

Senescence in Young Adult Dystopias

ANNA BUGAJSKA

Introduction

When five hundred years ago More was describing a perfect state, he laid a special importance on equality. And yet, there was a repetitive pattern, ensuring the privileged place in the society for those senior in age and experience: “Each household, as I said, comes under the authority of the oldest male. Wives are subordinate to their husbands, children to their parents, and younger people generally to their elders” (More 1970: 80). The reverence for the elderly clearly reflected medieval notions of an old man as a supreme manager. As Paul Johnson (2013) relates, especially in aristocratic and church hierarchy, those more advanced in age would be seen as more qualified to lead others, their white hair and wrinkles becoming a symbol of wisdom and gravity. This social organization would also protect the interests of those who could not fight for their rights with their own strength. More’s utopian vision of people as one extended family relies on the optimal utilization of the abilities of all its members, no matter what their physical fitness.

Although, as can be seen, the traditional model of utopian world reserves a special place for the old, the fact is mentioned only *en passant*, and the tendency to neglect the question of the elderly in the society has remained strong in painting the pictures of a perfect world. Granted, the imaginations of paradise would not often be associated with all the difficulties of senescence, i.e. pain, weakness, disease, mental incapacity, etc., as those signal the presence of death and transience. Contemporary

utopias, observable in, e.g. advertising, consistently promote the image of senior fitness, whereas dystopias underscore non-typical problems that concern only a percentage of older citizens (Johnson 2005; Nawrocka 2013; Yläne 2012). Generally, though, few utopian writers would devote space for the discussion of the question of the social place of the old people (see Roemer 2010). It is also a reflection of a broader social phenomenon, called the invisibility of the old people (Victor 1994), which will be discussed in more depth in the following parts of this chapter.

The invisibility is particularly well noticeable in the programmes and literature targeted at children. Old men and women, if present, are marginalized, fulfilling supportive roles (Johnson 2003; Victor 1994). Especially in the contemporary world, which attempts to realize the vision of paradise through the technological and medical advancements, aiming even at immortality (Immortality Institute 2004), the images associated with death and decay are discouraged. It is no wonder, then, that the popular genre of young adult dystopia would also remove old people to the outskirts of the narrative. If they are present as central characters, they usually fulfil the roles of villains (e.g. Coriolanus Snow in *The Hunger Games*, Richard Pincet in the Declaration series), reinforcing the idea of old age as inconvenient or even threatening in a utopian world. Since dystopias are intended as social criticism, the tendency also shows a dangerous neglect of the problem of senescence by the biopolitics of the ageing Western society, and is supportive of transhumanist philosophy.

In the following parts of the chapter I am going to discuss the problem of senescence in young adult dystopias, drawing examples from two acclaimed series. Nancy Farmer's Matteo Alacrán novels (2002, 2013), set in a futuristic border state between the USA and Mexico, concentrate on the downfall of the tyranny of sempiternal drug lords, thus utilizing a trope familiar from generic dystopias, where the aged characters are metonymic of dysfunctional system. The role of the elders is underscored and Farmer renders a very complex picture of ageing, questioning the accepted old age threshold (sixty years of age) and provoking the readers to redefine their thinking about ageing. Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005-07), on the other hand, presents the tyranny of the enhanced humans, arrested in "optimal youth", with their elderly—"crumbles"—practically non-existent in the narrative, treated with ridicule and contempt, as socially unproductive. I intend to compare and contrast the two dystopian visions to uncover inherent stereotyping of senescence, gerontophobic attitudes within the criticized social models, as well as to reflect upon the possible solutions for the problem of the role of the elderly in the present-day society.

Invisibility of the Old

While considering the “invisibility” of old people, one obviously has to start with their visibility, i.e. how their presence manifests itself in the studied narratives. In the case of Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) and *The Lord of Opium* (2013) the dominance of the drug lords is obvious. The supposed utopia, Opium, founded by El Patrón in his youth, transformed into the narco-naval of the world, allowing the drug lord to hoard massive riches, which enabled him to secure for himself the most recent medical inventions. Thanks to his clone farm, he can prolong his life indefinitely, exchanging a liver or a heart when the old one wears out. Not accessible to everyone, he nevertheless holds sway not only over his own country, but also the neighbouring, as well as overseas states. In his 140s, though, he does not retain the youthful appearance: an ancient, decrepit man in a wheelchair, he has to rely on his microchipped slaves for everyday maintenance. A formidable, albeit a little bit pathetic figure, he forms the nexus of the narrative: all characters relate to him in some way, trying to imitate him or to fight him.

In Westerfeld’s eugenic tetralogy the social utopia is constructed to the exclusion of the old and ugly. All people at the age 16 are subject to a plastic surgery, turning them into “pretties”, extremely attractive and fit. The fitness may be further enhanced by a Special operation, reserved for law enforcement services. The books revolve around the struggle of Tally Youngblood to renounce the temptation of the leisurely life of a pretty and to remove the controlling lesions from people’s brains (a result of the operation). Old people in the series are few and far between. The aged pretties are called “crumbliés” and are absent from the social space, save for periodical life-extension treatments. The most memorable personages Tally meets are The Boss—a librarian of rebellious uglies—and an old man in charge of the ancient armoury, both of them making fleeting appearances and unable to protect what was entrusted to them. They are redundant to the point that Tally thinks that the crumbly in the armoury is not really calm and wise, and that “she could knock him cold without regret if she had to” (Westerfeld 2011c: 105).

While discussing longevity trope in fiction, Frederic Jameson asks an essential question, definitely relevant to the discussed aspect of dystopian senescence: “At what point can longevity become visible in the narrative itself?” (2005: 331). When it comes to Farmer’s novels, although the country is tyrannized by an old man, the

realization comes after a long exposition, only when Matt, a clone of El Patrón brought up in his mansion, reaches his Middle Age (7-11).

“Come closer, boy,” said an old, old voice.

Rosa gasped. Her hand dropped from Matt’s shoulder. “El Patrón,” she whispered.

Matt saw that what he’d taken for an empty armchair actually contained a man. He was extremely thin, with shoulder-length white hair neatly combed beside a face so seamed and wrinkled, it hardly seemed real. He was wearing a dressing gown, and his knees were covered by a blanket. It was the blanket that had fooled Matt into thinking the old man was part of the chair (Farmer 2002, 57).

The above quotation shows how, quite paradoxically, the ancient ruler is so instrumentalized as to be perceived as part of surrounding him objects. The same is true for the later representations (the Mushroom Master and Dabengwa in *The Lord of Opium*). El Patrón comes to Matt as a real “patron”, providing him with protection and education. These functions of the old are foregrounded, whereas the disturbing aspects of unenhanced senility are brought to light only as instrument of control over the family and justification of organ harvesting (El Patrón’s comments on El Viejo’s state during the birthday party). Farmer bares the rhetorics of threat, present in contemporary mass media, not so much glorifying youth as thriving on the fear of the loss of control over one’s faculties and resulting social dependence (Nowacka 2013, Yläne 2002).

In the case of Westerfeld’s dystopia, the situation is quite different: old age does not equal longevity and has no desirable qualities. The meeting of Tally with The Boss and later with a nameless “crumbly” in the armoury allows to justify an already ingrained disgust with everything imperfect and deprived of superpowers that for Special people are an obvious and indispensable part of their identity. Both episodes finish with complete destruction of the environment the old were living in: the Smoke community and the Rusty weapons collection are engulfed by the special forces and the nanobots. It paints an extremely powerful picture of an unstoppable replacement of one culture with another: futuristic and technicized. Further developments in the tetralogy portray the passage from authoritarian eugenics, the foundation of the Pretty time, to liberal eugenics, wherein everybody is allowed to choose their own enhancements, heedless of consequences: Diego city in *Specials*, Japan in *Extras* (Habermas 2003). For Westerfeld the chief value seems to be freedom, with ageing and weakness as something that is inflicted as punishment (Dr Cable’s downfall in *Specials*), thence, eugenic liberalism is what looms from behind Tally Youngblood’s story. Although the books began as a polemic with aesthetic medicine business

(Westerfeld 2013), the message they convey is entirely one of the youth cult culture, thus inscribing them into transhumanist discourse.

Talking about the invisibility of the old people in the society, Paul Johnson describes the elderly as “silent”, deprived of voice (2003), and Christina R. Victor underlines that by accepting the social marginalization as part of growing old, the elderly resign from the possibility of fighting for their rights, whether for better medical treatment or for financial support (1994). Apart from the world of politics, their voice is unheard in the public sphere, especially not reaching the younger part of the society (Victor 1994).

The alteration of the physical quality of voice is part of ageing. This is particularly well-visible in Farmer’s *The House of the Scorpion*. The book is divided into the phases of the protagonist’s life. When Matt reaches the appropriate age to be a donor (12-14), he is said to enter the “old age”, which precedes his death. It is recognizable by the change in the quality of his voice—it becomes more raspy and uneven. Besides being a faithful rendition of the natural process, the mutation betrays Matt’s vulnerability and defencelessness. Johnson points out that one of the distinguishing features of the elderly is their “tremulous” voice, provoking the patronizing or indifferent attitude from the environment (Johnson 2003; Victor 1994). In this light, the voices of the old in the discussed dystopias portray varying trends. Farmer consistently reinforces the image of the powerful ancients: El Patrón’s voice is not loud, rather whispery, however, it has commanding quality and raises fear in his subjects (Farmer 2002). The voice of the crumbles is “rattling”, “craggy” and “harsh”, disturbing the mellifluous sounds of the pretty world (Westerfeld 2011a). Both of these—one challenging and the other conforming to the ageist stereotypes—are seen as undesirable. Matt tries to rid himself of the persistent whispering in his head, which is seen as possession (Farmer 2013), and Tally feels unnerved by the Boss’s “rusty razor blade” of a voice (Westerfeld 2011a).

When it comes to expressing themselves in the public media, both dystopias present the elderly as shunning from such an activity, or as being suppressed. The Mushroom Master, who appears in *The Lord of Opium*, although revered for his knowledge, suffers from agoraphobia and prefers to be left in peace. In *Extras*, the fourth part of *Uglies*, a group of crumbles make it to the news, suing the city for denying them the access to immortality technology (Westerfeld 2011d). However, their popularity is short-lived and they are ridiculed by media-users. Those that refused to be freed from mind-control are called “non-people” (Westerfeld 2011d). Westerfeld’s

frequent stigmatizing the aged as “fashion-missing”, irrational and backward (a.o. they want to go back to being controlled, Westerfeld 2011d), contributes to building the stereotype facilitating the exclusion of the voice of the aged from the public space.

The Spaces of the Old

Another important point to raise in the investigation of the place of the elderly in the society is the actual space they occupy. As Johnson (2003) relates, the patterns of dependence/independence can be established by looking into the land inheritance and ownership or into the structuring of a household. It may be worthwhile, by extension, to reflect if there is any ghettoization of the old people, fencing them off from the bulk of the population, and what are the reasons behind it.

In Matteo Alacrán books, the aged live in a sequestered space, specially designed for them to either meet the demands of their failing bodies or to separate them from young/healthy/functional population. The descriptions of El Patrón’s gloomy private wing in the white mansion betray the social anxieties as far as imagining the old age. Clattered with heavy furniture and ancient works of art, it builds up the atmosphere of depression and loneliness, whereas the dent in the mattress and handholds in the bathroom are telling of physical disability. The mirrors are removed, underlining the essential “ugliness” of the old (Farmer 2013). The hacienda has also a special apartment for El Viejo, El Patrón’s grandson, who is suffering from dementia and must be shielded off from others to muffle his screams (Farmer 2002).

Westerfeld’s dystopia fits the aged citizens into an institutionalized enclosure. They live in the suburbs, called Crumblyville, with the smallest children, who cannot yet go to school. Few enjoy solitary posts, like the nameless man guarding the armoury, and they are obviously restricted to the assigned spaces. Worryingly, the rebellious uglies repeat the same pattern: the Boss, barely forty, but still considered an elderly person, is similarly limited to running the dusty and old-fashioned library, which gives the man a fake feeling of power (Westerfeld 2011a). The crumbly doctors, escaped from Pretty Town, live far from the rebel society, in a “half-buried” house (Westerfeld 2011a). Even after the reversal of the mind-control, the tendency is to equate the aged with small children and the uglies (Westerfeld 2011d), assigning them the same social status and the same space (parklands).

As can be seen, both texts reinforce the idea of the separation or even imprisonment of the aged in specially designed spaces. This is reflective of ageist stereotypes, which make us perceive older people as essentially dependent, useless, backward and ugly. These features strike fear into the hearts of a population that bows down to transhumanist visions of a perfect, enhanced body of “optimal youth” (Freitas 2004), obsessed with efficiency and individual freedom. These preconceptions are so deeply-rooted that even though the evidence from social studies belies these death- and illness-related images (Victor 1994), they seemingly self-replicate in the works of culture, remaining contrary to facts. As Victor notices, the empirical deviations from the culturally-imposed norm are seen as exceptions, silently confirming the rule.

The adoption of a prejudiced standpoint may result in making the old age a “master status trait” (Victor 1994)—perceiving people not as being of certain age, but as “old people”, thus altering and dehumanizing their personhood. Both Farmer and Westerfeld make this social stigma clear—the Old is situated as the Other: impossible to understand or barely fitting in the boundaries of the contemporary world, covering with dust together with the useless old magazines and weapons. This exclusivist attitude is fundamentally an expression of the fear of death and its preceding decay.

It is important to notice here the repetitive pattern appearing in the choice of the spaces the authors make for the old: they are all places connected with memory, tradition-keeping and history. As Jameson (2005) notices, the tension in the longevity narratives comes among others from their metaphorical portrayal of a fundamental conflict between Past and Future, but also from the attitudes to History that are made evident by the stories about the senescent. I have already remarked on the marginalization of the problem of the old in the *Uglies* cycle, and their being positively swallowed by the novel technologies. The optimistic belief in technical progress is quite clear, as is devaluation of history as such. It is worth mentioning the case of Andrew Simpson Smith, a member of a primitive tribe, who discovers that his family was being cheated and used by the enhanced humans, and abandons the traditions of his people, as irrelevant for the age of biotechnology (Westerfeld 2001b). The past is portrayed as full of ignorance, ugliness, scandals, irrationality, wars and eco-threat. Such past, certainly, is not worth retaining. Demonization of the past and rejection of history serve as support for building the mythology of the new, better age.

Similarly in Farmer: “most things in *Opium* were a hundred years in the past, but El Patrón’s private wing was even older. He had brought back entire sections of

Iberian castles. He had plundered El Prado, the finest art museum in Spain, for paintings and tapestries” (Farmer 2013: 12-13). El Patrón’s wing, filled with works of art, remains unappreciated by his successor, Matt. For him they are representations of the abuses the authoritarian rule of monarchs and religious organizations were guilty of. It is representative of yet another dimension of old vs. young motif Jameson (2005) talks about: the class struggle. El Patrón’s constant reminiscences of his deprived childhood betray the reasons for his hoarding the wealth: in the end, he becomes just like the *ranchero* he had to beg for food (Farmer 2002). Matt refuses to subscribe to the totalitarian organization of the state and sides with the *paisanos* turned *ejits*, trying to liberate and educate them.

The historical dimension acquires particular resonance in the context of Mexican identity struggle. What Matt—at least, apparently—rejects is Spanish colonial past, the contemporary drug cartels’ culture, but also the philosophies of coming back to the Aztlán roots, propagated by Mexican leftist movements. His deep desire for utopia pushes him to cut himself off from the past—but also some forms of future: his biopolitics, unlike El Patrón’s, is not geared towards enhancing the human body, but towards healing the damaged Earth. He becomes the “patron” of the senile Mushroom Man, a male version of Gaia archetype. The narrative seems to promise that the new times will construct a better world, restored to its natural greatness. The reader, though, is left with a disturbing afterthought: are not the new times (Matt) a clone of the old (El Patrón)?

Metaphorizing Old Age

All of the aspects discussed in the previous parts of this chapter are played up by metaphorization and mythicization of old people. The elderly are homologised with the images of buildings, trees and beasts, each of which reveals some aspect of how the aged fit into the society. The building metaphor is particularly well visible in *Uglies*: the ancient bridge between Uglyville and Pretty Town, and the Valentino Mansion are “dumb” and silent. Although they are attractive and “quietly knowing” (Westerfeld 2011a; Westerfeld 2011b), they only provide a prop for the young rebels to hide their contraband and climb. It also underlines the constructivist perspective on the body, perceived in terms of its being damage-proof: the variations of the word “to crumble” are used in the tetralogy mostly in reference to buildings, cities and

bridges. Its adjectival form is borrowed to equate the old age with deformed, monstrous, inefficient body, evoking fear (the Rusty Ruins; Westerfeld 2011a) and disgust, especially in comparison with dainty, pleasure-oriented houses of the Pretties, enhanced with smart technology.

When it comes to the conceptualization of man as a tree, it is worth recalling the parallel elaborated upon by Jacques Bertillon, a nineteenth-century French demographer, which seems especially apt for the image of the old appearing in juvenile dystopias:

A human society might even be compared to a forest of a given surface. After the lumberman has made clearings, seedlings spontaneously burgeon anew and the forest is restored without there having been any need to replant it. If it were otherwise, it would imply the presence of some defect, some harmful germ that was impeding nature's salutary effect. In that case, the forester would have to find the sterility's cause and destroy it. He would have to get rid of the ruinous goats' teeth and other damaging animals who destroy the forest's young plants. But what can be said of someone whose only recourse against such misfortune would be to exclude the lumberman's axe and preserve the trees indefinitely? He would succeed only in uselessly *ageing* his plantation and, in the end, would be defeated in his struggle against death, because the law of living societies, forests as well as nations, is the perpetual replenishment of beings. The impossible task attempted by this ignorant forester is none other than what overconfident doctors are now advising (Bertillon 1895: 433).

Bertillon metaphorizes the society in general as a forest, but it is clear that within this forest there is a distinction between the new seedlings and the ancient trees. He sees the unimpeded growth of the existing plants as detrimental to the necessary rejuvenation of the population. He speaks harshly about the attempts of those who aim at immortality: the supposed sterile health is seen as "defect" and a "harmful germ", whereas striving at eternal life is called ignorance. Placing man within the perspective of natural sciences and emphasizing the basic role of the circle of life, the author propagates the vision in which the intervention of the doctor-lumberman serves the design of a utopian society. It is, quite visibly, oriented towards the young.

The identification of old people with trees appears in both cycles. On the surface, the authors seem to follow the logic of natural law, propagated by Bertillon, in that they are clearly alarmist as to the immortality technologies. In Westerfeld the ancient forest, which provides a line of resistance to the monoculture of white orchids, is being fell down and burnt by the Ugly rebels, who explain that they plant new trees. It raises horror in the modified Pretties, devoted to the protection of the environment (Westerfeld 2011a). Their quarrel is over what both groups perceive as "natural": the cycle of life and rebirth versus immortality. While for the first group

the forest embodies values like freedom and tolerance, the second group's identification with Nature is much stronger. The Pretties seem to wholly embrace the conceptual metaphor "tree is a person", and in this light they can be seen as fighting for the protection of the actual long-lived people. The rebels, pressing for the succession of generations, seem less humane, and their making maximum use of the fallen trees reminds one of Nazi "utilization" of the dead bodies. However, as consistent with the previously mentioned instances of the Boss and the armoury caretaker, Westerfeld's alarmist only as far as the use of the biotechnologies for the limitation of individual freedom. As long as they do not imperil the natural environment and personal agency, there is no need to revert to the Rusty times.

The tree metaphor in *The House of the Scorpion* and *The Lord of Opium* is explicitly used to present the deformity of body and mind in old people. While describing Glass-Eye Dabengwa, Farmer compares his body to a tree with deformed roots: "His legs were like tree trunks covered in gray bark, and his toes, with their gnarled and discolored nails spread out like the talons of a bird of prey" (Farmer 2013: 354). The connotations of decomposition and monstrosity are coupled with the idea of Dabengwa's immobility, caused by some sort of an illness. The African is not like a strong, solid tree: rather like a diseased one, unable to escape imminent death.

As far as El Patrón, the author implies that his long life resulted in madness, instead of wisdom: "He grew large and green until he shadowed over the whole forest, but most of his branches are twisted" (Farmer 2002: 70). The impression that the old age must equal mental problems is strengthened by El Viejo's dementia. Worth noting, the figure of a giant tree used by Nancy Farmer bears close resemblance to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible (Daniel 4, 1-24), thus acquiring the status of a parable, conjoining the old age with absolute power. The result of this fusion is an unavoidable negative picture of the elderly, as evil kings bound to be punished by God.

In both cases the motif of the aged serves to talk about the global political tensions. El Patrón, overshadowing the vicinity with his branches, represents the United States' imperialistic fantasies. He lives in a great white mansion, served by slaves, and all other drug lords are dependent on his supply of opium. When he dies, chaos ensues, provoking Dabengwa to attempt to take over El Patrón's empire. As can be inferred from the above description, though, Farmer sees the African political organism as essentially corrupted and unable to claim dominance on the global scene. Still, the American hegemony is also questioned, as the author points out its deficiencies.

Like many other juvenile dystopias, Matteo Alacrán books call for rethinking of the functioning of the current system, rather than overthrowing it. Farmer, though, seems sceptical as to the feasibility of a possible remake.

Finally—and perhaps most noticeably—old people are dehumanized by pointing out their resemblance to beasts and demons, which is present mostly in Farmer’s dystopia. El Patrón is often called an “old vampire” (Farmer 2002; Farmer 2013), which underlines the extreme stereotyping of the senescent as “receivers” (Victor 1994), who thrive on the blood of the young, and suggests that long life must be *contra naturam*. The elderly do not have faces, but “beaks”, no hands, but “talons”, and they resemble predators, like crocodile or scorpion (Farmer 2002; Farmer 2013). Whereas vampirism implies that old age is supreme Evil, the animal metaphors put the elderly lower in the hierarchy of creation, questioning their intellect and control over impulses. Lastly, the necessary cyborgization of the failing body (the robot “glass eyes” of Dabengwa, Farmer 2013) adds to the unacceptable Otherness of the elderly.

Conclusion

To sum up, although senescence is not foregrounded in young adult dystopias, the problem is nevertheless powerfully present in the background. The portrayal of the aged largely conforms to social stereotypes and ideologies promoting the cult of the body and inexhaustible efficiency. The ageing process is seen as evil—to that, an unnecessary evil. Although old bridges, buildings, and trees may exude the aura of wisdom, the decay of the body is not essential. Especially equalling people with architectural structures reflects the constructivist vision of the body, divorced from the soul and individual identity. Johnson (2003) writes about the concept of *puer senex* which shows that the wisdom is not age-dependent and the decaying body may not contribute much as far as spiritual growth. This ancient idea is resuscitated in Matteo Alacrán series: although the reader witnesses the first fourteen years of Matt’s life, the boy claims to be one hundred and forty seven (Farmer 2013)—he was made from the cells of El Patrón and his body seems to hold some of the memories and identity of the sempiternal drug lord. He acts above his age (Farmer 2002) and soon becomes Don Sombra—another leader of Opium (Farmer 2013).

Westerfeld offers an explanation for the absence of the old people from the public space. He claims in *Extras* (Westerfeld 2011d) that in the past the elderly were

the centre of social life because of tales of past experiences they stored in their memories and shared by the campfire with other members of the community. However, nowadays this spiritual leadership is performed by celebrities: “Humans needed big faces around for comfort and familiarity, even an ego-kicker like Nana Love just talking about what she’d had for breakfast” (Westerfeld 2011d:37). Thence, Wise Old Men, if present, do not fulfil their functions as mentors: they cannot adjust fast enough to the changing everyday life, and are usually replaced by adult males. Wise Old Women, like Celia, Consuela or *abuelita* in Farmer, are left to child-rearing, cooking and religious rituals (Farmer 2002). Where these social functions are defunct, like in the post-scarcity Pretty World, the portrayal of women reveals the “double standard” of ageing: doctors Cable and Maddy are “typified as worn-out, menopausal, neurotic and unproductive” (Victor 1994: 82).

Whatever the explanations, the patterns revealed by the ironic presentation of dysfunctional societies make one reconsider one’s attitude to ageing in the face of technologies promising longevity and even immortality. Such reflection is much needed in the contemporary ageing society. As Lemke (2011) writes, one of the chief questions that need to be answered in the face of the development of biotechnology is which category of citizens still fulfils the demands of the current “regime of truth”. The dystopias call for the redefinition of the place of the old people in the contemporary world, so as to avoid unjust bias either towards the old or towards the young. They are centred around the idea that the biopolitical discourse written from the point of view of any of these protects the interests of one group only, instead of aiming at the common good, so often put forward as the argument for human enhancement (Habermas 2003). The current discussion about human nature and genetic identity necessarily extends to the notion of youth and old age. In the perspective of the lack or the shift of old age characteristics, More’s *Utopia* needs to be reimagined for the present times to provide the shape of the future that we are going to build.

Works Cited

- Bourdelaï, Patrice (2003), 'The ageing of the population: relevant question or obsolete notion?', in: Paul Johnson, Pat Thane (eds.), *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, London, New York: Routledge, pp. 110-131.
- Bertillon, Jaques (1895), 'De la depopulation de la France', *Journal de la Société de Statistique de Paris*: 12, pp. 410-438.
- Claeys, Gregory, ed., (2010), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Davis, J.C. (2010), 'Thomas More's *Utopia*: sources, legacy, and interpretation', in: Gregory Claeys, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 28-50.
- Farmer, Nancy (2002), *The House of the Scorpion*, New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers 2002.
- Farmer, Nancy (2013), *The Lord of Opium*, New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013.
- Freitas Jr., Robert A. (2004), 'Nanomedicine', in: Immortality Institute (ed.), *The Scientific Conquest of Death. Essays on Infinite Lifespans*, Buenos Aires: LibrosEnRed, pp. 77-92.
- Habermas, Jürgen (2003), *Przyszłość natury ludzkiej. Czy zmierzamy do eugeniki liberalnej?*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Immortality Institute (2004), *The Scientific Conquest of Death. Essays on Infinite Lifespans*, Buenos Aires: LibrosEnRed.
- Jameson, Fredric (2005), *Archaeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, London and New York, Verso.
- Johns, Alessa (2010), 'Feminism and utopianism', in: Gregory Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp.174-199.
- Johnson, Malcolm L., ed. (2005), *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Johnson, Paul, Thane Pat, eds. (2003), *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Johnson, Paul (2003), "Historical Readings of Old Age and Ageing", in: Paul Johnson, Pat Thane (eds.), *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1-18.
- Lemke, Thomas (2011), 'Analityka biopolityki: Rozważania o przeszłości i teraźniejszości spornego pojęcia', *Praktyka teoretyczna*: 2-3, pp. 11-25.
- More, Thomas (1970), *Utopia*, transl. and ed. by Paul Turner, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Nawrocka, Joanna (2013), *Spoleczne doświadczenie starości: stereotypy, postawy, wybory*, Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls".
- New American Standard Bible (1995), 'Daniel 4', *La Habra: The Lockman Foundation*, <http://biblehub.com/daniel/4-11.htm> [accessed: 30.11.2016].
- Roemer, Kenneth M. (2010), 'Paradise Transformed: Varieties of Nineteenth-Century Utopias', in: Gregory Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79-106.
- Thane, Pat (2003), 'The Family Lives of Old People', in: Paul Johnson, Pat Thane (eds.), *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 180-210.
- Victor, Crisitina R. (1994), *Old Age in Modern Society. A Textbook on Social Gerontology*, London, New York: Chapman & Hall.
- Westerfeld, Scott (2011a), *Uglies*, New York: Simon Pulse.
- Westerfeld, Scott (2011b), *Pretties*, New York: Simon Pulse.
- Westerfeld, Scott (2011c), *Specials*, New York: Simon Pulse.
- Westerfeld, Scott (2011d), *Extras*, New York: Simon Pulse.
- Westerfeld, Scott (2013), *Mind Rain: Your Favorite Authors on Scott Westerfeld's Uglies Series*, Dallas: BenBella Books, Inc.
- Yläanne, Virpi (2012), *Representing Ageing: Images and Identities*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.