RETHINKING PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES
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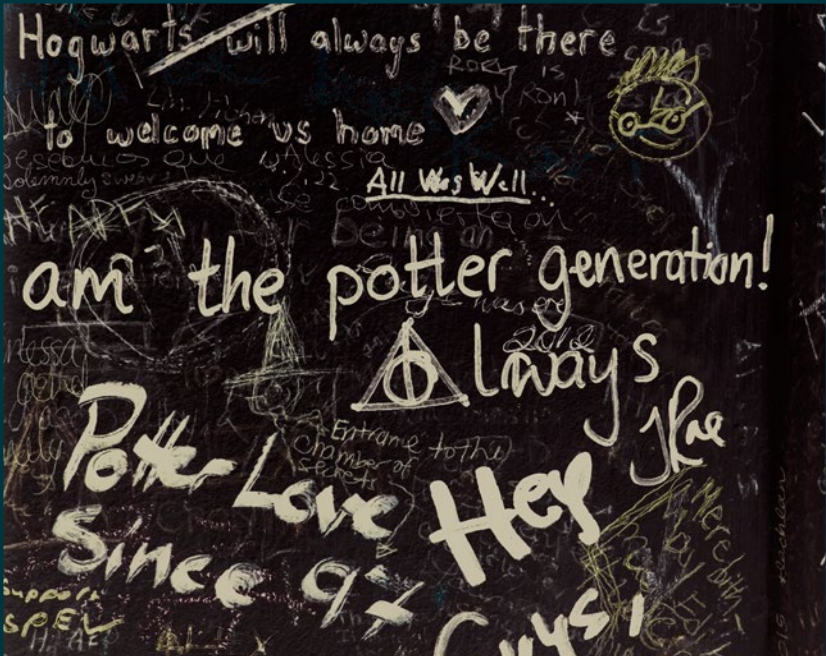
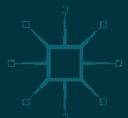
Peace and Resistance in Youth Cultures

Reading The Politics of Peacebuilding From Harry Potter To The Hunger Games



Siobhán McEvoy-Levy



Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies

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Siobhan McEvoy-Levy

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Reading the Politics of Peacebuilding from Harry Potter to The Hunger Games

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To Aedan, with love.

Preface and Acknowledgments

At various points in this book I argue that self-reflexivity is vital for a scholar, particularly one thinking and writing about youth culture. In the spirit of such reflexive work, I note here experiences and people that were on my mind when writing this book. Each of them has shaped the final product and the reader should be aware of their influence—though of course any errors of interpretation are mine. As I am too old to have grown up with *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, I can say with certainty that I became immersed in these fictional worlds because of the children and young people that I know. If this book is of any value, it is because of them. In writing this book, I thought a lot about my son who is in his early teens at the time of writing and about the world he and his friends enjoy, the things they worry about, and likely will be challenged by. Though mostly an avid video gamer, he has read and/or watched both series, and though he is not a devoted fan of either, many of his friends are, and so are two of my nieces. All of these young people have shaped my thinking in numerous ways.The delight and grumbling, often irreverent humor, and curiosity that is their interface with the world reminds me to be playful, to not take myself too seriously, and to look and listen for pain, fear, and friendships in unexpected places. I am exceptionally grateful to them all and to their parents for their inspiration, love, and fun diversions, including Potter-themed parties, as I wrote this book. Thank you Aedan, Teagan, Niamh, Colm, Anna, Ning, Cece, Lucas, Nina, Joseph, Logan, Fields, Ethan, Esti, and Owen, and thank you Andy, Roisin, Rob, Eamonn, Cati, Connall, Grainne, Kate, Philip, Randy, Sylvie, Tim, Mary, Hilene, and Geoff. For the support I needed at just the right time, I also thank

Margaret Brabant, Su-Mei Ooi, Becky Sayre, Claire Newkirk, Deborah Wolff, Walter Levy, and most of all my parents, Rose and Paddy McEvoy.

My interest in young adult fiction has connected me to many people, young and older. Among those who are most pleased, and surprised, at my interest, are my undergraduate students at Butler University. When I use Rowling and Collins' texts in my classrooms to teach courses about war and peace, the classes fill up rapidly with excited 18–21-year-olds who *have* grown up with these works and connect with them in a deep way. They find it easy to connect political theories, processes, and events to the adventures of Harry and Katniss, and to link those stories to their own lives socialized in a post-9/11 political world. When I have talked to groups of young people at international activist workshops, they too know the characters and the stories. And, with a good dose of skepticism, they are nevertheless open to any ideas that promise better activism against global structures of violence and oppression and better understanding of the roots of those forces. I am indebted to many students and young activists near and far for thoughtful comments on my presentations of some of this material. It is young people who are enthusiastic when I describe this book, and I hope they will find themselves in it. Several students at Butler University have helped me gather materials for this book: Alec Stubbs, Anastasia Luc, Hadeel Said, Rebecca Rendall, Jimmy Lardin and Rachel Bergsieker were invaluable at various stages. I am incredibly grateful to you all for your help and insights.

Toward the end of the writing process, the death in Syria of a former student was also on my mind a lot. Peter (Abdul-Rahman) Kassig was one of the Western aid workers killed by ISIS in 2014. I hope his spirit of activism and empathy permeates this book as well as does the staged spectacle of his death. The first conversation I ever had with Peter was about both Harry Potter and his time as an Army Ranger. I will always be grateful that I knew him. I also thought quite a bit about my own childhood in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s, how books and television were sources of resilience and, while I hadn't recognized this at the time, how they were also a mechanism of shaping a hybrid and ambivalent identity. With British TV, like *Doctor Who* and *Noel Edmonds' Swap Shop*, American movies and musicians, Australian soaps, and an Irish nationalist cultural setting, it's not hard to see how the (pop) cultural influences on my own identity have produced an interest in transversal politics. Since then I have met a lot of people living and working in conflict zones, including young Palestinians who volunteered information about books they were reading

(e.g., by Alice Walker) or young Irish people who adopted pop culture alias for interviews (e.g., *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) while at the same time offering critiques of Occupation and sectarianism. All of these experiences make me hopeful that art, literature, and pop culture of all kinds are means of connection across division, even if they are also sometimes weapons of war.

Last but not least, I am also very thankful for the support and patience of series editor Oliver Richmond and Palgrave editors Sarah Roughley and Samantha Snedden as well as to the anonymous readers of the manuscript. Parts of Chaps. 4, 5 and 6 are revised from excerpts from my previously published articles: 'Disarming "Militainment": Reading Peace and Resistance' in *Peacebuilding. 2015;* 3 (2): 200–217 and '*The Hunger Games*: Theorizing Opportunities for Peace Education' in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Special Issue on Children and Armed Conflict: Toward Comprehensive, Sustainable Interventions. 2017; 23 (1): 23-30. I am grateful to those who commented on those articles and on earlier versions of parts of the book including Helen Berents, Caleb Hamman, Mike Wessells, and, of course, the always generous, loving, and funny, Andy Levy.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Each is implicated in the practices and understandings of the other […] popular culture cannot be divorced from world politics nor world politics from popular culture. (Grayson et al. 2009)

The quality of the peace culture in any given society can be found in its art forms. (Boulding 2000, Quote at p. 103)

This book offers a rationale for and ways of *reading popular culture for peace* that identifies novels and material culture as 'texts.' I seek through these readings to better comprehend the spaces within which social meanings of peace emerge and evolve, the notions of peace evolving particularly in the Global North since 9/11, the role of young adult (YA) literature within these processes, and young people's agency in inventing, constructing, enacting, and subverting peace. Militarism and processes of militarization shape the international political system and the lives of people around the world,[1] and popular entertainment is a part of those processes.[2] Like Hollywood cinema, pop music, and video games, YA titles are influential not just in the United States and Europe; they also have impact across many other contested polities in the divided hemispheres of the post-9/11 world and in the global political economy.[3] As with other aspects of culture and politics in the Global North, for better and for worse, they impact the Global South as well. I argue that through taking

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youth-oriented pop culture seriously, we can better understand the spaces (local, global, and transnational), and the relations of power, within which meanings and practices of peace are known, negotiated, encoded, and obstructed.

This study combines insights from poststructural, postcolonial, feminist, and peace and conflict studies theories to analyze the literary themes, political uses, and cultural impacts of two hit book series. I explore three sets of questions. First, how is popular culture relevant for peace research? How can peace researchers go about studying peace in popular culture? What can be gained by integrating a youth lens into this analysis? These questions are addressed throughout the volume but are particularly focused on in Chaps. 2 and 3. A second set of questions probes the meanings of peace within two book series. What images and ideas of peace are contained in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* tales and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy? And with what other political, cultural, and academic discourses do they resonate? Are these discourses of peace overt or submerged in the novels and in their film adaptations? Do they challenge militarized belief systems including the idea of the inevitability of war? Do they resist or reinforce gender, race, and class hierarchies? How are they contributing to existing 'common sense' political narratives about peace or resisting them? These questions are explored in Chaps. 4, 5, 6 and 7. A third area of inquiry focuses on the political uses, consumption practices, and fandom activities associated with the series. I ask what understandings and practices of peace do these corporate, communal, and inter-relational uses and adaptations support or hinder? What different forms of resistance (and toward what targets) are evident? These questions are explored in Chaps. 8, 9 and 10 examining fan activism and fan fiction based on Rowling's and Collins' works. Finally the implications for thinking about peace and resistance in youth cultures and for future research are discussed in a concluding chapter.

Over 450 million copies of Rowling's novels have been sold worldwide, and in the United States alone, sales of Collins' series have surpassed 60 million. The films of both book series have been global box-office hits.[4] Children's/young adult books were the fastest growing segment of the publishing market in 2011,[5] and they are not only being read by teens, but by people of all ages. People's reading and other entertainment tastes and consumer practices reflect and shape what they know about war and peace. Fiction does not just tell stories; it also helps create realities, by creating 'common sense' policies, self-fulfilling prophecies,[6] 'moral grammars of

war,'[7] corporate/policymaker collaborations, and popular resistance. Analysis of pop culture narratives can show how people and nation-states imagine their roles in the world. 'It is through popular culture (at least in part) that we decide who we are, who we want to be, and how we want people to understand us,' explains Jason Dittmer.[8] Analysis of popular fantasy and dystopian stories can help us understand, and perhaps even reconsider, the political ideologies and collective emotions of particular eras. For example, the militarized, religion-invoking, foreign Other-fearing, dissent-phobic, hypervigilant yet still idealistic and hopeful exceptionalism of the Anglo-US political imagination of the early twenty-first century is both reflected and critiqued in YA fiction of the same period.

Grappling with economic inequality, government oppression, rights violations, and the (im)morality of war, terrorism, and revolution, the 'children's stories' studied in this book explore harsh realities and dilemmas of world politics. Furthermore, both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* have colonized and been appropriated by wider cultural, economic, and political discourses in significant ways. Used in youth activism and in the rhetoric of political elites, Rowling's and Collins' works are part of the web of narratives and counter-narratives (de)constructing and reproducing the dominant discourses of international relations, security, and peacebuilding. This has practical implications for conflict resolution, social justice, and decolonization processes; for better understanding and critiquing the actions of states, international organizations, and non-state groups; and for better appreciating and supporting youth activists.

In the following chapters, I focus on how recent young adult (YA) literature gives expression to and helps to create a 'politics of peace' which, as defined by Vivienne Jabri, is 'the capacity at once both to resist violence and struggle for a just social order.'[9] I also show how this politics of peace has been tamed, subverted, and co-opted in cinema, merchandise spin-offs, media commentary, and fandom. In addition to being hit book series, *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* also have a life beyond the printed page—in films, toys, video games, food, clothing, fan fiction, wikis, theme parks, education—and a range of political campaigns and causes. *Harry Potter* has been translated into over 70 languages, and *The Hunger Games* is widely read as part of curriculum in US schools. The rights for Collins' series have also been sold for translation into at least 50 world languages.[10] Both series have influenced activists and advocacy groups concerned with inequality, oppression, and war in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the United States, and Europe. Both peace activists and the US government have

used *Harry Potter* in their political rhetoric, the latter in its domestic public diplomacy about Guantanamo Bay Detention Center.[11]

The Hunger Games story has been deployed by media commentators and by activists to justify ideologies from both the left and right of the political spectrum. Seemingly un-ironically, *The Hunger Games* franchise sells products like wine glasses, nail polish, and diamond jewelry. In the United States, the Tea Party Patriots produced a *Hunger Games*-based political film critiquing the Obama administration's policies and held a Capitol games party (with *Hunger Games* costumes encouraged).[12] Progressive Governor Elizabeth Warren was depicted as Katniss at one of her campaign events and was photographed giving District 12's three-fingered salute.[13] Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka tweeted a picture of herself 'channeling her inner Katniss' at an archery range.[14] In China, fake *Harry Potter* books promote nationalist pride.[15] The Harry Potter Alliance organizes transnational campaigns against human rights abuses, including lobbying Warner Brothers, the makers of the Chocolate Frogs based on the Potter series, to use fair trade cocoa and not exploit African child labor.[16] Cinemagoers in Israel[17] and pro-democracy protesters in Thailand and Hong Kong have mimicked *The Hunger Games* salute.[18] Critics of US President-Elect Donald Trump pointed out that his plan for a 'victory tour' of the country after the 2016 election seemed named after and strategically emulated those organized by President Snow in *The Hunger Games*.[19] In these and other varied forms, *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are part of the international politics governing people's lives, a means of critiquing that politics, and instruments of social struggle.

I have chosen to focus on works that can be read as contributing to discourses of anti-militarism, nonviolence, and pacifism in popular culture with a view to understanding what role they may be playing in (de)militarizing people's lives and contributing either to a politics of peace or non-peace. This requires some detective work (an *Aparecium* spell[20] would come in handy), because '[m]ilitary symbols, representations, talk and images now dominate the cultural and political landscape' in the United States and in many other countries,[21] suggesting populations being thoroughly and, often unconsciously, militarized. Roger Stahl used the term 'militainment'[22] to describe the products—video games, TV shows, embedded war reporting, sporting events, and toys—that make war consumable. Through othering and dehumanization, making war seems productive, exciting, heroic, and glamorous, but mostly through making war pleasurable, 'militainment' helps to 'construct the citizen's identity in

relation to war'[23] and helps normalize war as a tool of foreign policy.[24] Dittmer explains that analysis of popular culture should begin with the understanding that popular culture it is not 'a *thing*: an object that can be grasped, considered and analyzed.' Instead, he states, 'popular culture is a *doing*. It is what we do, in common, with others.'[25] Such belongings are complex and flexible, however, and pop culture consumption is 'inextricably linked to the production and re-production of meanings […] through subversion, overt challenge or gradual change.'[26] The constructions of gender, race, class, and violence in the stories we tell and share about peace can challenge the myths of war, provide (false) hope, demoralize and make peace seem an impossible ideal, reproduce the discursive formations of the past, or offer new ideas.

The primary sources for this study are the novels, fan fiction writing, films, fan activists' manifestos and news articles about their actions, political speeches and press releases, commercials, opinion pieces, blogs, wikis, social media sites, toys, clothing, filming locations, and theme parks related to *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. This is interpretative research using discourse analysis and online participant observation to offer both theoretical insights and empirical findings that surface multiple meanings of peace and their tensions and contradictions as seen through youth cultures and within media and political discourses. Phil Cohen and Pat Ainley argue that 'the youth question is potentially at the cutting edge of interdisciplinary enquiry in the human sciences' but to approach this potential youth research requires methods that 'transcend the narrow empiricism of most youth transition studies, and the theoreticism that continues to characterize the study of cultural texts.'[27] In thinking about pop culture and politics, I focus on their entangled roles in the discursive construction of meaning, the semiotic practices,[28] the relational space between microlevel and macrolevel politics, and 'the differences and potential connections between interior, semiotic resistances and sociopolitical ones, between meanings and behaviors, between progressiveness and radicalism, between evasive and offensive tactics.'[29]

As we will see in later chapters, I find that the same YA literature has operated as both a mode of 'militainment' and as its critique. Through textual and intertextual analysis, I show how Rowling and Collins' books speak about and within world politics. The stories of pop culture contain myths of war and peace that through internet technology are being used by young people in ethical and political deeds and performances and are forms of what James Der Derian termed 'info-peace.'[30] Ideas in Rowling's

and Collins' books are redeployed by young people who reinterpret and rewrite the stories they love into political activism and fan fiction and by adults seeking to influence the young. YA literature is promoting intergenerational connections and has a socializing function. In creating new forms of 'common sense' about politics, YA fiction is also creating 'self-fulfilling prophecies' of youth peacebuilding.

Chapter Summaries

The book is divided into three sections: The first section provides the theoretical and historical foundations for the study. In Chap. 2, I discuss the relevance of popular culture for peace research and present the theoretical framework I use for such an analysis. I ground this framework in the existing research on pop culture in world politics, the 'militainment' and peace in IR literatures, the main theories in youth studies, as well as in the ideas of Michel Foucault (on disciplinary discourse), Giorgio Agamben (on apparatuses), Michel De Certeau (on poaching and hidden resistance), James Scott (on infrapolitics), and Gloria Anzaldua (on bridging). My analysis is rooted in a Foucauldian understanding of discourse (and concepts of power and discipline) that has influenced other scholars in international relations[31] and that seeks to understand how discursive formations and pop culture products/practices create political meaning; limit the range of meanings an idea or practice, such as child soldiering or peace(building) can have at specific moments; and offer new possibilities. My reading of popular culture texts for peace is intended to complement important work already being done by scholars identifying and deconstructing security, counter-terrorism, and war-promoting discourses in foreign policy.[32] I draw on approaches to politics and peacebuilding that emphasize aesthetics, emotions, and narratives,[33] explore the imagination and agency of youth in IR,[34] and attend to racialized, gendered, and class hierarchies and processes in IR.[35]

In Chap. 3 I focus on philosophical and literary ideas about the young that have evolved into and informed social and foreign policies in the West/North. These images endure in contemporary international political discourse about children and youth. They are important to introduce here because we can see a relationship between past and present views of youth as political agents and dangers and how policy entrepreneurs, humanitarians, educators, and novelists were influential in these discussions. Such

discursive constructions of youth are tied up with the identity of states and with the maintenance of an unequal international system.

YA fiction occupies 'in between' space as a genre and is usually listed for ages 12 to early 20s, but it is often read (or viewed in film form) more widely, both above and below this intended age bracket. However, it would be wrong to think that the young adult fiction trend is really new because the distinction between children's and adults' cultural commodities only emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and even then remained blurred in literature. Unlike education, and child-rearing theories, which place children in a separate social sphere from adults, popular forms of entertainment are more flexibly used. Furthermore, whether one is talking about books for children or books with child protagonists (that, like recent YA hits, may have a wider audience), there is always a 'hidden adult' writer,[36] and often a disciplinary purpose of either diversion or instruction of youth, or both. The 'hidden adult' speaks to the parents of his/her child readers via a 'shadow text' that often has historical, political, or sexual themes that only adults would understand.[37] Such subtexts help account for shared adult/child tastes in YA literature but are also ways of keeping youth in their place. They can also be used strategically and/or unintentionally by policy elites as part of their public diplomacy with a view to influencing youth or others. Chapter 3 explores how study of the historical discursive construction of 'youth' in the West illuminates fears, desires, and dynamics of liberal peacebuilding. Then, recurring tropes in discourses about youth in world politics can be identified in YA fiction, and its attendant commentaries, to the extent that they are engaged, reinforced, and/or disrupted.

Section two of the book focuses on the concepts of peace in *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games.* Previous work on *Harry Potter* has explored the series' international relations[38] and how it can be used to better understand political processes and concepts,[39] including human rights, gender, and war. In Chap. 4, my reading of *Harry Potter* foregrounds the different concepts of peace and youth in Rowling's texts. The seven books and eight film adaptations of the *Harry Potter* saga straddle the pre- and post-9/11 periods. Chapter 4 shows how Rowling offers two visions of peace that appear to be complementary and mutually reinforcing. The first is a hybrid idealist-liberal peace of elites and institutions pursuing just wars, and the second is gendered-relational peace, symbolized by nurturing home spaces, unconditional love, transgenerational

transmission of knowledge and memory, political coalitions across difference, and nonviolent youth action. One of the chief choices that Rowling identifies is between violence and nonviolence, and, in the books, she clearly promotes the latter with a variety of forms of 'infrapolitics' and popular resistance depicted. Harry's espousal of nonviolence is radical because it defies adult pressure to conform to just war norms. Ultimately the idea that war is inevitable and the proper duty of a citizen is unchallenged in the series, but in the context of the 'war on terror,' Rowling exposes readers to some quite radical rejections of conventional wisdom. She gives her heroic protagonists a toolbox of nonlethal and defensive spells and she has Harry choose nonviolence in opposition to his own older compatriots' example. State violence (i.e., ministry violence) is critiqued along with the fascist and insurgent violence of Voldemort and his Death Eaters. Intolerance is criticized and difference and equality are celebrated. As chapter 4 shows, it is possible to identify complex notions of peace and resistance in popular children's entertainment.

Rowling's novels and their film adaptations not only narrativize war, and cultural and structural violence, intervening within specific cultural and historical moments, but her stories are also being operationalized in actual discourses and practices of (resistance to) violence, continuing a circle. Having examined the ideas of peace in Rowling's series, the next chapter turns to how the series has actually been deployed and mediated and the discursive meanings produced. Chapter 5 focuses on how ideas of youth and peace have animated US foreign policy in relation to 'the war on terror,' by tracing the evolution of news stories about the Guantanamo Bay detainees reading the *Harry Potter* books. The chapter shows how the militarization of everyday life extended into appropriations by both the state and its agents (some media and politicians) of children's literature, which was then used to rhetorically demilitarize Guantanamo and to make it into a space of liberal peacebuilding, a space of instruction and rehabilitation. The Guantanamo prisoners were rhetorically constructed as 'youth' and Guantanamo acquired meaning as a 'disciplining' mechanism for dangerous 'youth,' using the trope of *Harry Potter*-reading prisoners. In the Bush Administration's gothic-inspired imagined world setting, there were crumbling boundaries, death ever-present, and monstrous attackers, and the realist-liberal peace of the 'war on terror' was justified with other images of peace that were normative and gendered. Representations of children and young soldiers were central to the construction of peace in the Bush administration's public diplomacy; they were central not just to

the construction of how peace would be achieved (though defeating 'terror') but also what peace was (freedom, family unity, love, transfer of values and history, American primacy, and showing this to Others). The chapter shows how Guantanamo was itself a *fantasy* of liberal peacebuilding, specifically, a fiction of 'discipline' and 'corrective training' or 'the gentle way in punishment' as Foucault would put it.[40] We can then consider what futures this narrative made more desirable.

In Chap. 6, I turn to Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* trilogy providing another close textual reading and then analyzing the series significance within its US and transnational political context. *The Hunger Games* recounts a history of people whose existence and identities are brutally entangled with cycles of armed conflict and forefronts child soldiers as agents of change. Critiquing military-entertainment complexes from within, *The Hunger Games* series' key protagonist also ultimately rejects even just wars. Decadent consumption is presented as distraction from empathy, but love can also be a barrier to just decisionmaking and a reason for fighting. In the end, Collins offers a vision of peace based in local, low-tech, creative responses to war trauma and hope of rebirth through collective memory and family. The chapter pays attention to how the books, if considered within their geopolitical time and context, bring a range of children and youth into the frame of the international politics of war and peace. Thus, it is possible to argue that in critiquing both injustice and liberation violence, Collins writes in a 'third space' to narrate a politics of peace, and, that at the time it was written, this was a radical challenge to American foreign policy *and* its violent opponents. The chapter also begins discussion of *The Hunger Games'* popular reception, focusing on the gendered-, class-, and race-based conflicts that emerged in the discourses about the books and the films and includes discussion of its relevance in the 2016 US Presidential Election. Applying a psycho-political analytical lens, the chapter concludes that focusing on the mainstream discourses surrounding *The Hunger Games* would suggest that its peace and justice messages have ethical importance but may be for many 'an awaking that is yet to occur,' in Lacanian terms.

In the third section of the book, I explore the reception of both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. In Chap. 7, I further examine the media reception and merchandise of *The Hunger Games*. In tracing the uses and disciplining of Collins' series, the chapter shows how it has been given meaning in relation to gender and race conflicts as well as in relation to contemporaneous political uprisings, wars, and terrorism. The chapter

also shows how media and corporate spin-offs entailed both transgenerational alliances and disparagement of youth. In this chapter, I also explore how the meaning of *The Hunger Games* series' stories has been subverted and gradually changed as the movies have been commented on and merchandized, showing how Katniss becomes a liberal feminist/militarist icon and Peeta is forgotten. In the film versions, Peeta's anti-violence ethics fade into the background of furious battles, and the mourning and memorialization scenes of the books are condensed or left out. But, as presented in the books, Peeta's antiwar masculinity, paired with Katniss's empowerment as a hunter, breadwinner, and fighter, challenges mainstream gender norms and binaries.

Recognizing that discourses and 'dissident thinking space' can become too disconnected from analysis of capitalism and class,[41] Chap. 7 also gives attention to the selling of products and services related to YA literature. Grayson et al. argue that pop culture and world politics should be conceptualized 'as a continuum' and 'intertextual, mutually constitutive and even materially entangled through cycles of production, distribution and consumption.'[42] As they construct national/political narratives, popular music, film, TV, and games are a part of everyday life, infused in ordinary activities and struggles, and made, consumed, and talked about in global systems of exchange and exploitation. Weldes and Rowley explain that: '[M]ost forms of popular culture are produced and consumed in industrial form, and these industries, their inputs (raw materials, labour, technology), practices (of production and consumption), and outputs (films, clothing, toys, etc.) transcend state boundaries.'[43] Children play with toys and young people wear T-shirts and costumes that have been produced in factories and sweatshops that also often employ the young. Reviewers of books and films and designers of entertainment experiences (like studio tours) encode certain messages as most important. With this in mind, I turn to the merchandise that has been spun off from Collins' series. Multisensorial embodiment of *The Hunger Games* protagonists is possible for those with financial means. Fan can purchase clothing, makeup, food, music, school supplies, real bows and arrows, and more. They can also participate in related summer camps and take tours of the filming locations and visit exhibitions of the film sets and costumes. The logos, images, and slogans from the series have been used to sell food, cosmetics, clothing, and extravagant living quarters—many of these are reminiscent of the excesses of the Capitol that the heroes of the books despise. Chapter 7 shows how operating on its subjects transnationally, pop culture production and

consumption can connect people across division but also helps maintain global hierarchies of inequality and structural violence. Both production and consumption are apparatuses of neoliberal control.

In Chapters 8 through 10, I further explore the reception of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* but this time consider the discourses of peace that emerge through a close analysis of fandom including fan fiction and fan activism which involves a 'profanation' of the 'apparatuses' of publishing and capitalism. In fan fiction, fans not only follow Rowling's and Collins' leads, they also assume authorial power in their rewritings, demonstrating both emotional investment in the original work and resistance to it.[44] Furthermore, fan fiction is both a space of cross-generational exchange[45] and a space for young people to be independent thinkers unconstrained by literary rules, copyright laws, or adult expectations.[46] The medium of online fan fiction itself is, theoretically, a space within which liberal, radical, and emancipatory peace discourses would not only be welcome but also created.

First, Chap. 8 examines how the war and post-war themes in *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are extrapolated and critiqued in fan fiction. Fan writings show how popular culture, politics, international relations, and young people's lives and aspirations are interwoven. There are explicit references to historical and contemporary wars, including to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many stories deal with the traumatic aftermath of war and political violence, some focus on the ethics of war and combat from a youth soldier perspective, and others include more graphic violence than in the originals. Through the act of writing about armed conflict and peacebuilding, fan writers are imaginatively traveling across national borders and erasing the boundaries between the real and not real. They are engaging new political possibilities for alliances and breaking taboos about reconciliation. They are also producing visions of peace. The capacity and role of fan fiction as a space within which deliberation about war can occur, without reinforcing militarism and xenophobia and, possibly, without enhancing the pleasures of war but making peace pleasurable instead, is considered. Then, in Chap. 9, I shift the lens from the direct violence and hard power politics of war studied in the previous chapter to issues of structural and cultural violence, so that a more complete understanding of the potential of fan fiction as space of peacebuilding can be approached. I explore online fan writing and fan fiction sites as potential spaces of peacebuilding practice where inclusion and empathy are shown in micro-movements for social justice. In this chapter, I also consider the medium

of fan fiction as a space or structure that can *mediate* the concerns of direct, structural, and cultural violence, holistically, but without equating war with peace in the manner of neocolonial liberal peace/virtuous war paradigms. The chapter concludes that online fan fiction is a space where critical and personal peace and poststructural pluralist peace(s) are imagined and (temporarily) spasmodically lived through fans' community practices. An accumulation of stories with narratives of inclusion, justice, and healing creates a 'third space' of peace discourse.

I focus on fan activism in Chap. 10. Fan activism is another practice that bridges and blurs fiction and nonfiction and shows how recent YA literature gives expression to and helps to create political action. Both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* have already inspired people to take nonviolent action against injustice. While such activism involves mostly North American and European activists, people in other regions—such as Russian, Thai, and Hong Kong protestors—have made connections with their own regimes and struggles. A focus on fan-based political action as well as other fan practices allows consideration of their hybrid potential to shape, through reiteration, practices, and habits of (thinking about) peace and cross-national alliances. This chapter shows how reading *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* has inspired activism against economic oppression, intolerance, and other abuses of rights, in keeping with the themes of the original books. But, because fans are 'textual poachers,'[47] these texts have not just inspired progressive activism. It may be in the contradictions of activism and consumerism that spaces of peace are being created at local levels and transnationally. Furthermore, of crucial interest to peace and conflict studies is who is left out of mainstream narratives and scholarship about peace that may be brought in via pop culture analysis.

Finally, in Chap. 11, I consider how my findings and analysis can help frame a broader agenda for peace and conflict research that focuses on popular culture and youth and finds productive links between the macro-elite, public levels of peace politics and the infrapolitical realms of local resistance or infrapeacebuilding. I offer conclusions related to peace education, activism, and scholarship, focusing specifically on Agamben's idea of the 'profanation of apparatuses'[48] and the promise of fan fiction and fan activism in post-liberal peace formation. In documenting the peace-related themes, roles, and influences of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, I hope to have contributed to knowledge about representations of peace, the spaces of the social construction of peace, and the modes of resistance within youth cultures and also to have prompted further thinking about

the relationship between peace (building), youth, and youthhoods in the fields of international relations and peace and conflict studies. How people think about peace is shaped by many factors in our everyday lives, mediated via popular religious, educational, and entertainment discourses, and infused with race, gender, and class concerns and inequalities. Peace researchers can know more about the relationship between those always in-progress concepts and discourses of peace, their blurred local/global, private/public origins, and the foreign policies of States and IR in practice. In addition to uncovering how entertainment narratives shape images of war and enemies, it is possible to better understand how popular culture narratives and products are contributing to structural and cultural violence and animating or thwarting possibilities for sustainable peace.

In sum, this study tries to probe the everyday meanings of peace evoked by people (particularly the young)—reading, viewing, writing about, acting in the name of, making, wearing, and debating *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*—within the constraints of a neoliberal international order. The study is certainly limited in many ways, not least because only English language sources have been used and I have not surveyed or interviewed young consumers or activists. But it is hoped that the approach and scope of this study—tracing two pop culture phenomena's socially constructed meanings across a range of discourses, practices, and geopolitical locations—can be adapted by others and will provide inspiration. Of course, surveying, watching, using, and interpreting the various print and online texts, products, and services that are discussed in this book involves some nonobjective participation and some unobserved observation on the part of the researcher which is its own form of disciplinary power. '[T]he inevitable difference between the represented and its representation is the very location of politics,' argues Roland Bleiker,[49] and this book, like the genre of YA fiction, and the concept of youthhood, occupies a space 'in between' and is a site of politics. Readers may draw different final conclusions from mine. But I hope that this approach will interest researchers interested in the intersection of pop culture/world politics, critical peace studies, and those in youth studies, as well as activists.

*The main arguments of the book ar*e summarized below:

1. Young adult (YA) literature and film focused on 'child soldiers' and ethical debates about political violence challenges mainstream narratives of war and militarization in often hidden ways. For example, they challenge the idea that all children are innocent/good and that

all child soldiers are victims but without negating children's rights or justifying undemocratic, authoritarian approaches to violence prevention. Some of these works also critique their own readers and their governments, disrupt mainstream gender norms and class-based injustice, and evoke race in ways that surface prejudice and produce agonistic dialogue.[50]

2. Reading these works for peace uncovers discourses of nonviolence, relational empathy, and 'positive peace' (as entertainment) that coexist with discourses of 'militainment' and other militarized aspects of daily life. The juxtaposition creates a 'third space,' a bridge space, out of which new agendas for peace can emerge. As Homi Bhabha noted, 'third spaces' can facilitate 'new alliances' that may necessitate new thinking: 'in any particular political struggle, new sites are always opening up, and if you keep referring those sites to old principles, then you are not actually able to participate in them fully, productively and creatively.'[51] There are new spaces of peace(building) that have emerged in and via the fandoms of YA literature.
3. When *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are read and then adapted from books into films, video games, toys, clothing, food, exhibitions, and theme parks, and as they generate blogs, wikis, fan fiction sites, and social and political agendas, some aspects of their discourses of peace are lost, transformed, and/or become practices. Through analyzing these shifts, these discourses and practices can be studied in terms of their relationships to a politics of peace.
4. Embedded within local and global structures of violence, the acts of purchasing and using the works and their multiple spin-off products and services cannot be disentangled from injustice or manipulation. This complicity is to some extent exposed by fans that are politicized by the series.
5. Reading popular culture for peace requires 'a tolerance for ambiguity,' in the manner understood by Gloria Anzaldua,[52] and includes close attention to the different conceptual, discursive, community, consumption, and activist spaces that YA literature and its readers generate, use, and occupy in a complex web as messy as life really is. One possibility that I explore in this volume is that YA literature (and/or youth fans themselves) embodies the notion of a politics of 'third space' understood as a bridge space via Anzaldua's concept of the social change-effecting 'mestiza consciousness.'[53] Being both a

form of 'militainment' and its critique, YA fiction embodies Gloria Anzaldua's claim that 'it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions,' for we have to 'stand on both shores at once' in order for a 'new consciousness' to emerge.[54] The shore-straddling metaphor also applies to the liminal social position of youthhood and to the ways in which Rowling's and Collins' books perpetuate certain ideas about war and, *at the same time*, critique them. In these ways they may also be creating a space of post-liberal peace or highlighting factors preventing its evolution.

6. The phenomena of youth-driven pop culture peace politics illustrate another way in which young people can be agents of peace and how they shape the social lives of others. Young people are adapting these works for their own purposes, asserting authority in fan fiction, for example, and showing political entrepreneurship in social justice campaigns inspired by the books. The findings of this research also prompt further consideration of the lenses we use to study IR, and for including youth and the 'soft power' role of popular culture. Both of the latter can be implicated not only in the export of the liberal peace but as part of an emancipatory, cosmopolitan project as envisioned by critical peace and security studies.
7. Reading peace in popular culture involves reflecting on the act of reading as well as on the content of books. It involves analyzing how relationships of power link spaces of politics, commerce, and culture and seek to contain and/or liberate or instruct youth. The YA fiction series studied in this book have created openings for understandings of peace and security that have emancipatory potential. They valorize but do not overestimate 'the capacity at once both to resist violence and struggle for a just social order,'[55] *and* they provide a means for putting that capacity into practice. Thus, they offer lessons for peace research and education.
8. The project of (re)populating international relations and peace and security scholarship, in addition to bringing in children's and youth's voices and recognition of their agency, involves attention to their tastes and choices, modes of identity expression, chosen heroes, and imagined worse and better worlds. While not a substitute for the actual voices of youth being understood by scholars and policymakers, we will be better able understand how we already think about peace and may be able to improve peace theory and practice, through examining popular culture's youth revolutionaries and

their outcomes—from their digital and plastic renderings to their living embodiments in local struggles for justice to their reification as targets of policy and as signs and ciphers of global politics and conflicts.

Notes

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7. Weber C. Imagining America at war: morality, politics and film. London and New York: Routledge; 2006.
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9. Jabri V. War and the transformation of global politics. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave; 2010. Quote at p. 172.

10. In addition to English Language editions around the world, *The Hunger Games* rights were sold into more than 50 languages including by 2014 the following: Albanian, Arabic, Azeri, Basque, Bosnian, Brazilian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese Complex, Chinese Simplified, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Faroese, Finnish, French, Georgian, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuania, Macedonian, Malaysian, Marathi (India), Mongolian, Montenegrin, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhalese, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spanish (Spain, South America, Mexico and Central America), Sri Lankan, Swedish, Tagalog (Philippines), Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese. Source: E-mail from Stimola Literary Studio.
11. Ten Facts about Guantanamo. 2006.
12. President and Co-Founder of the Tea Party, Jenny Beth Martin, likened Washington D.C. cronyism to the Capitol and District 1 in the *Hunger Games* in her Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) speech. See, Martin, J. B. Prepared text of speech to CPAC. March 16, 2013; See also, Tea Party Patriots. Party with us at CPAC. Capital Games Party and Karaoke Contest; Tea Party Patriots. Tea Party Patriots Short Movie Making Waves. March 19 2013.
13. The picture of Warren giving the salute is available here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxksWnnwOnmqeER4dTVRNVJIQUU/view Accessed 12 December 2016.
14. For a story about the tweet, see Allen K.C. Battle of the bows: Ivanka Trump vs. Katniss Everdeen. Archery 360. December 21 2016.
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22. Stahl R. Ibid. Quote at p. 6; Leonard D. Ibid. Quote at p. 1.
23. Stahl R. Ibid. Quote at p. 15.
24. Stahl R. Ibid.
25. Dittmer J. Ibid.
26. Weldes J, Rowley C. Ibid. Quote at p. 20.
27. Cohen P, Ainley P. In the country of the blind? Youth studies and cultural studies in Britain. Journal of Youth Studies. 2000; 3(1): 79–95. Quote at p. 79.
28. As understood by Lisa Wedeen; see Wedeen L. Conceptualizing culture. Possibilities for political science. American Political Science Review. 2002; 96(4): 713–728.
29. John Fiske quoted in Jenkins H., editor. John Fiske collection. Understanding popular culture. London and New York: Routledge; 2010. Quote at p. 7.
30. Der Derian J. Ibid. Quote at pp. 255–256.
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46. Tosenberger C. Ibid.
47. Jenkins H. Textual poachers. Television fans and participatory culture. London and New York: Routledge; 1992.
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PART I

Theoretical and Historical Foundations

CHAPTER 2

Reading Popular Culture for Peace: Theoretical Foundations

This book unpacks different discourses and practices of peace (building) circulating within and around pop culture phenomena. Through intertextual analysis it shows how popular entertainment can be related to, and sometimes subvert, the dominant discourses and power relations of world politics. In grounding this study, several different literatures are drawn upon. First, the popular culture in world politics, 'militainment,' and liberal peacebuilding literatures are discussed along with an argument for why popular culture study has importance for peace research. Then I discuss the theoretical bases for my framework for reading peace in popular culture.

Why Read Popular Culture for Peace?

The term 'popular culture' can encompass a range of products, events, and activities that are available for mass consumption—including novels, feature films and documentaries, magazines, music, video games, sports, theme parks, toys, clothing, commercials, and TV shows—as well as the social meanings and discourses attached to these products and practices.[1] Why study pop culture for meanings of peace? Culture entails 'the practices of meaning-making through which social actors attempt to make their worlds coherent,' Lisa Wedeen explains. 'Culture designates a way of looking at the world that requires an account of how symbols

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operate in practice, why meanings generate action, and why actions produce meanings, when they do.'[2] Culture sustains solidarities and identities through shared experience. Culture also creates and maintains power. It has its producers, practitioners, guardians, profit-makers, targets for exploitation or exclusion, adherents, and detractors. For example, pop culture includes the writers who create magical fictional worlds, the corporate creators who generate spin-offs for further profit, the young people who derive meaning from and give meaning to the entertainment they consume, and who may form their own subcultural communities, and those who make the toys and costumes or work in theme parks serving food or emptying trash cans. Thus culture, and pop culture, is also about power and conflict, economics, exploitation, and world politics. One reason to study popular cultures is that there is much more continuity between pop culture, political activism, and policy than might be at first assumed.[3] Peace researchers can identify, for the purposes of resisting, the violence that is produced through media and entertainment discourses and practices.

Identifying and Resisting the 'Commonsensical' Narratives and 'Self-Fulfilling Prophecies' of Violence in World Politics

Popular culture does not just show violence through images and stories, it can also create violence—direct, structural, and cultural—through its narratives, design, production, and consumption habits. Children's literature, for example, has a long history in promoting nationalism and patriotism and in socializing a citizenry that expects and accepts war as a tool of foreign policy (see Chap. 3). Such literatures imparted generational messages[4] and fostered a 'pleasure culture of war'[5] that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reached to recruit from colonies of the dominant world powers as well as to recruit at home. The beliefs of policymakers as well as their publics are influenced by culture, including by the literary and film depictions of war, enemies, states, and soldiers that are prevalent in the media and education cultures of their times. Popular films were central to the development and maintenance of US national images during the Cold War and, as Michael Shapiro explains, 'the way we experience war history is inextricably linked to the forms it has taken on in media representation.'[6] Indeed, the Pentagon and Hollywood have a long history of collaboration,[7] and in the present, video games are used to recruit and train soldiers and plan for future wars.[8]

Publics interpret elite representations through 'the cultural resources' of their own societies. As we 'take up' or reject elite representations, we filter them through what we 'know,' about war and peace, for example. Likewise, elites' justifications for policy must resonate with the public and are drawn from within 'the field of discourses' to which they belong, including those of the media/culture/entertainment industry. Jutta Weldes explains:

> State policy and international politics have a fundamentally cultural basis and state and other international actions are made commonsensical through everyday cultural meanings, including those circulating in popular culture. What this means is, first, that decisions and actions of policy elites (state or otherwise) cannot be understood without a corresponding grasp of the field of discourses—the broader cultural repertoire of meanings—through which elites apprehend world politics and their own place in it.[9]

It is significant, then, that high-ranking White House staff have watched and discussed television shows about counter-terrorism including '24,' according to Grayson et al.[10] Popular culture discourses create boundaries, containing certain meanings and excluding others to form and maintain 'common sense' views. The significance of this is further underlined when we remember that states' identities are discursively reproduced and policy discourses also define and frame policy problems and solutions.

In addition to noting how pop culture and politics reference each other, therefore, peace researchers can unpack the enduring meanings that such cross-referencing suggests. This is important because narratives can produce 'self-fulfilling prophecies,' creating the outcomes that they imagine.[11] During the Cold War, fantasies about superweapons became 'common sense' political endeavors.[12] Books, radio broadcasts, and films about 'fantastic enemies and sophisticated high-tech wars' made 'a future of militarized security seemingly attainable through advanced weapons and information warfare,' Weldes suggests.[13] She also explains this process in relation to globalization: '[P]ut simply, the representations that most people entertain about globalisation—what they think it is and how they think it works—affects how they act. It is this effect that can render globalisation discourse a self-fulfilling prophecy.'[14] What we think war or peace is and how it operates also affects how we act. Pop culture discourses are today also contributing to public and elite knowledge about reconstruction, humanitarian intervention, and peacebuilding. Cynthia Weber identifies

competing stories in US cinema after 9/11 that entail debates about whether the United States is 'the humanitarian' or 'the vigilante' and are often wrapped in discourses of the 'traditional family.'[15] As Weber notes, these stories produce 'moral grammars of war' and sometimes also reveal 'how we wish we had not been,' as shown in some documentary and feature films about Vietnam that were produced post-9/11. Moral debate about who 'we' are now occurs 'at the intersections of cinema, national trauma and US foreign policy decisionmaking,' argues Weber.[16]

Conceptual systems and presuppositions structure foreign policy actions[17] and make violence possible by clarifying differences between 'us' and 'them,' as Roxanne Doty showed in relation to US policy in the Philippines.[18] In addition to the direct violence of war, entertainment involves cultural and structural violence by producing and hiding oppression. For example, Jason Dittmer explored the evolution of the comic book superhero *Captain America* and showed how uncomfortable truths about civil rights struggles were obscured in the superhero story to maintain 'a morally clean and flawless' American national image.[19] To take another example, 80% of toys in the US market are made in China including *The Hunger Games*' Katniss Barbie doll[20] (Chap. 7), and Beryl Langer notes that:

> The toys that 'enchant' the children of the affluent are made in the Enterprise Processing Zones of countries like China, Thailand and the Philippines, where young women little more than children themselves work for low wages in factories which also serve as dormitories and, on occasion, death traps.[21]

In addition to direct violence (such as war), cultural violence (such as racism), and structural violence (such as child labor), a fourth example of violence that can be related to popular entertainment practices is found in the psychological disturbances in thinking that can accompany compulsive internet use and, among other effects, generate fantasies of power.[22] Scholars including Shapiro, Weber, Weldes, Dittmer, and others have shown that popular texts, products, and practices are important vehicles by which some ideas and beliefs become hegemonic, integrated into the everyday, naturalized, and unquestioned as real and inevitable. This form of investigation is important for peace researchers, as it can then allow violence-justifying narratives to be denaturalized, repoliticized, and resisted.

Understanding the Domestic Pop-Cultural Contexts of Liberal Peacebuilding/Militarism

A second reason that pop culture analysis is important for peace research is that it may open up new ways of thinking about a specific 'common sense' discourse such as 'liberal peacebuilding.' Liberal peace is a shorthand term for a discourse/practice of the international community that promotes democracy and the free market as a necessary good for development and conflict prevention. Local communities' experiences of liberal peace interventions are often negative, entailing increased inequality, disempowerment, and new conflicts.[23] In part, this is because the theories and processes of peacebuilding that are being implemented have been developed in societies, cultures, and institutions that are quite different from those that are the recipients of peacebuilding interventions.[24] The liberal peace is a 'virtual peace,'[25] according to Oliver Richmond; that is to say, it exists in the discourse/imagination of the international community but is not experienced in the same way on the ground.[26] 'Its goals are self-images that must be simulated in the other,' states John Heathershaw.[27] Hybrids of local and imported peacebuilding processes and institutions produce unpredictable results.[28] Youth often bear the brunt of resource competition that can be (re)produced and/or exacerbated by interventions and promote intergenerational conflicts.[29] But recent research suggests that some liberal peace interventions may unintentionally create the space for some forms of local peace and resistance to emerge.[30]

Critical peace theorists are also concerned with the blurring of war with peace in liberal peace interventions.[31] Heathershaw argues that the 'intense intertextuality of peacebuilding'[32] is illustrated in how military action has come to be portrayed as humanitarian and humanitarian intervention as requiring military action.

> Earlier invocations of the concept of peace—as an orderly balance of power (a negative peace) or an inclusive system of social justice (positive peace)—gave rise to the idea that peace and war were mutually exclusive. […] Today the process of international peacebuilding takes place 'over generations' and its endpoint is rarely defined. Peacebuilding provides a widely accepted justification for the permanence of war or very high levels of organized violence in post-conflict spaces. Under peacebuilding war and 'peace' are always with us.[33]

Heathershaw identifies the international community as a set of global spaces forming 'an emerging identity group for the management of post-colonial and post-conflict spaces in world politics' and within which the discourses of the liberal peace are institutionalized. The liberal peace is made up of a 'tripartite institutional discursive environment' that posits 'conflict management, order and justice' as its main operations.[34] Such 'informal and not violently visible empire-building' by states and international organizations employs 'hypernationalism, hypermasculinity and neo-liberal discourses of 'capitalist democracy' to justify its interventions as modes of 'bringing freedom to the oppressed,' argues Chandra Mohanty, and targets poor, third world women for its instruction.[35] Therefore, the liberal peace involves domination masquerading as humanitarianism and is also a virtuous peace, to adapt a term from James Der Derian.

Der Derian argues that 'technology in the service of virtue has given rise to a global form of virtual violence' which he calls 'virtuous war,'[36] which is a combination of the virtual and virtuous (meaning driven by images of heroic mission). After 9/11, Der Derian writes, 'virtuous war' was 'played out by the military-industrial-media-entertainment network as our daily bread and nightly circus.'[37]

> In virtuous war, made-for-TV wars and Hollywood war movies blur, military war games and computer video games blend, mock disasters and real accidents collide, producing on screen a new configuration of virtual power, the military-industrial-media-entertainment network. In spite and perhaps because of efforts to spread a democratic peace through globalization and humanitarian intervention, war has ascended from the virtual to the virtuous.[38]

In this cultural context, peace is synonymous with permanent war, and, as Shapiro argues, military recruitment and war on terror detention practices are part of a complex web of 'home front' and 'distant front' agencies, events, and images, involving academic, military, media, and entertainment collaborations.[39]

Disarming 'Militainment' The neocolonialism of the liberal peace can be resisted by 'shifting one's gaze towards the colonising practices of Europe and the United States'[40] and examining how these practices are prepared and practiced at home. In culturally justifying foreign policies

based on domination masked as humanitarianism, many factors are involved, but three important factors are focused on here: consumable war or 'militainment,' 'tabloid' political coverage (both of which are discussed below), and ideas about youth (discussed in brief here and more fully in Chap. 3).

As part of liberal peace promotion, states instruct and militarize their own children. Michael Shapiro uses the term 'violent cartographies' to describe the combination of 'geopolitical imaginaries' and 'the forces, institutions, and agencies that move bodies into the zones of violent encounter' and 'identify the domestic spaces where bodies are judged to be dangerous because they are associated with foreign antagonists.'[41] Many, if not most, of those 'bodies' moved to kill or be killed by the state or other forces are the young, the 'conveniently mobile'[42] targets, and agents, of state policies. In the United States and other countries, youth, particularly working-class youth, are targeted for militarization in service of the state as it projects it power overseas. But both state and non-state groups recruit youth and both engage with pop culture to create and sustain identities and to do ideational/ideological battle. In the United States, as in many other countries, there is also public policy concern, and frequent moral panics, regarding the impact on the young of violence in film, television, and video games. At the same time, works that glorify and fetishize violence proliferate, and the citizenry is socialized through media promotion of patriotic, martial values.

The media plays a critical role in defining the world map and the relations within world politics, including how youth are seen in geopolitical terms. At home youth may be viewed as politically apathetic when their actions do not fulfill the usual model of political engagement or threatening when they 'misuse' technology, culture, or tradition. But when youth bodies are massed on the global stage, in the war zone, or in the revolutionary square, what they represent becomes pregnant with political meanings—such as predictions of generational shifts—much of which are externally inscribed by globalizing media.

Francois Debrix argues that 'the tabloidization of everyday culture takes place when the media and their programming and their fictional realities becomes the all-encompassing dimension of the vast majority of people's lives,'[43] when 'the quick, unattached, ever-changeable message that tabloid discursive formations produce offers the public sufficient doses of information, comfort and often emotion.'[44] Debrix further

explains how this 'tabloid' tone was employed by foreign policy analysts and commentators in the United States, including by Samuel Huntington (*The Clash of Civilizations*) and Robert Kaplan (*The Coming Anarchy*)[45]:

> Using a discursive style directly borrowed from popular television talk-shows, news reporting, and punditry, tabloid geopolitics is designed to be highly entertaining, sensational, shocking, and overtly simplistic. Tabloid geopolitics combines commonsensical textual explanations and spectacular maps to produce a sense of fear and inevitable danger that can lead American audiences to accept certain 'truths' that geopolitical experts seek to impose.[46]

This 'tabloid' culture helps justify and normalize the surveillance state and is part of the 'militainment' industry.

Der Derian argues that the military-industrial complex coupled with a complicit global media has produced a 'military-industrial-media–entertainment network' or MIMENET that now can 'seamlessly…merge the production, representation and execution of war.'[47] A part of this process is the militarization of popular culture that includes products like the video games *Call of Duty* and *America's Army*, television shows and films, toys, war reporting, and sports coverage [48] Such 'militainment,' as Roger Stahl calls it, makes war consumable.[49] Part of the military-entertainment complex,[50] 'militainment,' not only comprises a large share of the entertainment market,[51] but it is 'an important pedagogical project of U.S. war practices,'[52] supplementing the militarization of schools, universities, and daily life. In addition to valorizing military solutions, these discourses emphasize strong government and heteronormative family themes.[53]

Roger Stahl identifies three main scholarly perspectives on such popular culture products: first, there is the view that they are tools of the state, 'an additional platform […] from which to conduct classical propaganda, thereby keeping the population in tune with the official justification for war.'[54] State-funded films, such as the World War II picture *Why We Fight*, directed by Frank Capra, are an example. A second, political economy interpretation highlights the collaboration of media and defense economic/political interests 'that nudges cultural narratives towards the profitably bellicose.'[55] Collaborations, between video-game makers, weapons makers, and the military, produced hybrids such as the Army Experience Center and embedded reporting that may help recruit soldiers and create wider support for war. In his own work, Stahl takes a third analytical perspective examining how popular culture shapes the citizen's identity. He argues that 'militainment' has two main roles:

> The first might be described as the 'wiring' of the citizen's relationship to war, the material arrangement of technologies and institutions that make war as a phenomenon available for consumption. These interfaces normalize certain practices, habits and dispositions toward war. // Closely related is the second aspect, the symbolic construction of military activity. This includes the dominant generic alignments, narratives, images, and language choices that not only paint a picture of state violence but also work to articulate the citizen subject within it.[56]

While combining the propaganda and profit explanations to some extent, Stalh's interpretation of 'militainment' involves a more constitutive relationship, an exchange between leaders and publics, than is presumed in straight propaganda, and goes deeper than a commercial enterprise. 'Militainment,' in Stahl's analysis, has the spiritual and psychological impact, as well as economic motives, that Eisenhower famously predicted for the military-industrial complex and that make effective democratic deliberation about war very difficult. However, pleasurable war play alone does not account for liberal peacebuilding. US movies, talk radio, and entertainment present 'moral narratives' of American military power and panic narratives of a world of threats and ever-encroaching disorder.[57] US political rhetoric is replete with references to American exceptionalism and moral mission in the world.[58] In addition, ideas about children and youth are important to understanding liberal peace-promoting states because intergenerational learning is at the heart of a culture. Furthermore, as shown in Chap. 3, certain recurring tropes in media, arts, and political discourses about youth are transposed onto whole nations overseas.

Post-liberal Peace? Critiquing liberal peacebuilding then necessitates considering what 'post-liberal peacebuilding' would or should look like. Richmond argues for investigations of 'post-liberal peace' emphasizing 'discursive "webs of meaning".'[59] Pop culture analysis can contribute to this endeavor by looking to both ideas within narratives and the practices of fans. Stahl concludes his study of 'militainment' with a call to continue trying to find 'weapons' that can counteract 'the seductions of the entertaining war' and still preserve both respect for soldiers and for deliberative democracy.[60] 'As interactive war evolves, these weapons of critique will not always be obvious,' he writes. But, '[t]hey will always be present, however, within the circulation of signs and within the citizen-subject.'[61] A concrete example is that activist citizens succeeded in closing the Army Experience Center. Stahl's research suggests that seeking peace in the spaces occupied

by corporatized, militarized pop culture will entail looking for resistance from within, as well as revolutionary counter-ideologies. Examples of the former are the hacking activities of Velvet Strike who use multiplayer war video games 'as sites of political protest and activism.'[62] These interventions aim to disarm militainment with parody and disruption, reducing its power to influence or do damage. The refusal to buy such games is another form of consumer resistance. Shapiro argues that 'violent cartographies' are contested through 'display spaces that are outside of government controls,' such as political film festivals, operating as 'counter-spaces' of critique and resistance to war on terror policies.[63] Der Derian sees potential for 'info-peace' and resistance from within and against the military-entertainment complex. 'Info-peace' according to Der Derian is 'the production, application, and analysis of information by peaceful means for peaceful ends [...] Info-peace stresses the actualization of peace through the creative and pragmatic application of information technology' and can be judged by its impact on levels of personal and structural violence.[64]

Identifying and Supporting Cultural Sources of Positive Peace and Resistance

A third reason for peace researchers to be interested in popular entertainment cultures is that, just as war and discrimination are created and/or aided by cultural images and practices, the arts and storytelling are recognized as having a role to play in helping to create cultures of peace.[65] Fiction, creative writing, music, dance, theater, and visual art are used in peace education and activism.[66] They are also regularly employed in programs in active conflict zones promoting coexistence, personal healing after trauma, and social reconciliation.[67] Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham, and Tom Woodhouse note that 'the creative and expressive areas of human activity provide a powerful source of peacebuilding energy,'[68] and John Paul Lederach and Elise Boulding have long argued for attention to the emotional, affective, and intuitive dimensions of knowing as a way to creatively envision peace and open up avenues for action.[69] However, little attention has been given to mass consumer culture as a source of peace, even though such cultural practices have been recognized as ways of expressing identity, as shared experiences, as distractions from political deliberation, and as forms of violence or manipulation.

Perhaps it is the everydayness of popular culture and its association with leisure and pleasure, and with escapism and consumerism, that explains

the perception that popular culture is peripheral to IR/peace and conflict studies' concerns, as Alex Danchev and Debbie Lisle suggest: 'International Relations too often merely *tolerates* scholarship on art, culture and imagination, and therefore underpins all the latent power relations that modes of toleration always produce.'[70] Writing about the Palestinian-Israeli context, Rebecca Stein and Ted Swedenburg recall the following criticism: 'In an atmosphere of torture, land expropriations, suicide bombings, and massive poverty, isn't it simply frivolous and perhaps even politically irresponsible to devote one's scholarly energies to Israeli punk bands or Palestinian villagers' consumption of U.S. television soap operas?'[71] In response, these authors draw on Stuart Hall and others to point out that culture is not 'merely epiphenomenal' but 'a crucial locus of political engagement.'[72] Therefore, another reason for studying pop culture for peace is that, as a space of politics, popular stories and forms of entertainment are not only useful as *tools for* conflict transformation; they are also a *space of* conflict and its transformation, a space where 'common sense' ideas about peace form and are reinforced, and a space where shifts of empathy and healing can occur.

Arts-based therapies provide spaces for emotional expression and insight that helps resolve conflict and promote empathy.[73] Kimberley Chabot Davis argues for the possibility of 'empathetic crossings within cultural space' to create social justice coalitions.[74] Writing about the responses of white and black audiences to African-American literature, Chabot Davis finds that 'radically destabilizing empathy' can occur when emotional experiences lead to critical self-reflection without erasure of the Other, who is now more fully understood as a unique but equally valuable human being.[75] Such 'empathetic crossings' can happen through reading and critical, collaborative reflection, she claims. In his analysis of combat veterans' trauma, in a book called *Achilles in Vietnam*, Jonathan Shay notes how emotion and knowledge are intertwined. Drawing on his use of The Iliad for addressing combat trauma, Shay argues that healing occurs in the encounter between the survivor/sufferer and an empathetic listener via narrative. Such a listener must be open to sharing the survivor's fear, anger, and grief.[76] Shay's description of a therapeutic setting generated using epic literature is mirrored in other peacebuilding practitioners' experiences of what art can achieve.[77] Empathy involves both emotion and awareness and has been promoted using children's literature in educational drama projects related to global conflicts, for example.[78] For Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch, building capacity for peace entails

'cultivating existing capacities and skills in order to meet human needs' for self-esteem and a sense of efficacy that can be mobilized. They provide the examples of Forum Theater and arts education programs as 'mechanisms that build self-confidence, enable self-expression, and provide training in leadership, public speaking and creative problem-solving.'[79]

Studies of the role of emotion in politics note that IR has emphasized the role of fear and pity but given much less attention to other emotions such as empathy, hope, and wonder.[80] Neta Crawford recommends more work on 'anger, empathy, hope, and love,' arguing that such analysis may help explain 'when and why humanitarian interventions occur, when crises yield to war, and how identities and aspirations are formed and modified.'[81] These hopes for arts-based conflict resolution rely on the idea that 'emotions and emotional relationships are at least to some degree determined cognitively and socially, [...] emotions can be learned and (with some difficulty) relearned, as can the behavioral components of emotions. [...] Specifically, not only are beliefs socialized, so are emotions and emotional relationships.'[82] Emotions also have 'cognitive content' (i.e., they involve interpretation, evaluation, and a certain amount of intentionality, e.g., love or fear *of* something) that is constituted by internal and external stimuli. Emotions are aimed at an object, though not necessarily consciously.[83] For example, psychoanalytical lenses applied to literature can help uncover meanings that the writer may have included for other adults or not consciously intended at all. Crawford suggests that emotions such as fear or love are not only attached to 'agents' but also 'institutionalized in the structures and processes of world politics.'[84] Media-entertainment conglomerates and schools are institutions of world politics, constructing national identities, and Us/Other relations. Toys and games have an affective quality to their use. Therefore, analyzing cinema, music, art, toys, video games, and fiction offers insights and opportunities for learning about the emotional sources and barriers to peace (education) that may otherwise be missed by social science researchers.[85]

Conflict actors' decisions are based on the options on an imagined playing field, by perceptions of threat, beliefs about 'us' and 'them,' and emotions. Those emotions, such as anger, hate, and love, may be felt as natural but are in fact learned through stories and social scripts, and this is one reason that works of literature can be understood as providing ethical education.[86] When art, literature, dance, and song are deployed in support of nationalism, to degrade our enemies or to uplift our own side, they evoke powerful feelings. Groups have emotions, as well as individuals, and so do

states, because states are groups.[87] Applying psychoanalytic frameworks to international politics, Vamik Volkan illuminates the relationships between politics and individual and large-group emotions.[88] Large-group mourning, Volkan argues, begins in an already regressed state,[89] and the nation-state is composed of the traumas of the past, which shape diplomatic interactions. But '[w]e hide the traumatic real,' notes Jenny Edkins.[90] 'The political is that which enjoins us not to forget the traumatic real but rather to acknowledge the constituted and provisional nature of what we call social reality.'[91] This suggests that 'the traumatic real' can be hidden in popular entertainment texts, and because the division between social reality and fantasy/fictions is by no means clear, there may also be room within people's experience of pop culture for the tending of collective trauma. Understanding the emotions in pop culture, therefore, is potentially important for both understanding conflict and for conflict resolution. Ramsbotham et al. write: 'Dimensions of feeling, emotion, imagery and imagination, which are stimulated when peace and conflict are the subjects of the visual and other arts, are clearly important but underutilized reservoirs and motivators for conflict resolution.'[92]

A brief discussion of ideas about youth in IR and the main theoretical perspectives in youth studies is the focus of the next section.

Youth in the House

Youth have always been in the wiring of 'the House of IR,' as indicated by critical work identifying Pater Realism and Mater Liberalism,[93] and by studies arguing for children to have 'a seat at the table' of IR,[94] and to be seen as peacebuilders as well as contributors to conflict.[95] Older young people have most recently been presented as assets and risks in the dominant discourses of international development, economically and socially stuck in 'waiting,' and while often peripheral to political decisionmaking, they have been instrumentalized for many political purposes including as soldiers and in symbolic politics.[96] Incorporating a consideration of children into IR theory, Kim Huynh, Bina D'Costa, and Katrina Lee-Koo[97] argue that two views of children dominate in international political discourse: one is a protection approach that they call the 'caretaker' model, and this is the approach that realists and liberals implicitly share. Children according to this perspective are 'assumed to be protected within the domestic sphere of the home, family and community'[98] and do not have a role in shaping world politics. The other is an agency perspective, which

they call the 'free ranger' perspective, and they argue it is more compatible with critical IR perspectives. This view holds that children do shape their societies and contribute to how conflicts unfold or are resolved.[99]

The other way in which youth have contributed to IR, of course, is as a metaphor for the international system. The phased maturity model of children's and youth development are ideologically paralleled in IR's division of the world into developed (adult), developing (youth), and undeveloped states (children). The colonial and paternalist origins and implications of this are further discussed in Chap. 3, but this same model has been scaled up from a focus on human development to, in the liberal peacebuilding endeavor, post-conflict states' development. Although the inclusion of children as a site of politics and analytical category in IR is fairly recent, these IR perspectives derive from long-standing social theories about young people's development, capabilities, and prospects.

There are four main theoretical perspectives in the contemporary social science study of youth: one focuses on developmental transitions, another focuses on the social construction of childhood that emphasizes young people's agency and youth cultures, and a third lens focuses on social generations and emphasizes the social transformation roles of specific youth cohorts (both national and transnational). Finally, the fourth is a hybrid lens that emphasizes the social ecologies and lifeworlds of youth. Depending on the theoretical youth lens used, different forms of and approaches to pop culture would be emphasized and different relations with IR would be seen, as summarized in Table 2.1.

Transitions/Becomings The developmental stages model[100] has dominated the study of childhood and the modern practice of childcare and understands childhood as an 'apprenticeship' for adulthood that involves a 'natural' growth of rationality in stages from a 'pre-social' phase of biological immaturity to 'full human status, i.e adulthood.'[101] Care, protection, and nurturing of children and young people's interests and talents are a social good and a task beginning with parents and later shared with school professionals. In theory, the aim of the development transitions focus is protection and nurture of the young while they are vulnerable in order to help them reach their full potential. This remains a valued role of parents and teachers, even if neoliberal education models place obstacles to its achievement, and this lens allows interest in popular culture for its impact on the young in terms of their socialization and as a potential tool in education. But critics have underlined the disciplinary function of the

Table 2.1 Youth theories and pop culture: Foci of analysis and inquiries that are emphasized in this perspective

Transitions: A cognitive and sociobiological phase of development lens for looking at young people that, in relation to pop culture, is concerned with its appropriateness for age and developmental stage. Pop culture is important because it can be educational. The developmental transitions approach might be critiqued for preferring protection over autonomy and for labeling as 'deviant' what is different from the 'norm.' *Key inquiries from this perpective: how are different forms of popular entertainment influencing the young in their psychological, social, and moral development? How could they be used for supplementing developmentally based learning goals and transitions toward adulthood? How could potential risks be addressed?*

Agency: A perspective that the young are shaping their own and other's social conditions, and that recognizes that young people create their own subcultures and create, use, and interact with pop culture by poaching from and adapting it to suit their needs. Often applied only to older youth in groups, the agency perspective can be critiqued for romanticizing and overreading youth autonomy. *Key inquiries from this perspective: how are the young using, changing, or creating pop entertainment? What social impact are they having? How can the peaceful uses of pop culture by youth be supported? How are young people constructed as agents in different pop cultural forms?*

Generations: Collective identities are emphasized and youth are viewed en masse as potential drivers of major social transformations in this perspective. Specific youth cohorts will read into and take out of pop culture certain messages; this lens also notices the symbolic uses of pop culture in political movements. But this lens may lead to too general conclusions and universal predictions. Users of this lens might over promise or fear the power of pop culture and focus on violence and geopolitical hotspots. *Key inquiries from this perspective: how are social movements rooted in or using pop culture? How can we draw conclusions about youth in particular eras from their depictions in and uses of pop entertainment forms? How can pop culture be used as a tool for foreign policy or international peacebuilding?*

Lifeworlds/social ecologies: This perspective emphasizes the local and the everyday social world in its complexity and how pop culture is one of many influences; youth agency is understood within a system of constraints and opportunities that are psychological, economic, sociocultural, and political. Young people's identities are mutually constituted with this system which they also shape. The lens may lack a transnational dimension and has been used in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, but less so in political science. *Key inquiries from this perspective: how are young people using and experiencing pop culture in their everyday lives? How are play and consumption nuanced by context and history and influenced by variables such as class, gender, race, and global economic shifts and pressures?*

model. 'As heirs to a western intellectual tradition centered on scientific rationality, "the child" represented a laboratory specimen for the study of primitive forms of cognition,' argue Alison James and Alan Prout.[102] The focus on social and biological development places 'the child' as Other, and marginal, like 'the savage,' in a state of becoming. Its 'nature' is different

from adults', being 'asocial and acultural' until acquiring the 'cognitive skill' to be rational, independent, and social.[103] From such a perspective, children are rarely really encouraged toward free self-actualization but are molded in the image of the powerful—parents, educators, the state, media and corporations, and international organizations.[104] However, a development transitions perspective is also what inspires progressive education, nurturing children's interest in the arts, nature, and their spirituality, for example, and ensures funding for schools, children's charities, and organizations such as UNICEF. The paradoxes of nurture and control that a developmental lens contends with are well expressed in and through children's literature (Chap. 3) and other pop entertainment forms. Indeed, as a narrative device, children's literature has mostly required the breakdown of the developmental model in some way: the orphan or child separated from parents (as in *Harry Potter*) and the child being exploited in a dystopian society (as in *The Hunger Games*) are symptoms and symbols of the development transition model gone wrong. Adult readers perhaps expect that, through the narrative, the protagonists will find substitute 'families,' their place in society, and their true identities and overcome the disadvantages of their pasts.

Agency/Youth Cultures A social constructivist perspective emphasizes 'the role of creative individual activity in the constitution of human society.'[105] From this perspective children have cultures and abilities to interpret culture, influence their societies, and act upon them with and without intention; and they may see the world differently from the dominant group (adults). Further, socialization is not (and from this perspective should not be) a unidirectional process controlled by adults, but an interactive process, where children influence as well as are influenced by adult societies. However, while such an exchange of influences may seem to many to be self-evident, and even in some particularly liberal cultures, morally right, the practical exchange of or sharing of power between children and adults remains difficult to identify or quantify, though it is being explored in groundbreaking work such as that by Helen Berents on the everyday forms of peacebuilding by youth in Colombia.[106]

The youth agency lens encourages a focus on the roles of the young in producing and adapting popular cultures, such as the remixing moves that I explore in fan fiction in Chaps. 8 and 9. An agency lens also promotes a less panoptical approach to monitoring young people's uses of pop culture

forms such as video games or social media. Debate about agency versus structure in sociology[107] has been bridged in recent years by a focus on the discursive co-construction of individuals and societies. Post-colonial studies of youth have contributed subaltern perspectives and noted hidden rebellions and resiliences of people of color, women, and others on the margins, challenging Pater Realism and Mater Liberalism,[108] and including children in their analyses. Youth studies have begun to rectify the north-/west-centric bias in theories of adolescence by noting the diverse lifeworlds of global youth and recognizing that 'a disproportionate number (if not most) of our images of what happens in adolescence are based on American and European teenager.'[109] Anthropological and post-colonial studies of youth emphasize the young's contextual social and political roles in resistance to domination[110] including the limiting narratives of NGOs and international organizations[111] and their active roles in everyday cultural reproduction or transformation. Documenting the everyday politics of youth in the present, such youth studies frequently identify pop culture as the locus of youth identity-making, expression, and resistance.[112]

The space of children's literature is one where fantasies of agency can go wild. Similarly, however, imaginative discourses such as those attached to the liberal peacebuilding project can conjure, as a space of agency, the subjectification of those colonized. Indeed, even a prison can be configured in this way as will be shown in the case of Guantanamo in Chap. 5. Thus it is necessary to be alert to the illusions of some claims of 'agency.' Nevertheless, an agency/youth cultures lens can focus us on the ways young people actively shape their social worlds and, then, on the ways those actions are related to how youth are represented in policy and pop culture narratives.

Youth studies sociologist Darcie Vandegrift notes that attention to the transnational experience of contemporary youth is necessary to fully capture the creation of the political by youth through 'play' and consumption.[113] A recently revived paradigm seeks to transcend the binary of development transitions versus agency and re-emphasize the political in study of youth, according to its proponents.[114] This social generations lens may seem to be particularly useful for consideration of the political importance of young people in IR.

Social Generations/Youth as Drivers of Social Change While the development transition and agency perspectives begin with a focus on the individual child and may not generalize to the collective youth, a third perspective

addresses youth as a mass. Mannheim's social generations theory suggests that the 'fresh contact' of each new youth generation can catalyze social transformation.[115] Certain issues and modes of political engagement will dominate a generation when they share the same historical, cultural, and economic milieus. This view of generations has influenced my use of a psychoanalytical lens to explore the wider cultural significance of books and films that acquire mass popularity. A revival of social generations theory has occurred as response to perceived deficiencies of the transition model[116] and/or as a response to the practical thwarting of youth transitions due to global economic recession and political oppression.[117] Scholars of revolution have long noted that youth vanguards are essential actors in major social change.[118]

Alcinda Honwana uses a generations approach in her study of youth experiencing 'waithood.' Honwana employs the term 'waithood' to explain the experience of young people stuck between childhood and adulthood because of lack of economic opportunities and other forms of exclusion.[119] This liminality of youth points to intergenerational tensions and 'thwarted transitions,' but such youth still hold rights and have agency. The frustration and the creativity of a 'waithood generation' have led to this concept being employed to explain the political uprisings as diverse as Occupy and the Arab Spring. As a lens for looking at popular culture, social generations theory underscores how the youth of specific eras feel and act as demonstrated in the way they choose and use music, art, and literature. But a generations approach can be too broad a brush in some instances and produce universal claims at the expense of exploring multiple subjectivities and power relations.

The recognition that social histories of conflict are internalized by youth[120] and that young people can be deposited in or active agents of memory[121] also contributes to the idea that there are generational scripts that specific cohorts of youth follow and that these cohorts have a collective identity. While this is not a new idea, it has emerged as the 'new orthodoxy' in youth studies, according to Alan France and Steven Roberts,[122] who instead argue for a constructionist and holistic model for youth studies that emphasizes how 'macro-forces shape the social, economic and political realities young people encounter in trying to manage their everyday lives.'[123] They state that these forces 'are not a "generational effect" but a continuation of a process that emerged with industrial capitalism back in the eighteenth century and involves both social change and the maintenance of the status quo, especially around class and gender

relationships.'[124] This is the approach that I use when exploring how concepts of direct, structural, and cultural violence emerge in young people's (and other's) fan fiction writing and in fan activism. While both social generations and transition approaches are useful, Vandegrift argues they would both benefit from 'deeper theorization of space and place' to incorporate 'globality' in young people's worldviews.[125]

Ecological Systems, Lifeworlds, and Everyday Peacebuilding

A fourth approach, similar to the one proposed by France and Roberts, is evident in the attention to the complex lifeworlds of young people that an ecological systems model offers. Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory has inspired exploration of how young people's subjective experiences are related to the wider social, economic, political, and historical context. A social ecologies perspective emphasizes a holistic approach to understanding the 'lifeworlds' of children and youth.[126] It recognizes both age-related sociodevelopmental needs and the agency of young people in shaping their own lives, including their role in cultural reproduction and transformation and their capabilities in diagnosing and prescribing policy. When a social ecologies approach is applied by scholar-practitioners toward conflict and war-affected children, it seeks to balances the agency, developmental, and protection needs of young people.[127] Such an approach also values intergenerational narratives,[128] and the co-construction of meaning through discursive practices, and highlights the 'interconnectedness' between local micro-system relations and experiences and the macro-systems of economy and governance.[129]

The traditional socialization and developmental models are still central to popular child-rearing practices, to domestic youth policies and education, and to much of international youth and peacebuilding policy, where, for example, dualisms of victim and perpetrator have persisted in the discourses related to child soldiers. But all four of the theoretical lenses discussed are important to fully seeing youth as actors in IR and peacebuilding: the young have both age-based needs and active roles in cultural and political change. Furthermore, both generational gestalts and structural contraints help explain why and how movements for justice and peace occur. Therefore, I use all of these lenses in this book, integrated with approaches to analysis from post-structural, post-colonial, and feminist theory as discussed next.

Exploring Peace in Pop Culture: A Framework for Analysis

To explore the politics of peace in popular culture, I am investigating (a) how peace is conceptualized, debated, and fought over within fiction/film texts; (b) how peace is distributed or denied within cultural production, consumption, and other practices related to these texts; and (c) how these discourses and practices operate and are given meaning by different social actors within and across local, national, and transnational boundaries. Richard Jackson explains that 'discourses are composed of (and also create) what we call *discursive formations* or *constructions* -groups of related statements about a subject that determine its meaning, characteristics and relationships to other discursive formations.'[130] To say that world politics and IR are discursively reproduced means that statements about such things as peace, security, national interest, and the global economy have effects that are ideological and material and that, as these statements proliferate, they form a dense mat of accepted understandings that come to have the quality of 'common sense.'[131] The idea of peace in IR has been thoroughly explored by Richmond.[132] Excerpts from his findings are used here to give structure to the analysis, as these concepts make peace initially 'knowable' and identifiable in popular culture texts and discourses.

As Richmond shows (see Table 2.2), peace is a richly textured and contested concept in IR. In using this framework in this book, the idea is not to close off discussion of other concepts or understandings of peace, including hybrids of those in Table 2.2. Peace as an ideal and as a set of ideas and movements has been studied since ancient times and across cultures.[133] The aim of presenting the main conceptions of peace in an IR framework here is to provide clarity about the concepts being used in my analysis and to suggest a possible template to be used or adapted in further investigations of pop culture. Furthermore, striving to make peace 'knowable' counters the 'peace may be war, for all we know' elisions that the liberal peace and war on terror 'regimes of truth' seem to have promoted. Arguably peace must be knowable if it is to be *known* and the normative and prescriptive aims of peace studies realized. While Michel Foucault reminds us that 'We must not imagine that the world turns to us a legible face which we would only have to decipher,'[134] the frames we place on social reality construct that reality. If the frame used is one that looks for war, militarism, and militarization, then it should not be

Table 2.2 Conceptual frameworks for analysis of discourses and images of peace in IR

Idealist peace: The absence of structural, cultural, and direct (physical) violence made possible by the inherent cooperativeness of human nature and societies, through practices of disarmament, pacifism, and internationalism. International institutions, social movements, and states all have a role
Liberal peace: The absence of structural and direct violence for the majority made possible by democratic governance regulated within states using an elite-determined balance of freedom and discipline. Unlike in idealist peace discourse, violence may be inherent to human nature in this perspective
Realist peace (a Victor's peace): Generally, a sufficient peace is a temporary lull in interstate war and conflict is managed but not resolved. However, the achievement of 'imperial hegemony based upon victory would be an optimum version of peace.'[a] Fear of war or social disorder produces internal stability: citizens accept their state's authority to maintain control; external nonwar is achieved through the balance of power and weaker states accepting their fate
Pluralist peace: 'Peace is found in a transnational world society [...] developed through conflict resolution approaches. Peace represents a distribution of human needs adequate for all'[b]
Normative peace: 'Peace lies in a recognition of a universal normative system and individuals as ends in themselves, reflected either in cosmopolitan or communitarian institutions and norms. [...] Peace depends upon toleration, recognition, and also a recognition of the dangers of unethical behaviour'[c]
Structural Peace: 'Peace represents progressive emancipation'[d] through removal of structural barriers to social and economic justice for individuals to create a classless and just society occurring as a result of revolutionary change
Critical peace: An emancipatory peace of social and economic justice that emerges through empathy and 'possibly active care'[e] in everyday life and institutions
Gendered peace: Based in 'a positive epistemology of peace incorporating both gender critiques and sensitivities' and investigation of the obstacles to alternatives to patriarchal forms
Post-structural peace: A 'post-sovereign' peace understood 'through a pluralist, genealogical examination of the broad range of issues and dynamics that lead to or constitute identity difference, and hybridity'[f]

Adapted from Richmond (2008a)

[a]Richmond O. 2008a. Quote at p. 154
[b]Richmond O. 2008a
[c]Richmond O. 2008. Quote at pp. 154–5
[d]Richmond O. 2008a
[e]Richmond O. 2008a. Quote at p. 155
[f]Richmond O. 2008a. Quote at p. 155

surprising if peace is not seen or if it is trivialized and caricatured. But peace as conceptualized in IR has been decidedly western centric and has not yet fully considered concepts such as 'kindered' peace as proposed by Watson.[135] Richmond suggests that 'a possibility of a post-liberal peace emerges' via investigations 'in which everyday local agencies, rights, needs, custom and kinship are recognised as discursive "webs of meaning".'[136] As I show later, there is potential for online fan fiction and fan activism to function as forms of 'info-peace.' Ultimately, I also identify constructions of peace emerging from young people's uses of pop culture, including virtuous peace, mythic peace, and ethico-political narrative peace. Yet, it remains the case that, as critical peace scholars have noted, there are disciplining structures in world politics that any form of resistance, including the youth activism discussed in this volume, must struggle within and against. So, in the next section of this chapter, I turn to the Michel Foucault's and Giorgio Agamben's theories of discursive control and apparatuses.

Discipline, Struggle, and Hidden Resistance

Foucault argued that 'in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose purpose is to ward off its power and its dangers.'[137] His idea of a 'regime of truth' helps explain the process:

> Each society has its regime 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 statements, 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.[138]

The continuous 'production of truth' is necessary for governance in Foucault's thought; disciplinary power must 'rest on a whole technology of representation.'[139] In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault wrote of the continuity of politics with war: 'Politics, as a technique of internal peace and order, sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop.'[140] Political discourse is thus a 'discipline mechanism' extending to control of society.[141] The 'military institution' of the eighteenth-century great powers created civil peace he

explains not just with force but 'because it was a technique and a body of knowledge that could project their schema over the social body.'[142] The 'military institution' sits 'at the point of juncture between war and noise of battle, on the one hand, and order and silence, subservient to peace, on the other.'[143] But other institutions can also perform this role. The prison, the reformatory/borstal, asylum, and the school exist on the same continuum as the military institution in Foucault's analysis; and law, teaching, and surveillance, like war and threat of war, operate to produce 'order and silence' as a kind of peace which might be called a punitive peace.[144]

Schools, prisons, militaries, asylums, and factories are disciplinary apparatuses but so too are other technologies such as cellphones, computers, and language, argues Giorgio Agamben, because an apparatus is anything that can 'capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions or discourses of living human beings.'[145] Late capitalism is 'a massive accumulation and proliferation of apparatuses,' Agamben argues.[146] Children's literature is one such apparatus[147] and so are media, academic and policy writings, and speech, which while they may be in Foucault's terms 'administrative apparatuses' are also 'machine[s] for altering minds.'[148] On the continuum of disciplinary power, popular entertainment franchises are addressing 'the souls' of young people and others and seeking to create 'new actions, habits and skills' via consumption. Foucault writes about discipline as having an affective dimension:

> It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished – and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives.[149]

That Foucault placed children on a continuum with subjects of political and economic colonization, with a person in a psychiatric facility, with a prisoner, and with an exploited worker demonstrates the child's ambiguous status as Other, as a subordinate, a danger, a victim, a protected category—a status that while it is maintained in contemporary discourses of world politics (Chap. 3) is, as I will show, disrupted and challenged by young adult fiction and its fandom. However, an argument that young people can use pop culture for their own ends would be suspect to Agamben:

> The spectator who spends his evenings in front of the television set only gets, in exchange for his desubjectification, the frustrated mask of the couch potato, or his inclusion in the calculation of viewership ratings. Here lies the vanity of the well-meaning discourse on technology, which asserts that the problem with apparatuses can be reduced to the question of their correct use. Those who make such claims seem to ignore a simple fact: If a certain process of subjectification (or, in this case, desubjectification) corresponds to every apparatus, then it is impossible for the subject of an apparatus to use it 'in the right way.' Those who continue to promote similar arguments are, for their part, the product of the media apparatus in which they are captured.[150]

There cannot be a way to resist or subvert from within the spectacle of militainment, therefore, or to use pop culture to effect social change without being a piece of the media apparatus itself, in Agamben's thought. Disciplinary power works as social control because submission of people to it appears to them to be elective and contingent (which to some extent it is) due to a background of shared meanings or agreement to submit on the part of the governed, a decision not to revolt. And, adds Agamben: 'every apparatus implies a process of subjectification, without which it cannot function as an apparatus of governance, but is rather reduced to a mere exercise of violence.'[151] If people did not submit to its disciplinary power, pop culture would be violence. But, then, submission is often, if not usually, unacknowledged. This does not mean resistance is impossible: Agamben's idea of how to challenge apparatuses is 'profanation' or 'to restore to free use'[152] what has been captured within the apparatus. I will return to the issue of the profanation of apparatuses in the conclusion (Chap. 11).

While many critical IR theorists view the international community and economic globalization as disciplining structures that make resistance difficult or at best weak, resistance to the disciplinary power of discourse can occur in hidden reactions, as even Agamben suggests: 'The more apparatuses pervade and disseminate their power in every field of life, the more government will find itself faced with an elusive element, which seems to escape its grasp the more it docilely submits to it'.[153] Thus, there are possibilities for progressive resistance from within pop culture that may be hidden behind a militaristic or materialist appearance or partially obscured in ambivalence. My framework for analysis recognizes these dynamics via the theory of James C. Scott and Michel De Certeau.

Infrapolitics Disciplinary power controls, but does not dominate absolutely, as such power operates elusively and often ambiguously and stimulates a reaction in kind. James C. Scott coined the term 'infrapolitics' to describe 'an unobtrusive realm of political struggle.'[154] In infrapolitical struggle, evasion, unspoken resentment, and disagreement and microlevel conflicts with authority are involved. Pop culture consumption can also be a space of resistance and defiance, where consumers are, as John Fiske put it, guerrilla-like and 'avoiding capture, either ideological or physical,' though they are all the time at risk within the porous boundaries of various disciplining apparatuses. For young people that are often either encouraged to know their place or are overly protected and/or monitored, reading can entail freedom. Young readers can resist authority in plain sight. They may imagine (themselves in) new communities and be exposed to new and radical ideas. Indeed, lodged within the materialistic, smart-tech apparatuses of late capitalism, the act of reading by young readers may be both resistance to commodification and subversion of adult-centered panoptical power.

Drawing on Michel De Certeau's idea of 'reading as poaching,' we understand how conformity to pop culture trends is only partial and entails diversion, daydreaming, and creation by the consumer, as well as their initiation into communities. If, as De Certeau claimed, readers are 'poachers,'[155] then they are able to take away and interpret what they are reading, without an authority's editing or critique, and turn it into capital and/or nourishment. But such actions presume an existing unfulfilled need or hunger of some kind and a law that the poacher must transgress, such as the law of the 'apparatus' be it a book, canon, franchise, political establishment, or capitalism. De Certeau also potentially suggests that the act of reading entails a lived (intellectual) experience of equality, new forms of community, and of post-nation-state identities. 'Emancipated from places, the reading body is freer in its movements,'[156] for example, a reader can 'run' a text like a driver can run a traffic light, but without witnesses. De Certeau does not only offer the possibility for individual resistance to hegemonic oppressive orders through reading as escape. Readers are also, as De Certeau states, 'deterritorializing' themselves, which opens up possibilities for a range of re-identifications with nation, gender, class, and race and for globalized belongings. Both of these results—poaching and re-identification—can be seen in fan fiction and other creative and

community spaces inspired by *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. If readers are poachers, surreptitious rule breakers, and 'novelists,' they enter the realm of 'infrapolitics.' It is also possible to identify 'hidden transcripts' of resistance in the comments sections of news articles, in online reviews of products, and fandom participation of various kinds, as shown in Chaps. 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Bridging Differences Toward New Consciousness

But it remains to be considered how resistance can become positive peacebuilding (at home and/or abroad) and not simply a form of survival and part of a discourse that retains a self/other binary. Gloria Anzaldua's bridge theory and her idea of '*las nepantleras*,' or 'the threshold people,'[157] are important touchstones for this book's analysis in this regard. 'Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness,'[158] Anzaldua explains, and they express both the experience and space of transition. The shore-straddling bridge is on both sides at once. Writing about the difficulty of mediating conflicting social and cultural messages, Anzaldua states:

> [I]t is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to the common denominator of violence. The counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and for this it is proudly defiant. All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Because the counterstance stems from a problem with authority—outer as well as inner—it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination. But it's not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores and, at once, see through the serpent and the eagle eyes. Or perhaps we will decide to disengage from the dominant culture, write it off altogether as a lost cause, and cross the border into a wholly new and separate territory. Or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.[159]

The 'mestiza consciousness' is a related concept of Anzaldua's thought, and involves 'developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity'[160]; there are repeated crises and rejections of paradigms based in dualism and then a rebuilding or new synthesis.

> 'Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos – that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—*la mestiza* creates a new consciousness.[161]

Anzaldua's ideas of mestiza consciousness and *nepantla/nepantleras* provide an alternative framework to binary Us and Them configurations. She prompts us to consider books, reading, activism, and community building as bridge spaces within which 'we-ness' can be experienced, and as spaces of conflict transformation. In the bridge space, as conceptualized by Anzaldua, otherness is accepted, it is not denied or elided into an all-consuming melting pot or multiculturalism, but seems to float and link.[162] The bridge space, or *nepantla*, is an 'in between space'; thus:

> The *Nepantleras* are the supreme border crossers. They act as intermediaries between cultures and their various versions of reality. *Las Nepantleras*, like the ancient chamanas, move between worlds. They can work from multiple locations, can circumvent polarizing binaries. They try not to get locked into one perspective or perception of things.[163]

As a mode and metaphor of conflict transformation, Anzaldua's bridge and bridging imagery can be applied to local and to international conflicts and her imagery provides for an important role for both youth and the popular culture genre of YA fiction in mediating difference. The *nepantleras* as AnaLouise Keating explains are 'a unique type of mediator':

> Nepantleras live within and among multiple worlds and, often though painful negotiations, develop what Anzaldua describes as 'a perspective from the cracks'. They use these transformed perspectives to invent holistic, relational theories and tactics.[164]

As a writer, Anzaldua saw herself in this role of a 'facilitator' a 'mediator.' She wrote: 'A bridge, such as this book, is not just about one set of people crossing to the other side; it's also about those on the other side crossing to this side. And ultimately, it's about doing away with demarcations like 'ours' and 'theirs.''[165]

Anzaldua's concept of *'las nepantleras'* or threshold people, already applies to youth, as liminal actors straddling the childhood/adulthood divide. But they may acquire other attributes of a *nepantlera*, such as the role of spiritual activist and creator of change. The rewards are transformation of consciousness and social change.[166] But Anzaldua's theory, rooted

in her life experiences, does not offer a naïve vision of peace through becoming adult (because the bridge space is something else), nor does she look back to an idealized childhood (because her own was fraught). She notes that 'there is an enormous contradiction in being a bridge'[167] and writes of herself as a 'windswayed bridge, a crossroads inhabited by whirlwinds' who is 'straddling the walls between abysses.'[168] The experience of being the bridge means 'a constant state of displacement –an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling.'[169]

Another way of understanding this tension is through Anzaldua's concept El Mundo Zurdo (the Left-Handed World), or 'the pull between what is and what should be.'[170] Reading and writing fan fiction can be likened to traveling this path, which Anzaldua describes as 'going deep into the self,' and then 'expanding out into the world.'[171] Using imagination and 'poaching' to create and share new versions of the beloved story in fan fiction, for example, can be understood as 'a simultaneous recreation of the self and a reconstruction of society.'[172] Anzaldua believed 'in changing ourselves we change the world,'[173] but she certainly was not complacent or even comfortable in this belief. She wrote, 'I can't reconcile the sight of a battered child with the belief that we choose what happens to us, that we create our own world.'[174] This ambiguity was a tension in a thread that linked others who similarly understood oppression and who 'together' must perform a 'Balancing Act,'[175] according to Anzaldua, because they have no choice but to continue not being reconciled to injustice.

As Jutta Weldes and Donna Haraway have noted in relation to science fiction, 'the boundary between [science] fiction and social reality is an optical illusion.'[176] Anzaldua has her own take on such blurred boundaries and self-fulfilling prophecies: 'By focusing on what we want to happen, we change the present. The healing images and narratives we imagine will eventually materialize,'[177] she wrote in relation to activism, our need for alliances, and the internal conflicts of alliance and coalitions.[178] Her vision of this work entails a strong affiliation with the idea of the optical illusions of the fiction/reality binary, for example, when she talks about 'an element of roleplaying' in activism. [179]

Pop Culture/Peacebuilding: Blurred Boundaries

Drawing the different theories discussed in this chapter together, a framework for reading peace in popular culture can be devised that connects reading, writing, and online and street activism with peacebuilding. Pop

culture practices, discourses, and products are apparatuses or technologies of control, linking as well as dividing people transnationally, exploiting some, and empowering others. But within a tabloid postmodern culture[180] that is being globalized, we also need to be able to read critically for, possibly hidden, discursive formations of peace. Critique of 'militainment,' surveillance, and 'tabloid culture' especially one denuded of reference to race, gender, and global economic inequalities cannot be adequate for peace research. Violence according to Johan Galtung is avoidable denial of human needs,[181] and for a positive peace to be pursued, people need to be free from direct, structural, and cultural violence, all of which compromise needs. But they must also be able to define their own needs, modes, and content of struggle and their own understanding of 'violence' and 'peace.' Such interpretative and authorial power is denied to people when a terror spectacle like 9/11 stops or resists discourse, as Debrix suggests, and tabloid politics take over. 'Tabloidized geopolitics is a medium—perhaps *the* medium in matters of international relations and foreign policy today—but, first of all, it is a discourse,' Debrix writes.[182] Thus, it seems likely that before positive peace is a medium for conduct of foreign policy or peacebuilding, it must first be a discourse (and/or recognized as one). This calls for analyses of what Vivienne Jabri calls 'the politics of peace' or 'the capacity at once both to resist violence and struggle for a just social order,'[183] in a range of discourses including in different forms of pop culture. It also calls for analyses that are contextual but at the same time are broad enough to recognize possibilities of both structural inequalities and shared values. Therefore, in this book, I am examining the discourses of peacebuilding blurred within and between young people's fiction, the dominant discourses of Anglo-American liberal peacebuilding, and critical voices of peace in fandom, within a global context of relationships of oppression and dissent that are ensured through neoliberal economic production and consumption.

Reading/Peacebuilding as Emotional Ethico-political Thinking Space Michael Shapiro draws on Gayatri Spivak's 'angles of vision' to forward the claim that fiction is space for thinking and not of 'definitive knowledge judgments.'[184] He argues that in a 'clash of centrifugal voices' complexity is added and that 'literature's imaginative construction of space and time disrupt entrenched and unreflective ways of seeing/interpreting lifeworlds.'[185] The importance of marginal narratives in particular to emancipatory peace politics has been identified both in terms of the

ideas and experiences that are surfaced through such narratives and by the narrative process itself. Shari Stone-Mediatore focuses on nonfiction storytelling (including that of Anzaldua) that uses language in ways that are unexpected or untraditional and thus create insights 'that challenge the discourses that naturalize social hierarchies' and that 'open imaginative space for us to recognize alternative identities and ways of life.'[186] The potentially disruptive role of the reflective reader in shaping social practices including potentially a politics of peace is connected with the emotions they experience, as Crawford explains in relation to the impact of feminist utopian science fiction. The science fiction work critiques contemporary society by creating a fictional version that exposes the risk of 'present practices and policies' through deliberately expanding and following these policies to their logical outcomes. The familiar being followed to a logical but undesirable conclusion is then transformed through the rebuilding of a different outcome or society in the utopian narrative. But, she argues, these three 'operations of critique' (which she terms 'extrapolation, estrangement and defamiliarisation') would not be compelling 'without their emotional engagement, passion, and hopeful reconstruction.'[187] Danchev and Lisle appear to concur: '[A]rt matters, ethically and politically; affectively and intellectually. It is another way of apprehending the world. It has consequences. Not only does it make us feel, or feel differently, it also makes us think, and think again.'[188]

Reading is a part of identity formation in Anzaldua's thought, allowing both empathy and (re)identification.[189] It is worth noting, too, that Anzaldua herself describes how reading popular books as a child (e.g., 'a 25c Pocket Western') changed her and helped her recognize racism.[190] She describes entries into the world of literature as empowering in a situation of marginality due to poverty and racism.[191] Thus, books can have emancipatory potential even if they do not offer critical or uplifting messages of inclusion or justice, as a drugstore Western novel appears to have done for Anzaldua. Reading also helped her cope with an emerging sexual identity that made her feel like 'an alien from another planet' at home.[192] This role for books is reported too by *Harry Potter* fans, as discussed later. Indeed, in noting how class, sexual identity, and professional position shape how a reader reads and what they see in a text, Anzaldua also draws attention to how young people may be responding to books in ways that are quite different from adult analysis:

> Learning to read is not synonymous with academic learning. [..] The street reader looks at an experience as something that's alive and moving or about to move, whereas the academic looks at the flattened out, abstract theory on these pages that is not connected to actual experience.[193]

Although reading and writing are associated with sanctuary and escape to some extent by Anzaldua, who also sees the reader as part co-author, others suggest that in children's literature a 'hidden adult'[194] decides whose trauma is necessary and how it should be achieved and/or revealed. In his study of classic American novels for children of the twentieth century, Eric Tribunella argues that American adults see experience of loss as essential for achieving maturity. Stories such as *The Yearling* and *Old Yeller*, as well as books about the Holocaust, provided 'contrived traumatization' of both the protagonists and readers, to provoke a 'melancholic' process of maturation.[195] Another 'angle' allows us to see how interior resistance might be communalized for the purposes of healing trauma[196] via reading groups and how reading can inspire 'empathetic crossings' that foster new alliances for peacebuilding and social justice.[197]

When we consume stories, stories change us, a process Marshall Gregory also links to emotion:[198]

> [I]n narrative interactions, when we embrace stories because we love them, we need to remember that loving is an activity that always changes us, regardless of whom or what we love: money, God, liquor, chess, classical music, rock music, a person, *Hamlet*, or Hamlet.[199]

The 'love' that fans feel for particular books, the pleasure that their reading and belonging to fandom evokes, has political consequences. Like Hamlet's play, a popular book can be 'a thing, to catch the conscience,' and fans may move from reading to related actions or to more complex thinking. Cognitive schema studies have shown that being introduced to 'fictional exemplars' can shift people's beliefs about real people in similar roles. Protest novels 'can engage readers in precisely the sorts of cognitive activities that have been found to correct faulty social information processing.'[200] Mark Bracher argues that such literature 'constitutes radical cognitive politics, a mode of intervention that works to promote social justice by altering the cognitive roots of harmful and unjust social policies.'[201] But the subsequent actions of mobilized readers may not be as the author intended as shown in the case of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* which led to

changes to regulations in meat processing factories but not to the intended target of union/labor rights.[202]

Writing/Peacebuilding as a Space of Sanctuary, Revolt, Dialogue, Justice-Seeking and Repair, Acting, and Not Reacting, a 'Way of Life' The thought of Anzaldua, Agamben, Scott, and De Certeau inform the book's view of writing as peacebuilding. Writing is empowering, Anzaldua claimed, because while writing she experienced 'a timeless, spaceless no-place where I forget myself and feel I am the universe.' 'This is power,' she states.[203] But such empowerment is not only self-focused. Through writing she is exposed and more vulnerable and also takes on other's stresses and vulnerabilities and Anzaldua conceived of her reader as 'to some degree, a co-author.'[204] There are implications of this view of power for thinking about peacebuilding as taking on the burdens of others while remaining reflexive. In fan fiction, which is explored in Chaps. 8 and 9, resistance to and transformation of dominant discourses occurs.

Fan fiction confirms that reading has a role in 'jump-starting our imaginations'[205] and provides a tangible resource for studying how readers are linking literary works with everyday life and politics. On the one hand, we interpret what we read in ways that fit with our prior experiences and beliefs. Consequently, readers will not all respond to the same text in the same way. On the other hand, rewriting and discussing a text within an interactive, communal setting, such as an online fan fiction site, uncovers and generates shared understandings, as well as differences, and may include specifically linking fiction with political action. Most studies of fan fiction note that the genre/medium itself is intrinsically a space of tension, like Anzaldua's bridge, that connects people, texts, and worlds. Fan fiction is described as a space for exploration and potential emancipation from constraints and a 'charged crossing point.'[206] Tracey Kell states that fan fiction 'bridges age, race, gender, and educational status'[207] Fan fiction is a space of 'poaching,'[208] and resisting 'the assumptions and desires of the publishing industry.'[209] Stein and Busse argue that 'fannish traditions of creativity celebrate the possibility of creativity held between transformation, multiplicity, and repetition,' [210] and this insight also evokes Anzaldua's bridge space.

Reflecting a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, fan fiction is a spaces of 'communal intelligence,'[211] archiving,[212] as well as 'recursiv-

ity,'[213] a term that tries to capture the agency of the writer of fan fiction in creating an ongoing interaction between texts. But fan fiction is not exactly about resistance to dominant discourses from within them, rather it is, in Anzaldua's terms, acting and not reacting, creating as 'a way of life' and, in many of its manifestations, working as '*nepantleras,*' as shown in Chaps. 8 and 9. Nevertheless an important element of fan fiction is how it reacts to and resists the assumption of children's places being as recipients of knowledge, as those to be educated. Adults write children's literature, so the source texts are part of 'a system that validates the primacy of adult voices.'[214] But, in fan fiction, these power relations can be subverted, along with other rules, as the source texts are disassembled and reused by young people, and through exchanges between younger and older writers. Thus, in several different ways, fan fiction sites first offer a space for collection of knowledge about peace, for radical resistances of tradition, and then for agentic demonstration of dialogue and exchange. The medium of online fan fiction itself is a space that is theoretically conducive to reflecting on, creating, negotiating, and acting on values and visions of peace, and not just through identifying forms of resistance but also through investigations that make naturalization of certain ideas and policies visible and alternatives possible.

Playing/Peacebuilding as a Pleasure Culture of Embodied Resistance and Action for Mythic Justice Like fan fiction, fan activism demonstrates, in a concrete way, how 'readers […] do not simply passively absorb the texts [they read or view] but actively respond to them,'[215] and they resist not only with ironic detachment but with loving re-engagement. 'A striking feature of postmillennial politics is the ways that pop culture references are shaping political rhetoric and movement practices,'[216] notes Henry Jenkins. Fan activism is defined by Jenkins as: '[F]orms of civic engagement and political participation that emerge from within fan culture itself, often in response to the shared interests of fans, often conducted through the infrastructure of existing fan practices and relationships, and often framed through metaphors drawn from popular and participatory culture.'[217] What happens, then, when books become films, video games, costumes, and other products and experiences that can be worn or played with? An affective dimension of nondiscursive embodied understandings becomes more relevant. Such play evokes feelings and sensations that have not yet been 'labeled as emotions by the mind'[218] but that incite repetition

or repulsion and nevertheless shape belief and actions. Today, YA fiction is politically important as a lucrative market category with global reach that enables political messaging. But its online fandom also is a space of youth activism and forms a global space of transgenerational and transcultural mixing. Therefore, YA fiction and its fandom might be considered as a new kind of space of alliances, following Anzaldua and Homi Bhabha's idea of 'third space'[219] that has transformational potential, including in contemporary world politics. Der Derian argues that 'info-peace opens up possibilities of alternative thought and action in global politics.'[220] With a foot in two worlds (real and imaginary), readers potentially have much to learn from the YA texts' construction of enemies, threats, and community from its explanations of the sources and costs of war and injustice and the methods employed for effecting social change, and from its visions of a good society, as an extension of a peaceful 'home' space. But readers are 'poachers,'[221] taking away and interpreting what was read. They may turn their reading into capital and/or nourishment modeled on the author's intent, and the textual evidence, or they may not. Therefore, literature is a space of possibility as well as an escape; indeed its possibilities for peace politics may partially be in escape, in a pleasure culture for peace. However, the idea of the freely grazing, unencumbered reader 'emancipated from places,' as De Certeau suggests, is challenged by pop culture fiction that spins off commodities such as films that encode certain themes or character readings as most important. At the same time, this fiction generate toys, video games, Halloween costumes, and theme parks that can be played with (in several senses). De Certeau claims that 'reading has no place' and 'it does not keep what it has acquired or does so poorly.'[222] However, he adds that 'we mustn't take people for fools'.[223] To do so would mean failing to look for creative license-taking as well as 'hidden transcripts' of peace in people's uses of pop culture artifacts. Through these practices they may be learning and expressing 'a tolerance for ambiguity' that breaks through boundaries leading to a 'new consciousness' as Gloria Anzaldua predicts.[224]

Lederach's idea that 'the capacity to live with apparent contradictions and paradoxes lies at the heart of conflict transformation'[225]resonates with Anzaldua's new mestiza 'developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity'[226]and is a stance that is necessary to adopt in order to understand popular entertainment as a source of positive peace. But, in fact, critical, post-colonial IR and peacebuilding practitioner perspectives

that argue for efforts toward 'worldism'[227] and an 'integrative moral-political climate'[228] resonate with Anzaldua's idea of 'creating a new mythos'[229] and are emulated by fan activists who see themselves as creating embodied peace founded on new myths of pop fiction (as shown in Chap. 10). A commitment to 'we-ness' as a mode of conflict transformation does not presume or require consanguinity, living together, universal agreement, or shared professional community or theoretical outlook. But it does imply recognition of the other's right to exist, to thrive, and to have a perspective both similar and different from one's own, to be part of dialogues about one's own future, to resist domination, and to have access to a bridge—a way to connect with the Other—and space within which self/other binaries can be suspended. Although such a space is regularly occluded or degraded by 'tabloid' journalism, 'militainment,' and neoliberal economic exploitation, YA fiction and fan writings have provided a bridge to an alternative reality, with limitations, as will be discussed in later chapters.

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CHAPTER 3

What We Talk About When We Talk About Youth

This chapter focuses on 'youth' as a discursive construction through an historical analysis, to show how ideas of youth and peace are interwoven over time. Discourse, Foucault argued, does not just express or hide 'desire,' but is the 'object of desire.' In conflicts, discourse does not just explain what is at stake, 'discourse is the power to be seized.'[1] Thinking reflexively, we should always be asking, what and who are we really talking about when we talk about youth? Two short stories, Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981) and Nathan Englander's *What We Talk We About When Talk About Anne Frank* (2012) which was influenced by Carver's work, express the power and malleability of discourse and the instability of meanings in dialogue. Briefly, Carver and Englander's short stories have middle-aged, middle-class, heterosexual couples as protagonists engaged in drunken discussions with their friends. Carver's story starts out with four American protagonists talking about love and then shows how their conversation ranges through their stories of domestic violence, suicide, aging, and depression. Englander's American and Israeli-American couples begin by talking about politics, the Israeli Occupation, and 9/11 and move on to parenting, memories of growing up, religious identity, drug use, and the Holocaust. They eventually play 'the Anne Frank Game' where they try to imagine which of their friends or loved ones would hide them in the event of a second Holocaust.

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In both stories, their children are mentioned or make brief appearances but are external to the plot. They are talked *about*, and clearly emotionally at the heart of these stories about intergenerational trauma, politics, love, and death, but they are also, to various degrees, mysteries to their parents. Both authors show that what 'we' talk about when we talk about people (Anne Frank) or issues (love) that seem to have common meanings—that we believe we know—are, in fact, subjective, shifting, and complexly personal sets of discursive formations. While private, such formations are nevertheless also in and of public discourses, and in and of world politics. As in Carver's and Englander's stories, we may not foresee where our discourse will go. And, of course, this 'we' is itself, class-, race-, gender-, and nationality-inscribed.

'Youth' are both people and a political/policy issue. Recognizing the power relation between the discusser and the discussed is an important reflexive framing for any academic analysis of young people. What do 'we' talk about when we talk about youth? And who are 'we'—those authorized to define and discuss youth? Young adult (YA) literature provides its own answers to those questions. But before turning to Rowling and Collins and their texts' receptions in detail, I examine historical, primarily Anglo-American, understandings of youth.

Popular culture, politics, policy, and images of youth are complexly co-constitutive. Literary depictions of youth and 'children's literature' have historically been employed in defining and disciplining (literally and figuratively) young people within the wider social and political contexts of their lives. The necessarily attenuated discussion of ideas and literature that follows is mostly focused on the West/North and is not meant to provide a history of the evolution of ideas of childhood and youth in IR. Instead, it pinpoints enduring tropes in the discursive construction of children and youth as beings in liberal peace-promoting polities. Based on this review of historical depictions, I suggest that youth are talked about (and within) a range of entangled fears and desires: frames of wildness and innocence, reforming and saving, Orientalism and estrangement, schooling and (military) discipline, beauty and dying, policing and parenting, and evoking progress, technology, and existential threat.

There are continuities in the intellectual, policy, and media framings of youth, I wish to suggest, that draw on all of these entangled fears and desires. They form the context for understanding the extent to which contemporary young adult fiction and fandom continues on or departs from a tradition of adult territoriality in discursively framing and controlling the

young. This analysis shows that there are continuities in the framing of children and youth by adults over time that include dualisms as well as self/other confusions and that are transposed onto other groups including nations overseas. Then it is possible to appreciate how enduring images and values are being reproduced and resisted in contemporary globalizing discourses of youth (including those of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games)* and how these discourses might have implications for IR.

Talking About Youth: Fears and Desires of War/ Peace

Historians have concluded that childhoods have differed significantly over time, though they have debated about when the modern idea of childhood emerged. French Historian Philippe Aries argued that medieval societies did not have a concept of childhood, children were seen as miniature adults, and ideas of childhood emerged only between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.[2] Critics of Aries contended that early societies may have had concepts of childhood that we are unable to recognize through our contemporary lenses and argued that consistent honoring of children can be identified at least from the Middle Ages.[3] In fact, children in antiquity were given educations, had toys, and were involved in conflict,[4] making it evident that children had early political significance in war and peace. Recovering and analyzing past images of youth can disrupt contemporary political discourses as well as provide insight into the foundations of entrenched militarism. For example, Biblical scholar David Bosworth discusses the violence of David and contrasts him with another biblical figure called Jether who was described in the Bible as being afraid to kill because he was young. Bosworth argues that 'readers cannot applaud David's actions without implicitly condemning Jether's fear and refusal to kill' and that, therefore, 'the traditional celebration of David's involvement in killing implicitly endorses the use of children as soldiers.'[5]

Military historian Michael Howard explains a different elite-level dynamic, recognizing children as functional components of a balance of power: 'In the later Middle Ages and the early Modern period, every child born to every Prince anywhere in Europe was registered on the delicate seismographs that monitored the shifts in dynastic power. Every marriage was a diplomatic triumph or disaster. Every stillbirth, as Henry VIII knew, could presage political catastrophe.'[6] Obviously there was and is a great difference between the lives of aristocratic children and the masses. Yet,

these latter childhoods too were historical sites of politics, as Howard himself demonstrated when he wrote that the contemporary 'young soldier' was both ill prepared and yet mentally sustained by the myths of war that 'he' has learned. Such myths were 'nursery history' according to Howard and essential to 'breaking in children properly to the facts of life.'[7] As these two examples suggest, it is possible to locate contemporary debates about child soldiers within much older debates both for and against the practice and to look for submerged traces of the international political significance of children. Furthermore, the emotions of the power-laden fear of the young's stabilizing or destabilizing potential, suggested in Howard's description of aristocratic power politics, persist in more recent liberal discourses concerning young people's education as an issue of military security.

Contrasting the present with the late 1980s, when the Cold War was ending and the State Department was a 'hot beat' for young reporter, Thomas Friedman wrote in a 2010 article that the US Department of Education was the new 'epicenter of national security.' He drew on a speech by then education secretary Arne Duncan to support his argument. Duncan had said: 'One of the more unusual and sobering press conferences I participated in last year was the release of a report by a group of top retired generals and admirals. Here was the stunning conclusion of their report: 75 percent of young Americans, between the ages of 17 to 24, are unable to enlist in the military today because they have failed to graduate from high school, have a criminal record, or are physically unfit.'[8] So, one way political and communications elites continue to see young people is as necessary instruments of foreign policy or the renewable resources of empire building, and this makes education, health, and crime policies also national security issues.

Ideas about youth are discursively reproduced and connected with the (discursive) construction of States and IR and with ideas about peace. Yet, in thinking about liberal peacebuilding, turning back the clock to look at other discursive framings of the young is also important, for these not only demonstrate the instrumentalization of youth as a biopolitical resource and show adult-elite generational boundary maintenance. Also shown are self/other confusions in adult appraisals of youth politics. When 'we,' the designated adult appraisers, talk about youth and youthhoods, we stray into embracing sacred images and notions of duty, toward liberal peace.

The Child as an Image: Idealist and Normative Peace

Wildness, Innocence, and Signs

Discourses frame and create realities and they are social, competitive, and repetitive. In the West, an historical change in *the status* of children and the notion of childhood gradually occurred, emerging clearly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[9] Philosophers such as a John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (in *Emile* 1762) proposed that the child was a clean slate, and innately good, and children began to be seen as individuals.[10] Enduring understandings of children and youth are contained in statements from this period that suggest their innocence and wildness and their potential as messengers and/or as empty vessels that could be filled with lessons. While mainstream Christian teaching of the period held the child to be inherently evil and requiring redemption, John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) argued that the child could be written upon and, with proper instruction, molded to be a useful member of society.[11] In contrast, Rousseau saw children as 'distinct entities, innately moral and only degraded by exposure to adult behavior.'[12]

> Locke and Rousseau would bring out the birth of the body and the physical being of children, who would no longer be seen as mere copies of adults, as they had been awkwardly presented by painters for centuries, nor as little men, already touched by original sin and who had to be saved by hook or by crook, but as naturally good creatures.[13]

Artists and poets were part of debates about children's nature in the 1700s and 1800s.[14] Romantics, such as William Blake and William Wordsworth, further helped encode the idea of childhood as 'fundamentally different from adulthood' and 'having its own nature.'[15] Blake saw childhood as 'the *source* of "innocence",' a quality that had to be kept alive in adulthood in order to provide nourishment for the whole life.'[16] Until the early 1800s, children's books were 'remorselessly instructional (spelling books, school books, conduct books) or deeply pious.'[17] Blake reversed the lens in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789), offering the child's point of view as instructive to the adult.[18] Wordsworth saw childhood as 'a special (genderless) time of life'[19] and adulthood was the permanent loss of this Paradise. Wordsworth's ideas were more influential,

although, as Harry Hendrick notes, they were initially only applied in the lives of children from the upper classes.[20] In Britain, industrial capitalism and the Evangelical Revival fundamentally challenged the Romantic notion of childhood, as 'poets are no match for political economy.'[21]

Discourses of the sinful or romantically spiritual child were not the only ones to identify 'wildness' as a characteristic of the young. Others drew on evolutionary theory in presenting children as wild animals that needed to be tamed, and the child's development into adulthood was conceived as a recapitulation of the ascent of the species.[22] For different reasons, various groups shared concern about the exploitation of children due to industrialization and made movements for reform. Children's books began to be widely published probably due to a growing middle class, new printing technologies, and new educational theories.[23] It was out of a desire to instruct and shape children that books and other entertainments for them emerged, and this was domination masquerading as humanitarianism (in the minds of many responsible adults) and turned into a capitalist enterprise: a form of liberal peacebuilding.

In contemporary rationales for international children's rights, childhood innocence is normatively evoked. In keeping with the past, children's 'sinful nature' and/or sacred goodness are implied in the molding of youth in religious schools worldwide. In different ways, older ideas are also expressed in children's beauty pageants (where children, usually girls, are modeled as copies of adults) and in girl's hypersexualized clothing. In the visual and narrative appeals of today's children's charities and international adoption agencies, images of innocence needing saving are presented, and girls crying have more persuasive power than boys.[24]

But, along with this, there is the idea of children having special knowledge, in the tradition of Blake, and of their roles even as angelic messengers. This idea is repeated, in a way, in arguments, such as my own, for the voices and ideas of the young to be incorporated into understandings of and plans for peacebuilding, not just because of young people's rights to participation but also because of their lived experience and perceptions.[25] The view of wisdom as emanating 'out of the mouths of babes,' which is a 'commonsensical' formula of Biblical origin, can also be confused by adults with their own 'inner child'—the object of psychoanalysis. Joanne Faulkner explains:

> The child can also be understood to represent a subterranean perspective: as a messenger from the unconscious, delivering a forgotten or hidden knowledge that is rendered visible only by virtue of the refracting effects of the

> child's innocent (but interrogative) regard. The gaze of Dickens's cadre of children upon nineteenth century industrial Britain, for instance, or Harper Lee's depiction of the deeply racist South, told through the six-year-old Scout Finch's innocent eyes.[26]

As a projection of the self that recognizes injustice, the adult-manufactured 'child's voice' in literature or a political text raises the alarm but is ultimately self-regarding. In this, it is like liberal peacebuilding at the international level.

Liberal forms of peacebuilding are 'subservient to statebuilding and romanticise the non-liberal self,'[27] Oliver Richmond writes. The child, as the original non-liberal self, is idealized, and the loss of childhood innocence is mourned but only in a sentimental way because, of course, such a perspective is supposedly offered from a position of maturity. This discursive formation is also transposed onto countries undergoing liberal peacebuilding. For example, to successfully transition to liberal democracy, countries need to 'grow up,' stated a consulting demographer to the US National Intelligence Council in 2008, but currently 'more than half the world's countries remain too young for comfort.'[28]

Reforming and Saving

In addition to being collaborations between publics and elites, via writers and journalists, discourses emerge from and are sustained through interactions within and across other subcommunities such as professional organizations, political groups, and economic interests. A brief focus on Victorian literature that responded to child labor and urban poverty provides an example of this process. Parliamentary inquiries into children's factory work influenced both Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem 'The Cry of the Children.' The latter was a condemnation of industrial exploitation that deprived children of play and nature as illustrated with a brief excerpt:

> For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
> Through the coal-dark, underground —
> Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
> In the factories, round and round.

Other writers, such as Charles Kingsley in *Water Babies*, registered their concern about children's labor as well.

These works stimulated activism that influenced science and social policy. Charles Dickens advocated imaginative education over utilitarian education in *Hard Times* and saw it as essential both to children's moral development[29] and to the health and global standing of Britain. In a letter written to a newspaper on London's 'Ragged Schools,' he argued that poor 'outcast' children should be taught 'some knowledge of the commonest principles of morality and religion [..] before the Gaol Chaplain becomes their only schoolmaster.' Dickens also expressed concern about the effects of this lack of British education on the world: 'the careless maintenance from year to year, in this, the capital city of the world, of a vast hopeless nursery of ignorance, misery and vice; a breeding place for the hulks and jails: is horrible to contemplate.'[30] The Dickensian waif was leveraged by Victorian charities in order to garner funds and public support, though few actual homeless children were aided by these institutions.[31] Victorian children's literature, such as books by Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, and Rudyard Kipling, embraced notions of children's development out of wildness and narratively presented ways of bringing such an evolution into effect.[32]

Liberal Peace and Gothic Wars

Gender, Race, Class, and Estrangement

Discourses operate to define boundaries and leave some people out while others are written in. By the mid-1800s, 'the wage-earning child was no longer considered to be the norm. Instead, childhood was now seen as constituting a separate and distinct set of characteristics requiring protection and fostering through school education.'[33] The practical applications of these ideals took much longer to come to fruition for all children. But this was an intellectual turning point in the treatment of children as relevant to policy. Dickens' fiction and nonfiction writings about the 'wronged child,'[34] and other Victorian novels, influenced the emerging fields of child psychology[35] and pediatrics.[36] Childhood, for the middle classes, had become a gendered sphere separated from adults, and children's toys and books were distinct commodities.[37] This commercialization of childhood also occurred in tandem with humanitarian actions on behalf of poor children and against child labor and the molding of the young as martial citizens through popular entertainment. Yet, while new thinking led to the removal of under 12 years old from factories, mines, and even from

work in home/family industries, for those 13 years old and older, 'work was the norm,' unless they were bourgeois youth who were in schools and universities.[38] Injustice for some children at home was normalized, and both injustice and putative salvation were projected overseas.

Aspects of nineteenth-century Evangelicals' teaching that children were 'sinful polluted creatures' that it was adults' duty to correct and reform, as well as evolutionary theories that predicted reform, were also applied to the 'primitive,' 'childlike' adults, and their whole societies, encountered through colonial expansion.[39] A hierarchical relationship between parents and children was mirrored in the parent-state and citizen contract and in the paternalistic empire's relationship with its colonized subjects. Focused on the impact of Dickens' novels in New Zealand and Australia, Lydon argues that public sympathy gained for poor white children as a result of these writings operated to make Black people appear less sympathetic.[40] She identifies a reversal of 'telescopic philanthropy,' a term Dickens coined referring to Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House*. It meant a focus on those perceived to be needy overseas to the neglect of injustice at home.

Dickens' 'telescopic philanthropy' was illustrated again in twenty-first-century movements like the Invisible Children campaign,[41] which targeted American teens (mostly white, middle, and upper-middle-class girls) for charitable giving and collaborated with the US military in Uganda.[42] It is exposed as well as in some variants of celebrity humanitarianism,[43] as well as in governmental and institutional liberal peacebuilding discourse and practice[44] that aims to correct perceived institutional and cultural deficits in geopolitical hotspots. Similar to 'telescopic philanthropy,' Richmond writes that contemporary liberal peacebuilding 'operate[s] at many levels of denial: cultural, structural, economic and physical.'[45] Contemporary fan activism has both continued and departed from this approach of exercising social justice and humanitarian feeling from a distance, as shown in Chap. 10.

Gothic Girls and Resistance

In the past, literary discourses also identified and dematerialized boundaries to offer critiques of foreign policy. In the Gothic genre, innocence and danger tangled at home and abroad and operated by estrangement of the familiar and use of troubling doubles like the human monster in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). In some of its manifestations, the Gothic was politically incisive and

international. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) critiqued domination, racism, slavery, and language's power to oppress.[46] Shelley's *Frankenstein* (which she wrote when she was 18 years old) can also be understood as endorsing liberal politics and modeled dialogic conflict resolution: 'On the basis of the compact they forge, monster and man are able to reimagine the nature of their affiliation with each other. Their agreement renders them no longer "enemies" but individuals who commit themselves to each other for the foreseeable future,' Colene Bentley argues.[47] The imperial Gothic in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* involved 'reverse colonization' which, Stephen Arata argues, reflected popular anxiety of the time period about British imperial decline. Like Shelley's creature, Stoker's Dracula studied language but for the purposes of invasion rather than inclusion: he was an occidentalist rather than an orientalist, as Arata puts it. Thus, 'cultural guilt' and 'geopolitical fear' were evoked in the imperial Gothic, as the reader encountered monstrosity in a mirror.[48]

The Gothic was clearly one inspiration for J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* tales. Suzanne Collins's trilogy has a similar effect in that the Capitol is a (funhouse) mirror to the political culture and commerce of the books' majority of US-based readers. Katniss doubles as the innocent Romantic child and the Gothic heroine in peril—the rebellious girl that was also a feature of the Gothic in mainstream Victorian fiction. Sometimes such female protagonists were a disruptive influence on the innocence-wildness-salvation discourse that defined youth. In Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Cathy Linton rejects the angelic child image when she says she would be unhappy in heaven and recounts a dream of being thrown away by angels and falling to earth sobbing with joy.[49] Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) 'introduced a new voice to the world—a passionate, angry and defiant child,' states Sally Shuttleworth.[50] In the contemporary Gothic too, such a child is a source of anxiety for adults because he or she 'knows too much,' or appears to, and is difficult to read, according to Steven Bruhm.[51] But, it must be pointed out, such a child is part of political and colonial structures beyond her control or knowledge and that, like Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, set fire to her hopes.

The knowing child needs to be contained or returned to innocence (ostensibly for his or her own good), but also for the good of political stability, because such a child uncovers contradictions and injustice. In this, parents and politicians (often also parents) are collaborators. The Gothic is 'the transhistorical register of cultural anxieties and repressed ideas, especially ideas that relate to the bourgeois family,' states Bruhm.[52]

He notes that the sexual knowledge of the child is one important source of adult anxiety because adults desire that the child should know enough about sex to develop as expected and be safe, but not know too much. Studying YA literature we can see that both sex and war are placed in this category of requiring some but limited knowledge. Bruhm argues that the contemporary Gothic, as seen in horror films with child protagonists, reflects a culture 'bent' on 'killing children' because of their illegibility and adults' fear of what they know. Not only do Gothic themes occur in both Rowling and Collin's narratives but we also encounter the dynamic of making the child legible by 'killing' it in the media's disciplining of Collin's heroes Katniss and Peeta into status quo forms (Chap. 7). These literary and media discourses have analogues in foreign development and security discourses, too.

Boundaries and Revolt: Youth Containment and a Search for Structural Peace

The politicization of youth as assets and trainable social goods is another historically recurring theme, and here Rousseauian ideals also are evident. Rousseau was instrumental in the development of the concept of adolescence in the nineteenth century as a period of biological and moral tumult with a 'crisis of sexual identity.'[53] The concept of youth was also acquiring 'an intellectual and political meaning' during this time as it was connected with student activists involved in democratic and national struggles.[54] Thus, 'youth' came to have a different meaning from 'children' as more intensely related to politics and national identity, all the while wrapped up with issues of gender and sexuality, beauty and dying, and policing and parenting. In some countries, due to their histories of revolt, 'youth is regarded, in biopolitical terms, as a potential threat to the equilibrium of governance.'[55]

Apprenticeship and Insurrection

In the nineteenth century, despite new child labor laws, worker youth were rightless and were controlled by families (to which they owed their salaries until at least the age of 16) and apprenticeships. Michelle Perrot notes that '[a]t the age of 18 one was an adult in terms of responsibilities but not in terms of rights. Thus the workshop, the factory, and the construction site became youth-filled settings' and eventually the locations of

youth protests.[56] In France, young people were energetic at the barricades, but they were not attracted to formal politics because they could not vote and were even often disenfranchised in their unions, states Perrot. Since youth were thought of as masculine, girls were excluded from formal apprenticeship training except for the most exploitative. They mostly worked as domestic servants and in the textile industry and were intensely scrutinized for immorality. Illustrating this concern, a category of 'minor girls' was created in French laws in 1874 and 1892 to encompass young women aged 18 to 21.[57] Nevertheless, girls did lead worker protests.

Being active at the barricades was not the only way in which youth influenced politics. Education came to be seen as the method not only for training children into 'men' but also, in turn, for transforming the nation/society. Jean-Claude Caron describes elites' awareness 'of youth as a social asset, as the object and subject of [the] political renewal.'[58] In Germany, France, Italy, and some Scandinavian countries, 'youth movements, student movements, young worker movements or youth political organizations have at some time or another played a decisive role in shaping the history of the nation, in helping to bring about, directly or indirectly, some basic shift in power or ideology,' explain Phil Cohen and Pat Ainley.[59] But such a biopolitical understanding of youth has had less currency in cultures such as Britain, and the United States, they argue, where youth movements have not had such a critical political role. In Britain, youth cultures and subcultures have been the focus of analysis.[60] However, it is not necessary to be a movement to be conceived as a danger, as unemployed working-class youth and Muslim in youth in the United Kingdom and elsewhere have experienced.[61] Regardless of religious identity or economic status, there is always the fear that although youth subcultures are containable within the larger parent culture, they will challenge its boundaries.

A group, such as youth or specific subgroups of youth, can be considered to be in the 'wrong place if the stereotype locates it elsewhere,' notes David Sibley.[62] Writing about France, Perrot notes that young people were a source of 'social, sexual and political anxiety' in the nineteenth century[63] and became 'a special issue, an area for intervention' in the early twentieth when concerns expanded about youth gangs, delinquency, and protests against military service. Writing about twentieth-century US youth, Austin and Willard note that in public debates 'youth' often acquires metaphorical status signifying 'social change' and, therefore, 'is an enduring locus for displaced social anxieties.'[64]

Continuities in attitudes to education from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries can be seen in the following way: in the nineteenth century, changing attitudes to education were made necessary by new forms of economic activity emerging with industrialization, fear of delinquency,[65] and concern about national military power being depleted by the negative health effects of child labor.[66] These attitudes mirror concerns expressed in the 2010 article by Thomas Friedman that was discussed at the beginning of the chapter, which identified a vital linkage between US young people's education and the country's military strength.

Martial Civic Peace

(Military) Discipline

In the past, children's literature was a vehicle for their molding into loyal, war-ready citizens. Studies of early American youth show how they were politicized as part of nation building. Courtney Weikle-Mills defines these children as 'imaginary citizens'—'individuals who could not exercise civic rights but who figured heavily in literary depictions of citizenship and were often invited to view themselves as citizens despite their limited political franchise.'[67] These literatures used parent metaphors to promote loyalty to the State, such as references to Mother Britain and the Founding Fathers. In British Victorian literature, there was also a recurring trope of 'the soldier turned tender adoptive father'[68] and Holly Furneaux argues that this character was 'an unsettling figure':

> On the one hand, these narratives can be felt to work to make war more palatable, using a de-militarized male in the service of a militaristic agenda. On the other hand, the same archive supports a necessary rethinking of military masculinity as a form of manliness much more emotionally sensitive and complex than the stereotypes of the firm, reserved and stiff upper-lipped Victorian soldier. It also presents the adoptive family as a powerful, potentially transformative example of the personal and social benefits of relationships across boundaries of class and nationality.[69]

These same themes, along with their complications and contradictions, continue to appear in contemporary YA fiction. Gothic rebel girls are interruptive figures in Rowling and Collins' work via the characters of Katniss and Hermione and adoptive 'tender soldier' father figures reoccur

with Sirius Black and Dumbledore in *Harry Potter* and with Gale in *The Hunger Games* (see Chaps. 4 and 6).

In the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, children's literature had an important role in militarizing children in many countries, including through fostering nationalism, valorizing enlistment, and teaching about foreign relations and Others·, as many studies have shown, including studies of Israeli, Irish, Turkish, German, Canadian, British, and Russian publications for children.[70] These earlier forms of 'militainment' sought to recruit from the colonies as well as at home[71] and presented child (usually boy) fighters as both victims and heroes and, crucially, as militarizing pre-citizens:

> Children's literature from WWI reveals a multifaceted use of the image of the boy fighter as both an innocent, whose destruction highlights the 'savagery' of the enemy, and as a brave soldier-in-waiting, ready at even a young age to stand or die bravely in defense of his nation. Although the use of young soldiers is frowned upon by some writers, who suggest that the protection of children is the mark of a civilized society, the bulk of children's literature from this time presents the clear view that young boys should be prepared to do the work of soldiers and encourages young readers to enlist as soon as they come of age.[72]

However, while fewer in number, there was also antiwar literature for children during this time. For example, Kimberly Reynolds shows how some World War I recruits in the United Kingdom were not simplistically or homogeneously motivated by mythic war adventures, but some had been shaped by progressive publications and schools.

> The different reading experiences of boys from different classes and educational backgrounds is just one of many problems with the claim that fiction for boys was central to youthful enlistment. Others include the fact that while the stock of militaristic stories grew during the war, the appetite for enlistment did not.[73]

Reynolds argues that Quaker and other progressive schools and organizations produced publications that 'would have impeded direct assimilation of propaganda and thrilling wartime adventures by boy readers.' She notes that there were 'profound ethical and emotional dilemmas for young men as they decided whether or not to enlist' and emphasizes their agency and likely ambivalence:

> Deciding to fight in defence of one's country when background, education and belief make war repugnant is quite different from being seduced by tales about war-time adventures and exploits which risk glorious sacrificial death.[74]

Importantly, Reynolds thus discourages a mono-causal, deterministic approach to explaining the impact of literature on either war or peace decisions which has relevance for thinking about the contemporary impact of mythic warring adventures in YA fiction and 'militainment' too. 'Tabloid' political coverage and video games may be seen to have replaced the earlier literary forms of encouraging martial citizenship. But recent Pew surveys suggest that younger Americans read more books than their elders, probably as result of young people's schoolwork and a decline in over 65 reading habits.[75] So, the militarizing role of books cannot be discounted, even if they are overshadowed by cinema, television, and new digital technologies.

Parenting, Policing, Politicizing, Pacifying

Expanded access to schooling in the West institutionalized the understanding of childhood as a separate phase of learning and preparation. Universal schooling made childhood a sacred space again but helped encode notions of youthhood as a period of 'social dysfunction and psychological confusion.'[76] Identification and retraining of 'delinquents' was necessary for the health of the Western liberal state.[77] The 'sinful' child of earlier eras became the troubled adolescent at sea between childhood and adulthood. This 'wild' and 'imperfect,' usually male, child was dangerous because he was physically mature in adolescence, but not mentally, morally, or socially mature enough yet. Discipline was necessary and always unstable. Children, like criminals and the insane, required the punitive 'establishment of power relations' acting on 'a soul to be known and a subjection to be maintained.'[78] This could be achieved in the prison system to a much greater extent than in schools but was nevertheless applied in both. Training in schools and social organizations to be a 'good citizen' involved adaptation of the potentially deviant, oppositional youth to the 'parent' culture(s).[79]

For young people, the interwar period, the rise of Soviet power, World War II, and the Cold War were times of activism and also of being manipulated in State and organizational interests. This duality of roles was obvious

in the slaughter and fighting of youth in the World Wars and the Holocaust but was more subtly advanced in peacetime as well. Early in the twentieth century, Stanley Hall's view of adolescence as time of turmoil (or 'storm and stress,' from the German 'sturm und drang') precipitated the development of organizations like the Boy Scouts and a mass of parenting literature.[80] Paradoxically, children's loss of innocence was considered a threat to society in the form of delinquency, but failure to mature was also a threat to parents and political elites. Hall believed that a youth's development was a recapitulation of the species' evolutionary process, and education was a microcosm of the civilizational process, and he adopted a racialized discourse via Herbert Spencer.[81] This view was critiqued and later discredited, but it influenced parenting practice. The 'storm and stress' of adolescence is cited by some reviewers as a reason for *The Hunger Games*' appeal, as will be shown in Chap. 7.

Progress and Existential Threat: Realist Peace and Human Rights

Often liberal peace and militarism were entwined, and in the twentieth century, children were targets of foreign policy in striking continuity with the past. For example, saving youth was linked with saving the world by American Christian Churches in the interwar period, when there was a perceived 'crisis' brought on by war, unemployment, and adult disapproval of youth cultures, as Thomas Bergler explains: 'The traumas of World War I and its aftermath added fears about a "lost generation" and helped solidify the idea that global events could destroy an entire generation of young people.'[82] These collective fears were leveraged by young Christian youth leaders in the 1930s and 1940s, and the result, Bergler claims, was that '[e]ven nominally Christian adults who lived through the crisis years would instinctively view later teenage problems such as juvenile delinquency, school integration, rock 'n' roll, and comic books as both threats to Christian faith and as battles in the war to save American civilization from its political enemies.'[83]

In the early and mid-twentieth centuries, youth were the focus for foreign policy, as both subjects and participants, in Russian movements like the Communist Youth League[84] and international educational tourism and exchange programs.[85] Similar organizations and movements were developed in the Western Europe[86] and in the United States, such as the Peace Corps.[87] On the one hand, as participants in international relations, young

travelers, students, volunteers, and activists were transnational actors and agents of change. But they operated within a Cold War structure that instrumentalized them as a tool of foreign policy as well. A process that Christopher Sutton labels 'a youth race' occurred during the early Cold War (between 1945 and 1949). Soviet ideology's radical appeal to 'international youth,' particular those eager for decolonization, was actively engaged by British policymakers concerned about the maintenance of their empire.[88] As archives of government documents show, Soviet leaders were keenly aware that the international tourism of young people to the USSR had both an internal and external propaganda function: images of 'happy childhoods' showed the health of the Soviet system.[89]

Resistance: From 'Rugged and Ready' to 'Peace and Love'

Popular culture was again a tool of influence as well as a means of youth resistance in the Cold War. Jazz was used by the United States in its public diplomacy,[90] and Jazz music's repression in the Soviet Union led to countercultural youth movements.[91] The atomic bomb and fear of nuclear annihilation permeated culture in the United States at all levels,[92] and sales of toy holsters and pistols rocketed in the post-World War II period.[93] In 1950 an editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* commented on an image of a group of white boys dressed up as cowboys, noting: 'In the last couple of years the American child has come to think of himself as a clear-eyed, straight-talking, fast-shooting hombre, armed to the milk teeth and tall in the saddle.' This was a good thing, the caption said, because 'peace depends on all of us being rugged and ready.'[94]

Anxiety about changing gender roles was also connected with the popularity of movie Westerns and the readiness of parents to purchase toy guns, argues Angela Keaton:

> 'pistol-packin" play sent a masculine, practically patriotic, and capitalist message to the Soviets, or so the Post editorial writer (mentioned above) would have his readers believe. But female innocence was also used as a symbol of vulnerability, as in Lyndon Johnson's Daisy Girl advertisement (1964) for example.

The reported increase in sales in bows and arrows (by girls) after *The Hunger Games* books and movies were released repeats a pattern, therefore, and can be similarly unpacked for its gender and war politics (Chap. 7).

Eric Tribunella argues that the 'contrived trauma' in children's stories stands in for real experience of loss and atrocity and is believed by adults to be protective.[95] During the Cold War, anxiety was 'projected onto the bodies of young white males' in a discourse 'fixated on their perceived softness and openness to communist penetration,' argues Oca: 'The underlying anxiety was that youth would be unable to uphold the "national heritage" of expansionism built by the hard (white) men of previous generations.'[96] I show how this heritage, and fear of its loss, was evoked by US government officials in justifying Guantanamo in Chap. 5. In a different way, it was imposed on girls during the War on Terror as seen through the lens of *The Hunger Games* in Chap. 7.

In the 1960s, the new elite body was young and virile. 'Youthful maturity' was the image that Bobby Kennedy aimed to present during his 1962 goodwill tour in 'an attempt to counter Moscow's claim that the United States was an old, imperial power and an unnatural ally of third-world nations.'[97] The Vietnam War draft and the antiwar movement that followed were a youth sacrifice and rebellion of grand proportions, discursively crafted in the public imagination as a point of rupture. Young people's counterculture activism, involvement in the civil rights struggle, the rock and roll and sexual revolutions,[98] and anti-militarism in the United States in the 1960s were rejections of past raced, gendered, and militarized tradition. Such ruptures challenged the United States' moral narrative of itself as a good parent and as parent of the world, just as in the past the British liberal elite had worried about the impact of youth poverty and homelessness on their empire. In the United States, these events were followed with narratives of surreal dangers in the 1980s and 1990s, panics about gang violence, AIDS and drug epidemics, and so-called 'superpredators' that resulted in increased incarceration rates, paramilitarization of the police, and repression of poor people of color.[99] Youth curfews, intrusive technological surveillance, 'panopticon mall prisons,' and talk of 'quarantining…juvenile terrorism' were documented at home a decade before the War on Terror.[100]

Neocolonial, Neoliberal Peace

In the 1990s, old colonial tropes were used in Robert Kaplan's politically influential work *The Coming Anarchy*. Kevin Dunn shows how Kaplan reimagined Africa as primitive, wild, animalistic, and underdeveloped in a narrative 'saturated by the ideological systems that inform it, particularly

in classed, raced and gendered ways.'[101] In his presentation of children and youth in *The Coming Anarchy*, Kaplan himself described the human scenes he encounters in West Africa as 'Dickensian.' He also emulated Dickens' style as shown below, first with an excerpt from Dickens on London's Ragged Schools written in 1846 which is followed by Kaplan's description of African young people:

> [H]uddled together on a bench about the room, and shown out by some flaring candles stuck against the walls, were a crowd of boys, varying from mere infants to young men; sellers of fruit, herbs, lucifer-matches, flints; sleepers under the dry arches of bridges; young thieves and beggars--with nothing natural to youth about them: with nothing frank, ingenuous, or pleasant in their faces; low-browed, vicious, cunning, wicked; abandoned of all help but this; speeding downward to destruction; and UNUTTERABLY IGNORANT.[102] (capitalization in the original)

Kaplan writes of West Africa in the 1990s:

> [G]roups of young men with restless, scanning eyes surrounded my taxi, putting their hands all over the windows, demanding 'tips' for carrying my luggage even though I had only a rucksack. In cities in six West African countries I saw similar young men everywhere—hordes of them. They were like loose molecules in a very unstable social fluid, a fluid that was clearly on the verge of igniting. [...] West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger. [...] The forty-five-minute journey in heavy traffic was through one never-ending shantytown: a nightmarish Dickensian spectacle to which Dickens himself would never have given credence. The corrugated metal shacks and scabrous walls were coated with black slime. Stores were built out of rusted shipping containers, junked cars, and jumbles of wire mesh. The streets were one long puddle of floating garbage. Mosquitoes and flies were everywhere. Children, many of whom had protruding bellies, seemed as numerous as ants. When the tide went out, dead rats and the skeletons of cars were exposed on the mucky beach.[103]

In seeking to raise the alarm about environmental issues, Kaplan dubbed the environment 'a hostile power.'[104] The result was not only 'a re-employment of a colonising practice'[105] oriented toward Africa, as Dunn shows. Kaplan also contributed to an image of African youth as a hostile power. This fear was also applied to young men of color at home and later

to the United States' enemies in the War on Terror, whether or not they were actually young, as will be shown in Chap. 5.

Conclusion

The old dialectics of ideas that have been discussed in this chapter continue to proliferate in children's and young adult literature and still appear in various guises in the policy discourses of world politics. The contemporary pop culture manifestations of 'the Gothic speaks to fear of the loss of innocence, for ourselves as we come to terms with our own complicity in terrorism and torture, but also for our children as they grow up in a world where they know too much,' argues Victoria Carrington.[106] During the George W. Bush Administration, politicizing children and youth in the War on Terror was a means of mobilizing collective emotions (see Chap. 5). Employing an image of youthfulness, Presidential Candidate Barack Obama spoke directly to the young in his 2008 election campaign. On his own world tour that mirrored that of Bobby Kennedy 50 years earlier, President Obama advocated empathy: 'Learning to stand in somebody else's shoes, to see through their eyes, that's how peace begins. And it's up to you to make that happen,' he said to students in Istanbul in 2009.[107] Just as Jazz musicians and American playwrights had been instruments of the cultural Cold War, hip-hop has been used by the US government in its post-9/11 public diplomacy overseas.[108] Hip-hop was also a mechanism of revolt during the Arab Spring/North African uprisings—in what appeared to be local adaptations of US pop cultural forms by the young for their own ends. The transnational spread of pop culture and the role of social media and the Internet[109] have impacted this aspect of adult attempts to influence the young at home and abroad, expanding possibilities for young people to control their own messages and forms of diplomacy.

Youthhood is a social construction employed to frame and explain a particular period in a human being's life. Today, youthhood concepts are being globalized and adjusted as young people are increasingly technologically connected with each other and with pop culture across national and regional boundaries. But the old adage of 'the more things change the more they stay the same' also applies here. In 1690, Furetiere's dictionary defined the adolescent as 'the young man from fourteen to twenty or twenty-five years old.'[110] States and contemporary international organizations define youth in much the same way today. Though usually not overtly gendered, such policy discourses often focus on young

men. A discourse of 'emerging adults' experiencing a 'prolongation of youth' and difficult transitions to adulthood in industrialized societies[111] is applied globally using the concepts of 'waithood' and 'generations in waiting.'[112] Failures to transition to adulthood are an issue of transnational policy concern because of a 'global youth bulge'[113] and worries about the so-called 'demographic of insurgency.'[114] Some of this discourse of youth reproduces past colonial narratives—the image of the feral, lost youth as part of a 'coming anarchy,'[115] for example. Both instructional and salvation responses to this youth threat can also be found in foreign aid agency and international development interventions against young people's 'thwarted transitions' in the Global South, but have been critiqued for demonizing young males, and burying the agency and interests of young women.[116]

We need to be self-critical and reflexive about how youth studies entail 'engaging in a colonising act of power by controlling representations of "the Other" and producing a specific, politically saturated picture of the world,' as Dunn wrote about Kaplan's discourse on African anarchy.[117] Class and geopolitical inequality muddies any adult-child hierarchy in global terms. Domestic militarization in liberal peace-promoting states continues in close relation to consumption. There are new forms of transnational activism[118] that use social media and the Internet, but transnational activism itself is not new[119]; neither are transnational mercenaries or the use of pop culture by and against them to inspire, manipulate, or distract new features of IR.

'We' should also keep in mind that when we talk about youth, we are talking about Others, and seizing the power of discourse. But we are also talking about ourselves, of course, because 'youth' is construct of adults who once were young. Writers, academics, and policymakers operate within systems of meaning, creating the discursive space that creates its own, their own, and our own realities. Discourse is a power to be seized by them/us, like the securitization of education by Friedman and Duncan discussed at the beginning of this chapter. When we talk about youth, we contribute to a background of shared meanings: ideas of young people's wildness and innocence, the need for instruction and protection of youth, love and hopes for progress, and fear of annihilation and estrangement, for example. We talk in gendered, raced, and nationalist ways, and within the ideational constraints of a neoliberal order. As in the past, literature for and about children speaks critically about international relations, and also shapes political realities, as the next chapters will show.

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PART II

Reading Peace: Textual and Intertextual Analysis

CHAPTER 4

Reading War and Peace in *Harry Potter*

The great majority of you belong to the world's only remaining superpower. The way you vote, the way you live, the way you protest, the pressure you bring to bear on your government, has an impact way beyond your borders. That is your privilege, and your burden. If you choose to use your status and influence to raise your voice on behalf of those who have no voice; if you choose to identify not only with the powerful, but with the powerless; if you retain the ability to imagine yourself into the lives of those who do not have your advantages, then it will not only be your proud families who celebrate your existence, but thousands and millions of people whose reality you have helped change. We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better.
(Rowling 2008)

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books comprise a body of work that straddles the so-called pre- and post-9/11 eras. The first book in the series was published in 1998 and the last in 2009. The last film adaptation was released in 2011. For readers in the United States and Europe, Harry's school years span a period marked by two major wars, 'a global war on terror' and US domestic political polarization, and the beginnings of both a global economic crisis and momentous political changes driven by popular protest, such as the Occupy movement and the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Along with Osama Bin Laden and George W. Bush,

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many young people grew up with Harry Potter and may have identified with him better than either of the latter.[1] It is clear that Rowling saw the contemporary political relevance of her work. This chapter is introduced with excerpts from a speech given by Rowling at a Harvard commencement ceremony in 2008. Much of her speech emphasized the importance of empathy and discussed her experiences at Amnesty International and her study of the Classics. Quoting Plutarch, Rowling expressed her belief that 'what we achieve inwardly will change outer reality' and referenced her audience's privilege by virtue of geopolitical position. The analysis in this chapter provides a refresher or introduction for those who have not read J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* tales. But its main purpose is to provide to a detailed documentation of what careful readers of the series 'know' about war and peace. The chapter particularly focuses on Rowling's presentation of peace.

Reading for peace in the *Harry Potter* series, we will notice the cultural violence of pureblood superiority and the liberal governing group's tolerance for repression, including exclusions of feared identity groups and races, and their failures of transitional justice. Along with these factors, the sources of war are pathological enemies seeking absolute power. However, Harry's espousal of nonviolence defies adult advice and transgenerational pressures to conform to just war norms. Harry goes further than applying just war rules of proportionality and not targeting civilians. He uses non-lethal force as a matter of course and as the strategy that wins. Having won, he throws away his prize—the 'elder wand'—and with it the power of future domination.

Harry Potter's Just Wars[2]

> *Enemies, Terror and Evil*—'You're scared for yourself, and your family, and your friends. Every week, news comes of more deaths, more disappearances, more torturing … the Ministry of Magic's in disarray, they don't know what to do, they're trying to keep everything hidden […] Terror everywhere … panic … confusion … that's how it used to be.'[3]

The war context of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* stories is often overlooked,[4] but, in fact, Harry is a war orphan, growing up in an uneasy 'post-conflict' period after 'the first Wizarding War.' His parents were killed in the first conflict at the hands of Tom Riddle/Voldemort, who Harry will battle repeatedly and eventually defeat in Wizarding War Two. Voldemort is also an orphan. He was abandoned by his parents and is

described as someone who has never known love, a factor that explains his arch-realist worldview: 'There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it.'[5] Voldemort seeks to ensure his own immortality and political dominance through killing.[6] In Rowling's imagined political universe, the threat Voldemort poses is of an evil 'other' that cannot be negotiated with and lacks mercy or proportion. The books offer a more complex and sympathetic explanation of Voldemort's turn to violence than the films are able to provide, including detail about his mother's abusive family. But despite the background story of childhood abandonment and neglect, the nature of the threat that Voldemort represents is as an evil lust to dominate. James Heit describes him as a character 'incapable of knowing, recognizing, or choosing good,' who rejects the opportunities for redemption that both Harry and Dumbledore offer to him.[7] Harry, Voldemort, and Prof. Snape mirror each other as 'abandoned boys'[8] and soldiers in the same unfolding war, but they make different choices along the way. Ultimately these choices are influenced by the extent to which they have access to love and social support.

In Rowling's narrative Voldemort shows early psychopathic tendencies by torturing animals and children before killing his father and numerous others, but he manages to conceal these urges. As a youth he is viewed as a charming and brilliant student at Hogwarts. Yet, Voldemort has no capacity for empathy or friendship, and although exuding a 'dark glamour,'[9] he contains vicious anger and self-hatred (being ashamed of his parents) and is obsessed with restoring a mythical order of the 'pureblooded' wizard race. Voldemort desires to dominate others and even triumph over death, which leads him to commit the unnatural act of soul-splitting. Soul splitting is achieved '[b]y an act of evil—the supreme act of evil. By committing murder. Killing rips the soul apart.'[10] Hiding the soul fragments allows him to live beyond the destruction of his physical body and be reincarnated through parasitical exploitation of other people's body parts and blood. This 'evil' intent is reflected in Voldemort's physical appearance. Although described as handsome in his youth, he 'seemed to grow less human with the passing years'[11] becoming monstrous with a 'snake-like face,'[12] slits for nostrils, and catlike slits for eyes that are colored red or scarlet in the books (but changed to blue in the films). He is 'tall and skeletally thin'[13] with long white fingers 'like large pale spiders.'[14] He speaks in 'a high cold voice empty of any human kindness'[15] and often is said to hiss. In Rowling's Gothic school story, the Death Eaters are described as an extension of Voldemort's gang in school who were 'a mix-

ture of the weak seeking protection, the ambitious seeking some shared glory, and the thuggish gravitating towards a leader who could show them more refined forms of cruelty'.[16] Voldemort pursues a realist politics of peace in a Gothic world order. But as a parasitical dependant on the flesh and blood of others and on products such as cups, ring, and books (the horcruxes that contain his life), he can also be read as a monstrosity of global capital and corporate exploitation.

The first volumes of Rowling's series echo British policies of internment and shoot-to-kill of terrorist suspects in Northern Ireland and prefigure the post-9/11 'war on terror'. They not only invite reflection on the appropriate responses to terror and direct violence but also about the role of cultural and structural violence as sources of war. Dumbledore urges Minister Fudge to send 'envoys' to the giants to persuade them to take their side: 'Extend them the hand of friendship, now, before it is too late, or Voldemort will persuade them, as he did before, that he alone among wizards will give them their rights and their freedom!'[17] Dumbledore and Remus Lupin, who are wise and empathetic characters, are the voices for negotiation. They use the language of lack of rights, self-determination, and structural violence to explain terror. Theirs is a liberal politics of peace based on enlightened self-interest in Dumbledore's case and empathy in Lupin's case because he is part werewolf. But as giants are feared and hated by the public, Fudge will not use diplomacy, fearing for his political career.[18] Rowling demonstrates the role of elite self-interests in maintaining enemy images and rejecting negotiation.

Voldemort's dehumanization in features is also a reflection of even deeper spiritual decay as Dumbledore explains: 'the transformation he has undergone seemed to me to be only explicable if his soul was mutilated beyond the realms of what we might call "usual evil"…'[19] Harry completes Dumbledore's analysis: 'So he's made himself impossible to kill by murdering other people?'[20] The idea of preemptive use of violence and the amassing of power to achieve invulnerability and security is anathema to the heroes in Rowling's narrative.

Elitism is part of the wizarding world. Even those who argue against it, like the character of Kingsley Shacklebolt, and are allies of Harry, promote speciesism along with universal human rights: 'I'd say that it's one short step from "Wizards first" to "Purebloods first," and then to "Death Eaters". We're all human, aren't we? Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving.'[21] This human-centric, liberal peace excludes other species in the series such as giants and half-giants like Hagrid. Nevertheless,

the elites of Harry's world recognize human life as valuable even if it is not 'innocent,' and this contrasts with contemporaneous Anglo-American positions after 9/11, as shown in President Bush's statement: 'In this world, there are good causes and bad causes, and we may disagree on where that line is drawn. Yet, there is no such thing as a good terrorist. No national aspiration, no remembered wrong can ever justify the deliberate murder of the innocent. [...] We must speak the truth about terror.'[22] In Rowling's wizarding world, evil exists and the 'murder of innocents' is condemned, but there is less clarity about who is good or evil. Harry himself has part of 'the dark lord' within him as a result of being attacked by him as a baby. This connection with Voldemort is a double-edged sword; it allows Harry to speak to snakes and read Voldemort's mind, giving him a strategic advantage, but also makes him vulnerable to control by him.

> *Tolerance for ambiguity*—'the world isn't split into good people and Death Eaters.'[23]

Death Eaters can change and are redeemable. They also can be double agents, like Snape, who is ultimately revealed as having chosen good. The dehumanized Other image of Voldemort is not the only way in which threats are constructed and managed in Rowling's series. In action and appearance, Prof. Snape appears also to be Other and untrustworthy. In fact, Harry views Snape as an enemy until the last few chapters of the last of seven books that is published in 2009. A former Death Eater, ally of Voldemort, and coldly sarcastic and bullying teacher, Snape is physically described as having 'greasy black hair, a hooked nose and sallow skin,'[24] yellow crooked teeth, and 'cold and empty eyes' that 'made you think of long dark tunnels.'[25] He has a 'twitchy walk' like a spider[26] and is bat-like in his black robes.[27] The eventual truth of Snape's bravery as a double agent, his protection of Harry motivated by his love for Lily, Harry's mother, complicates the narrative of heroes and villains. Snape turns out to be a hero who is unattractive both physically and in personality[28] and breaks down what has previously been a clear-cut we-other dichotomy, reversing the certainty that had existed for Harry about the nature of threats and enemies. Through Snape, Harry learns through experience what his Godfather Sirius Black had explained earlier that 'the world isn't split into good people and Death Eaters.'[29] However, there is another side to this complicating of Us and Them. Not only is Sirius 'the soldier turned tender adoptive father'[30] that Holly Furneaux identifies in

Victorian literature (Chap. 3), but it is revealed that Snape is a love-motivated counter-terrorism agent and both of these images can be interpreted to romanticize militarized identities and actions, offering a form of 'militainment.'

Although not nearly as sympathetic ultimately as Snape, the other recruits of Voldemort are also a complicated set of enemies. As well as wealthy, aristocratic, pureblood supremacists like the Malfoys, Voldemort attracts the reviled and the marginal. Most werewolves, as Lupin explains to Harry, 'live on the margins, stealing—and sometimes killing—to eat,' and they ally with Voldemort because 'they think that, under his rule, they will have a better life.'[31] Goblins could be convinced either way, 'if they're offered freedoms we've been denying them for centuries they're going to be tempted,' he states.[32] Readers learn that Voldemort's ability to recruit was helped by the poor treatment of certain groups in society and by the political failures of the transition after the First Wizarding War. The first war prompted repressive government policy to regain control. The Ministry's crackdown involved brute force, imprisonments without trial, and the use of 'new powers—powers to kill rather than capture.'[33] They 'fought violence with violence, and authorized the use of the Unforgivable Curses [including torture] against suspects' and became 'as ruthless and cruel' as their opponents.[34] These policies, part of a cycle of violence, evolve into the Second Wizarding War, as Voldemort's followers break out of Azkaban prison and terrorize the country with torture, murder, and abductions.

On Harry's side, which is comprised of two underground resistance groups—the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's Army—the object of security is their way of life, constructed from a liberal vision of minimal violence to maintain order, due process, and rule of law (which, as noted, the Ministry had failed to preserve after the first war). Dumbledore preaches a cosmopolitan vision of unity across difference against Voldemort's violence: 'We can fight it only by showing an equally strong bond of friendship and trust. Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts open.'[35] But he also counsels constant militarized vigilance: 'It is important to fight, and fight again, and keep fighting, for only then can evil be kept at bay, though never quite eradicated.'[36] In the books that are published after 9/11, the first of which was *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*, the allusions to contemporary politics include the image of Voldemort as expertly

trained in the magical dark arts. Harry is taught in school that the 'dark arts' are a hydra-like threat (similar in discursive construction to the threat addressed by the global war on terror)[37]:

> The Dark Arts are many, varied, ever-changing and eternal. Fighting them is like fighting a many-headed monster, which, each time a neck is severed, sprouts a head even fiercer and cleverer than before. You are fighting that which is unfixed, mutating, indestructible.[38]

Given the war on terror context of the books from *Order of the Phoenix* onward, it is significant that Harry defies his adult compatriots in embracing nonviolence as a strategy of just war. In this stance he differs significantly from the 'common sense' view in the wizarding world and from the dominant American and British political discourse post-9/11.

> *Infrapolitics and Nonviolent Resistance* –'That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to understand. Of house-elves and children's tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands nothing. *Nothing*. That they all have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped.'[39]

If, following Dumbledore's insight in the quotation above, we take the trouble to explore popular fiction, we discover that readers of *Harry Potter* learn techniques of infrapolitical subversion throughout the series, culminating in the founding of Dumbledore's Army (the D.A.). When Harry is in his fifth year, a new headmistress, Ministry apparatchik Dolores Umbridge, is installed for the political purposes of damping criticism of the Ministry's handling of the Voldemort threat. Umbridge forbids meetings of large groups and the learning of practical magic. She implements a repressive regime of dreary textbook learning, teaching to the test, and increasingly monitored and regimented social life. She uses torture and informers, recruited from the bullies, to maintain control and gather intelligence. While outwardly conforming, Harry's gang defy Umbridge to form the D.A. and teach themselves the skills they need, 'resisting under her very nose.'[40] Harry feigns compliance in class while actually daydreaming about how the D.A was progressing in learning spells such as the 'impediment jinx,' a nonviolent blocking maneuver.[41] Soon Umbridge is plagued by comical but disruptive incidents conjured by D.A. members, the Weasley twins, such as firework dragons and flying

pigs, and the teachers join the students in passive noncompliance. For example, they pretend they do not know how to stop the mischievous spells or are uncertain about their 'authority' to do so.[42]

Harry and his friends have already been rebels, thieves, and vandals, pilfering from the Snape's potions stocks in their second year, damaging the whomping willow in a flying car crash, sneaking around the castle after dark and under the invisibility cloak from the beginning. The D.A. is on the one hand an extension of this mode of adolescent rebellion but, on the other, also a political rite of passage. Harry has been a victim of violence and has had to defend himself against Voldemort's attacks, for several years before he formally organizes an armed group. Now, at around age 15, he begins to train other students in secret to use magic to defend themselves, subverting Umbridge's dictatorial rule.

The D.A. secretly trains for combat under Harry's leadership and he teaches his peers his regular fighting spells. These spells are Expelliarmus (disarm), Stupefy (stun), and Expecto Patronus (literally 'I await a protector'), a spell that repels attacks through a force field created by drawing on one's happiest memories. These defensive spells all entail fighting with nonlethal force, and they are Harry's 'trademark' to such an extent that they mark him out when he is in disguise and actually make him vulnerable to attack. Harry rejects the version of political realism that Voldemort presented to him, via Quirrell, in their first encounter. In Harry's thinking, there is good, and the power to pursue it should also match the desired ends and peace should be achieved by peaceful means. Harry fights back in various creative ways, mostly improvising, but generally using as little force as necessary, and conscious of both civilian and 'enemy' lives. In one battle in the final book, he acts so as to not kill a combatant for Voldemort (Stan Shunpike) who is under the Imperius curse and therefore lacks free will.

This approach becomes a point of contention with an adult compatriot who criticizes his continued use of the disarming spell, rather than a stun or a kill spell, as the conflict with Voldemort escalates. Calling these actions 'close to suicidal,' teacher Remus Lupin, one of the most beloved characters in the novels, references norms of self-defense, saying, 'frankly, most people – would have expected you to attack back!'[43] The author writes of Harry's 'defiance' in response to these arguments, until finally he retorts: 'I won't blast people out of my way just because they're there. […] That's Voldemort's job.'[44]

Still, while Harry consistently resists becoming like his enemy, he is at times tempted to cause violent physical harm. In anger and grief after Bellatrix kills his godfather Sirius Black, he attempts to use the torture curse on her[45] and in another encounter badly injures Draco Malfoy.[46] In the final book, when a Death Eater spits in Prof. McGonagall's face, Harry successfully uses the torture spell against him, in a seemingly disproportionate response.[47] These escalations in force correspond with the growing power of Voldemort and a collective sense of existential threat, and it does not seem out of place when even McGonagall threatens Slytherin staff and students with death if they attempt to undermine the defense of Hogwarts.[48] However, one of the chief choices that Rowling identifies is between violence and nonviolence, and she clearly promotes nonviolence. In the climactic battle between Harry and Voldemort, Harry returns to form with his disarm spell, which causes the killing spell that Voldemort employs to fatally rebound on him. In the end, the Battle of Hogwarts is won through 'political ju-jitsu' without Harry stooping to his opponent's level.

Unlike 'militainment' products that offer an attractive 'picture of state violence [and] also work to articulate the citizen subject within it,'[49] Rowling creates a character in Harry that will not work within formal politics and is scapegoated by the establishment, but manages to find his position as a member of the magical world's community through nonviolent action. The 'politics of peace'[50] requires the strength, will, skill, and agency ('capacity') to *simultaneously* ('at once') work against violence and for both justice and order, applying defensive strategies ('to resist') *and* engagement strategies ('struggle') as Harry demonstrates in his battle with Voldemort. However, it is readers more so than viewers alone, who are especially privy to this politics of peace. The exchange about use of force between Harry and Lupin discussed above is reproduced in the film *The Deathly Hallows Part I*, but, as online questions illustrate, the cinematic battles, with spells and flashes of light, confuse the viewer as to how Voldemort was destroyed by being disarmed.[51] The *Harry Potter* video games and films may be seen, then, as not dramatically different from 'militainment,' which 'normalize[s] certain practices, habits and dispositions toward war.'[52] This makes close reading of the text important in speculating about reader resistance to dominant views about war and nonviolence.

Harry's Gendered and Relational Peace

Community, Memory, Maternal Protection—'Your mother died to save you. [...] to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever.'[53]

In addition to the theme of active nonviolence, the world that Rowling constructs for her readers offers a vision of peace cohering in friendship and intergroup coalitions, embedded within domesticated spaces. Parent-child love, friendship love, and romantic love are the sources of peace. In particular, Rowling presents maternal love as the most powerful 'ancient magic.' Harry's mother died when she stood in front of Voldemort's killing curse to protect her child. Her unconditional love and maternal sacrifice explains why Harry is the 'chosen one' destined to defeat Voldemort with 'ancient magic [...] which he despises, and which he has always, therefore, underestimated – to his cost.'[54]

In *The Sorcerer's Stone*, Dumbledore explains: 'If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark'.[55] The point is repeated in *The Order of the Phoenix*: 'She gave you a lingering protection he never expected, a protection that flows in your veins to this day'.[56] This blood protection was maintained through Lily's sister, Petunia Dursley, who as it turns out is another unexpected, and reluctant, ally. Voldemort himself admits he was foolish to overlook this 'old magic' that empowers Harry.[57] So, the foundations of peace, readers learn, are micro-local, private, and gendered. Through recovering old wisdom as a source of protection, Rowing suggests culturally sensitive peacebuilding rooted in spiritual beliefs and mothering as a social practice.[58] Yet, the price, it must be noted, was a woman's sacrifice of her own life.

Built on this foundation, everyday peace for Harry, Ron, and Hermione happens in the spaces of sociability, including shared adventures and spaces that are created and recreated through cultural traditions—the communal activities of sports and celebrations. Needs of nourishment and connection are met and expressed through loyalty, generosity, and selflessness. For example, on Harry's first journey to Hogwarts when he meets Ron Weasley, he shares his food with the poorer boy and creates a permanent friendship:

> 'Go on, have a pasty,' said Harry, who had never had anything to share before or, indeed, anyone to share it with. It was a nice feeling, sitting there with Ron, eating their way through all Harry's pasties, cakes, and candies (the sandwiches lay forgotten).[59]

Peace is evoked in a pleasure culture of crackling fires and feasts in Gothic-Bohemian surroundings. In contrast to a cold bourgeois life with his foster family, the Dursleys, Hogwarts is a place where Harry belongs: 'The castle felt more like home than Privet Drive ever had.'[60] In the last book of the series, when he is finally about to sacrifice himself in death, he again thinks of this home: 'Hogwarts was the first and best home he had known. He and Voldemort and Snape, the abandoned boys, had all found home here…'[61] Unlike Voldemort and Snape, Harry had been able to develop and sustain genuine friendships at school, and these, along with memories of familial love, seem to have provided Harry with resilience and made the difference in their fates. When Harry is depressed or in grief at the death of a friend or loved one, he pulls away from these surrogate home spaces. Thus isolated, he becomes weakened in his struggle against Voldemort, but he is restrengthened by love and collaboration. When Voldemort tries to control his body and mind, Harry's love for his godfather, Sirius Black, repels his would-be possessor. Thus, it is 'we-ness' and solidarity that is the source of political and military strength in the narrative.

The home spaces of Harry's world come to life, vividly, as warm refuges—the Gryffindor common room, the shabby but cozy Weasley Burrow ('the best house I've ever been in'[62]), the Great Hall, and Hagrid's Hut. These places provide havens for regrouping and reflection and tending to physical and emotional needs: satisfying food, play, consolation, and conversation. Yet standing up to one's friends is considered courageous,[63] and there are numerous political disagreements. While domesticated, these are not conflict-free spaces, a combination illustrated in this description of a meeting at Hagrid's Hut:

> A light rain had started to fall by midafternoon; it was very cozy sitting by the fire, listening to the gentle patter of the drops on the window, watching Hagrid darning his socks and arguing with Hermione about house-elves.[64]

However, as in the nonfiction world, everyday peace for some in the wizarding world rests upon the exploitation of others, including deliberate strategies of direct domination. Wizards prevent goblins from learning

'wandlore,' preventing them from expanding their (magical) powers.[65] House-elves are enslaved to certain wizard families and do all the domestic work at Hogwarts. The magical dishes that appear on the tables in the Great Hall are prepared by elves working out of sight. For Harry and friends, home spaces provide safe bases from which to bridge into the public world of politics but also are in themselves political, as they gradually learn. Yet, the object to be secured in the just war against Voldemort is the everyday peace of the wizarding world, which is a liberal peace with hidden injustices at its foundation.

In his fourth year, Harry and his friends realize that the elves are an unseen pool of 'slave labor'[66] whose subordination is treated as normal, as one character remarks: 'That's the mark of a good house-elf isn't it, that you don't know its there?'[67] However, despite being socialized within a system that treats such oppressions as natural, Harry and his friends do not treat other beings as inferior. Hermione (who has Muggle parents) notices injustice and takes political action, forming an organization to promote justice for the elves. Yet her advocacy group, the Society for the Protection of Elvish Welfare, has the acronym S.P.E.W. and, while well meaning, Hermione's attempts to impose freedom on the elves involves ambushing them without enough thought for the consequences. This is essentially a liberal peacebuilding problem, and it is debated in the books at some length. It is not much discussed in the films, however, suggesting that reading is the source of the fan activism of the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) which draws on the situation of the house-elves to advocate against child labor, as discussed in Chap. 10.

Significant victories occur for Harry's side precisely because his opponents underestimate the power of love, empathy, and loyalty across species/races. Harry is only 12 or 13 years old when he frees Dobby from the brutal Malfoy family by tricking his master Lucius Malfoy, and although Dobby is meant to be an adult elf, he is presented as childlike and hysterical (particularly in the film versions) and readily transfers his allegiance (and life) to Harry. Still, over time, their relationship becomes based on mutual aid and trust with Dobby returning in later books to help Harry and his friends in numerous ways before sacrificing himself to save them. While it is possible to see Dobby as the 'loyal slave' who cannot help but return to save a master, Rowling is at pains to depict them as friends. Harry has genuine sorrow at Dobby's death in the last book and in particular his digging of Dobby's grave is underlined as a politically significant act.[68] Through manually digging the grave (rather than using quicker

magic), Harry acquires the grudging respect and help of the goblin Griphook that proves essential to their quest. In contrast, elitist adults, like Lucius Malfoy, lose power because certain groups, such as elves, are morally invisible to them and therefore are underestimated even though they possess powerful magic. A critical plot point, for example, and triumph of infrapolitics, is when Dobby saves the protagonists from torture and imprisonment in Malfoy Manor using elf magic to 'apparate' into the building. Although Lucius Malfoy used a charm to guard against wizards entering in this way, he neglected to guard against elf magic, presumably because he didn't value or notice their powers and agency, and does not imagine that love or loyalty of this kind could be possible. Rowling offers love as the secret weapon that undermines all forms of structural, cultural, and direct violence, including discrimination against certain groups such as the poor, like Ron and his family, 'mudbloods' like Hermione, half-giants like Hagrid, and elves like Dobby.

Everyday Peace and Adult Territoriality: 'Youth cannot know how age thinks and feels. But old men are guilty if they forget what it was to be young.'[69]

Everyday peace exists for Harry through negotiations between free agency and rule-bound traditions within encompassing home spaces. In contrast, institutionalized public politics is presented as corrupt and a danger to peace. Still Harry is not a revolutionary at heart. He is happiest in a community of free sociability, play, and leisure but is also a willing subject (most of the time) of adult-structured days, curricula, school terms, and traditions such as the House system. Harry consents to be governed during the tenure of Dumbledore, whose legitimacy as a leader is based on wisdom and fairness, and rebels against threats to that order such as Umbridge's tenure as school principal. In addition to the existence of nurturing surrogate 'home spaces' in Rowling's narrative, an important feature of Hogwarts is that that young people have a lot of freedom to be with their peers without supervision. Enlightened adults—such as Dumbledore and McGonagall—have tolerance for the students' bending and breaking rules such as leaving the confines of the school. But a continual tension exists between adults and youth about love that is empowering and love that, in seeking to protect, actually limits. The existence of traditions and group identities, through which young people can form attachments, is vital, but at the same time, good leaders (e.g., Dumbledore)

are distinguished from bad ones (Umbridge) by their flexible and irreverent attitudes to traditions, rules, and rule breaking and by their treatment of different identity groups and species.

Yet there are also failures of transgenerational transmission due to adult self-interest, protectiveness, and trauma.[70] Dumbledore claims to have loved Harry 'too much' and makes a distinction between Lily's instinctual sacrifice and the kind of love that aims to protect young people from knowledge and from fear:

> I cared more for your happiness than your knowing the truth, more for your peace of mind than my plan, more for your life than the lives that might be lost if the plan failed. In other words, I acted exactly as Voldemort expects we fools who love to act.
>
> Is there a defense? I defy anyone who has watched you as I have—and I have watched you more closely than you can have imagined—not to want to save you more pain than you had already suffered. What did I care if numbers of nameless and faceless people and creatures were slaughtered in the vague future, if in the here and now you were alive, and well, and happy? I never dreamed that I would have such a person on my hands.[71]

Perhaps Dumbledore's admission is an analogue to short-sighted national security policies, and Harry's lack of knowledge is equivalent to collective ignorance or amnesia about past foreign policy violence. The truth about how his parents died, their histories, and his identity are hidden from Harry by the significant adults in his life, parcelled out gradually by his teachers, relatives, and parents' friends who claim to be trying to protect him. Initially, he is plagued by half memories of this traumatic past represented in nightmares, anger, alienation, and sometimes isolation, but he also finds friendship, love, and acceptance, allowing him to cope with yet more insecurity, war, and violent losses across seven books. The pattern of adults attempting to protect Harry through keeping secrets from him is a reoccurring one in the books. While usually well intentioned and sometimes necessary, this protective silence often proves to be misguided or self-serving. Several times lack of information puts Harry in danger. His peril is revealed to be the result of adults' egos, a sense of having 'the bigger picture,' or protecting themselves from admitting shameful mistakes or having painful conversations. For example, it is only through legilimency (a kind of mind reading) lessons and the magical pensieve that holds multifaceted memories from different perspectives that Harry learns of his father's and Sirius Black's arrogance and bullying, getting a fuller picture of his and

their identities and of the reasons for Professor Snape's antipathy to him. Only through the pensieve is he able to read Snape's memories after his death and understand how he must defeat Voldemort. It is only through the pensieve that Harry learns of Snape's friendship with his mother, how he has survived, and what he must do to win. Without this magical object, to compensate for adults' failed strategies, he never would have had the knowledge he needed. We can read this as representing a failure of trans-generational transmission due to trauma and the incomplete mourning of Snape, Dumbledore, and others, which like the politically motivated denial of Fudge and others in the Ministry results in avoidable deaths. But these secrets are also representative of the tendency of adults to think that certain knowledge should be kept from young people—as in the Gothic novel's concern with them 'knowing too much' (see Chap. 3).

Mrs. Weasley argues with Sirius about how much Harry should be told about the prophecy and Voldemort's plans, and their disagreement revolves around the problem that Harry, at age 15, is 'not a child!' and 'not an adult either!'[72] For Harry, a growing recognition of his past leads to increasing agency in the role of the leader of the resistance to Voldemort. His identity is increasingly articulated as a rebel that challenges not just an enemy but also his own allies. He chooses loyalty to friends, school, and faction over loyalty to the official institutions and power structures of the wizarding world. As Harry and his friends demonstrate again and again, they are resourceful, very independent, and committed to social action. Their activism saves their way of life and also appears to heal the trauma of Harry's childhood.

The generational politics of gatekeeping and secret-keeping almost leads to defeat, however. At the end of the final book, his chief mentor, Dumbledore, admits his own errors and secrets: 'Can you forgive me for not trusting you? For not telling you? Harry, I only feared that you would fail as I had failed. I only dreaded that you would make my mistakes.'[73] In some ways then, Harry's story is not only a typical coming-of-age story, one of learning about adult frailties, but it also mirrors the position of youth in international relations and humanitarian practice, fields within which children and young people have been excluded from decisionmaking, depoliticized, and perceived to lack agency, but being in need of rescue and protection.

But Harry, Ron, and Hermione are helped by many, including adults, and form intergenerational coalitions as well as cross-species alliances. One of the objects that elderly Dumbledore bequeaths to the young trio,

to help them in their quest to defeat Voldemort, is a children's book. Books are employed in many different ways throughout the series—as important resources (in the library's restricted section) and as dangers (e.g., Tom Riddle's diary and the Half-Blood Prince's school book). While spells are verbal (or with more skill silently evoked), demonstrating the power of language to effect change, the written word and visual imagery are linked with hidden resistance (e.g., the Marauder's Map) and with healing trauma, memory, and peace (Harry's parents' photographs and Lily's letter, for example). Throughout the series, Harry is plagued by traumatic memory of his parent's deaths, later compounded by the loss of his godfather Sirius, and then the death of Dumbledore. Healing is facilitated through objects that pass on memory, such as photographs, books, and letters:

> The letter was an incredible treasure, proof that Lily Potter had lived, really lived, that her warm hand had once moved across this parchment, tracing ink into these letters, these words, words about him, Harry, her son.[74]

These objects link the past and present and the dead and the living. The tangible power of stories, words, and objects to transmit memory and knowledge is also deformed in Voldemort's horcruxes which take intergenerational transmission literally and selfishly. Voldemort's brutal bid for literal immortality misses the point. To be remembered one has to have been loved and/or, as in the case of Snape, to have loved.

Conclusion

> *Peace in Contradictions:* 'a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave.'[75]

For young people that are often either encouraged to know their place or are overly protected and/or monitored, reading can entail freedom of thought and imaginative travel. Young readers can resist authority in plain sight: like Harry wearing his invisibility cloak. Free from surveillance, they can imagine (themselves in) new communities and be exposed to new and radical ideas: like Hermione in the restricted section of the library. In reading about war and 'child soldiers' in the so-called safety of their homes (a state that cannot be taken for granted), and reading about peace in the

context of everyday militarization, readers of *Harry Potter* (and also *The Hunger Games* as discussed in Chap. 6) embody 'a tolerance for ambiguity' that may break through boundaries leading to a 'new consciousness' or 'new mythos' as Gloria Anzaldua predicts.[76]

Throughout Rowling's series, we see that memory not only enables love (and vice versa), but memory also activates the will to fight and is required for knowledgeable agency. The pensieve in Dumbledore's office, a magical object that stores memories, is critical to the narrative. Unlike Voldemort's horcruxes, the objects used to contain his soul fragments in his bid for immortality; the pensieve is not a container of egoistic self-interest, but an important communal legacy and source of knowledge. Secrets and lack of information put Harry in danger many times, and dipping into Dumbledore's pensieve often has to substitute for actual truth telling and the fact-to-face transgenerational transfer of knowledge. Friendship, loyalty, and love are employed to construct the characters' identities in relation to peace, which takes a hybrid form: as a peace comprised of political, intergenerational, and intergroup coalitions in domesticated spaces. Rowling's readers are provided with a vision of peace that involves transgenerational partnership as well as politically active youth. The oddness of the multigenerational coalition of the marginal and eccentric that support Harry[77] suggests a nontraditional family and a diverse, nonjudgmental polity.

Harry and his friends also subvert cultural and structural violence, each representing a marginalized identity in a coalition across difference working for peace. But in the final analysis, it is unclear if any structural changes, leading to emancipation of previously marginalized groups, will emerge. We get only the suggestion of something more than negative peace, as the dust of battle is clearing: 'nobody was sitting according to House anymore: All jumbled together, teachers and pupils, ghosts and parents, centaurs and house –elves.'[78] Furthermore, the hint of wider unity and equality that is symbolized by the survivors of the battle of Hogwarts links progress for marginalized groups to their participation in a wizard-led war. If it were to come to fruition, this social progress would represent belonging acquired through martial citizenship. Harry's nonviolence is exceptional not paradigmatic.

The ending glosses over post-war trauma, as well, with an epilogue skipping 19 years ahead to the fruit of happy marriages: the next generations of Potters, Weasleys, and Malfoys, heading off to Hogwarts. In the

end, Harry and friends reproduce the traditional nuclear family, but cross class—and blood status—divides in doing so. These tentative breaks with tradition can hardly be termed radical. In the end, Harry fights to restore the status quo, as he knows it, his everyday peace, which is an idealist-liberal peace at the institutional level. Furthermore, the *Harry Potter* series ultimately does not challenge the idea that war can be just and the duty of a citizen. Ultimately, turning to myth, Harry is martyred (in a Christ-like way by allowing himself to be killed) and is reborn to defeat Voldemort completely. Although there are losses of very close friends in the second wizarding war, Harry's miraculous (even by the wizarding world's standards) rebirth makes the story an epic myth of heroism in the end and not a real war story.

Like many children caught up in contemporary armed conflict and political violence, Harry comes of age—biologically, socially, emotionally—in war. For Harry, a growing recognition of his past leads to increasing agency in the role of the leader of resistance to Voldemort. His nonviolence is radical in that it challenges intracommunal norms, but Harry's nonviolent disarming, stunning, and blocking of his enemies is possible because magical spells to do these things exist in his world. Again, as with the pensieve, it is important to point out that without the magic of these spells, the happy conclusion to the war of Hogwarts would have been impossible. For children involved in real armed conflict, such a happy ending is obviously lacking. This kind of magical thinking is not the resolution to war that Suzanne Collins takes in *The Hunger Games* series, which is discussed in Chap. 6.

Nevertheless, Rowling does present a compelling vision of gendered-relational peace, symbolized by nurturing home spaces, unconditional love, and the transgenerational transmission of knowledge and memory. She calls on maternal thinking, tolerance, and diversity to secure the future. In the context of the War on Terror—detention without trial, torture, rendition, surveillance, and unilateral preemptive war—Rowling offers politically radical rejections of conventional wisdom: 'mission accomplished' in the case of *Harry Potter* was enabled by the 'ancient magic' of maternal love, ethical nonviolence (disarming his opponent), and cosmopolitan coalitions. Finally, although Harry did win in a mythic, heroic battle and thus acquired the fabled 'elder wand,' which would give him unlimited power, he threw away the wand at the series' conclusion, rejecting the power to dominate going forward.

Notes

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9. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. Quote at p. 361.
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11. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. 502.
12. Rowling JK. Goblet of Fire, 646.
13. Rowling JK. Goblet of Fire, 634
14. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 644.
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16. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. Quote at pp. 361–2.
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23. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 302.

24. Rowling JK. Sorcerer's stone. Quote at p. 126.
25. Rowling JK. Sorcerer's stone. Quote at p. 136.
26. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix.
27. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince.
28. Rowling JK. Sorcerer's stone. Quote at p. 136.
29. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 302.
30. Furneaux H. Children of the regiment: Soldiers, adoption and military tenderness in Victorian culture. Victorian Review. 2013; 39(2): 79–96. Quote at p. 94–95.
31. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. Quote at p. 334.
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33. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 527.
34. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 527.
35. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 723.
36. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. Quote at pp. 644–45.
37. See, for example, A Survey of Al-Qaeda. A Hydra-Headed Monster. The Economist. 2008; July 17.
38. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince. Quote at p. 177.
39. Rowling JK. Deathly hallows. Quote at p. 709–710.
40. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 397.
41. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 397.
42. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at pp. 633–4. Hermione's stalling which involved leading Umbridge into the forbidden forest with a made-up story about a hidden 'secret weapon' is another example of foot-dragging as resistance that occurs later in the Order of the Phoenix.
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44. Rowling JK. Deathly hallows. Quote at p. 71.
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46. Rowling JK. Half-blood prince.
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56. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 835.
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61. Rowling JK. Deathly hallows. Quote at p. 697.
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63. Rowling JK. Sorcerer's stone.
64. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 265.
65. Rowling JK. Deathly hallows. Quote at p. 488.
66. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 182.
67. Rowling JK. Goblet of fire. Quote at p. 182.
68. Rowling JK. Deathly hallows. Quote at p. 486.
69. Dumbledore in Order of the Phoenix. Quote at p.
70. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at pp. 88–89.
71. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at p. 37.
72. Rowling JK. Order of the phoenix. Quote at pp. 88–89.
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CHAPTER 5

Harry Potter in Guantanamo: Gothic War/Peace from Bush to Obama

This chapter focuses on US foreign policy discourse in relation to the War on Terror and demonstrates how the stories of popular culture are related to the discourses of world politics in complex ways. Pop culture and politics blend and fact and fiction are blurred in both. The chapter focuses on a widely circulated, but little analyzed, news story about *Harry Potter* being read by the detainees in Guantanamo Bay prison and shows how ideas about youth and peace were articulated within US foreign policy discourse. In the political climate of the War on Terror, the militarization of everyday life included uses of children and of children's literature for the government's political purposes. According to a 2006 US Department of Defense press release, the Guantanamo prisoners' favorite books were from the *Harry Potter* series, and this detail was highlighted in numerous media reports. The ways in which Guantanamo acquired meaning as 'disciplining' mechanism for dangerous youth, aided by the trope of *Harry Potter*-reading prisoners, is highlighted in this analysis.

First, the chapter discusses the references to children in President George W. Bush's and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's public diplomacy after the 9/11 attacks. Then, the references to *Harry Potter* being read in Guantanamo are examined.[1] Finally the Obama Administration's early rhetoric on youth in politics is brought into the analysis, showing how a fantasy of Guantanamo as a space of liberal peacebuilding was created on a continuum with a Gothic narrative of the War on Terror. The

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idea of instruction is central to the discourse of the liberal peace as an imperialist project (a discourse within which the child and youth are important figures, as shown in Chap. 3). Identifying different 'youth' discourses in official rhetoric is one way to expose and critically explain this tendency in peacebuilding. The chapter shows how the Guantanamo prisoners were rhetorically constructed as 'youth' and how these stories reflected more general fears about 'domestic' youth as well. Conversely, this reading also confirms that as a liberal peacebuilding project, Guantanamo was itself a fantasy. It was a fiction of 'discipline,' 'corrective training,' or 'the gentle way in punishment' in Foucaultian terms.[2] As a disciplining architecture, liberal peace exists in the elite discourse/imagination but is not experienced in the same way on the ground or by its prisoners. As discussed in Chap. 2, liberal peacebuilding seeks to reproduce its own self-image.[3] In turn, we can then examine what future this discourse rendered desirable and in what ways it was a 'self-fulfilling prophecy.'[4]

Public Storytelling: Romantic, Militarized Children, and Gothic World Order

In the public speeches, remarks, and interviews of President George W. Bush after September 11, 2001, there are hundreds of references to children. That alone is unremarkable. There are also hundreds of references to children in Bush's pre-9/11 speeches and in the speeches of his successor Barack Obama. Evoking children and future generations is a staple of political rhetoric across ideologies. *How* children are evoked in political culture is the salient point. Among its other strategic roles—persuasion of allies, threatening enemies, electioneering, bureaucratic competition, and agenda-setting—public diplomacy is public storytelling for creating identity and culture and comforting the domestic public in times of crisis. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush urged his people to cherish their children anew: 'Americans are asking, what is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives and hug your children.'[5] He repeatedly talked about how he was 'a loving guy'[6] who worried about the children and families affected by the attacks but who also saw the attack as an opportunity to strengthen families and noted that families were 'hugging more.' These remarks were made in formal speeches, in news conferences, and in seemingly off-the-cuff statements to journalists and internally to government employees. For example, in remarks to the

State Department, Bush said: 'I see a great opportunity when I see moms and dads spend more time with their children here at home. [...] out of this evil will come good, not only here at home, as youngsters all of a sudden understand the definition of sacrifice. [...] I see an opportunity as well to bring peace to the world.'[7]

The President's speeches included reports of the administration's war 'to bring the evildoers to justice so that our children might live in freedom'[8] and so that 'children everywhere' would be free. Policy in Afghanistan was presented as a combination of military and humanitarian action:

> Initially, the terrorists may burrow deeper into caves and other entrenched hiding places. Our military action is also designed to clear the way for sustained, comprehensive, and relentless operations to drive them out and bring them to justice. At the same time, the oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and our allies. As we strike military targets, we'll also drop food, medicine, and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan.[9]

Bush spoke often about his concern for children in Afghanistan, created a fund for American children to send money to Afghan children, and quoted letters from American children that demonstrated their unquestioning willingness to sacrifice even their own parents to his cause:

> I recently received a touching letter that says a lot about the state of America in these difficult times, a letter from a fourth grade girl with a father in the military: "As much as I don't want my dad to fight," she wrote, "I'm willing to give him to you." This is a precious gift, the greatest she could give. This young girl knows what America is all about. Since September 11, an entire generation of young Americans has gained new understanding of the value of freedom and its cost in duty and in sacrifice.[10]

In his Remarks on America's Fund for Afghan Children, October 16, 2001, US children were encouraged to be 'in the army' of good:

> You know, there's a lot of focus on our soldiers, and we're so proud of our soldiers. But there are other ways to be in the army, and one way is to show the goodness of America. One way to fight evil is to fight it with kindness and love and compassion. And what an amazing contrast it is for our children to help children in need in Afghanistan. It points up how ugly and repressive the Taliban Government is of Afghanistan. And the message stands in stark contrast to the message of hate.[11]

In addition to being rhetorically militarized and at the same time made symbols of the US superior values of caring, the children were invited to be humanitarian actors and citizen diplomats. '[O]ne of the best weapons' was kindness,[12] Bush said, and they were urged to donate funds and also to write letters. Bush said: 'one way to fight evil with good is, you can help by writing letters to [Muslim] boys and girls your age.'[13] But they were reminded that there were dangers: 'We're doing everything we can to find anybody who wants to hurt you, to bring them to justice.'[14]

At the same time the plight of children in Afghanistan was often noted[15] though structural causes were not mentioned in favor of a charitable relief effort. American children were enlisted to help rescue the children of Afghanistan by raising money to send tents, winter jackets, and 'hats socks and school supplies, toothbrushes and hairbrushes, candy and toys.'[16] Bush had explained: 'Each gift parcel is marked this way: "A Gift to Afghan Children From American Children."[…] —it's written in several local languages. […] it says love knows no bounds or boundaries.'[17] In this public diplomacy, President Bush was playing the role of the father of the nation. He was comforting but also pointing out lessons and prescribing opportunities to engage in character-building service. Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, was playing the grandfather. Or, as he was described in a US newspaper at the time, Rumsfeld was '[p]art cantankerous professor, part lovable grandfather, part take-no-prisoners warrior' and part 'manager.'[18]

Rumsfeld gave an interview to representatives of 'the young people's press'[19] in March 2002, 6 months after 9/11. Their interview with Rumsfeld was itself reported on the Department of Defense website which recounted: 'To reassure America's children, and adults, about the course of the war against global terrorism, Rumsfeld pointed to the country's democratic government, ideals and traditions.' Rumsfeld explained to the children that democracy 'is an important stabilizing fact in our society, which ought to give one confidence, regardless of their age.' He also talked about being a Navy pilot in World War II. When asked if young people should be afraid after 9/11, Rumsfeld said 'it was good to be alert about possible new terrorist acts against Americans. […] People can get comfortable and learn to live' while still being vigilant, he said, recalling his own youth during World War II.

> What's important is the president and the Congress and the country have decided correctly that the only way we can live with terrorism as a threat is to go find the terrorists and to stop them.

> [If] one looks over the whole span of American history. On big issues, within a reasonable period of time, we tend to make the right decisions as a country, and I think young people can have a lot of confidence in that.[20]

Rumsfeld taught as he underlined for the young reporters 'what's important,' the administration's 'correct' decisions, and the reassurance that the United States is usually 'right' in the end, because democracy is 'stabilizing' and World War II provides a good model for today. The discursive background for the news stories about reading *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo combined the instructional mode of the (grand) parent-leader, drawing on their superior knowledge and experience, with a Gothic narrative of a War on Terror.

Gothic War

In the administration's public diplomacy, there was one version of a politics of peace that contrasted the innocence and kindness of children with the 'evil' of the enemy, and at the same time securitized children, employing this contrast as a weapon of war on the home front and as a symbol of US superiority. The enemy had 'no mercy' and did not share our values.[21] They were the kind of people who sent 'kids' and 'students'[22] to fly planes into buildings while hiding themselves: 'we're after people who, on the one hand, send kids to suicide missions, and on the other hand, try to bury deep inside some cave.'[23] There was, of course, an analogy with the Bush Administration sending young men and women to Afghanistan and then Iraq, while as political leaders they stayed safe at home. 'Doubling' is typical of a Gothic narrative, and as Richard Devetak argues, the Gothic became a 'more prominent discursive feature of IR' after 9/11.[24] Devetak identifies the return of pre-enlightenment forms in the discourses of security after 9/11, in the 'monsters, witches and ghosts' of Islamic terrorism. This discourse produces its own self-fulfilling prophecy in a policy of obsessively chasing external 'monsters' to slay. An imperial Gothic[25] aesthetic is evident in the ways in which the Bush Administration portrayed 9/11 and the War on Terror in relation to children and youth as well. In the Gothic narrative of 9/11, the rational order of everyday life was disrupted by terror, horror, and dread. In the story, a reluctant hero (President Bush) was forced by circumstances into a struggle with evil. The landscape and architecture of the War on Terror, including its detention centers and the collapsed world trade centers, were the haunted houses, prisons, and

ruined castles of the Gothic, where normal rules do not apply. The otherworldliness of Afghanistan under the Taliban, the caves of Tora Bora where Bin Laden may or may not have been hiding, added another level of foreboding and mysterious setting. In the imperial Gothic genre, there is political blowback. Core features are '[p]eople and things with imperial origins turning peaceful English homes into scenes of Gothic terror.'[26] Racial miscegenation fears are part of the foreign 'otherness' of the villain (e.g., Bram Stoker's Dracula). Yet, in the Gothic, villains are not always clear-cut; there are 'doubles' and a 'dialectical and interdependent' relationship between the monster and its pursuers,[27] as was shown by Rowling in *Harry Potter* with the character of Snape (see Chap. 4). Moreover, there is also fear of regression and 'going native,' as in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, a novel which 'both reveals and enacts the contradictions that structure the "civilising mission" of imperialism.'[28] The monsters of the Gothic are 'metaphors of human anxiety.'[29] They are abject, liminal creatures that might defy borders and may suggest an undercurrent of repressed or deviant sexuality. In this vein 'monstrosity' images are used to describe political systems and geopolitical maps that are associated with offensive hybridity or ambiguity. In different ways both Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden are narrated as the monstrous 'other' in the Gothic discourse of IR after 9/11 as Devetak's analysis shows. But the supernatural, pre-enlightenment events and impulses of the Gothic were also well expressed in the 'ghost prisoners' and secret prisons of the Bush Administration's policy; the photographed torture of black-hooded victims and the pantomimes of sexual deviance in Abu Ghraib existed on a continuum with the spectacular barbarism of the 9/11 attackers and, later, with those of ISIS.

The Gothic is also about aristocratic decay, fear of patriarchal structures under attack, paternity anxiety, and the failure of fathers resulting in 'social monstrosity.'[30] In the Gothic genre, sons are cursed by their father's secrets, which return to haunt them, and for President George W. Bush, Iraq was a problem he inherited from Bush senior. The typical roles of women and children in the Gothic narrative also had their analogies in the Bush Administration's public storytelling. There were the women who needed rescue in Afghanistan, and the 'mad women' suicide bombers. But there were also the female soldiers of Abu Ghraib to play the 'mad women' roles and a feminized United States itself to be protected. In the Gothic narrative, children are either innocent or conduits for evil. In Bush's early post-9/11 rhetoric, America, and America's children in particular, were

portrayed as innocent and like the Gothic 'heroine of sensibility.' In the Gothic story, this heroine has lost her nurturing father but now under threat of defilement appeals to God to help her maintain her virtue. She has empathy and helps others in distress. But in US foreign policy discourse other youth had more ambiguous roles as something to be afraid of as well as for.

The stories of Guantanamo prisoners being 'spellbound,' as some in the media put it, by *Harry Potter*, fitted into the Gothic narrative of international relations after 9/11, but also disturbed it. Rowling's series draws on many genres, not just the Gothic. Another important influence on her work is the tradition of British boarding school stories. Popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and until just after World War II, this school story genre emphasized subjectively benign discipline and also reflected colonial values. Ostensibly written from the perspective of the school's pupils, school stories emphasized friendship, loyalty, sports, and pranks, and the students enjoyed their time there, though there were bullies.[31] The ideological message was about moral virtue and instruction. But in their social context, some may also have offered a means of resistance (e.g., they enabled girls to imagine a life outside the home[32]). As well as uncovering fantasies of victory and fears of monsters within, following the *Harry Potter* trope helps locate the aesthetic of the school story in the construction of Guantanamo as a space of liberal peacebuilding. Against a Gothic backdrop, the bodies of children and youth were part of the rhetorical battleground. For example, there was the 2006 atrocity at Mahmudiyah where US soldiers raped and murdered a 14-year-old girl, Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi, and also killed her family. This led to the prosecution and sentencing to life imprisonment of soldiers including the 'ringleader,' a 19-year-old soldier who later hanged himself in prison. The Haditha massacre, the Abu Ghraib abuses, and the deaths of prisoners at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan were additional realities that clashed with the image of US moral mission. They were countered in official rhetoric with images of the good soldier, praised by a loving father-leader. Bush told the story of a young soldier who had been killed in Iraq, saying: 'He wanted to join the Army so badly that his dad let him start training his senior year of high school. He was deployed to Iraq. It tells you something about his character that when his mom asked him if he needed anything [..] she said the only things he asked for were coloring books, crayons, and candy for the Iraqi children he had befriended.'[33]

Harry Potter and the Prisoners of Guantanamo

> They don't need walls and water to keep the prisoners in, not when they're trapped inside their own heads, incapable of a single cheerful thought. Most go mad within weeks.[34]

The first reports of *Harry Potter* being read by War on Terror detainees can be traced to 2004 and refer to a controversial child soldier. In March 2004, *Harry Potter* was mentioned in connection with Canadian citizen Omar Khadr, first in an interview with his mother that mentioned his brother's enjoyment of Rowling's series and the film *The Matrix*,[35] and then in a later story about Khadr's letters after he was transferred to Guantanamo. This news story noted that in Guantanamo, 'Harry Potter is available in five different languages, including Urdu and Farsi,'[36] like the care packages that had been sent to Afghan children at the end of 2001, as part of the humanitarian prong of the administration's Afghan strategy. But, Khadr's story exposed a different effect on children of the other prong of the intervention equation. Khadr was 15 when he was seriously injured in a battle with US forces in Afghanistan in 2002. He was detained and interrogated and had turned 16 when he arrived at Guantanamo. His age meant that he was too old to be placed in the 'holding yard for juveniles,' the one with 'a television, couches and an oceanside view.'[37] Camp Iguana, as the juvenile detention area was called, had held boys aged between 12 and 16 years old, who had been taken from raids or sold to Coalition forces in Afghanistan (though not all juveniles were held there). In briefly reporting the stories of just a few of these young soldiers and prisoners, I seek to illustrate the tangle of dangerous/innocent children/youth that was central to the war of terror on the ground. There were many other youths among the over 700 people that were held at Guantanamo, most of whom had no connections to Al-Qaeda or 9/11.

Worthington documents how these prisoners were 'Taliban footsoldiers [...] humanitarian aid workers, religious teachers, and economic migrants, who were, for the most part, sold to the Americans by their allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan.'[38] Most of the Saudi and Yemeni prisoners, for example, were 16–25-year-olds who had been forced into fighting with the Taliban by a fatwa issued by an elderly cleric. Worthington also reports that they believed they were fighting warlords backed by Russia.[39] The official US line, however, was that they were 'the worst of the worst,' as Bush said:

> These aren't common criminals or bystanders accidentally swept up on the battlefield. We have in place a rigorous process to ensure those held at Guantanamo Bay belong at Guantanamo. Those held at Guantanamo include suspected bomb makers, terrorist trainers, recruiters and facilitators, and potential suicide bombers. They are in our custody so they cannot murder our people.[40]

Bush had remarked in relation to mass starvation in North Korea that 'children are children, regardless of who their leaders are,'[41] but this did not appear to hold true for juveniles that were stripped naked, threatened with dogs, beaten, and held in Guantanamo for several years.

Omar Khadr's lawyers described him as traumatized and made suicidal by his experiences, which included threats of rape while in detention in a US military facility in Bagram, Afghanistan. He confessed, under coercion, to throwing a grenade that killed Sergeant First Class Christopher Speer, a 28-year-old father of two young children from Colorado. Shortly before his death, Speer, an army combat medic, had been given an award for saving two Afghan children from a minefield. One of Khadr's interrogators Joshua R. Claus was later one of the US personnel convicted of abuse of a different prisoner who died in detention in Afghanistan. Claus was 21 at the time. His victim was a 22-year-old taxi driver, named Dilawar,[42] who was also a father of a young child and who most of the US interrogators believed to be innocent at the time. It was Claus who, to pressure 15-year-old Khadr into a confession, made up a story of gang rape by 'big black men and big Nazis.'[43] Khadr was also told that he would be sent to Jordan, Israel, Egypt, or Syria to be raped.[44] His lawyers stated that he was 'feeling worthless, having trouble sleeping and seeing things that aren't really there […] [I]t took him three hours to read a two-page letter outlining incidents of abuse he leveled at his captors.' He was able to focus on a *Harry Potter* book, however.[45]

The fate of Omar Khadr, like the fictional child soldiers of Rowling's creation, such as Draco Malfoy, but also Harry Potter himself, was driven by family connections. Khadr's father was an associate of Osama Bin Laden. But in a brilliant analysis, Kathy Mac shows how Omar Khadr was neither Potter nor Malfoy, juxtaposing excerpts from Rowling's books with pieces of official documentation and evidence from Michelle Shepherd's nonfiction account of Khadr's incarceration *Guantanamo's Child*. I will not reprise Mac's analysis here, except to report that she shows how Harry's disciplinary hearing for use of underage magic (in *The*

Order of the Phoenix) parallels some of the proceedings in Khadr's military tribunal hearings, including the political ruling that found Khadr was not a child soldier. Nevertheless, Radhika Coomaraswamy, special representative of the UN secretary general for children and armed conflict, said Khadr's story was the 'classic child soldier narrative'[46] and he was recognized as 'the first child soldier tried since world war two.'[47]

Other prisoners were also said to be reading Potter and those that were named were also young men with western or westernized backgrounds. 'The Brits were always arguing about which volume of *Harry Potter* they could have,'[48] US Airforce officer Ahmad Al Halabi reportedly explained. Halabi (aged 25) was prosecuted for allegedly being part of a spy ring in Guantanamo and had been accused of sending coded messages. He was later cleared of the charges, along with Chaplain John Yee, another Muslim member of the US military working in Guantanamo. Some of the 'codes' were revealed to be library references. Halabi had been distributing books and taking orders from Australian detainee David Hicks, and others, for titles that included Rowling's work. Hicks had been detained in Afghanistan in 2001, at the age of 26. He was convicted for 'providing material support for terrorism' in 2007, for participating in training at an Al-Qaeda camp. His conviction was overturned in 2015 because he had been tried for a 'war crime' under a 2006 law, but the charges were related to activities that had occurred years earlier.[49] The early news references to *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo humanized the detainees and emphasized these Western(ized) prisoners. They appeared to contradict the administration's message about terrorists: 'Remember, these are—the ones in Guantanamo Bay are killers. They don't share the same values we share.'[50] But they also appeared to support the administration's assertions that the detainees were being well taken care of. That claim posed a cruel contrast to the realities of the lack of Geneva Convention protections, the actual care the prisoners received, and human rights violations in other US run interrogation centers in Afghanistan and Iraq. Fact and fiction were shamelessly blurred.

Through exerting disciplinary power, which contrasts with the feudal model of torture and spectacle, the administration was asserting its moral superiority to its enemies (Taliban, Hussein, for example), were it not for the emaciated prisoners, torture, and deaths in detention. These reflected the 'coercive, corporal, solitary, secret model of the power to punish'[51] that was hidden in 'black sites' and rendition policies. But with negative publicity of prisoner suicides and Koran defilement, a story of the reading

of *Harry Potter* became part of a different discourse of punishment that was evolving, that of the 'reforming jurists' re-categorizing the prisoners as 'juridicial subjects' that could be given military hearings.[52] As the administration faced questions about the legality of the detentions and when the prison would close, the *Harry Potter* story was woven into an ambivalent discourse about 'cold-blooded killers' who would murder if they were out on the street, while creating the image of a space of rehabilitation in Guantanamo. Complex layers of meaning would be included in the justification because in order to discipline, Foucault writes, '[t]he publicity of punishment must not have the physical effect of terror; it must open up a book to be read.'[53]

The next example of Rowling's work being read in Guantanamo is found in an Associated Press story, on Fox News.com, about Congressional representatives visiting the prison in June 2005. Quoting Vice President Dick Cheney's opinion that the prisoners were well fed and 'living in the tropics,' the story also reported that visiting members of Congress had witnessed some interrogations, including one where 'a female interrogator took an unusual approach to wear down a detainee, reading a Harry Potter book aloud for hours. He [the prisoner] turned his back and put his hands over his ears.'[54] This tale of a benign form of interrogation contrasted with the reports of abuse, including by women soldiers, who were involved in beatings of prisoners[55] and subjecting Muslim prisoners to humiliations such as being led naked by female officers to the showers. Soon, however, the *Harry Potter* story changed and the prisoners were said to have enjoyed and requested the books about two months later.

School Stories: Potter as Pacifier and Teaching the Lessons of History

In a short piece in *The Washington Times*, the *Harry Potter* books were said to be at the top of the then 520 prisoners' reading lists with 'a few' of the detainees even 'hooked' on the series and one asking for the movies.[56] The detainees' reading lists were being presented to members of Congress who were investigating accusations of torture at the prison, including the mishandling of the Koran. While a wide range of reading material was available, the *Times* article noted, '[t]he library bans certain book categories, such as ones that deal in political thought,' according to a source identified as a civilian female librarian from the prison called Lori. In making choices about the available books, she stated: 'We try to keep people

calm and not incite riots.'[57] According to this narrative, then, the *Harry Potter* series fell into the category of apolitical and pacifying reading. As riot control it was presented as analogous to babysitting by putting on a movie, or in Foucaultian language, a very 'gentle form of punishment.' Those prisoners who objected were then depicted as ungrateful children, as shown in the official response to the death of Yasser Al-Zahrani. Al-Zahrani had been 17 when he was captured and he committed suicide in Guantanamo along with two other men in 2006. The US officials described their deaths as 'a good PR move' and 'an act of asymmetric warfare committed against us.'[58]

The story of the Guantanamo prisoners' conversion from being tortured by *Harry Potter* to becoming addicted was offered as an attempt to sooth the administration's supporters and pacify the detention center's critics, as confirmed in the 2006 release by the DOD of Ten Facts About Guantanamo, which included the claim that 'the library has 3,500 volumes available in 13 languages—the most requested book is "Harry Potter".'[59] The aim of the release of this information was to 'let people know there's more than one side to the story in Guantanamo,' according to one of the DOD writers.[60]

September 14, 2006—Ten Facts About Guantanamo

1. **The detainees at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility include bin Laden's bodyguards, bomb makers, terrorist trainers and facilitators, and other suspected terrorists.**
2. **More money is spent on meals for detainees than on the U.S. troops stationed there. Detainees are offered up to 4200 calories a day. The average weight gain per detainee is 20 pounds.**
3. **The Muslim call to prayer sounds five times a day. Arrows point detainees toward the holy city of Mecca.**
4. **Detainees receive medical, dental, psychiatric, and optometric care at U.S. taxpayers' expense. In 2005, there were 35 teeth cleanings, 91 cavities filled, and 174 pairs of glasses issued.**
5. **The International Committee of the Red Cross visits detainees at the facility every few months. More than 20,000 messages between detainees and their families have been exchanged.**

6. **Recreation activities include basketball, volleyball, soccer, pingpong, and board games. High-top sneakers are provided.**
7. **Departing detainees receive a Koran, a jean jacket, a white T-shirt, a pair of blue jeans, high-top sneakers, a gym bag of toiletries, and a pillow and blanket for the flight home.**
8. **Entertainment includes Arabic language TV shows, including World Cup soccer games. The library has 3500 volumes available in 13 languages—the most requested book is 'Harry Potter.'**
9. **Guantanamo is the most transparent detention facility in the history of warfare. The Joint Task Force has hosted more than 1000 journalists from more than 40 countries.**
10. **In 2005, Amnesty International stated that 'the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay has become the gulag of our times.'**

From the Department of Defense Office of Public Affairs—OSD Writers' Group.[61]

These 'facts' noted first that the crimes of the detainees were those of, as it was frequently said, 'the worst of the worst.' This was contrasted in point two with the less comfortable treatment the United States' own soldiers were receiving. The memo records that prisoners were being afforded religious freedom, then health care, communication with family, recreation, healthy sports, and language sensitivity through providing Arabic TV and books. 'The punishment must proceed from the crime; the law must appear to be a necessity of things, and power must act while concealing itself beneath the gentle forces of nature' explains Foucault.[62] In Bush's words: 'The Defense Department asked a lot of opinions from respected scholars, and the world's now beginning to see what we meant by a fair system that will enable us to bring people to justice but at the same time protect national security.'[63] In this rhetoric, the detainees were represented as orphaned school children or refugees being supplied with clothing, glasses, dental care, and all of the solicitousness of a moderately attentive parent. They were being made into 'docile bodies' through 'enclosure' and 'control of

activity.'[64] The similarities between this portrayal of Guantanamo and the Victorian boarding school can be seen via the depiction of Dothesbury Hall in Charles Dicken's *Nicholas Nickleby*:

> Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, astronomy, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classical literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum. No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled.[65]

But for the Guantanamo prisoners, who we were told would be sent home if they were innocent, there was a 1950s summer camp vibe to the image of jean-jacket clad, high-top sneaker-wearing detainees travelling with 'pillow and blanket' after ping pong, basketball, and board games. Perhaps, this imagery reflected the generational consciousness of Rumsfeld and Cheney, bristling at the 'gulag' comparison made by Amnesty International, and their target audiences among the public. US congressional representatives who visited the prison, such as Senator Bob Bennett and R-Utah (who like Rumsfeld was born in the early 1930s), reported an 'eye-opening' experience, finding a 'model system' with detainees so well fed that they were 'tending toward obesity' and provided with medical treatment and recreation. He told his local newspapers that 'the detainees like to read the *Harry Potter* series of books out of the library the most.'[66]

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld mentioned the *Harry Potter* detail in his *Los Angeles Times* article defending a controversial speech he had made to the American Legion.[67] Former detainee Moazzam Begg responded with his own article in the LA Times titled 'It's still a gulag, even with "Harry Potter".'[68] In the American Legion speech, Rumsfeld had referenced young soldiers several times: 'our country is grateful to all of you who have children, relatives, serving in our nation's military'; 'no one is more proud of these young people than their Commander-in-Chief,' and he also he talked glowingly about the Boy Scouts, of which he had been a member as exhibiting 'some of the very best qualities of our country.' These points were paired with references to the interwar period in early twentieth-century Europe when there was 'a strange innocence about the world,' and 'those who warned about a coming crisis, the rise of fascism and nazism, [..] were ridiculed or ignored.' There was 'cynicism and moral confusion' in Europe and similar dynamics could be seen in the

contemporary United States, Rumsfeld said. Referencing criticism of Guantanamo and of 'the occasional bad actors' in the US military, Rumsfeld warned 'any kind of moral or intellectual confusion about who and what is right or wrong, can weaken the ability of free societies to persevere,' and he added:

> Those who know the truth need to speak out against these kinds of myths and distortions that are being told about our troops and about our country. America is not what's wrong with the world.
>
> We have learned the lessons of history, of the folly of trying to turn a blind eye to danger. These are lessons you know well, lessons that your heroism has helped to teach to generations of Americans.[69]

On the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Bush asked the public: 'Do we have the confidence to do in the Middle East what our fathers and grandfathers accomplished in Europe and Asia?'[70]

Foucault described two images of discipline, the 'discipline-blockade' which Guantanamo emulated and the 'discipline mechanism' which was the extension of control to the whole society.[71] To achieve the latter, the administration deployed 'a body of knowledge'[72]: imparting that the lessons of the two world wars were patriotism, masculinity, respect for the military, and no appeasement of 'monsters.' In the twenty-first century with an all-volunteer military that was distant from the masses, and an international 'coalition of the willing' operating against much of their public's objections, the ideological force/technique of exceptionalism was applied by evoking dread monsters and paternal protection. Bush told the story: 'One detainee held at Guantanamo told a questioner questioning him—he said this: "I'll never forget your face. I will kill you, your brothers, your mother, and your sisters."'[73] In the administration's argument, it followed that the Iraq War was necessary because homes and children were targeted in a zero-sum game:

> We know that if they were able to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, they would use them against us. We face an enemy determined to bring death and suffering into our homes. America did not ask for this war, and every American wishes it were over. So do I. But the war is not over, and it will not be over until either we or the extremists emerge victorious. If we do not defeat these enemies now, we will leave our children to face a Middle East overrun by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons.[74]

The 'common sense' of unquestioning support for military policy is the equivalent of the 'military institution' of the eighteenth-century great powers: it disciplines and maintains peace and order on the home front.[75] As Foucault notes the disciplining 'complex of signs must engage with the mechanics of forces; reduce the desire that made the crime attractive.'[76] The crime that was being deterred was the crime of dissent and questioning policy. The specter of a domestic youth revolt weakening resolve in war fighting is a conventional wisdom of conservatives about the failure of the Vietnam War.

Populist Exceptionalism and Guantanamo as a Space of Liberal Peacebuilding

The '10 facts about Guantanamo' DOD press release was reported on globally. Although the availability of *Harry Potter* books was only one of ten 'facts,' the *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo story had headline value, and it was mainstreamed and regularly reappeared over the next few years in reports about the detention center.[77] Prisoners were 'spellbound,' 'bewitched,' and 'hooked.' Visiting the prison in 2007, members of the press interviewed the civilian contractor who was the librarian for the camp. She again noted that while poetry and religious texts were popular, the prisoners were 'most enthralled with Pashtun translations of the popular children's book series, Harry Potter.'[78] The *Washington Post* reported that *Harry Potter* books were offered as a treat to one prisoner in exchange for 'responsiveness,'[79] as did the *Wall Street Journal* in an opinion piece entitled 'The Gitmo High Life' by Robert Pollock. Describing his visit to the prison, Pollock noted the stringent rules in the Army Field Manual: 'Not only does that mean no "torture" is going on. Your average good-cop bad-cop routine isn't allowed. Cooperative detainees get rewards like movies. "Harry Potter" is one of their favorites.'[80] All of this emphasis on the conditions of Guantanamo, designed to counter the torture claims, distracted from other human rights issues such as the lack of evidence or charges and indefinite detention. The idea was evolving that regardless of guilt or innocence, the United States was doing the detainees a favor by elevating them out of poverty and backward thinking, as per the ideology of the liberal peace. Since disciplinary punishment must be 'corrective,'[81] Guantanamo was a space of rehabilitation. A Defense Department official wrote about one 31-year-old detainee that he would 'return home a healthier, more educated Afghan citizen.' Not only that, he would also be

'prepared to participate in political change, engage in rebuilding his country, or return to herding livestock.' In an othering rationalization, it was argued that the prisoner would have a 'choice based on options he would not have had if not for his time in Guantanamo.'[82]

The *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo story played well with the neoconservative base and evoked pronouncements of the success of neoliberal peace, as well. Jihadwatch bloggers responded to the story with a mixture of relief and glee commenting that it served to illustrate the attractiveness of US values as well as the soft conditions in 'club gitmo.' They wrote:

> Well, we've won a few hearts and minds, anyway.
>
> Oh My God! We have turned hardened jihadis into hapless Western consumers. Will the torture never cease?

Domesticating the detainees as a type of 'welfare queen', some commentators saw these claims as proof that prison life was 'a heaven on earth', stating:

> Would YOU want to leave the relative paradise of Western Civilization with all of its comforts—even in confinement—to go back to some islamic hellhole? [83]
>
> I mean they get indoor bathrooms and showers, 3 good squares a day; Korans are available, the guards scrambling around to make their lives as comfortable as possible due [to] the whiney leftists who think they get tortured every day. The only prisoners who are unhappy are the western jihadists who think they are missing out on a goldmine of benefits once they are out and screaming to the gullible public of their horrible treatment…[84]

Instead of questioning the story, interpreting the prisoners' interest in *Harry Potter* as evidence of the global popularity of the series, or even considering it as proof of the prisoners' lack of otherness, Jihadwatch commentators engaged in their own kind of magical thinking: when exposed to the possibilities for western-style consumption and entertainment, the prisoners had quickly converted to secular materialism, or as one commentator happily noted, they were being exposed to superior values of Christianity.

> Harry Potter translated into Arabic, eh? […I]n the course of the book there are two verbatim quotations from the Christian scriptures? […] Teehee. These folks in Gitmo would never accept a bible if it was offered them, but

> if they're reading Harry Potter they're getting exposed to all *sorts* of ideas that are wholly alien to Islam.[85]

Harry's use of nonviolence against Voldemort is an important feature of the series (discussed in Chap. 4), illustrating that this commentator was a careful reader of Rowling, even if unschooled in traditions of Islamic nonviolence and of Christian biblical violence. A filter of American exceptionalism ensures that none of these commentators considered that the prisoners might imagine the United States as a Voldemort-like power, destined for a self-destructive backlash. For the Jihadwatch bloggers, the United States was Harry who used his power moderately and to heal. However, another way in which the story was kept in circulation was through use by its critics.

Dissent and Resistance from Within

The *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo story was not universally convincing in deflecting criticism of the administration, of course. At the same time as the original DOD release was circulating, Candace Gorman, the lawyer for Libyan detainees Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi and Algerian Razak Ali, wrote about the difficulty of representing her clients when the government would not provide information of the charges against them. Instead, 'we spent a long time discussing the Harry Potter books,' she said, which were 36-year-old Ali's 'favourite books at the Guantanamo library.' She continued:

> Ali sees parallels between George W. Bush and J.K. Rowling's arch-villain, Voldemort. Guantanamo is the real-world equivalent of Azkaban, the cheerless prison guarded by the soulless tormentors.[86]

Gorman made a link between the literary world and the fictions of 'war on terror' politics: 'It seems almost natural that fact and fantasy collide in Guantanamo, the prison camp dreamed up by the Bush Administration lawyers. Checks and balances, constitutional protections and long-standing legal traditions all dissolve before their fanciful unitary executive theory,' she wrote.[87] Gorman and other critics used the administration's own rhetoric as a weapon, deconstructing the official narrative; if these stories were true, then it could not possibly be the case that the prison held only 'the worst of the worst,' wrote Worthington

online: 'it serves only to demonstrate that the enduring claims that Guantánamo contains a significant number of al-Qaeda members or sympathizers are wildly mistaken, as it is unimaginable that, under any circumstances, Osama bin Laden or Ayman al-Zawahiri would take some light relief from their ideology by reading books that are so thoroughly drenched in paganism and sorcery.'[88]

Taking yet another angle, the Justice Campaign argued that there was forced reading of children's books to make the prisoners 'childlike' and more malleable.[89] A military prosecutor wrote later of David Hicks 'we told the world they were the worst of the worst,' but he was a 'knucklehead.'[90] Supposedly absolving him of being a major terrorist, this label also was a way of justifying the discipline/instruction he had been subjected to in Guantanamo. But, other than the prisoners, who else was being pacified and how? What was being admitted in these attempts to persuade? Prisoner riots and hunger strikes and domestic political questions were indicated as the short-term concerns. In the longer term, a narrative of US moral exceptionalism was being shored up. There was also the anxiety about different categories of youth: not just the detainees but also US soldiers, the children in detention, homegrown Jihadis, and the specter of patriotic dissent and rebels within.

The 'fact' of *Harry Potter* being read in Guantanamo, from the DOD press release of 2006, was reproduced again in George W. Bush's 2010 memoir *Decision Point* and Donald Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown* in 2011, though only as a footnote in the latter.[91] This 'fact' along with others about the detainees' treatments was part of a foreign policy fiction. The title of Rumsfeld's memoir refers to his now infamous 2003 comment about foreign policy threats. 'There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know,' Rumsfeld had worried. But in the course of his 'amateur philosophising,' Slavoj Zizek has pointed out Rumsfeld left out the realm of unconscious knowledge: 'What he forgot to add was the crucial fourth term: the "unknown knowns,"' wrote Zizek, 'things we don't know that we know—which is precisely the Freudian unconscious, the *"knowledge which doesn't know itself,"* as Lacan used to say.'[92] What was being revealed with the repetition of the story of *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo that was returned to again and again in media reports and political memoirs? What was the 'unknown known,' the unconscious renderings of a buried fear or desire that the

story of *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo revealed? Of course, at least one detainee was on the record with an answer; according to his lawyer, the truth was that 'President George W. Bush was his own version of Voldemort.'[93] Such a characterization had also been made about Donald Rumsfeld, from within the US government itself, though more tongue-in-cheek in usage in the latter case. In a 2005 interview about how policy might change with the appointment of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State, an unnamed American 'senior foreign service officer' was skeptical and quipped that 'Voldemort is still there,' in reference to the Defense Secretary.[94] Both elite and collective public doubts about the morality of the War on Terror and its likelihood to succeed were indicated.

Zizek notes that 'the Abu Ghraib scandal shows that the main dangers lie in the "unknown knowns"—the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values.'[95] Among those unknown knowns were not just the racism and sexual anxieties that drove young soldiers to threaten a 15-year-old with rape by 'big black men and Nazis,' and the militarism of a larger culture of militainment. There was also the fear of the danger within, from those soldiers, their critics, and the specter of domestic Jihadis-in-the-making. Some of the key testimony to the abuses in Guantanamo came from former prisoner guards, such as Brandon Neely, who recalled that in the first 6 months the detention center was open the prisoners were emaciated and described many other abuses and indignities.[96] Neely noted in his memoir and in testimony given to the Guantanamo Testimonial Project[97] how two of the detainees liked Doctor Dre and Eminem; 'they were just like me,' he said, and not the 'monsters' that he had been told to expect.

> As the months went on, one or two of us would actually question what was going on here, the way the detainees were being treated and if they were actually terrorists or not, but being no-ones, and young, and dumb, we never questioned anything further; just did our time until we went home.[98]

Neely's empathy for the prisoners destabilizes the official narrative, but his own situation described in his own words as 'doing time' was also one of submitting to disciplinary power. Neely notes that the day before his departure from his role as the guard at Guantanamo he, like other personnel there, was 'told by the United States Army that, if we did not sign this piece of paper that stated we would not talk to the press, write a book, or

make a movie, we could not leave and go back home.'[99] Demonstrating yet another way in which ideas of parental duty are political, Neely drew on his responsibilities as a father to explain why he did eventually talk: 'How can I as a father tell my children to tell the truth and stand up for what they believe in if I was not willing to do the same?'[100]

For the Bush Administration, 'youth' had several facets: in addition to children who had to be protected and young people who could be called upon to sacrifice themselves in military service, there was the 'social monstrosity' of the homegrown Jihadi. There was also rebellious soldier, the human rights abusers of Abu Ghraib, but also critics from within, like Neely, and defectors. In this light, we should not forget the anxiety that was created in certain segments of the US population by a young 'upstart' moving into the White House after the 2008 election. Rush Limbaugh called Obama 'the boy President' and for racist conservatives, Obama's election was a Gothic nightmare. In another self-fulfilling prophecy, there would eventually be NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, who did not agree with his leaders about the US government being 'right' and who in 2013 described his rebellious actions as 'digital defense against the dark arts,' in yet another *Harry Potter* reference.[101]

Presidential Candidate Barack Obama was a big *Harry Potter* fan according to 2007 reports that Obama read the books to his daughters. His election would 'bode[s] well for the "special relationship" between the UK and USA,' because *Harry Potter* was a taste shared with then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, said an article in *The Telegraph*.[102] Indeed, *Harry Potter* helped explain Obama's winning of the election according to a study of the attitudes of US Millennials.[103] Thus, Jihadwatch bloggers and Bush Administration members/supporters were not the only observers to take comfort in the detail of *Harry Potter* being read in Guantanamo. The story continued to circulate after the election of President Obama in 2008.

In a 2008 book by Matthew Alexander (an alias) with John R. Bruning called *How to Break a Terrorist*, the authors claim that interrogators used their prisoners' mutual like of *Harry Potter* to get vital intelligence ultimately leading to the killing of the head of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.[104] Like other interrogation techniques, *Harry Potter* had also migrated. In a *Washington Post* opinion editorial based on Bruning's book, and condemning the torture and abuse in Guantanamo and Iraq, Alexander argued that this cleverer approach to interrogation was more in tune with American values and traditions and declared his 'optimism' about the Obama Administration and US future policy.[105]

Over five years, the significance of reading *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo underwent subtle shifts. At first, it had been used via Fox News as an example of benign interrogation and the prisoners had disliked it (their otherness and our superiority being indicated). Rapidly, the prisoners had been converted. Then, in the story of interrogation described in the Alexander article (above), there was a return to the benign interrogation theme, but this time *Harry Potter* worked as a technique of rapport-building because the prisoners liked and identified with the books and by extension with their interrogators. They had been reimagined in the image of the dominant: in a fantasy of liberal peacebuilding.

Enhancing Liberal Peace

Guantanamo remained open, despite the campaign pledges of Barack Obama (by his time of taking office, the number of prisoners had fallen, but the categorizing of the prisoners under his administration remained the same), and the stories of Harry's influence there continued but with additional detail. A *Time* article from 2010 began: 'There's not a lot to look forward to […] no visits from loved ones; no parole or release date; and for many, no prospect even of a day in court to answer charges. Still, at least there's Harry Potter. He may not come riding in on the back of a hippogriff to free his favorite captives from their own version of Azkaban, but he shows up once a week on a cart of books from the prison library, offering an escape of the imagination treasured by many.'[106] Continuing with this breezy portrayal, the article informed readers that the prisoners could check out a book for 30 days and had a range of titles to choose from including poetry, the *Lord of the Rings*, *National Geographic*, dictionaries, and President Barack Obama's memoirs, though the latter were not that popular it was reported. Confirming the transnational scope of the 'war on terror' and the government's detention policy, the story noted that the library that had started in 2003 with books in five languages, now had offerings that 'span some 18 languages including Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Pashto, Russian, French and English.' The photograph accompanying the article was of a shelf of ten Arabic language copies of Rowling's 2005 book *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. There was a photo credit, but the location of the books was not indicated. However, it was noted that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helped to find books in languages such as Uzbek and Indonesian Bahasa. Guantanamo was beginning to sound like a permanent international boarding school.

The *Time* article also reproduced the claim from the original *Washington Times* piece that reading materials were selected for their security implications and pacifying effects:

> 'Guantánamo's library is carefully screened to prevent prisoners from getting access to books by religious or political extremists that could create controversy or teach them methods of resistance. The library also bans books that have excessive graphic violence, military topics, travel offers, classified advertisements (which could be used to send coded messages to the detainees) and physical geography, such as maps of buildings or subway systems that could provide targets for potential attacks.'[107]

Decisions about banned materials were made by the military with one exception. Books with sexual content were also forbidden but at the request of the prisoners themselves. Extending the liberal interventionism analogy, this was the culturally sensitive part of liberal peacebuilding. But an additional humanitarian motive behind providing reading material was provided. Navy Lt. Robert Collett, nicknamed the 'Dean of Gitmo U,' stated for the article that Dan Brown's books were very popular but hard to find in Arabic. Other favorites included 'Islamic texts and books by John Grisham, Agatha Christie and the *Harry Potter* series, as well as travel books that feature large colorful photos of the outside world. The ocean, in particular, is always a hit,' and the library also included titles such as the self-help book *Don't Be Sad*.

According to the D.C. spokesperson for the ICRC Martin De Boer, 'Access to books and news from the outside is very important to the prisoners mental state'—a reminder that there had been unrest in the past and that extended detention was detrimental to well-being. Guantanamo personnel also worked to satisfy the reading needs of the detainees: 'Officers scan newspapers to stay up on the latest titles and try to meet requests from prisoners.' Under the Obama Administration, the suggestion was books like *Harry Potter* were not used to interrogate or pacify alone, they were also provided as part of duty of care. Fully evolved from a 'state of exception' devoid of laws, Guantanamo was normalized. It had first been transformed to a disciplining well-run prison for deserved punishment, then to a reformatory for juvenile delinquents, regardless of age, and finally a boarding school, almost as fantastical as Hogwarts.

Conservative media outlets reported that some prisoners had asked to stay in the prison rather than be sent home: 'Far from being tortured, as

some protestors outside the White House alleged last week […] prisoners at Gitmo are allowed to take classes with some even receiving "home-schooling",'[108] stated a CNS article quoting a former army prosecutor in the prison Kyndra Rotunda, author of *Honor Bound*. This narrative switches from an image of a well-run dog kennel—'They are outside of their housing bays for up to 12 hours a day'—before reverting to a picture of a well-stocked school/community center: 'During that time, they can take classes, visit the library–which has over 5,000 titles, including the *Harry Potter* series translated into Arabic, which are very popular–exercise, check out movies or games, play sports–detainees can choose from a selection of athletic shoes–or even visit the computer lab.' Six years later, this quotation reproduces the DOD press release from 2006.

As a repeated trope of media commentary on the prison from 2004 onward, the reading of *Harry Potter* books in Guantanamo was officially offered to support the Bush Administration's argument that the conditions in the prison were good. Arising organically from a few of the prisoners' actual tastes, it was soon placed as a small familiarizing detail in a larger picture that was painted by a 'writers' group' attached to the DOD and was aimed at balancing criticism. In a vacuum of information about the prison, such stories got picked up easily, especially as they also pushed some important buttons. The reading of *Harry Potter* story, which suggested a benign rule at Guantanamo, fits with the 'common sense' narrative of US exceptionalism, a deeply engrained set of beliefs that is institutionalized in the US political system and popular culture. In President Bush's version, American exceptionalism was also a mythic struggle of good people versus 'evildoers'—the stuff of children's tales. In President Obama's version, the instructional mechanism was more nuanced, but the ideal of 'remaking the world' remained intact and young people (and not just American youth) were the agents of change, 'because young people are unburdened by the biases or prejudices of the past.' He said:

> That is a great privilege of youth. But it's also a tremendous responsibility because it is you who must, ultimately, decide what we do with this incredible moment in history.[109]

In response to a French journalist's question, Obama noted: 'I think that the main thing I always want to tell young people is that if they work hard and they aren't constrained by the status quo, by what has happened

before, then they can remake the world.' But this had to be done 'in a responsible way.'[110] Obama spoke about the need for 'a common and persistent effort to combat fear and want wherever they exist'[111] and 'transmitting to young people the sense that this is really their world for the making and that on issues like climate change or economic inequality or how do we deal with world health issues or how do we deal with conflict, that in all these areas, creating a more peaceful, prosperous world is up to them.'[112] But the dilemmas related to real 'child soldiers' in the 'war on terror' also destabilized the Obama version of the exceptionalist narrative, as illustrated in the case of Omar Khadr.

Back to School: Graduating Omar Khadr

In the case of detainee Omar Khadr, *Human Rights Watch* had reported: 'In spite of Khadr's young age at the time of his capture, the United States refused to apply universally recognized standards of juvenile justice in his case, or even to acknowledge Khadr's status as a juvenile. Both US and international law allow for detention of juveniles only as a last resort, require juveniles to be provided educational opportunities and housed separately from adults, and mandate a prompt determination of all cases involving children. Yet Khadr has been incarcerated with adults, reportedly subjected to abusive interrogations, and not provided with any educational opportunities (unlike other children at Guantanamo).' Omar Khadr was 16 when he arrived at Guantanamo Bay and 'was considered too old to qualify for a room' in the juvenile wing.[113] While the military claimed he was humanely treated, his lawyers said he had PTSD and 'prison guards used his body to mop up urine.' As already noted earlier in this chapter, he had been threatened with rape. A news report wondered: 'Omar Khadr may be a cold-blooded killer who trained with al-Qaida before throwing a grenade at a U.S. soldier in Afghanistan six years ago. Or he may be a harmless Toronto teenager with an affinity for Harry Potter.'[114] He could not be both. Again, there was no room for ambiguity. It was one or the other. But, in fact, the ambiguity surrounding this point was used by both the administration's and the detainee's lawyers who in different ways used *Harry Potter* as a signpost in Khadr's case.

After being in US custody for more than eight years, Khadr was given a final hearing in US Military court in 2010. In one part of the trial, his fitness or lack thereof for release was linked to the materials he had read in Guantanamo—on how well he had been schooled in detention. During

the trial, a prosecution witness, psychiatrist Dr. Michael Welner, claimed that Khadr was too dangerous to be released. Welner singled out *Harry Potter* as an example of a bad influence on the detainee. Khadr had memorized the Koran but, other than that, said Welner, he'd only read *Harry Potter* for 'escape' while imprisoned in Guantanamo.

> 'He reads *Harry Potter* but you know, in terms of reading escapist materials, which is what he has actually described to me, he reads things to just get away, to not think about things. He is very angry about being in custody, but he does not involve himself in the kinds of things that would acculturate him to this western environment.'

> 'I think he'll derive far more benefit from going to school than reading *Harry Potter* books. And certainly it will make him more employable and to the degree that he concentrates on his studies it will be a distraction of sorts, but that's all that it is, it is a momentary distraction from something that is—that is a core, passionate belief—he killed. He killed in the furtherance of being a martyr. That says something about the meaning of this to him. It means something to him and so, certainly something that enhances his skills is a good thing, it's a nice thing and—but again we're talking about something that—that is a—a matter of deviant thinking, deviant behavior.'

Khadr's rehabilitation potential and security significance was debated via a contestation around reading materials. Under cross-examination, Welner admitted that Khadr had also told him he had read the biographies of Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, and Ishmael Beah and books by Danielle Steel as well as Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series and others. The defense appeared to counter with the claim that the Guantanamo system was molding not the next generation of terrorists but, if Khadr's reading of Obama and Mandela was relevant, perhaps, its statesmen. Perhaps it *would* be alright in the end—just as in a fantasy happy ending—with the right instruction.

But Welner still maintained that 'It was instructive to me' that Khadr was reading *Harry Potter*. In countering with a fuller list of Khadr's reading, the defense used both Khadr's westernization and the child soldier image to argue that he was a victim and could be rehabilitated. Khadr's reading material destabilized the narrative of the fanatical evildoer, at least for those who looked at the world through a secular, human rights lens. But it could equally be interpreted as proof of threat as it was in Welner's depiction of the detainee as part fearsome terrorist and part uneducated

delinquent.[115] Welner insisted that 'the way he depicted his choice in reading and the things that he watched was to escape and fantasy' which made the memoirs of Obama, Beah, and Mandela on a par with fiction about wizards and vampires.

Ironically the narrative used to soothe the detention center's critics, and show the prison's good side, was now produced as proof of 'deviance' in the military's case against Khadr. No matter Khadr's guilt or innocence, the length of this detention without trial, the abuses he had experienced from the state, the important thing was, had he been appropriately schooled? Had he been a good student? This approach to his rehabilitation refracted the roles of other young men within the system, like the soldiers and contractors who had committed crimes and abuses, and the other insiders who became whistleblowers like Snowden or were controversially 'deviant' in other ways, such as Chelsea Manning and Bowe Bergdahl, for example.

In the post-9/11 period, US government officials created 'a new social reality' using discursive strategies to convince the public that terrorism threatened almost everything important and that the Bush Administration's preferred counter-terrorism policy was the inevitable and right response.[116] Part of this reality-creating involved deflecting discomforting challenges to the public's belief in US moral superiority and benign intent and action in the world that policies like internment and 'enhanced interrogation' undermined. Intertextual analysis of the range of different statements about *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo shows one way in which such a discourse was implemented, attempting to prevent attrition of the 'taken-for-granted' view of US exceptionalism, and shore up the Bush Administration's power to implement their 'war on terror' policies. Further, just as Weldes noted that 'globalization is science fiction,' we can see by tracing the journey of *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo how 'the war on terror' was also a fantasy story replete with magical thinking and spell work. Through language, rhetoric, obfuscation, and deception (the spell work of politics), it sought to compel without having to persuade through evidence. This was not war as spectacle, as in its very nature Guantanamo was unobservable. It was not just interactive war, either; it was war as Gothic myth paired with a fantasy of liberal discipline and instruction. Both the Gothic and the failures of the liberal discipline narrative came back further refined in those Americans and Europeans who joined Jihad and indeed in ISIS propaganda videos. A paradox of the liberal peace appears in the emulations of the US by ISIS in their media campaigns that drew on pop culture such as the TV series *Homeland*[117] and presented their hostages in Guantanamo-style prisoner jumpsuits.

Forward to the Past

In 2013 a group of Kazakh students asked visiting British Prime Minister David Cameron which *Harry Potter* character he would like to be. He responded that he had been reintroduced to the books by his then nine-year-old daughter and that: 'I suppose in the end you know if you've got any sense you want to be Harry Potter. That must be the correct answer.'[118] Cameron could have chosen an adult character from the series. He could have chosen one of the teachers at Hogwarts, or perhaps, most appropriately, the Minister of Magic. In his response to the Kazakh students, Cameron had gone on to say: 'I suspect people in Britain might want to paint me in a different role but I'll let them do that, I won't make the work easier for them.'[119] David Cameron understood that there was an answer he was supposed to give, if he had 'any sense.' The 'correct answer' *had* to be Harry Potter, the hero of Rowling's series. He treated the student's question as the political question it was: he could not be seen to be out of touch with their interests and his choice could be revealing. But he did so by acknowledging his role as a parent, stating that his daughter had reintroduced him to the books. Cameron's concern about being portrayed as Voldemort, Harry Potter's evil adversary, may not have been that misplaced. After all, several years earlier, the detainees in Guantanamo Bay Prison and their lawyers had leveled such as a charge against George W. Bush, as discussed above. But a decade later, a different candidate for the role of Voldemort was offered by Maajid Nawaz in a Fox News interview with Megyn Kelly on ISIS in 2015. Nawaz claimed that President Obama was 'failing the Harry Potter test' by not naming the ISIS threat as inherently about Islamic extremist ideology, 'If you can't name Voldemort, everyone fears him even more. When we don't name the Islamist ideology, what happens as a result is that people who naturally don't know about my own religion, Islam, will think it's the religion that's at fault itself.'[120]

Through this analysis we can see how 'everyday cultural meanings' connected with pop culture are part of 'the field of discourses' that influence elites views of world politics.[121] Pop culture is part of the decisionmakers' own frames of reference when considering policy,[122] but with the exception of the deployment of *Harry Potter*-in-Guantanamo rhetoric, overt references by politicians are usually prompted by journalist or audience questions: they are political acts of engagement initiated by the media, publics, and, as shown in some of the examples above, by the youth.

Through their shared knowledge of Potter and in applying it to politics, diverse political actors like Cameron, the Kazakh students, Nawaz, Edward Snowden, the US State Department representative, and the writers' group at the DOD simply confirm that, as Jutta Weldes put it, popular culture 'helps to construct the social reality of world politics for elites and publics alike.'[123] *Harry Potter* is a folk myth that elites recognize and can draw on because it resonates with their (global) publics. Furthermore, as the rest of this book explores, pop culture is intimately involved in the social construction of peace.

Notes

1. Some of the material in this section of the chapter was discussed in my article "Disarming 'Militainment': Reading Peace and Resistance" in Peacebuilding. 2015; 3(2): 200–217.
2. Foucault M. Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage; 1979. Quote at p. 104.
3. Heathershaw J. Unpacking the liberal peace: The dividing and merging of peacebuilding discourses. Millennium. 2008; 36(3): 597–621. Quote at p. 620.
4. See Weldes J. Globalisation is science fiction. Millennium. 2001; 30(3): 647–667; Weldes J. High politics and low data: Globalization discourses and popular culture. In: Yanow D. Schwartz-Shea P. editors. Interpretation and method. Empirical research method and the interpretative turn. Armonk. NTY: M.E. Sharpe; 2006. pp. 176–186. Quote at p. 178.
5. Bush GW. Address before a joint session of the congress on the United States response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. Washington D.C. September 20. 2001. In: Public Papers of George W. Bush: July 1–December 31. 2001. Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (PPP). Washington D.C: Office of the Federal Register National Archives and Records Administration. Quote at p. 1140.
6. Bush GW. Remarks in a telephone conversation with New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and New York Governor George E. Pataki and an exchange with reporters. September 13 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1106.
7. Bush GW. Remarks to department of state employees. October 4. 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1189; and Remarks to department of labor employees. October 4. 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1193.
8. Bush GW. Remarks at the swearing-in ceremony for Tom Ridge as Director of the Office of Homeland Security. October 8 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1203; See also The President's news conference when he said: 'People often ask me, how long will this last? This particular battlefront will last as

long as it takes to bring Al Qaida to justice. It may happen tomorrow; it may happen a month from now; it may take a year or 2. But we will prevail. […] We must rid the world of terrorists so our children and grandchildren can grow up in freedom.' October 11 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1221.

9. Bush GW. Address to the nation announcing strikes against Al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban military installations in Afghanistan. October 7 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1201.
10. Bush GW. Ibid. Quote at p. 1202. See also: 'Even 7000 miles away, across oceans and continents, on mountaintops and in caves, you will not escape the justice of this Nation. For many Americans, these 4 months have brought sorrow and pain that will never completely go away. Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: "Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I don't want to play football until I can play with you again some day.' Bush GW. Address before a joint session of the congress on the state of the union. January 29 2002. PPP. Quote at p. 129.
11. Bush GW. Remarks on America's fund for Afghan children. October 16 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1245. He also added: 'I know some boys and girls worry, but by going out to raise money to help others, it'll help ease the worry and set such a good example for everybody else to see.' PPP. Quote at p. 1246.
12. Bush GW. The President's news conference. October 11 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1218; At home, Bush also proposed legislation to make it easier for the government to fund faith-based charities in a bill called 'Armies of Compassion.' He said: 'We must pass and sign into law an "Armies of Compassion" bill this year that encourages and supports charitable giving, removes unneeded barriers to government support for community and faith-based groups, and authorizes important initiatives to help those in need.' See Bush GW. Letter to congressional leaders on proposed 'armies of compassion' legislation. November 7 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1358.
13. Bush GW. Remarks on America's fund for Afghan children. October 16 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1301; see also Bush GW. Remarks at the Thurgood Marshall extended elementary school. October 25 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1302.
14. Bush GW. Remarks on America's fund for Afghan children. October 16 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1246.
15. Bush said: 'Almost half of Afghan children suffer from malnutrition. One in four Afghan children won't live beyond their fifth birthday.' Bush GW. Remarks in New Windsor, Maryland, on America's fund for Afghan children. December 8, 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1498.
16. Bush GW. Remarks in New Windsor, Maryland, on America's fund for Afghan children. December 8, 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1497.

17. Bush GW. Ibid. Quote at p. 1497.
18. Weisman J. Rumsfeld is a mix of warrior and manager. USA Today. December 21 2001. http://usatoday30.usatodid ay.com/news/sept11/2001/12/21/rumsfeld-rules-usat.htm Accessed Dec 10 2015.
19. There were young reporters representing Nickelodeon's Nick News, The Washington Post KidsPost, and Time for Kids magazine.
20. Gilmore G. Rumsfeld 'meets the Young People's Press'. American Forces Press Service. March 26. 2002. US Department of Defense. http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=44219 Accessed December 10 2015.
21. Bush GW. Remarks to the community at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. November 21. 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1440; Remarks to the United States attorneys' conference. November 29. 2001. PPP. Quote at p. 1459.
22. Bush GW. Address before a joint session of the congress on the state of the union. January 29. 2002. PPP. Quote at p. 129. See also the continuation of this theme through 2006 and 2007: 'You might remember, some of the kids that flew those airplanes were on—here as students. And we did what most Americans expected us to do— made sure we inventoried where we were so we could best protect the American people.' 2006. PPP. Quote at p. 935; and Bush GW. Interview with David Speers of Sky News. August 30. 2007. PPP. Quote at p. 1146.
23. Bush GW. Address before a joint session of the congress on the state of the union. January 29. 2002. PPP. Quote at p. 129.
24. Devetak R. The gothic scene of international relations: ghosts, monsters, terror and the sublime after September 11. Review of International Studies. 2005; 31(4): 621–43. Quote at p. 622.
25. Daly S. The imperial gothic. Discovering literature: The romantics and the Victorians. No date. The British Library Online. http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-imperial-gothic Accessed December 10 2015.
26. Bertha Mason, the Jamaican-born 'mad' wife of Mr. Rochester in Bronte's *Jane Eyre* is an example. See Daly S. Ibid.
27. Devetak R. 2005. Quote at p. 625.
28. Daly S. The imperial gothic.
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CHAPTER 6

Reading Peace Beyond Trauma, Resistance, and Hope in *The Hunger Games*

This chapter examines the politics of peace in Suzanne Collins' young adult (YA) dystopian-romance trilogy *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010).[1] While J.K. Rowling has often described the Potter series as a 'prolonged argument for tolerance,'[2] Suzanne Collins has been equally clear in asserting her aim to educate children about war.[3] Collins was influenced by her father's military service in Vietnam. She describes her childhood memories of his absence: 'you don't really have the words to express your concern. There's only this continued absence.' Having had a deployed parent, she witnessed the aftermath of her father's war, including his 'nightmares [...] that lasted his whole life.'[4] Collins was also influenced by channel surfing and noticing how war coverage and reality TV shows dissolved into each other as she switched television stations. In *The Hunger Games*, Collins' writing makes 'virtual' war a visceral experience. She offers violence as entertainment and critiques it. Such critique is important because of the potential effect of military-entertainment collaborations on the demos' support for wars, as Stahl explains: 'Our goal as a polity should be to cultivate a citizen conscious of the gravity of this responsibility, a citizen critical of the cultural forces that would turn real soldiers into pawns in a game and real civilians into fodder for a cynical pastime.'[5] *The Hunger Games* clearly aims to stir this kind of consciousness. As a mediated spectacle, *The Hunger Games* doubles as 'militainment' and its opponent. As the chapter shows, Collins'

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work responds to virtual/virtuous war by offering emotionally gripping accounts of suffering and survival strategies that are similar to those that people are forced to adopt in real-world conflicts. Collins' narrative provides insights into the motivations of (child) soldiers and tipping points for mass political mobilization, thus intervening in international politics. The violence of the state is unjust and extreme. Her child characters actively resist oppression, using both violent and nonviolent forms of resistance. The oppressed fight back and successfully bring down a government. But by the end of the series, Collins levels a powerful critique of revolutionary war as a game of cynical collateral damage. Memorialization of those lost is part of the healing process, and the main protagonists' post-war repudiation of violence sets Collins' work apart from the conventional mythic war epic. Significantly, she offers a vision of local, relational peace based on low-tech, communal, and creative responses to 'virtual war' that dismantles a system of gender binaries and hinges on hope of rebirth through memory of the losses of war, love, and education.

In addition to a close textual analysis, this chapter also explores the emotions and empathetic crossings related to youth and conflict that are made possible in the reflective 'thinking space' provided by the series. After 9/11, concerns about a global 'youth bulge'[6] shifted to predict 'youth Tsunamis,' 'youthquakes' and to explore policy options for addressing the 'demographic of insurgency.' As the 'war on terror' unfolded, all the major development, security, and intelligence apparatuses were considering the role of youth in conflict.[7] Think tanks and academics worked with the military and development agencies on alleviating the impact of child soldiers on the morale and fighting effectiveness of their armed forces. Additionally, the US and UK governments and many international organizations' efforts focused on understanding why young people would become 'radicalized' and join armed groups.[8] A young adult book series about youth underdogs fighting against the state might appear dissonant, a challenge to the status quo and/or to peacebuilding in such a context. Depending on one's reading, however, *The Hunger Games* evokes the children affected by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, young fighters in those countries, US and coalition soldiers, bystanders, and relatives. It brings children and youth into the international politics of war and peace and, as shown in the chapter, allows readings that make 'empathetic crossings' and new alliances. The ethico-political thinking space that is created in this sense is primarily for readers on the older end of the young adult spectrum, and I conclude the chapter with a psychoanalytic reading of *The*

Hunger Games' popularity that identifies the series as 'an ethical awakening yet to occur' in Lacanian terms.

War and Peace in *The Hunger Games*

State Violence and Domination:

'look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there's nothing you can do.'[9]

Readers of Collins' trilogy are taken straight into a seminar on state oppression and popular resistance. In book one of the trilogy, the Panem government maintains control through propaganda, fear, and force. It uses access to food and the ritual Hunger Games to divide and control the people in its twelve districts. The struggle to survive in District 12, home of heroine Katniss Everdeen, her sister Prim, and her two love interests, Gale and Peeta, in a situation resembling an extremely poor Appalachian coal-mining community, makes active resistance very difficult. In addition to the poverty of their district, injustice and powerlessness is starkly presented in the subordination of young people to the state's political agenda. All young people between the ages of 12 and 18 must have their names entered in the Hunger Games lottery, and poorer youth are statistically more likely to be chosen for the Games. The government extracts resources from the districts—each of which appears to specialize in a different commodity or industry such as grain, coal, steel, textiles, and weapons—and rations the food that is returned to them. To survive most people have to buy 'tesserae'—extra rations of grain and oil—through submitting their children's names additional times to the Hunger Games lottery. The annual Hunger Games, a televised competitive slaughter of youth, were installed to punish the districts for a prior rebellion and are maintained many years later as a means of social control. A repetitive public spectacle of punishment, The Hunger Games are designed to demoralize the districts and deter further revolts. They operate annually by publicly and randomly choosing one boy and one girl from each district to engage in brutal combat until only one is left standing. The oligarchic Panem government states that the games 'guarantee peace,'[10] and this propaganda is reinforced by holding the mandatory reaping ceremonies in front of the Justice Building that is policed by heavily armed 'Peacekeepers.' The Games, therefore, are a form of discipline that works not by punishing actual crimes but by deterring potential 'crimes' of dissent and rebellion.

The regime's institutions use the language of 'peace' and 'justice' to maintain docility and order. The annual ritual of the reaping is a ceremony reinforcing sovereign control and the games themselves 'deploys before the eyes of the spectators an effect of terror as intense as it is discontinuous, irregular and always above its own laws.'[11]

In Panem, as in other systems of oppression, as James Scott notes, 'dignity is at once a very private and a very public attribute.'[12] Parents are not only powerless to keep their children from harm but are required to watch them being ritually abducted and killed by the state. Yet, even though the people of District 12 appear thoroughly cowed and broken down, they do see through the euphemistic rhetoric of peace and justice. For example, in private they call the Hunger Games' launch room, where the children wait prior to entering the arena, 'the stockyard.'[13] However, their power to resist the cultural violence of the state's propaganda is weakened by structural violence and the direct violence of the state. Public executions, and use of surveillance and informers, stifle dissent and promote compliance without going so far as prompting backlash in the districts that cannot communicate with each other and know little of life in the Capitol.

From Silence to Insurrection: 'I'm more than just a piece in their Games.'[14]

In contrast to the Capitol, back in District 12, Katniss and her friend Gale use simple hunting and gathering techniques to survive. They break the law, risking imprisonment or death, by slipping through the electric fence surrounding their district so that they can hunt animals and gather berries, roots, and leaves to feed their families. Katniss and Gale are both the primary 'bread winners' for their families as both lost their fathers in the same mining accident. Gale's mother has many children to look after and Katniss's mother is traumatized by her husband's death and incapable of adequate caretaking. Prior to his death, Katniss's father had made a book of plant lore that she uses to identify safe food. The knowledge he recorded for her and the hunting skills he taught her, along with the knowledge her mother has about traditional medicines, are essential to their survival and help others in the district. Katniss and Gale also barter and sell their goods in the illegal economy, at The Hob, and trade with officials of the state, the Peacekeepers, and the town Mayor, who are tacitly complicit. In this way, they subvert the state's material domination. They have to take less 'tesserae' to feed their families, cutting their chances of being chosen for

the Games. In the woods they can speak freely—criticizing the government, making plans, daydreaming about revolt or escape. Their conversations and actions form 'a hidden transcript' of anger and rebellion, and the woods are a political space for the assertion of their own dignity. Everyday acts of resistance such as poaching and trading in the black market and whispered dissent are 'the disguised, low-profile, undeclared resistance that constitutes the domain of infrapolitics.'[15]

The reaping is statistically more of a poverty draft. But in the narrative, Katniss's 12-year-old sister, Prim, who has only had her name entered once, is chosen is a cruel twist. This makes it harder for readers to distance themselves or avoid feeling the arbitrariness of (totalitarian) terror. Katniss volunteers to replace Prim. The male tribute selected for District 12 is Peeta Mellark. At the reaping, when Katniss volunteers to take her sister's place as tribute, the people of District 12 as a whole symbolically resist domination by the state. When they do not applaud: 'They take part in the boldest form of dissent they can manage. Silence. Which says we do not agree….'[16] Instead of applauding for the cameras, they draw on an old ritual, raising one arm to give a three-fingered salute that becomes an important symbolic action, identifying them for the broadcast as a people with a culture and traditions and humanizing them to the other districts. The salute provides a symbolic means of communication between the districts that will be used later in the rebellion.

In stark contrast to the districts' suffering, the wealthy Capitol's unquestioning public wallows in shallow materialism, body modifications, and fashion. The District 12 tributes, Katniss and Peeta, are appalled by the waste of food that they witness. At the Capitol parties' binging and purging is encouraged for 'fun.'[17] Katniss thinks of the cruel contrast between the 'emaciated bodies of the children' back in her home district and the partiers who make themselves vomit so that they can taste more of the extravagant food. In global terms, the Capitol is the center and the districts are the periphery. In national terms, the youth of the districts who participate in the games, who are citizens of Panem, are conscripts sacrificed for a national ideal. The children of the Capitol do not participate and are portrayed as emotionally stunted witnesses to the violence. They are involved from afar in 'the social play of the signs of punishment'[18] by watching the games and the pre-game shows on television. The tributes have hair and makeup artists and etiquette coaches and are profiled and interviewed on television with a live audience. Their clothing is designed to aesthetically represent their district's main socioeconomic or political

purpose: coming from the coal-mining district, Katniss and Peeta's costumes have a fire theme and even expel flames. The Capitol audience members gasp and cry at the fashions and the personal stories of the tributes that are part real and part manufactured. In another part of the show, the tributes also have to perform training sessions that lead to their rankings by the Gamemakers and betting on the outcome.

The television spectacle for the Capitol citizens begins by watching reapings, then following the tributes' training and preparations, and culminating in the visual techno-feast of brutality once the tributes are sent to the arena. Capitol viewers develop fanlike identifications with different tributes. They have a prurient fascination with the manufactured slaughter of the Games that are planned and packaged like reality TV shows. As in contemporary military violence controlled from afar and projected through technologies such as drones, the Gamemakers control the action in the games with computer-generated horrors that kill and maim the tributes or force them to murder each other. There is further interaction for the wealthiest people who have the ability to send gifts into the arena using silver parachutes at crucial moments in the games. To some extent these donors can shape the outcome by giving certain tributes advantages, but ultimately the Gamemakers are all powerful. Thus, Collins depicts both war as spectacle and virtual, interactive war: the Capitol viewers of the Games think they are involved and are emotionally invested, from a position of voyeuristic safety. The families and friends of the tributes who are actually killing and dying are required to watch the televised games that are broadcast to workplaces as well as homes. Again, a reference to Foucault is apt:

> We have, then, the sovereign and his force, the social body and the administrative apparatus; mark, sign, trace; ceremony, representation, exercise; the vanquished enemy, the juridical subject in the process of requalification, the individual subjected to immediate coercion; the tortured body, the soul with its manipulated representations, the body subjected to training.[19]

The sovereign, President Snow, smells of blood and it is rumored that he drinks it. In fact, as readers learn later, the smell results from mouth sores he has sustained by drinking poison to deceive his political enemies as he assassinates them. He is not a Gothic monster, but a modern realpolitik-wielding authoritarian who elides his own power desires and ambition with declaratory aims of maintaining order and 'peace' for the good of the

people. The rule of President Snow is explicitly likened to a Roman regime of 'bread and circuses'—decadent and callous, feasting on the gladiatorial feats of the tributes. But Snow's government also has panoptical power with eavesdropping, military, transport, and communications technologies that far outstrip anything in the districts. The direct violence depicted in the first novel is graphic and involves both hand-to-hand combat and weapons of mass destruction. Until Katniss and Peeta break the mold, tradition held that in each Games twenty-four children entered the arena and only one survived. The remainder were poisoned, stabbed, stung to death, and eaten alive by mutated beasts, in artificial arena environments with floods, plagues, and fires available at the touch of a button. In the arena the Gamemakers'/government's technological sophistication creates the instant disasters that, as Der Derian describes, in *Virtuous War* are blurred with war and sports in the 'real world' as well.[20]

It is a version of this real-world structure of virtual power that Peeta uses to their advantage, however. During their preparations for the games, Peeta tells Katniss that he is trying to imagine a way to maintain his dignity and prevent the Gamemakers from turning him 'into a monster'[21]: 'I keep wishing I could think of a way to…to show the Capitol they don't own me. That I'm more than just a piece in their Games.'[22] This is the first hint of his strategy that nonviolently subverts the spectacle from within. Peeta decides to do his best to make sure that Katniss survives so that she can return to her family. His decision is complex, as he loves her, having had a secret infatuation since childhood. But he also calculates that he cannot win the games and might as well defy the Capitol by refusing to play by their zero-sum rules. At first, Katniss does not share his defiant perspective, having a dependent (her sister) to return to, but Peeta plants the seed of an idea that proves to be beginning of the end for the regime.

Children's Insurgencies: 'it's been a long time since I've been considered a child in this war.'[23]

In the first games, Katniss plays to the viewers by pretending to be in love with Peeta and gains lifesaving gifts from external donors in exchange for on-camera kisses, working within the spectacle. But Katniss also is the first tribute ever to interact through the arena broadcast with the people in the other districts as a result of her alliance with the youngest tribute. A turning point in the first book is the death of this tribute, 12-year-old Rue from District 11. Rue reminds Katniss of her sister, and her death is the

trigger for Katniss' anger and the crystallization of an understanding of injustice beyond her own need to survive. Katniss' politically symbolic actions—singing the dying girl a lullaby, wreathing her in flowers, and, uniquely for the games, showing empathy for an opponent—spark uprisings in the districts and eventually full-blown mass insurrection. Katniss receives a gift of bread from Rue's district. She thanks the District 11 people to camera with the three-fingered salute that the crowd from District 12 had given on the day of her reaping as a sign of respect for the tribute and dissent against the Games. Although we are not given an account of the planning of the revolution, we do know that the underlying grievances of economic deprivation, the complete lack of legal protections and rights, and the absence of any means of influencing the government nonviolently finally lead to the political mobilization of a group of dissenters and rebels. The fear barrier is broken by Katniss and Peeta's defiance of the State when they threaten a double suicide at the end of their first games. During the emerging rebellion that is the subject of the second book *Catching Fire*, another turning point for Katniss, one that makes her decide to fight back, occurs after Gale is brutally whipped by a new Peacekeeper in punishment for poaching. Reacting to that event, she thinks of Rue's killing, and of Prim's future, and decides that fighting is justified because they are already victims: 'because what has been done to them is so wrong, so beyond justification, so evil that there is no choice. No one has the right to treat them in that way.'[24]

Katniss, who was fashioned as the 'girl on fire' in book one, is transformed phoenix-like into the Mockingjay, the symbol of the nascent rebellion in book two. She is forced into a second Games by Snow to demoralize the victors and dowse the brewing dissent. The tributes try to stop the games by each strategically appealing to the audience's emotions. The wedding dress Katniss has been forced to wear on television by President Snow is designed to burn away to reveal the Mockingjay suit. Katniss is transformed into a coal-black angel—an act of symbolic subversion (and secret step in the rebellion) by her image consultant that he pays for with his life. Peeta claims on television that Katniss is pregnant in a final attempt to use the audience to undermine Snow. But the games go on. As celebrities in a reality TV game show, they are told by Effie in *Catching Fire* (the film): 'we must feed the monster.'

This 'monster' is a mirror of the films' audiences. But for readers and viewers, the rebel uprising against the Capitol is justified, fought for survival, justice, and human rights by people with no other means of persua-

sion. From the beginning, the violence of the oppressed is positively contrasted with that of the state and of the 'career tributes' who volunteered for the arena. Katniss' archery prowess is a result of her earlier marginalization and struggle for basic survival, but her motivation to fight is love of family and her district's people: politically, she is a guerrilla fighting for self-determination. Emotionally, she is Eros and Thanatos embodied. From President Snow's point of view (further suggested in the films than in the books), she is, at first, a naive youth challenging authority and later an insurgent committing acts of treason and terror against the state. The film version adds an appearance by Snow's granddaughter who he sees modeling her hair on Katniss' braid. This addition further illustrates the instability in the system that Katniss' charisma is causing. The granddaughter's inclusion also sets up for the later proposal by the new President to sacrifice the relatives of the old regime as a transitional justice mechanism. But, in *Catching Fire*, the reader's loyalties are unequivocally with Katniss, the underdog unfairly pitted against a superpower's well-trained, armed, and brutal elite tributes. And Katniss, the freedom fighter, uses her bow and arrow to bring down the whole show, literally destroying the arena, by attacking the military-entertainment complex of the Games from within.

The Hunger Games directly addresses how and why children join armed groups illustrating both forced and voluntary recruitment. The reaping of the tributes for the Games could be compared to forced recruitment by states and non-state groups (e.g., Boko Haram) who abduct and brutalize children to service a war effort. Although Katniss volunteers out of love for her sister, and some 'career tributes' are volunteers, most recruits are forced. However, the wider rebellion that the Games provoke involves children's 'voluntary' recruitment.[25] Katniss initially wants to run away from further conflict even though she has unwittingly become a symbol of hope to the rebelling districts. As noted above, she decided to stay and fight because of Gale's whipping and based on the intolerability of violence against children and others she loves. Katniss' decision mirrors how altruism, family loyalty, and friendship intersect in the reasoning of children who decide to join armed forces or groups.[26] Her desperation in the context of difficult circumstances makes choosing to fight a seemingly rational and unavoidable action and thus the narrative intervenes in the international politics of child soldiering. As in Rowling's work, *The Hunger Games*' peace politics and war politics are related, in a mirror reflection of the Freudian relationship of Eros and Thanatos: 'The living being, [..]

defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies.'[27] Peace politics emerge out of love interests and family ties that motivate mobilization for collective political action. Thus, the story intervenes in the international politics of child soldiering by suggesting its inevitability in the face of oppression and its roots in fighting for survival of self and others one loves. So, does not the narrative just reproduce the myth of heroic necessary war? It tells of violence driven by emotions of love, and struggle alongside and in defense of those we love, as a source of meaning. As Chris Hedges writes, 'Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good; for beings seek not only happiness but also meaning. And tragically, war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning.'[28]

The Victor's Peace, Revolutions That Eat Their Children: 'Something is significantly wrong with a creature that sacrifices its children's lives to settle its differences. You can spin it anyway you like.'[29]

Collins does not leave the narrative of justified anti-oppression war unexamined. During the anti-government rebellion detailed in *Mockingjay*, Katniss is used as rallying symbol rather than as a soldier. She is rarely in on the whole strategy and in the end realizes she is just being used as a pawn by the rebels too, 'used without consent, without knowledge.'[30] The rebels' District 13 is 'even more controlling than the Capitol.'[31] It lacks space for creativity or freedom, militarizes its youth from age 14, and also uses torture against Katniss's prep team. The abused protagonist, while hating the system presided over by Snow, maintains concern for her prep team, saying that they are 'like children.' Rather than dehumanizing the Capitol's people, Collins diagnoses the callous apathy of the Panem crowd in political terms: '[I]n return for full bellies and entertainment, his people have given up their political responsibilities and therefore their power.'[32] Collins does not, in the end, portray the war as a heroic struggle for a people's self-determination.

Through the rebel war that Katniss and Gale participate in, the moral peril and ethical compromises inherent to any violent struggle against injustice, regardless of the necessity, are well portrayed, including callous decisions leading to mass killings and the state's use of children as human shields. For much of the series, in a romantic triangle, Katniss is torn between Gale and Peeta. Gale's familiarity, similar background, handsome

masculinity, protectiveness, and righteous anger against injustice appeal to Katniss. But Gale's passion for justice leads him to morally questionable choices in an ends-justifies-the-means strategy in war. Gale helps adapt the designs of his hunting snares, which were once vital to their survival from starvation, into booby-trap bombs,[33] and he creates a massive death trap that threatens to kill thousands.[34] He asserts: 'if I could hit a button and kill everyone in the capitol I would.'[35] Although we see Gale becoming like their enemy[36] in his ruthlessness, he also saves lives and risks his own and remains an attractive and sympathetic character. Collins' narrative raises moral questions about whether there are right and wrong ways to kill in war, but she does not demonize soldiers, instead criticizing the social and political structures that perpetuate political killing. At the end of the war, Katniss has lost her sister to an immoral bombing by the rebels that incinerates Prim along with numerous other children and aid workers, to hasten the end of the fighting. In contrast to the happy conclusion to the battle of Hogwarts, one that sees a rainbow coalition of victors and a prologue that skips the post-war trauma and rebuilding, the end of war in *Mockingjay* reveals treacherous realpolitik. Mythic war is deflated when Katniss has a long, slow recovery from post-traumatic stress and is never quite healed.

Other similarities with the real aftermath of armed conflict for survivors are Katniss' 'need to know the truth' about what happened to her sister[37] and differences of opinion about transitional justice. After the rebel victory, hundreds of the old regime are tried and face execution, but 'the suffering in the districts is so extreme that these measures seem insufficient to the victims.'[38] Questions about justice and who has the power to punish are raised when the surviving tributes are invited to vote for one last Hunger Games, this time using the Capitol's children, as punishment and symbolic closure. Peeta votes against. But Katniss agrees with the new President Alma Coin and votes for this retributive strategy and victor's peace, agreeing to publically execute President Snow as well. Ultimately, the so-called rebels are not so different from the regime they seek to replace. The new President seems just as willing to sacrifice youth for political gain and so, briefly, is Katniss, motivated by grief and revenge (again, an Eros/Thanatos emotion). At the last minute she changes her mind and assassinates Coin instead, before collapsing mentally and physically. Katniss's trial for killing Coin results in acquittal based on mental incapacitation. Her final act of violence toward the adult leader, and not the children of her enemy, is a catalyst to political transition and could be

seen to justify some forms of political violence, necessitating a reading based on 'a tolerance for ambiguity.'[39]

The end of war is marked by heartbreaking loss, slow recovery, and the resolve to 'never again' fall for ideas of even so-called just war. Katniss thinks her way into a somewhat cynical nonviolent stance by the end of the series, evoking, again, as she had for justifying fighting, the unacceptability of the sacrifice of children for political goals of conflict resolution (as shown in the quotation introducing this section). This ending means that *The Hunger Games* is not simply a story about how war is terrible. It also leaves us with questions about the justification of political violence even by the oppressed, or for justice or humanitarianism, placing an emphasis on the human cost, including the cost to the combatants themselves.

While the setting is in a future America, *The Hunger Games*' child soldiers confuse (in the manner of nonthreatening conflict education that does not directly address a conflict with a real adversary, but may still prepare one for greater empathy). *The Hunger Games* evokes, without directly mentioning, the children affected by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, including fighters such as a ten-year-old who 'said he has hated US troops since his parents were killed by them in May 2004 as they fled a battle in Fallujah city.' The child reportedly participated in an attack that killed three US marines.[40] The child soldiers of *The Hunger Games* are capable of political thought, rational action, and self-sacrifice, but they are also exploited and manipulated. Katniss is never in control of a violent system. The destruction of District 12 results in mass death of her people and displacement of the survivors and can be related, for example, to the massive number of Iraqi, Afghan, or Syrian children killed, injured, orphaned, and made refugees by recent wars. Like Prim, most children in armed groups do not actually participate in fighting but may still perform support roles, which put them in peril.[41] The film versions of the series contain images seemingly plucked from the news headlines of Syrian hospital bombings and hostage videos. In Peeta's capture and televised appeal, Collins' story evoked the children who had been detained in Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca, but also the hostages of ISIS. The tense scenes of decisionmakers watching from their control room during Peeta's rescue mirror famous photographs of the Obama administration during the US Navy Seal raid to kill Bin Laden. Consider also the parallel between the celebrity treatment of the tributes in the games and that of the perpetrator of the Boston marathon bombing 20-year-old Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, whose attractive picture made the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine. In these examples

of blurred art/life, there are political controversies and moral dilemmas such as the framing of victims and perpetrators and hypocritical glorification of violence in some venues and not others.

In this context, *The Hunger Games* provides a 'thinking space' for reflecting on who our enemies are, who fights our wars, why, and who benefits? Katniss, Gale, Peeta, and the other tributes can be a bridge to seeing and accepting the other in ourselves and realizing our own capacity for violence.[42] Katniss ends up rejecting the idea that fighting, even for a good cause or love, is laudable: '"You can spin it any way you like," she thinks, but sacrificing children for political agendas is never justified.[43] In reality, although some survive, many that one loves do not. But more than that, the children of one's enemies are not legitimate targets. Her story promotes critical thinking about claims of justified violence and the difficulties of transitional justice. In these ways, *The Hunger Games* may generate antiwar feelings and help promote empathy for children in war zones or experiencing other forms of adversity.

Gender Politics of Nascent (Post-Sovereign) Peace: 'Peeta bakes. I hunt.'[44]

The relationship between militarism and sexism has been noted as an essential nexus in maintaining the 'war system.'[45] In Collins' series, this relationship is disrupted through the outcome of the romantic triangle at the center of the narrative, in which Gale and Peeta are in competition for Katniss' affections. In locating the vision of peace in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, the recurring motif of bread is important. The government of the country of Panem (Latin for bread) uses 'bread and circuses' to control its population, but bread is also a symbol of resistance. When Katniss mourns Rue in the arena, Rue's district sends her a thank you gift of bread and, in *Catching Fire*, coded messages from the rebels about the time of the breakout from the arena are sent in numbered loaves of bread. Katniss remembers in flashback that Peeta saved her from starvation before the arenas, and her memory of him as 'the boy with the bread'[46] acquires deeper meaning over time.

Peeta is the son of a struggling bakery owner. He is comparatively much better off than Katniss (though his family cannot afford to eat their own baked goods), but he does not seem to be valued or loved very much at home. Peeta is a different kind of 'abandoned boy' than Harry Potter and Voldemort or Gale. Both Gale and Katniss are obliged to take on family

caretaker roles after the mining deaths of their fathers. Both of Peeta's parents and a brother are still alive but write him off as dead as soon as he is chosen for the Games. Underestimated, Peeta is free to innovate, and as the series unfolds, Peeta becomes a progressively stronger symbol of resistance to both injustice and violence. Scott states that 'resistance to ideological domination requires a counterideology-a negation-that will effectively provide a general normative form to the host of resistant practices invented in self-defense by any subordinate group.'[47] Peeta offers this counter-ideology, giving voice to dissent and embodying an alternative as 'the boy with the bread' that nourishes rather than destroys. And although she has been a determined and skilled soldier, Katniss declares that 'they will never again brainwash me into the necessity of using' weapons.[48] Her embracing of nonviolence is foreshadowed by Peeta's plea from imprisonment in the Capitol at the beginning of *Mockingjay*. At that point, his call for a cease-fire gets Peeta branded a traitor,[49] but it is Peeta that Katniss chooses in the end. Sjoberg argues that 'people who not fit traditional gender roles disrupt, and reveal the gendering of, traditional war narratives.'[50] Both Peeta and Katniss disrupt gender expectations and thus, potentially, the gendering of mainstream war stories.

The characters of Peeta and Katniss survive together through an exchange of gender roles: 'Peeta bakes. I hunt.'[51] Peeta, who is Gale's ideological opposite, is associated with the feminine: kindness, charm, art, cake decorating, spring flowers, and regeneration. Peeta does fight and he is strong (from lifting heavy bags of flour in the bakery), but he also uses other attributes to survive, such as his gift for communication and making people like him, which attract vital sponsors during the games, and his artistic talent, which allows him to cleverly camouflage himself in the arena. He uses his art to protest and remember and his gift of eloquence to honor fallen tributes and to make the right political impression to save Katniss and himself from President Snow's retaliation. He is bravely generous and self-sacrificing not only for Katniss but for others. The image of Rue that he paints to shame the Gamemakers in *Catching Fire* is a symbolic move to 'hold them accountable for a moment.'[52] His unprecedented donation of their games' winnings to Rue and Thresh's families is more revolutionary than it appears on the surface. These counter-hegemonic actions bridge the divisions between districts, divisions that the Capitol requires to maintain control. The regime reacts with violent repression. Peeta also makes paintings depicting the Games to help him cope with his nightmares. In painting the Games, he responds to the military-

entertainment network with tactile, personal creativity. Painting is a low-tech, and usually financially low-profit, medium. He is psychologically wounded by the violence he participates in and he is still a typical hero in that he 'gets the girl.' Peeta's character is identified with self-abnegation and unconditional love and with the aspiration of ideological pacifism though not passivity. It is with Peeta that Katniss recovers and he is the one she eventually chooses to marry, because like 'the dandelion in the spring,' Peeta represents 'the bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction.'[53] However, Collins does not just end her story with (magical thinking about) a triumph of Eros over Thanatos.

In last chapters of *Mockingjay*, the vision of peace that Collins offers dispenses with gendered livelihood roles but still offers images of rebirth through family, artistically preserved memory, and education. Like real child soldiers, Katniss emerges from war with little conception of herself as a child: 'it's been a long time since I've been considered a child in this war,' she thinks.[54] She also notes 'the truth is, no one knows quite what to do with me now that the war is over, although if another one should spring up […] they could find a role for me.'[55] Her recovery story bears some resemblance to the holistic approach that scholars and practitioners note is required to help child soldiers reintegrate[56] and break cycles of violence. Peeta and Katniss have livelihood skills—baking and hunting, respectively—that contribute to their resilience, but they need help from others in the interim, including medical treatment and food. As with some real child soldiers, Katniss's recovery involves rituals of transformation from fighter to civilian, including the burning of her old clothes[57] and finding 'meaning' through memorialization practices in community.[58] Memorialization of those lost is part of the healing process for Katniss and Peeta. Together they create a book with Peeta's sketches or photographs of people they loved who died in the war, recording by hand 'all the details it would be a crime to forget.'[59] This models a different way of remembering the past than through the violent ritual of the reaping and the Games. This act of book-making replicates the transfer of Katniss' father's lessons for survival through plant lore that he had recorded in a hand-made volume and that had saved her life at the beginning of the series. The war memory book saves evidence of the existence of those lost to violence, whose lives and unique interests and personalities become lessons against future war. It is a low-tech, local, creative, and communal response to the high-tech brutality of the Games and the MIMENET. Katniss also derives comfort from singing.[60]

In contrast to the epilogue to Rowling's *The Deathly Hallows*, the journey from war to peace for Katniss and Peeta is detailed as painful and fitful. Katniss has to be coaxed for a long time before she agrees to have children and she is burdened with fear for them. Katniss wonders how to tell her children about their parents' roles in the games 'without frightening them to death?'[61] Katniss and Peeta remember that the meadow where her children play is a massacre site. This is another way in which Collins subverts any unrealistically happy ending and prevents glamorization of child soldiering. Yet, their society does move on. Fields are plowed, a new factory is built to produce medicines, the arenas are turned into memorials, and children learn about the Hunger Games in school.[62] Everyday peace is an ongoing negotiation with war memory and trauma and with anxiety about the future, but there is also hope. Katniss copes by mentally listing 'every act of goodness' she has witnessed. Peeta believes that they can explain to their children to 'make them understand in a way that will make them braver.'[63] His optimism about the power of story and education perhaps speaks the author's intent in writing *The Hunger Games* trilogy. One criticism of children's literature focused on personalizing an atrocity such as the Holocaust or slavery is that it may foster emotional truth without educating the reader historically.[64] Readers of *The Hunger Games* witness an atrocity, with many real-world contemporary and historical allusions, but no direct historical parallels. Thus, *The Hunger Games* provides a container that can hold many different meanings for readers in different cultures and, indeed, conflicts, as show in Chap. 7. This would not make it immune from criticism in terms of potentially trivializing or glamorizing real political violence through magical thinking and the restoration of hope. However, any survivor story (fiction or nonfiction) has by definition an ending that incorporates hope. But it may be that *The Hunger Games* fosters emotional truths about politics without educating the reader politically, and this theme is explored in the next section and the four chapters to follow.

Missing Positive Peace, Previewing a Post-Obama Era

The relationship between hidden resistance and open confrontation[65] and the links between direct, structural, and cultural violence are depicted in Collins' work, which in the end resolves into micro-home-front dissent in a world of war play. *The Hunger Games* series also provides a means for reflecting on the interplay between mass media and contemporary war-

fare, how technologies such as video games create the sensory illusion of 'interactive war' and are used to recruit and train soldiers, and how reality TV and consumption degrade civic responsibility and ability to think critically and ethically.

Both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* link a lessening of power with hope. At the conclusion of Rowling's work, Harry throws away the elder wand, the superweapon that many have craved, killed, and died for, and with this move, Harry rejects the power to dominate absolutely. But in Collins' work, Katniss and Peeta reject both political power and violence. They reject the symbolic power to influence others and the physical power to hurt others, but also withdraw into an emotional space of the family unit in recovery from trauma.

In world politics terms, *The Hunger Games* can be read as a rebellion of the periphery, the oppressed Global South, against the center. But it can also be read as proposing a shift in US foreign policy. By reflecting on *The Hunger Games*, in critical conversations about race, gender, and geopolitics, 'radically destabilizing empathy'[66] could occur, through the dissonance created for readers who identify with the oppressed heroes while more realistically being represented by the people of Capitol. Such empathy could also occur through the ambiguous (child) soldier examples in the novels and how they are both like 'our troops' and like 'terrorists.' While the heroes come from the exploited districts, some of the rebels come from within—Cinna (Katniss' stylist) and the Gamemaker Plutarch, for example—and from privilege. These conclusions are not intended to minimize the impact of popular culture in reinforcing romanticized views of war, desensitizing people to violence, or obscuring racism and colonialism. On the contrary, the books and films could be interpreted and employed in ways that might promote acceptance of global violence(s), but they do not have to be. Subsequent chapters explore the reception of *The Hunger Games* to better understand the potential for *The Hunger Games* to be considered a form of 'info-peace.'[67] In *The Hunger Games*' films, merchandise, and other spin-offs, there is potential for the peace messages of the original texts to be proliferated or changed, which I turn to in the next chapter.

However, several aspects of *The Hunger Games*' narrative are challenging to a positive peace framework. *The Hunger Game*s' reception shows how a critical focus on the direct violence of war and the structural violence of class-based oppression, while important, can lead to a downplaying of gender and racial injustice. As I will explain, in its social and political

context, what *The Hunger Games* and Katniss and Peeta's survival represents is 'beyond hope' and previews a post-Obama era while looking back at the War on Terror. Thus, 'the contrived trauma'[68] of *The Hunger Games* was in fact engaging with complex real traumas in its context, both those on the surface and those not, which may lead to a 'a breaking down of paradigms' and 'new consciousness' as Anzaldua hoped.[69]

Race, Gender, and Political Trauma

In setting a further foundation for the analysis of *The Hunger Games*' reception and merchandise in Chap. 7, the rest of this chapter explores the social, emotional, and political context of *The Hunger Games*' success in the United States. Significantly, although Gale goes to work in the Capitol after the war, Katniss and Peeta reject roles at the center of power and, it could be argued, they reject the important roles in democratic deliberation that critical engaged citizens should adopt. It is also unclear how well the gender equity and anti-violence themes are embraced by readers. The violence and focus on heterosexual romances in *The Hunger Games* might lead one to dismiss the series as reinforcing the 'war system.'[70] There have been few studies of reader reception of *The Hunger Games*' peace-related themes, but researchers who studied a book club with girls found that young readers reimposed traditional gender norms on the characters.[71] These researchers argued for 'the need for prolonged engagement with youth in critical discussions' about books like *The Hunger Games* in order to transform social and cultural norms about gender and violence.[72] Peace educators, for example, would likely want to consider if Katniss' story promotes gender justice or if it further normalizes war, by reflecting a fantasy of liberal feminist militaries guarding over peaceful (largely heteronormative) civilian life.

The races and ethnicities of the characters became a source of conflict with the making of the film versions of the novels. In the books, the people of the Capitol and the people of the districts are described as having various skin tones and features, including in the Capitol a variety of forms of cosmetic surgeries. Katniss and Gale come from a coal-mining region called The Seam, and they are described as having 'straight dark hair,' 'olive skin,' and 'gray eyes.'[73] Peeta lives in the same district but comes from a merchant class who we are told have lighter skins and blue eyes. Katniss' mother is from the merchant class but her late father was of Seam origin, so Prim is blond, taking after her mother's side.[74] Furthermore, the

District 11 tribute Rue is described as having 'dark eyes' and 'satiny brown skin.'[75] Readers were able to read several different ethnicities and races into these descriptions, and when the film versions encoded a racial canon, there was backlash from several quarters. This backlash illuminated both how entrenched racialized thinking and racism is and how emotionally invested readers were in the books. Filmmakers were both accused of 'whitewashing' the novel[76] and criticized for casting black actors. There was concern about a reported casting call for *The Hunger Games* that requested Caucasian actors. While some saw Katniss as a person of color (possibly indigenous North American, Asian, Latina, or Middle Eastern), others took the Appalachian setting to identify her as white and 'redneck,' another category of Other that, it was argued, also does not often get the glamorous lead role.[77] Thus, the race discourse around the casting of the film versions also highlighted a race-class conflict.

The casting of the films also surfaced discussion about how race and ethnicity are presented or can be interpreted in the novel and the responsibility of filmmakers to not only represent what the author intended but also to reflect the diversity of the populace and provide opportunities for actors of color. Bloggers criticized the casting call, and this lead to discussions with the author on entertainment media where she described the setting of the books as a 'period where hundreds of years have passed from now. There's been a lot of ethnic mixing.'[78] Thus, we have in Collins' story an imagined 'post-racial' world that could not be sustained in dialogue with fans.

I have considered how *The Hunger Games* disrupts 'common sense' views of heroic and anti-oppression war. But this reading also prompts consideration of its self-fulfilling prophecies. The gender politics of *The Hunger Games* cohere in a post-equality narrative where both older male and female leaders are venal and both male and female children are equally victimized. In addition to the equal gender opportunity to die in the Games, there is a subtle storyline of a male victor being sexually exploited and there is a hint of a Peacekeeper abusing girls. As noted, Katniss' character is weighted more traditionally masculine, while Peeta is given more traditionally feminine traits. However, in this post-liberal peace, there is no feminist solidarity. Coin, an older female leader, and the young Katniss are rivals. Alma Coin's name suggests venality and Katniss decides that she might even be worse than Snow, whose name in North American informal speech suggests the ability to con with words. Another middle-aged female leader who is ambitious and corrupt appears in Veronica Roth's *Divergent*

Series, a less successful but still very popular YA dystopian-romance series that followed *The Hunger Games*. These depictions of the untrustworthy female leader foretell a narrative that emerged around Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US Presidential Election. Furthermore, it appears that a significant part of the electorate was willing to be 'Snow-ed' by candidate Trump.[79] This is not to suggest causation—merely to offer another example of the continuum of discourse between pop culture and politics.

Peace Beyond Hope in a Post-Obama Era

The Hunger Games became a hit on a 'threshold.' It dealt with spectral wars and was a critique from within the spectacle of the war on terror, at time of growing general public disillusionment with war and growing partisan divide on social issues, particularly the so-called culture wars around race, gender, and 'political correctness.' Large group mourning, Vamik Volkan argues, begins in an already regressed state.[80] The nation-state is composed of the traumas of the past, including, for example, the trauma of the Vietnam war, which Collins personally felt via her father's service there. Collective trauma is cumulative and inherent to the development of the nation-state. The attacks on the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon in September 2001 added to this legacy of collective national trauma. Over 3000 children under 18 were directly affected by losing a parent on 9/11 and their average age was nine.[81] The first book in Collins' series was published in 2008 and the first film released in 2010. Most of its target audience in 2008 (10–21-year-olds) would only have been aged between 5 and 14 in 2001. Like older readers and their parents, these young people had lived through the trauma of the attacks and of the subsequent loss of US moral exceptionalism that was entailed in the War on Terror and in Guantanamo (discussed in Chap. 5). Children who were nine-year-olds at the time of 9/11 were entering adulthood at the time of *The Hunger Games* first publication in 2008, which was also the year of Barack Obama's historical election as the United States' first black (or biracial) President.

On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, many articles were written about the generational impact of the attacks. 'The attacks heightened awareness of global events for a generation of kids, shattered their illusions of a peaceful world, and changed perceptions they had of their nation as almighty and invulnerable.'[82] It was said that Millennials 'crave order' and worried that 'strange people with motives we don't understand could be lurking among us.'[83] Popular media talked about 'defining moments' and echoes of 9/11

affecting young people's career choices toward the peace corps and the military. Psychologists were more cautious but recognized there were many underlying issues in the current cohort of young people that seemed to be traced to 9/11's impact.

On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, television shows interviewed children, now in their 20s, who had lost a parent, and they described years of anger, pain, and addiction. Like Katniss, some of the children directly affected by 9/11 were deeply impacted by their 'mothers' disaster-related psychological problems.'[84] But they were also resilient. *The Hunger Games* tells a story of pain and resilience due to political violence. Perhaps, it is unsurprising, then, that it was interpreted to promise girls' empowerment as shown in the next chapter. Though it cannot be proven that *The Hunger Games* popularity is due to its resonances with post-9/11 anxieties and preoccupations, some commentators have certainly made the link (as shown in Chap. 7, as well). It is interesting, however, in the spirit of utopian imagining that literature can provoke[85] to consider how *The Hunger Games* offers a lens for looking at children in world politics more broadly, as I have also done in this chapter.

Accepting that 'the traumatic real' can be hidden in stories and collective trauma is cumulative and inherent to the development of the nation-state,[86] further significance of the series for peacebuilding can be proposed. The popular reception of *The Hunger Games* in the United States and Europe, at least, was concurrent with the traumas of 9/11 and the War on Terror, with global recessions and popular uprisings. But it can also be said to have predicted the rise of Trump in the 2016 US Presidential narrative, not least due to both narratives' appeal to white rural poor voters who, Katniss-like, are part of a game. Therefore, I conclude this chapter by turning to another story, that of 'the burning child,' from Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, to further explore the psycho-political significance of *The Hunger Games*, as a cultural event that has appeal beyond its teen marketing category.

The Girl on Fire and the Burning Child

A classic text of psychoanalysis, analyzed by Freud, Lacan, and others, including Cathy Caruth who I draw on here, 'the dream of the burning child,' is for my analysis a story that illuminates other stories by hitting on deep fears and emotional questions. The story is a dream recalled by father whose child has just died unexpectedly from a fever. Exhausted, the child's

father falls asleep in a nearby room, leaving an elderly man to watch over the child's body. The father dreams the voice of his already dead child reproachfully telling him that he is on fire: 'Father, don't you see I'm burning?,' the child calls out. Waking up, the father finds that the corpse of his child has indeed just caught fire due to a falling candle. Freud wondered why it would be that the dream happened at all. If the father unconsciously recognized from a sleep state that a fire had started, probably by a 'glare' from the room as the candle fell, why did he not immediately wake up to smother the flame? Why did he dream about it? Cathy Caruth puts Freud's question in a form immediately relevant to the study of pop culture as a window into world politics: 'In the context of a violent reality, why dream rather than wake up?' Another way to put this, in political terms, is if violence is predicted, why not act to smother the flame?

Or, why read or write fiction (dream) or view a film rather than examine other sources of knowledge about peace (being awake)? Why use pop culture's myths to critique injustice? These questions are about the practicalities, and even ethics, of treating literary study and pop cultural analysis as informing about such weighty, real-world matters as peacebuilding. One possibility is that some knowledge can only be accepted in an 'unreal' form. As Veena Das has noted some experiences 'need to be fictionalized before they can be apprehended.'[87] Some genres of knowing and being may be more able to help people process collective trauma, for example, or envision peace. As I showed in Chap. 2, research on emotions and art suggests such a link.

In the burning child dream, the father had a terrible reality to cope with in the death of his son. In Collins' novels, the reader engages the terrible reality of children's involvement in war, and Collins has acknowledged that the subject matter relates to her own experience as child with a deployed parent. What is interesting to me is what the popularity of the series indicates about its fans' recent experiences of war. And this analysis is a prelude to a closer examination of how fans are using *The Hunger Games* in the following chapters. In focusing on a father and son, the 'burning child' dream also promises insight into the figure of the parent-leader identified in Chaps. 3 and 5 and, thus, insight into liberal peacebuilding.

'Father, Don't You See I'm Burning?'

Freud's initial interpretation of the dream is that the father does not wake up because dreaming for a while brings his child back to life. The dream-

ing father does not want to face the reality of the child's death and feels guilty, perhaps, that a fever overcame the child. Caruth explains: 'Thus the dream transforms death into life and does so paradoxically with the very words that refer to the reality of the burning.'[88] The burning fire does not just represent the burning fever because the fire exists. The fire is a repetition of the prior tragedy. One possibility for the popularity of Collins' work is that *The Hunger Games* recovers direct memory of loss that is traumatic but cannot be consciously faced and that is either an attempt to prevent future trauma or a way of repeating it. Such readers could have a generalized consciousness 'tied up with but also blinded to the violent reality outside.'[89] Reviewers and journalists do make this link as shown in Chap. 7. But without going so far as to claim this causal link, we can see how a psychoanalytic reading of the popularity of *The Hunger Games* can add to analysis of intergenerational dynamics in world politics.

Later, Freud reconsiders and adds to his analysis that the father's wish to prolong the life of his child in the dream is only one aspect of its importance. The other is 'the father's wish to sleep,' and this wish is generalized, becoming 'the wish fulfillment of the consciousness itself,' because all people need to sleep. Freud wrote: '*the dream is the GUARDIAN of sleep and not its disturber*'(italics in the original).[90] Then, Caruth argues, Freud is probing 'what does it mean to sleep' and to wish to sleep? The dream indicates perhaps a desire to be dead and to join the child, or to be nourished through sleep, and revived to cope with life. This latter interpretation allows for *The Hunger Games* to have some future political impact, as its readers recover from lack of knowledge/forgetting and are empowered by sleep/the dream/fiction to act differently, to prevent future violence. This, it appears, is the hope of those organizing as fan activists who are discussed in Chap. 10. Fiction allows readers to encounter the hurt of war without having to physically live its realities. In this way, fiction may be said to resist militainment. From this perspective, however, reading *The Hunger Games* is an escape from reality, a desire not to see, and would not stimulate peacebuilding consciousness or action. Either way, sleeping and dreaming can only be temporary. The father must wake up.

The Child's Address

Jacques Lacan turned to the reason why the father woke up and a different question about the burning child dream: '*What does it mean to*

awaken?'(italics in the original).[91] For our purposes, the question is important to understanding the impact that *The Hunger Games* or fandom in general might have on consciousness raising and peacebuilding actions. In addition to wondering why this work entertains many people, we can ask, is it sparking change in thought or actions and what it is that led to this outcome? In Lacan's analysis, it is the child's words, his 'address' to the father from within the dream, his complaint about neglect that wakes him, forcing him to face a reality that cannot be ignored. As noted in Chap. 3, the trope of the child as special messenger is a recurring one in literary thought and philosophy. But, Cathy Caruth writes, 'Lacan seems to suggest, a paradoxical attempt *to respond, in awakening, to a call that can only be heard within sleep*' (italics in the original).[92] Thus, we read in *The Hunger Games* a similar call from the dead children of fiction. Prim and Rue should 'wake' us up, like they did Katniss.[93] If they do, the *Hunger Games* is sounding the alarm in the voice of children who are already dead and an invitation to struggle. Such a space between life and death, hope and despair evokes Anzaldua' threshold space, 'Nepantla' or borderland.[94]

Failure to See/Hear

In Caruth's words, when the child in the dream cries out 'Father, don't you see…' and the father wakes, there is revealed 'the story of a repeated failure to respond adequately, a failure to see the child in its death. For, to see the child's living vulnerability, the father has to go on dreaming. In awakening, he sees the child's death too late and thus cannot truly or adequately respond.'[95] In this we can read the difficulty of adequately responding to the fear of youth violence and the problem of peace as asymptotic as well. Arguably, then, *The Hunger Games* may awaken us to the reality of violence. But it may not empower us to respond, perhaps especially if *'Awakening, […] is itself the site of trauma'*: 'the trauma of the necessity and the impossibility of responding to another's death' (italics in the original).[96] In thinking about empathetic crossings in relation to war and our enemies, this gap (of empathy and the possibility of forgiveness) is important. Still, such trauma may be productive in indicating the failure of leadership and producing resolve for future change. In Lacan and Caruth's interpretation, this awakening is traumatic as it 'reenacts the father's survival of the son's death' and is a repetition of a failure 'to see in time' either the death-dealing fever or the fire.[97] So, when we read, view, and are moved by *The Hunger Games*, is it already too late? A 'failed

address' seems to be predicted. This failure to see/hear in time can be linked to the problem of youth, a perennial challenge that has ever-new cohorts, and the dilemmas of transgenerational forgetting/blindness.

Katniss, Peeta, and Gale all cope with absent fathers and mothers and confront authoritarian father and mother leaders (Snow and Coin). There are also imperfect, inadequate parent figures in Haymitch, who is an alcoholic, and Effie, who is only able to relate via superficialities, though both Haymitch and Effie care about their 'charges.' Haymitch promises Peeta and Katniss he will keep them informed but he does not. He lies to them, 'for their own good,' just as Dumbledore does to Harry Potter. But Collins provides us with a portrait of inadequate adults who are themselves victims and offers a space for complex victimhood to be considered. Like the grieving father of the burning child, characters like Haymitch and Katniss's mother have already been destroyed. Reality too suggests, real deaths and injustices demonstrate, that there has already been an inadequacy of leadership in the War on Terror, for example. How, then, would it be possible to say that that *The Hunger Games* is able to disarm militainment or promote peace (building)? We need to recall the elderly man who is left in the room with the child's corpse and note his failure of caretaking as well. More than one generation is involved. Some questions remain: What will the father do now? Will he recover? If *The Hunger Games* only points us to the losses of children in war, which have already happened, its antiwar message comes too late. But *The Hunger Games* also points us to a way to remember and that is through the child veterans of war: the survivors. Katniss was 'the girl on fire,' the spark to the revolution, the angry warrior telling President Snow: 'if we burn you burn with us.' As a result of the war, Katniss and Peeta are both injured physically and psychologically: 'We are both fire mutts now.'[98] And they survive.

The Burned Children Survive and Third Space Alliances

Collins' story is therefore an inversion of the burning child dream. In a reversal in Collins' story, the burning child survives, and the father is dead. In Katniss' case, her biological father (productively) haunts the child, not the other way around. Katniss' mother is emotionally and intellectually absent. Peeta's parents abandon him to the Games. The authoritarian father-leader (President Snow) attempts to kill Katniss and tortures Peeta. A similar mother-leader takes over and she too is defeated by Katniss. Collins stated that she wrote the story in part to educate children about

war, before it is too late, suggesting that adults have failed in the past. This past needs to be mourned and lived beyond, but in Katniss's case, the ghost of the father-leader (Snow) needs to be exorcised, while preserving the memory and knowledge of her real father. Katniss and Peeta go on to have their own children. Rejecting state violence and forced forgetting, the future is to be guaranteed through transfer of the memory (of the crimes of war); memory is a source of survival and justice. Katniss and Peeta are both needed to make this peace politics, *and* their parents (living and dead), *and* their own children, are needed to recover knowledge and memory and make it endure. Gale ends up in an important political job in the Capitol. Katniss' mother also makes a new life in the Capitol avoiding the space of traumatic memory. But the ones who were on fire, the soldiers, go home. Katniss, Peeta, and Haymitch, District 12's tributes, return to rebuild their home. This withdrawal from the politics at the center of power is significant. If adults (parents and leaders and parent-leaders) are incapacitated by the reality of the past and present wars, they are encouraged by the story of Katniss and Peeta to choose a different kind of politics. As noted earlier, this may not be good for democratic deliberations about war or indeed for electoral participation. But in the Lacanian interpretation of the dream of the burning child, the awakening represents 'the way father *and* child are inextricably bound together through the story of a trauma.'[99]

Through Katniss *and* Peeta, Collins offers a counter-ideology of dissent: valorizing incidents and actors with the dual need/capacity to actively work for justice while resisting the use or endorsement of direct violence, unless in immediate and direct self-defense. Such a perspective de-authorizes and delegitimizes both the legal soldier and the suicide bomber: both are sent home by the story to focus on reproducing life. So, I conclude that, like the role of the dream, the role of fiction as a 'third space' of peacebuilding in an 'unreal' and turbulent world lies in the questions it raises and in its humanizing of the participants in war to repopulate international relations/politics with the stories, memories, and perspectives of children *and* parents, us, and them. In the context of the wider pop culture/policy nexus that is militarized and profits from virtual/virtuous war, the child's words passed on through *The Hunger Games* represents 'the ethical imperative of an awakening that has yet to occur'[100] and, at the same time, is a call to tell the story of '*what it means not to see*' (italics in the original), a bid to transmit an awakening.[101] Writers like Collins, Rowling, and others, appear to hope that stories can act as a guard against political amnesia and future cycles of violence and intolerance. In Collins' fictional world, Katniss' father transmits a

lesson about putting in book form 'those things you cannot trust to memory' and Katniss does the same at the end of *Mockingjay*. In the next chapters I explore the extent to which and how such a transmission/awakening has occurred between Collins' fiction and people in fandom.

Notes

1. Some of the material in this chapter informed a part of an earlier article focused on the implications for peace education of *The Hunger Games* series (McEvoy-Levy 2017).
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17. Collins S. Catching fire. Quote at p. 80.
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PART III

From 'Tabloid' Culture to Fan Culture: Consumable Peace?

CHAPTER 7

Youth Revolts, Neoliberal Memorialization, and the Contradictions of Consumable Peace

This chapter explores *The Hunger Games*' many (re)interpretations in commercial products, and in popular media discourses, and the significance of this for young people and a politics of peace. 'Popular culture has political power,' Duncombe and Bleiker argue, 'precisely because it is so closely intertwined with consumerism.'[1] Can there be revolt from within the apparatuses of pop culture, media, and capitalism? While there were many celebrity-focused gossip and fashion stories about *The Hunger Games*' movie stars, a remarkable feature of the media commentary on the series was its overtly political analysis. The chapter documents how journalists, policy analysts, online bloggers, reviewers, and public intellectuals interpreted Collins' YA series. It focuses on their discussions of adolescent development and agency, contemporary wars, youth revolts, gender emancipation, and racism. The chapter also examines the series' official and unofficial merchandise and how *The Hunger Games* has been historicized and memorialized at various commercial sites, including at its film locations and in a traveling educational exhibit. The writing about, reception, and merchandizing of *The Hunger Games* are acts of power that value (normatively and economically) young people as social actors and consumers. Some commentary sought to raise the alarm about injustices, but other writing and commodification of the series also gradually excluded certain people and meanings of peace. While the disciplining moves of the

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political discourses surrounding both youth politics and their consumption practices are noted, resistance by consumers is also evident. The evolution of Katniss as a cultural icon prompts further thinking about youth as agents of change (or as dangers to be contained) in world politics and how the voice of the rebellious child is received. It shows how both of these views of youth are entangled in the workings of global capitalism and entertainment franchises; neoliberal militarism and liberal peace are doppelgangers, interwoven in the pop culture filaments of world politics. Yet, the arenas of consumption were also spaces of reflection and dialogue about the sources and dynamics of injustice and peacebuilding in diverse localities.

Talking About Youth and *The Hunger Games*: Elevation or 'Tabloidization'?

In Chap. 3, I showed how recurring discursive tropes frame young people as the necessary instruments of foreign policy (making education, health, and crime policies also national security issues), and also framing youth as innocents in need of protecting, delinquents in need of containing, and special moral messengers. But in addition to generational boundary maintenance, there are self/other confusions in the recognition by adults of youth agency in their discourses. All of these themes reoccur in the media commentary on *The Hunger Games*' books and films. Film reviewers and social commentators frequently addressed the question of why young people liked Collins' series. The romance and adventure aspects were clearly a draw, the former illustrated in the online groups for 'Team Peeta' or 'Team Gale' where fans registered their support for their favorite love interest for Katniss. But some critics perceived that the appeal lay in the equation of life under totalitarianism with school life and adolescent development: 'war is hell, but so is growing up'[2] one explained. Another wrote, 'an individual against a brutal authoritarian system is basically what school feels like to some.'[3] If these interpretations of *The Hunger Games* showed sympathy for monitored and controlled youth, they also confirmed in the popular discourse the inevitability of war and its relationship to youth development, harking back to ideas of growing up as a recapitulation of macro-political forces; but this time not of the ascent of the species or civilization but of war itself. War might be hell but it happens naturally like puberty and relationship angst, seems to be the idea. Readers' interest was attributed to 'the stormy psyche of the adolescent' and the fact that 'the

world of our hovered-over teens and preteens may be safer, but it's also less conducive to adventure' which made the YA dystopias a vicarious pleasure. Here we have the recurrence of the idea that 'contrived trauma' in literature is a stand in for necessary suffering as a function of growing up.[4] 'As punishment and humiliation and deterring rebellion, the games lack ideological coherences' wrote one commentator in *The New Yorker*, but 'as a fever-dream allegory of the adolescent social experience, they become perfectly intelligible.'[5]

On the other hand, just before the opening of the first Hunger Games film, the book series was reviewed by another critic in *The New Yorker*, Amy Davidson who saw it as a mirror to the post-9/11 'war on terror': 'a story about a long counterinsurgency campaign, the costs it exacts, its moral traps, and the political use of violence.'[6] Davidson wrote about enjoying the series with her middle-school-age daughter and did not patronize young readers who she argued understood the social commentary of the book: 'The teen-agers who love these books are watching stories in the news, and thinking about them, and should be given some credit for drawing connections.'[7]

But in evaluating the appeal of *The Hunger Games* for youth, Laura Miller intuited that adult fantasies were in play, noting that 'it somehow fits the paranoid spirit of these novels that adults are the ones who write them, publish them, stock them in stores and libraries, assign them in classes, and decide which ones win prizes. (Most of the reader reviews posted online seem to be written by adults as well),' she claimed.[8] Some mental health professionals cautioned against allowing teens to watch the films in the absence of further discussions.[9] Based on the nature of the violence in the novels, there were predictable 'parenting' concerns about the first film.[10] But some of the concern was a familiar Gothic one of children 'knowing too much.' A Guardian columnist wrote:

> Teens who are told that the future is one of environmental catastrophe and global financial collapse flock to see these films; films full of grey, bombed-out zones, totalitarian regimes, morally compromised rebels, unremitting cruelty, and the media used as a weapon of war. These films of the future say much about what entertains our young people. And it is very far from childish.[11]

In these ways media discussions of *The Hunger Games* mirrored a familiar dialectic between saving and recognizing the young, which is also a perennial tension in the humanitarian and human rights discourse between

acceptance of youth agency and political awareness and a concern for young people's protection and shielding from images of violence.

Alarm-Raising

A second kind of commentary involved raising the alarm about global political issues. In many articles headed 'The Real Hunger Games,' it was evident that for headline and op-ed writers, the Hunger Games operated as shorthand. Robert Reich wrote that we were living in a Hunger Games world and Michael Klare warned that climate change might mean 'our post-apocalyptic fantasies could become everyday realities.'[12] As Collins' series progresses, the narrative action shifts from the survival-based violence of the Games to the overt political violence of the rebellion against the Capitol. Plenty of commentators saw reflections in the Syrian Civil War and also the potential for making pop culture connections to attract attention to the humanitarian disaster there. Hisham Melhem, bureau chief of Al Arabiya News Channel in Washington, DC, wrote that the Assad regime's attacks on the Palestinian refugees in Yarmouk were 'Syria's cruel "Hunger Games"':

> It shall be said, that in the 21st Century, in the environs of Damascus, Syria, the country that used to be part of the granary that fed the Roman Empire, people are dying of hunger, living on grass, and subsisting on cats and dogs [...] today's brutal Hunger Games, are killing young men, destroying children and infants, physically brutalizing women and tearing apart the social, familial and cultural fabrics of society.[13]

Another article in *Newsweek*, titled 'Syria's Hunger Games,'[14] reported on attempts to evacuate starving civilians from the Old City of Homs, where at least 1100 children were trapped, according to UNICEF, in 2014. The Syrian government blamed the rebels for diverting or preventing passage of food aid; the opposition recognized that the tactic was to starve them into submission. Shane Bauer's pointed and poignant piece in *Mother Jones* told a true life story of Peeta and Katniss, a young couple called 'Waed and Hassan who fell in love,' but whose lives were tragically altered 'when the Assad regime turned their world into a medieval hellscape.' They could have been from The Seam: 'They were a handsome couple, both in their mid-20s. Waed was reserved compared to most of the group, but sharp and self-possessed, with gentle eyes and long, wavy hair. Hassan

had a long face, a head of shiny black curls, and dense, dark eyebrows that arched high when he became excited.' Only the title of the article references Collins' series, but Bauer's story displayed a novelist's skill in offering a real-life account of war that showed an ongoing Hunger Games.[15] In addition to writing about the young Syrian couple, Bauer's story concerned the aid politics of the conflict and criticized leaders of the Syrian regime, the UN, and the United States. Starvation in Syria, as reported by the Voice of America, was partially caused by the bombing of bakeries. This story, like many others, was titled 'Syria's Hunger Games.'[16]

The strategic use of *The Hunger Games* to engage in foreign policy discussion and analysis was also demonstrated in 'Four Ways "Mockingjay" Explains the World' by Beenish Ahmed. Ahmed directly compared the video of American journalist James Foley before he was killed by ISIS to Peeta's appeal for a ceasefire in *Mockingjay*. Foley had said: 'I call on my brother John, who is a member of the US Air Force. Think about what you are doing, think about the lives you destroy, including those of your own family.' Ahmed argues that Peeta is similarly used for propaganda. 'He urges Katniss specifically—a lot like Foley urges his brother John—to reconsider her part in promoting a rebellion against the Capital.'[17] This writer also compared the Syria separatists' videos with the propaganda films (or Propos) that Katniss makes for the rebels, the bombing of a Gaza hospital by Israel with a similar scene in Mockingjay, and the speeches of Al Assad, Qaddafi, and Mubarak with those of President Snow.[18] In *Mockingjay*, Peeta is labeled a traitor by the rebels for his cease-fire call but then excused, as Ahmed does Foley, because he is being tortured. But it is also the case that, as the book's moral center, Peeta tells the truth. As these examples show, *The Hunger Games* was employed in political critique and humanitarian advocacy, as well as recognized as a mirror of international political events.

And it was not only American or Europe-based media that drew connections between *The Hunger Games* and political conflicts. The series was referenced in regional media commentary in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Ramzy Baroud compared one of *Mockingjay*'s segments to the real bombing of a hospital in Gaza: 'I could have never imagined myself drawing parallels between my refugee camp, Nuseirat, in the Gaza Strip, its heroic people, and a Hollywood movie; the struggle of my people is too sacred for that. But I couldn't help it as I watched the latest from *The Hunger Games* franchise, Mockingjay.'[19] In another op-ed, an American author writing for Al Jazeera hoped for revolution that would reconfirm American soft power: 'The task of a true revolutionary movie is to rethink

the possibilities for rebellion against injustice in a contemporary setting and not just to replay old models for uprisings that no longer apply. Maybe the last two films of the *The Hunger Games* will do just that and the beacon of revolution will, once again, shine from America.'[20] On the other hand, Jamil Khader mocked actor Donald Sutherland's hope that the series would spark a real revolution.[21] Khader also wrote about a round of applause he witnessed at an Israeli cinema during a screening of *Catching Fire*, saying it suggested that 'Hollywood today is that stand-in for the symbolic Other that believes for us, so that we avoid being involved and continue going about our lives doing whatever we like.'[22] What these commentators appeared to share, however, was an appreciation for *The Hunger Games* as a narrative of war, abuses of power and dissatisfaction with the status quo. But the series also sparked disagreement about, and often little confidence in, youth revolt.

The Hunger Games and Global Revolt

The release of *The Hunger Games* corresponded with the global rise of youthful anti-government protest movements. The Occupy movement and the North Africa/Arab uprisings brought rebellious youth to the front of the political stage to demonstrate their anger about economic and political injustice. Occupy Wall Street sought to reject moneyed power for the power of ideas and economic solidarity: aspects that made them comparable to the heroes of YA dystopian literature. In *Salon*, the Occupy movement was given meaning in relation to *V for Vendetta*, *The Hunger Games*, and other YA titles. Mike Doherty noted how both the literary characters and the Movement's activists 'safeguard learning' and 'rough it [...] as if keeping alive a more earthy, simple, honest way of living; their library tents symbolize their devotion to learning from the past as they forge a better way for the future. Indeed, the library is a synecdoche for the movement itself.'[23] While the Guantanamo library (discussed in Chap. 5) had a pacifying function, the Occupy Wall Street or People's Library (with 5000 titles) was a means and a symbol of emancipation. Like Katniss and Peeta, the Occupy protestors refused both subjugation and co-option by elite politics and achieved moral victories at least. On the other hand, Katniss' 'girl on fire' persona had a gruesome real-world referent in 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation that was the spark for uprising in Tunisia. He, like Katniss, had been young when he lost his father and was financially supporting his mother and siblings, often forced

to work outside the law to live. His death galvanized young people's determination to end the regime of President Ben Ali. The 22-year-old hip-hop artist Hamada Ben Amor spoke directly to Ali in his song that was widely circulated online[24] called: 'Mr President. Your People are Dying.' The song, which could have been a version of the burning child's address (see Chap. 6), rallied young Tunisians to the uprising and strategically spoke to Ali like a father who had not fulfilled his parenting duty. But Tunisian and Egyptian youth were, like Katniss, outmaneuvered by older more politically savvy actors.[25]

A number of analysts connected *The Hunger Games* to these events in a third strand of commentary that looked for real-life Katniss analogues. The YA dystopia trend, like some contemporaneous political realities, expressed the dichotomy of fear/anticipation in thinking about a future without repressive structures. In the *New Republic*, Ivan Krastev wrote that *The Hunger Games* explained the protests in Egypt and Russia, stating that the books 'capture[s] the new spirit of rebellion better than faddish sociological theories.'

> The global protests, like Katniss's revolution, boil down to an insurgency that is antipolitical at its base. It is born out of a profound sense of injustice, governed by a broad array of images, and rooted in an innate sense of empathy and human solidarity.

Thus, Krastev was a describing a critical peacebuilding movement. But he went on to state 'The conscience-stricken celebrity may be its only legitimate leader.' The lesson that Krastev took from *The Hunger Games* was that charismatic individuals outside of mainstream politics but with media power would rally people for change. Krastev looked to TV personality Kseniya Sobchak to be the Russian Katniss:

> 'Is it accidental that Kseniya Sobchak—the enfant terrible of Moscow's good society, who is famous for little more than being famous—became one of the symbols of Russia's protests? It is a revolution without an ideology or a master plan. It does not envision a future radically different from the world of today. Failing to offer political alternatives, it is an explosion of moral indignation.'[26]

Other journalists and bloggers also found Katniss equivalents in the Ukrainian MP and pop singer Ruslana Lyzhychko[27] who was known as the 'soul' of the Euromaidan protests and Ukraine's revolution.[28]

In another example, journalist Maria Margaronis tapped a young Greek Nikos Romanos for a role in a real-life Hunger Games. In 2008, Romanos had been 15 and on a night out in Athens with his friend, Alexis Grigoropoulos, also 15, when Grigoropoulos was killed by police. The killing sparked weeks of riots by thousands of young people frustrated at the state of their country's economy and politics. In 2014, the now 21-year-old Romanos was on hunger strike in prison demanding to be allowed out of prison on furlough to attend college classes. The self-proclaimed anarchist and 'urban guerrilla' had been imprisoned on an armed bank robbery charge, but reports were that he had not threatened the bank staff. He had been beaten up in police custody. Margaronis wrote of Romanos:

> The power of Romanos's story is as a parable of the crisis, the social and personal breakdown so many Greeks have lived. For his supporters he has become an almost mythic figure, the hero of a real-life Hunger Games. A boy with his life ahead of him derailed by a bullet from a policeman's gun.

She noted the similarities with killings of young men by the police in the United States and with the plight of Syrian refugees. She wrote that middle-class Romanos had disappeared after his friend's death, 'to resurface battered and bruised as a dark Robin Hood, armored now with an angry ideology. A boy who swallowed the sanctioned lawlessness and chaos of the state and mirrored it back again like a rogue Robocop.'[29] After 30 days on hunger strike, and mass solidarity protests, Romanos ended his fast when a parliamentary amendment was passed allowing prisoners to take leave to attend classes. They would first have to successfully complete two months of the term by distance learning and would be electronically monitored, but Romanos had successfully called out the state on its disciplinary responsibility to make education accessible. Like Katniss and Peeta at the end of their first games, he had threatened suicide and called the bluff of the government, drawing attention to its hypocrisies.

'You Call It Entertainment but the Hunger Games Is My Shit'

Others looked to the structural violence of poverty, the direct violence of police brutality, and the cultural violence of racism in the contemporary US. Black Lives Matter activists tweeted quotes and symbols from *The*

Hunger Games (discussed further in Chap. 10). A blogger captured the analogies many were making between *The Hunger Games* and race relations in the United States:

> I saw the latest Hunger Games film—*Mockingjay*—and in it, the Capitol executes unarmed civilians, their deaths broadcasted for millions of eyes. I couldn't stop thinking about Eric Garner, Tamir Rice: the killing of unarmed people, one a man and one a child, their murders recorded and spreading like wildfire on the Internet. Like in Hunger Games, the people have taken to the streets to protest these killings, demanding change, demanding that the system in which laws that benefit some and murder others be overthrown.[30]

After unrest following police shootings in Baltimore, Maryland, Jon Stewart's Daily Show comedienne Jessica Williams used a Hunger Games analogy to mock how the press had covered the White House Correspondents' dinner at the expense of Baltimore protest coverage.[31] A writer in *Ebony* argued that while African-American audiences had initially been mostly unaware of the series, adult African-Americans were later drawn to the films: 'like a grassroots protest effort, nods of approval spread about a unique storyline. […] The storyline moved the more progressive crowd who saw an eerie parallel to real life barrel fights for low income crumbs in close project quarters where the young beat and shoot one another in desperate, bloody crimes of survival.'[32] Imani Cezanne's (spoken word) poem titled *The Hunger Games* dealt with 'a more real account of Hunger Games' in the United States, from an African-American perspective. 'You call it entertainment but the Hunger Games is my shit,' she states, asking audiences to consider how the film 'erases' urban, race-related poverty in the United States and 'how the experiences of life in poverty can be considered entertainment in one realm and ignored in others.'[33]

The casting of the film versions of *The Hunger Games* also surfaced racism, and although only a few fans posted racist comments about the casting of black actors in key roles, there was considerable attention to this as an entertainment news story. Both racist comments on Twitter and the online backlash against them exposed a space of political conflict but also dialogue. The comments ranged from the subtle/soft racism of those who were surprised at the casting, because they had not imagined the characters in this way, and those who were overtly hostile. For example, one

young woman, apparently from Singapore, commented that the death of Rue was 'less sad' in the film because she was portrayed as black. Respondents pointed to the textual evidence of how Collins had written Rue with 'brown skin' (see Chap. 6) and left other characters racially ambiguous. The social media conversation also led to further thoughtful explorations of race and racism in some mainstream media venues. One critic wrote: 'The notions taught by patriarchy and white supremacy do not only effect our day-to-day encounters in reality; they shape our imaginations and our expectations, our intangible realities.'[34] A writer in *The Atlantic* argued that the lack of racism (and sexism) depicted in *The Hunger Games* and other recent YA titles such as *The Giver*, *The Maze Runner*, and *Divergent* was just another example of the science fiction 'tradition of imagining the subjugation of white people.'[35] But in *Christianity Today*, a writer made the point that *The Hunger Games* is about critiquing processes that promote racism:

> Here are some things that animate racism: a preference for entertainment and spectacle over justice. Fear—of the weak, of the person not like me. The need to grasp at power one has before it slips away. Both willful and ignorant blindness to one's own privilege, a type of power that could be spent righteously, but often is not.[36]

In these examples we can see how *The Hunger Games* stimulated reflection and dialogue about the sources and dynamics of injustice and peacebuilding in diverse localities. But, as David Sibley notes, 'Adolescents may be threatening to adults because they transgress the adult/child boundary and appear discrepant in "adult" spaces.'[37]

'Out of Place': Blaming Youth/Panoptical Illusions

The Hunger Games commentary also exposed negative and essentializing assumptions about youth. A *New Yorker* article about the racist tweets on casting made many insightful points including wondering: 'If the stories we tell ourselves about the future, however disturbing, don't include black people [...] then what does it say about the stories we tell ourselves regarding the present?' However, this article also attributed the invisibility of black characters to generational prejudice and 'a certain generation's failure of imagination,' because the offensive tweets had been written by 'people in their teens and early twenties.'[38] Other commentators con-

curred, describing the tweeters as 'our national brain trust of semi-literate racist teenagers' and 'racist garbage-teens.'[39] While discussion of important issues of race and gender was provoked by *The Hunger Games*, the space and mode of conflict resolution regularly entailed individualized shaming of the offensive tweeters on the one hand and a blanket condemnation of a whole generation, on the other. When 16-year-old Amandla Stenberg, the actress who had played Rue in *The Hunger Games* film, began a sophisticated online discussion about race and cultural appropriation, she was described in *The Washington Post*'s headline as 'all grown up.'[40] Age was evoked to criticize fans, but when a young person made incisive political points, she was no longer seen as a youth, but had graduated to adult status. A rare exception, one commentary in *Slate*, addressed the issue structurally: 'these ideas don't occur in a vacuum, and the young people who absorb them from our culture and then repeat them back to us don't deserve the brunt of our scorn.'[41]

But an enduring urge to put youth in their places, even among progressives and liberals, was demonstrated in these articles about *The Hunger Games*. Furthermore, reviewers of the first film, who had not read the books, were quick to dismiss it as politically feeble and suggested young people's ignorance and lack of political sincerity:

> 'The film sticks to the comforting message that misery stems from the actions of the authorities. Its protagonists are the innocent victims of a system that they're powerless to influence. Its target audience, the young, are invited to pride themselves on the blameless nobility of their age-group, but not expected to interrogate the realities of their world, or question their own passion for The X Factor.'[42]

Another thought that the success of *The Hunger Games* was because it brought the news to young people 'without having to pick up a newspaper.' Noting that 'millennials are great at substituting entertainment for the news,' this commentator added 'and *The Hunger Games* borrows just enough from real global events to satisfy their very particular "I want to care, but I don't care to know" attitude.'

Like Rowling's characters before her, Katniss was not a useful role model argued David Cox because 'she's just living the teen dream of becoming special, wondrously endowed with a flatbow instead of a wand. All she achieves is to discover the tedious merits of sacrifice, endurance, courage and archery. Things might have got more interest-

ing if the games had awakened in her an appetite for savagery.'[43] In addition to hoping for more violence from Katniss, this reviewer pegged her as lacking political guile, writing: 'Reflection is not her strong suit. When it's put to her that the games would collapse if people refused to watch them, she just dismisses this as an impossibility.'[44] This criticism may represent a failure of the films to capture the subtleties of the books but also reflected a more general tendency to dismiss young people's pop culture as empty-headed. A critic writing in *The Guardian* stated: 'When the best political imagery available comes from a corny series of paranoid science fiction films that are retro-1970s science fiction at best, and vacuous adolescent fantasy at worst, there is something missing. [...] It seems that films and comics, rather than conventional political ideologies, are the texts from which modern radicalism takes its imagery.'[45] He criticized the use of series imagery by activists in Thailand (discussed in Chap. 10) as evidence of 'dangerous' youth naiveté or lack of political understanding. The films were 'willful absurdities [...] rooted in teenagers' sensibilities.' And he argued that 'Marx himself would have thought the emptiness of today's radical imagery beneath scorn.'[46] Such opinions did not go unchallenged however. In the comments section accompanying this article, others disagreed; one pointed out that the critic had missed 'the Situationist logic [in the Thai protestors symbolism] of subverting the spectacle, which needn't be intentional, but merely a reflection of human necessity. If you are starving and someone offers you stale bread, you do not turn your nose up and suggest that organic sourdough is better.'[47]

Another piece directly linked the YA fiction trend to the policies of Anglo-American liberal peacebuilding:

> 'This "us-versus-them" paradigm is, of course, completely understandable in the context of children's entertainment. What is worrisome is how closely it mirrors current political discourses in the real world. It echoes quite problematic official views and policies of Western governments, particularly the U.S. and U.K. Their discourse of "transforming the world" (for example, bringing democracy to the Middle East) centers upon eradicating their "enemies".'

This criticism of the enduring urges of western political elites to remake the world was attributed to 'our deepest childhood desires' and not being mature enough:

> 'In a complicated world we long for someone to blame, for quick fixes, for a personalized target to project our hopes and fears upon. It is only with maturity that individuals come to realize it is usually not a person that is solely, or even primarily, to blame. Instead, it is underlying system that drives their actions and therefore requires changing. […] Is also necessary to celebrate the possibility of not just destroying but also recreating society. […] In the contemporary age, youthful rebellion does not just dominate teenage entertainment — scarily, our grown-up political fantasies are also a sucker for it.'[48]

Criticism of *The Hunger Games* as 'rebel-tainment' due to a lack of corporate/banking bad guys in Collins' story and the series' merchandise spin-offs may have been on point, but the author also took a swipe at apathetic young people. Lynn Parramore wrote:

> 'They [Hollywood] are banking on the notion that our anxieties will be exorcised in the darkened theater and helpfully monetized for corporate executives who, unlike America's youth, never fail to make their presence felt on election day. The young people who flock to *The Hunger Games* can expect crap jobs, a frayed social safety net, and an economic system that is literally killing them slowly, but never mind: their right to shop at Walmart is inalienable.'[49]

While these articles responded to *The Hunger Games* as a political text, they also illustrated an ever-present readiness for cultural scapegoating of young people for problems created by adults and a generalized cynicism about young people's political agency. Furthermore, in several respects they missed or had not read the subtleties in Collins' series, including how many of their criticisms mirrored Katniss' views. The results of a survey by economist Noreena Hertz suggested that in fact many young readers were not as politically naïve or self-focused as the commentators discussed above seemed to believe. Hertz coined the term 'Generation K' (K for Katniss) when she published the results of her survey of American and British girls, aged between 13 and 20 years old. The survey showed they had very little trust in government or large corporations, were 'profoundly anxious' about terrorism and jobs, sought to 'celebrate difference and diversity,' and were most concerned with 'equality.'[50]

Liberal Militarism: Girl Power, Toys, and Boys

At the same time, in popular media discourse there was a celebration of Katniss as a role model for girls and women, and this gender aspect was frequently discussed as part of a new and refreshing trend in popular literature and film.[51] A *Guardian* columnist wrote that Katniss was 'a brilliant role-model for tweenage girls: one who wouldn't be seen dead in a princess outfit in case it hindered her ability to run for her life.'[52] This emphasis on girl power[53] often seemed to glide over the extreme hardships of Katniss' situation, emphasizing gender emancipation over socioeconomic issues. Another result of the girl empowerment perspective was glossing over the soldiering aspect of Katniss's story and presenting them as simply tomboy tactics. One columnist wrote: 'A fighter, a killer, a survivor, she fights boys, and even rescues boys. She hunts (like an Amazon, with a bow), she gathers, she climbs trees. She's canny and resilient. […] I love her for inspiring a revolution. I love her for seeing that the only way things change is through empathy; as she feels for other people, she realises that her feelings are not a weakness but a strength. They might even save her country. What better heroine could there be for our angry, confused and disconnected times?'[54] This same columnist noted that Katniss was traumatized by her experiences. She perceived that this war-related trauma was part of the connection for audiences noting that 'Collins's exploration of post-traumatic stress is phenomenal (and, judging by the intense response, both resonant and needed).' The tension illustrated in this discourse between the recognition of post-9/11 PTSD and the valorizing of Katniss as 'a fighter, a killer' underscores the limitations of liberal feminism's equality focus in recognizing militarism. Indeed, the discourse about Katniss as a girl power role model provokes an important set of questions related to peacebuilding with youth: Who is empowerment for, whom does it exclude and exploit, how does it create violence, how are these forms of violence managed in practice?

The toy industry illustrates. While *The Hunger Games* is cited as prime example of a strong role model for girls because of her action orientation, the toys for the franchise often fell short of this ideal. Barbie Katniss wears khaki combat-style pants and jacket and carries a bow and arrow. She is still the same doll underneath, of course, and as the movies are released, the same doll sheds her forest-poacher look for sleek figure-hugging arena battle suits.[55] In the films, her emancipation is visually indicated by increased sexualization; from wearing the simple, practical hunting attire

that included her father's jacket, she is molded into black rubber jumpsuits and dark eyeliner in the heat of battle and, at the conclusion, wears a floral dress as she cradles her second child. In addition to camo-chic fashion, with its problematic endorsement of militarism,[56] there were other commercial moves that militarize by looking to a profile of proper femininity. For example, an unofficial commercial tie-in to the series was a pink bow and arrow set, the Hasbro 'Nerf Rebelle Heartbreaker Bow'[57] that looks nothing like the original but is sold for ages 8–11 using a young model that looks like Katniss. Promoting a hybrid of girlishness and battle readiness, a story on CBS News maintained that the marketing of the pink bow and arrows to girls was a new and empowering trend. It quoted parents and a 'toy and play' expert who said: 'We're seeing a fundamental cultural shift in the way girls want to be perceived and how they're going to act that out through play […] They're ready to be the hero.'[58] She went on to add that the pink bow 'is more welcoming for them.' Only at the end of the story is the contradictory opinion of a 12-year-old fan included: 'I think that most of the girls who will want a bow, won't be drawn to a pink one,' the child said, adding that 'most kids want to be someone who's strong and powerful and can be anything they want.'[59] The commercialization of YA fiction took other forms as well. In fact, it appears that many young female fans were inspired by the series to take real archery lessons,[60] and purchase real bow and arrow sets, that were labeled to suggest Collins' series, such as the 'Victor Recurve Bow Set.'[61] Young customers describe using their bows for hunting or at the archery range, and as a costume accessory, and they attributed their purchases to a combination of influences from popular entertainment and family tradition, as one apparent customer explained in the product review section:

> I come from an avid hunting and bow hunting family, and my closest Uncle is a bow tech. I never really got too much into archery until I saw Chronicles of Narnia, (Susan was my fav bc of archery), and Hawkeye is one of my fav Marvel characters, and of course when i started reading the Hunger Games books and watched the movies.[62]

Another recipient of a bow wrote: 'I've wanted a silver recurved bow since I read my first Hunger Games book and saw the movie last year! My father got this for me for my 15th birthday!'[63]

These girls seemed to embrace the self-sufficient, survivor side of Katniss as written by Collins while identifying with a range of pop culture

characters. But other products, such as mass-manufactured costumes, were conventionally gendered in ways at odds with the gender politics of the original story. For example, the product descriptions for costumes that are reproduced below offered clothing for 'girls' and 'men' [with my highlighting].

Katniss Archer Jacket:	'**If you're going to represent your home in a fight to the death you need to have the right coat**--this Archer Jacket! Add a bow and arrow set to completely become a movie heroine.'[64]
Katniss Arena Jacket:	'While knowing how to make a fire is a good skill, you don't want to be as bright as fire in the arena. With this Katniss Arena Jacket, you'll be able to wait it out in trees, and sprint across the forest in ease. And remember, **sometimes you'll get some outside help**. So just hang in there!'[65]
Girl's Survivor Jumpsuit:	'Do you think you got what it takes to survive in an arena where all forces are working against you? The other contestants are out for your blood and the arena is also trying to kill you. **You are going to need something sleek and comfortable in order to survive.** Hopefully this Survivor Jumpsuit Girls Costume will help you out.'[66]
Men's Survivor Jumpsuit:	'Have a little bit of a bad luck streak? We know you were the unfortunate selection to battle your way out of the survivor dome, but **don't worry, we're confident that you will be the victorious champion! All you have to do is out think and outperform your opponents**. And be really fast at running towards weapons that are dropped into the dome. That helps too!'[67]

As shown in the highlighted excerpts, the male wearer of a Hunger Games costume is not only assured that he will win the games but he is also expected to 'think,' while the female consumer is encouraged to have a good outfit and to expect 'some outside help.'

In her ethnography of childhood consumer culture, Allison Pugh shows that acquiring popular toys and games facilitates entry for children into communities with peers and allows them to be part of 'the daily conversation.'[68] Parents, often reluctantly, submit to children's desires for particular products so that they will not be left out.[69] All of this seems to support Agamben's claim that resistance from within the apparatus is difficult if not illusionary. Indeed, when we turn to further analysis of Hunger Games merchandize and consumable experiences, further bars of a virtual prison seem to close around.

Revolution Merchandized, Global Economic Exploitation, and the Souls of Young People

> Work on the prisoner's soul must be carried out as often as possible. The prison, though an administrative apparatus, will at the same time be a machine for altering minds.[70]

The apparatus of neoliberal capitalism permits multisensorial embodiment of *The Hunger Games*' characters. The Cover Girl Capitol cosmetics collection offered girls and women the opportunity to wear cosmetics themed for the different districts in Collins' story, including the luxury collection for District 1, the livestock collection for District 10, and color palates to represent transportation, technology, power, fishing, lumber, textiles, mining, grain, agriculture, and masonry.[71] Among the many toys and books related to *The Hunger Games*, there are books of Hunger Games recipes and of New Testament parallels[72]: nourishment for body and soul. Fans may also purchase trading cards, posters, dog tags, socks, pajamas, necklaces, bracelets, stationary, folders, pen and pencil sets, journals, umbrellas, candle holders, tea lights, stamps, survival backpacks, and belt buckles.[73] Most of these cheaper items are geared toward younger girls and are items to take to school, wear, or use to decorate one's environment. These products, and the practices of consumption they entail, contribute in complicated ways to the transformation of the 'powerful girl' (and pacifist-leaning boy) paradigms of the books. Through play and embodiment, fans become Katniss through dressing up, but through playing with her body (e.g., through dolls), fans emulate the Capitol citizens. One way of understanding this is that the habits being made, the minds being altered, to follow Foucault, entail normalization of hypocrisy: Katniss-inspired girls are encouraged to be at once fighters against injustice and the warders of their own materialist and body-conscious prisons.

The Hunger Games has been used to promote unusual high-end hotels,[74] inspired a reality TV show called Capture,[75] and spawned official tie-ins including a Capitol clothing line[76] and sandwiches.[77] A Subway sandwich commercial featured clips from the movie with the voiceover: 'Bold can be standing up for what you believe in. Bold can be testing your limits and defying all odds. And now, bold can be found at Subway.' Subway's fiery footlong sandwiches were described as 'a revolution in bold taste.'[78] An unofficial Taco Bell commercial argued for resistance to the tyranny of McDonalds, as well. Nevertheless, it is also possible to purchase personalized Hunger Games' T-shirts, coffee mugs, aprons, bags, and other items. These items further demonstrated how people integrate fiction into their everyday lives, representing as a fan and making a commentary about what values are important to them: 'I love the boy with the bread' and 'Down with the Capitol' were two common T-shirt slogans. Fan-designed items showed the romance interest, but also included revolutionary slogans from the series. 'We Burn, You Burn' was common, and 'Down with the Capitol' mouse pads and 'Every Revolution Begins with a Spark' cups are also available.[79]

Girl Power and Production

Consumable revolution may be appealing, but despite revolutionary ideas on the surface, many of the products described relied on worker exploitation at the site of production. As a liberal feminism icon, Katniss may have offered empowerment for some girls, but using a lens of global structural violence helps us shift focus to different people's lives. A large variety of fan-designed and custom collectables can be purchased online through companies with US-based production facilities such as CafePress[80] located in Louisville, Kentucky. But in most cases the textiles used to make the bags and T-shirts printed with 'The Future Mrs. Mellark' and 'Team Peeta' are not sustainably sourced or fairly traded. These aspects are hidden and special inquiries need to be made to determine the origin of these products. But such inquiries reveal that most of the shirts were made by Gildan and Hanes, both of which have been accused of poor labor conditions in their overseas sweatshops including use of child labor. Eighty percent of toys in the US and European markets are made in China including Katniss Barbie, made by Mattel, and the pink Heartbreaker Bow, by Hasbro (that were described above). Both of these companies are cited in studies of worker exploitation in the toy industry.[81]

The list of legal and ethical labor violations found by China Labor Watch in 2007 and 2014 included excessive overtime, unpaid wages, unsafe working conditions, harassment, and discrimination based on age and ethnicity. Another consortium of European NGOs described 'famine wages' in the toy industry.[82] These 'hunger games' that Chinese toy factories represent are a symptom of a global political economy built on the interests of multinationals: 'In order to mitigate investment risk, instead of building their own factories in these regions, toy companies often contract their manufacturing to local factories via intermediary supply chain firms.'[83] Consumer pressure to end abuses is deflected by blaming these local suppliers.

The contradictions in fictional stories of oppression being merchandized via exploitation of their nonfiction analogues can be further surfaced. Like Katniss's mother, 45-year-old Hu Nianzhen was mentally unable to cope, but in 2010 she completed suicide at the factory where she worked, Taiqiang Toys, a major supplier for Mattel.[84] According to China Labor Watch, 'The family subsequently protested for justice outside the factory gate; the factory retaliated by calling a group of thugs who violently beat many of the protesting family members.'[85] Campaigners were still fighting for compensation for her husband and three children. Like Katniss and Peeta, the 'fire mutts' (see Chap. 6), young workers were disfigured. 16-year-old Xu Wenquan worked at factory that made gifts and toys for Walmart. 'I work on the plastic molding machine from 6 in the morning to 6 at night,' he said explaining how his hands were covered with blisters to a *New York Times* reporter; the machines are 'quite hot, so I've burned my hands.'[86] On the other hand, *The Economist* reported that labor shifts were seeing more young men like Xu in the once female-dominated factories and newly assertive women workers. The article titled 'Factory Women. Girl Power'[87] described tens of millions of Chinese migrant workers leaving rural areas for work in the cities: 'Conditions in the factories have often been harsh—poor safety, illegally long working hours, cramped accommodation, few breaks and little leave—but for many it has also been liberating and empowering, both personally and financially.' These 'liberated' women were active in strikes and labor organizing in 2010, said the article referencing toy workers 'in their 30s or 40s' who had been working in the factories for two decades.

As these examples show, a problem with a 'girl power' label related to popular entertainment is that it can obscure more than it explains, and these issues can be brought to the fore in peace education curricula (see

the conclusion). Even in its own wheelhouse—the film industry—*The Hunger Games* had not signaled an actual improvement in access of women and girls to acting roles. 'Despite the inspiration — and revenue — generated by "The Hunger Games," female roles in films are still a fraction of the total speaking parts in movies,' wrote one columnist who cited a study of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Of the top 100 highest earning movies, only 28.4% of speaking parts were for women, illustrating a downward trend in access.[88] Another study by San Diego State's Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film found a similar trend in that there were more women protagonists in top films in 2002 than in 2014, despite the success of female-dominated movie franchises like *The Hunger Games*. Studying over 2000 characters in highest-grossing domestic films of that year, they found that women were only leading characters in 12% of those films.[89]

The corporate gendering of *The Hunger Games* also ignored the possibility for gender alliances. In popular media commentary about *The Hunger Games*, there was a lack of discussion of how recent YA dystopian hits offered role models for boys. Some religious blogs and a review in *Christianity Today*[90] equated Peeta with Jesus; but most of those who wrote about the positive role model potential in *The Hunger Games* emphasized girls and not boys. Pointing to girls' empowerment, but ignoring the war-questioning boy of the series, further normalizes political violence as heroic duty by equating it with gender equality and also reinforces the image of young men as violent: an effect at odds with Collins' original conclusion (as shown in Chap. 6). Thus liberal feminism in corporate discourses of consumption helps to create the self-fulfilling prophecy of militarized young women and angry, disaffected young men. It is, of course, not long before the empowered, newly militarized 'girl' becomes reinterpreted as a security threat.

After the release of *Mockingjay* Part 1, media comment on Katniss began to identify her as a danger to discipline. *The Hunger Games* was among the pop culture products left behind by 19-year-old Aqsa Mahmood, a young woman who left Scotland to join ISIS. She was described in a CNN article in the following terms: 'she listened to Coldplay and read "Harry Potter" books. On her desk, colorful loom bands and bracelets hung from a goosenecked lamp, a dog-eared copy of "The Hunger Games" nearby.'[91] A 'terrorism expert and security professor' was 'concerned that some of Katniss' actions could glorify the lives of rebels

and terrorists among young viewers.' He hadn't read or viewed the series, but said: 'The bottom line is, being a terrorist sucks. If we accept the justification of these groups without taking into account what's motivating the violence, we lose sight of that nuance. And I would definitely fault Hollywood for that. […] It sounds like this series portrays the rebellion as justified. But we see very similar rationales and justifications in groups like ISIS.'[92] Others stated that 'It is incumbent upon teachers to call Katniss a terrorist' and/or use her as a spur to discussion about contemporary use of drones to attack groups like ISIS. They also considered how *The Hunger Games* helped young people understand and cope with terrorism, citing the importance of the role of reading in shaping young people's worldviews and for allowing different perspectives to be explored.[93]

Transnational Neoliberal Memorialization: Visiting the Museums of Fake History

Among the commercial spin-offs from the book series was a planned stage show billed as an 'immersive theatrical experience' created by an American-Dutch media company for a purpose-built facility next to Wembley Stadium in London.[94] Hunger Games-themed rides are also being planned for a 2017 opening at a Motiongate theme-park in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.[95] One of the attractions, the Panem Aerial Tour, involves a battle with Peacekeepers. Like *Harry Potter* fans before them, Hunger Games fans (though not necessarily the young) can participate interactively in a continuing narrative, traveling across national borders and time zones. They can visit physical sites that have faux historical and memorial meanings and 'become' the characters. Fans can visit wax Katniss at Madame Tussauds in London[96] or take one of the unofficial tours of the filming locations in North Carolina or Atlanta, Georgia. They can also visit *The Hunger Games* Exhibition that opened in New York in 2015 and will tour selected cities (including San Francisco and Sydney).

Fans have visited the filming locations and some are purchasing expensive guided tours. In North Carolina, an abandoned early twentieth-century company mill town, Henry River Mill Village, contains the buildings used for the Mellark Bakery and Katniss's house in the first film. At DuPont State Forest fans try to locate the cave where Katniss and Peeta first kissed. They can stay at an outdoor discovery center and take survival classes that include lessons in archery, sling shot, orienteering, fire and shelter building, nighttime zip lining, and a 'no kill' Hunger Games simulation.

Hunger Games tours are also offered in Atlanta where the sequels were shot,[97] and the sites include the Swan House, a building that is part of the Atlanta Historical Society and was President Snow's mansion in the film. In Atlanta, the 'Girl on Fire Tour' costs sixty-five dollars per person and the other tours and experiences range between one hundred and four hundred dollars in price, which helps explain their clientele. According to one of these tour leaders, these fans are professionals: 'attorneys, judges and school administrators,' as well as Asian business people on a conference break, and a group of female soldiers 'all sporting Mockingjay tattoos.'[98] One tour operator records clients from forty US states and eight countries including a journalist from the United Kingdom's *Easy Living* magazine.[99] Young people who could not afford the tour have organized online to meet and defy the private property signs to explore the sites on their own, some of them dressed in Seam-type costumes to represent the working poor of District 12. But they have also been blamed for vandalism at the site.[100]

The Hunger Games Exhibition[101] ran in New York City from 2015 until January 2016[102] before going on tour.[103] News of the exhibit was placed on the Voice of America website.[104] The exhibit was clear about its purpose to 'celebrate[s] the blockbuster *The Hunger Games* franchise and Katniss's epic journey.'[105] At the exhibition store you could purchase a limited edition diamond and 18 carat gold Mockingjay pin for $7500.[106] According to the advertising material, the circle of the pin symbolizes freedom and the Games Arena and the diamonds are grouped into sets of three and two to represent the trilogy's two themes of rebellion and hope. The pin also 'features the world's first diamond encrusted serial code.' There were a small number of toys and also clothing and hats, but most of the merchandise was clearly designed and priced for adults. These items included latte mugs, stainless steel travel mugs, wine glasses, silk pillows, genuine leather purses, canvas messenger bags, with the Mockingjay or other themed image or logo, and boxes of sweets such as the 'Cascading Cashews and Chocolates' four-tiered gift set with the 'Capitol's district emblem embossed in silver on the top.' There was also available for purchase a Katniss silk-screen poster that mixes the iconography of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Obama Hope poster and a necklace inscribed with 'I am, I will.' This quotation refers to the scene in *Mockingjay* when Katniss is asked by patients at a war hospital if she is there to fight alongside them. She says she is, though the visit is a propaganda stunt. Soon after, and because of Katniss' visit, the hospital is bombed by the Capitol's forces and patients and staff, young and old, are incinerated.

Inscribing ‘I am, I will’ on a necklace, therefore, is an interesting but potentially troubling move. The ‘contrived trauma’[107] experienced through reading books or watching films about wartime atrocity is an all too real experience of trauma for others. For some, the ‘I am, I will’ necklace may be worn to suggest solidarity with people in war zones, but in its rendering as an inscription, the statement could also suggest a ‘melancholic’ growing up, a resignation to war crimes as a ‘fact of life’ and empty expressions of solidarity; or it may simply represent blindness to the violence of global politics. While reading and viewing a story of war can evoke awareness and even empathy for those affected by such violence, the ‘I am, I will’ necklace shows how trauma can be concealed through consumption: worn noose-like as the ‘unknown known’ of the modern consumer’s complicity in global violence. Or, trauma may be denied, yielding in turn the feared ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ of the capacity for violence within; because in Collins’ story, Katniss does fight back. This latter possibility is prepared for within the exhibition’s educational materials.

School visits to The Exhibition are encouraged and education materials are provided linked to US government education standards.[108] Teachers are instructed to prepare ‘by watching the movies, visiting the Exhibition in advance if possible, and /or reading the books.’[109] The curriculum, available to freely download, is focused around four ‘thought questions’ and oriented toward visiting school groups with extended curriculum modules for classroom use. The questions are: ‘Can one person change the world? How does science inform the worlds we envision? How do governments use media to affect citizens? Is war ever just?’ The first question encourages thinking about the impact of individual choices and asks student to make connections with ‘real-world examples.’[110] It is linked with a module on The Hero. The second asks students to consider the science-based difference between Panem and the contemporary United States and how science is used ‘to make predictions about changes in weather, population size, geology, and more, to help set government policy about a variety of topics.’[111] There is a companion module on Resources. The third question deals with the exhibits’ materials on the use of the media by the Capitol and the Rebellion and includes the origins and function of the Games, the dueling roles of Capitol TV, and the Propos made by Katniss and her team in District 13. The real-world connection is made with a proposed discussion of media viewpoint or bias and encourages thinking about examples from students’ daily lives of ‘the government using media to influence your opinion?’[112] In the companion model on

propaganda, one of the resources is a YouTube video of Noam Chomsky. Prefaced by the claim that the world of *The Hunger Games* is one of 'calamity and strife' and the Capitol urges stability, the fourth question asks: 'Is war ever just?' This unit encourages exploration of why Katniss decides war is necessary and if 'the ends justify the means.' The guide states: 'With peace as the ultimate goal, what are ways to achieve that?' and 'Consider historical conflicts, both peaceable and not, you have studied: what justifications did each side use? Were those conflicts just?'[113] Visitors to the exhibition can walk around model scenes from the film and are asked to think about the social and economic status of Katniss and her family. This exhibition also seeks to encode a reading of peace in *The Hunger Games*. President Snow's position is presented as utilitarian and Katniss is posed as a libertarian. The educational materials define each ideology and students are invited to debate the merits of each:

> Utilitarianism is the idea that the best solution to any dilemma is the one that maximizes the amount of good or happiness. So, what is good for many outweighs what is good for one person. Libertarianism is the idea that the rights of an individual (including the right to property) are equally as important as what benefits many. In this activity you will have students explore their understanding of how they respond to philosophical dilemmas. Do they side more with Libertarianism or with Utilitarianism?

Through this assignment, President Snow's regime is being retold as a dilemma of power and a managerial problem; he is presented as utilitarian and having the larger good in mind, a theme that is only in the originals as his own propaganda.

Youth are instrumentalized in the corporate-education practices of memorializing *The Hunger Games* as fake history, which is also, like some other forms of the liberal peacemaking, hypocritical. It purports to educate but is also a commercial enterprise. The costs and structures involved mean that well-off adults have privileged position and youth are welcomed to be schooled. In the books, Katniss and Peeta are disgusted at the excesses of the Capitol, which the merchandise of the exhibit emulates. The blurring of history and entertainment is no longer only about making history entertaining. It also turns fictional characters and worlds into history. Imagine Exhibitions, the makers of The Hunger Games Exhibition, have also made installations on Leonardo Da Vinci, Dinosaurs, Titanic, and Angry Birds. In the advertising for their products, there is a seamless presentation of

these different endeavors with the difference between historical figures and events and the fictional ones barely intelligible.[114] The focus on government propaganda, rather than on media bias or marketing manipulation in The Exhibition education curriculum, demonstrates a neoliberal act of boundary assertion.

However, a bridging 'tolerance for ambiguity' must be introduced here also. We can consider this kind of entertainment-as-history as 'militainment' in reverse. And different forms of resistance may be (un)observed. For example, the inclusion of Chomsky perhaps suggests a more radical subtext and teachers organizing school visits could create their own lesson plans and encourage critical thinking about the space and it purposes. Fans also have noted the irony of such commercial tie-ins.[115] 'I wonder if the Capitol made action figure of the tributes,' said one in response to the Barbie action figures. There has been unintended subversion as well. For example, Catholic Relief Services was praised for its real-life dropping of 'silver parachutes'[116] which underlined the privilege of aid giving countries by linking them with the wealthy sponsors of the arena tributes. In addition to ironic detachment and pointing up the contradictions in some of the merchandise and advertising, there was also unauthorized merchandise such as products found on the Etsy shopping site, for example. 'The book was better,' 'never judge a book by its movie,' and 'perfect boys only exist in books' are slogans for Hunger Games-themed T-shirts that can be purchased along with handmade jewelry, original art, crochet patterns to make a Katniss cowl, themed wools (The Seam gray, Mockingjay black and silver), and organic tea with quotes from the books (available in English and Italian). Many items referencing Peeta are for sale, including a poster of Josh Hutcherson (the actor who played Peeta) in the style of the iconic Obama 'Hope' image. There are also many uses of the 'dandelion in the spring' and 'real or not real' quotes on merchandise, and a ring with a quote from Hunger Games fan fiction.[117] A goat milk soap bar is described as: 'Inspired by the coal mines the district is famous for, Nature's Honey District 12 Craft Soap might look like coal but it cleans like you expect from our soaps. To transport you to the wooded hills that surround the district we've scented District 12 with the aroma of fresh soil after a heavy rain.' Even with controversy over Etsy's introduction of a ruleallowing factory-made items, and dilution of its original local, handmade and vintage business model, these items suggest creativity, independence, and resistance to corporate mass production in favor of cottage industry. Many use natural or organic fibers and are upcycling and recy-

cling. So, these producers and consumers are engaging with the politics of the global economy and capitalism. Their countermovements, the economic activities of a pseudo-peasant, Bohemian, cottage industry-class, are challenging the hegemony of the gift shops in the museums of fake history. Such resistance from within the neoliberal corporate-educational apparatus is only partial, however, and undoubtedly some of it is cynically about cashing in on a pop culture hit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter showed how many writers, thinkers, and activists in different countries, including those experiencing armed conflict, identified with and employed *The Hunger Games* to critique governments, institutions, and policies. Many of these examples show that *The Hunger Games* provoked thoughtful political analysis and debate. But it must be noted that frequently such writing operationalized and scapegoated 'youth' as a function of its criticism. In this chapter, I also explored how the meaning of *The Hunger Games* series' stories has been subverted and gradually changed as the movies have been made, commented on, and merchandized. Late capitalism is 'a massive accumulation and proliferation of apparatuses.'[118] On the continuum of disciplinary power, *The Hunger Games*' franchise is addressing 'the souls' of young people and seeking to create 'new actions, habits and skills'[119] with talk and products that lose the non-binary gendered peace and antiwar sentiments of the original texts. These efforts make revolution another commodity to be worn or played with and ultimately have fans (unwittingly) re-identify not as the heroes but as the villains of the piece. All of this suggests that *The Hunger Games* has not produced a turning way from spectacle to self-actualization and/or a withdrawal from doing injustice to others. However, focusing on writing and acting in fandom, a different picture emerges, as shown in the next two chapters.

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CHAPTER 8

Katniss in Fallujah: War Stories, Post-War, and Post-Sovereign Peace in Fan Fiction

Katniss Everdeen is a Marine Corps sniper in Iraq, trying to lead a unit unaccustomed to a female commander. Stowing a wand-bayonet in his thigh holster, Harry Potter, dressed in a camouflage robe, leads a children's army into a bloodbath. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) has blown up Hogwarts, Voldemort is plotting with Bin Laden to bring a deadly virus to New York City, and Lily Potter is a war criminal. But Head Healer Hermione is making cures for illnesses that Muggles and magical folk can share, Harry negotiates with Voldemort, Peeta and Katniss' granddaughter teaches a history class about the ethics of war, and the Hogwarts' friends argue for a respectful burial for Bin Laden. These are just some of the transformed characters and situations written by fans of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* that are discussed in this chapter.

Analyzing fan fiction is one way to further explore how fans have interpreted a book series' themes. In previous chapters, I showed how Rowling and Collins provide readers with visions of peace that include active youth, intergenerational coalitions, tolerance of difference, and rejection of gender binaries. This is the first of two chapters showing how these themes are (dis)continued in the creative writings of fans. Fans not only follow Rowling's and Collins' leads, they also assume authorial power in their rewritings. In this chapter, I examine how the war and post-war themes in *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are extrapolated and critiqued in fan

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fiction. Then, in Chap. 9, I explore stories that are not focused on war, but focus on issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice in everyday life. When stories that deal with both 'negative' and 'positive peace' are taken together, a fuller picture of the peacebuilding potential of fan fiction is provided.

The chapter shows how fan-written stories about both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* have produced visions of emancipatory peace in embryo, emphasizing social relationships based on empathy and mutual caretaking as the foundation for post-war healing. In closely examining fan writings as literary and political texts and, where possible, analyzing the authors' stated intent, the chapter unearths how these recent pop culture series are being given meaning by fans, in local but virtual forms. Eclectic mixes of people are writing *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games* fan fiction. While they are mostly female and young, with the average age of early to mid-20s, and are predominately native English speakers, they are not exclusively so, and the stories of older writers, as well as some written by young male combat veterans, are included in the discussion. Fans from at least 15 different countries have contributed to the writing and discussions I analyze. That said, the bulk of the writing of fan fiction in English that I studied comes out of the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Therefore what is being analyzed here are different voices within liberal peace-promoting countries, the energies, dilemmas, and contradictions of which are important to further understand.

Fan Fiction

Fan fiction refers to creative writing based on the content of an existing book, TV show, movie, comic series, or video game. It can take the form of novels, short stories, brief scenes called 'one-shots,' drabbles,[1] poems, and 'song fics.'[2] Fan fiction (or fan fic) writers may create new stories using the existing characters of a popular series but by devising different plotlines, adventures, and romantic pairings for them. They also may create their own original characters to insert into the canon world. Writers of fan fiction may rewrite existing characters to make them more or less sympathetic or make minor characters more fully realized by explaining their childhoods or providing other backstories. They may keep the characters within the preexisting literary world—Panem or Wizarding Britain, for

example—or transport them to a different setting or time period such as Apartheid South Africa or World War II. Commonly, fan fiction fills gaps in the original timeframe of a book series: how Katniss and Peeta struggle with PTSD after the war is a common theme of *The Hunger Games*-based stories. But fan fic writers also build worlds out of 'crossovers,'[3] combining two or more fictional works, blended with historical and political materials and with content from their own lives.[4] People wrote fan fiction before the Internet, but opportunities for sharing, reading, and studying fan fiction have been greatly expanded by the online medium. Some stories are coauthored by multiple participants, and readers will review and comment on the stories in highly interactive and sometimes collaborative processes.

Fan fiction entails 'poaching' of copyrighted material and all online fan fiction stories include a disclaimer about copyright, acknowledging the original author's ownership. These fan stories are 'unpublishable,'[5] because they have essentially stolen/borrowed characters, worlds, scenes, plots, and even dialogue from the originals. Catherine Tosenberger explains that this 'unpublishability' appears to be part of the pleasure of fan fiction writing. Fan fiction is a space for exploration and potential emancipation from constraints. Fan fiction stories illuminate the diversity of ways in which people interpret YA texts and, as Tosenberger states, 'how radically those responses can differ from the assumptions and desires of the publishing industry.'[6] Therefore, fan fiction writing as a practice begins as a form of resistance. Furthermore, a politics of peace may be in motion at the 'charged crossing points'[7] that fan fiction provides.

Louisa Stein and Kristina Busse note fan fiction writers have a 'continued (or perhaps residual) investment in more traditional notions of authorship and originality' because the source texts are their inspiration, but they 'model the conflict between remixing and originality, between creativity within limits and creativity beyond limits.'[8] Tosenberger suggests that in contrast with sports fandoms 'media fandoms […] are often perceived to be the domain of a) men who have failed to live up to the demands of hegemonic masculinity; and b) women, especially young women.'[9] But, she argues, even within media fandoms, women and men may approach fan writing differently. Anecdotally, fandom participants believe there is a preponderance of women in 'transformational fandom,'[10] the kind of fan activity that significantly alters the original work,

as opposed to prioritizing canonicity. The latter kind of fan practice is shown in archiving and assessing of materials through creating wikis, or writing nonfiction essays about the original works, such as those found at the *Harry Potter* fan site, *The Leaky Cauldron*. Fan fiction, on the other hand, is transformational in that it chops up the original and then recreates a new narrative that, if not greater than the sum of its parts, is very different, and fan fiction writers build worlds, as well as reuse them.[11]

I examine the *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* stories posted at FanFiction.net, a not-for-profit web space where anyone, aged 13 and over, can post a story and receive feedback from other users through reviews and favorites ratings. FanFiction.net is only one such site, and it is clear from the massive amount of fan fiction writing in existence that both Rowling and Collins' series, as well as other literary and entertainment media for young adults, are phenomena not just of consumption or passive entertainment, but also facilitate creative expression and voice. At FanFiction.net, there are separate sections for books, movies, TV shows, anime/manga, cartoons, comics, and video games. *Harry Potter* tops the books list. There are over 70,858 *Harry Potter* stories on FanFiction.net (as of March 2015). Most are in English but about 10,000 are in other languages.[12] Fan stories range from tomes of over 700,000 words (and 100 chapters) to short stories, poems, and micro-fiction entries such as drabbles. *The Hunger Games*' stories at FanFiction.net number over 14,000. *The Hunger Games* is the third most popular subject of stories in the books section after *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* (18,449).[13] As with *Harry Potter*, most *Hunger Games* stories are written in English[14] and are most often categorized as Adventure, Romance, or General.[15] The large volume of available data means that this chapter discusses only a small fraction of the existing writing by fans of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. The strategies used to identify the peace themes in these stories were the same for both series. A keyword search of all of the data was used to identify stories with peace and conflict studies' themes.[16] I read more than 1000 stories on these themes. I also closely examined the top 50 most read and reviewed stories for each series, as well as the reviews for all those discussed. The fan stories in this chapter have been loosely categorized as falling into one of seven overlapping types of narrative: Fantasy Killer stories use exaggerated stereotypes and extreme, often

cartoonish or video-game-type, violence; the Disillusioned Good Soldier story also uses graphic violence, but has critical political content; Romantic-Warrior stories merge sexy romance with warzone action but some also have direct and indirect political messages; Ethical Debater stories explore issues such as just war and some could be seen to engage reviewers in political debate; Lover/Homemaker stories create post-war domestic bliss through healing the trauma of war losses and are mostly based on *The Hunger Games*; Educator stories have school or academic themes related to the fictional lessons of history, post-war reconciliation, and reconstruction; Healer/Social Rebuilder stories are mostly *Harry Potter*-based and also deal with post-war rebuilding, through institutional innovations, negotiation, and the use of knowledge and skills (magic) for healing and social progress.

War Stories

The Fantasy Killer

Escalating Violence

In *Harry Potter* fan fiction, references to terrorism merge real-world figures with fictional villains. In one story President Obama meets the Minister of Magic who remarks that 'the dark wizard Bin Laden' is the cause of trouble in the Middle East.[17] Another story, posted in 2003, was written by an 18-year-old girl and is about Osama Bin Laden's grandson. Set in 2071, Bin Laden is President of Syria, allied with both Iraq and Voldemort who is plotting to attack New York City with a virus.[18] Bin Laden is afraid of the more extreme and powerful Voldemort, however—a writing move which deflates the power of the real-world source of anxiety.

A minority of stories were overtly racist, and those that were in this vein focused on Muslims and political violence. Some purported to be parodies; for example, Harry is brought up by Osama Bin Laden, renamed 'Mustafa,' and prepared for a Hogwarts bombing in 'Harry the Muslim Terrorist.'[19] Other recent political conflicts were also integrated into the Potter narrative. In 'Harry Potter and the Nightmares of Futures Past,' Voldemort's side has 'beguiled' some Irish Muggles in the IRA who explode a bomb at Hogwarts.[20] A Serbian author writes about a

Harry Potter/Serb victory over an evil Albanian Voldemort.[21] But the majority of the war celebrations emphasized US themes and historical figures, for example, in 'The Call of Duty,' Harry beheads Voldemort and Neville dismembers Bellatrix in the name of love and family. A quotation on right and wrong from Theodore Roosevelt is used to introduce the story.[22] However, for some perspective, this story (published in 2007), only has four reviews and two favorite ratings. Compare this readership to a story about the Harry the peacemaker, which will be discussed in more detail later, called 'On the Wings of a Phoenix' (from 2008). This story has over 900 reviews and has logged 1556 favorite ratings and 1632 followers.

Still, many fan fiction stories increase the violence of the originals in ways that are gratuitous and genocidal. For example, in the top 25 stories about *Harry Potter*, we can read scenes about Harry decapitating Voldemort and Hermione torturing Draco,[23] Ron raping and beating Hermione,[24] and Harry using the Avada Kedavra (killing) spell.[25] Fan fiction based on *Harry Potter* also includes fantasies of superweapons and of US military superiority as the solution to Voldemort. One author, self-described as a trainee priest, explains in his profile that he is writing 'what millions of teenage boys secretly thought of as they read the *Harry Potter* series: introduce the wizarding world to U.S. firepower.'[26] Another writer presents an atomic bombing of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade village, wiping out wizard folk.

Many fan stories tell of a *Hunger Games* involving the Capitol children.[27] Doing so, they reverse Katniss' eventual realization in the original story that this would be an immoral act by a new regime that is as violent and corrupt as its predecessor. A sub-genre and significant proportion of *Hunger Games*' stories are Submit Your Own Tribute (SYOT) stories, a format that is unique to *Hunger Games*' fan fiction. At the time of writing, there are 909 separate SYOT entries at FanFiction.net.[28] Fans write their own original character (OC) to be worked into a story written by a third party, or sometimes collaboratively.[29] Tributes are submitted either by personal message or through the review section.[30] Different themes may be used; for example, in one SYOT Quell all the tributes are people with disabilities.[31] Some of the SYOT stories are online games, as well. It is possible in some versions to send points and be the sponsor of a tribute. The tributes are created with physical and personality traits, preferred weapons, and likes and dislikes, in the manner of a video-game's battle players or trading card characters. Some of these SYOT stories involve

quite finely drawn characters and bring each tribute to life. In the original, the tributes are only understood from Katniss' point of view. SYOT stories are told from each tribute's own point of view, including their deaths and/or their thoughts as they kill other tributes, which makes some of 'bad' characters more understandable and sympathetic.[32] However, in SYOTs a number of so-called 'bloodbaths' are always written. These characters will inevitably die, usually in the first scene of the games, and are often portrayed as passive, weak, hippie, and peaceful. Rather than making the youngest tributes sympathetic, as Rue is in the original, in one major SYOT, a 12-year-old boy is portrayed as the most bloodthirsty and ruthless. Despite the effort to create more detailed tributes, the SYOT game format has a 'militainment' feel. Stories that reproduce fantasies of control and domination through violence are found in many pop culture representations of US foreign policy over the last century. Most of the fan stories in the fantasy killer category appear on the surface to have little redeeming value as political critiques. However, this finding must be qualified, as it is difficult to discern the motivations of fan writers in the absence of author notes. And, as shown next, when the interplay between a violent story and its author's intent is revealed, it can make a politically powerful statement.

The Disillusioned Good Soldier

Virtual War Writing as Critique, Confession

Children are the victims and perpetrators of violence in 'Children of War,' a Harry Potter story written by an army combat veteran of Afghanistan in his mid-20s. The summary promises 'A militarized Harry and the DA fight against Voldemort's forces alone as child soldiers, sacrificing themselves for a future peace they will never have. The young have inherited the war of hatred their cowardly elders let happen and refused to assist. Now they commit the sin of heroism.' But in this short story, martial agency is dis-ennobled, through a mix of nonfiction storytelling and 'virtual' violence. The author, Soti 13F, states that he wanted to write about Dumbledore's Army by integrating elements of his own combat experience. Seeking to make Rowling's story more realistic, he writes Harry dressed in olive camouflage clothing and combining Muggle warfare tactics with magical fighting. Harry has invented a knife that attaches to his wand that he carries in a holster on his thigh. In summer holidays, he

trains with the Muggle British army, 'who were enchanted not to notice his youth,' and he takes what he has learned back to educate his school friends in the D.A.

In the story, as in the original series, the process of recruitment is through peer influence and experience. This is presented as a loss of innocence that particularly troubles adults. The battle at the Ministry of Magic in their 5th year 'turned children into killers,' Soti writes; 'Dumbledore cried that night in front of Harry for making the youth he saw over into soldiers now irreversibly entangled in a war of hatred.' Their chief recruiter, Harry, 'never stopped hating himself for it' either. The main action in 'Children of War' involves a 'Slytherin uprising,' and graphic violence follows as the Slytherin students are sliced in half, blown up, and decapitated by Harry and friends who engage in scenes of both realistic fighting and improbable Ninja-like acrobatics. The author notes that he has added elements of film and video games 'to make it a compelling story,' but that he is attempting to present 'the brutality of war' and 'degrade your mind and soul' with this imagery. Harry is captured and some of the Slytherins urinate on his wounds. He might be about to be raped and mutilated. But then Ginny arrives with reinforcements. Ginny and Hermione fight with the same fervor as their male comrades, and the violence is perpetrated against male and female students alike.

Soti also states several times in the story that both the protagonists and their Slytherin enemy are children. In his author notes, he further points out that child soldiers exist in 'more underdeveloped locations like Burundi, Chad, Congo, Colombia.' He does not mention Afghan child soldiers who have a spectral presence in the story. But does state that 'terrorists and similar types' use child soldiers and children as human shields that 'world militaries' have to fight because they are 'the new threat.' He says that this creates propaganda for the enemy and causes civilian protests in countries such as the United States, 'only dragging the whole thing out.' With this comment a new take on a 'Vietnam syndrome' is indicated, rooted in humanitarian feeling for children, antiwar protestors create the quagmire that explains failures of the 'war on terror.' But the not so hidden theme is that coalition troops are also child soldiers. This idea is reinforced as he weaves his personal experience of a real warzone with cinematic and video-game elements, into a 'virtual war' story, within the content world of a children's book

series. His notes to the reader emphasize the psychological damage of soldiering, which he says Rowling did not capture. 'It changes us in a way I have the hardest time explaining,' Soti states. Writing is part of his process of making sense of his experience as a soldier. Specifically, he notes that warfare is brutalizing and that the people he knew who had killed in hand-to-hand combat 'became feral' and had to leave their families. The 'lost' child soldier idea is thus transferred to US soldiers, as well.

In one scene in Soti 13F's story, Harry, Ron, and Hermione set up an explosive suicide potion to give them the option of killing themselves rather than being taken alive and tortured. The author explains in a separate note that this scene was based on his own experience in Afghanistan. If a US armored vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED), the fuel tank could ignite and burn its occupants alive. So his vehicle crew rigged a fragmentation grenade to the dashboard that they could use, if necessary, to kill themselves more quickly in the event of such a fire.[33] On the one hand, then, comparing American military personnel to Harry, Ron, and Hermione would seem to locate the US soldiers as the heroes and their opponents as Slytherin. But on the other hand, both the story and the accompanying notes deglamorize war and emphasis its real horrors.

This anecdote also provides a version of Freud and Lacan's 'burning child' address. Rather than burn alive, the soldiers planned self-destruction. The equivalent line to 'Father, don't you see I'm burning' is '[War] changes us in a way I have the hardest time explaining.' Telling the story of how he could have burned is a traumatic memory, and his anger is directed toward those who put him in circumstances where self-destruction would be the only rescue possible. In direct political comment, Soti says he left the military because of 'distant politicians and civilian interference' from people who do not know what it is like on the ground. In the disclaimer section where fans usually note that Rowling owns the characters and world, Soti also has harsh words for copyright lawyers, who should be investigating 'pedophile politicians': 'it's people like you who should go to war, not the peasants of the world,' he writes. In these different comments, this author expresses his critical estrangement from the father figures who oversaw his military service and may also control his post-war world. The Afghan Other, who would have set the IED, is less important

to criticize than the domestic elites, the civilian politicians who ordered the war.

In the Lacanian and Caruth's interpretation of the dream of the burning child (discussed in Chap. 6), awakening is the site of trauma and represents 'the way father *and* child are inextricably bound together through the story of a trauma.'[34] Soti's interior resistance is enabled by (re)writing *Harry Potter* into a sociopolitical critique. The placing of his story on a public website is an act of political communication. This story of a traumatic awakening is contradictory. Combat is depicted as 'loss of innocence,' with degrading violence without rules or ethics of engagement. The apparent rejection of Harry's nonviolence and acceptance of child soldering, in Soti's fictional narrative, contrasted with the way that he represented himself (and represented the place of children in the war zone) in his own short biographical statement. As an Army radio operator he called in strikes on different enemy targets but he stated: 'I'll have you know in my personal record only the enemy ever got touched by my fire missions.' He also made friends. 'While conducting foot patrols and reconnaissance in Afghanistan I developed a strong friendship with the locals whenever possible. Children of course, like anywhere else in the world, are easiest to get along with when neither of you speak the same language.' He gave out 'school supplies, candy, jokes' and, in return, he got his nickname, Soti, which is Pashto for radio, and his writing handle. In this own biography he is a soldier-humanitarian, but in his fan fiction story, war has no virtue and is only, in his words, 'extremely violent' and 'profane.'

Soti's/Radio's message is conflicted but nonetheless powerful when read as another example of how the boundary between the real and the not real is an 'optical illusion.'[35] The layers of contradictions and his own unconscious identification with child soldiers through the YA fiction also suggest how some genres of knowing and being may be more able to help people process trauma. In his work with Vietnam War combat veterans, Jonathan Shay described a role for healing discussions around classic Greek literature that would form a 'trustworthy community of listeners' that could 'hear with emotion.'[36] The fan fiction medium has the potential to be such a space for reflection and dialogue for veterans and civilians impacted by war. However, while well written, his story, which was posted in 2013, may be another 'failed address.' It has only eight reviews and Soti is still looking for a beta reader to critique his

work. For this veteran, writing was a weapon of critique and for revealing war as brutal and corrupt and the space of fan fiction may be a therapeutic space. Unfortunately, for the scholar of conflict and peace, most fan writing is not so heavily annotated and confessional. Cumulatively, not much of the fan writing studied explicitly recognizes that Rowling's characters have their real-world equivalents in both 'the third world child soldier' and the super-equipped modern US military, in the way that Soti 13F does.

Another different veteran of Afghanistan pens the story 'A Jewish Fistfighter in Panem.'[37] The main character David sees the Hunger Games as class warfare. He states, 'I get to hunt and hurt the people on the other side of the equation' who are the rich kids. But turning to prayer, as he is about to die, David is remorseful: 'I should have knelt down at the opening bloodbath and allowed myself to die rather than stain my soul.'[38] This story is another example of a repeated theme: the critique of war as a form of elite exploitation of the young soldier.

Other stories detail a child soldier's agency in adversity without a contemporary war setting, as in 'A Necessary Gift,' which draws a bleak picture of the aftermath of the Second Wizarding War. Written by a woman in her early twenties, the story shows that peace does not follow war when an unjust system of government is maintained. While Harry has been successful in killing Voldemort, the Death Eaters remain in control of the United Kingdom and their ideology of pureblood superiority is intact. Many of the Order of the Phoenix, including Neville, have been executed, and the rest are exiled. 'Muggleborns' and 'mud bloods' were sent to Azkaban. In this hostile setting, Harry is killed, again, and this time is able to choose to go to an alternate universe as his 10-year-old self to set things right. First, he sets about acquiring his basic needs, careful to avoid being put under adult supervision, and then he succeeds in proving Sirius Black's innocence to get him freed from Azkaban.[39] In effect, the child frees the adult to have a partner in effecting political change, which provides an interesting metaphor.

The Romantic-Warrior

Merging Father, Mother Through the Other

Wedding nights and first sex are told from Katniss' point of view in several stories that underline her 'innocence' and Peeta's sexual prowess. War is

the context for such a story in 'A House United,' a love story set in the US South in the Reconstruction Era. Katniss, who is a Southerner, loses her virginity to Peeta, a Yankee soldier. Admiringly, she inquires how he learned to be such a good lover and he explains: 'There are a lot of things soldiers do in their spare time during a war. Places—and people—we visit.'[40] More often, though, ongoing contemporary wars are the basis of *Hunger Games*' fan stories. In 'Torn,' Gale and Peeta are both soldiers heading to Iraq. Katniss is dating Gale and both of their fathers have died in a bomb explosion in Iraq (instead of in a mining accident as in the original). The main tension in the story is about which of the two men she will choose, and the war is mostly incidental to the romantic plot.[41] However, other stories depict grief and post-traumatic stress. For example, in 'Afghanistan,' Gale is the soldier and he has a dream that he and Katniss are blown up by a child with a grenade.[42] In 'Coming Home,' Sergeant Katniss Everdeen, an army sniper, mourns her fiancé Gale who was killed in a roadside bomb in Iraq but 'find[s] love again' with the baker's son Peeta.[43] Again, these stories focus on the damaged self. The child with the grenade and the roadside bomb are ciphers: spectral images of the Other that are neither demonized nor humanized. The Other's act of violence is a narrative mechanism for allowing home front and personal conflicts to play out.

In 'Semper Fidelis' Katniss suffers flashbacks to Iraq—'I am back in Fallujah the moment Rue was shot'—and worries that a diagnosis of PTSD will get her discharged. In this story, Katniss is a Marine Corp Sergeant and a sniper in Iraq, working in a unit unused to having a female leader. Corporal Peeta Mellark speaks five languages and is 'the only one who bothers to not make us look like a bunch of bloodthirsty assholes,' according to Major Haymitch Abernathy. The fan writer takes two of the most distinctive features of Collins' characters, Katniss the expert archer and ambivalent revolutionary and Peeta, the diplomat, who is morally opposed to violence, and translates them into plausible real-life soldier's roles. The narrative action focuses on the killing of a civilian child and a related conspiracy within the military. As I will show, the story reproduces a narrative of virtuous war but with a twist created by the pop culture influences on the setting and characters.

On deployment in Iraq, Peeta has befriended a motherless ten-year-old Iraqi girl, called Rue. Peeta is teaching Rue to read, with her father's permission, and he introduces her to Katniss who braids her hair; with the help of Peeta's Arabic language skills, they begin to bond. So, as an Iraqi

girl, Rue is written as evidence of the humanitarianism and cultural sensitivity of the US soldiers (Peeta and Katniss). Rue is trying to return a book to Peeta when she is shot by Marvel, another sniper in their unit, who claims he thought she was reaching for a weapon. She was in fact reaching for a book given to her by Peeta. The book Rue was carrying was *To Kill a Mockingbird*,[44] so we have the idea of the Other being schooled through liberal education. She is presented as welcoming a benign form of US military/liberal peace discipline.

In this fan piece, Rue dies and an explosion buries Katniss under the rubble of a building, where Peeta finds her, and they hide from Iraqi military, mirroring the cave scene in *The Hunger Games*. While he treats her physical wounds, their romance blossoms, and there are descriptions of kisses woven between details of Kevlar, rations, and other military paraphernalia. In fact, a large part of the story, as it later unfolds, focuses on the sexual relations of Katniss and Peeta. That makes Rue, the Iraqi child, a literary device who has been killed as a mechanism for facilitating their pleasure. The story has become a settler-colonial narrative.

However, another side of this narrative is also presented. It turns out that Marvel's shooting of Rue was part of a conspiracy within the unit to destabilize the area. Marvel is arrested and sent to Washington for trial and Peeta and Katniss must give testimony. Their trip to Washington is the occasion for lots of explicitly described sex, as well as an encounter with peace protestors who Katniss castigates for mistreating a US flag. Instead of having to convince the Capitol that she loves Peeta, as in Collins' original story, in 'Semper Fidelis,' Katniss has to convince the country that 'war is the right course of action,' as President Snow tells her in a phone call. They also become aware of internal military corruption. Katniss passionately speaks out for Rue's memory in the courtroom. So, as an Atticus Finch figure, she represents a voice for justice, speaking up for the powerless and unjustly treated, in a rescue narrative where the Other is a foil for her heroism. But Rue is already dead. Thus, as in the psychoanalyst's reading of 'the dream of the burning child' (Chap. 6), this fan story involves recognition of the failure to respond, the paradoxical 'necessity and the impossibility of responding to another's death'[45] which in this case is also a geopolitical Other's death.

The twist is that we know Rue—via the book and film—is not a faceless Other. Rue is Katniss' ally. Both are in their places because of elite structures beyond their control. In the original *Hunger Games*, Rue's death is a turning point for Katniss, as discussed in Chap. 6. Rue's death exposes

the Games for what they are and becomes the spark for Katniss and the districts to fight against the Capitol. This story makes the US-Iraq War into a Hunger Games in which both Iraqis and Americans are exploited by a small corrupt American elite. From its location between Fallujah and a Washington courtroom, 'Semper Fidelis' speaks about a collective American trauma and, drawing again on Caruth's analysis of 'the burning child dream,' and on Anzaldua's idea of threshold space, fictionalizes 'the ethical imperative of an awakening that has yet to occur.'[46] It holds within it the promise of recognizing the Other's suffering as well as one's own complicity, manipulation, *and* suffering.

The Ethical Debater

A Space of Deliberation and New Optics

> 'Harry, we cannot ask students to fight for a cause they do not know,' Dumbledore said cautiously. 'We're not. We are asking them to fight for a cause they all know well. How many people have lost loved ones in this war and the first one,' Harry said resolutely. 'How many have watched others suffer at the hands of Death Eaters, and wished they could do something about it. This war is not the Order versus Voldemort. This war is [for] who refuses to live in fear against those who wish to enslave us all.'[47]

In this excerpt from a fan story, student and teacher deliberate and the student's argument prevails. Harry emphasizes military preparedness as a right of the teenager: 'Everyone should have that chance, and that training if for no other reason than to defend themselves if necessary.'[48] This militarizes Harry's position, which in the original, as shown in Chap. 4, was to advocate nonviolent action against adult advice. But it is similar to the original in that he asserts that the teenagers have the intelligence and understanding to discern a just cause and the altruism and firsthand experience of loss to motivate actions. Child soldiers are constructed as rational actors in this story. The same piece creates an alliance between the magical 'Aurors,' who fight the Dark Arts, and Muggle law enforcement, bringing Harry and his cousin (and ex-rival) Dudley together in common purpose. In a change from the canon, the story reveals that Muggles can use magical objects, something that wizards had thought impossible, and which thus changes Wizard-Muggle power relations.[49] In this we see an assertion of martial youth agency, but also an extension of Rowling's vision to a yet

more inclusive fighting coalition or, read another way, sharing magic is also about sharing power. This story is democratic in allowing equality of adult and youth in argumentation.

Moving from the simulation of ethical debate involving fictional characters to an example of how fan writing stimulated an actual debate among readers, I examine a story called 'Respect' by Nitenel. 'Respect' provides a striking example of empathetic reflection in writing that generated deliberation about war in the comments section. In this story, Rowling's teenage protagonists partner with adults in making post-war political decisions about transitional justice and reconciliation. The author of 'Respect' states that s/he wrote it after the US military's assassination of Osama Bin Laden in 2011 because s/he was upset at people's celebratory reactions. S/he repeats this point in a note at the beginning of the text and the end of the story. The writer of 'Respect' also invites comments and preemptively 'sincerely apologizes' to anyone who is offended. Framed by these explanations linking it to a contemporary event in the 'war on terror,' and inviting feedback, Nitenel's story opens on a domestic scene and quickly becomes a meditation on the treatment of war dead:

> Five Days After the Battle of Hogwarts[50]
>
> It's dark outside. The wind howls around a small cottage in the middle of nowhere. A single light is on in a small kitchen where a small group of people is sitting at the wooden table. One of people, a young woman, clears her throat. 'We must do something with the bodies.'
>
> A man snorts. 'Let them rot. They don't deserve better.'

This opening with the repetition of 'small cottage,' 'small kitchen,' 'small group,' and a 'single light,' in 'the middle of nowhere,' makes the local and the everyday the central space of political action. Then there continues a contentious dialogue between the characters George, Hermione, Kingsley, Molly, Ginny, Harry, and others.

> 'Those bastards killed my brother and you want to honor them?'
>
> 'I did not say that. I said they don't deserve to rot,' the black man counters.
>
> 'I agree with Kingsley,' says a balding red head.
>
> A silence envelops the kitchen. 'What about… Him?' asks another red head.

Turning to the question of what to do with Voldemort's body, Harry and Ginny suggest to burn it and George adds that all of the Death Eater bodies should be burned. But they are countered by Molly Weasley and Hermione who persuade Ginny and then the others that:

> 'If we do that, we are no better than them.'
>
> [...]
>
> '[I]f we treat them with disrespect, this includes the survivors, then they are martyrs. Why inspire them to do bad anymore?' points out the young woman who spoke first.
>
> [...]
>
> 'What will you tell your children, George? That after the war and we could've had peace, but you all but destroyed the Death Eaters until they were less than people? Let's make peace. Extend an olive branch. Put aside this dark era,' booms Kingsley.

Thus, a coalition of white women and a black man sway the others to treat Voldemort's body with respect for both ethical and practical political reasons. Kingsley insists the enemy is still human and that humiliating victory celebrations will perpetuate a cycle of violence. Harry emotionally lists all of their fallen friends and comrades who had fought the Death Eaters, arguing that their war was for peace, for the next generation. In the original, Voldemort disappears when he is destroyed. In giving him a body in this fan story, the author models the re-humanization process in conflict reconciliation.

> 'They died not to stop them, but to create peace. So someday our children can be friends. So our children's children will know not of hate and death.'
>
> [...]
>
> 'So it is decided then? We will bury their bodies with respect. With families?' says Kingsley.
>
> 'Yes,' says Hermione firmly, 'To not give their loved ones a chance to see the bodies goes beyond torture. And I speak from experience.'
>
> George's eyes narrow a bit but he says nothing. Harry nods and says, 'In the American Civil War the bodies of both sides were buried in the same place. Both sides should be buried at Hogwarts.'
>
> 'Yes,' says Molly softly, 'That makes sense.'

Readers know that Molly is the mother of one of the deceased and has more reason than most to want to disrespect those who killed her son. Her

quiet dignity ends the piece as the group decides that the war dead should be buried together, 'with families,' as a beginning to reconciliation. The message is one of empathy for the families of those killed, without condoning the violence of the dead 'terrorists,' and social healing originates in the domestic, local (but not private) political sphere of the post-war home.

This story is also posted at a different fan fiction site called Archive of Our Own,[51] without the reference to Bin Laden. At that site, a small number of thoughtful reviewers provide helpful writing critiques. On FanFiction.net, however, where the Bin Laden connection frames the story, little writing advice is offered. Instead, the comments section became a space for political deliberation, not only about the death of Bin Laden but more widely about war. Sixty-five comments, both affirmative and critical, are offered on the story's perceived political messages. These reviews of 'Respect' were written mostly by teenagers and people in their early 20s from a range of countries: the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, India, the United Kingdom, Norway, Mexico, and Brazil, and include one who was an Indian national, born and raised in the United Arab Emirates. Two thirds of the comments from this globally diffuse group were supportive of 'Respect' and referenced having similar feelings of discomfort as the author when witnessing television images of celebratory parties while also noting that they did not condone Bin Laden's actions. Others described his death as justice and referred to his burial at sea by the Navy Seals as respectful. A small minority, who were aggressively critical, called the author 'an idiot' and 'a liberal' who 'would just love to think that the US are more evil than Osama.' One wrote, 'I'm disgusted you would feel any kind of sympathy for that man.'[52] Some who also misread the story as an apology for Bin Laden drew on historical analogies rather than relying on attack; for example, one person justified the US action, proposing that many people would like to be able to go back in time to assassinate Hitler or Stalin. Others took the opportunity to correct wider misconceptions related to 9/11: two Indian commentators noted that it was unfair to describe 'the middle east as celebrating after 9/11' as if 'whole countries' agreed, because 'it were just the infidels who were [celebrating].' Another pointed out that while only a 'very few fundamentalist groups' supported 9/11, they saw it as justice because they were oppressed by 'superpowers' that 'influence their law making and [...] their sovereignty.'[53]

In addition to becoming a space for voicing dissent, the comments section also surfaced traumatic narratives. Two commentators said they had lost family members on 9/11. Their comments were in keeping with the tone of 'Respect' but rejected Nitenel's premise, as shown in the following example: a teenager whose aunt had been killed wrote of how the attacks had traumatized 'AN ENTIRE GENERATION,' capitals are reproduced as emphasized in the original. The 9/11 attacks had created her view of the world as a dangerous place.

> 'Sure. Celebrating death is bad. I get it. If we want to live in a perfect world we should respect everybody. Everything would be butterflies an[d] rainbows.
>
> Unfortunately, we do not live in the sugary world and your [sic] an idiot to think we do. This man's body was buried respectfully at sea and no one desecrated it in any way.
>
> I'm not sure if you understand how bad this man was? (And I don't mean to be rude or harsh) Do you realize what he did to AN ENTIRE GENERATION? I remember being pulled out of 1st grade to be driven home with my mom. I remember watching the towers burn on tv and seeing the planes crash.
>
> […]
>
> Don't tell me I'm a bad person for being happy this bastard's gone. He broke my family.
>
> Some of us were scarred by the day that rocked our nation. You may be scarred too, but remember that a lot of us are broken. And we aren't ready to be fixed.
>
> The world needs nice people like you. Innocents who try to make the world a better place. You make the rest of us long for it too.
>
> But we don't live there.'[54]

This writer associates empathy for an enemy with forgetting one's own war losses. S/he frankly depicts trauma as being 'broken,' but is defiantly not 'ready to be fixed.' Perhaps there is a pleasure in brokenness, and in remembering, and she is not ready to cross the bridge; she says, 'we' who are broken 'don't live there.' Yet, it appears as if s/he becomes more empathetic toward Nitenel, the longer s/he writes: 'you may be scarred too,' s/he acknowledges, toward the end of the comment. S/he has shifted from derision to stating that Nitenel's idealism affects her by making her desire a different kind of world.

The latter intervention may be contrasted with that of a more mature female military voice that of a US Airforce member, stationed in Japan, who praised the writer's bravery, and does not interpret Nitenel's story as utopian or as apologist.

> I'm really glad you published this story, many people do not voice their opinions for fear of being mocked. […] As military member I can tell you personally that this thing is nowhere near over, with or without Mr. Bin Laden.
>
> To be honest, I think it's very typical of people to all jump on the bandwagon with this sort of thing, shouting USA, USA, USA, without giving it any thought.
>
> My father served in the first gulf war and the second. My husband and I are serving in this current one, I dare anyone to tell me that my opinion is not valid.
>
> Anyway, you rock! And if anyone ever makes you feel like you are not allowed to feel this way, just know that you have airmen in Japan supporting you (I read your story to my unit and they all liked it).[55]

This commenter hones in on the pragmatic aspect of the 'Respect' story and asserts the authority of her own voice as a soldier from a family of soldiers. Similarly, in the previous comment, the victim speaks as a member of a family of a victim. Two different identities and responses to the story both rest on 'their family' and personal/emotional experience, as the source of their political legitimacy. Familial peace is a repeated theme of the fan fiction for *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, and in these comments we witness how the fictional theme reflects reality, and (re)constructs enduring meanings of peace.

Roger Stahl called for investigation of the 'weapons' that can counteract 'the seductions of the entertaining war' and preserve both respect for soldiers and deliberative democracy.[56] In the space of the fan fiction review section, political engagement and radical disagreement were evident. The politics of who gets to speak, and whose voice counts in transitional justice, was also alive within the democratizing space of a free discussion site, where survivors and soldiers both speak up. Gloria Anzaldua's idea of 'las nepantleras'[57] applies to the fan fiction author whose work was discussed above. Boundary crossers, the fan fiction- writing 'nepantleras' or 'thresholders' act 'as intermediaries between cultures and their various versions of

reality,' and 'they serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness.'[58]

Post-War Peace Stories

The Lover/Homemaker

Safe Homecomings and Sexual Healing

In fan fiction based on *The Hunger Games*, the 'common sense' future most often depicted entails being 'at home.' Everyday peace is associated with pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure, and forming stable, loving partnerships. The description for one story called 'The Powerful and the Powerless' states: 'If your home is something that defines you, then I don't know who I am anymore. Peeta struggles to find his place in the world after his time serving in Afghanistan.'[59] Told from Peeta's point of view, in this story we learn that he and Katniss both signed up together and served in the same unit in Afghanistan. A variety of images of women and children are woven into the short piece,[60] including Afghan children playing soccer and dancing Afghan women who are described as 'trying not to be a piece in their game.' This is the phrase Peeta uses in *The Hunger Games* to express his desire to defy the Capitol Gamemakers. The protagonists suffer from PTSD, but healing is signaled by the birth of their child.[61] As with the story 'Semper Fidelis' discussed earlier, the orientalist tone of the description of Afghan women and children is only partially mitigated by the suggestion that they are positively surviving in the face of oppression. Yet, the liberal peace being described is a shared burden. While Afghan characters are placed on the side of being buffeted by events, so too are the US veterans Peeta and Katniss. As with other stories, then, we see a theme of civilians (Afghan and Iraqi) and soldiers (US) allied against the Gamemakers (which appears to be the US or UK governments or more generally understood as a political elite).

Of 100 *Hunger Games* stories using the keyword peace, 90% are about a temporary respite between wars and Games. However, there are also over 200 entries for the key word healing and most create events to fill the gap in the original story between the end of the war in *Mockingjay* and its epilogue, explaining how Peeta and Katniss struggle with their past and grow back together.[62] Most of these stories of healing are concerned with

exploring the relationships of the main protagonists, often giving them richly-described sex lives and adult worries.

In 'Finally Home,' the story opens with a sex dream, featuring Peeta, a soldier in Iraq, who is about to be discharged and return home to his wife Katniss, the object of the dream. Katniss is a teacher and soldier Peeta enlists the help of her pupils to set up a surprise for her in her classroom where he arrives early in uniform bringing her favorite 'cheese buns' which he has baked. The author says it is based on how her brother surprised her sister-in-law when he was on leave.[63] Emerging in this story is the idea of an everyday peace expressed as safe homecomings. Going further, other stories meld romance and sex with more detailed depictions of the experience of a returning soldier and/or of the war zone. In 'Coming Home,' Katniss and Gale both joined the army to get away from their small town and to make money for their families. Katniss says that she knew going to college would be hard financially and didn't really like school anyway. The parts of the story describing her return home depict different domestic attitudes to war. At the airport they are stopped numerous times and thanked for their service. Her friend Johanna, another soldier, is estranged from her family who are described as antiwar. Katniss and Johanna have won several awards and medals for their service, but when Peeta describes her as a war hero, Katniss contradicts him: '[S]he was no hero, she had killed people in Iraq without a second thought.' This translation of Collin's original story into a sexy romance in a contemporary US setting includes everyday details of supermarket shopping, drinking in bars, and cooking dinner, and keeps the gender disruptions of the original with Peeta the baker being a good cook and a painter, but not a veteran. He is still traumatized, however, from being injured in a car crash. In this story both same-sex and heterosexual relationships are positively depicted. However, sexual harassment is resolved through violence, with both Peeta and Katniss beating up a lecherous Cato on different occasions. While Katniss and Peeta fall in love, Katniss worries about having children as a military mom, and the story ends with her heading off for another tour of duty, this time in Afghanistan.[64] This story does not blur war and peace but instead describes a domesticated if difficult peace from the returning veteran's point of view. After war, peace is a separate transitional space of good-enough recovery, before traveling on to the next war. Though there is guilt about killing, the people of the countries being warred in or on are nonexistent.

Without the backdrop of Iraq or Afghanistan, other stories deal with the post-war struggles of Katniss and Peeta to settle down into heterosexual marriage and family. 'Science and Progress' is an erotic romance, written by a '30 something. Forever 21' author.[65] Katniss has difficulties adjusting to life after the war and is struggling to get by as a part-time teacher.[66] Her healing in this story entails taking part in activities to reclaim the teenage years she lost while participating in the Hunger Games and fighting in the war against the Capitol. She tells Peeta:

> I want to hang out on a tree the whole day. I want to eat luxurious Capitol food. I want a puppy. I want to receive lots of flowers. I want to relax and eat a candied apple. I want to learn how to knit. I want to see Gale again and laugh in the woods. I want to watch the moon at night. I want to plant trees, lots of trees. I want to skinny dip. I want to be giddy and love struck, and bask in the thrills of being a teenager, and all sorts of frivolousness that comes with it. I want to live.

After a few pages of flirting and being teased by Peeta, there is a steamy sex scene, and she climbs out the window thinking, 'I feel frivolous.' Peeta plans all the activities on her 'bucket list' of missed experiences, which include an incident contrived by Peeta of her being fought over by two guys and having elaborate romantic dinners. But, like many fan stories with romance as a central feature, there is much more to this story, including depiction of healing of a spiritual feminine nature. Her healing process proceeds through symbolic acts, visits, and experiences including planting a sapling near her father's 'war-battered, little summer house.' She finally grieves cathartically for her sister Prim via nature. She finds Prim 'in the starlight […] the grass […] the sky.' 'Prim is all around me. […] she surrounds me like a circle.' But Peeta, who is still mentally disturbed from being 'hijacked' by the Capitol (a canon reference), has a psychotic episode during which he shoots Katniss in the shoulder and spends time in prison. When they reunite, Katniss is worried that she will not be able to get pregnant. When they do eventually get pregnant and marry, she takes Peeta's last name.[67]

How do we read a story like this for emancipatory peace? On the one hand, this Katniss is no feminist. She stays with a violent man and her healing becomes a function of losing the self-sufficient, tenacious survivor of Collins' creation. On the other hand, Collins' Katniss was an emotionally numb, neglected child, living in poverty, oppressed by the state, brutalized

by the Games, and bereaved by war. In the story discussed above, Katniss' medical file describes her as a 'war icon of the second dark age' who has been receiving treatment for trauma and depression from the age of 20.[68] The story ends with Katniss aged 39 in a stable relationship with Peeta, who is also healed, and their two children.[69] Thus, this story is an example of how fan writers have created justice for Katniss by imagining a better future for her. Based on their own life experiences and longings, they write for her an everyday peace. Still, as the story concludes with the lyric of Stevie Wonder's 'Knocks Me Off My Feet,' and an author's note about Peeta giving Katniss a Michael Kors bag, it suggests that this space of deliberation is either a privileged space of consumption or of an outsider longing to be let in.

Some fan fiction weaves wider collective healing into the story of interpersonal peace centered on the relationship of Katniss and Peeta. In 'One Last Time,' Katniss and Peeta both struggle mentally. But in their last TV appearance for the Capitol, Katniss makes a point of mentioning how Prim died trying to treat the injured. She believes Prim should be honored and remembered as well as the fighters and tributes. For the protagonists, '[t] here is no happy, [...] just alright or not. [...] We both are shells of a person, clinging to each other in the cold.' But the wider society now at least values children. After the games 'there came a new love for children; people would indulge them, let them play out longer after sunset. Each child is cherished, for each child survived. We are all victors.'[70] In another story, Katniss realizes that the bombing that killed Prim at the end of the war and her vote to have a last Hunger Games with the children of the Capitol elites (which go ahead in this story in a change from the original) are both wrong. 'Panem didn't need more killers' she says, 'it needed more people who could comfort and heal.'[71]

The Educator

Political Memory and War Lessons

There are fan stories imagining more formal transitional justice and reconstruction processes as well. In 'A Strange New World,' a year after Snow's death, Freedom Day is celebrated for the first time with the ritual torching of the victors' houses.[72] Other stories deal with revisiting the abandoned arenas.[73] 'History Class' is a thoughtful short story set 58 years after the mass killing of the children that ended the war in *Mockingjay* and is told

from the perspective of a teacher, Miss Leontine. The description for the story states: 'How do you teach a class of free teenagers about the war crimes which made them free? Nearly 60 years after the fall of Snow and the Capitol, a teacher tries.' In the story, sophomore high school students are asked to write essays in response to the prompt: 'The Massacre of the Innocents was a necessary act to bring the war to a swift end and save more lives. Discuss.' The story tells of the students' responses and their teacher's intimate connection with General Hawthorne (her uncle Gale), one of the chief architects of the massacre. It was General Hawthorne who named it the Massacre of the Innocents. He created a Reparations Board, which probably prevented further bloodshed. Now, over 80, he has had many labels: 'the General of the Armies of Panem, Rebel Saint of Twelve, The Reconstructor, and The Butcher of the Innocents.' Every year he makes a national public apology, trying 'to make amends,' and he has prevented three coups 'almost bloodlessly,' saving Panem from returning to Fascism several times, and is generally loved by the country. While the General believes he saved lives, he is haunted by his past. We learn that Beetee, his collaborator in creating the bomb, committed suicide five years after the bombing.

In the history class, many of the children are named Peeta, Katniss, and Finnick, after the famous war heroes, though fewer are so named each year, remarks the teacher, as this history fades. One student, named Peeta, struggles with the emotionally difficult assignment but finally writes the best essay, concluding that 'the only universal truth' is that human lives 'are never valued highly enough by anyone.' After they have submitted their essays, the students ask the teacher what she thinks the answer to the prompt is. She tells them the event cannot be considered in isolation, that there were atrocities on both sides, and that we should learn lessons from history such as violence creates more violence: 'killing one rebel, recruits two more.' The students complain that she hasn't answered the question. But she states that the point of the prompt was not to come up with a definitive answer but to recognize that while the decision might have been 'wrong,' 'nothing is *ever* that simple' and that her opinion has changed many times. The ambivalence of her answer contrasts with that of General Hawthorne who 'fundamentalist to the core,' believed he had no choice but to commit 'murder' at that time but afterward dedicated his life to 'fixing' that wrong and to 'make the world a better place.' At his death, Gale is buried in the mass grave of the innocents as he had requested. We

learn at the end that Miss Leontine is a direct descendant of the original Peeta and Katniss.[74] This story positions a female teacher's Anzalduan 'tolerance for ambiguity' in a dialectical relationship with the male military general's absolutist confidence in virtuous war.

The Healer

Radical Reconciliation

The child soldiers of Rowling's books often become involved in politically complex peacebuilding challenges, in their fan fiction renderings. Many stories create post-war worlds in which the politics of reconciliation is considered. In 'On the Wings of a Phoenix,' the story has Harry trying to fulfill a prophecy that he is the 'Bringer of Peace' and a 'connector' between the warring factions of the Death Eaters and The Order. The story describes popular war weariness, amnesty for fighters agreed through a Reconciliation Committee as prerequisite for peace, and also how back channel diplomacy—Harry opening talks with a Death Eater—provide the way forward. The author's message in the story summary is: 'The consequences of thinking for oneself are far reaching.'[75] Through thinking for oneself and exploring the causes of a war, we learn that victims and perpetrators are not always clear-cut. In this story, Voldemort murdered Harry's parents in revenge for their previous killing of his family during the First Wizarding War. Not only were atrocities committed by both sides, some of those atrocities were committed by Harry's mother, Lily Potter, who canonically symbolizes nonviolence and love. Recognizing that 'Dark Magic feeds off hatred and anger,' Harry works with Voldemort to attempt to break the cycle of violence. This radical break with canon considers ideas of conflict resolution through recognizing multiple truths and mutual grievances.

In 'The Age of the Serpent'[76] the post-war period is dominated by an authoritarian regime lead by Voldemort and Harry is dead. We see Alice and Neville Longbottom both suffering from forms of PTSD related to their prior torture. Neville works as a 'healer' and is 'sworn to neutrality' and to treating all who need it, indiscriminately. Those who don't acquiesce to the new regime either flee or are killed. His parents and others in The Order become exiled to Germany and see him as a collaborator, who is being used for propaganda by the regime.[77]

Hermione is experiencing post-war combat trauma in 'Amends, or Truth and Reconciliation.'[78] The post-war period is 'lonelier' than she expected and plagued by nightmares. Hermione is affected by traditional gender expectations. Her future mother-in-law, Mrs. Weasley, gives her 'an end-of-the war present: a compendium of housekeeping spells,' suggesting that after war, women return to traditional roles. Hermione and Neville attempt to prevent vigilante justice by the war orphans living at Hogwarts who attack Draco, while they both struggle to control their own anger and aggression, and a war crimes trial is underway. Drawing on actual peacebuilding challenges, this story explores the fraught politics of the transition out of armed conflict that Rowling's original glossed over.

In 'Shape and Change,'[79] Harry ends up doing medi-wizard training to become a Healer rather than joining the Aurors (the elite unit of magical police). He becomes Head of Healing at the Center for World Health, 'understanding the need for international co-operation to find cures for both muggle and wizard diseases.' In another story by the same author, 'Dark Memories,'[80] Harry ends up as 'a seeker and a keeper of peace and a voice of reason,' and fear of the Gothic is resolved. As a 'peacekeeper' he organized negotiations with the vampires to establish 'feeding boundaries, so that they could be accepted into the circle of communities and nations.' Eventually, the vampires, goblins, centaurs, and giants achieve their wish 'to be recognized and respected.' As an adult, Harry creates magical items to 'improve quality of life' for people and plants. Hermione is head healer and leaks nonmagical cures to the Muggle world, subverting the rules of the wizard world. She works with Harry and Neville to infuse healing properties into objects that help sick children. Social trust and understanding are the keys to a 'better future for the next generation,' accomplished through political discussions in the Wizengamot. The new era 'wasn't perfect or some gold coated utopia but it was tolerant, honest and respectful.'[81] While writing closely within the world of the original series, these last two stories rectify institutional and structural violence and foreground nonviolent negotiation and the use of knowledge and skills (magic) for healing and social progress. In these examples, the allusions to real-world conflicts and injustices, and peacebuilding approaches and institutions, are subtle. They might be compared and potentially utilized in peace education as a non-confrontational and indirect approach to conflict, where facilitators

encourage reflection on conflicts other than those being directly experienced by the participants.

Conclusion

Many readers of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are translating those worlds, characters, and ideas into the fabric of their interior lives and then further politicizing their favorite stories and sharing them, in the virtual social settings of the fan fiction community. Fan fiction writing used as 'a weapon of critique' sometimes employed elements of entertaining 'virtuous' war, and graphic video-game violence, to draw attention to psychological and physical costs of war. Pointed critiques are provided by fan fiction writers who have experienced military combat. While some stories reproduce mythic war narratives, and others escalate the violence of the originals, many stories show that their writers have resisted the heroic narrative of war through presenting the post-war struggles of Katniss and Peeta, and Hermione and Harry, and making them heal and be healed, through experiencing everyday pleasures, and hardships, and working to build new lives and institutions. In these stories 'peace' is given meaning as familial, relational, and local; and maternal figures and nurturing values are prominent. Thus, the creation of pleasurable peace in fan fiction stories disarms 'militainment.'

However, there are no Iraqis or Afghans writing these stories, though they are frequently written about. It is unclear if this represents further erasure, through further fictionalization, of the Other, or, if it is possible that in remaking both the Self and the Other as beloved fictional characters, the fan fiction story performs an act of bridging that prefigures solidarity. Furthermore, in the originals and in many fan stories, the protagonists have gender equality when they are warriors. But some of the fan stories reverted to stereotyped gendered hierarchies in peacetime. One could argue, then, that these stories are also subtle militarizing maneuvers that further normalize war by incorporating it into a fantasy of liberal feminist militaries guarding over peaceful civilian life where harmonious heterosexual helpmates are the norm. In providing pictures of happy resolutions to war trauma, they encourage magical thinking and romanticized visions of war as the prelude to peace. While this is certainly partly the case, the research in this chapter also showed that fan fiction about *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* is operating as space of critical memorializa-

tion of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, it must be remembered that some of the stories discussed in this chapter are tens if not hundreds of thousands of words long. The richness of these imagined worlds cannot be reduced to simple political oppositions any more so than other literature, or the nonfiction world, can be. The next chapter looks at fan fictions stories that highlight structural and cultural violence and then discusses the medium of fan fiction as a potential space of peacebuilding discourse/practice.

Notes

1. Drabbles are short works of fiction around 100 words in length and may have originated in British Science Fiction fandom. Drabble competitions are challenges to write to a theme in a concise but interesting way.
2. Song fics are short pieces containing the lyrics of popular songs.
3. For example, there are stories about Hermione, Ron, and Harry being chosen for *The Hunger Games* and about Voldemort creating a *Hunger Games* for the Wizarding World. See ct320. Hermione and the Hunger Games; Kentos. Harry Potter and the Hunger Games; and Holz9364. A Game of Hunger. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9553988/1/A-Game-of-Hunger
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8. Stein L, Busse K. Limit play: Fan authorship between source text, intertext, and context. Popular Communication. 2009; 7(4): 192–207. Quote at p. 205.
9. Tosenberger. C. 2014. Quote at p. 7.
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11. Samutina N. 2016.
12. Language breakdown of *Harry Potter* stories on FanFiction.net, March 10, 2015: English (64,276), French (3554), Spanish (3298), Portuguese

(1433), German (1009), Indonesian (266), Polish (140), Swedish (106), Dutch (100), Hungarian (70), Italian (40), Czech (33), Norwegian (12), Danish (11), Russian (10), Chinese (9), Finnish (9), Vietnamese (8), Latin (6), Catalan (5), Romanian (4), Turkish (4), Hebrew (2), Croatian (2), Korean (2), Filipino (1), Farsi (1), Icelandic (1), Estonian (1), Malay (1), and Afrikaans (1).

13. *Percy Jackson* (8695) and *Lord of the Rings* (2087) have fewer individual entries but more text written about them than the *Hunger Games* when comments and reviews are included. Measured by quantity of text (as opposed to number of separate works), the chart is slightly different: *Harry Potter* (709 K), *Twilight* (217 K), *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (60.9 K), *Lord of the Rings* (53.2 K), and *Hunger Games* (42.2 K).
14. *The Hunger Games* at FanFiction.net, March 20, 2015: Total: 14,445; language breakdown: English (14,137), French (239), Spanish (31), Indonesian (16), Portuguese (9), Dutch (4), German (2), Japanese (1), Polish (1), Swedish (1), Norwegian (1), Esperanto (1), Albanian (1), and Malay (1).
15. Genre breakdown of *Hunger Games* Stories at FanFiction.net, March 20 1015:Adventure (4927), Romance (4724), General (3814), Drama (2843), Suspense (1665), Tragedy (1628), Hurt/Comfort (1597), Friendship (1022), Angst (849), Sci-Fi (829), Humor (715), Horror (576), Family (535), Fantasy (389), Parody (306), Poetry (190), Mystery (123), Supernatural (95), Crime (27), Spiritual (16), and Western (4). There are also crossover stories combining *The Hunger Games* and *Harry Potter* as well as other series: *Divergent*, *Percy Jackson*, and *Twilight*.
16. The keywords used were war, peace, justice, soldier, race, racism, disability, disabled, poverty, religion (specific), truth commission, diplomacy, conflict resolution, peace conference, and peace agreement.
17. The story is no longer available online but was written by Potterhead101. The other president. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5338668/1/The-Other-President
18. Deliamon. Threat of the future. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/1520195/1/Threat-of-the-Future
19. Tridentwatch. Harry the Muslim terrorist. https:/www.fanfiction.net/s/4327753/1/Harry-the-Muslim-Terrorist
20. These events lead Harry's side to worry about the political ramifications and possible repeal of the Muggle Protection Act. The 40-year-old author of this story claims he/she has both Irish and British family and is making 'no real-world political statement.'
21. SuperSerb. Harry Potter vs Albania. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9980856/1/Harry-Potter-vs-Albania

22. Kennedy J. Harry Potter: Justice and revenge. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/3785954/1/Harry-Potter-Justice-and-Revenge
23. Rorschach's Blot. Make a wish. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/2318355/1/Make-A-Wish
24. Robst. In this world and the next. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5627314/1/In-this-World-and-the-Next
25. Sarah1281. Oh God, not again! https://www.fanfiction.net/s/4536005/1/Oh-God-Not-Again
26. Echo Frosts. Task force whiskey hotel. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10553016/4/Task-Force-Whiskey-Hotel
27. However, not all of these are SYOT stories. For example, in a short piece about one of President Snow's relatives realizing that she will be in the last games, Katniss runs the country. The last games are known as 'The Peace Games.' SwirlHeart101. The peace games, https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9661881/2/The-Peace-Games
28. A collection of fan fiction 'rising stars' stories are offered here: HungerGamesGirl98. Greatest SYOT's in HG FanFiction. https://www.fanfiction.net/community/GreatestSYOT-s-in-HG-FanFiction/100966/. There are also other fan sites with SYOT stories including: #TeamSarah. The Hunger Games: Forum Edition. Telltale Community. 2015; Feb. https://www.telltalegames.com/community/discussion/comment/1852358
29. 24tributes24authors. Tears of blood, https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7608756/1/Tears-of-Blood. The description states: '24 writers come together to write a *Hunger Games* of epic proportions. Only 1 will survive while 23 other authors' dreams get crushed as they watch their characters die. May the odds be ever in your favor.'
30. See, for example, RachyBabyLoveYu. The 3rd hunger games: All is fair in love and war. https://www.fanfiction.net/r/6801681/0/5/
31. Kennedy S. Control: The 100th hunger games. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7051311/1/Control-The-100th-Hunger-Games
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39. Cosette-aimee. A necessary gift: a harry potter story. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/6671596/1/A-Necessary-Gift-A-Harry-Potter-Story
40. Shesasurvivor. Blue on grey. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8582649/1/Blue-on-Grey
41. alisonkim428. Torn. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8887452/1/Torn
42. Wolfsarecoolerthanvamps. Afghanistan. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10239867/2/Afghanistan
43. Davis32. Coming home. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8472234/1/Coming-Home
44. FalafelWaffel.Semperfidelis.https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8000847/20/Semper-Fidelis
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46. Caruth C. 1996. Quote at p. 111.
47. Lopie. Harry Potter and the new marauders. http://www.harrypotterfanfiction.com/viewstory.php?chapterid=126795&i=1
48. Lopie. Harry Potter and the new marauders. http://www.harrypotterfanfiction.com/viewstory.php?chapterid=126795&i=1
49. Mrs_Granger. Harry Potter and the winters after the war. http://www.harrypotterfanfiction.com/viewstory.php?chapterid=403396&i=1
50. The story was tagged as tragedy/hurt/comfort and is 870 words long (610 without the framing commentary).
51. See archiveofourown.org.
52. However, these latter comments came from people without profiles, who were either not regular participants or were choosing to remain anonymous. Thus, it was impossible to know their nationalities or other demographic identifiers, or even if they were more than one person.
53. This commentator continued that in the United Arab Emirates, where the commentator was living at the time: 'i can tell u no1 was was delighted by such a demonic act by al qaeida...' Another wrote 'actually, very few fundamentalist groups did [support 9/11] but really, the situation they wre in, you cant bame them. when superpowers liek some countries, opress other countries, influence their lawmaking, they lose their sovreingnity and 9/11 to these fundamentalist groups was like justice. terrrible and sad times, biot 9/11 and his death.'
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72. Mockingjayy. A strange new world. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9965897/1/A-Strange-New-World
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CHAPTER 9

Sanctuaries, Solidarities, and Boundary Crossings: Empathetic Justice and Plural/Personal Peacebuilding in Fan Fiction

Gale Hawthorne is in prison with Nelson Mandela. Peeta and Gale are a couple and so are George Weasley and Katniss. Autistic Harry Potter, South Indian 'Peetha' Mellark, and sexy, gay Draco are some of the new characters written by fans that are discussed in this chapter. Along with Chap. 8, this chapter shows how, in responding to Rowling and Collins' book series, readers and writers of fan fiction are cumulatively (re)producing discourses and practices of peace. Fan fiction is a bridge space and allows ethical journeys of various kinds. These 'charged crossing point[s]'[1] are the focus of the chapter. I discuss stories on the themes of gender roles, sexuality, physical disabilities, mental illness, race, and religion. Most of these stories do not reference armed conflict but are concerned with everyday conflicts about inclusion. Fan writers bring people of color, those with disabilities, and LGBTQ characters into key roles in Panem and the wizarding world. Changing the original narrative to make it more inclusive is a peace practice, but such practices must also be investigated for how well they avoid liberal peacebuilding flaws and self-indulgences.

This chapter shows how justice is being reimagined in the space of fan fiction, by writers and reviewers experimenting in a variety of different voices. Some are writing to include their own gender, racial, or other identity into their favorite series. Others are writing in a voice that is not their own, seeking to bring in an excluded perspective. Fan fiction stories do not lend themselves to easy categorization by theme, because many involve intricate world building and depict complex human relationships

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and interactions. In many stories, themes of race, class, gender, and sexuality are interwoven. However, shorter pieces are written by fans to insert a particular identity perspective that appears to be excluded from the original. As suggested by Anne Kustritz, consideration of the political importance of fan fiction 'must be communal' because no one story can 'get it right.'[2] In this chapter, I also consider the medium of fan fiction as a space or structure that can *mediate* the clash of voices, looking also for evidence of empathy and ethics of care. The chapter shows how fan fiction is a bridge space that makes empathetic crossings possible. Critical peace and poststructural pluralist form of peace(s) are created in in the stories of fan fic writers and in their online communities.

The next sections look at stories that transform the originals in ways that address gender and sexuality, race and religion, disability, and age politics.

Gender and Sexuality

A few stories re-gender the original characters, creating a female 'Harri' Potter, for example,[3] but the most frequent form of transformation in fan fiction involves sexual identity. Writing LGBTQ characters into the series is one of the ways in which fan fiction writers pursue post-canon social justice for themselves and for others. Although estimates vary,[4] a significant percentage of *Harry Potter* stories are about same-sex relationships between characters that are not couples in the original series. These stories are known online as Slash and Femmeslash, with male-focused Slash being the most common. 'Slash fiction is fan fiction with a gay theme, ranging from tender romance with mildly erotic scenes to extreme and sometimes violent pornography.'[5] An example from one end of the spectrum of Slash fiction is 'Jealousy,' a short story written about Harry's identity struggles in his third year when he faces homophobia and has to deal with his crush on another student, Cedric Diggory. The story resolves with a kiss between the two in the library.[6] This 'one-shot' mirrors the teen struggles of the original *Harry Potter* stories with its focus on bullying concerns and fears of unrequited love and uses the familiar characters and school setting. It adjusts the canon only to present same-sex romance without other disruption to Rowling's world.

Moving toward the other end of the spectrum are radical reversals of canon, such as in the sub-genre in fandom of Draco stories. Many of these stories are Slash and Draco is 'beautiful, witty, tormented, louche, sarcas-

tic, charming, aristocratic, secretly goodhearted, and above all, sexy,' as Tosenberger explains.[7] Depictions of sexual acts between adult characters and teenage characters, including Harry and Voldemort, are another form of radical shift, though most fan fiction authors avoid ethical controversy or censorship by setting their encounters in the future when the young characters have grown up. Graphic sex scenes between adult Harry and Voldemort also break a political taboo by making the enemies lovers. In this way two forms of 'unspeakable' desire are played out in the space of fan fiction. Slash fiction is considered to be 'more radical' and more 'anarchistic' in its appropriation of Rowling's universe, than other forms of fan fiction.[8] However, the politics of Slash fiction are generally inclusive but not revolutionary. Marianne MacDonald notes that a world of 'sexual tolerance' is depicted in these stories but without discussion of how such a world had evolved.[9] She also interviewed writers of Potter Slash who had received negative feedback in the comments sections for their stories and were pessimistic about real-world change in terms of gay rights.[10]

In considering the kind of peace that Slash fan fiction represents, I look to the concept of 'empathetic crossings.'[11] From the perspectives of many authors, writing gay characters and relationships improves upon Rowling's narrative by including marginalized identities and/or surfacing the hidden stories of the original. In her analysis of the fan fiction response to Rowling's outing of Dumbledore as gay, Tosenberger explains: 'Dissatisfaction with the source text is an equally compelling motivation to write fanfiction, and fans examine his [Dumbledore's] isolation and heartbreak, explore the possibilities of other lovers for him […], and invent alternate universes where he can be happily in love.'[12] In this way, some authors are writing themselves home in a beloved series. But others are writing, not about themselves, but out of curiosity and as bridging and solidarity work. MacDonald's study found that most of the writers of Slash were young women, in their twenties, who found male sexuality and male gay relationships interesting and/or were politically motivated by the absence of queer characters in mainstream entertainment.[13] In my survey of fan fiction stories, I found that some authors use their profile pages to advocate for different political causes, including LGBTQ rights: 'To all those who think Homophobia is wrong and want to fight for a better future for our gay and lesbian friends, please repost this into your profile,' writes one author of a *Harry Potter* story. In the statement this author wanted circulated, she identified with LGBTQ people in different scenarios of discrimination: 'I am the girl kicked out of her home because I

confided in my mother that I am a lesbian. I am the prostitute working the streets because nobody will hire a transsexual woman. […] I am the domestic-violence survivor who has no support system to turn to because I am male. I am the father who has never hugged his son because I grew up afraid to show affection to other men. […] Re-post this if you believe homophobia is wrong. Please do your part to end it.'[14]

Most fan fiction writers do not confine themselves to writing about one social issue; the writer advocating against homophobia, quoted above, wrote her own *Harry Potter* story about social anxiety. These writers are practicing intersectional politics in their art, enabled by the creative task of creating a story of characters, plots, and struggles that draw on real everyday life experiences. The author noted that she herself was a sufferer of a social anxiety disorder, but, as shown here, she was not just writing for personal peace but advocating for the rights of others as well.

In *The Hunger Games*' fan fiction, heterosexual romance stories dominate. At FanFiction.net, authors can opt to classify their stories as falling in one or two out of a possible 21 genres.[15] Most of the Potter stories are tagged as Romance (26,910), General (23,463), and Adventure (19,914). There are also separate fan fiction genres for Hurt/comfort, Friendship, and Family. Overall, both series had very similar ratios of romance to other tags considering the entirety of each book's fan fiction. But of the top 50 most reviewed *Hunger Games* stories, 33/50 were tagged as Romance.[16] In contrast, only 11 out of the top 50 *Harry Potter* stories were tagged by their authors as having a Romance theme, with Drama, Adventure, and Family being more prevalent tags. This suggests that the romantic relationships of YA series are a major attraction for fans. But the relative newness of the *Hunger Games* series probably explains why an equally small number of new heterosexual partnerships are offered in fan fiction with Katniss/Cato, and Gale/Madge, as there are same-sex pairings such as Peeta/Gale and Peeta/Cato. Still, even though the original *Hunger Games* series is heteronormative, some fan stories offer positive gay relationships, albeit often positioned as sidenotes to stories focused on heterosexual romance. The previous chapter showed some complicated hybrid narratives in fans' romance stories. An erotic politics of peace emerged in the treatment of post-war trauma and healing by some *Hunger Games* fan writers.

Longer in existence, and a bigger collection, the *Harry Potter* series has evolved a much larger body of fan fiction work, entailing exploration and extrapolation of the culture, commerce, and political institutions of the

wizarding world. As well, the character list is more heterogeneous, having multiple species as well as national groups. A central narrative thread of Rowling's work is related to interspecies and identity conflicts and development of alliances. For all of these reasons, it is not surprising that there are more noncanonical relationships in *Harry Potter* fan fiction than in the *Hunger Games* stories. Although fan fiction is transformative, even radical, fan writers create within preexisting subcultures. Tosenberger claims that micro-fandoms do not interact, suggesting that the level of bridging and exchange that is happening between fans of different characters even within *Harry Potter* fandom may be less than appears from the volume of stories. However, Kustritz argues that Slash fiction emphasizes 'friendship-based love' and 'equality-centered relationship dynamics,' in ways that are challenging to patriarchy, helping to explain the interest in Slash by young women who are not gay.[17] In sum, liberal feminist and tolerance politics but not radical changes are reflected as desires of the majority of fan writers focused on gender and sexuality.

Race and Religion

Compared with those that solely focus on romantic relationships and struggles based on sexual longing and identity, a much smaller number of fan stories for both series deal predominately with issues of 'real-world' race and religion. This is despite the fact that many *Harry Potter* stories do deal with the injustices of the wizarding world, as per canon. One exception is the outline for a story called 'Of Two Worlds' which is set in Mississippi in the 1970s asking: 'What if *Harry Potter* had been black? What if instead of Surrey, England, Harry lived with his abusive aunt in the South? What if Voldemort actually killed Harry's parents because they were an interracial couple? (Lily, a "mudblood", i.e. African-American, and James was white).'[18] This is an idea for a story and was not developed, and most of the stories found on race or ethnicity are short, experimental interventions that did not evolve into longer narratives. Ramadan is celebrated in 'Fasting At Hogwarts' as teachers and pupils break the fast in the Great Hall, its magical ceiling transformed into a night sky aptly featuring a crescent moon.[19] There are a small number of other stories featuring Muslim characters at Hogwarts,[20] Hanukkah celebrations,[21] Gypsy/Roma characters,[22] Hindu themes,[23] and Indian characters, including an interracial relationship story written by an Indian 18-year-old who lives in the Caribbean[24] and another story in which Harry has an Indian half-sister

Shaila Potter.[25] These references to religious, racial, or cultural difference are adding to the postcolonial tapestry of the original narrative, by claiming a place at Hogwarts for a child of a particular ethnic identity. They are neither controversial nor challenging to the canon for the most part. But in this respect such fan fiction writers imagine a pluralistic peace, as their stories are about inclusion and equality. A few are also exploring intracommunal tensions. For example, one story about a Muslim girl getting her Hogwarts' acceptance letter includes discussion of physical child abuse in a Muslim family. The author states that she is Muslim and not making a blanket statement about Muslims but highlighting an important issue of violence.[26]

In *Hunger Games* fan fiction, writers commonly made the characters biracial or involved in interracial relationships. A young Native American writer sets a Peeta and Katniss love story between a reservation girl and town boy in 'The One Who Hung the Moon.'[27] While the focus of the story is romance, details such as her uncle having an AIM (American Indian Movement) patch on his clothing make the setting recognizably different and illustrate how this writer's political values and pop culture tastes are linked. She recognizes the politics of class/race in Collins' original and applies it to her own cultural and political setting. She also encourages readers to get interested in the Idle No More protests.[28] Another *Hunger Games* story called 'Yet Again' is written by a Filipino immigrant and set in the Philippines. Written in English with some Tagalog phrases,[29] this is a story of Peeta and his family migrating to Manila where he is childhood friends with Katniss, a biracial girl born to a poor family. Katniss is being raised in a small two-room house, eating sardines 'for breakfast, lunch and dinner.' Peeta's family is much better off financially, but he is beaten by his mother. Peeta's family returns to the United States and later go back to the Philippines when he is a teenager. He notices the country's poverty but puts it out of his mind. By this time, Katniss' father has become a wealthy CEO. Thus, there are many crossings of ethnicity, class, time, and space, as well as direct and structural violence in the story. Rebecca Black argues that fan communities are part of the 'process of relocation for many immigrant youths' and important in development of skills for new English language learners.[30] Her claim is supported by the comment of one reader of 'Yet Again' who states that he/she found the use of Tagalog helpful.

Even without the *Hunger Games*, 'oppression and poverty still exist,' writes a 16-year-old girl from Texas in a tragic romance 'song fic' inter-

spersed with lyrics in both Spanish and English from the pop song 'Jueves (Thursday)' by La Oreja De Van Gogh.[31] In the story Katniss and Peeta have to work to support their families. They fall in love on their daily commute, but have to stop seeing each other because Peeta's mother disapproves and threatens to get Katniss fired, which she cannot risk for financial reasons. Katniss' poverty and Peeta's mother's oppression produce a Romeo and Juliet meets war on terror ending: saying a final goodbye, they are killed together in a bombing of the train station by the Capitol. Other Latina and Muslim characters are created for *Hunger Games*-based stories in contemporary and future United States. In 'The Letter' by Anais 177, Katniss is a young Muslim woman based in Brooklyn, New York. The conflict surrounds her need 'to choose a suitable husband' and contrasting family and personal preferences for a mate. 'Human Resources: *The Hunger Games*' offers only a short beginning to a story, but the protagonist is a 19-year-old half Latina female who is hit by a car in New York, dies, and wakes up in the future Panem.[32]

Some authors transport the characters to historical scenarios,[33] sometimes transforming their race and/or nationalities in the process. 'District 12' looks at Apartheid through the lens of *The Hunger Games*. In this story Katniss is the daughter of a white Afrikaner woman and a black man who dies in jail for violating South Africa's laws related to interracial relationships. Gale and his family are Colored and experience racism, and his sister Posy is sexually assaulted by a white man with impunity. Katniss' sister Prim is politically active, boycotting history class because she disagrees with the white separatist views of her teacher (Mrs. Coin, named after President Coin from the original). Peeta is white, liberal, and antiracist. Katniss and Peeta fall in love, as per canon, but die during a township riot. Gale meets Nelson Mandela in prison, offering a glimmer of hope of change at the end.[34]

The question of co-option/exploitation versus solidarity/bridging is relevant, because not all of these authors were writing from within the religious tradition or racial groups that their stories were seeking to include within the *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games* post-canons. As with Slash fiction, then, this writing comes out of a more complicated set of longings and belongings than any clear-cut identity politics. Still, writers appeared sensitive to the issue of representation, noting they asked for help from Jewish and Muslim friends in writing their stories and inviting corrections of the cultural details from readers. The reviews of these stories offer endorsements as well. A story about an Indian 'Peetha' Mellark and an

intercaste relationship is positively reviewed by Indian readers. For example, one wrote: 'I am a South Indian […] I love the way that you have written about Peetha's background and family. When I lived abroad people kept mispronouncing my name and I had to keep correcting them. I could relate to Peetha in this story.' Another reviewer wrote: 'This particular fic hits very close to home. I'm a 20-year old Indian-American girl […] I identify a lot with Peetha's dreams, concerns, and his juggling of two cultures and what he wants versus what he feels is his duty. Delhi's[35] character too is something I'm definitely interested in […] I too recently went through some soul searching about my own sexuality, so my heart goes out to her.'[36] As these comments demonstrate, for some readers an ethnically pluralistic peace is inextricably also about respect for personal preferences and freedom to express sexual identities.

Child Abuse, Illness, and Disability

Empathy is also illustrated when fans write background stories of child abuse and previous war atrocities that explain the actions of villains like Draco, Voldemort, and Snow. There are many sympathetic readings of Draco. For example, his malicious personality is explained as resulting from his father's beatings to stop him being friends with Muggles and other forms of parental brainwashing.[37] Although they are currently a small minority of *Hunger Games* stories, sympathetic portrayals of President Snow include retrospectives explaining his youth as shaped by his mother's death from exhaustion and his father's cruelty[38] or by poverty and the loss of his father who died leading a previous rebellion in District 12.[39] These examples show fans resisting the canonical portrayals of enemies as shallowly callous.

In addition to humanizing the villains, some fans rewrite the heroes with physical disabilities or mental illnesses. In 'Different, Not Defective,' Harry Potter has autism. He also struggles with the effects of an abusive childhood with his adoptive parents and with having witnessed his biological parents' murders. This story emphasizes the capabilities as well as the struggles of those with autism and explores the vulnerability of 11-year-old Harry in his first year at Hogwarts. In an interesting move, this author imports another pop culture icon into the story. Harry is able to communicate his feelings with Professor Snape through shared understanding of comic books, specifically Batman comics. He wishes he was like Batman because 'the bad guys would be afraid of me [..] People

couldn't get away with hitting me if I was Batman and Batman is wicked smart. [...] I could live all by myself and not have to be shouted at for not doing normal things.'[40] This story picks up the negative portrayal of Snape as bat-like and reverses it. It also writes a role for pop culture in promoting resilience in young people who are differently abled, ill, abused, and/or feel outcast. In fact, the young author of this story was advocating for understanding but also writing for personal peace, as explained on her/his profile page: 'Writing is how I communicate. I can talk, but I can't explain things. Only writing lets me be free of whatever keeps my thoughts and feelings locked in my head.'[41]

Some writers note that they are socially awkward or antisocial and make political statements about tolerance and against stereotyping in their profiles.[42] One author who has written 15 *Hunger Games* stories, including one offering an empathetic reading of Katniss' mother,[43] describes herself in self-deprecating terms as 'a first-class geek' and states that 'I'm the tiny (literally and figuratively) person in the back of the classroom.'[44]

> I'm extremely awkward in social situations (who needs friends when you have computers?) though I'm one half-step away from the mental asylum once you get to know me (everyone seems normal at first).[45]

Another signs off as 'Little Girl Gone Mad.' These self-appointed Gothic mad women can be read as representing contemporary secrets of exploitation and exclusion.

Fandom sites may function as everyday sanctuaries and can allow 'safe encounters with complex issues' and development of interpersonal skills. Child therapist Kathy Hunt recounts a home visit with a bereaved eight-year-old girl who found comfort in relating to Harry Potter as an orphan.[46] The plethora of fan fiction linking *Harry Potter* and mental health issues suggests that the books also provide a vehicle for readers to explore, find support for, and help dispel the stigma of these issues.[47] In 'Bother' Harry battles depression and alcoholism.[48] In 'Break Me, Shake Me,' Harry Potter has a social anxiety disorder caused by child abuse.[49]

Fandoms also provide important support for young people who are seriously ill and spend a lot of time confined indoors or in hospitals. There are more than twenty *Harry Potter* stories about cancer patients on the fan fiction site. In 'Diagnosis,' Harry has cancer.[50] In another short poetic piece about the cancer treatment of one of Harry's children, his sister cuts her hair in solidarity after his chemo.[51] In 'Blind Faith,' Draco has lost his sight

as a result of a car accident.[52] In 'Harry Potter: The Silent Halls of Hogwarts,' he is deaf.[53] Self-harm, eating disorders, and suicide are also repeated themes.[54] Like *Harry Potter* fan fiction, *Hunger Games* stories fill in gaps left in the original series. There are stories in which Gale or Peeta is blind or deaf.[55] New blind characters are created to participate in the games in other fan stories.[56] Others present the story from the perspective of characters that are not fleshed out in the originals, including Haymitch, Clove and Cato,[57] Katniss and Peeta's children, Katniss' mother, Finnick, Mags, Madge, and Snow.[58] There are over 2000 stories written either about Haymitch or from his point of view. Mags, the older woman who is Finnick's mentor in *Catching Fire*, is the subject of a novel-length story explaining her political importance in her younger days: 'Katniss was the spark, but it was Mags who laid the foundations of the second rebellion.'[59] Again, themes of alcoholism, childhood abuse, mental illness, resilience, and love are explored in fan fiction stories about minor characters in the canon, showing that Collins' books have impacted and engaged readers into imagining beyond the text and sympathetically feeling a range of human struggles and triumphs.

Generational Crossings

The author of 'Time Doesn't Heal' is a 16-year-old girl writing from the perspective of 67-year-old Katniss who still has traumatic memories 50 years after the end of the games.[60] In another story, about Katniss' mother,[61] and the suffering of the previous generation of District 12, hunger and class differences within the District are themes, along with romance. In the story Mrs. Everdeen is a healer but cannot ever heal herself from the deaths of her husband and daughter.[62] The young author comments on how she developed understanding for the character through writing her background story. This imaginative action allowed her to shift perspectives, from the original text where Katniss' criticism of her mother is persuasive, to finding empathy for a woman who 'tried her best to be strong for her children' and was 'admirable' in the end.[63]

The burden of transgenerational trauma is described in 'What Hurts the Most,' a fan fic written by a 14-year-old girl. Katniss' daughter tries to get her mother to talk about Prim (the aunt she is named after), but it is still too painful and Katniss refuses to speak about it. Consequently, her daughter feels that the Games were her fault, even though she wasn't born at the time, and that she needs to fix the past. She makes plans to set off on a journey to do something to remove 'the hurt imprinted on them all.'[64]

'Empathetic crossings' in the other direction are central to some of the most popular *Harry Potter* stories, written by older fans. In the sample of the most read/reviewed stories, most of these were book length between 70,000 and 100,000 words, and, while not every author profile contained their ages, the longer works were written by middle-aged fans.[65] A repeated theme in these fan novels is the failure of authority figures. Three of the most read and liked stories (in the top 25) deal with the flaws and manipulations of Dumbledore being recognized by the teenagers who reject his authority.[66] In 'Poison Pen,' Hermione criticizes Dumbledore and McGonagall for lying about Squibs to maintain a fiction of pureblood superiority.[67] In 'Harry Crow,' Dumbledore and Umbridge die in Azkaban prison while the next generation rejects their elitism and racism. 'Harry Crow' (seemingly a reference to Jim Crow and a racial subtext) was brought up by goblins and leads the reform of the wizarding world to end discriminatory laws.[68]

An older Australian writer of fan fiction and a mother of six, according to her profile, describes a complex mix of identifications driving her participation in the fan fiction community: 'I've noticed that my favourite fandom characters, such as Snape and Percy and Neville, are all under-appreciated and male. Perhaps they symbolise my autistic sons, and society's tendency to dismiss disabled people as being worth less than "normal" people. What draws adults like myself to Snape is not "bad boy charm" (I find the very suggestion ludicrous, frankly, for he is neither bad nor boyish nor charming), but identification and/or hurt-comfort. We recognised early on that Snape was a profoundly unhappy man, trapped by duty and obligation into a dead-end job/life.' Again, a combination of motives—advocacy for others, in this case for inclusion, and respect for people with disabilities, along with personal needs, in this case for expression and fulfillment—is interwoven. This combination mirrors the example of Rowling's original in the fusing of maternal love, social consciousness, and empathy and in writing to promote social change as well as personal peace.

Everyday Cyber-Peace

Sanctuary Space Can Also Be Public Space

The participation of young people in fan fiction communities is not separate from everyday life but a part of it. At times these worlds are reconciled and at other times in conflict, in an operation of push and pull (like

Anzaldua's 'lefthanded world'; see Chap. 2). Littered throughout fan fic stories, authors will apologize for not having updated their stories sooner: 'Sorry it has taken me so long to up date. I have started working plus going to school,' writes one. Another says: 'I just hope you don't forget me, as I haven't forgotten any of you, or the encouragement your reviews give me.' Many fan fiction authors may be introverted, as some mentioned above, but they live in various different worlds that they connect through posting their writings online. Legitimate concerns about sexual predation, bullying, and harassment online (indeed, Berg notes that teens have difficulty identifying when the latter is taking place)[69] should not be allowed to obscure the benefits of a medium like fan fiction. Online communities offer spaces of support for teens facing identity conflicts and the violence of exclusion. Even with monitoring software, these are spaces that can be accessed in secret, away from parental or peer disapproval, and such spaces are often essential for the well-being of morally and socially excluded youth.

Tosenberger notes that an 'authentic teenage voice' emerges in fan fiction because there are 'no adult middlemen' shaping and controlling the travel of a story from one teen writer to another teen reader. However, this seems to be only partially true, at least in the stories I examined, because the source material still provides the structure, no matter how dismembered and loosely reused the characters, ideas, or values of the original are in the remixed new product. Most of the existing research, including Tosenberger's, focuses on sex and sexuality experiments that are clearly transformational. However, a focus on other issues such as race or war did not uncover the same level of radical transformation at all. Furthermore, close reading of author notes and profiles shows that some stories are posted by teenagers as school projects or they are responses to fan community competitions and prompts. In addition to the fan fiction site's moderators, the numerous older adults writing and reviewing on fan fiction sites make them far from adult-free or compliance-free zones. Add the evaluating eye of the researcher (me), and the idea of uncovering an authentic voice of youth in fan fiction becomes even less plausible. However, these findings do not dilute the importance of studying fan fiction sites for better appreciating the social significance of young adult literatures or for tracing the communal creation of knowledge about peace. Tracey Kell states that fan fiction 'bridges age, race, gender, and educational status as the writers and fans work through a participatory culture to socially connect through their writing.'[70] The user is both a learner and a teacher and the engagement modes and rules of the space dismantle hierarchies.

The 'both/and' characteristic of fan fiction demonstrates the acceptance of ambiguity that Anzaldua's bridging metaphor implies. Online fan fiction is a space of reading and writing in secret and in community *at the same time*. Furthermore, there is mixing in fan fiction, as there is in the 'third space' as envisioned by Bhabha and Anzaldua, from which new possibilities arise. One of those possibilities is that sanctuary can be found in the public/private threshold space of fandom.

Spaces of Solidarities Are Always Ambiguous

Writing about gender, sexuality, race, and disability, authors of fan fiction implicitly and explicitly advocate for rights, equality, and justice. Stories create post-canon justice by remedying the absence of people of color and of gay, lesbian, and disabled characters in their favorite series. The post-canon social justice afforded in stories about romantic and sexual pairings of same-sex characters is one way of addressing cultural violence. This fictional social justice is not concrete or revolutionary structural change, but it *is* a form of progressive political action and may provide practice for other forms of activism later. As shown, some authors link readers to particular causes, these included LGBTQ rights, pro-life, and Native and Indigenous rights issues. One of the striking features of fan fiction commentary, as reviewed in this chapter, was the civility of the discourse. Often, when political themes or statements were included, the author would simply say so up front, warning away those who would be offended, but in a breezy and non-provocative fashion. For example, the Native American writer, who encouraged readers to get interested in the Idle No More protests, invited people to follow her on Tumblr but noted 'be warned though, I post a lot of native/first nations issues on my tumblr so if you don't care about indigenous issues then don't bother following me on there.'[71] There is a 'live and let live' attitude within fan fiction communities. 'Tolerance for ambiguity' is also required and suggested by the fan advocating for both LGTBQ and pro-life causes.[72] However, Driscoll and Gregg's study found that fan communities are 'not always nice, and the expectations of obligation and reciprocity by which fanfics work can convert into bitter power-plays and gossip economies online as easily as they can offline.'[73] 'Power in these communities is about intimate networking,' argue feminist cultural studies researchers such as Driscoll and Gregg, and about knowing how to interact.[74]

In seeking peace and justice in fan fiction the problems of privatized politics and appropriation remain. Many if not most of the fan fiction stories for *Harry Potter* and the *Hunger Games* are romances. But as explored in this chapter, some of those writing about race and religion, as well as creating LGBTQ characters, are not writing from within those social groups. Their micropolitical moves to inclusion may be seen as frivolous at best and at worst neocolonial. However, viewed as 'empathetic crossings,'[75] even those writing about, rather than from within, a particular minority community can be positively understood as agents of emancipation.

Young people are writing about themselves and advocating for others in these stories. Widening and humanizing a larger community of characters, young fan fiction writers have created a culture of inclusion and empathy. Older adult fan fiction writers have made the choice to write within youth-centric fan cultures. Both kinds of fans make empathetic bridge crossings when they take the point of view of characters that are much older or younger than them. These 'empathetic crossings' inspired by fictional characters create a space within which many noncontiguous territories of post-canon justice are maintained. Online fan fiction is the 'bridge,' the structure that enables repeated crossings in both directions, as readers imagine different gaps and justice needs, and such bridge space, as Anzaldua has explained, is both unnerving and a space where a new consciousness emerges.

Emancipatory Bridge Space and Digital Privilege

Fan writing activities are microforms of political action. They are assertions of authority by youth, attempts to build bridges, and efforts to create spaces for a politics of inclusive peace within everyday life. As shown in this chapter, online fan fiction is a technology-mediated, creative, social, and political space within which meanings and practices of peace are displayed and negotiated in varied ways. Through the interactions of multiple writers and readers, fan fiction is an instrument of social struggle involving the inclusion of marginalized identities, hybrid world-building, and linking of generations. There is powerful evidence of tolerance and relational empathy within the fan fiction communities studied. Intergenerational, inclusive, and relational peace are advocated and modeled within the fan fiction writers' community, and personal peace and resilience are pursued through writing. Combined with the stories of everyday peace after war that were

discussed in Chap. 8, these stories provide a view into the many forms of peace that are subsumed within the political structures of neoliberal peace in the West/North's IR and are challenging it from within with post-sovereign and poststructural pluralist narratives.

Digital privilege enables this access to emancipatory peace. Globally, as of early 2014, less than half, roughly 40%, of the world's people have access to the Internet.[76] The digital divide, while narrowing quickly, remains stark between the Global North where almost 80% of households have Internet access and the world's poorest and least developed countries, where less than 10% do. Most of those who do not have Internet access live in rural areas and they are more likely to be women, with the gender gap particularly pronounced in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, where, respectively, women are 34% and 43% less likely to be online.[77] There are wide variations in access between these two poles of the digital divide; two thirds of people in Chile, Venezuela, and Russia have Internet access, 63% in China and Lebanon, 50% in Egypt and Mexico, 43% in the Philippines, 34% in El Salvador, falling to 20% in India, 15% in Uganda, and 8% in Pakistan.[78] Access is strongly related to per capita income, owning a computer, education levels, and English-speaking or English-reading ability.[79] For example, in Argentina, 90% of those who can speak or read English have Internet access, while only 44% of those who do not speak English go online. In Egypt, 81% of those with a college degree use social networking sites but just 18% of those with less education do.[80]

Yet, a youth lens complicates this picture. In most countries age-based differences in access and usage are pronounced. For example, 83% of young Thais (18–34 years old) have access to the Internet or a smartphone, while only 27% of those age 35 and older do. In Peru, 70% of young adults have access, while only 31% of over 35s do, and in Ukraine 84% of young adults have access compared with 39% of those over 35.[81] In the United Kingdom almost all 18–29 year olds use social networking sites (94%), compared with 66% of 30–49-year-olds and 22% of those aged over 50.[82] In Vietnam, 90% of young Vietnamese (18–34 years old) use social networking sites, while only half of over 35s do.[83] A 2012 Pew study of 21 countries found at least three-quarters of the Internet users surveyed shared their views about movies and music online, including in China (86%), India (85%), Mexico (84%), Greece (83%), Turkey (78%), Tunisia (77%), and Italy (75%). Generally, sports were a less popular topic for online discussion except in Jordan and India. 'Community issues' surpassed movies and music as a popular topic

for discussion in Egypt (74%), Jordan (80%), Lebanon (81%), and Tunisia (82%). In these countries, 60% to 68% reported using the Internet to share their views on 'politics' as well, whereas only between 30 and 37% of Americans, British, Russians, and Chinese shared their views on politics through social media with the numbers doing so falling to only 22% for the Japanese, 20% for Mexicans, and 18% for the French.[84]

These numbers are important because they illustrate the extent to which ideas about both pop culture and politics are expressed online and with regional differences in emphasis. They are also important because they point up the global generational shift in access that is happening in tandem with an increasing gap between rural, poor women in the South and the rest. Most people who use the Internet do so for socializing with family and friends. Men are more likely than women to use the Internet for keeping up with political news. Young people are more likely to use the Internet for social networking and for job hunting.[85]

The fact that intergenerational differences in access within countries are more stark than the differences between youth access across countries suggests the potential for cross-national youth coalitions, including coalitional empathy, within many online formats. However, gender differences in access regionally mean that there is overrepresentation of men's voices and of those most socioeconomically advantaged in cyberspace. It is potentially significant then that young adult fan fiction is a feminized space.

Digitally privileged, young, English language speakers from the Global North certainly dominate the spaces of fan fiction as writers, even though there is more diversity among the readers of fan fiction. They also dominate fan activism related to *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* (discussed in the next chapter). However, in the United States, trends in the use of new media for creative purposes defy 'popular stereotypes' and 'are not restricted to white suburban males.'[86] Over 90% of people aged 12 to 29 have Internet access.[87] Among 12–17-year-olds, 73% use social networking sites, 63% go online everyday, 38% share their own creations online, and 21% remix content—which includes fan fiction. Among 18–29-year-olds, 72% use social networking sites, 37% share their own creative content, and 19% remix.[88] All groups of teens, regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, are equally likely to share content online. But more teenage girls than teenage boys will remix content. Among young adults in the United States, no variations based on gender, race, and ethnicity were found for those sharing or remixing content online in general.[89] As shown in the next chapter on activism, even

some who had not seen *The Hunger Games* because moviegoing was cost-prohibitive did have access to the Internet and used it to protest with *The Hunger Games*' salute.

Fan fiction and fan activism can provide a participative structure for expressing care of others as well as self-interest. Furthermore, Louisa Stein and Kristina Busse point out that 'while technology imposes limits on particular forms and types of stories, it also encourages and creates new categories of storytelling. Because these interfaces are often designed to link users, they encourage forms of multiauthored narrative. Instant Messenger programs allow writers to engage directly with co-writers, facilitating a style of joint story creation that highlights multiple points of view.'[90] The formats of online creative sites including fan fiction offer possibilities for multithreaded, multiauthor narratives to be created around a host of peace and conflict concerns.

However, 'language proficiency is one of the most powerful predictors of Internet use, even controlling for other demographic factors.'[91] In 2007, foreign-born and Spanish-dominated Latinos trailed both whites and English-speaking Latinos in Internet use and home broadband access.[92] Research suggests that along with other 'online global social settings,' such as discussion boards and video gaming sites, fan communities are part of the 'process of relocation for many immigrant youths' and important in the development of skills for new English language learners.[93] Rebecca Black argues that exploring how identities and literacies are shaped in such settings 'can help us to understand how youths take on and negotiate social roles that may have implications for learning in both on- and off line spaces.'[94] This process was confirmed in the stories and comments from immigrants reported in this chapter which are examples of the submerged social justice effects of fandom communities. Considering the costs of other forms of consumption, as shown in Chap. 7, the space of online fandom is quite egalitarian.

Fan writing about *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* may be considered a form of resistance from within the spectacle that is not necessarily self-aware of being subversive. Stein and Busse state:

> While fannish discourse may emphasize modernist notions, fannish traditions of creativity celebrate the possibility of creativity held between transformation, multiplicity, and repetition. In the end, the collective creative energies of media fans showcase artistic prototypes that emphasize intertextuality, community, and a creativity that is not invested primarily in notions of originality.[95]

The lack of concern with originality, and with recognition, is one of the characteristics of fan fiction that also marks it as a 'third space' of mixing where new ideas may arise, in a syncretic dance, but do not have to be forced to the surface.

'Emancipation, theoretically, is security,'[96] and emancipatory space, in theory, is also a bridge space, where 'tolerance for ambiguity' can be accommodated and enjoyed. While absolutism and fundamentalism can indicate certain kinds of privilege—patriarchy, and armed power-based control, for example—'tolerance for ambiguity' is also enabled by privilege: thinking space, safety, and freedom from communal deterrence practices such as ethnocentrism and nationalism, as well as from neoliberal economic domination, all allow the post-liberal subject to productively, humanely equivocate. Regardless of other background, fan fiction writers are privileged in that they can participate in nuanced, magical life in contrast to the 'bare life' of Others,[97] but they are not necessarily recognized by their states as being of political or ethical importance. Strategic hiding aside, 'tolerance for ambiguity' can also mean detachment from emotion about social suffering, abstract theorizing that is disembodied and divorced from people's everyday lives. This is why Anzaldua's theory of bridge space is so helpful as the book's concluding chapter discusses. But first I turn to fan activism.

Notes

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3. A female Harry (Harri Potter) is the protagonist of the story by Koinaka. Adventures in witchcraft and wizardry. Fanfiction. 2013 Mar 11 [updated 2013 Nov 6]. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5808499/1/Adventures_in_Witchcraft_and_Wizardry
4. MacDonald notes that there are still more 'het' stories than slash ones but that the gap is closing. See MacDonald M. 2006. *Harry Potter* and the fan fiction phenom. *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide. 2006;* XIII (1): 28–30.
5. MacDonald. M 2006. Ibid.

6. AbigailKinney4life. Jealousy. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7408038/5/Jealousy.
7. Tosenberger C. 2014. Mature poet's steal. Children's literature and the unpublishability of fan fiction. Children's Literature Association Quarterly. 2014; 39(1): 4–27. Quote at p. 19.
8. MacDonald M. 2006.
9. MacDonald M. 2006.
10. MacDonald M. 2006.
11. Chabot Davis K. Oprah's book club and the politics of cross-racial empathy. International Journal of Cultural Studies. 2004; 7(4): 399–419.
12. Tosenberger C. 2008. 'Oh my God, the fan fiction!' Dumbledore's outing and the online *Harry Potter* fandom. Children's Literature Association Quarterly. 2008; 33(2): 200–206. Quote at p. 204.
13. In MacDonald's study, 6 out the 10 female respondents to her survey were female authors identified as either gay, bisexual, or having no sexual preference. MacDonald M. 2006. Ibid. p 28.
14. See Daggers Blood Pain. Break me, Shake me. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/4398421/1/Break_Me_Shake_Me
15. *Harry Potter* stories on FanFiction.net categorized by genre, March 10, 2015:

    Genre: Romance (26,910), General (23,463), Adventure (19,914), Humor (16,689), Drama (10,746), Fantasy (5291), Angst (5086), Family (4580), Friendship (4162), Parody (3680), Hurt/Comfort (3228), Mystery (3037), Supernatural (1939), Tragedy (1556), Suspense (1319), Horror (1024), Sci-Fi (815), Poetry (695), Crime (285), Spiritual (206), and Western (25).
16. The romance tag was often combined with drama or adventure. The remaining seventeen stories were divided mostly between humor/parody and hurt/comfort.
17. Kustritz A. 2003. Ibid. Quote at p. 377.
18. Whyborn. Harry Potter: Of two worlds. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8674000/1/Harry-Potter-Of-Two-Worlds.
19. Mariamwrites. Fasting at Hogwarts. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9484131/1/Fasting-at-Hogwarts.
20. Forever sleeping. The other Muggleborn student. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10165174/1/The-other-Muggleborn-student.
21. mischiefmanaged73. A Hogwarts Hanukkah and other holidays. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/6591830/1/A-Hogwarts-Hanukkah-and-other-holidays.
22. Kami2015. Gypsy magic: The Yoska Frescka chronicles. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9411128/1/Gypsy-Magic-The-Yoska-Frescka-Chronicles.

23. This story is written by a teen Hindi Indian author. Simevra Lestrange. Colonial love. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10395483/1/Colonial-Love.
24. Stompy-Sanji. Take me away. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/1588416/1/Take-Me-Away.
25. Rana Rai. A whisper in the wind. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/3254013/1/A-Whisper-in-the-Wind.
26. Forever sleeping. The other Muggleborn student. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10165174/1/The-other-Muggleborn-student.
27. MooseDeEvita. The one who hung the moon. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8150130/1/The-One-Who-Hung-the-Moon.
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32. Anais 177. The letter; Archive of or Own. http://archiveofourown.org/works/2495321 No longer available online.
33. Peeta and Katniss meet in 'Hooverville' in Central Park in New York City during the Great Depression in Someone To Watch Over Me. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8947328/1/Someone-to-Watch-Over-Me. This story was written for a prompt 'Everlark Through the Ages.' It is no longer available at Fanfiction.net but is archived under Orphan Account. Someone To Watch Over Me. 2012; 4 October. https://archiveofourown.org/works/528481. In post-World War II Chicago, Katniss is 'an ex-Rosie the Riveter' and Peeta is a returning soldier in a story by Malibustacy. The blind date. 2012; 3 October. [Updated 9 July 2014]. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8578713/1/The-Blind-Date.
34. silvercistern. District 12. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8947324/1/District-12. No longer available at fan fiction. Available as: Orphan Account. District 12. Archive of our own. 2012; 3 October. https://archiveofourown.org/works/528359?view_adult=true.
35. Delhi is an original character created by the fan writer, but she is based on Delly in Collins' series.
36. Lbug84. 7 steps. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10319619/1/7-Steps.
37. LittleMissCloverFromDistrict2. Brainwashed. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8115113/1/Brainwashed; a poem in Draco's voice hopes that he will not end up like his father. See ACDC 4913. Take my Hand. 2003; 7 Aug. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/1466344/1/Take-My-Hand.

38. fudgemonkey878. Birth of a new name. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7047042/1/Birth-of-a-New-Name.
39. Jez Redfern the Huntress. White roses. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7867699/1/White-Roses.
40. awesomelyglorious. Different, Not Defective. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7239464/1/bDifferent_b_Not_bDefective_b.
41. awesomelyglorious. Different, Not Defective. Ibid.
42. Anarchist Suit Collection. Author Profile. https://www.fanfiction.net/u/2809160/TheAnarchist-sSuitCollection.
43. Frigonfic. Heal. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8295684/1/Heal. Frigonfic and Acid Extortion are the same writer.
44. Acid Extortion. Profile: 'Just another aspiring author here in fanfiction.net (: //I spend a very unhealthy amount of time on the computer, but then again, who doesn't? I love to read and I'm trying my hand at writing now, too. I absolutely love the *Hunger Games*, *Harry Potter*, *Divergent*, and *Delirium*. I like to draw as well - though it normally doesn't turn out too great, but what can you do?// I'm a terrible klutz who can't walk in a straight line, never sees the glass doors, and trips over her own two feet (they're such a bother sometimes). I have terrible coordination and terrible balance, and if it isn't blatantly obvious by now, I'm not a very good athlete. I swim to get some sort of exercise (because apparently typing isn't considered exercising) and that's only because if you suck at the sport, then you die (maybe not, but with my luck, it's very likely).// I'm extremely socially awkward in life (if you ever have the nightmare of meeting me) to the point where it's almost physically painful (or maybe that's the sugar kicking in.) I'm a bit mildly bipolar at times, a lovely pessimist, and a sarcastic attitude with a sharp tongue to top it all off.' https://www.fanfiction.net/u/4020167/Acid-Extortion.
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48. The Marked Lady. Bother. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/3074943/5/Bother.
49. DaggersBloodPain. Break me, shake me. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/4398421/1/Break_Me_Shake_Me.
50. angelindisguise24. Diagnosis. https://www.fanfiction.net/u/912878/angelindisguise247.
51. Kawaii Kumori. Cancer. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/3614049/1/Cancer.

52. Narwalish. Take my hand. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10393785/1/Take-My-Hand; In another story, Harry is blind; see xyvortex. Blind faith. 2005; 7 March. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/2046881/1/Blind-Faith.
53. Taylor1991/Shadow-Gryffindor. Harry Potter: the Silent Halls of Hogwarts. https://www.fanfiction.net/u/337815/Shadow-Gryffindor.
54. Fenris's Slytherin Princess. Harry Potter One Shot Series- Malfoy's Depressed. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9320013/1/Harry-Potter-One-Shot-Series-Malfoy-s-Depressed. This author has written 22 stories with similar themes.
55. See, for example, anaise1242. Darkness: Chapter 1. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5439190/1/Darkness-Chapter-1.
56. asyp. 73rd Annual Hunger Games: A Blind Story. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10107292/1/73rd-Annual-Hunger-Games-A-Blind-Story; see also Wanna Buy A Duck. The Blind but Bold. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8071156/1/The-Blind-but-Bold.
57. For example, Cato and Clove kill Katniss and Peeta and win; see Parabatai4life. Cato and Clove: A hunger games fanfic. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8303186/1/Cato-and-Clove-A-Hunger-Games-Fanfic; Cato's childhood is depicted in Library2.0. A Cause for Anger. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8737824/1/A-Cause-for-Anger.
58. Snow's granddaughter plots against him in StolenSoul. The Black Hand. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7040362/1/The-Black-Hand; Snow has a nightmare in The Last Letter. Mockingjay: https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8184361/1/Mockingjay; see also turtledove. Power is glory, power is absolute. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/10381560/1/Power-is-Glory-Power-is-Absolute; and Stuart Pidasso. The Devil's Rose Part One: Youth. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/9769471/1/The-Devil-s-Rose-Part-One-Youth.
59. Anla'shok. Checkmate. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8852698/1/Checkmate.
60. HungerGamesFtw. Time doesn't heal. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7755421/1/Time-doesn-t-heal.
61. dandilyon. Heal. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/11097873/1/Heal.
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63. Frigonfic. Heal. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8295684/1/Heal.
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65. Several writers use devices such as time travel or the existence of a parallel universe to retell the stories with different outcomes for the main characters and different romantic pairings.
66. See robst. You Can't Have It Both Ways. 2009; 26 Sep. [Updated 14 February 2010]. https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5402315/1/Can-t-Have-It-Both-Ways.
67. Genkaifan. Poison Pen. Fanfiction. 2009; 3 December. [Updated: Jun 21, 2010] https://www.fanfiction.net/s/5554780/22/Poison-Pen.
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72. GetMoMoney333. Fan fiction profile. https://www.fanfiction.net/u/1620218/GetMoMoney-33.
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77. Chang A. 2015. Ibid.
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79. Pew Research Center. 2015. Ibid.
80. Pew Research Center. Global Attitudes Project from March 17 to April 20, 2012. http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/12/12/social-networking-popular-across-globe/.
81. Pew Research Center. 2015. Ibid.
82. Pew Research Center. 2012. Ibid.
83. While age gaps are global, the largest age gaps in social networking use were in Poland, Vietnam, and Jordan. Pew Research Center. 2015.
84. Religion was discussed via social media by similar percentages as politics in Turkey, Jordan, and Tunisia. In the United States 32% had shared their

views on religion online, while only 8% had done so in both Britain and France: Pew Research Center. 2012.

85. Pew Research Center. 2015.
86. In 2005 'urban youth (40 percent) are somewhat more likely than their suburban (28 percent) or rural (38 percent) counterparts to be media creators. Girls aged 15–17 (27 percent) are more likely than boys their age (17 percent) to be involved with blogging or other social activities online,' and the Pew researchers found 'no significant differences in participation by race-ethnicity.' See Jenkins H, with Clinton K, Purushotma, R, Robison A, and Weigel M. White paper: Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century. Occasional Paper on Digital Media and Learning, October 19. Chicago, IL: MacArthur Foundation; 2006. https://www.macfound.org/press/publications/white-paper-confronting-the-challenges-of-participatory-culture-media-education-for-the-21st-century-by-henry-jenkins/. Accessed December 7, 2016.
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88. While the rates for teens and young adults have remained constant, there has been an increase in those over 30s sharing and mixing content between 2006 and 2009. There has been an increase from 16% to 28% of this age group who are sharing content online and a rise from 8% to 13% of this group who are remixing content. See Lenhart A et al. 2010. Ibid.
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94. Black R. 2009. Ibid.

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CHAPTER 10

Fan Activism, Symbolic Rebellions, and the Magic of Mythical Thinking

'Here we are weaponless with open arms, with only our magic.'—
(Gloria Anzaldua 1987, 2012)

Concluding an examination of the social meanings of peace that are mediated though the consumption, community, political, and creative spaces generated by the *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games* phenomena, this chapter focuses on fan activism. It shows how recent young adult (YA) literature has inspired political protest, lobbying, and advocacy and considers these activities through a peacebuilding lens. Militarized entertainment has been described as 'an important pedagogical project of U.S. war practices.'[1] The first part of the chapter shows how the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) has been able to create a countermovement to 'militainment' through its own pedagogical projects, rooted in the values of tolerance and nonviolence. Developing a new model of social change based on the stories or 'modern myths' of popular culture,[2] the HPA has mobilized young fans to participate in a variety of campaigns related to peace(building). *Hunger Games*-related activism has been anarchic. The second part of the chapter examines how different groups have used Collins' series in a range of political struggles from partisan US political conflicts to global human security advocacy. In addition to being used in virtual (online) activism,

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images and slogans from *The Hunger Games*' series have also been brought into the streets in protests related to the environment, police killings, and military coups. Finally, the rhetoric, issue foci, and practices of fan activists are analyzed in terms of how they are being used to wage conflict nonviolently, to reduce violence, to transform relationships, and to build capacity for peacebuilding.[3]

Fan activism is another practice that, like fan fiction writing, both blurs and bridges reality and fantasy to create new forms of power and new narratives of peace. In this chapter, I am primarily concerned with the discursive practices of peace that appear to operate in the online and street-based political activism associated with *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. In the first example studied, the HPA is reclaiming magical thinking as a political tool by playing with ideas from Rowling's series to mobilize Internet activists and build virtual movements for social justice. They are organizing in the spirit of Anzaldua who is quoted at the beginning of the chapter.[4] Recently, the HPA has begun to use Collins' *Hunger Games* series as well in their activism. In the next sections I examine the HPA's activism based on both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. Then, I turn to other activists' uses of *The Hunger Games*.

The Harry Potter Alliance (HPA): Magical Thinking and Virtual Movement Building

Deliberately muddling fictional and nonfictional worlds, their original slogan was a declaration and an invitation: 'We are an army of fans, activists, nerdfighters, teenagers, wizards and muggles dedicated to fighting for social justice with the greatest weapon we have-- love. Join us!'[5] The HPA was formed in 2005 by Andrew Slack, a comedian, satirist, and activist, who was then in his late twenties and had previously worked with 'troubled youth.'[6] Inspired by Rowling's series, Slack began writing action alerts making social parallels between the world of *Harry Potter* and contemporary political issues. 'Harry and The Potters,' a punk rock group writing songs based on the series, began to publicize Slack's action alerts, reposting them on Myspace. Slack states that immediately 'we were hearing from young people all over the world, saying they had always dreamed of being part of something like this.'[7] The slogan, 'The weapon we have is love,' came from a song by Wizard Rock, a Potter-themed band. Through networks of other similar bands such as 'Draco

and The Malfoys' and 'The Moaning Myrtles,' the HPA was soon reaching thousands of fans and, at that point, the mainstream *Harry Potter* fan sites began to pay attention.[8]

The first achievement of the HPA was to transform fans of Rowling's books into fan activists by providing a structure for mobilizing politically for a community that was already connected culturally. The self-described 'army [...] for social justice' now has 270 chapters in 25 countries on five continents,[9] and its most recent mission statement emphasizes civic heroism: 'The Harry Potter Alliance turns fans into heroes. We're changing the world by making activism accessible through the power of story.'[10] The HPA has approximately 100,000 people in its network, whose average age is 21, according to Henry Jenkins who notes that this level of support is 'unprecedented' in fan activism.[11] These fans have a collective identity that straddles a fiction/nonfiction divide. This makes them similar to other groups mobilized around myths of nation or ethnicity, for example. However, with the HPA we have a microcommunity (as compared with a nation or ethnic group); the existence of which relies on altruism and shared enjoyment of a canon of stories. These stories are employed in ways similar to how religious narratives may be used as a spur to conscience. For example, a 2009 twitter campaign, 'What Would Dumbledore Do?,' produced 12,000 tweets about Dumbledore's influence, specifically in 'promoting the idea that love is our greatest weapon, and that it is only with love that we can conquer evil.' Another example is 'Not in Harry's Name,' a campaign against the use of child labor.

In one of its first campaigns, Slack got Africa experts to create a podcast about Darfur, driven by the idea of 'waking the world up to ending genocide in the way that Dumbledore raised the alarm about Voldemort's return.'[12] This podcast on Darfur was downloaded over 120,000 times, and their NGO partner had 'significant spike' in activity on its website and other media attention.[13] Slack attributes much of this success in movement building to the fact that they were 'authentic fans,' which gave them the legitimacy to be embraced by mainstream fandom to become 'the community organizer of the entire Harry Potter fandom.'[14] The HPA was endorsed by J.K. Rowling in December 2007, in an interview with *Time* magazine. She said: 'What did my books preach against throughout? Bigotry, violence, struggles for power, no matter what. All of these things are happening in Darfur. So they [the HPA] really couldn't have chosen a better cause.'[15] The HPA demonstrates that fans of the book also have

similar politics to Rowling. Their love of the wizarding world is a stimulus to civic engagement in the real world. According to founder Andrew Slack, the HPA works 'to make civic engagement exciting by channeling the entertainment-saturated facets of our culture toward mobilization for deep and lasting social change.'[16] This success in developing a base of activist supporters demonstrated the cohesiveness of the *Harry Potter* fan community around shared ideas.

Slack's vision for the organization is rooted in a notion of cultural activism, which Slack calls 'cultural acupuncture,' and it resonates with Anzaldua's idea of 'creating a new mythos.'[17] Slack views pop culture narratives like *Harry Potter* as 'modern myths,' and stories are the 'needles' of 'cultural acupuncture.' He states: 'all this energy, talent and resources going into fandom can be moved through, and reprocessed and remixed to make a better world. [...] A lot of non profits get bogged down in the technocratic elements and lose the epic narrative element and HPA are working with non profits that often use dry language to help them be more playful.'[18]

The organizational model is decentralized and based on chapters that can be informal groups of friends or school clubs. Slack also states that while most youth activists come from politically active families, this is not the case with the HPA, which is reaching a different body of young people who might not be otherwise civically engaged.[19] Fans are linked by their shared love of the Potter stories and learn about the HPA via other online fan communities and word of mouth. HPA chapters are linked to each other through a website, social media, and newsletters. Official chapters are provided with HPA logos and other materials and can join core campaigns or innovate their own activities. The HPA strategy involves making core ideas, artifacts, and processes of the fictional world into real-world usable tools for promoting social justice. For example, W.A.N.D., or Wizard Activist News Dispatch,[20] is a publication of the HPA that contains articles on their recent social campaigns. Chapters adopt names that connect to the books. An Australian chapter called 'The Deluminators' was named after a helpful magical device of Dumbledore's that can remove or add light. A Canadian chapter held their own Yule Ball (an event from the books) that raised $7500 for an organization for 'at-risk youth.'[21] In a decentralized model, individual chapters are free to innovate their own approaches and foci for their efforts. A Mexico City chapter of HPA helped rehouse abandoned dogs. A California-based chapter created a Harry Potter as a Tool for Social Change curriculum. Slack views the

model as transferable not only to other forms of popular culture but also for helping 'cause-based organizations looking to reach and ignite a younger audience.'[22]

The HPA is primarily an online movement that uses social media for awareness-raising, fund-raising, and advocacy in partnership with existing nonprofit organizations that specialize in a particular issue. The model involves partnering with proven organizations that are already anchored within the communities they serve. So, the HPA does not involve fans travelling to sites overseas but working within their own communities in peer groups on projects that bridge both social justice activism and humanitarianism.

Normative-Idealist Peace

The invitation to activism, which the HPA extends to potential members, implies a shared system of values of tolerance and reciprocal relations of respect for difference. It also assumes preexisting altruism within its young fan base that should be directed toward universal rights and protection through cooperation with other fans and with organizations:

> Did you ever wish that Harry Potter was real? Well it kind of is. Just as Dumbledore's Army wakes the world up to Voldemort's return, works for equal rights of house elves and werewolves, and empowers its members, we: Work with partner NGOs in alerting the world to the dangers of global warming, poverty, and genocide. Work with our partners for equal rights regardless of race, gender, and sexuality. Encourage our members to hone the magic of their creativity in endeavoring to make the world a better place. Join our army to make the world a safer, more magical place, and let your voice be heard![23]

The HPA both validates existing desires of fans to imagine and act for a better world and encourages action. It colludes in creating a discourse of normative peace, which as defined by Oliver Richmond involves an understanding of 'a universal normative system and individuals as ends in themselves, reflected either in cosmopolitan or communitarian institutions and norms.'[24] The existing knowledge and idealism of youth is recognized and built upon in the HPA. The membership invitation, facilitated by the medium of the Internet, is one that fans can stumble upon via other fandom sites like the Leaky Cauldron. Simulating a journey of discovery, and introduction through friends, joining the HPA entails finding people with

similar values and dreams and membership is free. Therefore, the agency of young people is recognized and activated through a communitarian structure. The issue areas that the HPA projects have addressed include projects related to equal rights, disaster relief, child labor, and literacy.

Equal Rights and Inclusion In addition to raising awareness about Darfur, the HPA also focused on domestic issues of identity and rights. For example, Alliance founder Andrew Slack deftly links the themes of the novels to contemporary political conflicts over identity: 'Lupin has to live in the closet for his identity as a werewolf, Hagrid has to live in the closet for his identity as a half-giant, and Harry Potter is forced to live in the closet for his identity as a wizard. We all live in closets for multiple reasons. No one should have to, including for their immigration status or for their sexual or gender orientation.' These ideas motivated HPA members who, according to Jenkins, 'called 3,597 residents of Maine in just one day, encouraging them to vote against Proposition 9, which would deny equal marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples.' Like Darfur, this is also an issue endorsed by Rowling publically.[25]

Disaster Relief Overseas humanitarian aid and charitable relief activities were the focus in the 2010 campaign Helping Haiti Heal. In two weeks, HPA members raised more than $100,000 for the Haiti-based operations of Partners in Health (PIH), an organization created by Dr. Paul Farmer. PIH works to 'provide a preferential option for the poor in health care. By establishing long-term relationships with sister organizations based in settings of poverty [...]At its root, our mission is both medical and moral. It is based on solidarity, rather than charity alone.'[26] Five planes carrying medical supplies were paid for through the HPA's efforts. Four of the relief planes were named Harry, Ron, Hermione, and Dumbledore. The fifth plane was named DFTBA, the acronym for Don't Forget to Be Awesome, a slogan of Nerdfighteria, an online community created by the YA writer John Green and his brother Hank. This HPA campaign also involved collaboration with the fan communities tied to other popular books, films, and television shows, including *Heroes*, *Lost*, *True Blood*, *The Wire* and *Firefly*, and with Wizard Rock. 'Latino Harry Potter' fans were involved[27] in a LiveStream telethon for Haiti which was described as 'grounded in the Harry Potter community, it is a boundary-less initiative, spanning fan communities across the world!.'[28]

Child Labor 'Not in Harry's Name' is a campaign that has recognized injustice potentially perpetuated by Harry Potter fans through their consumption practices. The HPA lobbied Warner Brothers urging them to prove that no child slavery had been involved in sourcing the cocoa for their Chocolate Frogs. The supplier for Warner Brothers, Behr's Chocolates, received an F grade from Free 2 Work, an organization that monitors how well corporations protect workers' rights and prevent human trafficking or forced labor.[29] The HPA partnered with antislavery activists of the Walk Free Foundation[30] to lobby for change. They also created an alternative fair trade product and cited the slavery of the house-elves in Rowling's work to make their point. After a four-year campaign the HPA announced success in persuading Warner Brothers to change their supplier of chocolate to a fair trade or UTZ-certified company by the end of 2015. Members of the Alliance described it as a vindication of the power of fan activism: 'fans of stories can work together to effect change in the real world.'[31]

Literacy and Education 'Accio Books!' is an annual literacy campaign.[32] 'Accio' is a 'summoning charm' from the Rowling series and means 'find' or 'bring.' An Australian chapter collected over 9000 books for the annual campaign, and a UK-based chapter of the HPA established a book collection site at Platform 9 and ¾ in London's King's Cross Station. The HPA has raised funds for schoolbooks to be delivered to impoverished communities overseas as well as for the Mississippi Delta region and more recently for Ferguson, Missouri, in the United States.

After the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, the HPA called for donations to the Ferguson Public Library, providing a PayPal link for donations and a mailing address for sending books. The HPA described the Ferguson Library as a place of refuge for 'students, teachers, and members of the community while schools are closed due to safety concerns.' Libraries were identified as places of 'peace, learning, inquiry, home. An oasis.'[33]

Critical Peace: Embracing The Hunger Games Through the HPA

Following the release of the last *Harry Potter* film, the HPA began a transition to a new phase of operations, encompassing more fan subcultures. Their aim is to encourage a shift toward a broader-based alliance, and

Andrew Slack envisions collaborating with the Nerdfighters, *The Hunger Games* fans and fans of *Doctor Who*, *Star Trek*, *Firefly*, and potentially *Avengers*.[34] This new umbrella project will be termed 'Imagine Better'[35] and is inspired by a comment made by Rowling at Harvard in 2008 (quoted at the beginning of Chap. 4).[36] The HPA's most recent campaigns are using the vehicle of Suzanne Collins' series *The Hunger Games*, and there has been a noticeable shift in focus to domestic (US) economic justice. The pullback from humanitarianism abroad to domestic US social justice issues reflects broader public opinion and the shift in the macro-political narrative with the transition of US Administrations in 2008. This shift in HPA focus also parallels *The Hunger Games'* protagonists' final return to their roots, as discussed in Chap. 6, and to a politics of the local that is in keeping with the spirit of Collins' original story.

Income Inequality and Poverty Awareness The 'Odds in Our Favor' campaign is based on Collins' series and strikes a more radical tone than past projects:

> Economic inequality is not inherent to humanity. It has been constructed deliberately for the benefit of the few and at the expense of many. [...] We reject bootstrap philosophy and embrace the importance of a reasonable social safety net, the fabric of which continues to be eroded by corporate agendas and persistent misinformation.

Socially situated within the context of the Occupy movement, the Odds in Our Favor campaign promises to represent a mobilization of 'the many—the vast majority' and eschews national identities in favor of economic solidarity. In this campaign the activists are 'citizens of [the] world' recognizing inequality as a feature of 'every town, every city, every state and province and country across the world.'

Despite a global frame of reference, the *Hunger Games*-based campaigns of the HPA emphasize the injustices of domestic US/Western context, stating: 'The middle class shrinks and more people find themselves short of what they need to get by. These are our *Hunger Games*.' Using slogans including 'Hunger is Not a Game,'[37] 'We Are the Districts,' and 'The Odds in our Favor,'[38] activists have used social media to spread information about income inequality. Fans were asked to post pictures of themselves giving the three-finger salute of District 12 and to tell their personal stories of economic hardship, using the hashtag My*HungerGames*.

Selected tweets were then featured on the HPA website and released to the media; for example, one reads:

> Small biz owner dad couldn't afford health care. Dad died at 49 w/problems that could have been helped by regular dr visits.

Another hashtag MyHungerGames tweet says:

> Memories of my mom breaking down in tears because she spilled the mac&cheese and didn't know what she would feed us now.[39]

Other fans describe not being able to afford college, experiencing childhood homelessness, being ill without health insurance, and struggling to get by as minimum wage workers.[40] The HPA also created the 'We Are the Districts' blogging project.[41] This project involves peer education through discussion of how to alleviate economic inequality and by spreading stories about different groups working toward this goal. Dutch and Belgian chapters of the HPA planned to have discussions around the 12 themes of healthcare access, fair housing, media access, electoral participation, jobs, transportation, education and literacy, equal pay, food security, environmental justice, refugees and undocumented workers, and poverty-related violence.[42] The HPA has also supported Oxfam International's efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty through more fair and sustainable agriculture.[43] However, as the next example illustrates, there are limitations as well as advantages to the model.

Workers' Rights/Black Friday Protest 'The Capitol says we don't exist. Here we are. Join Us Black Friday.'[44] This was the caption for one of the photographs promoting the HPA's solidarity actions with workers at Walmart and McDonalds during the Black Friday shopping day in 2014. The HPA had already campaigned for workers' rights against the US corporation Walmart, parodying it as 'Dark Lord Waldemart.' But the *Hunger Games*' movie releases provided a platform for continuing economic justice campaigns. Protestors used the *Hunger Games*' three-finger salute as well as the hashtag MyHungerGames on Twitter to spread the word about the Black Friday protests. The campaign convinced Richard Trumka, President of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and US Senator from Massachusetts Elizabeth Warren to show their support. Both were photographed making *The*

Hunger Games' salute.[45] The HPA partnered with the Fight for $15 campaign to raise the minimum wage. While mostly a virtual protest, some HPA activists joined employees and union representatives on the streets, and they presented grievances to the managements of Walmart and fast-food companies.

An article in *The New Yorker* about the protests noted that fast-food workers 'weren't too familiar with "*The Hunger Games*".' One worker interviewed explained that, 'taking his three kids to the movies would cost him a full day's wages (sixty-four dollars, before taxes).' However, he joined in giving *The Hunger Games*' salute during the protests, saying 'I want to put up my middle finger. But I guess I'll put up three.'[46] Founder Slack has conceded that most of their activism has to be online as the HPA members 'have school,' reinforcing that the HPA is a fundamentally youth-based movement. This example, on the one hand, exposes the privilege entailed in being able to consume the pop culture used to advocate for social justice. But, on the other hand, it also illustrates that young people are disciplined by schooling requirements that make it 'illegal' to join protests such as the Black Friday workers' rights actions. The education system structurally militates against social mobilization of young people. However, arguably, the HPA has subverted this disciplining work of neoliberalism. It subverts from within the space of corporate-driven desire and belonging and reaches those young people who are not already networked into politics through their parents.

While progressive, it is not radical, as its clearly articulated theory of social change spells out. The HPA aims to produce four levels of outcomes: first, to 'empower fans as leaders' and 'build community'; second, to 'benefit underserved populations' as a result of their campaigns; third, to gain wider recognition of the effectiveness of their 'methodology' and then its replication by other groups 'leading to broad social change.'[47] This empowerment/service approach is one that is widely used in youth-work and schools and has been critiqued from the left for missionizing, lack of reflexivity, and for being a support to the status quo rather than of structural change. That said, the HPA's discourse is strongly inclusive and egalitarian; and it is countercultural in providing a space that shuns the notion of 'normalcy as an aspiration' and in embracing the idea of 'the weapon we have is love,'[48] while providing experience in activism for young people.

As a US domestically-focused set of local groups working toward the welfare and inclusion of teens within peer and affinity groups, and providing the space for, in global terms, relatively privileged youth to learn about and join movements of social equality, the HPA's cultural activism approach is evidently compelling. This chapter's analysis supports existing studies that suggest that 'connections between participatory culture and politics' are 'actively brokered by peers and adults' and within 'organizational infrastructures.'[49] In mobilizing 'modern myths' for social justice, the HPA has created a youth culture of fans who have grown up with *Harry Potter*, allied with older adults, like the organization's founder, who came to the series later. The HPA is a bridge between fiction and politics and between generations, and it also virtually operates across national boundaries.

The shift away from Darfur and Haiti relief-type projects to the economic justice focus of the present parallels a larger political shift from the Bush/Blair era to the Obama Administrations and the Occupy movement. In this sense the HPA is a follower rather than a leader of public opinion, which is an important point of departure for elicitive peacebuilding and a point in its favor. Increasingly domestic in focus, the HPA does not appear to aspire to liberal internationalist interventions. However, it envisions itself 'sharing' its knowledge and methodology, through the online medium: 'We are choosing not only to make change, but to share our knowledge and methodology so that change can spread to every corner of the world.'[50] Spreading a method of change is arguably different than pledging to remake the world in one's own image. The HPA approach allows for a conceptualization of an open-source space that could be applied to sharing knowledge relevant to addressing the root causes of conflict and building relationships in ways that are non-intrusive and decolonial in operation. But no method can be politically neutral, and any peacebuilding role for fan activists is shaped by additional cultural influences. The HPA founder has stated that he believes that 'cultural acupuncture as a model has potential to be a game changer for humanity.' He also repeats the claim that 'beside the Koran, Harry Potter is the most requested book in Guantanamo bay.' To appreciate the activism of the HPA, one needs also to be like Anzaldua's 'new Mestiza,' 'developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity,'[51] including the contradiction that new myths for social justice may well be wrapped up in the old myths of American exceptionalism.

Claiming the Games

'Empowerment comes from ideas—our revolution is fought with concepts, not with guns, and it is fueled by vision.'[52] Turning away from magic to the material politics of revolution, these words from Anzaldua also apply to other eclectic forms of *Hunger Games*' protest and advocacy. This part of the chapter documents the anarchistic life of *The Hunger Games* as a tool of activists in local, national, and international struggles, and in formal organizations and micro-movements, that are independent of the HPA. First, I discuss US-based activism, before turning to the uses of *The Hunger Games* by activists in Thailand, Hong Kong, Russia, and elsewhere.

Charitable and Partisan Peace

In the United States, *The Hunger Games* has stimulated activism on domestic political issues that has spanned the culturally different regions of the country and involved groups with quite different ideologies, from right-libertarians to progressive leftists, mainstream Republicans and Democrats, urban and rural youth, secular human rights groups, and religious youth ministries. This activism has involved charitable food drives, partisan framing of healthcare and education issues, pro-environment actions, and protests against police brutality.

Food Drives University and school groups have been among some of most frequent users of *The Hunger Games* to raise awareness about local hunger and/or collect donations for food banks. For example, students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill held their own Hunger Games to raise awareness of social justice issues. Hosted by the Carolina Hunger Education and Activism Project (CHEAP), the games involved 'fun physical and mental Amazing-Race style' games as well as education about hunger, poverty, homelessness, and disaster relief.[53] In 2013, the Michigan State University Residential College in the Arts and Humanities hosted a *Hunger Games*-themed concert, collecting cash donations and canned foods for a food drive. Other colleges hosted reenactments of various kinds, including a musical *Hunger Games*,[54] which involved food drives. High schoolers in Michigan invited 400 youth to a screening of the *Mockingjay* and collected 1200 pounds of food through the event for distribution to area families via a partner

organization.[55] There were also public library-based food drives linked to *Hunger Games*' movie releases, including in Washington, D.C.[56] and Monterey, California.[57] Movie theaters in Tennessee collected food for local food banks during the films' screenings.[58]

The militancy of the *Hunger Games*' rebels was evoked by Anonymous North Texas, who co-opted the *Hunger Games* with the hashtag OpHungerGames in order to fight wintertime death and hunger among the homeless. This campaign brought food and warm clothes and offered shelter to the homeless in the area: 'We are formally notifying you that Operation *Hunger Games* has been engaged and shall feed the homeless nourishing, GMO free foods despite your Ordinances and Municipal Codes,' announced their Facebook page.[59] The organization running this campaign collaborates with right-wing militia/libertarian organizations such as Don't Comply and Gun Rights Across America. Other partisan uses of *The Hunger Games* involving Republicans and Democrats are discussed next. Some of these involved protests against government regulations.

Critiques of Government Regulation Imagery and slogans from the *Hunger Games* were also used in pamphlets, videos, and posters. Turning Point USA, self-styled as 'the community organizers of the right,' created a booklet on the Affordable Care Act, called The Healthcare Games. The group was dedicated to showing the 'dangers of government run health care' on several campuses around the United States. The author of the booklet, featuring the *Catching Fire* movie logo transformed into a Obama O in flames, writes: 'I specifically saw a parallel between the rationing of food in the movie and the rationing of healthcare that Obamacare will create. After some further research it became clear that Obamacare is the real life version of *The Hunger Games*!' The Illinois-based but national-reaching group describes itself 'as a student organization fighting for fiscal responsibility, free markets, and capitalism. The most innovative youth movement in the country.'[60]

Kansas pupils were praised by their Congressman for their *Hunger Games*-themed video parody that critiqued the Obama Administration's healthy school lunch reforms.[61] The video portrays student athletes who are crestfallen at the new small portions and attack each other for food. The Congressman noted the 'common sense' of the students who know better than the 'Nutrition Nannies' of the USDA: 'Students like these—in consultation with their parents and their school administrators—should be

trusted to make their own decisions about what will be served in cafeterias and what they will eat.' The video has over 22,000 views on YouTube.[62]

On college campuses, libertarian student groups used *The Hunger Games* in their political activism. Young Americans for Liberty (YAL) at Case Western Reserve University showed the film for their Constitution Week, with the slogan 'It's not Left vs. Right, It's the State vs. You,' then at the bottom added 'Join YAL; Fight the Capitol.' Their description for the movie event described it as a 'survival series' and noted: 'Themes on the horrors of war, the dangers of allowing a corrupt and a decadent regime to control all resources, and the emptiness of reality TV and media manipulation should resonate with a libertarian audience.'[63]

Advocacy for a Social Safety Net At the other end of the political spectrum, the Half in Ten Education Fund is a project of the left-leaning Center for American Progress. Half in Ten is a campaign dedicated to cutting domestic US poverty in half in ten years. They also utilized *The Hunger Games* to advocate against projected cuts for SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps).[64] An accompanying video intercut scenes from *The Hunger Games* film with footage of Congressional Republicans and Congressman Paul Ryan whose position on the SNAP cuts is likened to the policies of President Snow.[65] The video description states: 'The REAL *Hunger Games* have begun. House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan has put forth a proposal that could kick 8–10 million people off nutrition assistance and would drop 280,000 low-income kids from school lunch.' People were encouraged to visit the website to learn about 'how you can stop the Capitol from winning. #REALhungergames.'

Taking The Hunger Games *to the Streets: Guerrilla Art and Glitter Terrorism*

Not all uses of *The Hunger Games* were in virtual activism. The US Senator and possible Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren was presented in a Katniss-styled cardboard cutout form at one of her campaign events, for example.[66] In this section, street protests in the United States, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Russia are discussed.

Anti-fracking Protests Using slogans and iconography from Collins' series, environmental activists in Oklahoma occupied a building owned by

one of that State's largest corporations, Devon Energy, in 2013. Their protest was against hydraulic fracking and Devon Energy is connected with TransCanada, the corporation behind the controversial Keystone Pipeline project. The anti-fracking activists from Great Plains Tar Sands Resistance and Cross Timbers Earth First used a homemade red and gold *Hunger Games* banner. It was decorated with paint and glitter and reproduced the symbol of Katniss' Mockingjay pin. Turning 'swords into ploughshares,' they had replaced the arrow in the original symbol with a monkey wrench and also adapted a slogan from the series. The banner stated: 'The Odds are Never in our Favor.' A handful of protestors entered the building and unfurled the banner from a balcony. Sometime afterwards, protestors were arrested for throwing 'a black substance' from the balcony, according to police.[67] Two of these protesters were subsequently charged with a Terrorism Hoax, a state felony carrying up to 10 years in prison,[68]as well as Trespassing and Disorderly Conduct. The black substance that was the cause of that Terrorism Hoax charge was glitter that had fallen off their banner.[69] Even though a janitor for the corporation had cleaned up the glitter before police arrived on the scene, authorities dubbed the glitter spill as a hazmat situation. This case received international media attention and fans recognized it as a mirror of *The Hunger Games* in which intimidation is used to stifle dissent.[70] But they also saw that leveraging that aspect of the series could be a powerful subversive weapon. A representative of the Earth First group said about *The Hunger Games*, 'If I were among the elite beneficiaries of the techno-industrial empire, I would have banned these books.'[71]

US Protests Against Racism and Police Brutality Receiving much wider attention, *The Hunger Games* also appeared during US protests against police killings of African-Americans. 'If we burn, you burn with us,'[72] Katniss' defiant statement of war in *Mockingjay*, was painted on a public arch in the Shaw neighborhood in St. Louis,[73] during the Ferguson, Missouri, protests following the killing of a young black man, Michael Brown. One of the leaders of the protests noted that *The Hunger Games* emphasized the power of love, that heroes might be flawed but still have 'righteous' missions, and that 'we will risk everything for our kids.'[74] The song 'The Hanging Tree,' which was a hit for *Hunger Games*' actress Jennifer Lawrence,[75] was also used and adapted by various groups to protest the Brown and Eric Garner killings.[76] 'The Hanging Tree' evokes lynching in the American south, and earlier songs such as 'Strange Fruit'

made famous by Billie Holiday. Protesters participating in a die-in for Eric Garner in Denver, Colorado, sang a remix of 'The Hanging Tree' with the following lyrics[77]:

> Are you
> Are you
> Ready to believe
> We blamed a man who said he couldn't breathe
> Strange things did happen here
> No stranger would it be
> If we blamed a man who said he couldn't breathe.

Bloggers, comedians, poets, and others made similar connections as shown in Chap. 7.

Pro-democracy Protests in Thailand and Hong Kong 'Dear #HungerGames. We've taken your sign as our own. Our struggle is non-fiction. Thanks.'[78] This tweet from a Thai student protesting against her country's military coup in 2014 refers to the three-finger salute symbolizing gratitude and farewell that transforms into a symbol of rebellion in Collins' *Hunger Games*. It was used by flash mobs and student activists protesting against the coup, their lack of democracy, and censorship of the media including banning of foreign television news channels such as the BBC and CNN and entertainment channels such as Disney.[79] The sites of mobilization in Bangkok were shopping malls and movie theaters. Protestors also held reading demos, sitting cross-legged, or standing silently reading George Orwell's *1984* and other books about protest against oppression. They were photographed reading *Noli Me Tangere* (*Touch Me Not*) by Jose Rizal, a novel set in the Philippines under Spanish colonial rule, and an academic book, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies* by Kurt Schock.[80] However, it was *The Hunger Games* that drew media attention. News reports stated that about 100 activists used the three-fingered symbol in Bangkok, facing up to 6000 soldiers and police in June 2014.[81] Photographs showed protestors making the sign and holding placards reading: 'UN please help us. Protect Democracy. Protect Human Right[s] In Thailand'[82] and 'No Coup, We Need Freedom, We Need Election.'[83] Protestors expressed a range of viewpoints on the symbol's meaning including 'liberty, equality and fraternity' and 'freedom, election and democracy.'[84] On Facebook, one of the

organizers of the protests, 'Red Shirt' activist Sombat Boonngam-anong, encouraged supporters to make the silent three-finger salute, three times a day, for 30 seconds, as a symbol of 'calling for fundamental political rights.'[85] Later that year, some cinema chains cancelled the film showing of *Mockingjay* after a student group, the League of Liberal Thammasat for Democracy, bought a block of 160–200 tickets to give away to its members on Facebook.[86] To win the tickets they had to answer the question, 'How does the Capitol resemble Bangkok?' Student activists also protested the official human rights commission with the salute.[87] The Thai junta responded with a Happiness campaign[88] and arrests of students who would be sent for 'attitude adjustment.'[89] London protestors showed their support for 'District Thai' at the movie premiere for *Mockingjay* and the UN criticized the arrests of the Thai protestors who had used the three-fingered salute.[90] Protestors in Hong Kong also used the *Hunger Games*' salute during pro-democracy protests.[91] The student protest group Scholarism had images of the salute and flames on their Facebook page.[92] China delayed the release of *Mockingjay* by several months, leading to some unconfirmed speculation that it was connected to the Thai and Hong Kong protests.[93]

Russian Protests In Russia, *The Hunger Games* was used by protestors of the country's lack of protection for LGBTQ rights and to coincide with international media coverage of the Sochi Olympic Games.[94] Participants in a rally in Gorky Park, Moscow carried rainbow flags and a banner condemning 'The Sochi *Hunger Games* 2014' as a waste of money that could have been used for health care and education. The protestors' press release said:

> Big businesses and officials make profits on kickbacks, but for the locals there is unemployment or slave labor, demolished houses and destruction of nature. […] [This is] not an international holiday, this is Russian '*Hunger Games*.' The real players here are political prisoners, powerless migrant workers, LGBT, poor pensioners, residents deprived of shelter. But they lose, this carnival is not for them.[95]

Alarm-Raising Advocacy and Agenda-Setting

Uses by International NGOs Another way in which the *Hunger Games* was used as a slogan was in NGO materials. Most of these only used 'The

Hunger Games' in their headlines, but the comparisons were apt. Human Rights Watch published a piece about unaccompanied Afghan children.[96] The British organization War on Want used the title The Hunger Games for its report criticizing 'The UK government's Department for International Development (DFID)[…] using the aid budget to tighten the corporate stranglehold over the global food system.'[97] Other charities such as the Tear Fund embedded excerpts from the film connected with their campaigns against food insecurity in Africa. Save The Children had a 'No Hunger Games' campaign.[98]

'The *Hunger Games* highlights a very concerning reality: about 1 billion people around the world are hungry and fight on a daily basis for some sense of food security,' wrote one journalist, citing the Tear Fund's campaign. Another wrote about the invitation of African leaders to a 2012 G8 summit to discuss food security and castigated the 'Hunger Word Games' of local leaders and international actors who preferred euphemisms to saying 'famine' existed.[99] 'Food has been used as a political weapon in Ethiopia' where 'the ruling regime weaponizes the aid to decimate opposition, crush the democratic aspirations of the people and flagrantly violate human rights.'[100] The role of multinationals in African starvation was the theme of a blog by a US academic that also referenced *The Hunger Games*.[101] A Senegalese musician, Baaba Maal, created a petition to 'Stop the African *Hunger Games*,' citing 'Africa's drought-struck Sahel region where 18 million people are on the brink of disaster, including 1 million children at risk of starvation.'[102] Kent Alexander from CARE described Niger as 'The *Hunger Games* on steroids.'[103] A South African wrote a piece called 'Hunger Games' that dealt with the issue of youth employment: 'If our government does not awake, the same youth will one day turn against the government […] it will be revolution against inferior education, tax exploitation, poor leadership and governance.'[104] There were also pleas from war zones using the *Hunger Games* to advocate for international action in situations of extreme hardship including the Syrian Civil War as shown in Chap. 7. An Oxfam aid worker, Ben Philips, tweeted a photograph of a Syrian refugee's temporary dwelling seemingly made out of *Hunger Games: Catching Fire* movie posters.[105] Starving Yarmouk residents used the *Hunger Games*' tag on Facebook to raise awareness.[106]

Celebrity Activism The *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games* film actors and franchises are also involved in activism, and celebrity activists have significant agenda-setting power. At the time of writing, in early 2015, *Harry*

Potter's popularity was also leveraged in Emma Watson's role as United Nations Ambassador for equal rights for women and girls at the Davos Forum.[107] *The Hunger Games*' movie franchise committed to partnering with the World Food Program and Feeding America by educating those who visited *The Hunger Games*' movie website about food insecurity and calling for donations to the two organizations.[108] In a video for the Ebola Survival Fund, *Hunger Games*' stars Jennifer Lawrence, Liam Hemsworth, and Josh Hutcherson discussed the need to help fight Ebola on a global scale. Lawrence's comment that she would be 'fine' if she got Ebola received wide attention and arguably helped not only raise awareness about the need to address Ebola but also highlighted the privileges that people living the United States have, while preventing fear-mongering about the disease.[109] Celebrity activists have addressed some of the absences/exclusions of *The Hunger Games*' series through the Straight But Not Narrow (SBNN) campaign.[110] The website states that *Hunger Games*' star Josh Hutcherson 'was the first, and remains the most active, supporter of SBNN and Hutcherson encourages everyone to "just be yourself".'[111] The goal of the charity is to train 'young adults on how to become allies of their LGBTQ peers.'[112]

Conclusion

Fannish Peacebuilding

This chapter has shown that creative activists (mostly in the Global North) are evolving a new model for political engagement that is breaking down the borders between work and play, rational action and imaginative innovation, and politics and pop culture. While 'magical thinking' has been derogatorily associated with immaturity and narcissism in psychology and child development,[113] these young activists, inspired by writers of YA fiction, have reclaimed magical thinking as form of political intervention. These forms of activism are discursively challenging exclusions based on gender and sexuality, class, race, and nationality and are mostly designed to benefit their local context and/or self-empowerment through civic engagement. Do the discourses and actions of fan activists meet the criteria of peacebuilding and of what kind? This chapter documented and analyzed the ways in which fans of *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* have put these series to work for charitable, normative, critical, structural, and cultural peacebuilding. Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch argue

that through nonviolent direct action, artists can 'balance power' and 'raise awareness about latent issues and conflicts,' escalating conflicts so that they must be addressed.[114] As shown in this chapter, fans of both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are employing images and slogans from both series to nonviolently protest and advocate about different political issues. A second role for the arts in peacebuilding according to Shank and Schirch exists in creative actions that 'aim to restrain perpetrators of violence, prevent and relieve the immediate suffering of victims and to create a safe space for peacebuilding activities'[115] Visual art, literary works, films, and theater can 'interrupt' cycles of 'emotional, spiritual, physical and/or psychological violence,' these authors argue. Activists drawing on both *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* are working against structural violence (income inequality, child labor, poverty, hunger) and cultural violence (gender/sexuality bias, racism, and intolerance generally), violence against the environment (fracking), as well as the direct violence of police killings. However, neither series' activists have consistently focused on war or organized direct violence (political or otherwise), except for the brief, original Darfur campaign of the HPA. While there is no indication, so far, of these two pop culture-based campaigns addressing militarism and militarization, they do employ the militant imagery of the books/films. The HPA also has a membership structure and virtual networks that reduce the violence of exclusion by offering a safe space for those who, in their words, do not embrace 'normalcy as an aspiration.'

A third way in which the arts can contribute to peacebuilding, Shank and Schirch argue, is through addressing trauma and healing broken relationships so that cycles of violence are ended and a transition to peace is sustainable. Shank and Schirch point to the use of music, movement therapy, theater, and rituals as peacebuilding interventions in individualized therapeutic settings as well as for healing collective trauma and 'making public demands for justice.'[116] Pop culture-related fan activism involves public justice-seeking. Its therapeutic potential is indicated by the self-reports of fans (see Chap. 11), and these and other ways in which fandom contributes to peacebuilding can be further explored.

Civic Engagement

Research has identified an important indicator of long-term civic engagement to be participation during adolescence in some form of

institutional/group-based civic activities that involve community service, politics, and public performance.[117] Unequal access to opportunities for civic engagement, due to living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, going to resource-poor schools with less of an adult volunteer base able to provide mentorship for youth, and not going to college, all work against contemporary youth being politically engaged as they age. Working class and poor youth no longer can expect a workplace, union, or even necessarily a family-based structure for creating bonds of solidarity and collective efficacy.[118] Disadvantaged communities also have less experience of the system's political institutions working in their favor. They may have negative experiences, as well as a lack of positive experiences, with civic engagement. Informal education programs can help to fill the gap.[119] Constance Flanagan notes that for development of constructive civic-mindedness, it is necessary to be exposed to heterogeneous points of view and to participate in political discussion and debates with family and peers.[120] She points to the important opportunities for learning about civic identity and belonging that take place in what she calls 'mini-polities' of school-based or extracurricular activism projects.[121]

Organizing inside or outside of school around pop culture, young activists, such as those forming HPA chapters, are acquiring valuable experience and skills. Another element of the capacity-building role of the HPA is found in the technical skills development that can occur through organizing. Jenkins notes that 'The [Harry Potter fan] community was among the first to use podcasting and blogs, to develop beta reading practices to improve fan fiction, to distribute mp3 files (such as those of Wizard Rock) through social networking sites, and to use machinima production practices to construct fan vids.'[122] These kinds of skills are also useful for human rights advocacy, peace education, and protest mobilization generally. When used to critique war, poverty, and discrimination, these uses of technology and technological skill are examples of 'info-peace' (as coined by Der Derian). The ideas of peace in Collins' and Rowling's works have been translated by fans into political slogans and campaigns. As a result, new hybrid social and political scripts and new forms of pop culture/art are emerging that may produce mythic peace narratives. The significance of this is discussed in the conclusion. As this chapter has demonstrated, Rowling and Collins have inspired young fans to be politically involved, though not necessarily via the formal political process.

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CHAPTER 11

Entertaining Peace: Conclusions and Thoughts on Future Research

As soon as peace knocks on the door, they seem paralyzed by distrust: What if it is but an illusion, a mirage, a trap? It is as though peace makes them uneasy—which is not unnatural, since we are so accustomed to living in fear of war that peace becomes a sort of elevated, remote ideal, soothing associated with the absolute, the transcendent. Peace has been so eagerly anticipated, invoked, demanded, desired and dreamed of that its reality can only disconcert. Like the patient who dreads leaving his hospital bed, like the prisoner afraid of being taken from his familiar cell, we hesitate, waver: What is at risk is too important. We are afraid to let ourselves go, to allow ourselves to be carried away by an enthusiasm born of 'wishful thinking.' It is as though we cannot forget certain images and words which, only yesterday, characterized the other side as our adversary.— (*Elie Wiesel 1990*)

Open the door to popular entertainment and a flood of images comes through—spies, cowboys, gangsters, soldiers, terrorists, monsters, tricksters, clowns, shamans, rebels, helpless, betrayed, empowered girls and boys, and so on—and with them tales of sublime disaster, cruelty, exquisite resilience, and love. These stories emerge in national but increasingly globalized hues and with renderings of race, class, and gender that reflect and sometimes challenge their times. Built on a raft of historical and cultural

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borrowings, these images and stories float beyond book and screen to people, in their everyday lives, voraciously reading every new book in a series, visiting all of its real and imaginary locations, creating their own stories for fan sites or for their secret pleasure, dressing up as their favorite characters, and collecting memorabilia. But, of course, the stories 'began' in the imaginations of writers, artists, and filmmakers, drawing on the collective histories, arts, and literatures of their polities and poached from others, and so the cycle continues. What, if anything, do these images, stories, and practices have to do with peace? It is as a function of our habituation to war, that, as Wiesel noted, 'peace' often appears as an 'elevated, remote ideal' that is 'associated with the absolute, the transcendent.'[1] Many factors, experiences, and meanings, including fear of and *for* youth, work together to reify peace as an intangible rarity (a double mystery, never having been known and always out of reach). Can opening the door to engagement with pop culture lead to better understanding of a politics of peace(building)? Or is that just 'wishful thinking'? The chapter addresses these questions as it offers conclusions and thoughts on a research agenda for critical peace studies focused on youth and entertainment cultures.

In Chap. 2 I made a theoretical case for focusing on pop culture in peace studies that argued that such an analysis can help us (a) identify and then resist the 'commonsensical' narratives and 'self-fulfilling prophecies' of violence in world politics, (b) understand the domestic pop-cultural contexts of liberal peacebuilding and how it blurs with militarism, and (c) identify and support cultural sources of positive peace and resistance. I also argued that a framework for exploring pop culture discourses in peace research could begin with but should not be bound by the main concepts of peace in IR, and should focus on a *politics of peace*, seeking to make peace recognizable as a discourse that permeates global political and economic relations, and local lives. I then noted how, depending on the theories of youth we prioritize, different questions would be asked about pop culture, underlining a need for reflexivity and intersectional analysis. The study of two young adult (YA) fiction phenomena illuminated these issues and provided insights into peace and resistance in youth cultures. But much more can be done exploring these and other pop culture creations and their fandoms.

Putting the study of what entertains us, and why, to the center of peace studies opens a vast cavern of possibilities for research foci—sports, music, film, books, comics, social media, reality television, toys,

and so on. These different media and products can be analyzed as discourses and as practices and for their local, transnational, and transversal manifestations and impacts. As I showed in relation to YA fiction, they can be explored in terms of the images, ideas, and discourses of peace that they contain and promote. They can also be analyzed in terms of the structural violence and colonialism of the conditions of their production and consumption. Pop culture discourses and practices may be analyzed as spaces where, for example, microforms of relational empathy or racial exclusions exist, or where ideas about gender and leadership form. They can be examined for their impact on diplomacy between states and on leaders' worldviews.

Focusing on what entertains us is a critical project when focused on the Global North because it scrutinizes the internal rationales for liberal interventionism on its home turf and must engage with relations of power and systems of exploitation. Focusing on what entertains people brings their everyday lives to the center of attention as an emotional-affective space of desire and belonging and also engages with the economic and political oppression of both consumers of products and of people involved in the production cycle. Noticing the use of pop culture in news headlines and young people's political activism can identify areas of potential for peace education. In the preceding chapters, I showed how some YA literature is a more subtle form of 'militainment'[2] and still potentially powerful in habituating people to war acceptance. But I also showed how YA fiction narratives resisted 'militainment' and how, from within the spectacle, activists and other writers drew inspiration for peace. Thus, a focus on pop culture contributes to an agenda for peace studies that exists on different shores at once—exploring how ideas and the material conditions of people's lives are sites of politics that bridge the local and the global.

'Borderlands' of (Post-liberal) Peace

A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and the forbidden are its inhabitants.[3]

To survive the Borderlands
you must live sin fronteras [without borders]
be a crossroads.[4]

The academic IR discussion of the failures of liberal interventionism has prompted reflection on alternatives: what would 'post-liberal' peacebuilding look like? In this book, I have argued that the roots of liberal peacebuilding can be traced to the cultural and historical entanglement of discourses of the self in relation to Others. The roots of liberal peacebuilding overseas, whether driven by international institutions or individual governments, are buried in the domestic cultures of peace-promoting countries like the United States and the United Kingdom and not just as concrete, material interests. Youth, as a body politic, a target of social policy, a metaphor, and a symbol, have been at the heart of liberal peace and development projects. This use of youth has both been shown and achieved through literature and other forms of pop culture, in dialogue with the discourses of politicians, the defense establishment, and financial interests (as discussed in Chap. 3). Therefore, ideas about (the obstacles to) 'post-liberal' peace may also be found in contemporary discourses of youth and in pop culture. As they have in the past, young activists are today creating new forms of political community, some of which are transnational, using different forms of media and pop culture as inspiration. New spaces of peace formation have opened up in online fandom and, I argue, these suggest that other possibilities remain to be explored as well. But neoliberalism poses challenges to shifts in peacebuilding rooted in pop culture. These issues are discussed in this final chapter as areas of opportunity for peace research, activism, and education.

Magical 'Borderlands': Fan Activism's Bridges, Myths, and *Nepantleras*

The fan activists I discussed in Chap. 10 are tourists, visiting virtual and mythic 'borderlands' spaces, making them into 'crossroads' as recommended by Anzaldua (above) that have transnational dimensions. They may yet reach out into other economic and geographic 'borderlands' to shape geopolitics in striking ways. For now, these fan activists are themselves unfolding myths, cyber-magicians, and cafeteria rebels that make videos, tweet slogans and symbols, fundraise, and occasionally occupy buildings. Anzaldua used the concept of *las nepantleras* to describe those who inhabit liminal spaces and reach out to try to heal divisions.[5]

> [The Nepantleras] can see through our cultural conditioning and through our respective cultures' toxic ways of life. They try to overturn the destructive

> perspective of the world that we've been taught by our various cultures. They change the stories about who we are and about our behavior. They point to the stick we beat ourselves with so we realize what we are doing and may choose to throw away the stick. They possess the gift of vision. Nepantleras think in terms of the planet, not just their own racial group, the U.S., or Norte America. They serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater conocimiento; they serve as reminders of each others search for wholeness of being.[6]

The description of a *nepantlera* applies to writers such as Rowling and Collins and also is recognizable in some of the fan activism based on their work.

The young activists of the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) are using the Internet, social media, and YA literature's symbols and slogans to advocate for social and economic justice. The fan activism related to *The Hunger Games* has been more diverse politically—encompassing anti-fracking and LGBTQ rights campaigns, pro- and anti-healthcare reform, and pro- and anti-US involvement in Syria. These two forms of fan activism illuminate two possible forms of 'post-liberal' peacebuilding space: one is organized, based on shared norms; the other is diffuse, disorganized, based on subjectivities and agonistic aims. Both involve working in 'borderlands' between the local and the global, reality and fiction, on- and off-line, with collaborations of young and older people. A pop-cultural bridge links these pluralist and poststructural forms of imagining/making peace.

How does this fan activism relate to the established political and media systems? Does its mode of operations and employment of myth productively expose the fictions and distortions of 'tabloid' geopolitics,[7] or does it reinforce them? To what extent can we view this fan activism as peacebuilding? Critics of recent fan activism, have suggested that it is a symptom and a support of the neoliberal status quo. I argue that, embracing Anzaldua's 'tolerance for ambiguity,' more credit and power can be given to fan activism. The images and actions of the fan activists studied were nonviolent but sometimes involved roleplaying the militant. Fan activists were inspired to engage in performative, public justice-seeking, employing symbols and slogans from both Rowling's and Collins' series that were in their fictional renderings sometimes employed using direct violence. But the fan activists transformed this fictional violence into nonviolent forms to be applied to nonfiction protest and advocacy. Reversing the elite discourse of liberal peacebuilding, which blurs humanitarianism with the use of military force, these activists send

peacebuilding in a different direction, showing how tradition is not destiny. Both sets of fans have presented themselves as nonviolent 'armies' of resistance and in this way offer a counter to militainment (in line with Der Derian's and Stahl's notion of activism within the genre, as discussed in Chap. 2). However, the apparent scarcity of systematic or focused protest of militarism by the HPA or by *Hunger Games* fans could be further investigated to uncover if this is a critical blind spot or a strategic decision.

Fan activism is a space of poachers who are stealing from the corporate entertainment sector and making 'profane' (in Agamben's terms) what was once only the property of media and intellectual and economic elites. The slogan 'if we burn, you burn' was used in protests of police killings in the United States and *The Hunger Games* migrated into African-American adults' cultural politics as evoked in the 'The Hunger Games is my shit' poem (discussed in Chap. 7). These uses of the series demonstrated how communities adapt pop culture to their own struggles' needs. Further research is needed on the uses of various pop culture icons and ideas in activism, where and how they come to be used, and how successful or not they are in capturing the emotion of protests, solidifying activist groups, and garnering additional attention and support. Further research in non-English language sources of fan activism is needed to explore the processes mentioned above and how the meanings of these texts are adapted in other cultural contexts.

Anzaldua conceptualized activism as a form of power rooted in ideas and a decision to travel beyond one's comfort zone. 'Activism is the courage to act consciously on our ideas, to exert power in resistance to ideological pressure—to risk leaving home.'[8] Many, if not all, of the examples of activism and advocacy discussed in this book were transversal political struggles; they intersected with, and crossed over, political boundaries: international, generational, ideological, and methodological. These crossings were not necessarily intentional or self-aware, though some certainly were deliberate. But they were flexible and used both traditional and non-traditional media.

The HPA has received significant mainstream media attention and coverage, though most of this has involved interviews with the organization's founder Andrew Slack. The media attention awarded to *Hunger Games* activism has run the gamut from celebration (e.g., in *The Guardian* on Thai protests) to criticism (e.g., local city press on the 'glitter terrorist' threat in Oklahoma) to micro-press announcements in school or college publications. Taken together in Chap. 10, this media coverage may give

the impression of fan activism having greater spread and support than may in fact be the case. Nevertheless it does show the capacity for pop culture activism to cross and link levels of analysis from the local and regional to the global. Fan activists have been criticized (as I reported in Chap. 7) for being self-indulgent, keyboard warriors. But, as Anzaldua argues, bridging work can have larger consequences: 'Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness.'[9]

Does fan activism advance thinking about peacebuilding? Fan activism reaffirms that transnational communities of shared ideas and values are possible. While most of the fan activism activities were short-lived, one-off campaigns, they have importance for theory because of the transversal 'we-ness' their spatial straddling creates. When ideas about peace inspire fans to come together, they encounter (feel and come into contact with) peace as a space of purpose and acceptance (the HPA) and/or as a process of struggle for justice and inclusion, agonistic dialogue, and opposing interpretations (*The Hunger Games*' activism). Such bridge spaces were also found in other aspects of fandom such as fannish support groups and in fan fiction. While challenging the power of elites and elders, such fan spaces may not produce what peace researchers would consider progressive outcomes (as demonstrated by the charitable-partisan peace of some fan activism identified in Chap. 10 and claims like 'Obamacare is our Hunger Games' suggest). Yet, mythic war is a powerful support for popular acceptance and validation not only for armed conflicts but also for the politics of domination generally. So, it is significant for peacebuilding theory and practice that, as shown in this book, mythic war/peace narratives from pop culture have been brought to life in nonviolent forms of protest.

Critical peace research can do more than recognize or support spaces of peace as spaces of many voices by (a) identifying crossed lines of dialogue and exchange and (b) actively intervening in shaping the discourses of fan-based activism. Textual analysis to highlight the peace ideas of popular works (as, for example, are shown in Chaps. 4 and 6) could provide templates for working with activist groups. The expensive merchandise produced for *Hunger Games*' fans visiting The Exhibition and the ways in which the character of Katniss Everdeen have been co-opted can be challenged by careful readers using the texts, just as fans did in response to the racist complaints about the casting of black actors in *The Hunger Games*' films (Chap. 7). Other recent efforts to use pop culture to advocate for justice include the 'Superman is an immigrant' campaign (created by the organizations Define American?

and the HPA-offshoot Imagine Better).[10] Peace researchers can identify and help activists deploy other examples from pop culture to promote peace and justice in their specific local contexts. For example, the TV series, *Doctor Who*, has strong themes for peace and conflict studies related to the costs of war and ethics of interventionism. The *Ironman* films comment on the military-industrial-media-entertainment complex.[11]

In the United States, *Hunger Games*-themed protests have involved the politically non-aligned, right-libertarians, leftists, and those identifying as mainstream Democrats and Republicans. These kinds of activity validate microlevel action as political participation in struggles for justice. Yet at a time of blurred entertainment/news, there should be skepticism about the utility of popular TV shows, films, and books to evoke and promote sustainable peace. At the same time, myths, as Anzaldua suggests, are ethico-political narratives that guide us toward new ways of thinking and acting: 'Imagination, a function of the soul, has the capacity to extend us beyond the confines of our skin, situation, and conditions so we can choose our responses. It enables us to reimagine our lives, rewrite the self and create guiding myths for our times.'[12] More studies of the representations of peace held by such activists are called for, including participation-action research that intervenes in the shaping of such representations. Peace research and education has another important role in helping young people, and those who would aim to instruct them, distinguish between myth, which can enchant, evoke interpretations, and guide toward knowledge, and propaganda, which is always about power *over*.

Peace researchers interested in popular culture can further explore how capacity for organizing is being developed in non-formal education settings created by fandom. They can look further at how groups like the HPA deploy an invitation to activism and both recognize existing capacity among the young and help them develop further skills. It may be that pop culture-inspired political education and organizing may fill social justice gaps by helping to promote literacy and other empowering skills (as discussed at the end of Chap. 10). Social justice can also be promoted by research that further explores how literacy levels and school performance generally have been improved by reading *Harry Potter*, as claimed by the publisher Scholastic.[13]

Used in political activism, popular books or films become new forms of pop culture. They are transformed from the originals through their uses in different and sometimes competing ideological campaigns. One finding of studies of fan activism is that they create intergenerational coalitions.[14]

But, are these coalitions gendered? Do they also help mediate conflicts based on race or nationality? Another hypothesis is that fan activism prepares youth for future civic engagement as they age which invites longitudinal studies.[15] More research can be done on these issues and questions, including ethnographic work with fan activists, and analysis of their motivations, as was done by Neta Kligler-Vilenchik et al.[16]

Engaging the popular as a source of knowledge about peace(building) requires more reader-reception studies, ethnographic studies of consumption that are intentionally focused on peace and justice themes, and studies of the social representations of peace held by those fans. Peace researchers can explore fandoms in other countries and the nuances of the concepts of peace that are driving or emerging from their activism. If consumers are poachers then, when they use pop culture in activism and fan fiction, they are stealing what they need for survival and nourishment. This makes analysis of the process, as well as the ideas and values being poached, all the more urgent for those concerned with the well-being of young people. The situatedness of the fan and of fan communities in a larger mesh of everyday practices, discourses, and values is crucial to acknowledge and can be further explored as well.

The fan activism that I studied is part of an embodied pleasure culture that does involve desires for peace of various forms. Because it also often involves masks and roleplaying, and temporary 'trying on' of different fictional identities, it may appear frivolous. Such activism should not be denigrated for this reason because, as Anzaldua notes, traditional activism also involves roleplaying:

> In alliance-coalition work there is an element of role-playing, as if one were someone else. Activists possess an unspoken, untalked about ability to recognize the unreality and game-playing quality of their work. We very seriously act/perform as well as play at being an ally. We adopt a role-model or self-image and behave as if one were that model, the person one is trying to be. Activists picture themselves in a scenario: a female hero venturing out and engaging in nonviolent battles against the corrupt dominant world with the help of their trusted comadronas.[17]

From music and clothing fashions to video games and YA novels, engaging the popular's pleasurable practices as forms of peacebuilding and sources of knowledge about peace is a critical intervention because it recognizes people's agency within structures of neoliberalism.

'Borderlands' of the Profane: Fan Fiction's Neoliberal Subjects and Their Pleasurable Peace

In order to consider the peaceful roles of the emotional ethico-political thinking and doing spaces of pop culture consumption, we must acknowledge the disciplinary power of neoliberalism. But we can also consider how this power is being challenged through what Giorgio Agamben calls the 'profanation of apparatuses.'[18] Certainly, a hit franchise's proliferation of product spin-offs invites repetitive and reinforcing narratives, performing the kind of social magic that makes some ideas about war and peace hegemonic. We may assume that these ideas are not too challenging to the status quo, at least on the surface, if they are being propagated by Warner Brothers or Lions Gate. Agamben explains: 'Apparatus, then, is first of all a machine that produces subjectifications, and only as such is it also a machine of governance.'[19] However, as I have shown, YA literature has allowed some readers not only to be emancipated by the text but also to come back to earth to act it out. In activism, in writing fan fiction, in cosplay, and in writing political commentary, a variety of people of different ages and backgrounds are making 'profane' moves.

Agamben argues that the only way to resist the apparatus (whether it is capitalism, or a specific entertainment franchise, schooling, or cellphones) is through its profanation by 'the restitution to common use of what has been captured and separated in them.'[20] He further adds:

> At the root of each apparatus lies an all-too-human desire for happiness. The capture and subjectification of this desire in a separate sphere constitutes the specific power of the apparatus.[21]

Thus, the boundary defying uses of pop culture as activism can be viewed as a 'profane' rebellion. Fan fiction also provides many good examples of poaching from pop culture that results in a 'profanation of apparatuses.'[22]

Fan Fiction as a Mode and a Metaphor of Peacebuilding

The creation of pleasurable peace in fan fiction stories actively challenges the popular culture of entertaining war in two ways. First, it narratively creates peace of various types and forms as shown in Chaps. 8 and 9. Second, in destroying or adapting parts of the canon world and characters,

the fan fiction writer restores 'to common use' the power of interpretation, the pleasure of creation, and world-building authority, making the once 'sacred' book or Hollywood movie series 'profane' (as in being of or in the common realm). This is a self-empowering move by the fan writer in a context of neoliberalism. It forgoes profit and recognition for play and (self) analysis and challenges copyright laws and norms. But this same rebellion, it can be argued, normalizes plagiarism and may involve colonial-type appropriations such as the orientalist tone of some of the writings discussed in Chaps. 8 and 9. We cannot evaluate this with any certainty without in-depth interviews with fan writers. But in analyzing their discourses, I found that in many stories, fan writers resisted a narrative of noble, necessary war through presenting the struggles of wounded warriors and then allowing these characters to become wounded healers. In these stories 'peace' was given meaning as familial, relational, and local. But at the same time in several of the fan stories studied about war, the foreign Other was only partially written into the story or was a self-projection, just as they often are in the parent narrative of liberal peacebuilding. This, as Agamben noted, is an inherent difficulty of critique from within the spectacle:

> The problem of the profanation of apparatuses […] cannot be properly raised as long as those who are concerned with it are unable to intervene in their own processes of subjectification, any more than in their own apparatuses, in order to then bring to light the Ungovernable, which is the beginning and, at the same time, the vanishing point of every politics.[23]

However, fan fiction writers, some of them from minority groups, also acted to include themselves and/or others from marginalized groups into the canon world of their favorite authors. They also transformed the canon world and characters into very different creations than those their original authors intended.

Fan fiction shows how emotions and moves of agonistic engagements can be encountered and experienced through creative writing and storytelling and often in imaginative disruption of violence-system norms. Fan fiction also offers its participants the opportunity to move beyond their own subjectivities, to rewrite conventional wisdom, and to experience agentic roles in social transformation. That is to say, they write the future, just as published writers of science fiction are credited with doing. Through writing, fan writers experience their own power to effect change in a deeply

valued status quo (e.g., Rowling's wizarding world) and to have those changes considered and evaluated by others (their readers). But what is different about fan fiction writing from other forms of creative writing is that the fan writer has to acknowledge histories and peoples and negotiate changes within a world they have inherited, not one they can invent from scratch. Like fan activism, fan fiction entails transcribing a shared body of knowledge into multiple stories and political claims targeted in different directions. Although readers can be critical of fan stories, they offer suggestions without imposing discourses or offering manuals on how or what to write. Fan writers have created spaces that are welcoming of diverse voices and are structured to allow equality of voice. They are bridge spaces (or *nepantla*, as envisioned by Anzaldua) where otherness is honored simultaneously with mixing and where no one is forced into dialogue.

As a metaphor for peacebuilding, then, fan fiction suggests the creative coexistence of differences emerging from the same root or landscape. Fan fiction models the peaceful coexistence of difference through inclusion where there is a preexisting common tradition (the shared text). But there are also the possibilities for narrative proliferation as mode of peacebuilding (in replacement of dueling narratives). The fan fiction stories I studied showed how identifications and myths already exist apart from those of religion, nationality, and ethnicity and can be used to create solidarities. Because these myths are fictional, they are arguably less threatening to existing beliefs, allowing the security necessary for shifts in perspective. Fan fiction shows how having a shared language can denaturalize divisions based on difference without requiring synthesis. Online fan fic spaces allowed the expression and development of solidarity without living in the same community and allowed dialogue without being face to face. This potential is limited by language barriers and access to technology. Nevertheless, as shown in Chap. 9, the access of young people to cellphone and Internet technology around the world is increasing quickly. Natalia Samutina notes that there are global and micro-fandoms that intersect and that are written in many different languages, with authors sometimes writing in their own languages and sometimes in English.[24] Further research into different countries' fandoms and their unique characteristic is needed. For example, Chinese fan fic communities also have a commercialized component where readers can 'act like sponsors' for online writings and will encourage storylines through sending money, voting, or persuasion.[25] There is potential too for thinking about different pop culture fandoms as new 'languages' for preventing or addressing transnational conflict.

There is less to learn about recruitment to peacebuilding from fan fiction than from studying how fan activist communities are created, perhaps. Here the invitation to dialogue emerges organically and is engaged due to the attractiveness of the subject matter itself. Nevertheless, national, class, race, gender, and sexuality factors will be relevant in explaining the motivations of fan fiction writers. Furthermore, in fan fiction there are recognitions of others' positions and understandings of sharing the same world, but interpreting it differently, that go beyond activism in producing 'worldism' or 'we-ness.'[26]

Last but not least, the space of fan fiction is one of social change in motion. When fan fiction is written by youth about young adult literature in which teenage characters' struggles are involved, several layers of overlapping liminality come into play in a crosshatch of bridging moves that obscure or write over boundaries and, as shown in Chap. 9, allow young gay people, for example, to live the lives they want. Hierarchies are disrupted when older adults write fan fiction, taking a risk in writing as minorities within a youth culture. For fan fiction writers, nothing is a given or sacrosanct. Fan fiction writers write shifts from being heroes to villains, from being friends to being adversaries, and vice versa. They believe the world can be changed. Diplomats and negotiators preparing for talks, and students of peace and conflict studies, might practice world-building, perspective-taking, mediation, and recognizing hidden forms of violence in similar formats. Therefore, both the everydayness of the peace images that are created and some of the procedures of fan fic writing could be further studied and/or emulated by peacebuilding theorists, planners, educators, and practitioners.

Another area for future study is how fan fiction sites may get past the political censorship of governments allowing for political resistance even under authoritarian restrictions on speech (though not, of course, where Internet access is controlled). There are ethical issues to be further unpacked as well about academic analysis of fan writing as a form of surveillance that could have a chilling effect on the playfulness and creativity of the medium and on its function as sanctuary space.

Info-Peace and (Virtual) Sanctuary Spaces

Young people have reported that the time spent reading or thinking about *Harry Potter* or participating in online fandom communities provides them with sanctuary. In numerous online communities, *Harry Potter* is

described as a source of everyday resilience. 'Thanks for making some somewhat lonely years not so lonely' wrote one fan on the completion of the series. Others appreciated both the series and its fan communities:

> PC [Pottercast] was with me at so many stages of my life and I'd just like to give the biggest love and thanks I possibly could for everything from getting me involved in online fandom communities to giving the lonely boy at the new school something to listen to in lunch breaks.[27]

> I really don't have a great social life. My friends aren't that great. My family life isn't that great. So, I take refuge in Harry Potter. It's one of the few things that will immediately make me happy. If I'm feeling down, I can reread one of the books and feel like I'm away from everything bad that's happening.[28]

These reports are further confirmed by HPA founder Andrew Slack, who reports having been told by fans at conventions that they would not have had any friends if it wasn't for *Harry Potter* fandom and organizations like the HPA. Having benefited from the series in this way, fans have been inspired to give back through social action. For example, a Scottish 17-year-old boy reported that was raising money for Rowling's Lumos charity because he had coped with being bullied by reading *Harry Potter*.[29]

Thus another way in which a profanation of the apparatuses of neoliberalism is occurring is through some fandom's restoration of ideas of friendship-love and non-traditional elective 'families' as reliable spaces of comfort and support, perhaps especially when healing or moving on is not an option. For example, therapeutic benefits of reading about fictional characters' traumas are suggested by research with bereaved children, such as those discussed by Kathy Hunt in her article: 'Do You Know Harry Potter? Well, He is an Orphan.'[30] Online communities also form important sources of support and enjoyment for chronically and terminally ill young people. Esther Earl, the inspiration for the character of Hazel Grace Lancaster in John Green's novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, was one of those ill fans of *Harry Potter* and a member of the HPA. Reportedly, Esther Earl and author John Green originally met at a *Harry Potter* convention.[31] In her memory, the HPA and partners established Esther Day to be celebrated annually on her birthday as a new holiday about non-romantic

love. The HPA encourages declarations of love ‘[i]nstead of mass produced greeting cards and baked goods.’[32]

> On Esther Day, we act for love: to uplift each other and create a more positive fandom; to empower and inspire our community; and to increase empathy. Our goal is nothing less than to make Esther Day a globally recognized, baggage-free holiday about love and gratitude.[33]

Esther Day is about transforming relationships and reaching out to, in the words of John Green, people ‘who I have trouble saying I love you to.’[34] While Green was talking about interpersonal relationships, similar relational risk-taking occurs at all levels of conflict transformation. Again, these examples suggest that we should have more curiosity about how peace is formed in the everyday, such as in the hospital ward and the convention center.

Structurally, fandom has functioned as a mode of creating peace by peaceful means, or ‘info-peace.’[35] But such ‘info-peace’ structures can create violence and sometimes produce ‘virtuous’ peace, or domination masked as humanitarianism, as was shown in some fan fiction narratives. The parents and teachers of the digital generation cannot help but be concerned about cyberbullying and safety, but as shown, the Internet offers safe spaces and affirming dialogue as well. Fandoms that mix readers’ imaginative power with online community participation and support, and with opportunity for activism by young people, may be spaces of ‘new consciousness’ for peace, an everyday peace, consisting of quotidian actions, disarming 'militainment’ in often ‘infrapolitical’[36] ways. But this is not inevitable and future research can focus on the conditions under which young people (and intergenerational coalitions) can foster the conditions of creating online spaces for positive peacebuilding. The dilemma of how fan activists and writers can recognize their own subjectification within the apparatuses of fandoms rooted in mass consumption (and its violence and/or liberal narratives of peace) will need to be a part of education, in critical curricula centered on a curiosity about peace as well as media fluency. The potential for pop culture fandoms to shape modes of peacebuilding lies in the bridging, mythmaking, and sanctuary-providing structures of such fandoms. But these structures are insufficient without the normative ideas of peace to inspire their building. So the second part of this conclusion turns to the political significance of ideas of peace in YA literature in light of liberal peacebuilding discourse’s historic reliance on youth images.

Neoliberal Leadership and Its (Inter)Disciplinary Play: Toward a Foreign Policy of Metaphor Change

The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect.[37]

Politics is represented in and shapes the aesthetics of popular entertainment, as well as the modes and conditions of its production. At the same time, popular culture is indivisible from the landscape of meanings and discourses that shape both policy elites' and publics' views about the right forms of political action. Such 'common sense' discourses influence policy, become institutionalized, and ultimately shape and reproduce foreign policies and international relations. Pop culture influences 'the metaphors we live by,'[38] but further as some of the literature on video gaming and other tactical and embodied play, such as dressing up, suggests, affect, emotions and repetition reinforce ideas and create habits. There is a sizable and sophisticated literature on these themes in the subfield of pop culture/world politics (discussed in Chaps. 2 and 3) that can be brought further into dialogue with the literatures on peace(building).

Engaging the popular to better critique the political fictions we live by requires a kind of literacy that recognizes symbols and subversions of meaning but also recognizes our own and others' subjectifications within a mind/body/technology nexus that is corporatized and leans ahistorical. One area for further thinking, I propose, is how the same images of youth and themes of intergenerational conflict percolate through the discourses of pop culture, politics, media, and consumption. Chapter 3 showed how the liberal view of the child as separate, needing nurture, or instruction is tied up with Western government's colonizing practices, which include militarizing its own children, fearing 'lost' young men, and veering between perceptions of other countries as completely different from us or just the same.

These discourses can be observed as threads through literature, philosophical writing, and other texts since at least the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, looking at the child/youth as recurring symbol, target for policy, and biopolitical resource, I argued that liberal interventionism is constituted within a tension between these two discourses of dangerous youth (who are underdeveloped or unstable) and vulnerable children (a discourse which is comprised of a confused image of the self, the adult's 'inner child,' and an innocent Other, left behind); these discourses are metaphorically applied to types of people, groups, and countries who are

understood as underdeveloped, unstable, or needing protection. The latter are not perceived as children and youth per se, but they are emotionally associated with them, and hence with the self, so that whatever the dominant international actors project onto them as being in their own good must be so. Hence, economic austerity measures or regime change can be understood as humanitarian or being 'cruel to be kind,' and peace education can be similarly exposed as a form of pacification.

Recurring images of children and youth form 'metaphors we live by' in other ways as well, such as the tension between youthfulness/virility and age/wisdom, and as part of the conceptual systems shaping foreign policy actions, they offer a particular challenge to the project of imagining emancipatory forms of peacebuilding. Because so many people writing, commenting on, and planning policy have children, and all of them once *were* children, these emotional foundations of liberal peace promotion may go unexamined and may be resistant to change. Thus, I suggested that the identities of the UK and North American liberal peace-promoting states are wrapped up in the flag of parent leadership, which, as shown in Chap. 5, reached a kind of surreal apotheosis in the justifications of Guantanamo Bay Detention Center as an instructional mechanism, using the motif of *Harry Potter*-reading prisoners. Studying elite political rhetoric showed, I argued, a fear of the failure of intergenerational transmission, combined with wider cultural beliefs in heroic struggle. The latter is a recurring theme of the books, films, and games that entertain us. The former can be viewed differently when we take YA literature seriously, as shown below.

Peace Readings

Fiction is a lie that tells us true things, over and over.[39]

The binaries of danger-innocence and age-wisdom are challenged throughout contemporary young adult literature that take themes of political struggles as central: not just Rowling's and Collins' series but also other recent titles such as the *Divergent Trilogy* (Veronica Roth), *Legend Trilogy* (Marie Lu), *and The Maze Runner* series (James Dashner) include this theme. Although the 'hidden adult' writes for adults as well as children, and resolves the story in socially acceptable ways, the danger that such narratives pose to the status quo for transgenerational transmission remains. Radical themes are doubly redisciplined within the discourses of neoliberal media and consumption. I showed how this happened in the

case of *The Hunger Games*: Katniss' shift from rebel to a war-weary political cynic is not well shown in its film versions and her counterpart, Peeta, the nonviolence-advocating male hero, falls out of the popular discourse about the politics of the film. This exclusion of the white male struggling for justice operates via capitalism to help maintain the image of the dangerous, angry young man (of color) in domestic and world politics while also promoting a rebel-chic for girls that glamorizes soldiering. Interestingly, it was liberal media that performed this move in their efforts to celebrate 'girl power.'

Chapter 5 showed how contemporary YA fiction was used through political elites and media to reframe Guantanamo and the people contained there as being educated. But it was this same literature that enabled critique both from within (by the lawyers acting on behalf of the detainees, for example) and from without (by critical journalists). The fiction that was used to persuade in favor of the Bush Administration's policy provided an interpretative ground against which to evaluate and understand what was being secured, which I argued was ultimately a racially inflected fear for the cultural/generational transmission of the US's moral exceptionalism.

To draw out the influence of spectral wars (including Vietnam and the post-9/11 War on Terror) on parents and children, and on transversal struggles for justice, I suggested how through the fictional dream state of *The Hunger Games*, we can hear a call to action, a sounding of the alarm, through the voices of children affected by war in the unconscious of adults (writers and critics). With this psychoanalytic reading, I suggested that the popularity of Collins' creation of Katniss 'the girl on fire' evokes the Freudian and Lacanian interpretations of 'the dream of the burning child' to demonstrate the failure of Western liberal states to live up to their ideals and the violent consequences. But, as the lead child survives in Collins' narrative, we see that, in fact, the tables have been turned. I showed how writers and activists in different countries, including those directly experiencing armed conflicts, identified with and employed *The Hunger Games* in political critiques. This wider appeal of *The Hunger Games* demonstrates how different peoples, as well as different age groups, may be bound by memory and trauma. It may suggest that global violence while beyond hope of mediation or forgiveness can, nevertheless, be recognized as pain and put into words that can transform conflict relationships. But, I also concluded that for some of those fans and commentators, their use of *The Hunger Games* represented 'an awakening yet to occur'[40] and entailed

denial about their role as the Capitol people and not the downtrodden but ultimately victorious heroine. Like the reading of *Harry Potter* in Guantanamo that I offered in Chap. 5, the reading of wars of the past in *The Hunger Games* in Chap. 6 attempts to 'point to the stick we beat ourselves with so we realize what we are doing and may choose to throw away the stick.'[41]

Pop Culture-Policy Collaborations

Turning away from fiction to the portrayal of youth in political rhetoric, it becomes clear that some habits are resilient. It is feared in policy circles that young men, in particular, are prone to radicalization, and because of the blurred liberal parent/leader role, this 'radicalization' sometimes comes to mean, simply, that they are liable to dissent or refuse normative transmission. As British Prime Minister, David Cameron, said: 'We've got to defeat the narrative of extremism, even when it's not connected to the violence. Because it's the narrative that is the jumping-off point for these young people to then go and join this dreadful death cult in Iraq and Syria.'[42] This statement, announcing a five-year plan against extremism and support for airstrikes, if viewed through a youth fiction lens illustrates how the adult desire to prevent violence might turn into the opposite self-fulfilling prophecy by trying to discipline a narrative rather than engage it. Preventing agonistic dialogue among young people who are seeking to understand their environment, be actively involved, have their opinions heard, or address their own or other's deprivations, and who see violence perpetrated, produces rebellion: at least that is the story in YA fiction.

Current constructions of the 'extreme' youth are evolving to include wider groups of young people with different social, religious, national, and economic backgrounds. For example, a professor of national security affairs at the US Naval War College identified a young male cohort of 'fail-to-launch' boys that had 'dangerous social grudges' and included the white supremacist Dylann Roof, NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, 'American Taliban' John Walker Lindh, US soldier Bowe Bergdahl, and UK ISIS recruit 'Jihadi John' who the professor said were 'different only in degree, but not in kind.'[43] A 'revenge of the lost boys' narrative presents a 'tabloid' picture of the academic literatures on oppositional youth and 'waithood.' Both of these discourses must be understood as part of world politics, and they exist on a continuum with the protection/empowerment narratives of liberal parent states and international organizations.

Yet, although extremist narratives are abhorred at the level of international relations, in our popular entertainment, narratives of extremism coupled with heroic violence are common and often celebrated. The maverick, misunderstood, male outsider has long been a favored Hollywood trope; for examples, we need only turn to Rambo, or numerous cop and espionage movie heroes. In these kinds of narratives the 'fail-to-launch' boy is destined for greatness, often through self-sacrifice, by going out in a blaze of glory. While we can talk about the mixed messages between pop culture and violence prevention programs, a more productive approach may be to consider how fictional and nonfiction narratives converge. For example, a former ISIS recruit describes his inspiration in terms very similar to those of pop culture icon Katniss when she decided to fight for her younger sister after Gale was whipped by the Snow regime. He said: 'I understood that that house had a revolutionist, but when I saw them arresting the kid who is only 15 years old, things started to fire up inside [me].'[44]

In peace education, literature like *The Hunger Games* or *Harry Potter* could be vehicles for coming to terms with 'the other in ourselves,'[45] recognizing our own capacity for violence, but also our capacity for empathy and for transcending violence, polarization, and gender stereotypes. They could be vehicles for inspiring 'the forgotten' to violent uprising too. But we need to know more about how such narratives work and education programs based on critical peace literacy focused on media and political rhetoric, might open up important conversations with the majority of young people who are not violent but who also could not relate to simplistic notions of what is extreme. 'Extremism,' we should remember, was embraced by icon of peace and justice Martin Luther King Jr., having first had the label imposed on him by his critics during the US civil rights protests. When he was accused of it, he wrote from jail in Birmingham, Alabama, he was originally unhappy with the label but on reflection decided that 'the question is not if we will be an extremist but what kind of extremists we will be.' King listed religious and political figures that he saw as good company in being extremists for 'love' and 'justice' as opposed to 'extremists for hate' and 'injustice.'[46]

Peace education competes with fictionalized versions of history that by 'sanitizing and distorting history, and presenting Western militarism as a force for good,' as Jeremy Kuzmarov writes about the film *Charlie Wilson's War*, 'ultimately help to perpetuate the ideological mindset shaping continued foreign policy blunders and crimes of historic dimensions, which

the American public has yet to fully come to terms with.'[47] There is the possibility that YA fiction like *The Hunger Games* can interrupt as well as reflect historical amnesia if employed in pedagogies to counter the dominant narratives of militarism and patriotism.

Discourses investing national hopes in youth in wartime or peacetime, or about the molding of youth to be good citizens, students, and workers, or about the containment of 'dangerous' youth in policing and security projects, or about humanitarian action on children's behalf, repeat patterns and debates that have long existed, and are part of the discursive reproduction of nation-states' identities. Today, young people are both the targets of foreign policy and active subjects of grassroots movements—their bodies and identities interact across these axes on a multimedia plane and they are discursively entangled in academic international relations as well (as discussed in Chap. 3). Although much remains the same, more than ever before, more young people are connected through the Internet and social media and thus contribute to how these discourses of youth are being shaped.

Peace-Policy Collaborations

In addition to offering critical readings, peace researchers can explore collaborations, understanding that political elites recognize the political importance of stories and of play in embodying important narratives (as show in the militainment literature, discussed in Chap. 2). For example, a distinct process of pop culture and policy collaboration is illustrated in the US Atlantic Council's partnership with the producers of the videogame series *Call of Duty*. In 2014, Dave Anthony, the writer and director of *Call of Duty: Black Ops* was invited to be a fellow of the Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. His brief was to work on 'the art of future war' project.[48] The 'Art of Future War Project' will comb video games, fiction, and other interactive media for insights into the future of war. His host at the Council, former pentagon official Steven Grundman, came up with the idea after watching his son play the *Call of Duty* game. Describing his role at the conference to launch the project that will entail predicting future scenarios of terrorist attacks in the United States, Anthony stated: 'Our job is to blow apart structure and come up with creative ideas.' According to *The Washington Post*, in *Call of Duty: Black Ops II*, Anthony collaborated with Brookings Institution fellow Peter Singer (who has written about children and war), Marine Col. Oliver

North, and David Goyer, the screenplay writer of the 'Batman Trilogy.' Anthony 'said he sees himself almost as a culmination of the three disciplines that Singer, North and Goyer represent'—the political scientist, the military man, and the thriller movie writer. This collaboration he believed was a potential new model for 'how D.C. thinks.' If policy elites are planning for war through pop culture studies, another area for peace researchers to contribute is through pop culture-focused collaborative research groups of peace practitioners, scholars, and creative professionals planning for peace in 'The Art of Future Peace' projects.

Furthermore, we can explore how politician's knowledge of pop culture shapes their views of themselves as well as their strategic attempts to persuade. After the 2016 US Presidential Election, the daughter of President-Elect Donald Trump tweeted a picture of herself at an archery range. Ivanka Trump's caption for the picture stated that she was channeling her inner Katniss.[49] But Donald Trump himself announced a victory tour of US states, which online commentators were quick to point out was the same term used by the regime of President Snow for the Hunger Games' victors forced publicity tour.[50] As discussed in Chap. 6, depictions of an untrustworthy older female leader figure in YA fiction foretold a narrative that emerged around Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US Presidential Election, suggesting yet more topics for further research and analysis.

But I note too that in Grundman's explanation (above) for his interest in using war video gaming as a predictive tool, he cites his son as the inspiration. Grundman's acknowledgment of learning about war from his son's interests and tastes is one way in which the micro and the macro, private and public, and domestic and international interrelate, and is not an isolated example. David Cameron talked in Kazakhstan about making the right decision in choosing to emulate Harry Potter (Chap. 5), and we might consider how Cameron's or other leaders' awareness of being a parent shapes their foreign policy worldviews? After all, he noted that he had read the books with his daughter. Both Cameron and Obama referenced their children's interest in *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, but such an exchange is under-examined for its meaning and as a (potential) influence on policies. There may be value in understanding the private understandings of parenthood or youthhood that political actors and peace practitioners hold, as these may help shape policy and practice. In fact, the political images and emotions of children and parents are likely often centrally involved when popular culture shapes as well as reflects foreign pol-

icy, and this dynamic is worthy of further study. Scholars and practitioners can also further consider how their images of youth influence their choices of research and programming.

Like states, non-state groups use popular culture forms for political ends. The US military uses web campaigns and video games to recruit and so does ISIS. The use of *Call of Duty* by ISIS to recruit western fighters shows that the call to war that war video gaming enables can be grafted on to various ideologies/causes. ISIS propaganda on social media has used screenshot images from the video game and the slogan: 'This is Our Call of Duty and We Respawn in Jannah.'[51] The 2014 examples of ISIS videos of hostages in orange jumpsuits and with voiceovers and music emulating TV series such as Homeland[52] illustrate this communication at work as well. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, these images follow the use of heavy metal music to 'break down' the, also orange clad, detainees in Guantanamo and other war on terror prisons. Conversely, hip-hop was a mechanism of revolt during the North African uprisings, and hip-hop has been used by the US government in its post-9/11 overseas public diplomacy, just as Jazz musicians and American playwrights were instruments of the cultural Cold War.[53] In these, and in more subtle ways as well, pop culture is both a means of political critique and of shoring up status quos and is part and parcel of conflict reproduction. Bodies and emotions are involved.

If we look only at the macrolevel uses of pop culture in war and peace, a 'soft power' role for popular culture that promoted an emancipatory peace would seem unlikely. However, as the first half of this chapter showed, there are online fandoms that operate transnationally. This also leaves open the possibility for 'a third space' of pop culture and foreign policy collaborators with a decolonial and emancipatory agenda guiding the development of toys, games, films, and online movements and lobbying Hollywood for careful treatments of peace and peacebuilding, similar to how religious and ethnic groups lobby for better portrayals of their groups. The media and marketing discourses of popular culture can be further critically examined to challenge elite investments in the image of the 'angry young man' in domestic and world politics, blindness to naturalized militarization, and derogatory analysis of young people's political concerns and understanding, as was shown in Chap. 7. These are some of 'the sticks we beat ourselves with' in Anzaldua's terms.[54] While security studies are concerned about coalitional aggression of youth, peace scholars can join a search for coalitional empathy that demonstrates solidarity actions that are both nonviolent and assertively about justice. Such

coalitional empathy is brought to life in the pages of Rowling's and Collins' novels and to some extent has been modeled in fan activism.

Reading peace implies both reading books and interpreting different forms of text. But reading fiction in particular provides a space of possibility as well as an escape, and the emotional, affective, and intellectual nature of the practice can be further explored as a metaphor for peacebuilding. However, YA literature can perhaps best be studied for what it reveals of societies' belief about and hopes for young people and how these are related to foreign policies (as shown in Chaps. 3 and 7). The discursive space changes when fiction becomes film. 'Violent cartographies'[55] of real-world politics are mapped onto the original in visual terms—like Peeta's hostage video. Disciplined in media narratives, characters become types, forced into ideological frameworks, like Katniss presented as a liberal feminist icon of girl's militarized empowerment. Capitalism exploits, disciplines, changes meanings, and encourages embodiment and/or more poaching. Pop culture expresses, creates, hides, and maintains power, including the power to define peace and regulate actions for peace. This power of authors, filmmakers, and corporations, that is engaged with by politicians, journalists, bloggers, fan activists, and teachers, can be further studied and understood by peace researchers with a view to denaturalizing and challenging its interpretations when they promote militarism and bigotry (or are glibly neocolonial without realizing it). Such aspects of pop culture can also be explored in peace and social justice curricula that foreground media and cultural analysis and use both playfulness and reflexivity in their pedagogies. Like a feminist curiosity, and a partner of it, a critical peace curiosity asks questions about what or who is absent from mainstream narratives? And, how we can recognize our own subjectification within the 'tabloid' political cultures of 'militainment'? Ability to engage in a politics of peace involves being media literate and able to recognize not just that there may be at least two sides to any story but that there is an interplay of agonistic dialogues of the movie reviewers, social commentators, politicians, activists, and advocates for whom pop culture is a focus of political engagement, a means of communication, of community building, and of power over Others. What are the options for peace? Who doesn't want what kind of peace and why? What kind of peace do they envision as unacceptable or dangerous? How do they articulate that for a wider audience? How these questions are played out and exposed through the heterosexual, nuclear family normalcy of the endings of Rowling's and Collins' books, through

the historical and contemporary political violence these works reference, and through the efforts of elites and publics to create, seize, and use these discourses themselves, are all part of such an engagement.

Peace education material exists in YA literature's construction of enemies, threats, and community, from its explanations of the sources and costs of war and injustice, and the methods employed for effecting social change, and from their visions of a good society, as an extension of a peaceful 'home' space (Chaps. 4 and 6). Fan fiction about *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* offers a glimpse into the psychological and ideological conflicts and confluences of its cultural context and time: a 'post-911 world' where elite constructions of Gothic school stories were shaded into new more hopeful vision of intra-/post-dystopian reasonableness in transition from Bush to Obama (Chap. 5). Most of the fan stories of Katniss and Peeta's healing from war trauma (Chap. 8) are set in spaces of post-sovereign, local, and emancipatory, but individualistic, peace: being able to do as they would choose, they choose love, sex, procreation, and the security of home (Chap. 9). In other fan stories, Harry Potter and friends work to develop more formal, institutional mechanisms for promoting tolerance and for sharing medical/healing knowledge within a larger pluralist polity. Thus, these different fan stories represent different facets of popular knowledge about peace(s) and also suggest desires for more just social orders where individual agency and social solidarity can resolve conflict and suffering, which was expressed in fan activism and in alarm-raising media comment (Chaps. 7 and 10). There is also material for educators in the strategic uses of pop culture by political elites, and organizations, and by mainstream and social media outlets and commentators, but not as curricula that encourages 'telescopic philanthropy'[56] and valorizes celebrity activism. Instead, we need to encourage the skills and attitudes of critically analyzing material culture and consumption for the ways in which these serve certain interests over others and serve our own self-delusions.

Pop culture consumption practices provide lessons about the forms that peacebuilding can take. It includes fan activism and fan fiction writing, mostly by the young, and alarm-raising public speech in media commentary, mostly by adults, who were inspired by or deployed YA literature and film to address poverty, prejudice, and oppression. Through poaching ideas and symbols, reinterpretation, appropriation, and mythmaking, and calling into question the boundaries between the real and fictional, as well as questioning who gets to decide such borders, fans and fannish commentators are experiencing peace as

something that can be created in everyday life. They are experiencing an everyday aesthetics of peace that involves sanctuary space, a space for creating and mobilizing new myths, and a space for agonistic dialogue about a politics of peace: critical versus liberal peace, charitable versus embodied peace. They are also transcending these binaries (see Table 11.1). This book showed how works of literature that were written for youth but that attracted broader audiences have the capacity to be intergenerational connectors in dialogues about fairness, tolerance, equity, justice, and reconciliation. Fandom is space where these persistently contested peacebuilding concepts were debated, mediated, and mobilized and where the concept of 'info-peace' is given life and virtual and virtuous peace are surfaced to be challenged or remade (i.e. given new meanings).

The peace practices of many of the fan activists and fan fiction writers that I investigated were local and virtually global, often earthy and also wired, at the same time. Neither near nor distant, fan activism and writing *is* a third space: a space of camouflage and escape (not fight or flight). Of course, finding sanctuary and taking what one needs can devolve to withdrawal, and taking what one wants. Breaking rules, transforming people, and places, or world-changing, can become conquest, imperial entitlement, and erasure. The guiding ideas/values of fiction used in activism are important and so is self-reflexivity. Political activism emerging from fandom may challenge dominant beliefs systems, but this is not inevitable and political participation in itself is not synonymous with peacebuilding. But as outlined above, there are roles for peace researchers and educators in exploring further how practices of peace might be enabled by enjoyment of pop culture/entertainment. If Anzaldua is correct and bridge spaces, 'nepantla' or threshold spaces, are not just spaces of resistance but spaces that stimulate new consciousness, then there is much more to learn from fandoms and the discourses that shape them and spring up around them. Furthermore, the forms of peacebuilding described in Table 11.1 can be examined for how they replicate or offer alternatives to the dominant forms of international peacebuilding.

I hope that this work can encourage some other scholars of peace and conflict studies and IR to focus on reading peace in popular culture. There, peace is understood from multiple angles, and from inner peace to peace in the world, these perspectives intersect to form an interactive web of meanings. From the mist a form of post-liberal peace could be emerging: it could be monster or friend, or both. And, of course, the answer may depend on one's perspective and interpretation. Playfulness is not the

Table 11.1 Formations of peace(building) that can be located in pop culture stories and practices

Sanctuary peacebuilding: Entails opportunities for self-care, development of solidarities, and self-reflexivity; through finding sanctuary spaces there may be a transformation of consciousness leading to recognition of (or seeking out) other forms of peacebuilding; includes participation in online interactive fandom sites
Ethico-political narrative peacebuilding: Involves critical (re)thinking of the status quo, noticing justice/injustice in discourse or as a result of consumer practices; writing self or Other to increase inclusivity; public writing that raises the alarm but retains awareness of power relations and privilege; potentially includes reading and some forms of writing such as fan fiction and blogging and the creation or use of new myths
Embodied peacebuilding: Writing for pleasure; and public performances emphasizing nonviolence and justice-seeking that may involve dressing up/masking; includes pop culture-based activism, cosplay, gaming, and some fan fiction
Neoliberal peacebuilding: All of the above without recognition of privilege and relations of power (nonreflexive); allied with the dominant; has manifestations in fan activism, fan fiction, as well as in celebrity-led activism and for-profit fan tours
Colonial/charitable peacebuilding: Nonreflexive, reinforces dependency of an Other, involves 'telescopic philanthropy,' framed in terms of 'saving' and 'innocence'; has manifestations in fan activism, celebrity-led activism, and some pop culture-based education/civic engagement projects
Thresholder, bridging, or borderlands peacebuilding: Can be part of and encompass all of the above; involves boundary crossings involving personal, imaginal, and embodied elements; reaching out to Others/enemies; acting, not reacting; a space of perspectival shifts, mythmaking, a 'tolerance for ambiguity' and 'non-binary connectionist modes of thinking'; includes discourses connecting liberal and non-liberal peace; is an aspiration of peace education

same as frivolousness, and a playful approach to research can expose connections that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. Inspired by Anzaldua, this study has been about a series of bridges. In the first instance, bridges were created to span disciplinary worlds: a mesh of subfields and theoretical cross-referencing. There is the bridge that pop culture creates between the everyday and the formal or macro-political sphere. Under that arch, multiform bridging structures, processes, ideas, and metaphors were identified. Children on one shore, and adults on the other, meet on the bridge of YA fiction. Moviegoers meet the readers. Op-ed writers and bloggers and political actors—famous and not—use the pop culture lexicon. Readers become authors of fan fiction. Fans become activists. Fan activists and authors bridge the shores of pleasure and work, private and public, and real and fantasy; they create an alternative to alienation, but they are not only embracing cosmopolitanism. They enjoy stories where political

violence is lauded but ultimately debunked. But the destabilization of the myth of war as inevitable, if it happens at all, happens at a hidden level. The YA fiction studied in this book creates and belongs in a space where pro-war and pro-peace entertainment collide; a space where conformity and resistance meet; a space where both global exploitation and neoliberal domination *and* revolt and emancipation are happening. To appreciate this requires a 'tolerance for ambiguity'—because as Anzaldua writes, 'The focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the mestiza stands, is where phenomena tend to collide'[57]—and a willingness to see this mesh as a third space, and to hope.

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