tried to explore another direction." (*Ethics* 176) He then tried to explain his very own "direction" by referring to his work as "a genealogy of the modern subject as a historical and cultural reality" (*Ethics* 177). Dreyfus and Rabinow (xvii), in a book entitled *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* have affirmed this statement by pointing out that one should rather perceive Foucault's work as an alternative way of thinking instead of attempting to attach a specific label to it. For them, other fields of inquiry such as "phenomenology, structuralism, and hermeneutics" (xvii) have only been moderately successful in their attempts to study human beings due to their ignorance of alternative approaches. In contrast to other critical thinkers of his time, Foucault's great significance lies in his ability to adopt an autonomous approach to the study of human beings, which cannot be easily categorized (see Dreyfus & Rabinow xi). While they believe that Foucault was exposed to the formative influence of "the vogue of structuralism" (xi), especially in the beginning of his career, he still never imposed any limitations to his work by publicly announcing any affiliation with a specific field of inquiry. Ultimately, Dreyfus and Rabinow arrive at the conclusion that solely "historical forms taken by discursive practices" (xi) have acted as the principal focus of Foucault's work.

Even though it cannot be denied that Foucault's work seems to be highly interdisciplinary and that any attempt to categorize it would most certainly fail, there are certain concepts and notions that reoccur throughout his texts (see Smart 19). Smart (19), for instance, points out that the objectification of human beings in Western culture and the establishment of certain discourses on power and knowledge throughout various historical epochs, in particular, have been his main topic of discussion in various analytical texts. When taking a closer look at Foucault's work, which is often referred to as a "critical history of the present", it becomes evident that he devoted much of his time to the analysis of "modernity" (Smart xiii). Modernity in the Foucauldian sense, however, should not simply be perceived as the latest century that people live in, or a distinctive characteristic of a specific time

period. Foucault rather proposes perceiving it as "a mode of relating to contemporary reality" (*Reader* 39) that should undergo radical change as time passes, since humanity is constantly developing and reassessing traditional ways of thinking. In addition, modernity as such should involve critical thinking about ourselves and the society we live in if social progress is to be made (see *Reader* 43). Ultimately, Smart (xiii) concludes that arriving at such a practical notion of modernity could be an effective means for exposing processes and events that have led to fundamental issues of prior centuries as well as our present time. Revolutionizing the way that people think can only be achieved if every single individual attempts to reflect upon his or her former actions.

When taking a closer look at Foucault's major texts (see *The History of Sexuality*, *Madness and Civilization*), it seems to me that "critique" lies at the heart of all of them. Foucault very much emphasises the fact that common knowledge, in particular, should be subjected to critique because human beings tend to readily accept traditional ways of thinking without giving much careful thought to them. He justifies his proposal by explaining that common ways of thinking usually represent the flow of information within a society. Over time, fragments of information are then used in order to form a body of knowledge that is supposed to represent everything that has been shared (see *Archaeology* 22). Consequently, taking them as factual knowledge, as suggested by influential instances of prestigious faculties or institutions such as the church, proves to be rather problematic. What might be done instead is maintaining critical distance from common knowledge and concepts in order to be able to carefully reflect upon them. Only then, one may arrive at the following reasonable conclusion: "[W]e must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized." (*Archaeology* 25) In order to do so, however, human beings must realize that it is their responsibility to decide which pieces of information do not need to be revised and when change for the better is necessary. Ultimately, this valiant attempt of mine to summarize Foucault's profound influence should have illustrated at least one crucial factor, namely that "the principle of the history of thought" should be perceived as a "critical activity" (Foucault, *Ethics* 201) that does not simply end after a historical epoch but rather appears to be an ongoing process.

2.2 Foucault's notion of power

Having established Foucault's field of inquiry, I would now like to focus on the actual topic of this diploma thesis, namely power structures. Before I provide a definition of power in the Foucauldian sense, however, I will explain why Foucault (see *Power*) expressed vehement opposition to the common assumption that power was his central focus of attention. It was rather the subject and its objectification through itself as well as other members of a society that Foucault sought to investigate (see *Power*). Furthermore, I will demonstrate how this close interest in the objectification of the subject led to Foucault's critique of the modern state. It will become obvious that power structures cannot simply be analysed in isolation, since they are deeply rooted in every segment of a society (see Smart xiv). Therefore, there will be a slight shift of focus from the subject to governmentality. As Smart points out, "governmentality is an inescapable fact of social life. Life in society, literally from the cradle to the grave, inevitably involves action(s) being exercised on other(s) actions" (xiv). Finally, I will illustrate Foucault's most important points for an analysis of power relations, which I will also apply to my own analysis of the negotiation of power in two young adult novels.

2.2.1 Objectification of the subject

When taking a closer look at Foucault's work, it becomes evident that he recognizes Kant's attempt to define enlightenment as absolutely crucial for studying human beings (see Dreyfus & Rabinow xviiii). Therefore, I will begin with a brief introduction to Kant's notion of enlightenment before eventually moving to the ways human beings are made subjects.

2.2.1.1 Kantian reflection on Enlightenment

Foucault, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (xviiii) point out, seems to attach great importance to Kant's essay "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'". They substantiate this claim by saying that at the end of the eighteenth century some fundamental rethinking took place, since "human beings came to be interpreted as knowing subjects, and, at the

same time, objects of their own knowledge" (xviiii). Foucault describes the aforementioned time period, commonly referred to as "Enlightenment", as follows: It is "the event that […] has determined, at least in part, what we are, what we think, and what we do today." (*Reader* 32) Enlightenment in the Kantian and Foucauldian sense, thus, should be perceived as a moment of enlightening instead of a historical epoch. Therefore, I will provide a brief overview of Kant's work, since it has had a profound influence on Foucault's notion of critical thinking.

According to Kant, Enlightenment can be defined as follows:

> *Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity* is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude*! Have courage to use your *own* understanding! (54)

What Kant seems to explain here is that human beings alone are responsible for their so-called "immaturity" (54) if they do not wish to change the immature state they find themselves in. He further elaborates this assumption by stating two reasons, namely "[l]aziness and cowardice" (54), that seem to be responsible for one's unwillingness to reach intellectual maturity. While Kant does not deny the fact that such drastic change might be resisted because of fear of the unknown, which could appear "difficult" or even "dangerous" (54), especially for those who have habituated to a state of complete intellectual stagnation, he still attributes those two adjectives to laziness and cowardice. The reason for this is that one should overcome one's fears, even if they seem well-founded at times, in order to leave the state of "immaturity" (54). According to Kant (58), not doing so would just mean missing the change to fulfil one's true potential. He was, however, also aware of the fact that there will always be a number of people who will not be able to leave the state of immaturity, despite the vital necessity to do so, due to complete ignorance (see 55).

Although Foucault acknowledges that numerous philosophers have addressed the same question before, Kant's seemingly "minor text" (*Reader* 32) offers the first more or less convincing answer to it. Foucault describes the Kantian approach to defining Enlightenment as fundamentally distinct from previous ones because Kant does not tie his definition to any historical "events" or "future achievements" (Foucault, *Reader* 34), which

could be perceived as influential factors of present times. On the contrary, Kant describes "*Aufklärung*" negatively, since he compares it to an "exit" (Foucault, *Reader* 34), which enables us to leave a certain period of time in order to reflect upon it. According to Kant (57), every new generation should make its own rules and question prior knowledge in order to become enlightened and yield steady improvement. Consequently, Kant (57) believes that every single individual owes this duty to the next human generation that is still to come. Therefore, one should head for the aforementioned exit in order to leave personal immaturity. Foucault (*Reader* 34) takes Kant's premise as a starting point and further elaborates its connection to authority. While staying immature seems to imply that one willingly permits another person to make decisions on one's own behalf, attempting to become enlightened is supposed to signal personal involvement in one's affairs. Foucault further explains this theory by referring to a link between "will, authority, and the use of reason" (*Reader* 34) that must be built and preserved if one wishes to be enlightened in the Kantian sense. If a person makes use of his or her reason out of his or her own free will, critical thinking will be stimulated, which will facilitate the process of leaving immaturity. What Foucault calls into question, however, is Kant's vague description of the transition from immaturity to maturity, since it is described as "a phenomenon, an ongoing process" as well as "a task and an obligation" (*Reader* 35). He attempts to find a satisfactory answer by explaining his notion of Kant's so-called "Ausgang" as follows:

> Enlightenment must be considered both as a process in which men participate collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally. Men are at once elements and agents of a single process. They may be actors in the process to the extent that they participate in it; and the process occurs to the extent that men decide to be its voluntary actors. (*Reader* 35)

By doing so, he offers a practical definition that proves to be a combination of both approaches. An immature person does not necessarily need to go through this process of change on his or her own, since it is very likely that other people will find themselves in the same situation. What one needs to decide individually, even if one's decision is initially influenced by someone else, is whether they feel ready for leaving immaturity (see *Reader* 35).

Another aspect which Kant (55) addresses in his attempt to define Enlightenment is the possibility of collective enlightening within a society. "[F]reedom to make *public use* of one's reason in all matters" (55), as he points out, is the only prerequisite to do so. What

makes Kant's argumentation highly progressive compared to other philosophers of his time is the fact that he does not define "freedom of conscience" as "the right to think as one pleases so long as one obeys as one must" (Foucault, *Reader* 36). Kant's distinctiveness, as Foucault points out, becomes evident in his use of two forms of reason, namely "the private and the public use of reason" (*Reader* 36). According to Kant (55), the latter fosters enlightenment, while the former does not really have the same impact. He justifies his proposal by defining his notion of the different uses of reason as follows:

> But which sort of restriction prevents enlightenment, and which, instead of hindering it, can actually promote it? I reply: The *public* use of man's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men; the *private* use of reason may quite often be very narrowly restricted, however, without undue hindrance to the progress of enlightenment. But by the public use of one's own reason I mean that use which anyone may make of it as *a man of learning* addressing the entire *reading public*. What I term the private use of reason is that which a person may make of it in a particular *civil* post or office with which he is entrusted. (Kant 55)

Although Foucault (*Reader* 36) seems to be positively surprised by Kant's forward thinking on this matter, he still voices a concern about Kant's distinction between the two uses of reason. The "private use", as it appears at first, is described as solely "submissive", a characteristic which seems to be opposed to "freedom of conscience" (*Reader* 36). In human societies, in particular, people tend to adhere to certain rules, thus restricting their private use of reason, in order to avoid attracting negative attention, which could easily disrupt such a hierarchical system. Nevertheless, Foucault arrives at the conclusion that Kant attaches great importance to freedom of expression, even in its private form. Being completely ignorant of what other people think just for the sake of exerting one's own will is what Kant advises us not to do. This is due the fact that one should follow certain rules and guidelines in a specific social position because one's private use of reason may have profound consequences for humanity if caution is not exercised (see *Reader* 36). While both, Kant and Foucault, definitely encourage critical thinking, they also have to admit that doing so regardless of the consequences for one's society may only be an idealistic wish. Foucault, thus, resolves this dilemma by proposing the following solution: "There is Enlightenment when the universal, the free, and the public uses of reason are superimposed on one another." (*Reader* 36) This statement shows that Enlightenment acquires a new dimension, when it takes place within a society. Here, one cannot only focus on "personal freedom of thought" (*Reader* 37), using reason to argue for oneself alone, but must also consider the whole system, which consists of numerous thinking beings that presumably

want to live together. For this reason, the "private use of reason" must in some ways be "submissive" (*Reader* 36), since human societies can only be permissive to some extent. Subsequently, Foucault points out that Enlightenment might also be "a political problem" (*Reader* 37) because it will not necessarily be perceived as a moral obligation by every single member of a society. He therefore recommends being very sensitive when voicing social criticism publicly, since provoking open rebellion out of nowhere might not be the best way to guarantee social justice due to the high number of individuals who obediently follow the rule of law without questioning it (see Foucault, *Reader* 37). Kant, as it appears, might have been aware of the aforementioned problem as well, since he himself had to admit that the ones in power will find a way to influence other people's "enlightenment" (58). However, Kant did not necessarily perceive collective enlightenment as a negative process as long as those in power were governing by using their own reason, which should represent "the collective will of the people" (58) at least to some extent.

Even though Foucault does not deny the fact that Kant's text might appear "ambiguous" (*Reader* 35) at times, he still sees great potential in it. While one should bear in mind that there may be more accurate historical accounts of the end of the eighteenth century, the importance of the philosopher's text for deep reflection about specific periods of history and common practices at certain times cannot be denied (see Foucault, *Reader* 38). This is due the fact that Kant's notion of Enlightenment has marked a drastic shift in social conduct because he was the first to describe this period as a starting point of unrestricted critical thinking (Foucault, *Reader* 38). Even long after Kant's time, this text shows that one should extend common knowledge over and over again and reflect upon one's own as well as other people's practices and ways of thinking (see *Reader* 38). Foucault explains this as follows: "[N]ow it is precisely at this moment that the critique is necessary, since its role is that of defining the conditions under which the use of reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped." (*Reader* 38) Critique, thus, is crucial in order to question human conduct and speak out against all the injustice that occurs in form of dogmatisms or bad political governance in today's societies (*Reader* 38). Ultimately, this also implies that critique should not be perceived as an act that ended after the epoch of Enlightenment (see *Reader* 50). As Foucault demonstrates, human beings did not simply become "mature adults" (*Reader* 50) after the publication of Kant's text and it is difficult to predict with any degree of certainty whether they will ever leave immaturity. What Foucault successfully proves, however, is the fact that Kant's text has been of

profound importance for our very own reflection about ourselves. One must only bear in mind that reading Kant's understanding of Enlightenment as "a theory" or "a doctrine" (*Reader* 50) would not make any sense. Foucault rather proposes doing the following: "[I]t has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them." (*Reader* 50) Olssen, in an article entitled "Foucault and the imperatives of education: critique and self-creation in a non-foundational world", conveniently summarizes Foucault's approach to critique by saying the following:

> Critique, for Foucault, is the basis of his own conception of maturity. Whereas Kant sees maturity as the rule of self by self through reason, Foucault sees it as an attitude towards ourselves and the present through an historical analysis of the limits, and the possibility of transgression, of going beyond. Critique is thus a permanent interrogation of the limits, an escape from normalization, and a facing-up to the challenges of self-creation while seeking to effect changes in social structures on specific regional issues of concern [sic]. (246)

Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that Foucault takes Kant's text as a strong incentive to encourage human beings to constantly reflect upon their everyday lives through "permanent interrogative thinking" (Olssen 253). Additionally, he decouples Enlightenment from a historical epoch and describes it as an omnipresent process that questions seemingly factual knowledge and historically accepted practices by making use of one's very own reason (see Foucault, *Reader* 38).

2.2.1.2 The subject and power

As far as Foucault's work is concerned, it is often wrongfully assumed that the prime focus of his work is power (Foucault, *Power* 326). Even though it cannot be denied that power seems to be a reoccurring concept in his work, Foucault's interest has actually been engaged by something else. Foucault explains this as follows:

> I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. (*Power* 326)

What becomes evident here is that Foucault has repeatedly attempted to demonstrate how human beings have been objectified throughout history (see *Power* 326). The term that he uses to refer to such objectified human beings is "subjects" (*Power* 326). He further elaborates his theory by putting forward "three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects" (*Power* 326). First of all, there is "the modes of inquiry that try to give themselves the status of science" (*Power* 326). Those modes, in particular, try to objectify human beings by presenting seemingly accurate information as common knowledge, which should be spread among the members of specific cultural groups in order to educate them (see *Power* 326). Subsequently, Foucault presents "the objectivizing of the subject in […] 'dividing practices'" (*Power* 326), which can be understood as a division within the subject as well as certain ways of separating human beings according to specific internal or external characteristics, which are perceived as distinctive features. Foucault provides a classic example of such practices in his book *Madness and Civilization*, in which he analyses how "sanity" and "insanity" (*Madness and Civilization* 224) became dichotomous variables, according to which some human beings were placed in confinement if they were classified as belonging to the mad. The last mode is concerned with "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject" (*Power* 327). An in-depth discussion of this mode can be found in Foucault's book *History of Sexuality*, in which he describes how men produced different theories based on the biological sex of a person, thus making it a determining factor in the objectification of human beings (*History of Sexuality* 56).

While the preceding elaboration shows that Foucault definitely must have based his work on the investigation of the subject, the pertinent question of the role of power in the objectification of human beings still remains. Before one can arrive at an adequate answer to the aforementioned question, however, a closer look at the meaning of the word subject should be taken. According to Foucault, there are two meanings, namely "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (*Power* 331). What both meanings have in common is the fact that they "suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to" (*Power* 331). Ultimately, this similarity is also what connects them to power in the first place (see *Power* 331). Foucault further explains this by saying that "while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations" (*Power* 327). Consequently, Foucault devoted much effort to answering the question of power, which appears to be rather "complex", since there do not seem to be very effective "tools of study"

(*Power* 327). Foucault diagnosed the lack of appropriate "ways of thinking about power" (*Power* 327) as a possible reason for the unsatisfactory study of power with regard to the subject. The only "ways of thinking about power", which have been used in an interdisciplinary manner, were either "based on legal models […] [or] on institutional models" (*Power* 327), which solely focused on the question of legitimating power and on its effect on the state. Therefore, Foucault saw a possible solution to this problem in rethinking previous definitions of power. This, however, proved to pose a new, rather difficult dilemma, which Foucault describes as follows: "Do we need a theory of power? Since a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as a basis for analytical work. But this analytical work cannot proceed without an ongoing conceptualization. And this conceptualization implies critical thought – a constant checking." (*Power* 327) After some careful thought, Foucault still resolves this dilemma by suggesting that "the historical conditions that motivate our conceptualization" as well as "the type of reality with which we are dealing" (*Power* 327) should be determined beforehand if one wishes to analyse power relations. By doing so, the high probability of becoming blind to reoccurring "mechanisms" of power, which have been deeply rooted in the "political rationality" (*Power* 328) of members of human societies, might be reduced.

After having emphasized the fundamental necessity to change our understanding of power, Foucault postulates "a new economy of power relations" (*Power* 328). The need for such a radical rethinking arises from the fact that philosophy has had two major responsibilities to bear since the Kantian Enlightenment has come into being, namely "prevent[ing] reason from going beyond the limits of what is given in experience" and "keep[ing] watch over the excessive powers of political rationality" (*Power* 328) in a society. This, as Foucault discovers, proves to be a challenging task, since constantly monitoring "rationalization and excesses of political power" (*Power* 328) in every human society, despite their close connection, appears rather impossible. While Foucault acknowledges that there have been concerted attempts to investigate the relationship between "rationalization and power" (*Power* 328), such as by the Frankfurter School, he still believes that they were only partially successful. Previous investigations seemed to produce unsatisfactory results due to their extremely broad scope of analysis (see *Power* 329). Foucault's analytical work, thus, is based on the following premise:

> I shall accept the groupings that history suggests only to subject them at once to interrogation; to break them up and then to see whether they can be legitimately reformed; or whether other groupings should be made; to replace them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them. (*Archaeology* 26)

By constantly questioning common categories, which were created and established throughout history, and focusing on the analysis of "several fields, each with reference to a fundamental experience", and thereby moving from the notion of "rationalization" to the one of "specific rationalities" (*Power* 329), Foucault puts forward a new, rather unconventional way of thinking and working, which seems to be much more fruitful than previous approaches. For his very own approach, often referred to as the "new economy of power relations", Foucault carefully chose the aforementioned fields, such as "madness", "crime" or "sexuality", and approached them by analysing specific "forms of resistance" (*Power* 329) to power. This, it seems, proved to be "more empirical, [and] more directly related to our present situation" while at the same time "[implying] more relations between theory and practice" (*Power* 329). Ultimately, Foucault summarizes his approach to analysing power relations as follows:

> [I]t consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analysing power relations through the antagonism of strategies. (*Power* 329)

What becomes evident here is that one should always investigate a specific field by closely examining all the special circumstances and mechanisms that could possibly have an effect on the subjects of a society, before assigning seemingly correct meanings and labels to something. For this reason, it seems reasonable to assume that Foucault's suggestion to focus on "the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these [power] relations" (*Power* 329) could be a good starting point for an investigation. While it might be argued that Foucault's approach to power appears "elusive" at times, its enormous value to the study of power structures cannot be denied (Dreyfus & Rabinow xiii). Since the idea of a continuous interrogation of seemingly factual knowledge and common processes seems to be at the core of his work, even such an "elusive" approach could still succeed in doing so because it encourages critical thinking.

2.2.2 Power and the state

Having highlighted Foucault's interest in the objectification of human beings and his "new economy of power relations", the necessity to define power, for this diploma thesis in particular, still remains. Since Foucault himself expressed the need for a new understanding of power, he also attempted to provide a working definition for his analysis of power relations. According to Foucault, "[p]ower is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (*History of Sexuality* 94). Rouse (105), in an article entitled "Power/Knowledge", commented on Foucault's definition by emphasising its dynamic character. For Rouse, Foucault's uniqueness lies in his "attempt to break free of the orientation of political thought toward questions of sovereign power and its legitimacy" (99). In contrast to other theoreticians of his time, Foucault did not attempt to define power as something a specific sovereign or government holds. What he did instead, as Rouse points out, was expressing a deliberate "rejection of any reification of power" (105). Ultimately, Foucault arrived at the following conclusion:

> Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. […] In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (*Power/Knowledge* 98)

It is thus that Foucault rejected the view of power being solely exercised from above, he rather described it as a "force" coming "from below" (*History of Sexuality* 94). Ultimately, human beings should not be perceived as victims of powerful others, but rather as "effect[s] of power" and "elements[s] of its articulation" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 98).

Nevertheless, Smart emphasises that Foucault did actually express an increasing interest in "'governmental rationality', […] that is, into how people are governed in modern societies" (xiii) in his later work. This, however, should not be taken as a rejection of the aforementioned definition, since people in seemingly powerful positions as well as every single individual may exercise power in a state. What makes the modern state so highly interesting for Foucault is the fact that "the state's power […] is both an individualizing and a totalizing form of power" (*Power* 332). Every single individual living in a society

undergoes a subconscious process of integration, which shapes a person's individuality and eventually leads to one's "[submission] to a set of very specific patterns" (Foucault, *Power* 334). Rouse illustrates that this integration can even be accelerated through an interplay between knowledge and power, since there seems to be "a two-stage development" (97). While "techniques of power and knowledge" (Rouse 96) are introduced "as means of control or neutralization of dangerous social elements" at first, they are eventually transformed "into techniques for enhancing utility and productivity of those subjected to them" (Rouse 97). The state also uses seemingly universal truths in order to justify governmental constraints (see Foucault, *Power* 327). In an interview entitled "Truth and Power", Foucault tried to explain the connection between truth and power by saying the following:

> Each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statement, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (*Power/Knowledge* 131)

What becomes evident here is that truth and power are directly connected. So-called "régimes of truth" stand for "a particular type of discourse and a set of practices" (Foucault, *Biopolitics* 18). According to Foucault, discourse is especially important to the state since it "constitutes these practices as a set bound together by an intelligible connection and […] legislates and can legislate on these practices in terms of true and false" (*Biopolitics* 18). Foucault thus arrives at the conclusion that "truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power. […] Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint" (*Power/Knowledge* 131). By claiming that something is true, "'régime[s]' of truth" (*Power/Knowledge* 133) can be produced, which legitimate the state's conduct. Consequently, "intellectuals", who are often associated with knowledge and the production of truths, should not be perceived as "bearer[s] of universal values" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 132). They have never spoken of collective truths but have rather become "object[s] and instrument[s] in the sphere of 'knowledge,' 'truth,' 'consciousness,' and 'discourse'" (Foucault, *Language* 207). Having revealed the intellectual's decisive role in a society, Foucault further explains that theories, which are commonly referred to as products of one theoretician or researcher, should be perceived as a form of "practice" (*Language* 208) on a regional and local level. Rouse justifies Foucault's proposal by pointing out that seemingly factual knowledge of a specific historical period can easily

become irrelevant for another because "the organization of […] a discursive field" (93) is not static and will, sooner or later, change. Ultimately, Foucault diagnosed the following as the main concern of the intellectual:

> The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. (*Power/Knowledge* 133)

This statement shows that intellectuals are not to be trusted, since they are also a part of this endless cycle of truth and falsehood. Despite their constant reassurance that they only seek to demonstrate that their work is valuable to human beings, Foucault successfully illustrates that "it is truth itself" (*Power/Knowledge* 133) that they are after.

As history has shown, the wielding of power does not simply stop with the establishment of "règimes of truth" (Foucault, *Power* 340). While the 18th century is often perceived as the beginning of human emancipation, Foucault also observed a new development at this time, which came to be known as "the beginning of an era of 'bio-power'" (*History of Sexuality* 140). This development also accelerated the rise of capitalism by using ways and means of constraint that had far-reaching consequences for the members of a society (see Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 141). As Dreyfus and Rabinow point out, "bio-power" can be perceived as "a coherent political technology", marking "a period when the fostering of life and the growth and care of populations became a central concern of the state" (133). In his book entitled *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault describes how the state gradually started to constrain the behaviour of human beings by exercising discipline over their bodies (see *Discipline and Punish* 138). What made discipline such an effective means of mass control was the fact that it "produces subjected and practised bodies, [so called] 'docile' bodies" (*Discipline and Punish* 138). Foucault explained this as follows:

> Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (*Discipline and Punish* 138)

What becomes evident here is the fact that the enforcement of discipline seems to be a twofold problem. Not only does it force members of a society to carry out work for the state in order to increase its productivity, it also manages to restrict one's very own freedom by gradually weakening the individual, who eventually does not seem to be able to make use of his or her very own reason. Smart, thus, claims that Foucault must have perceived "government as the conduct of conduct" (xiv). He further explains this by pointing out that Foucault's approach to power is especially characterised by its "emphasis […] on practices of government and questions of politics, freedom, and ethics in the direction and guidance of human conduct" (xiv). For Foucault, the introduction of bio-power is crucial to the development of the modern state, since it initiated processes of "segregation and social hierarchization […] [and] [guaranteed] relations of domination and effects of hegemony" (*History of Sexuality* 141).

Despite the state's ability to exercise power over human beings, there always seem to be forces of resistance (see *History of Sexuality*). According to Foucault, "[w]here there is power, there is resistance" (*History of Sexuality* 95). Like power, resistance lies at the heart of every bureaucratic system and may have an equally powerful influence on the members of a society (see *History of Sexuality* 95). While Foucault's analysis of power relations has been considered ground-breaking by numerous theoreticians, it cannot be denied that the aforementioned statement has received sharp criticism as well. Poulantzas, in particular, attempted to contradict Foucault's notion of power and resistance as two co-existing forces by saying the following: "For if power is always already there, if every power situation is immanent in itself, why should there ever be resistance? *From where* would resistance come, and *how* would it be even possible?" (149) What Poulantzas seems to be questioning the most is the immanence of power and resistance. For him, Foucault ignores the fact that people rebel against the government because they believe that they can make a change for the better, which will stop the abuse of power (see Poulantzas 149). Smart, who commented on Poulantzas' critique of Foucault, diagnosed two factors, namely "a serious under-estimation of the importance of social classes and class struggle" and "an almost complete neglect of the question of the central role of the state in the exercise of power in modern societies" (125), as the main points of critique. Subsequently, he refutes Poulantzas' claim that Foucault shows a total ignorance of social class by pointing out that Foucault does in fact acknowledge "the importance of the modern state as the 'political form of centralised and centralising power'" (Smart 126). What Poulantzas seems to be ignoring is the fact that

Foucault provides "an alternative approach to the question of the exercise of power, […] which does not analyse power in terms of the state, sovereignty, and the law" (Smart 127). Instead, Foucault focuses on "the developments and diffusion of more subtle and economical forms of power exercises over life – over individuals and populations" (Smart 127). As Dreyfus and Rabinow (147) point out, both forces, power and resistance, are equally important to Foucault. Since "[r]esistance is both an element of the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 147), it can facilitate the dissemination of bio-power as well as disrupt it. It is thus that resistance should not be perceived "external to power" (Rouse 108). For Foucault, power is omnipresent because no one is in possession of it, and those who wish to seize it need to rally committed supporters, who will establish and strengthen a certain "règime of truth" (see Rouse 109). Therefore, Rouse concludes that "[t]he actions of dominant agents are […] constrained by the need to sustain the alignment in the future; but, simultaneously, subordinate agents may seek ways of challenging or evading that alignment" (108).

2.2.3 Analysis of power relations

As far as Foucault's analysis of power relations and the objectification of subjects is concerned, it can be said that he based it on one important premise, namely that power should be perceived "as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain" (*Power/Knowledge* 98). Starting from this premise, Foucault carefully listed the following five starting points for any analysis of power relations, which will also form the basis of my very own analysis of two selected young adult novels:

1. *The system of differentiations* that permits one to act upon the actions of others […]
2. *The types of objectives* pursued by those who act upon the actions of others […]
3. *Instrumental modes:* whether power is exercised by the threat of arms, by the effects of speech, through economic disparities, by more or less complex means of control, by systems of surveillance, with or without archives, by rules, explicit or not, fixed or modifiable, with or without the materials mean of enforcement.
4. *Forms of institutionalization* […]
5. *The degrees of rationalization:* the bringing into play of power relations as action in a field of possibilities may be more or less elaborate in terms of the effectiveness of its instruments and the certainty of its results (greater or lesser technological refinements employed in the exercise of power) or, again, in proportion to the possible cost (economic cost of the means used, or the cost in terms of the resistance encountered). (*Power* 344)

What becomes evident here is the fact that Foucault's analysis goes beyond one single institution, which might be identified as the cause of all injustice in a bureaucratic system. While he does not deny the fact that "power relations have been progressively governmentalized" (*Power* 245), leading to the common assumption that a centralization of power into the hands of certain people has taken place, he still adheres to his basic premise. Even though it might be the case that the government exercises power over the members of its society, every single individual could reflect upon the actions of those in power and decide to challenge them at any time (see Foucault, *Power*). Therefore, Foucault quite rightfully concludes that "[t]o live in society is, in any event, to live in such a way that some can act on the actions of others. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction" (*Power* 343).

Finally, I would like to emphasise that Foucault himself had to admit that his challenging of common truths might seem "confused and uncertain" (*Power/Knowledge* 132) at times, especially if one grew up believing certain individuals or institutions were telling the truth without ever questioning it. Therefore, Foucault explicitly insists on considering his approach to power relations as a "hypothesis" (*Power/Knowledge* 132). This hypothesis could, however, be tested by critical thinking (see *Power/Knowledge* 133). It is thus that Foucault calls for action. "[D]etaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (*Power/Knowledge* 133) is what every single one of us should do in order to reveal processes of objectification of individuals in our society.

3. Young adult literature

Having examined Foucault's notion of power, I would now like to discuss how the importance of this omnipresent force has been addressed in YAL. As Nikolajeva points out, there seems to be an innate power imbalance between children and adults, which is reflected in literary texts: "[N]owhere else are power structures as visible as in children's literature, the refined instrument used for centuries to educate, socialize and oppress a particular social group." (*Theory* 16) Even though the focus of this diploma thesis will be on YAL and not on literature for children, I will demonstrate that power in the Foucauldian sense is central to YAL because it mirrors real-life adolescent power struggles, which seem to deteriorate if an adolescent starts to make use of his or her own reason. In order to develop an understanding of the significance of YAL in the literary community, this chapter of my diploma thesis will begin by contesting the widespread claim that YAL lacks in literary complexity. While novel series like Rowling's *Harry Potter* have marked a change in attitude towards YAL, the genre is still not treated with the seriousness it deserves (see Daniels 79). After a careful examination of the sharp criticism that the genre has had to face, I will demonstrate that negative attitudes of the literary establishment could be made responsible for the fact that critical literature on YANs remains scarce. Furthermore, I will focus on the role of power in YAL, which is a defining characteristic of the genre. It will be argued that the Foucauldian approach to the analysis of power relations can also be applied to YAL, since those narratives usually revolve around an adolescent's negotiation of power with social institutions (see Trites 8). Finally, I will assess the significance of power in the rise of young adult dystopian fiction and demonstrate that an adolescent's fight for personal freedom might appear even more powerful in science fiction.

3.1 Defining young adult literature

Even though YAL has often been deemed responsible for a decline in morals and reading competencies of young adults, several attempts have been made to prove opponents wrong (see Hill 1). In the following subchapter, the emerging role of YAL in the literary community will be examined. The fact that YAL is often mistaken for children's literature, or worse, is not even considered to be literature, has led to the difficulty of defining the

genre as such. Therefore, I will demonstrate that striving for a rigid definition of YAL does not make any sense due to the genre's great versatility.

3.1.1 Young adult literature's place in the literary community

Although there seems to be a growing body of YAL, certain popular misconceptions have made it particularly difficult for the genre to establish its position in the literary community (see Hill; Hunt). In *The Critical Merits of Young Adult Literature: Coming of Age*, Hill has commented on the bitter controversy surrounding the value of YAL among scholars as well as non-academics. While he claims that a gradual process of coming of age of YAL has definitely taken place, YANs are still considered hardly suitable for serious literary engagement in educational institutions (see Hill 3). Daniels, in an article entitled "Literary Theory and Young Adult Literature: The Open Frontier in Critical Studies", affirms this by diagnosing a lack of "substance" (78) as one of the major arguments of critics who do not believe that writings labelled as YAL should be included into the traditional literary canon. She further elaborates this by pointing out that YAL has widely been perceived as "a secondary category of child-like storytelling" (Daniels 78), thus making it a matter scarcely worthy of a serious literary theoretician's time. Monseau, who has contributed numerous works on YAL to the literary community, refutes this unsubstantiated claim by emphasising the enormous value of YAL in the so-called "literary world" (qtd. in Blasingame 77). While it cannot be denied that YANs are commonly found in the English language classroom due to their great "pedagogical and sociological value" (Monseau qtd. in Blasingame 77), they also allow for critical engagement on various levels, thus dispelling any doubts about the genre's rightful place in the literary community. Davis (5), who has also commented on the aforementioned criticism in an article on integrating YAL into the mainstream, highlights the immense importance of changing the irreverent attitude of teachers towards young adult novels. As long as scholars who are working with YAL continue neglecting the value of young adult texts, it is highly unlikely that they will be acknowledged as serious literature. Daniels (78) confirms Davis's assumption by saying that YAL has not been treated as literature for a long time. Young adult and children's literature, as Daniels (78) points out, have not only been labelled as one and the same thing but have also been perceived as non-literary texts. She further diagnosed the so-called "theory barrier" (Daniels 78) as the main reason for the rejection of YAL, since reducing young adult narratives to inconclusive

discussions about their mostly young readership or attempting to draw close parallels to adult literature will not make any difference. If YAL is to be taken seriously, proponents of the genre and the literary establishment need to acknowledge the genre as such (see Daniels 79). Connors, for instance, does so by pointing out that the great value of YAL lies in "its ability to motivate reluctant readers, support struggling readers, and explore issues that adults, who, not coincidentally, author the majority of young adult novels, assume are of concern to adolescent readers" (147). On the other hand, the genre also manages to express "complexity and literary sophistication" (Connors 147), which could be of interest to competent readers as well, thus showing the genre's great versatility. Connors (147) also acknowledges the genre's didactic purpose by explaining that YAL can serve as an effective means of democratization, since it encourages critical thinking about the non-fictional world of its young readers. For Garcia, this didactic function could also be explained in terms of a democratic function, which could broaden the appeal of the genre, since it does not only address issues of concern to adolescents but also "greater human conditions" (xi). Garcia further demonstrates this by referring to the YAN *The Maze Runner*, which seems to follow the growing trend towards "bleak and post-apocalyptic world-building" (3), which has affected the public perception of such novels. In the USA, as Garcia points out, YANs are perceived as "a zeitgeist of the current climate […], politically, civically, and culturally" (3), leading to an increase in readership, especially among adults.

Ultimately, Hunt arrives at the conclusion that "the striking lack of theoretical criticism" (10) could be made responsible for the general neglect of YAL in the literary community. Even though public perception of the genre is gradually changing, there still seems to be no clear consensus over its literary value since hardly any serious study of YAL has taken place. Hunt's claim is substantiated by Coats, who believes that YANs need to be treated as a so-called "destination literature" (317) instead of pieces of fiction that are read for the sole purpose of personal entertainment. In contrast to well-known classics belonging to the literary canon, YAL is simply not being perceived as a serious, independent genre. This, however, appears to be the fundamental mistake in the reception of YAL because the literary establishment has ignored the unique way YAL approaches topics of social importance such as the negotiation of power relations (see Coats 317). If certain popular misconceptions about the genre are to be dispelled, YANs need to be approached critically

not only by YAL scholars in the academic field but also by the English literature establishment that has not given it the credit that it deserves.

3.1.2 Arriving at a working definition of young adult literature

As various literary theoreticians have shown (see Nikolajeva 2010; Garcia 2013; Daniels 2006), the term "young adult literature" requires careful definition if the genre is to be treated with the seriousness that it deserves. When taking a closer look at common definitions of YAL, it becomes evident that the genre is often exclusively defined in terms of its young readership (see Nilsen et al.). Nilsen et al. (3), for instance, base their definition of YAL on a readership consisting of twelve- to eighteen-year-old students, who are reading for two main purposes, namely pleasure or school. Herz and Gallo (2005), who have analysed the connection between YAL and the so-called classics, also seem to fail in defining the genre due to their repeated conformity to an adult norm. In their attempt to provide a comprehensive definition of YAL, they have listed the following key characteristics among others:

- The main characters are teenagers. […]
- The language is typical of contemporary teenagers, and the vocabulary, unlike that of adult classics, is manageable by readers of average ability. […]
- The books contain characters and issues to which teenagers can relate. […]
- [A]ll the traditional elements typical of classical literature are present in most contemporary novels for young adults […] – though they are used less frequently and at less sophisticated levels to match the experiential levels of readers.
- The very best YA books can be as appealing to adult readers as they are to teens. (Herz & Gallo 10)

Even though Herz and Gallo do not restrict their definition to a specific age group explicitly by referring to "teen readers" (9) in general, their constant comparison between teenagers and adults indicates that they conform to an adult norm. Nikolajeva, who commented on this widespread phenomenon in children's literature, uses the term "aetonormativity" (*Theory* 16) to describe this common tendency towards adult norms. Adults, thus, are taken as a value criterion, which has to be met if CYAL is to be treated as serious literature. While Nikolajeva does not deny the fact that there will always be some power imbalance due to the adult author, this still does not justify the fact that teenagers are perceived as a homogenous group, which shares the same interests and language use. Consequently, she

proposes perceiving both, childhood and adulthood, as equally important "human conditions" (*Theory* 16). Coats seems to affirm this by pointing out that the widespread perception of YAL as a so-called "gateaway drug" (316) for young readers who have still not reached a high level of reading competence must change, since the genre has much more to offer. For the purpose of my diploma thesis, I have therefore decided to propose a new way of thinking about YAL instead of a rigid working definition of it. YAL ought to be perceived as a distinctive genre demonstrating great versatility.

3.2 Power in young adult literature

Contrary to popular belief, YANs appear to be highly complex texts due to their negotiation of power relations between young protagonists and adults (see Trites). In the following, I will demonstrate that modern power struggles against the restriction of personal freedom as analysed by Foucault can also be observed in fiction for young adults and that adolescent protagonists need to reach maturity in the Kantian sense in order to fully understand that dominant discourses should be perceived as knowledge and practices that may change after a certain period of time. Ultimately, I will give an account of young adult dystopian fiction, a subgenre of YAL, that seems especially appropriate for a discussion of socio-political injustice. Finally, I will address the empowerment of young protagonists in science fiction for young readers, since this genre seems to attach great importance to the formation of moral judgements that go far beyond the power imbalance between adults and adolescents (see Alkestrand; Nikolajeva, *Theory*).

3.2.1 Power as a defining characteristic

Foucault's central proposition that "[p]ower is everywhere" (*History of Sexuality*, 93), it seems, also applies to young adult novels, even though critical texts on power in YAL remain relatively scarce (see Trites). In her book *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, Trites highlights the great need for critical theory about YAL in order to discuss power discourses as well as reveal power structures within fictional societies of adolescent protagonists. She justifies this proposal by describing a pattern of narration on the story level, which seems to be reoccurring in YAL: "[I]n the adolescent novel, protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what

they are. They learn to negotiate the levels of power that exist in the myriad social institutions within which they must function." (Trites 3) What becomes evident here is the fact that "issues of power" (Trites x) seem to be at the heart of YAL. Even though it might be argued that YAL centres around the adolescent's coming of age, personal growth and power appear to be intertwined. During the transition to adulthood, a person's life seems to be in a constant state of chaos, throwing the adolescent into total confusion surrounding his or her "place in the power structure" (Trites x). Once the adolescent experiences both, "power and powerlessness" (Trites x), he or she can finally reach full maturity. In addition, Trites (2000) has also contributed to the vigorous debate surrounding the differentiation between children's and young adult's literature. YAL, as Trites points out, can clearly be distinguished from children's literature due to the aforementioned characteristic, namely its distinct way of questioning social constructions within a society. Growth, in YANs, has very much to do with a young person's power struggle with dominant institutions, such as the school or the government, and less with a child's so-called "self-discovery" (Trites 20).

By drawing on Foucault's notion of power as a "force" (*History of Sexuality* 94), Trites has also been able to elaborate on the different ways power is exercised in YAL:

> Power is a force that operates within the subject and upon the subject in adolescent literature: teenagers are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them in these books. Much of the genre is thus dedicated to depicting how potentially out-of-control adolescents can learn to exist within institutional structures. (Trites 7)

Trites (22), thus, attaches great importance to the analysis of the function of social institutions in YAL, which seek to constrain the behaviour of adolescents to ensure that they become submitting citizens. By doing so, one may realize that adolescent protagonists are engaged in a constant power struggle for personal freedom, since they are subjected to strict "régimes of truth" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 133) based on dominant discourses and practices which they have to follow. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that rebellion begins to stir once a young adult's freedom is threatened (see Trites 7). In the Kantian sense, then, the adolescent makes use of his or her own reason and starts questioning the entire social system that dominates his or her society. By doing so, a crucial step towards personal maturity is made, since the young adult does not simply accept authority but permanently questions seemingly factual knowledge and fundamental rules of dominant institutions (see Kant 1970).

Ultimately, Trites critical engagement with YAL shows that institutional discourses can be analysed on various levels within YAN. A young protagonist's gender, race or social class, for instance, may influence important events in the narrative, since those factors have an enormous impact on one's position within a society (see Trites 47). Trites (52), thus, arrives at the conclusion that readers accustomed to tensions in narratives may gain a richer reading experience as well as arrive at a deeper understanding of discourse on the nature of power and knowledge in their respective cultures.

3.2.2 Dystopian fiction for young readers

In the following, I will demonstrate that utopian and dystopian worlds in YAL can mirror real societies and could be read as unique forms of "social criticism" (Connors 147), which encourage their primarily young readership to seriously debate political and social issues of today's society. In addition, it will be argued that young adult science fiction novels are not simply a means of entertainment but allow for empowerment of adolescents that greatly encourages critical thinking about society as a whole. Consequently, reading about the different ways adolescent protagonists seize power might lead to a shift in thinking about dominant discourses amongst young as well as mature readers.

3.2.2.1 Utopianism and dystopianism revisited

Utopian and dystopian fiction is deeply rooted in the literary community and can be traced back to More's *Utopia* in the early sixteenth century. More, who coined the term "utopia" (1516), was the first to describe a seemingly perfect society which seeks to ensure eternal happiness of all citizens. Even though this initial definition largely dominates any discussion in the literary field, Hintz and Ostry (2003) are also aware of the fact that utopia has become a vague term, since the concept of perfection seems to be based on subjective preferences depending on what one perceives as being ideal. Hintz and Ostry, thus, raise the following questions: "Does a text's utopian status lie within the form of the work, the thematic message of the work, the intention of the author to portray an ideal or nightmarish world, the intentions and beliefs held by the characters who live in the fictional society, or the response of the reader?" (2) All those examples show that defining a utopia proves to

be rather difficult and that it can, in fact, display some characteristics of its opposite, the dystopia, which is referred to as a cruel world in which social injustice dominates (see Claeys 2013). When taking a closer look at More's utopian commonwealth, it becomes evident that fundamental flaws can be identified even in such a seemingly perfect world. Logan and Adams (1989), for instance, have critically commented on More's work and questioned his original intention behind *Utopia*. They describe More's account of a flawless society as a reflection of the dichotomy between "the moral and the expedient in political life" (Logan & Adams xxiii). Even though More seems to follow the golden rules for creating a perfect society as formulated by the great Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato, the Utopian government cannot operate on the basis of both, morality and expediency (see Logan & Adams xxiv). The following extract from More's *Utopia* perfectly shows this: "The other hours of the day, when they are not working, eating, or sleeping, are left to each man's individual discretion, provided he does not waste his free time in roistering or sloth but uses it properly in some occupation that pleases him." (51) This classic example illustrates how the restriction of personal freedom is justified on the grounds of the greater good. In Utopia, all members of the society may enjoy the fruits of their labour to a certain extent. If someone, however, dares to step out of line, profound consequences have to be faced. Ultimately, Logan and Adams (xxvii) arrive at the conclusion that More's attempt to portray an ideal commonwealth could in fact be read as a practical handbook giving advice on how to govern a state by maintaining a balance between morality and expediency.

Logan and Adams (1989), it seems, have not been the only critics to look behind Utopia's façade of democracy. Claeys, in an article entitled "News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia", proposes going beyond the literary tradition in order to reveal that utopia as well as its opposite, the so-called dystopia, should be perceived as "specific responses to modernity in general" (172). He demonstrates this as follows:

> As utopia posits an essentially communal aspect of human identity increasingly lost in modernity, so this argument runs, dystopia evidences both the starkness of the loss itself, and the equally horrific nature of enforced communalism of the community type, with its crushing loss of subjective individual identity. (Claeys 172)

What becomes evident here is the fact that both fictional utopian and dystopian societies can reflect issues of major social concern regarding personal freedom. Claeys (171), thus,

proposes shifting the focus from a sole literary meaning to an ideological and a historical one, which in contrast to the former are connected to our real world. By doing so, it might be revealed that utopia does not necessarily portray a perfect society. As Claeys (156) points out, modern, dominant utopian institutions hide behind a friendly façade and, eventually, become a dystopia if something as fragile as trust is broken. Ultimately, Claeys puts forward "a composite definition" (147), which acknowledges the two terms in its literary as well as realistic sense, demonstrating that utopianism and dystopianism are in fact occurring concepts in today's societies.

Even though analysing modern forms of utopianism and dystopianism would go far beyond the scope of this diploma thesis, Claeys' argumentation perfectly shows that fictional worlds can be a mirror of modern societies. In 1994, this has already been addressed by Booker who described the growing appeal for dystopian fiction as lying in "perceived inadequacies in existing social and political systems" (20). While for the purpose of this diploma thesis dystopian societies will be referred to as places "in which the ideals for improvement have gone tragically amok", as postulated by Hintz and Ostry (3), the preliminary discussion should have demonstrated that the terms dystopia and utopia are not to be taken as dichotomous variables. Additionally, an analysis of dystopian fiction may be perceived as much more than a mere account of a fictional world, since it could also be a reflection of wider issues of our modern society.

3.2.2.2 Young adult dystopia's appeal in today's society

Nikolajeva (73), who has produced numerous critical texts on CYAL, calls the 1990s a crucial turning point for young adult dystopian fiction, since from this date onwards it has started to establish itself as a major trend in CYAL. Despite the massive increase in popularity, Connors, who has analysed gender aspects in Collins' *The Hunger Games*, points out that dystopian fiction for young adults has far too often been described as "speculative fiction" (146), a pejorative term encompassing a number of genres such as fantasy or science fiction. Even though YAL is gradually establishing its position in the literary community, so-called speculative fiction has encountered strong resistance and has wrongly been labelled as "superficial entertainment" (Connors 146). What is known about dystopian fiction, thus, is largely based upon "stigmas and mischaracterizations" (Connors

146) that overshadow the genre's enormous potential. Hintz and Ostry (1) affirm this by emphasizing that utopian and dystopian CYAL can be both entertaining as well as socio-critical. The latter makes those texts extremely important for adolescents, who start to "systematically explore collective social organization" (Hintz & Ostry 2) from the point of view of an adolescent protagonist who questions institutional structures and those in power in his or her society.

Power, which seems to be a fundamental concept in YAL, is considered particularly significant for the distinction between young adult dystopian fiction and the one aimed at children (see Nikolajeva 2010; Hintz & Ostry 2003). According to Hintz and Ostry (9), dystopian narratives in YAL appear to be very complex and centre around the coming of age of adolescents who start to question the hierarchical structure of their society. During the course of the narrative, as Hintz and Ostry point out, adolescents gradually reveal "the secret and unsavoury workings of the society" (9) and, in contrast to the innocent child who will always seek refuge in adult superiority, must seize power in order to secure personal freedom. This reoccurring romantic pattern of a teen saviour coming to the world's rescue on the story level, then, allows young adult readers to see their full potential and realize that they can demand social and political change (see Hintz & Ostry 10).

Ultimately, it seems reasonable to assume that utopian and dystopian narratives allow for critical engagement on various levels, depending on decisive factors such as age or educational background. While there is clearly no lack of interest in the subject, Connors (146) emphasises the necessity of including critical theory in professional discussions about young adult speculative fiction. By doing so, one could critically engage with those novels on a deeper and highly theoretical level and exploit their political and social potential. Hintz and Ostry also address the aforementioned potential by referring to its crucial role in reflecting on today's society: "Utopian and dystopian fiction is a productive place to address cultural anxieties and threats as well as to contemplate the ideal." (12) Since the ideal society is yet to be created, dystopian fiction may serve as a means of reflection for younger as well as mature readers, who express interest in contemplating modern forms of social organization.

3.2.2.3 Moral empowerment in science fiction YANs

Since Dashner's *The Maze Runner* (2011) is set in a counterfactual world that appears to be far more technologically advanced than today's society, I would like to address in what ways science-fiction narratives, in particular those involving complex technologies, influence the moral empowerment of adolescents.

When taking a closer look at dystopian fiction in general, it becomes evident that science fictional or fantastic settings, such as technologically advanced societies or magical worlds, appear to be effective means for portraying youth empowerment (see Moran 2003; Alkestrand 2014). In "Righteous rebellion in fantasy and science fiction for the young: The example of Harry Potter" (2014), Alkestrand discusses the great potential of science-fictional and fantastic settings for the depiction of youth empowerment in YAL. While she acknowledges Nikolajeva's (2010) great contribution to the study of power in CYAL, she simultaneously refutes Nikolajeva's claim that children and adolescents can only be empowered to some extent because they must eventually learn that adults know what is best for them. Even though teenage rebellion might be perceived as nothing out of the ordinary, since it is often portrayed as part of the coming of age of a person, Alkestrand emphasises its deep meaning in science-fiction and fantasy novels:

> [T]he rebellions are portrayed as so much more than the ordinary adolescent protest. They function as a motif that challenges the relationship of power between adolescents and adults on a more fundamental level, since they depict adolescents who stand up for democratic values and challenge adults and institutions which are portrayed as corrupt and blinded by power. (109)

Rebellions in science-fiction and fantasies, thus, appear to be much more than angry outbursts of adolescents. Young protagonists do not simply revolt against their own government without reason, they only do so if they suffer great injustice by those in power. Therefore, Alkestrand (110) arrives at the conclusion that settings that deviate from the reader's reality allow for a much deeper reflection about power relations between adolescents and adults because of a shift of focus. In science-fiction YANs, technology is often depicted as a "dehumanising force" (Applebaum 58) that poses a serious threat to humanity as such. Consequently, rebellions can become so-called "didactic vehicles" (Alkestrand 111), which encourage young protagonists to negotiate power relations with adults as well as fight for political democracy and social justice, fostering moral values that

go far beyond the relationship of a minor and an adult. Rabkin, who has also commented on power in CYAL, uses the term "power fantasies" (3) to refer to the way young adults thrive in such seemingly hopeless situations, enabling them to become knights in shining armours when the world needs them the most. Ultimately, it seems reasonable to assume that the science-fiction's and fantasy's appeal to YAL can be attributed to its unique way of portraying an adolescent's brave fight against social injustice. By questioning dominant discourses on knowledge and power, the reader gains a new perspective on seemingly ordinary attitudes and values regarding the real world (see Alkestrand 121)

4. Analysis of *The Maze Runner*

Before approaching an analysis of Dashner's *The Maze Runner* (2011), it seems important to note that there are two societies on the story level that ought to be analysed separately if one wishes to illustrate the full complexity of the function of power within the novel. I will demonstrate in what ways power is negotiated on two levels due to the embeddedness of one society within the other by analysing "WICKED" (Dashner 212), which is the superior social institution, first. Afterwards, I will do so with the second society. I will use Foucault's points for an analysis of power relations as a starting point to address the different means that are applied in order to restrict the personal freedom of adolescent subjects. After having analysed the social institutions that restrict power, I will elaborate the protagonist's enlightenment and subsequent rebellion.

4.1 The Creators

In *The Maze Runner* (2011), absolute power is held by an organisation called "WICKED" (Dashner 212), which follows the fanatical belief that committing atrocities against children and adolescents by exercising bio-power will save humanity. Since the world as we know it is controlled by a terrible sickness, the "Flare" (see Dashner 363), which is turning every person on Earth into a monster, WICKED, an acronym standing for "WORLD IN CATASTROPHE: KILLZONE EXPERIMENT DEPARTMENT" (212), has been founded in order to seek a solution. What makes WICKED extremely powerful is the fact that it has created certain régimes of truth that legislate for the kidnapping of carefully chosen male objects, ranging from teens to young adults, based on parameters such as intelligence and perseverance (see Dashner 8). If a child or adolescent has been taken, the scientists rename him after an influential person in the scientific field, such as Alby after Albert Einstein, Newt after Isaac Newton, or Thomas after Thomas Edison, and raise him according to their wishes until he is eventually send into "the Glade" (Dashner 7), a place created by WICKED. By doing so, every single subject that is chosen to take part in the experiment is objectified for the seemingly greater good. The renaming, in particular, highlights the loss of identity even more because the objects, who must participate in the experiment without their consent, are perceived as possessions of WICKED that do not even deserve to keep their birth names. They are fully expected to serve the sole purpose

of saving the world (see Dashner 299). Consequently, bio-power in the Foucauldian sense is an important means of constraint that is used by WICKED in order to achieve its goals. All disciplinary actions are simply justified on the grounds that there is no other way to save the world.

Since the scientists' main objective is to save the world by finding objects who are stronger than the Flare, WICKED has invested a lot of time and effort into designing and constructing a place for their empirical experiment. The reader, however, does not learn more about the happenings in the real dystopian society of WICKED because the story is narrated from the perspective of Thomas, the adolescent protagonist of the novel who has to live in the Glade. In general, "the Gladers" (Dashner 296), an expression that is used to refer to the objects who have been sent into the artificial world, remain quite clueless about their prior life, since one of the most effective means of control for WICKED is memory loss. Before the objects are sent into the Glade, they are wiped of their memory, leaving them completely perplexed by the vague recollection of their lives in the real world (see 26). By doing so, WICKED ensures that the inhabitants of the Glade will do as they are told, and rely on basic instincts for survival, which is exactly what the scientists would like to test. Afterwards, all the objects are put inside a dark box that comes out of a hole in the middle of the Glade. Even though the Gladers do not know anything about the Flare, they cannot ignore the fact that somebody is controlling their every move. The box, thus, serves as a constant reminder of the threat and superiority of the Gladers' "Creators" (Dashner 22), a term used by the adolescents to refer to WICKED. But the hole is not the only symbol that stands for the Creators' dominance. The whole construction of the Glade as such appears to be intimidating, especially due to its massive stone walls, surrounding the inhabitants: "He [Thomas] felt an uncomfortable sense of vertigo looking at the towering walls, as if he hovered above them instead of sitting at their base." (Dashner 23) This description all the more shows that WICKED must have carefully designed this place in order to deter the young people from trying to escape. Even though the Gladers attempt to understand this new world through their senses, such as hearing or smelling, WICKED has made sure that logic does not apply in the Glade: "He [Thomas] took a deep breath, loving the fresh whiff of dirt and growing plants. He was almost positive the smell would bring back some sort of pleasant memory, but nothing came." (Dashner 63) The fact that memories do not simply come back if something familiar is sensed is a significant factor

behind the bio-power of WICKED, which demonstrates how elaborated the experiment must be.

During the course of the narrative, it becomes evident that WICKED is an extremely powerful entity that exercises discipline on various levels in order to test the abilities of the Gladers, who are expected to be stronger than the Flare. Therefore, the purpose of the new, carefully designed world is to make it impossible for the inhabitants to escape, which should eventually push them to the limits of their abilities. To further pursue this objective, it is not enough to take away the objects' identities and send them inside the Glade. Another effective "instrumental mode" (Foucault, *Power* 344) that is used by the scientists is the incorporation of certain technological elements, which deviate from the Gladers' common knowledge of the real world and divert their attention from their worst enemy, being WICKED. Those elements can be found inside the Maze, which surrounds the Glade. Like the hole in the ground, reminding the children of their powerful superiors in another world, a window has been placed in the thick stone walls for the Gladers to see what is awaiting them inside the Maze: "It took a second for his eyes [Thomas'] to focus on the moving object on the other side, to look past the grime and dust and see what Newt wanted him to see. And when he did, he felt his breath catch in his throat, like an icy wind had blown down there and frozen the air solid." (Dashner 38) Since only a small number of extremely brave Gladers enters the Maze on a regular basis, and even then only temporarily because of the dangers inside of it, the window offers a glimpse of the frightening world surrounding the Glade to all inhabitants (see Dashner 28). This window, thus, proves to be extremely useful, since it enables WICKED to gradually instil deep fear of the unknown in the Gladers, especially those who have never entered the Maze. The dangerous creatures that can be found inside the Maze are called "Grievers", and are described as being "the size of a cow but with no distinct shape" (Dashner 38) and having "[w]icked instrument-tipped appendages protruded from its body like arms" (Dashner 39), which could kill a person within seconds. They are a highly effective means to exercise power, since they prove to be "a horrific mix of animal and machine" (Dashner 39) that seems to be impossible to fight and magically enters and leaves the Maze, fuelling fears of the fantastic amongst the Gladers. Even though the Grievers are a product of technological advancement, which was probably made out of metal like various other elements of the Maze such as the box in the middle (see Dashner 2), the Gladers perceive them as something magical, which WICKED obviously uses to its advantage. Since the Gladers have been wiped of their memory, they

cannot simply make sense of them in logical terms, leaving them even more vulnerable to all the intentional attacks of the scientists. They further attempt to intimidate the Gladers by equipping every single Griever with a so-called "Grief Serum" (Dashner 196), which induces weird hallucinations if someone is stung by the creature's arm. Those hallucinations, however, are in fact brief glimpses of the world outside the Maze that leave the victims of the Grievers in a state of total confusion. By doings so, WICKED once again successfully demonstrates its advanced scientific knowledge and power over the Gladers, who cannot simply remember their past but are only allowed to do so if they risk being stung by a machine designed by the Creators. While reviving at least a few memories might seem an efficient way to seize personal power, it is essential to understand that absolute power always rests with WICKED, which does not leave anything to chance in this experiment. After being wounded by a Griever, one needs to get a specific serum, which is only provided by the Creators, in order to survive the poisonous infection that could lead to one's death (Dashner 14). And even then, the brutal torture is not over because the victim has to undergo a process called the "Changing" (Dashner 97), which affects one physically as well as mentally. While all the memories that have once been gone seem to come flooding back, they are taken away by WICKED after a short period of time, leaving a person in a state of utter confusion and pain. Alby, a boy who was stung by a Griever, describes the aforementioned experience as follows: "I saw what I saw, Greenie. It's kinda fadin', but I ain't never gonna forget. It was terrible. Tried to talk about it, somethin' starts choking me. Now the images are getting' up and gone, like that same somethin' don't like me remembering." (Dashner 195) This statement perfectly demonstrates that WICKED uses its power to subjugate its objects on various levels. Even getting one's memories back does not change anything, since the Creators have considered this scenario beforehand and use it to ensure that the inhabitants start to question each other's reliability. Every victim of a Griever suffers from physical pains that eventually lead to deviant behaviour such as vomiting all over oneself or attacking others out of nowhere, so that the rest of the Gladers has reason to believe that a person is not to be taken seriously anymore (see Dashner 147). WICKED even wants the Gladers to be aware of this fact because it makes them come to the following recognition: "It brings back memories. Just little snippets, but definite memories of before we came to this horrible place. Anyone who goes through it acts like a bloody psycho when it's over […]. Anyway, it's like being given your old life back, only to have it snatched away again." (Dashner 147) The powerful epiphany that occurs after every Changing is the bitter realization that the Creators will always be superior. The

apparent paradox about the Gladers' whole existence is that they have to accept that the Creators, who put them inside the Maze, are also the only ones who can save them from the terrifying creatures in the Maze. Another constant reminder of this absolute superiority is the closing of the walls that surround the Glade. This ritual is described as follows: "The enormous stone wall to the tight of them seemed to defy every known law of physics as it slid along the ground, throwing sparks and dust as it moved, rock against rock." (Dashner 28) Since the movement of the walls appears to be a reoccurring event that the Gladers cannot explain, it once again demonstrates the power of WICKED that controls everything.

Apart from mind control and the deliberate provocation of great anxieties, the bio-powerthat is exercised by WICKED also requires constant surveillance of the Gladers in order to ensure strict discipline. For this purpose, another seemingly fantastic creature, the "beetle blade" (Dashner 14), has been designed that enables the Creators to spy on the inhabitants of the Glade. Even though the Gladers do not possess any memories, certain elements of the real world belonging to common knowledge have not been deleted from their brains. The beetle blade, thus, reminds the inhabitants of an insect: "The torso was a silver cylinder […]. Twelve jointed legs ran along the length of its bottom, spread out, making the thing look like a sleeping lizard. The head was impossible to see because of the red beam of light shining right at him." (Dashner 122) Due to its relatively small size, the beetle blade proves to be a perfect surveillance device that allows the Creators to watch the Gladers' every move. Ultimately, surveillance proves to be an effective means of enforcement for WICKED due to its dual purpose. On the one hand, it provides the organization with valuable information concerning everyday life in the Glade. On the other hand, WICKED does not observe the Gladers without their knowledge on purpose, if anything, the beetle blade should serve as a permanent reminder of the Creators' power (see Dashner 64). If, however, somebody dares to disobey WICKED, cruel punishment is inflicted (see Dashner 50). Gladers who have been stung by a Griever, for instance, are manipulated by WICKED through mind control in order to act as law enforcement bodies (see Dashner 252). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the organization's enormous bio-power can be attributed to its harshness, which simply does not tolerate any disobedience.

While WICKED obviously exercises power through violence, it still has to ensure that hope does not fade completely amongst the Gladers in order to keep the experiment alive. For

this reason, the box in the middle of the Glade does not only transfer a new person once a month but also provides supplies, such as food, once a week (see Dashner 42). By doing so, WICKED provides the Gladers with relative stability concerning certain aspects of their lives, which seems to maintain a necessary balance between empowerment and confusion in the Glade. As long as the Gladers receive their supplies, they can deal with any occasional disturbance of their everyday routine. Depending on the degree to which WICKED wishes to provoke the Gladers, less violent to massive upheavals are caused (see Dashner 201). The Gladers also arrive at the following conclusion: "[T]hey [WICKED] wanted to test us, see how we'd react to what they call the Variables, and to a problem that has no solution." (Dashner 300) Even though the Gladers eventually come to the realisation that they have been tricked into believing that there must be a possibility of escape, WICKED successfully manages to entertain this vain hope amongst its objects until the very end of their pilot experiment due to its strategic superiority.

Ultimately, most of the examples given above should demonstrate that WICKED successfully exercises power through various means of control. As far as "the effectiveness of its instruments" (Foucault, *Power* 344) is concerned, it can be said that the methods applied by the organization appear to be highly elaborate and effective in the restriction of the behaviour as well as voice of the Gladers. The use of advanced technology, in particular, clearly reduces any probability of resistance. The bio-power of WICKED, thus, can be very much attributed to its use of a complex system of reward and punishment that successfully disciplines the Gladers. As long as the Gladers' hopes of escape are kept alive, they will not stop fighting, which seems to be an ability that is desperately needed in the vanishing world outside the Glade.

The fact that the organization is attempting to test every possible variable that they can think of, however, also expresses the dynamic character of power that Foucault addresses in his texts on power relations (see *Power/Knowledge*; *History of Sexuality*). Even though WICKED appears to have the upper hand in the power struggle with the Gladers, the dystopian society outside the Glade is gradually becoming extinct. Ultimately, this also expresses the arbitrariness of power and the fluid dynamic between empowerment and powerlessness. No matter how scientifically advanced the methods of WICKED are and how powerful it seems to the Gladers, it still has no power over the Flare. While the reader only receives limited information concerning the Flare in this first novel of Dashner's

trilogy, it becomes evident that WICKED might be as desperate as the Gladers despite its elaborate pretence of absolute power. This is due the fact that it appears to be difficult to predict with any degree of certainty whether the best Gladers, who will be released into the real world, will manage to rescue humanity from the Flare.

4.2 The Gladers

The hierarchical structure of the society inhabiting the Glade is based on a rather simple "system of differentiations" (Foucault, *Power* 344) as found in wildlife habitats. Natural principles such as physical strength and duration of residence are determining factors in the decision on one's status within the Glade. The lowest position on the hierarchical ladder is occupied by so-called "Newbies" (see Dashner 17). After his arrival, Thomas, the main character, immediately learns what it means to be the Newbie, since information about life in the Glade and the Maze is not provided as long as he does not gain the trust of the Gladers. The ones in charge, in particular, maintain strict secrecy about certain activities when he is around (see Dashner 26). Any attempt to learn more about the Glade fails, since he always receives the same answer: "When you bloody need to know, you'll know, Greenie." (Dashner 37) If a new person arrives, he must go through an initial induction phase which will determine his role within the Glade. During this time, different job keepers assess the Newbie's capability to carry out certain tasks of their profession (see Dashner 43). Taking on some responsibility, no matter how minor the job might seem, is of utmost importance to the Gladers due to one simple fact: "That's one of the reasons we run this place all nice and busylike. You get lazy, you get sad. Start givin' up. Plain and simple." (75) The society within the Glade can only function properly as long as they are working because keeping oneself occupied makes it possible to suppress negative feelings. Being assigned certain tasks and duties, thus, is central to becoming a legitimate member of the society. Hence, when the Newbie has found an occupation, he is gradually introduced to their society. Consequently, he receives more information about the Maze after gaining the trust of the Gladers.

Within the Glade, every Glader has to accept that people in certain positions may enjoy more privileges than others. This becomes especially evident when taking a closer look at the different jobs. On the one hand, there are certain occupations that more or less tie a

person to the Glade, which is divided into four sections. First of all, there are the "Gardens", where the so-called "Track-hoes" work. Those people are responsible for all the agricultural work. In the "Blood House", "Slicers" and "Blood Housers" can be found whose occupation it is to farm and slaughter animals. In the small graveyard that is located in the forest, called the "Deadheads", "Baggers" bury dead Gladers. The "Homestead", the headquarter of the Gladers, is located in the centre of the Glade. Here, "Runners", "Med-jacks" and "Keepers" meet (see Dashner 43). The former refers to "the best of the best" (Dashner 98) amongst the Gladers. Those young boys have to be extremely athletic as well as highly intelligent, since they are the only ones allowed to enter the Maze in order to create maps (Dashner 62). Other Gladers appreciate their work and cater for their needs, when they return from a hard workday in the Maze. If new supplies arrive, Runners are also allowed to take whatever they need for their investigations. The Creators know about the Runners and even supply them with new running shoes on a regular basis (Dashner 200). One of the many privileges of being a runner is that they know where the weapons and maps are hidden (Dashner 202). "Med-jacks" spend a lot of time in the "Homestead" as well because they are responsible for curing people who have been stung by a Griever (see Dashner 58). If a person is sick, "Med-jacks" give medical reports to their superiors, the "Keepers" (see Dashner 179).

According to Alby, the adolescent leader of the Gladers who has been the first to arrive two years ago (see 45), the inhabitants have managed to build a functioning society that is pretty much self-sufficient: "Don't need a lot – pretty much run ourselves in the Glade." (Dashner 42) This fact can very much be attributed to the hard work of a community council, which consists of ten members who are called the "Keepers" (see Dashner 103). Since Alby has been elected the leader of the Gladers, he is also the head of the "Keepers". In contrast to the other children and adolescents, the Keepers constantly attempt to imitate adults in order to secure their position of power amongst the Gladers. This becomes especially evident in their use of offensive language. Newt, the second in command, makes this perfectly clear when saying the following to a Keeper who misbehaved: "I've never seen so many shanks acting like tit-suckin' babies. We may not look it, but around these parts we're adults. Act like it, or we'll disband this bloody Council and start from scratch." (Dashner 158) Using swear words, thus, appears to be an effective means for establishing authority, since the adolescent Gladers seem to associate such language with adults in charge and do not know how to earn respect otherwise. Even though the need to demonstrate authority might seem

to be the primary objective of the Keepers, they do so in order to achieve another, far more important goal, namely surviving the Glade. Since the struggle for survival against an omniscient enemy proves to be rather difficult due to the obvious inequality in power, the Keepers feel the need to establish certain rules and restrictions. By doing so, they make sure that the part of their lives that they can control, namely the society within the Glade, is in perfect order. Questioning this desperate longing for order, however, is inacceptable as Newt makes clear: "Order. You say that bloody word over and over in your shuck head. Reason we're all sane around here is cuz we work our butts off and maintain order." (Dashner 100) What becomes evident here is the fact that the Keepers want to maintain order at all costs, since they are perfectly aware of their hopeless situation. Every new inhabitant, thus, has to swear an oath, promising that he will abide by the rules that the Keepers have set (see Dashner 107). There are two fundamental rules within the Glade that have been established in order to guarantee the inhabitants' safety: First of all, everyone has to stay inside the walls of the Glade. Only Runners may enter the Maze because they are physically and mentally capable to do so (see Dashner 46). Secondly, search parties for any Glader who has not returned from the Maze are forbidden (see Dashner 106). If somebody, however, breaks those rules or does not submit to the discipline imposed by the Keepers, harsh punishments are inflicted. The least severe one is being send to the so-called "slammer" (Dashner 86), which is the Gladers' small prison. Since the Creators do not allow any mistakes, the Keepers rigidly adhere to the same rule. Therefore, breaking one of the two fundamental rules means being banished to the Maze, which nobody has ever survived if he has not made it back in time (see Dashner 90). Going through the ritual of banishment as such, however, already appears to be very cruel:

> Ben screamed then, without pause, made a sound so piercing that Thomas covered his ears. It was a bestial, lunatic cry, surely ripping the boy's vocal cords to shreds. At the last second, the front Keeper somehow loosened the larger pole from the piece attached to Ben and yanked it back into the Glade, leaving the boy to his Banishment. Ben's final screams cut off when the walls closed with a terrible boom. (Dashner 93)

This passage perfectly shows that the Keepers are intentionally sentencing somebody to a violent death. Even though they do not kill the convict themselves, the brutal ritual of being pushed inside the Maze on a pole demonstrates that the adolescents exercise power as they have learned from their superiors, the Creators. Since the Gladers have been living under total domination of their Creators, it does not come as a surprise that they have started to adopt their methods because they seem to be extremely effective in restricting their very

own freedom. The graveyard in the Glade can be taken as another example of this gradual assimilation because it has not been built to mourn the death but rather to serve as a constant reminder of the cruelty of their Creators, who are acting completely without mercy (see Dashner 114). While it cannot be denied that the Keepers are a dominant force of this society that has to adopt radical methods from time to time, they constantly attempt to establish political democracy by following formal procedures, which ought to facilitate the achievement of a general consensus on sensitive topics among the members (see Dashner 150). Gatherings, for instance, are called if a decision is to be made or somebody violates the oath (see Dashner 60). Since every single member of the Keepers belongs to a different group, depending on what job he is doing, they can collect various opinions on certain topics. On the other hand, this also makes the Keepers even more powerful, since they may attempt to shape public opinion by influencing smaller groups of Gladers before spreading the word about important decisions to the whole society.

Besides surviving the Glade and solving the riddle of the Maze in order to find a way out, the Keepers also pursue another object, namely seeking revenge on the Creators (see Dashner 145). Even though it might be argued that most of the Gladers have accepted their destiny due to statements such as, "A few weeks, you'll be happy shank. You'll be happy and helpin'. None of us knew jack on First Day, you neither. New life begins tomorrow." (Dashner 11), which they constantly repeat to each other, there seems to be more behind it. Having to live under such hopeless conditions could easily extinguish any love of life. Therefore, the Gladers see a possible solution in downplaying the severe restriction of their freedom: "Don't worry. You'll be all whacked for a few days, but then you'll get used to this place. I have. We live here, this is it. Better than living in a pile of klunk." (Dashner 15) By doing so, they keep alive the desperate hope that there must be a way out of their situation. In addition, they seem to be reassuring each other that life in the Glade is acceptable, and even enjoyable to some extent. Upon his arrival in the Glade, Thomas also has to admit that: "Some things here were too perfect. He knew that, but had no explanation." (Dashner 197) Even though the Keepers also share this idealised view, they are still aware of the fact that they will have to face reality sooner or later. Becoming a Keeper, thus, involves accepting the situation as well as allowing the feelings of anger against the Creators in order to take vengeance for the agonizing pain that they have caused them and their fellow Gladers that they feel responsible for. Since the Keepers appear to be the most mature adolescents, they have assumed the role of adults in the Glade. Even

though the Keepers relapse into childish behaviour from time to time, for instance when using names like "Zart the Fart" (151), the Gladers still accept their authority because they are taking care of them.

As far as the effectiveness of the rule of the Keepers is concerned, it can be said that their determined attempts to maintain order do not always succeed. This is due the fact that the Keepers are only powerful to some extent, since their knowledge of the Creators is limited even if they know more than the rest of the Gladers. Being aware of the superiority of WICKED, however, does not seem to discourage the Keepers because they pursue the aforementioned objectives in order to stay alive. While some Gladers' attitudes could be condemned as blind acceptance of authority, they do so willingly in order to ignore the bitter reality that they will never escape. In a way, the Keepers attempt to shield the Gladers from the realities of the Glade, allows the adolescents to keep at least some of their innocence. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the Keepers are only granted certain privileges as long as the other Gladers do not have to face the truth behind their existence.

5.3 Empowerment of Thomas

Having analysed the rather complex power relations due to the embeddedness of one society within another in *The Maze Runner* (2011), I would know like to address the empowerment of the protagonist of the novel. In the following, I will demonstrate that Thomas is a prototypical dystopian hero, who first experiences a state of powerlessness before finally feeling empowered enough to negotiate power relations.

In the beginning of the narrative, Thomas is still represented as an innocent child that shows emotional immaturity. This becomes especially evident in his initial behaviour upon his arrival in the Glade because he constantly asks the other inhabitants about the whereabouts of their families. The disturbing thought of living in a world without parents crosses his mind over and over again:

> His mind functioned without flaw, trying to calculate his surroundings and predicament. Knowledge flooded his thoughts, facts and images, memories and details of the world and how it works. […] And yet he didn't know where he came from, or how he'd got into the dark lift, or who his parents were. (Dashner 2)

This passage perfectly shows that Thomas is still in a state of powerlessness, since he is acting like an inexperienced child that would like to seek comfort in his parents' arms. Even though it cannot be denied that every person who has been affected by memory loss would most likely ask similar questions in order to discover his or her identity, it seems to me that Thomas is deliberately depicted as an innocent adolescent in order to highlight his rise to power even more later on. The lack of parental guidance appears to deteriorate the situation because Thomas finds himself abandoned in a place with other children and adolescents, who must behave like adults if they wish to survive. Consequently, Thomas is confused and anxious at times: "Emptiness ate away at his insides, quickly replaced by sadness that hurt his heart. It was all too much […] Tears threatened again to fill his eyes, but he refused to let them come." (Dashner 11) What becomes evident here is the fact that Thomas' arrival and realization that he has lost all his memories cause a chain reaction of confusion that is slowly driving him to total despair. Like any other child, Thomas feels the need to cry in order to express his hopelessness.

After this rather emotional first reaction to the Glade, Thomas gradually begins to leave the state of confusion and appears to be heading for the "exit" in the Kantian sense (Foucault, *Reader* 34) by questioning common practices and knowledge of the Gladers and their Creators (see Dashner 24). From the very beginning onwards, Thomas' fears are always accompanied by an insatiable curiosity about life in the Glade as well as the maze surrounding it (see Dashner 2). For this reason, he questions everything that the Gladers tell him and does not understand all the secrecy. Thomas, thus, does not accept answers such as the following: "That's just the way it is. Things are really weird around here, and most of us don't know everything. Half of everything." (24) While the other Gladers seem to resign themselves to being in the dark, Thomas already shows one important characteristic of a traditional dystopian hero, namely his healthy scepticism. A hero does not simply accept the fact that a seemingly desperate situation cannot be changed, on the contrary, he seeks to find a solution. On his way towards the exit, however, he has to learn that people accept certain dominant discourses in order to not disturb the social order that has been created by those in power. Thomas, thus, seems to obey the strict rules of the Keepers to some extent in order to avoid drawing negative attention: "I don't wanna get in trouble – I've only just got here." (31) This statement illustrates that Thomas understands that any minor disturbance of the daily routine of the Gladers will eventually get himself into trouble, which could be a hindrance to his plan to learn more about the Glade.

Therefore, he attempts to follow his natural instincts by attracting as little attention as possible because doing nothing is completely unacceptable to him.

Thomas' attitude also proves that he is willing to take action at his own risk in order to find a way out of the Glade, which Kant describes as yet another crucial step towards the exit. Since only a courageous person that takes a proactive approach in order to improve his or her situation is considered mature enough to leave immaturity by Kant (see Foucault, *Reader* 34), Thomas' burning desire to become a Runner demonstrates that he perfectly fits this description. From the very beginning onwards, the protagonist knows that he cannot derive fulfilment from any other job than being a Runner: "Thomas knew he was a smart kid – he somehow felt it in his bones. But nothing about this place made any sense. Except for one thing. He was supposed to be a Runner." (Dashner 40) Despite all the cruelty and inhumanity that Thomas has witnessed, becoming a Runner is described as a calling that is impossible to ignore (Dashner 46). This also distinguishes him from the other Gladers who seem to lack this genuine passion. Even Thomas himself appears totally surprised by the "insane courage" (Dashner 132) that he shows in his battle with a Griever and has to release his supressed feelings by crying: "His mind couldn't process the thought of where the Cliff led or what had happened to the terrible creatures. His last ounce of strength disappeared, and he curled into a ball on the ground." (Dashner 136) This passage demonstrates that Thomas is still a child that gets overwhelmed with emotions from time to time. At the same time, he is depicted as an adolescent that is constantly growing with every new challenge that he has to face. What marks Thomas as a prototypical teenage hero is the fact that he overcomes his fears, even if he does not always believe in his abilities to do so. In addition, Trites (x) emphasizes the fact that feeling powerless on one's way towards empowerment is an important lesson that every adolescent has to learn in order to achieve personal freedom. Thomas even experiences some kind of empowerment after every defeat, as he contemplates in this situation: "Right then Thomas made a decision. Forget all the weird stuff. Forget all the bad things. Forget it all. He wouldn't quit until he'd solved the puzzle and found a way home." (Dashner 198) The teen hero, it seems, appears even stronger because it makes him realize what he could do better next time. He displays great perseverance in his strong determination to continue fighting until a solution is reached.

According to Foucault (*Reader* 35), enlightenment in the Kantian sense also involves a considerable amount of courage, which Thomas definitely shows in his selfless behaviour

towards the other Gladers and his determination to save them. Despite the strict rule of the Keepers regarding the entrance to the maze, he leaves the Glade before he is chosen to be a Runner in order to save another Glader's life (see Dashner 110). This heroic act of bravery also demonstrates that Thomas uses his own reason to make a decision. While other Gladers would never dare to enter the maze without permission, Thomas decides to do what he thinks is best despite the consequences. Even though it cannot be denied that Thomas is filled with terrible fear when he steps into the Maze, he continues doing everything in his power to save someone who he has just met (see Dashner 111). This also proves to be a striking difference between a hero and the side characters: a hero will never leave someone to die and face mortal danger if necessary. Consequently, Thomas' enormous moral courage also earns him deep respect, which only reinforces his firm decision to follow his natural instincts (see Dashner 159). The overwhelming support that he receives also encourages him to seize power and to confront the Keepers directly after his return from the maze: "I didn't do anything wrong. All I know is I saw two people struggling to get inside these walls and they couldn't make it. To ignore that because of some stupid rule seemed selfish, cowardly, and … well, stupid." (Dashner 164) Even though he knows that statements like this might destabilise the regime of the Keepers, he is courageous enough to be the first who questions practices and knowledge of those in power in order to save the Gladers. What Thomas seems to realise before anyone else is that all the strict rules, which the Keepers have rigidly enforced, might have been useful at a certain time to provide stability. Now, however, the time has come to rethink dominant discourses in order to make some genuine progress with their escape plans.

As Thomas seizes power amongst the Gladers, he also raises a rebellion against WICKED that finally enables him to reach the Kantian exit, even if the Creators' maintain absolute superiority for the time being. During the course of the narrative, Thomas comes to the realisation that the other Gladers must become empowered as well if they should stand a chance of surviving (see Dashner 324). Causing serious disruption to the Creators' bio-power, however, proves to be rather difficult due to their advanced instrumental means of objectification and constraint. Nevertheless, Thomas does not seem completely intimidated by all those methods, since he constantly attempts to make use of his own reason in order to make sense of the happenings. By doing so, he manages to expose the Creators' traps and illusions, such as the Cliff at the end of the Maze that leads into a secret tunnel (see Dashner 138). While other Gladers, even the bravest Runners amongst them, have come to

believe that WICKED must be using some kind of magic (see Dashner 139), Thomas seems to have kept his sense of reality and makes use of the Creators' methods to his own advantage. His decision to regain relative personal freedom by being stung by a Griever and evoking the memories, which have been taken from him, enables Thomas to reach the Kantian exit. This is due the fact that Thomas shows great maturity in his decision to sacrifice everything just to regain control of his mind (see Dashner 288). Even though it might be argued that Thomas' enlightenment still does not allow him to assume power, since he is acting exactly like WICKED has anticipated it, and even helps the organization in achieving one of its objectives, the protagonist nonetheless leaves personal immaturity by using his own reason. Thomas, of course, will have to continue negotiating power relations, especially in the "real" society when he leaves the Glade, because he still appears to be like a cog in a machine that WICKED is operating. On the other hand, this should not come as a surprise if one takes Foucault's notion of power as a basis for the analysis of power relations (see Foucault, *Power*). Since modernity in the Foucauldian sense should be perceived as an act of constant critical thinking, which ensures social progress, Dashner's *The Maze Runner* seems to support that assumption by portraying a young, dystopian hero, who must continue going through this process of critical thinking if he wishes to stop the abuse of power in his society (see Foucault, *Reader* 43).

In order to analyse all aspects of Thomas' personal development and increasing maturity, fantastic elements on the story level such as memory loss, the telepathic communication and the technological advancement need to be addressed because they accelerate his empowerment. First of all, Thomas has an advantage over the other Gladers because he recognises familiar terminology and objects related to WICKED from the very beginning (see Dashner 34). While the others cannot remember anything about their prior life and the Glade, Thomas has the following vague feeling every now and then: "Suddenly, the Glade, the walls, the Maze – it all seemed … familiar. Comfortable. A warmth of calmness spread through his chest, and for the first time since he'd found himself there, he didn't feel like the Glade was the worst place in the universe." (Dashner 34) Even though Thomas cannot remember where this epiphany comes from, the familiarity seems to clear up the state of utter confusion that the Gladers usually find themselves in upon their arrival. The ability to telepathically talk to the only female Glader, who arrives just after Thomas, also appears to be a great asset to him because she recognizes the Glade as well (see Dashner 56). Through their telepathy the two of them can share secret information that the others should

not know (see Dashner 231). In general, Thomas seems to be very secretive about his vague memories because he knows that they would disturb the Gladers' routine and provoke increasing anxiety (see Dashner 85). Especially in the beginning of the narrative, Thomas is still depicted as an immature adolescent, who needs to leave immaturity in order to make use of his own reason (see Dashner 28). This fact also makes the others wrongly suspect him of being a spy that was sent into the Glade in order to collect information for the Creators (see Dashner 155). Eventually, Thomas becomes mature enough to speak the truth, which is a crucial step towards maturity and allows him to regain personal freedom amongst the Gladers because he is not supporting the Keepers' regime blindfolded (see Dashner 298). Finally, Thomas' unexpected victory over a Griever is extremely empowering because he manages to achieve something that no other Glader has ever done before (see Dashner 133). While the fierce battle against a fantastic creature might already be perceived as a situation that could portray a dystopian hero as a powerful person, Thomas' selfless intention behind the fight is what makes him truly stand out as an empowered adolescent. As Alkestrand (see 109) points out, it is not so much a victory over the fantastic that empowers a teenager but the strong determination to do so in order to stop the abuse of power that characterises a dystopian hero. With every new day that Thomas spends in the Glade, he grows to be more and more protective of the other children and young adults: "He couldn't believe people could create something so horrible and send it after kids." (Dashner 125) What this statement seems to illustrate is the fact that Thomas does not act with juvenile recklessness because he understands the gross injustice of the situation. This sense of responsibility is even heightened when he finds out that he has been one of the Creators, who are causing the Gladers so much pain (see Dashner 302).

Ultimately, it can be said that *The Maze Runner* allows for critical literary engagement on various levels. While this YAN demonstrates that dominant discourses within a society should be questioned because they are constructs of a certain time, which have probably been created by those in power, it also shows how much courage it takes to make use of one's own reason. Additionally, the technologically advanced elements in *The Maze Runner* (2011) allow for a vivid portrayal of a young dystopian hero, who leaves immaturity and attempts to negotiate power relations in order to win personal freedom as well as take revenge for the Gladers, who have suffered terrible injustice.

5. Analysis of *Noughts and Crosses*

In the following analysis, I will substantiate Trites' (47) claim that one's pre-determined position within a society has an influence on one's social role by demonstrating that the empowerment of the two protagonists, Callum and Sephy, has been influenced by their race. Since the whole society is hierarchically structured based on the determining factor race, the two star-crossed lovers experience racial segregation as they grow up, which makes it impossible for them to be together. Their different skin colours also appear to be a reason for their somewhat different empowerments because both leave immaturity and seize power in slightly different ways.

In my analysis, I will use capitalization for Crosses, the dominant class, and not do so for noughts, the inferior one, as this writing can be observed throughout the narrative. I will, however, criticise it and explain in what ways language can become a marker of power.

5.1 The state of Pangea

In the state of Pangea, legislative power is concentrated in the hands of a superior class, who is pursuing the primary objective of maintaining the hierarchical structure of their society. On the one hand, there is the privileged class called the Crosses, characterized by its dark skin colour, which is considered to be distinctly superior in intelligence and sociality to every other race (see Blackman 50). On the other hand, the Pangean society consists of so-called noughts, fair-skinned people who are clearly treated as being inferior to the Crosses. The social inequality between noughts and Crosses can already be observed on the language level, since the superior class is always referred to with a capital letter in contrast to the small one in the term noughts. Callum also notices the fundamental difference in the literal meaning of the two words, as he contemplates: "Noughts … Even the word was negative. Nothing. Nil. Zero. Nonentities. It wasn't a name we'd chosen for ourselves. It was a name we'd been given." (Blackman 79) What becomes evident here is the fact that racial segregation is already practised on the language level. As Callum points out, noughts have been given this name by the Crosses, who are constantly attempting to remind them of their inferiority. Since the term nought already carries the inherent meaning of worthlessness, noughts are discriminated in all aspects of social life. They have to carry

out manual work that requires no formal education and are considered incapable of participating in social activities due to their alleged intellectual simplicity (see Blackman 56). The patronizing attitude of Crosses is only tolerated by noughts because of the profound economic differences between the two races that makes noughts entirely dependent on financial aid provided by Crosses (see Blackman 63). Noughts, thus, are forced to please their Cross-employers at all costs: "God only knew that being around Crosses was like walking on eggshells." (Blackman 10) If they fail to do so, no matter how careful they might have been and how horribly wrong a Cross may be, life is merely a matter of survival (see Blackman 13). Ultimately, it can be said that the Crosses in power fiercely attempt to maintain the social structure, which they have imposed, because they firmly believe that they are the descendants of a superior race that has every right to enjoy certain privileges at their inferiors' expense.

As far as the "instrumental modes" (Foucault, *Power* 344) for exercising power are concerned, it can be said that the production of "regime[s] of truth" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 131) is of vital importance to the Pangean government because it justifies the objectification of noughts. First of all, the following religious doctrine is considered absolutely fundamental to the social order: "The Crosses were meant to be closer to God. The Good Book said so. The son of God was dark-skinned like them, had eyes like them, had hair like them." (Blackman 78) While the church as such is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative, Crosses, in particular, seem to be committed to traditional doctrines that clearly favour them at the expense of noughts because they grant them certain privileges. Religious holidays that have been named after Crosses such as "Crossmas" (Blackman 95), which is the fictional equivalent to today's Christmas, appear to highlight Cross-superiority because they imply that Crosses must have been the first race on earth. Even though it is not explicitly stated that religion plays an important role in Pangea, it is perfectly obvious that other, seemingly universal truths originated from this ideological foundation (see Blackman 79). Since Crosses are considered to be the only race chosen by God, irrational prejudices against noughts have been created that enormously degrade them as human beings. Everything they do, from the food they eat to the way their bodies smell, is turned against them in order to demonstrate their worthlessness (see Blackman 83). What makes the government's production of all those régimes of truth so highly effective is the fact that it uses religion as an excuse for economic exploitation and has accredited certain discourses as cultural history (see Blackman 137). By deliberately

ignoring any historical accomplishment of noughts and their role in significant discoveries, Crosses are constantly depicted as "the dominant race on Earth" (Blackman 136). This incomplete knowledge, however, has successfully been shared and extended over time, so that it would be extremely difficult to identify all those large gaps, especially for new generations of Crosses who have never heard of those inequalities before. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that children and adolescents take everything that they learn from history books as factual knowledge. After Sephy's first attempt to defend noughts at her school, she is confronted with the following negative stereotypes: "Blank, white faces with not a hint of colour in them. Blank minds which can't hold a single original thought. […] That's why they serve us and not the other way around." (85) This statement by one of Sephy's school mates illustrates how literal the teachings of the church have been interpreted and spread as universal truths. Based on the skin colour, which is biologically determined, the girl continues making a series of questionable assumptions about noughts that she represents as universal truths. The whole Pangean law enforcement as such uses those dominant discourses to justify the objectification of noughts. Noughts are regarded as animals that do not deserve to be treated with respect (see Blackman 56). The examples given above, thus, perfectly demonstrate that the Pangean government produces as well as successfully uses dominant discourses to its advantage.

Another influential institution that promotes the enforcement of bio-power of the state is the school that the protagonists attend. Even though a major amendment to the education bill has made it possible for selected noughts to attend the same schools as Crosses, it soon becomes obvious that this educational institution holds the same radical values and beliefs as the government and even attempts to foster them (see Blackman 253). Kamal Hadley, The Home Office Minister, makes this perfectly clear by saying the following: "Our decision to allow the crème-de-la-crème of nought youth to join our educational institutions makes sound social and economic sense. In a civilized society, equality of education for those noughts with sufficient aptitude … ." (Blackman 65) This public declaration illustrates that noughts are still considered to be lower class human beings. Kamal Hadley solely attempts to degrade noughts by reminding them and the rest of society of their allegedly limited intelligence. Additionally, he highlights the beneficence of Crosses, who have decided to grant first-class education. When taking a closer look at this new education bill and its implementation, however, it becomes evident that the Cross-school makes it extremely difficult for noughts to establish themselves as legitimate pupils. First of all,

noughts who feel brave enough to apply for a Cross-school have to take an entrance exam in order to demonstrate their intellectual suitability, which is assessed by Crosses (see Blackman 22). This initial aptitude test, however, has been made extremely difficult, so that Kamal Headley appears rather surprised and angry that a small number of noughts still manages to pass it (see Blackman 44). Even though the test's lack of objectivity and reliability clearly proves that it does not provide a true account of a student's knowledge, failing it implies poor suitability for Cross-education (see Blackman 65). Once a nought has entered a Cross-school, the institution refuses to support the student in any way and even turns a blind eye on unacceptable, violent behaviour of Cross-students as well as - teachers. An example of such gross professional misconduct is the behaviour of the headmaster, Mr Corsa, at a demonstration against nought-students on Callum's first school day (see Blackman 54). While Cross-students are welcoming their nought-colleagues by shouting the words "NO BLANKERS IN OUR SCHOOL" (Blackman 54), the headmaster is simply observing the angry mob of his students without stopping it. He does not even call for an end of violence, after some of the noughts have been physically hurt (see Blackman 56). To make matters worse, nought-parents are not allowed to enter the school in order to see how their children are doing (see Blackman 61). Furthermore, nought-students also have to suffer constant insults from their teachers, who either ignore or publicly shame them (see Blackman 71). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the school plays a central role in the exercise of bio-power because it promotes the objectification of noughts. Not only does the aforementioned educational institution fail to foster the development of its nought-students, it also does so on purpose and gradually silences the young adults, who find themselves in an extremely vulnerable position due to the lack of adult support in school.

The state also exploits its monopoly position as far as mass media is concerned, which is used in order to broadcast political propaganda against noughts. When nought-students are attacked by a hostile mob, as mentioned above, the truth is completely distorted by the media: "The noughts admitted to Heathcroft High School met with some hostility today. […] Police officers were drafted in to keep the peace as it was feared that nought extremists might try to take advantage of the volatile situation." (Blackman 68) What becomes evident here is the fact that noughts, who have obviously been the victims in this situation, are once again represented as violent criminals that should be made responsible for any serious escalation. The state, it seems, perfectly knows how to use powerful rhetoric in order to

attack its opponents. Callum, for instance, notices that the phrase "with some hostility" in the aforementioned news report appears to be a euphemism for the extremely hostile behaviour that the noughts had to endure upon their arrival at school (see Blackman 68). Additionally, media control also enables the state to portray itself as the saviour of the country, while simultaneously shedding bad light on any organization that strives for equality between noughts and Crosses (see Blackman 65). One such organization, "The Liberation Militia" (Blackman 65), which perceives itself as a group of "Freedom Fighters" (Blackman 43) for noughts, is described as follows: "The Liberation Militia are misguided terrorists and we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to bring theme to justice." (Blackman 65) While the media seems to be highly cautions when reporting on incidents in which Crosses have been involved, it does not appear to contemplate its word choice when referring to the Liberation Militia's alleged involvement in certain crimes. Therefore, it can be concluded that the state successfully controls the media in order to serve the practical purpose of portraying noughts as the scapegoats for everything that can only be brought to justice by the strict regime of Crosses.

Since the enforcement of discipline is considered especially important for the exercise of bio-power in the Foucauldian sense, the Pangean state does so by inflicting brutal violence on noughts as well as Crosses who demand equality for them. An effective means for achieving submissive behaviour seems to be the police, which ensures that everyone obeys official rules. The bitter irony in all this, however, is the fact that the police tolerates violence, thus the breaking of rules, as long as it is directed towards noughts (see Blackman 68). When Sephy and Callum take a train on one of their trips, the boy is accused of stealing a ticket by the police just because of his race. Every answer he gives to their pointed questions is immediately rejected and taken as a sign of his alleged guilt (see Blackman 109). This situation perfectly demonstrates how biased the police can be and how the state's irrational prejudices influence their work. If a nought is arrested, the social injustice continues because judges as well as juries are always Crosses, who do not have the defendant's best interests at heart (see Blackman 262). Apart from corporal punishment, discipline is also enforced by the death penalty (see Blackman 292). Kamal Headley announces this death threat on public television: "Political terrorism which results in the death or serious injury of even one Cross always has been and always will be a capital crime. Those found guilty will suffer the death sentence." (Blackman 66) Once again, the politician unfairly discriminates against noughts on the grounds of common stereotypes.

Public shaming in Pangea, then, reaches its peak at the public executions by hanging, which Crosses can watch from the best seats in order to objectify a nought even in his or her last minutes (see Blackman 290).

Finally, it can be said that Foucault's claim that the state's power can be "individualizing" as well as "totalizing" (*Power* 332) is substantiated by the way the Pangean government exercises power over a large section of its society. By producing and spreading seemingly expert knowledge, a subconscious process of integration of those régimes of truths is stimulated that eventually makes one submit to the unjust governance of the state. Since this submission is already initiated at an early stage, preferably when an individual is still too young to make use of his or her own reason, all values and radical practices of those in power are subconsciously internalized. Consequently, all submissive individuals become important elements of the state's bio-power because they play a key role in the enforcement of discipline. By permanently objectifying noughts in every aspect of social life, every single Cross is strengthening the oppressive regime even more. As a consequence of years and years of degradation, even noughts have started to resign themselves to certain régimes of truth. Callum, for example, remembers the following well-known saying that goes: "If you're black, that's where it's at. If you're brown, stick around. If you're white, say good-night." (Blackman 134) The inferior class, it seems, has also subconsciously internalised certain practices and values without even noticing it. Due to the fact that young noughts are silenced by powerful institutions of their society at an early age, they subconsciously submit to Cross-rules in order to participate in social life and become accepted members of their society. Therefore, repeating popular sayings, even if one does not truly agree with them, might be a sign of their symbolic significance and evil influence because they not only attract attention of Crosses but also of noughts, who may subconsciously start putting themselves into certain categories that Crosses have created. Ultimately, the examples given above demonstrates that the state effectively shapes public opinion by exercising power through the systematic manipulation of every single individual as well as the threat of arms if a nought's willpower cannot be broken and the society fails to constrain the behaviour of their inferiors.

Even though the large body of knowledge seems to justify all means, the state's bio-power is only partially effective due to increasing liberalisation of the government and ongoing

acts of rebellion within the society. The state itself has also started to perceive this societal development as a serious threat, as Kamal Headley admits in this situation:

> Those bleedings heart liberals in the Pangaean Economic Community make sick! They said we in this country had to open our schools to noughts, so we did. They said we had to open our doors to recruiting noughts into our police and armed forces, so we did. And they're still not satisfied. (Blackman 41)

What becomes evident here is the fact that the state has clearly underestimated its inferiors. While certain demands might not have seemed major at first, they definitely do so now because liberals are starting to understand that the radical regime could lead to the destruction of both, noughts as well as Crosses (see Blackman 67). The Liberation Militia, in particular, is a central organisation that demands more rights for noughts at all costs. They even attempt to stop social injustice by using unconventional, radical methods, such as the planting of bombs in public places (see Blackman 201). Such public violations of institutional structures, however, enable Crosses to maintain political power to some extent and legitimately restrict the freedom of noughts, who they portray as the ultimate enemy. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that this very first novel of the *Noughts & Crosses*-trilogy is still set in a relatively powerful state that manages to maintain its position of power due to its effective "instrumental modes" (Foucault, *Power* 344). As it encounters increasing resistance, however, it is only a matter of time before everything starts crushing down.

5.2. Empowerment of Callum

In the beginning of the narrative, Callum still appears to be an immature adolescent that is not yet able to look beyond the dominant discourses of his society and does not quite understand the consequences of his pre-determined position. As Trites (47) points out, teenage protagonists of YAN have to learn that something as trivial as race can have an enormous influence on their lives. Upon his acceptance to Heathcroft High, Callum is convinced that he can make a difference by attending a Cross-school:

> To tell the truth, I was looking forward to school tomorrow. I was actually going to secondary school. I could make something of myself, do something with my life. Once I had a proper education behind me, no-one could turn around and say, 'You're not smart enough or good enough'. I was on my way UP! (Blackman 39)

What Callum's high hopes before his first school day seem to demonstrate is the fact that he firmly believes that his following of Cross-rules will alleviate his family's deep financial misery and gain him great respect from his superiors. This, however, also shows how immature the character still is because he rather wants to impress everyone than seek to make a difference in his life (see Blackman 149). His childlike innocence makes him believe that having enormous material wealth is the key to personal fulfilment (see Blackman 31). Since he does not quite understand the racial injustices that noughts are experiencing, he desperately needs the approval of other people in order to feel empowered. In addition, Callum appears to be a perfect example of the state's systematic manipulation because he sometimes seems to believe that a physical characteristic such as race is to blame for all his failures: "How I wished I could afford the treatment to make my skin permanently darker." (Blackman 173) The protagonist's irrational wish for darker skin could be described as a feeling of despair as well as an indication that he has already internalized certain régimes of truth, which are successfully weakening him from the inside. This inner insecurity even makes him question his friendship to Sephy, although he should not have to question her loyalty because the two of them have been best friends as long as he can remember (see Blackman 70).

As Callum begins to struggle with dominant institutions, in particular his school, he eventually makes use of his own reason in the Kantian sense, an experience that leaves him completely powerless because he is still far too immature to cope with all the injustice. Even though the protagonist seems to suppress any negative feelings in order to secure his place in his new school upon his arrival at Heathcroft High, the acts of violence against noughts and the lack of adult support in this institution mark the beginning of his journey towards maturity (see Blackman 22). In school, Callum and the other nought-students find themselves in a situation of intolerable pressure because the rest of the noughts expects them to be at their best behaviour in order to represent their race accurately (see Blackman 37). This, however, proves to be a rather impossible task, since making mistakes is part of every adolescent's coming of age. Additionally, almost all Crosses in school, ranging from students to teachers, do not treat the noughts with the respect they deserve in order to express their strong disapproval, as Callum contemplates in the following situation: "[T]he teachers had totally ignored us, and the Crosses had used any excuse to bump into us and knock our books on the floor, and even the noughts serving in the food hall had made sure they served everyone else in the queue before us." (Blackman 62) Despite the fact that

Callum recognizes the importance of education, he also comes to the realisation that this extremely biased institution will try everything in its power to ensure the expulsion of every single nought-student (see Blackman 253). Even if he managed to receive a good education, the legislative system would only allow him limited success in his professional aspirations (see Blackman 78). Ultimately, he arrives at the conclusion that he will eventually find himself caught up in a system that will not provide equal opportunities for noughts and Crosses no matter how hard he tries to convince himself of the opposite (see Blackman 11). While Callum gradually starts to make use of his own reason, the aforementioned realisation shatters all his hopes of a better life, making the adolescent totally insecure about his place in this world.

The influence of his family also seems to cause considerable confusion about power relations in Callum's life, since the protagonist questions his own beliefs because they appear to be strikingly different to the ones of his family. His older brother and father, in particular, exercise an enormous influence upon Callum's development. With their radical views, which reflect their connection to The Liberation Militia, they constantly manage to confuse Callum, even if they do not do so intentionally in the beginning (see Blackman 65). Every time the protagonist attempts to challenge them, they make it perfectly clear that they do not believe that Crosses will ever change if noughts continue using conventional methods to achieve social equality (see Blackman 51). His sister's last words right before her suicide, "Just remember Callum, […] when you're floating up and up in your bubble, that bubbles have a habit of bursting. The higher you climb, the further you have to fall" (Blackman 151), paired with his mother's worries about his education at Heathcroft High make Callum question his beliefs as well. Gradually, he starts giving up hope of a better life and allows the negative mindset of his family to affect his relationship with Crosses, such as the liberal teacher Mrs Paxton or even Sephy. More than ever, he has to suppress the feeling of betrayal whenever he is spending time with Sephy because he feels like he is being disloyal to his family (see Blackman 132). During the course of the narrative, it becomes evident that Callum finds it extremely difficult to make use of his own reason because he is torn between his very own conviction that fair and respectful Crosses do exists and his family's conflicting claim that Crosses will never change (see Blackman 121).

Since enlightenment is supposed to be "an act of courage" according to Foucault (*Reader* 35), Callum seems to be heading into another direction after a number of traumatic events, such as the suicide of his sister and father, because he stops making use of his own reason and even joins the Liberation Militia driven by a burning desire for revenge (see Blackman 318). Blaming Crosses for everything, however, only demonstrates that he is still not mature enough to deal with the intensity of emotions (see Blackman 317). Instead of understanding that both, noughts as well as Crosses, will eventually become victims of their fight for ultimate power, he attempts to distance himself from any positive feeling that he has every felt towards Crosses and seeks revenge (see Blackman 295). By dropping out of school and joining the Liberation Militia, he has a fresh sense of purpose, which arouses a feeling of belonging that appears to be empowering (see Blackman 324). He even resorts to violence until he is totally consumed by his anger and devoid of any emotions: "Love doesn't exist. Friendship doesn't exist – not between a nought and a Cross. There's no such thing." (Blackman 307) By doing so, he successfully stops feeling anything that could remind him of his true self, thus make him vulnerable again. He convinces himself that he has to be someone he is not in order to stop using his own reason, which would remind him of his true self (see Blackman 356). What he does not seem to understand at this point in his life, however, is the fact that running away from one's problems and letting one's anger out on other people will only bring temporal relief. Even though the Liberation Militia is treating him with great respect, Callum eventually arrives at the conclusion that his personal freedom is still restricted. Since he has simply been acting without questioning anything he was doing, such as the murder of Cross-civilians, he must admit that this new kind of power is not changing his situation (see Blackman 413). When he finally sees Sephy after three years of separation, he starts making use of his own reason again and questions his past actions (see Blackman 369). Ultimately, he becomes emotional again: "I've finally figured it out. I'm dead. I died a long time ago, woke up in hell and didn't even realize. Thinking about it, I must've died just before I started at Heathcroft school. That's what happened." (Blackman 403) This realisation, then, makes him understand that his time in the Liberation Milita has made him more vulnerable than before because he has not managed to rise above his personal tragedy and has remained an indecisive child that does not know how to negotiate power relations within his society (see Blackman 329).

Despite the radical departure from his way towards maturity due to his inability to cope with his fears and anxiety, Callum still reaches the Kantian exit through his unconditional

love for Sephy and their future child, which encourages him to make use of his own reason again. Even at an early age, the protagonist seems to understand that acceptance is far more complex than the adults in power want to admit (see Blackman 22). Before his first school day, for instance, he attempts to explain his pre-determined role in society to Sephy: "Being in and being accepted are two different things." (Blackman 22) Callum, it seems, perfectly knows that life will not be any easier just because he has been accepted to a Cross-school. While Sephy appears too optimistic, Callum's mother feels extremely pessimistic about her son's decision to attend a Cross-school (see Blackman 35). During one discussion with his mother about the mixing of races, which the adult clearly disapproves, Callum asks himself a rather mature question:

> If a Cross had said that to me, I'd be accusing them of all sorts. It seemed to me we'd practised segregation for centuries now and that hadn't worked either. What would satisfy all the noughts and the Crosses who felt the same as Mum? Separate Countries? Separate planets? How far away was far enough? What was it about the differences in others that scared some people so much? (Blackman 36)

What becomes evident here is the fact that the protagonist finds himself torn between two extremes, namely hopeless optimism and pessimism, which seem to confuse him and make him question his rather realistic approach to reality. Since Sephy's as well as his mother's attitudes both appear to reflect the underlying reality of his society, Callum's hopes of a better life are always accompanied by a touch of bitterness. He, thus, arrives at the conclusion that even the attempt to escape would not make any difference because the aforementioned dominant discourses of his time would be the same no matter where he went (see Blackman 21). Callum's early sense of maturity in form of his realistic worldview, however, also makes him feel enormous powerlessness because he is not able to face the bitter truth, although he has already revealed the irrationality of Crosses as well as noughts intuitively and partially understood the different ways power is wielded in his society. Fortunately, the strong bond between Sephy and Callum enables him to continue his way towards the Kantian exit even after his emotional setback (see Blackman 415). By no longer blaming Crosses, in particular Sephy, for everything and using his own reason to question the behaviour of both social classes, Callum finally becomes enlightened: "I'd allowed all the things that'd happened to me to rob me of my humanity. Do unto others before they did unto you, that'd been my philosophy. That's how I'd coped with the world." (Blackman 424) In contrast to his younger self, he now truly understands that nought-resistance to the Cross-rule will require much more than money and violence if their society

should undergo fundamental change. Since noughts as well as Crosses have already internalized the dominant discourses of their time, both sides do not want to bring an end to racial segregation (see Blackman 434). If anything, they are fighting each other with the same means, such as violence and the production of contradicting truths, that make it nearly impossible to establish genuine equality.

5.3 Empowerment of Sephy

In the beginning of the narrative, Sephy is portrayed as an immature child, whose sheltered upbringing makes her relatively insensitive to racial injustice. This becomes especially evident in her conversations with Callum, in which she attempts to lighten his mood with her prevailing optimism (see Blackman 23). This innocent intention, however, fails miserably every single time because of her complete ignorance about racial segregation. Even though she does not want to hurt her friend intentionally, Sephy constantly manages to disappoint Callum by subconsciously repeating everything adult Crosses say or do (see Blackman 58). Her attempt to stop the mob at school by telling her Cross-colleagues that they are behaving like "BLANKERS" (Blackman 56), a pejorative word for noughts, is only one of many examples of Sephy's naïve attitude. She further demonstrates this by repeating dominating régimes of truth, which she has heard from her parents and teachers, when she is confronted with her actions. Sephy, it seems, fully trusts what powerful institutions, such as the school or government, are saying because she does not entirely understand what it means to be a nought in her society. When Sephy brings Callum orange juice as a child, which he cannot have due to his family's poor financial situation, she does not manage to grasp the reason behind his great joy at something as trivial as a drink (see Dashner 37). Since she enjoys certain privileges of being a Cross and firmly believes that Crosses are kind-hearted people, she remains ignorant to Callum's situation for a long time (see Blackman 41). Once she even has to admit to herself that she wishes Callum could be a Cross, which demonstrates her immaturity and lack of critical thinking because she is still too young to understand the far-reaching consequences of social segregation that cannot simply be put to an end by becoming a Cross.

As Sephy gradually starts to make use of her own reason, it becomes evident that being a Cross is not as easy as it seems because her class and gender constrain her freedom of

thought. Since Sephy descends from a powerful family that fully embraces the traditional doctrine that Crosses are superior to noughts, standing up to her family is particularly difficult to the adolescent (see Blackman 67). Therefore, it takes Sephy some time until she is finally mature enough to admit her family's cruel behaviour to herself. Initially, she appears as confused as Callum because she is still a child who needs parental advice despite the growing realisation that her family might be wrong in its hostile attitude towards noughts (see Blackman 78). During disputes with Callum, in particular, she appears extremely vulnerable to her parents' influence because she is subconsciously reminded of their values and beliefs despite her secret wish to never become like them (see Blackmann 77). On the other hand, most arguments between Sephy and her family are about Callum because her parents and sister disapprove of their friendship. When Callum's father is facing execution, for instance, Sephy must learn that her family will never change because it has internalized the discourses of their time up to a point where fundamental change of their mindset appears impossible (see Blackman 245). This severe lack of empathy, thus, forces Sephy to face up to other unwelcome truths about her family, such as her parents' broken relationship and her mother's drinking, leaving her completely confused about her role in society (see Blackman 144). Even though she clearly knows that she does not want to become like her parents, she repeatedly attempts to please them because life seems too difficult to cope with (see Blackman 147). After her total failure to win their affection, she has to admit to herself that she will never manage to be an obedient lady of high status that does not care about anything as long as she represents her family appropriately (see Blackman 208). The painful realisation that she can neither be an ignorant Cross nor a suppressed nought makes her extremely powerless and lonely, so that she starts seeking comfort in alcohol, which makes it possible to suppress all her negative emotions (see Blackman 218). Since she is still too immature to understand that her drinking is just a coping mechanism for her loneliness, she cannot even admit to herself that she has become like her mother, who has dealt with her unhappiness by drinking alcohol as long as Sephy can remember (see Blackman 155). Ultimately, Sephy's self-destructive behaviour could be interpreted as a desperate way to deal with problems that she cannot resolve due to her pre-determined role in society as well as her childlike immaturity, which she still cannot leave because of her lack of perseverance.

Even though it might be argued that Sephy's lack of strong determination makes it harder for her to use her own reason, her critical comments about society and the state's immoral

conduct show that she constantly questions dominant discourses despite her feelings of powerlessness. After her frantic attempt to stop the mob at school, for instance, Sephy arrives at the conclusion that language can be a marker of race because words appear to be effective means for the wielding of power, even though people belonging to a certain group might not use them against others intentionally (see Blackman 58). Furthermore, the adolescent starts questioning the representation of noughts in the media, especially when her father is speaking in public, as she contemplates in the following situation:

> Suddenly all I had were questions. How come in all the early black-and-white films, the nought men were always ignorant drunkards and womanisers or both? And the women were always near-brainless servants? Noughts used to be our slaves but slavery was abolished a long time ago. Why were noughts never in the news unless it was bad news? Why couldn't I stop looking at each stranger I passed and wondering about their lives? (Blackman 116)

Sephy's questions appear to reflect a growing understanding of the manipulative nature of the media that is clearly distorting reality. She even seems to address the heteronormative portrayal of human beings, who are prescribed certain gender roles due to their biological sex. When Sephy decides to take action into her own hands by violating institutional structures, however, she must learn the hard way that Crosses as well as noughts do not share her forward thinking (see Blackman 74). Simply sitting beside noughts at lunch already gets her into trouble with the headmaster and makes her suffer brutal violence because her former Cross-friends want to teach her a lesson (see Blackman 83). The nought-students also seem to disapprove of her mixing-up with them and let her know that she deserved to be beaten up (see Blackman 90). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the adolescent's failure to expose social injustice combined with the aforementioned lack of parental support make her feel powerless, which eventually drives her into total despair. Sephy's immaturity simply does not allow her to cope with the sheer hypocrisy of both social classes because admitting that her observations are right would require great perseverance and will-power in fighting for a change of society, which she still lacks due to her limited life experience.

Sephy still manages to reach the Kantian exit by overcoming her fears and working against social injustice despite the daunting prospect of fighting a lost battle. The adolescent's seemingly immature resolution to escape the reality of life by attending boarding school proves to be a wise decision because the emotional distance helps her to re-evaluate her past actions and accept that mistakes are bound to happen during childhood (see Blackman

333). By making a fresh start, Sephy feels empowered again to debate social issues objectively, without letting her emotions control everything:

> I used to comfort myself with the belief that it was only certain individuals and their peculiar notions that spoilt things for the rest of us. But how many individuals does it take before it's not the individuals who are prejudiced but society itself. And it wasn't even that most Crosses were prejudiced against noughts. I still didn't believe that. But everyone seemed to be too afraid to stand up in public and say 'this is wrong'. (Blackman 335)

What becomes evident here is the fact that the adolescent protagonist has truly understood what is going wrong in her society, because she seems to recognize the need of one's "private" as well as "public use of reason" (Kant 55). As suggested by Foucault (*Reader* 36), solely making use of one's private reason will not bring about social change because people need to find the courage to speak up as well. For Sephy, being confronted with one of her biggest fears, namely facing her past by meeting Callum again and standing up to her family, marks the end of her childhood and a first step towards making use of her public reason one day (see Blackman 347). When she finds out that she is pregnant with Callum's baby, she does not want to have an abortion against her family's wishes (see Blackman 429). Even though her father still treats her like an immature child by resorting to violence and verbal insults, his attempts to restrict her freedom fail because he has no power over her any more. Since Sephy has left the state of immaturity, she makes us of her own reason to decide what is truly best for her and her child (see Blackman 419). In addition, the adolescent's maturity is also characterised by her ability to accept the fact that Callum and her might not be able to witness social change, even though both of them have understood what it would take to make a difference:

> You're a Nought and I'm a Cross and there's nowhere for us to be, nowhere for us to go where we'd be left in peace. Even if we had gone away together when I wanted us to, we would've been together for a year, maybe two. […] That's why I started crying. That's why I couldn't stop. For all the things we might've had and all the things we're never going to have. (Blackman 417)

Sephy, it seems, has found inner peace despite everything. Even when Callum has to face execution, the soon-to-be mother does not fall into her old habit of giving up by using her own reason to suppress her feelings (Blackman 430). The sudden use of a capital letter for both races could also be perceived as an indication of the adolescent's firm determination to continue demanding equality, even though the novel actually indicates that Sephy was

speaking to Callum when she uttered the statement. Ultimately, it can be said that Sephy eventually manages to leave immaturity because she accepts that some things will remain beyond her control, while simultaneously fighting against the restriction of her freedom, even if that means that her heroic resistance might be crushed by the state's enormous power.

6. Conclusion

The primary purpose of this diploma thesis was to determine in what ways power is negotiated by adolescent protagonists in two young adult dystopian novels, namely Dashner's *The Maze Runner* and Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*. Accordingly, it was essential to include a strong theoretical foundation in order to approach the concept of power. I did so by building on Foucault's "new economy of power relations" (*Power* 328), which identifies the objectification of human beings as central to one's understanding of power because he argues that power is omnipresent and cannot simply be traced back to one single person. It rather functions as a dominant force that may empower those already in powerful positions as well as inferior members of a society, who might wish to move up the social hierarchy (see Foucault, *Power*). This dynamic nature of power, however, made it also necessary to address the influence of Kant's notion of Enlightenment on Foucault's concept of power. As Foucault (*Reader* 38) points out, Kant was the first to encourage critical thinking about dominant discourses of certain periods of time, which marked a drastic shift in social conduct because it demonstrates that human beings do not necessarily need to stay victims of powerful regimes as long as they make use of their own reason to question dominant values and practices throughout history. Additionally, I introduced Foucault's notion of "bio-power" (*History of Sexuality* 140), a specific form of power that is characterised by the use of various means of constraint, in order to illustrate how the state, despite fierce resistance, still manages to enforce discipline as well as restrict the personal freedom of individuals. Subsequently, I provided a thorough critique of popular misconceptions of YAL in order to gain a proper understanding of the genre that would not limit the scope of my analysis. Since narratives for adolescents are often considered unworthy of serious literary engagement (see Daniels; Coats), I explicitly sought to show its enormous potential as far as the analysis of power relations is concerned, which enables its mixed readership to gain rich insights into our understanding of human societies. Young adult dystopias, in particular, mirror issues of concern of modern societies due to their extreme departure from any societal ideal, which makes it possible to address cultural anxieties and discuss possible ways to bring about a change for the better (see Connors; Hintz & Ostry). In addition, I addressed the role of science fiction in the portrayal of young adults' empowerments due to its significant influence on their development as critically thinking beings (see Alkestrand; Rabkin).

Ultimately, I argue that the two aforementioned novels demonstrate that power is a dynamic entity that is not only exercised by a small number of authoritative members of a society, in this case adults, but also by seemingly powerless adolescents. Foucault's five indicators for analysing power relations proved to be a highly effective means to demonstrate this aforementioned dynamism, since they show power in its complexity by constantly stressing its omnipresent nature. As Foucault (*Power* 344) points out, power needs to be analysed from above as well as from below in order to gain a proper understanding of all the processes and products that are involved in the wielding of it. By applying Foucault's five indicators, I was able to reveal the systems of differentiations of adults in power and their very elaborate ways to objectify adolescents as well as examine the different ways adolescents attempt to seize power. On the one hand, the main character of *The Maze Runner* finds himself in a state of utter confusion due to his society's effective means of instrumentalization that are based on technological advancement. During the course of the narrative, those seemingly fantastic elements enable him to eagerly seize power and reach maturity because he has to show tremendous moral courage to admit his direct participation in the abuse of power. On the other hand, the alternative history in *Noughts and Crosses* portrays the empowerment of two star-crossed lovers that struggle with using their own reason because it is too hard to accept that social segregation might be so deeply rooted within their society that they have to fight a seemingly lost battle. Even though the adolescent protagonists in the two narratives negotiate power in different ways, depending on their societal structure, all of them become empowered by applying critical thinking in the Kantian sense in their negotiation of power. My analysis, thus, supports Foucault's approach to the analysis of power relations, according to which one should analyse injustice in bureaucratic systems by attempting to illustrate the dynamic nature of power instead of focusing on a single point of its departure (see *Power*). Both, *The Maze Runner* and *Noughts and Crosses*, demonstrate that power is negotiated on various levels within a society, especially among adolescents, who still have to learn how to make use of their own reason. Even though they constantly seize as well as lose power within their societies, they demonstrate that a shift in power can be brought about by critical thinking.

Another significant inference from the analyses of the aforementioned YANs was that young adult dystopian novels should be perceived as serious literature that can be analysed with regard to concepts of critical theory such as power. Even though it cannot be denied that the current paper is only based on a small sample of YANs and solely focuses on the

negotiation of power, the findings enhance our understanding of the great potential of YAL, which has not been given the credit that it deserves due to aetonormative attitudes of the English establishment (see Nikolajeva, *Theory*). I argue that the depiction of the fictional societies as well as the protagonists' empowerment in those novels can be taken as a reflection of various issues and concerns of today's society because of their great complexity on the story level. Since the protagonists question dominant discourses of their time, they eventually seize power in order to stop its abuse. Critical thinking, thus, seems to be the key to one's intellectual freedom because it enables every single individual to take a new vantage point and distance him- or herself from seemingly factual truths of his or her society. This is particularly true of YAL that can be used for critical literary engagement due to the its great versatility.

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8. Appendix

Abstract English

Even though Michel Foucault's notion of power as an omnipresent force has been applied to the objectification of human beings in modern societies, only few researchers have addressed the negotiation of power relations in young adult literature (YAL) due to the genre's alleged lack of complexity. This thesis examines how the adolescent protagonists of two young adult dystopian novels, namely James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* and Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*, negotiate power within their societies' régimes of truth to demonstrate YAL's great suitability for critical engagement. In order to guarantee a fruitful analysis, a discussion of Foucault's concept of power as well as Immanuel Kant's influence on his notion of critical thinking are pivotal parts of this thesis. Moreover, I contest prevailing attitudes of the literary establishment about the genre in order to show that YAL has not been given the credit that it deserves because it has been compared to an aetonormative norm, which defines adults as an intellectual standard. At last, a detailed analysis of the two aforementioned novels based on Michel Foucault's five indicators for analysing power relations demonstrates that power can be both, empowering and restrictive, and that dominant power discourses dictate the lives of the adolescent protagonists in their dystopian societies as long as they do not make use of their own reason. Ultimately, it can be said that the present observation could enhance our understanding of social existence in modern societies as well as prove that even a complex issue of social concern such as power can be addressed through young adult novels.

Zusammenfassung Deutsch

Auch wenn Michel Foucaults Vorstellung von Macht als allgegenwärtiger Kraft auf die Objektifizierung des Menschen in modernen Gesellschaften bereits angewandt wurde, haben sich nur wenige Forscher mit der Aushandlung von Machtverhältnissen in der Jugendliteratur befasst, da es dem Genre angeblich an Komplexität fehlt. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht, wie die jugendlichen Protagonisten zweier dystopischer Jugendromane, nämlich James Dashners *The Maze Runner* und Malorie Blackmans *Noughts and Crosses*, Machtverhältnisse innerhalb der Wahrheitsregime ihrer Gesellschaften aushandeln, um die große Eignung von Jugendliteratur für ein kritisches Engagement zu demonstrieren. Um eine fruchtbare Analyse zu gewährleisten, sind eine Diskussion von Foucaults Machtbegriff sowie der Einfluss Immanuel Kants auf seine Vorstellung von kritischem Denken zentrale Bestandteile dieser Arbeit. Darüber hinaus stelle ich die vorherrschenden Einstellungen des literarischen Establishments zu diesem Genre in Frage, um zu zeigen, dass Jugendliteratur nicht die Anerkennung erhalten hat, die ihr gebührt, weil sie mit einer aetonormativen Norm verglichen wurde, die Erwachsene als intellektuellen Standard definiert. Schließlich zeigt eine detaillierte Analyse der beiden genannten Romane auf der Grundlage der fünf Indikatoren für die Analyse von Machtverhältnissen von Michel Foucault, dass Macht sowohl ermächtigend als auch einschränkend sein kann und dass dominante Machtdiskurse das Leben der jugendlichen Protagonisten in ihren dystopischen Gesellschaften diktieren, solange sie sich nicht ihrer eigenen Vernunft bedienen. Letztlich kann gesagt werden, dass die vorliegende Beobachtung unser Verständnis der sozialen Existenz in modernen Gesellschaften verbessern und beweisen könnte, dass selbst ein komplexes Thema von sozialer Bedeutung wie Macht durch Jugendromane behandelt werden kann.