

## A DYSTOPIAN VIEW OF BERLIN IN 2039: THE DYSTOPIAN REFLECTIONS IN THE WORK *WIR WAREN HIER* BY NANA RADEMACHER\*

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### Abstract

This paper is intended to introduce Nana Rademacher, one of the contemporary female science fiction writers in Germany, and to study her work *Wir Waren Hier* (*We Were Here*, 2016) which has been seen as an anti-utopian fiction by different critics. In this study, the focus is on anti-utopia which has become a popular literary genre as a result of social, economic and political disappointment experienced in the 20th and 21st centuries. The protagonist, fifteen-year-old Anna, lives in a devastated Berlin which lies in ruins following several years of inter-state conflict which has now been under the hegemony of civil war and military rule. Self-preservation and lawlessness has become the order of the day. Anna's perspective on her broken world is passionate, strange, harsh and desperate, but also full of hope. This is the story of a girl searching for a way forward in spite of all the obstacles, and who is fighting for life, love and freedom. The struggle for existence/survival in an authoritarian-totalitarian system, as an important characteristic of an anti-utopian society, is one of the basic topics which is fictionalized by Rademacher and narrated by Anna within the work. Extremities, hopelessness, violence, war and the end of the mankind as a result of technology take place in this work. This study aims to determine whether and to what extent the work of Rademacher occurs as an anti-utopian book and how it makes Berlin a part of anti-utopian world.

**Keywords:** Anti-utopia, *Wir Waren Hier*, Berlin, Nana Rademacher.

## NANA RADEMACHER'İN *WIR WAREN HIER* ADLI ESERİNDEKİ 2039 YILI BERLİN'İNE DİSTOPIK BİR BAKIŞ

### Öz

Bu çalışma, Almanya'nın çağdaş bayan yazarlarından Nana Rademacher ve onun birçok açıdan "karşı-ütopya" olarak değerlendirilebilecek olan *Wir Waren Hier* adlı eserini irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın merkezinde, 20. ve 21. yüzyıllarda sosyal, ekonomik ve politik açıdan yaşanan hayal kırıklıklarının ortaya çıkardığı edebi bir tür olan "karşı-ütopyalar" vardır. 15 yaşındaki roman kahramanı Anna, yaşamını, uzun yıllar süren devletlerarası anlaşmazlıklar sonucunda tahrip edilmiş, yıkık dökük, savaş ve askeri hâkimiyet altındaki Berlin'de sürdürmektedir. Bu parçalanmış dünyaya Anna, sabır ve tecrübesizlik, acımasızlık ve hayal kırıklığına uğramışlığın içerisinde yine de umut dolu yaklaşır. Onun hikâyesi, tüm olumsuzluklara

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rağmen tam bir distopik roman kahramanı gibi aşk, yaşam ver özgürlük için mücadele eden ve geleceğe umutla bakan bir kızın hikâyesidir. Otoriter/Totaliter bir sistem içerisindeki var olma mücadelesi, karşı ütopya toplumlarının karakteristik bir özelliği olarak Rademacher tarafından kurgulanan ve eser içerisinde Anna tarafından anlatılaştırılan temel konulardandır. Ayrıca, aşırılıklar, umutsuzluk, şiddet, savaş, teknolojinin insanlığın sonunu getirmesi gibi karşı ütopyik izlekler de eser içerisinde yer almaktadır. Bu çalışma, Rademacher'in söz konusu eserinin ne ölçüde karşı ütopya olarak nitelendirilebileceğini ve eserin Berlin'i nasıl karşı ütopyik dünyanın bir parçası haline getirdiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Karşı Ütopya, Wir Waren Hier, Berlin, Nana Rademacher.

## 1. A GENERAL OVERVIEW TO THE GENRE: DYSTOPIA

Dystopias or anti-utopias, with which we confront in utopian literature, are Warning-Texts to display the disrupted social order. In dystopias, readers are faced with an opposite way of life and social order compared with utopias, in which the way of life and society are reflected as perfect. A dystopian place is generally located in the future and portrayed as a place that contains all the negative perceptions in it. In this context, dark and pessimistic perspective and reflection substitute for bright and optimistic perspective in utopia.

To make sense of the term and its position in literature clearly, it is necessary to understand the term or concept of utopia. Thomas More first used the term of utopia in 1516 and it is Plato's work *Politeia* (Greek) (English: *Republic*), which takes the lead by using so-called term (Erzgräber 1994: 446). According to Otto F. Best, it means *nowhere, no place (Nirgerndsland)* or just *the only fictional ideal cohabitation lifestyle* (Best 1972: 298). It is nowhere because utopias set an example of a considerable place which is too perfect to be true. They are a fictional social order because belongingness and life style are enviable socially and psychologically.

The Term *Dystopia* was first used in 1868 by John Stuart Mill (Kurtyilmaz 2014: 23). Dystopia, which is based upon utopia, is also called *anti-utopia, opposite utopia, cacotopia, dark utopia*. As it can be understood from the prefixes *anti, opposite* or *dark*, it contains utopia in itself, but even so, it displays an opposite order of it. As utopia is peaceful and pleasing so dystopia includes nightmare and chaos. According to Bezel's statement, *dystopias refer to an adverse and oppressive social order starting with a utopian tendency and purpose* (Bezel 1984: 7).

After World War I, as a result of the negative effects of the encountered problems, many authors wrote dystopias which were full of nightmarish fictions. These dystopias were written in an atmosphere in which the hope and expectations for a happy, peaceful and an egalitarian society in the future had disappeared. So, to raise awareness among the readers, these literary works choose totalitarian regimes as the main plot, in which there isn't any expectance of a happy future (Düzgün 2011: 22). In fact, as well as in utopia, social criticism comes into question also in dystopia (Düzgün 2011: 23). However, while utopias show the deficiencies of society and emphasize that everything, even negativenesses, can get better with a hopeful future, dystopia kills the positive and optimistic hope and expectations of utopia with a pessimistic attitude and it fictionalizes the troubles and negative parts of the society in the foreground (Düzgün 2011: 24). In the dystopian genre, the ruler, in other words authority, controls everything, so the individual's freedom disappears in every sense. All individual rights and freedoms -marriage, family, faith, religion, art, literature, etc.-are under the control of the ruling class, i.e., authority. There is a kind of conditioned life like a Pavlov model (Erzgräber 1994: 450). The mechanized individual is ignored within a life which is surrounded by prohibitions. The only expectation from the individual is to act in accordance with the rules. Otherwise, his existence is not even a matter of discussion. A physical and psychological violence are seen in the dystopian genre that aims to make the reader think about the matter by means of the question *how could the world become worse?* (Erzgräber 1994: 451).

In general, dystopias represent the socio-centric individual whose freedom is taken away. The individual is ignored because the only important thing is society. In the existing order, the authority has every right to make any decision on behalf of the individual. The concerns of society are above everything. The existence of the individual depends on serving the society; otherwise he cannot even be allowed to take part in society. Even a small "mistake" is punished. The individual is either punished by the authority or he commits suicide because of the repression. An individual who conflicts with the authority is condemned. In dystopian literary, the existence of a hero, who protests the system or regime, is indispensable. There is an obvious conflict between the system and this character (Inderst 2005: 24 and Akkoyun 2015: 25).

Another central theme of dystopia is technology. Developments in scientific activities have caused the progress of technology, but there is a question which comes to mind and makes the reader think about this topic: Has the extent of the developing technology resulted in positive or negative consequences? In fact, the developed technology that brings modernity and extremism together has become dominant and caused people to become mechanized, so people have become isolated and depressed and they have started to question their existence (Inderst 2005: 24-25).

Genders or relations between genders in dystopia are reflected free of emotion (Inderst 2005: 25). Emotions and thoughts are at the top of the forbidden list. A person who acts emotionally tends to move personally, and a person who can imagine becomes an examiner and it is hard for him to accept anything which is unreasonable. Concordantly, such an individual can cause a problem for the authority and cannot be easily domineered (Inderst 2005: 26).

One of the most important features of dystopian literature is that it enlightens the worries of time with a prospective perspective. This genre is basically a way of *political discourse containing the silent scream of the author as an enlightened individual* (Akkoyun 2015: 25). Many authors undertake a warning-mission by showing the fact that *people can become automats in the totalitarian regime* (Akkoyun 2015: 30). *Generally, writing such literary works in a real country or writing them by associating the things directly with the truth is a risky situation for authors who are living in a totalitarian order, and that's why the writer prefers to write in a fantastic atmosphere by setting the story in a dystopian world. Though the world created by the author seems to be surreal, a careful and conscious reader will surely hear the writer's enlightened scream* (Akkoyun 2015: 30). Nana Rademacher, the writer of *Wir Waren Hier* (2016) which forms the subject of this study, created a dystopian atmosphere and showed realism clearly in the fictionality by choosing Berlin as the setting in her literary works. As mentioned in the next section of the study in this context, the way in which Berlin is fictionalized as a dystopian place will be different from a created/fictional world.

## 2. COMBINATION OF TRUTH AND FICTION: DYSTOPIAN BERLIN

Nana Rademacher, a German contemporary writer born in 1966, published her work *Wir Waren Hier* (Eng.: We Were Here) in 2016 as a dystopian youth literature novel. Rademacher's starting point is a hopeful and warm-hearted fifteen-year old girl's point of view trying to survive in apocalyptic Berlin. Anna, the protagonist of the novel, tries to survive in Berlin in 2039 with her family which is a ruined, dreary and bombed-out territory. Her only wish is to have a good future, among people who are exposed to hunger, thirst, oppression and death.

Rademacher, who combines dystopian elements with reality and fictionalizes it in her novel, begins her literary work with the poem *Blaue Blume* (Blue Flower-1818) by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff, who is one of the most important authors in German romanticism. The reader starting to read this poem at the beginning of the book takes the signal of melancholy, longing, subconscious, fantasy, fiction, hope and eternity. *Blaue Blume* was first used in German Romanticism by Novalis as a motif in his work *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and it became a symbol of Romantic Movement over time as it was preferred by other writers. This symbol, starting from the relation between nature and human being, refers to yearning and passion for eternity and the undoable. It was also used by Eichendorff in close context to the use of Novalis in his eponymous poem; moreover, this poem became a symbol that combines reality with fiction. As one of the most important motifs of German Romanticism, it is here the symbol of Anna's longing for peace, passion and eternity. In this dream world, as in Romanticism, by finding the *blue flower* Anna lives with the hope of finding Good Luck and eternity. That's why the novel begins and ends with the emphasis of the *blue flower* which represents hope and new beginnings (Rademacher 2016: 85-86). At the same time, it is one of the most important motifs in the novel that symbolizes the

combination of reality and fiction: *Und immer wieder die blaue Blume: >>... ich suche und finde sie nie... mir träumt, dass in der Blume mein gutes Glück mir blüh<<* (Rademacher 2016: 207).<sup>1</sup>

The novel consists of three parts. The first chapter covers Anna's blog posts and begins by describing what she experienced on October 13, 2039. In this chapter Anna tells about the troubles, warfare, hunger, thirst, hopelessness, death, and oppression that they have, with the expectation that what she wrote could be read one day in a happy, peaceful and rosy future. Despite it being forbidden, she got to know Ben through her blog posts. Just like Anna, Ben is also a young person who resists against the military government and authority. In time, Anna falls in love with Ben. After her family and his favorite friend passed away, Ben becomes one of the reasons for her holding on to life. She succeeds in many things with Ben which she could not have withstood alone. The second chapter begins with the theme in which Anna is found by Ben while she was about to die. In this chapter, the reader deeply feels the combination of reality and fiction. As Anna and Ben escape, Anna is caught and their ways part. Anna is sent to a girls' dormitory in order to learn how to act according to military government's desire. Here she also resists the authority and finds a way to escape from the dormitory in order to find Ben and she goes to the *Tunnelmenschen* (Tunnel people) who also withstand the authority and who have met her before through Ben. Here she plans a rebellion with the tunnel people to overthrow the authority and finally they achieve it. At the end of the second chapter, Ben, Anna and the other survivors live in lakeshore peacefully, as they dreamed before. The third chapter is Anna's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday blog post in November 12, 2040. In this chapter, it reveals that everything in the second chapter was a dream of Anna. It is understood from Anna's blog post in the third chapter that Anna is dead.

As mentioned before in this study, the literary work *Wir Waren Hier* by Nana Rademacher will be discussed in terms of a dystopic analysis. So, the subtitles in the dystopian literature below will be analyzed in parallel with the novel:

#### **a. Protagonist against Authority:**

Anna, the 15-year old protagonist of the novel, is stubborn against the authority and she is also brave and a questioning person. She symbolizes the indomitable character, which resists repressive regimes in dystopia. As a little girl, she tries to ignore negativeness in her pure world that she creates with her pure thoughts and courage. Anna both struggles for her life and tries to survive and fights for human values like friendship, love and humanity. In this context, she brings materiality and spirituality together: *Wenn wir uns wiedersehen, werden wir uns nie mehr loslassen. Dann wird in unserer Umarmung die Welt verschwinden und die Angst und der Krieg* (Rademacher 2016:321).<sup>2</sup>

In the novel, a group of people who reject and plan to revolt against authority are also mentioned, as well as Ben and Anna. Anna describes these people, who are trying to live in the underground in U-Bahn of Berlin, as Tunnel People (Rademacher 2016: 132,143): *Und der Widerstand braucht gesunde, kräftige Kämpfer, um die Militärregierung zu stürzen und dann den anderen zu helfen* (Rademacher 2016:135).<sup>3</sup>

The characters questioning the authority are interested in forbidden arts like literature or music. Music, as a symbol of hope, makes the hard living conditions and resistance easier. For example, people living in the tunnel and also in Santje are interested in music (Rademacher 2016: 136). Reading and writing are both a kind of meditation in order to compete with what happened, and a way to carry everything to future. Anna and Ben are two protagonists in the novel who use

<sup>1</sup> Translations from German to English belong to the writer of this paper, because the book hasn't been translated into English yet.

*And again and again the blue flower: >>...I look for and find it never... I dream that in this flower my good luck blooms<<.*

<sup>2</sup> *If we meet again, we won't ever let go. So the world disappears in our embrace and the fear and the war.*

<sup>3</sup> *And the rebellion needs healthy, strong fighters to topple the military government and then to help the others.*

these ways most effectively. Ben is also a good storyteller; his stories color the plot and narrative style (Rademacher 2016: 140, 156-157).

The characters in the novel who withstand authority constantly emphasise the freedom which becomes a utopian fact: *Es fühlt sich so gut an, frei zu sein. Nicht mehr gehorchen, keine Kontrolle mehr* (Rademacher 2016:247).<sup>4</sup> *Besser in Freiheit zu sterben als noch einen einzigen Tag dort leben* (Rademacher 2016:265).<sup>5</sup>

### **b. Dystopian Extremisms:**

In dystopia, everything is experienced extremely. There is one type of human being-model that also standardizes everything. Diversity of seasons disappears as a result of the destruction of nature and so, nature becomes a monotype: In Berlin there is only winter and summer. Summer is extremely hot. People have to struggle with drought. The winter is very hard. People have to live with the risk of freezing: *Das Wetter wurde überall immer extremer* (Rademacher 2016:65)<sup>6</sup>:

*Wie immer zum Ende des Sommers gibt es noch ganz wenig Wasser (...) Aus den Leitungen kommt fast gar nichts mehr, und wenn, dann ist es eine warme braune Brühe, mit der man sich nicht mal waschen mag. Die Soldaten fahren Wasser mit Tanklastern heran und wir füllen unsere Kanister. Die Transporte sind schwer bewacht* (Rademacher 2016: 17).<sup>7</sup>

People struggle with hunger. The military government delivers only *Dauerbrot* (canned bread) which is not enough for the people: *Schade, dass man Seife nicht essen kann* (Rademacher 2016: 42).<sup>8</sup> One of the subjects in which the reality and the fiction are intertwined by Rademacher arises with this *Dauerbrot* delivered by the government. Canned breads were also the foods used by the people cautiously while they were struggling with hunger in post-war period in Berlin:

*Es gibt auch die warmen Winter. Aber die sind auch schlimm, wenn es wochenlang nicht regnet und die Stadt von einem grauen Himmel zugedeckt wird, der austrocknet aussieht wie Dauerbrot* (Rademacher 2016: 32).<sup>9</sup>

It is hard to find drinking water. People drink from puddles on the roof after rain with the risk of diseases:

*Auf dem Dach haben wir Wassertonnen (...) Mit dem gesammelten Regenwasser waschen wir uns oder spülen die Toilette. Wenn lange kein Wasser mehr ausgegeben wurde, trinken wir es auch. Aber meine Mutter hat Angst, dass wir davon krank werden, obwohl wir Tabletten reinwerfen, die die Bakterien im Wasser abtöten* (Rademacher 2016: 28).<sup>10</sup>

As it can be seen in the novel, in an authoritarian society, there is no financial power in society. The money cannot be a matter in this type of life. To provide something, people have to give up something from themselves. They interchange their possessions that they need less for more necessary things: *Ich bin froh, dass ich die Taschenlampe nicht eingetauscht habe. Licht ist unendlich viel wichtiger als Fleisch* (Rademacher 2016: 39).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It is a good feeling to be free. No longer obeying and being controlled.

<sup>5</sup> Better to die in freedom than to live there for one more day.

<sup>6</sup> The weather everywhere becomes more extreme. It is difficult to find food and drinking water; they are delivered to people in control of the authority at the appointed time and with the determined amount.

<sup>7</sup> As always at the end of the summers there is very small quantity of water (...) From the pipes comes nothing anymore and if, then that is warm, brown dishwater, by which one never will take a bath. The soldiers drive water up with tankers and we fill our canisters. The transports are heavily guarded.

<sup>8</sup> It is a pity that soup cannot be eaten.

<sup>9</sup> There are also warm Winters. But they are also bad, when it doesn't rain for weeks and the city is covered with a grey sky, which looks like dried out as "Dauerbrot" (canned bread).

<sup>10</sup> On the roof we have water barrels (...) With the collected rainwater we have a wash or flush the toilet. If for a long time there is no water to be distributed, we drink it too. But my mother worries that we will become sick, although we put tablets in it, which kill off the bacteria in water.

<sup>11</sup> I am glad that I didn't exchange my pocket lamp. Light is more important than meat.

### c. Pressure, Control and Prohibitions:

In dystopias there is a repressive and totalitarian social order which ignores the individuals. The authority and the ruler considered as god have all the rights: *Es ist kein Gott, der über uns herrscht, es ist das Militär* (Rademacher 2016: 45).<sup>12</sup> The authority sets the rules in an oppressive way and expects people to obey them. To ensure this, they apply heavy sanctions. In Rademacher's novel, the reader faces with the military government as a typical dystopian element. In the novel, after the war, military government seized Berlin and they began to use the hegemony as they wished: *Wir haben jetzt wohl so was wie eine Militärregierung, nur falls es jemand wissen möchte* (Rademacher 2016: 16).<sup>13</sup>

The military government, in other words, the authority, sets its own rules and applies them in such a way that there is frequently curfew in the city (Rademacher 2016: 17, 25, 117): *Und als Letztes AUSGANGSSPERRE BIS SONNENAUFANG* (Rademacher 2016: 17).<sup>14</sup> The military government tries to spread fear by the force of the military. Unconditional obedience to the authority is the only requirement and precondition of this authority: *Und Hubschrauber sind über uns hinweggedonnert. Das Ganze macht mir Angst* (Rademacher 2016: 39).<sup>15</sup>

In a dystopian society, internet is prohibited because it provides communication with the external world. The communication between societies prevents obedience, so the authority prohibits it strongly. In this novel the use of the internet is also prohibited by the military government. To ensure that, the authority employs the *WePo* (web police), the Internet Police:

*Hast du keinen schiss, dass die wepo dich schnappt? Einen meiner brüder haben sie abgeholt. Der hat auch geschrieben, was er wollte. Über den krieg und die soldaten und den hunger* (Rademacher 2016: 19-20).<sup>16</sup>

Despite all prohibitions, Anna succeeds to get online with a former Board found at home when the electricity is on, and on her blog post she tells about the situation of Berlin, the size of oppression and the facts of life, with the hope that it can be probably read in a peaceful future. The situation she is in is so desperate and the people are faced with such a hard hunger and captivity that Anna imagines that the person who can read her blog writings is free and full; if there would be any person left after 100 years and this dark age would be passed of course:

*Aber ich kann schreiben (stellt euch vor: ich tippe! Die Voice-Box ist kaputt), und vielleicht ist ja doch irgendwo irgendjemand, der das lesen kann. Und manchmal denke ich, wie es wohl wäre, wenn das hier jemand in hundert Jahren oder so liest. Und ich hoffe, dass dieser Jemand glücklich ist und satt und sagt: "Da bin ich aber froh, dass die dunkle Zeit vorbei ist und alle Menschen frei sind und genug zu essen haben"* (Rademacher 2016: 15).<sup>17</sup>

She hides her blog post from everyone including her family because of the worries of being caught. For this reason, Anna prefers to write on the roof of the home. It is the only place where Anna feels secure while writing. In this way, the author provides an objective viewpoint to her protagonist even with her first-person narrative. The roof and writing images give the reader the impression that the writing passes through an objective evaluation filter from the top view point (Rademacher 2016: 14, 16, 31). So, it can be said that Rademacher offers her figure in the story a secret omniscient point of view: *Aber immerhin ist es auf dem Dach sicherer geworden* (Rademacher

<sup>12</sup> It isn't the god that holds away over us, it is the military.

<sup>13</sup> We have something like military regime, if ever someone wishes to learn.

<sup>14</sup> And as a last resort CURFEW UNTIL SUNRISE.

<sup>15</sup> And helicopters roar over us. It all made me afraid.

<sup>16</sup> Are you not afraid that the wepo (webpolice) will catch you? They caught one of my brothers. He also wrote what he wanted. About the war and the soldiers and the hunger.

<sup>17</sup> But I can write (imagine: I type! The voice box is broken) and perhaps there is someone in some place who can read this. And sometimes I think that it would be well, if someone reads this in a hundred years or so. And I hope that this person is happy and full and says: "I am very happy that the dark period is over and all the people are free and have enough food."

2016: 16). (...) *Meine Eltern dürfen keinen Fall erfahren, was ich mache. Die drehen durch, weil Ich Uns Noch Alle In Gefahr Bringe* (Rademacher 2016: 14).<sup>18</sup>

One of the notable prohibited actions in dystopia is writing. Writing means leaving a relevant mark on future. It means permanence and so it is heavily forbidden by the authority. Because everything, all the oppressions and injustices of the authority, can be transferred to the future and to the other societies by writing. Every type of writing, a blog spot in here or literary works, is heavily punished. There are no literary works –no literature- in dystopia; it is out of the question. As a branch of art which can evoke the feelings and thoughts of people and can bring them universally together, it presents people freedoms that cannot be allowed by the oppressive government. Such an individual can protest the ruler because he reads and questions. That's why all the arts, including literature, which can liberalize people, are forbidden in dystopia. By taking all the risks, Anna also breaks this ban because writing and reading mean everything as a passion for her (Rademacher 2016: 101, 105, 198): *Zwei Jahre lang konnte ich nicht schreiben und nicht im Netz. Fühlt sich ein bisschen an nach Hause kommen* (Rademacher 2016: 14).<sup>19</sup>

At the recommendation of her father, Anna reads poems and texts from Eichendorff and Schlegel and talks about ancient civilizations and cultures with her family (Rademacher 2016: 41, 97, 105). Because for such a family that is conscious enough not to buckle under the authority, the only thing separating the human being from other creatures is the culture which the authority tries to destroy. Culture, literature and art are the driving forces to survive:

*Er gibt mir immer wieder neue Sachen zu lesen. Er sagt: "Wenn wir keine Kultur mehr haben, dann werden wir endgültig zu Tieren. Gedichte halten uns genauso am Leben wie Dauerbrot* (Rademacher 2016: 46).<sup>20</sup>

In the dystopia created by Rademacher, death becomes a common or usual fact: *In der Stadt war es irgendwie normaler, Tote zu sehen* (Rademacher 2016: 155).<sup>21</sup> Many people die from either hunger, thirst or because of the punishment of the authority. With Anna's own words, *Leichensammler* (corpse collectors) are responsible for taking away these dead bodies:

*Die alte Frau Weber von unten ist gestorben. Als ich eben runter bin, um zur Kirche zu laufen, haben die Leichensammler sie abgeholt. (...) Sie sind wie Soldaten angezogen, aber sie haben Atemmasken über den Gesichtern. Es sieht aus, als wären sie keine Menschen, sondern merkwürdige Wesen mit Stummel-Rüsseln (...) Ich weiß nicht, wie sie wirklich genannt werden, aber Leichensammler passt zu ihnen* (Rademacher 2016: 75).<sup>22</sup>

Every person who doesn't obey the rules faces with hard punishments like electrical shock, freezing showers that cause shock, or cell confinement (Rademacher 2016: 179, 190, 191):

*Ich schlage vor, dass Anna zur Strafe vier Tage nichts zu essen bekommt. Und Einzelhaft. Weil sie die Regeln nicht anerkennt. Plus jeden Tag einen Stromschlag für die Beleidigung* (Rademacher 2016: 179).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> But at least on the roof it is safer (...) My parents should never learn what I do. They would go mad, as I endanger All of Us.

<sup>19</sup> For two years I couldn't write and be in the network. I feel now a bit like I have come home.

<sup>20</sup> He always gave me new things to read. He says: "If we have no longer any Culture, then we become animals. Through Poems as "Dauerbrot" we can hold on to the life.

<sup>21</sup> In the city it is somehow normal to see dead people.

<sup>22</sup> The old woman Weber, a downstairs neighbour, died. As I was on road to church, the Leichensammler/ corpse collector picked her up (...) They are dressed as soldiers, but have respiratory masks on their faces. It seems as if they weren't human beings, but strange creature with trunks (...) I don't know, what they are actually called, but "Leichensammler/Corpse Collector" suits them.

<sup>23</sup> I suggest such a punishment for Anna that she cannot eat for four days. And solitary confinement. As she doesn't respect the rules. Plus everyday electric shock for the insult.



#### **d. Authority and the Automated People**

The main purpose of the authority is to automatize the people and to make them submissive machines who act in accordance with the instructions. They do not care about the individual, none of the emotional bonds are accepted in dystopia, and people are a kind of machine that has to behave in accordance with the benefits of authority. The standardized model of the people is seen as a machine that should act according to the authority as programmed: *Ich fühle mich wie ein Stück Fleisch, nicht wie ein Mensch* (Rademacher 2016: 166) (...) *“Du musst ins System passen und gut erzogen sein” sagt Stella* (Rademacher 2016: 188).<sup>24</sup>

Accordingly, in the novel a girls' dormitory which serves the authority to standardize the girls and turn them into automats is mentioned. The main aim of this dormitory is to convert these *alleged useless* girls into effective, obedient and functionalized ones: *Wir werden einen funktionierenden Menschen aus dir machen* (Rademacher 2016: 163).<sup>25</sup> This symbolical dormitory can be interpreted as the combination of reality and fiction by Rademacher. That's because the dormitory has similarities with the labour and concentration camps of Hitler's Germany (Arbeitslager-Konzentrationslager). The rules, punishments, sanctions, treatments to individuals, hierarchy in the dormitory etc. make the reader connect with the labour camps at that time.

Control is the highest form of love and it offers a better life. Moreover, peace is guaranteed with control. These dictated concepts are actually the inexistent phenomenon in this authoritarian dystopia: *KONTROLLE SCHAFFT FRIEDEN* (Rademacher 2016: 171).<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the low class or banal life style of these people who *live* who try to *survive* actually, in dystopian Berlin should be educated: *WIR SIND EINE MINDERWERTIGE LEBENSFORM, DIE ERZOGEN WERDEN MUSS* (Rademacher 2016: 171).<sup>27</sup> The only purpose of these people has to be to serve the government: *WIR DIENEN DER REGIERUNG* (Rademacher 2016: 172).<sup>28</sup> Emphasizing the slogans in the dormitory, Rademacher in fact reminds the reader of the German history again. The slogans –motto in other words- *ARBEIT MACHT FREI (WORK BRINGS FREEDOM)* written on the doors of the forced labour camps during the Nazi-period have the characteristics of a directive or instruction in the books and of a song that children are singing perpetually at the camp:

*Die bessere Zukunft für jedermann  
nur strenge Kontrolle erreichen kann.  
So geben wir uns der Regierung hin,  
den Regeln zu folgen ist unser Sinn.  
Gleich sind wir alle und mit dabei,  
Kontrolle ist Liebe, und die macht uns frei* (Rademacher 2016: 172).<sup>29</sup>

#### **e. Destruction of Nature:**

In the novel, Rademacher mentions about only two seasons as a warning signal of global warming: Summer and winter. Summer is extremely hot and it causes drought; winter is extremely cold and it causes freezing. It is almost impossible to see the tiny signs of natural life in this concrete world or in the war weary city:

<sup>24</sup> *I feel like a piece of meat, not a person (...) “You should respect the system and should be well-educated” says Stella.*

<sup>25</sup> *We will make a functioning person from you.*

<sup>26</sup> *CONTROL CREATES FREEDOM.*

<sup>27</sup> *WE HAVE AN INFERIOR WAY OF LIFE, AND MUST BE EDUCATED.*

<sup>28</sup> *WE SERVE THE GOVERNMENT.*

<sup>29</sup> *The best future for someone*

*Is reached only with strict control.*

*So we devote ourselves to the government,*

*To follow the rules is our Sense.*

*We are the same and together,*

*Control is love and make us free.*

*Es gibt zwar noch keine richtigen Bäume oder Büsche, doch in allen Mauerritzen und aus dem aufgeplatzten Asphalt wächst Unkraut und Gras. Wenn dann noch der Himmel blau ist und die Luft frisch, oder wenn es im Sommer mal regnet, was allein schon ein Wunder ist, und ein paar Wassertropfen auf den Grashalmen glitzern, dann ist es fast schön, am Leben zu sein* (Rademacher 2016: 62).<sup>30</sup>

#### **f. Pessimism:**

Pessimism dominates dystopian novels. Hopelessness, fear, horror are the general state of sense that the authority offers: *Ich hab versucht, Luki zu trösten. "Irgendwann wird es Frieden geben". Und Daisy darauf: "Das dunkle Mittelalter hat 500 Jahre gedauert"* (Rademacher 2016: 51).<sup>31</sup>

The colors that symbolize pessimism and all the negative elements are mainly black and gray: *"Die Stadt sieht grau aus. Als wäre das Leben ein Schwarz-Weiß-Film"* (Rademacher 2016: 34)<sup>32</sup>:

*Es ist echtes graues Brot* (Rademacher 2016: 167). (...) *Ich versuche zu schreien, aber es geht nicht. Den Rest der Nacht schwebe ich durch ein graues Nicht (...)* *Sie tragen Schwarz, als sei Küchenarbeit eine traurige Angelegenheit* (Rademacher 2016: 174).<sup>33</sup>

#### **g. Technology:**

There is a developed technology in Rademacher's dystopia. Many programs can be watched as a hologram: *Viele Sendungen gab es als Hologram* (Rademacher 2016: 24).<sup>34</sup>

By using laser, the Authority reports its own rules to the citizens with the scripts written in the sky. The residents in Berlin are responsible for finding out what they have to do by looking at the sky:

*Am Abend schreiben sie mit Lasern die Zeit an den Himmel und welche Sektionen an der Reihe ist und natürlich die Versorgungsstelle* (Rademacher 2016: 17) (...) *Jeden Abend haben wir zum Himmel geschaut. Aber dort stand nie ESSENSAUSGABE, sondern immer nur AUSGANGSSPERRE* (Rademacher 2016: 39).<sup>35</sup>

#### **h. Time in Dystopia:**

The concept of time is insignificant in dystopia because each moment is identical to any other moments and the people who serve the authority don't have different expectations and worlds that they can arrange for themselves. Past, present, future and all times intertwine: *Morgen, gestern, heute verschwimmen zu einem unendlichen langen Tag* (Rademacher 2016: 209).<sup>36</sup>

The remarkable feature of this dystopia, regarding time, is the year 2039 that the story takes place in. What is told in the novel shows similarities with the war atmosphere during Second World War period in 1939, and the author is thought to present her work to the reader as an admonitory dystopia by fictionalizing this consciously. In this context, emphasizing *next century* reminds and refers to the year 1939, the Second World War:

<sup>30</sup> There aren't any real trees or bushes, however in the cracks on the walls and from the chapped asphalt grow weeds and grass. When then the sky is blue and the air is fresh, or when it rains in Summer, that is but a wonder, and some water drops on the blade of grass, then it is great to be in life.

<sup>31</sup> I tried to comfort Luki: "Someday there will be freedom". And Daisy after that: "The dark Middle Ages lasted 500 years".

<sup>32</sup> The city looks like grey, as if the life is a black-white film.

<sup>33</sup> It is actually grey Bread. (...) I try to cry, but it won't work. For the rest of the night I am up in the air with a grey No (...) They wear black as if kitchen work were a sad affair.

<sup>34</sup> There are many programs as holograms.

<sup>35</sup> In the evening they write the time with lasers in the sky and which section will be the next and of course the supply point Versorgungsstelle. (...) Every evening we look at the sky. But there is never written FOOD SERVING there, but always only CURFEW.

<sup>36</sup> Tomorrow, yesterday and today become blurred in an endless day.

*Und manchmal denke ich, wie es wohl wäre, wenn das hier jemand in hundert Jahren oder so liest. Und ich hoffe, dass dieser Jemand glücklich ist und satt und sagt: "Da bin ich aber froh, dass die dunkle Zeit vorbei ist und alle Menschen frei sind und genug zu essen haben" (Rademacher 2016: 15).<sup>37</sup>*

### **i. Dystopia and Berlin:**

In Rademacher's work, the reader isn't confronted with a fictional world or place, but with a real one: metropolin Berlin, the capital city of Germany. As it was mentioned before, *writing such literary works in a real country or by associating them directly with the truth is actually a risky situation for the authors who are living in totalitarian order and that's why the writer prefers to write a dystopian world in a fantastic atmosphere* (Akkoyun 2015: 30). But contemporary author Rademacher intertwines reality with fiction in the novel by taking this risk and shapes the story in Berlin. In the novel, the reader discovers the main avenues and the names of the streets of ruined Berlin such as *Fernsehturm, Alexanderplatz, Postdamer Platz, U-Bahn, Schönhauser Allee*. This turn of a phrase sets the reader out on a journey in dystopic Berlin (Rademacher 2016: 18, 127, 144, 145):

*Gestern sind wir bis zum Alexanderplatz. Der Fernsehturm ragt wie ein abgebrochener Zahnstocher zwischen den Trümmern auf. Die Kugel war mal ein Restaurant. Jetzt liegt sie auf dem Boden, das Glas zersplittert (Rademacher 2016: 48).<sup>38</sup>*

In the novel, Berlin is portrayed as a bombed site and grey city which has no signs of life. Beauty and ugliness, good and bad interlace in the city. Soldiers and the authority's physical and psychological violence cover all good sights (Rademacher 2016: 16, 33, 34):

*Schüsse, Zischen, Pfeifen, Schreie, Blut und immer mehr Blut und Blut und Schreie. Menschen stolpern, fallen, bleiben liegen. Der Hubschrauber dröhnt, jagt, tötet (...). Alles ist rot und grau (Rademacher 2016: 115).<sup>39</sup>*

*Es sieht so aus, als würden die zerbombten Häuser bluten (Rademacher 2016: 18).<sup>40</sup>*

From this portrayal, a careful reader can compare this dystopian Berlin especially with the period of Hitler's Germany and post-war period (esp. with Berlin of DDR-Deutsche Demokratische Republik- German Democratic Republic). A gloomy city covered with grey color is similar to that time. Moreover, the identity checks performed by the soldiers and the fears of the people prove this assertion: *Es gibt jetzt noch mehr Soldaten in der Stadt. Sie überprüfen unsere Ausweise, sie scheuchen uns von der Straße (Rademacher 2016: 50).<sup>41</sup>*

What has made the city like this, as mentioned in the novel, is the European Crisis – Europakrise- and the war that resulted from the problems with Russia. (Rademacher 2016: 22, 98). The war started as a war over raw material resources and it turned into a civil war over time, and as a result the military government took over the city of Berlin (Rademacher 2016: 23, 26): *Zuerst War Es Ein Krieg Von Staaten Gegen Staaten, sagt mein Vater. Jetzt Ist Es Ein Bürgerkrieg (Rademacher 2016: 26).<sup>42</sup>* According to Anna, a war is a war and it does not matter what kind of war it is or why and how it started: *Für mich ist Krieg Krieg. Wo ist der Unterschied? (Rademacher 2016: 26).<sup>43</sup>*

<sup>37</sup> *And sometimes I think that it would be well, if someone read this in a hundred years or so. And I hope that this person is happy and full and says: "I am very happy that the dark period is over and all the people are free and have enough food.*

<sup>38</sup> *Yesterday we went to Alexanderplatz. Fernsehturm rises like a broken toothpick among the ruins. The ball of it was once a Restaurant. Now it lies on the floor with the glass shards.*

<sup>39</sup> *Shots, bombs, whistles, cries, blood and more and more blood and cries. People trip, fall over, remain on the ground. The helicopter drones, shoots, kills (...). Everything is red and grey.*

<sup>40</sup> *It seems as if the bombed houses bleed.*

<sup>41</sup> *There are more and more soldiers in the city. They check our passes, shoot us out of the Street.*

<sup>42</sup> *At First It Is The War of States Against States, says my father. Now It Is A Civil War.*

<sup>43</sup> *For me a war is a war. Where is the difference?*

### k. Social Criticism:

As in every dystopian novel, this novel includes social criticism, questioning and directing people to self-criticism. All that form dystopias are the results of what people – especially people with power- have done and will do to nature and humanity: *Wenn die Welt voller Lügen und Misstrauen ist, was kann dann noch wahr sein?* (Rademacher 2016: 35).<sup>44</sup>

Rademacher consistently tends to give a message to her readers based on situations where heroes and characters are. Whether the world is a livable or uninhabitable place; or whether it is changed into utopia or dystopia is entirely in the hands of people. The most important thing for this is actions, not discourses. People provide a paradise to live in for themselves and for the future, not only by talking but also acting. Otherwise it may become possible to encounter an *apocalyptic Berlin* that will bring hell on earth: *Wir müssten mehr tun. Nicht nur reden* (Rademacher 2016: 43).<sup>45</sup> Transferring from Hegel through Kula; if art is *an attempt to narrate historical self-consciousness by means of art production* and so, the work of art is an aesthetic product which mediates and uncovers the historical reality or self-consciousness, art has an altering aspect for both the writer and the reader. *Art alters!* In other words, art alters concrete and living human beings, society and the world (Kula 2016: 40). The writer contributes to this change with his fiction and the reader contributes on the basis of what he has read.

The novel's characters, especially protagonists, constantly emphasize that people are the cause of this apocalyptic situation they are in. Nature has nothing to do with this situation. Because it is also people who basically slaughter the nature: *Die Natur hat das da draußen nicht gemacht. Das waren wir Menschen* (Rademacher 2016: 78). (...) *Menschen zerstören alles* (Rademacher 2016: 288).<sup>46</sup> In addition to natural disasters and human-caused problems, the basic problem that can make the world a dystopia is actually the economy as it mentioned in the novel:

*Ich glaube, es fing an mit den ganzen Naturkatastrophen und den menschengemachten Problemen wie der Sache mit den kaputten Atomkraftwerk. Aber vor allem wegen der Wirtschaft gibt es keine Zukunft mehr* (Rademacher 2016: 65).<sup>47</sup>

The basic message given in the novel is that people should pass on the world to the future with love, respect, tolerance, serenity and peace. It is the primary duty of every individual to leave something of value to the world after his death: *Es ist nicht so, dass die Welt die etwas schuldest, du schuldest der Welt etwas. Wenn du stirbst, musst du der Welt etwas zurückgeben* (Rademacher 2016: 77).<sup>48</sup>

The awfulness of war is one of the important messages highlighted at the end of the novel:

*Aber wenn sich in ferner Zukunft jemand an diesen Krieg erinnert, dann hoffe ich, dass er in Frieden lebt und nicht weiß, wie es sich anfühlt, wenn die Menschen, die man liebt, verhungern oder erschossen werden, und dass er satt und glücklich ist* (Rademacher 2016: 342-343).<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *When the world is full of lies and distrust, what can be true?*

<sup>45</sup> *We must do more. Not only speaking.*

<sup>46</sup> *The nature made nothing out there. We, the people, made it (...) The people destroy everything.*

<sup>47</sup> *I believe that it began with the whole natural disasters and man-made problems as the fact with nuclear power stations. But especially due to the economy there is no more future.*

<sup>48</sup> *It isn't that the world owes you something, you owe the world something. When you die, you must give the world something back.*

<sup>49</sup> *But when in distant future someone remembers this war, I hope that this person lives in freedom and don't know, how it feels, that the people he loves, starve, or are shot and I hope that this person is full and happy.*

### 3. CONCLUSION

Dystopias, in other words anti-utopias, are the exclusive texts which represent the society in the background, and they show the reader the worst that could happen by giving some tips to avoid this situation. The warning-text characteristics of the genre, as mentioned above, come out in this way. Especially the totalitarian societies and their life styles are displayed as the author writes up the experiences obtained from the current problems and from the history.

One of the most striking features of the novel that makes up the subject of the work is that the plot takes place in 2039, in the near future and in Berlin, in a real place. Whereas the setting is fictitious in many other dystopic novels, the writer characterizes a dystopic real place in this novel. (It should be recalled here some dystopian literary works have chosen settings that actually exist, for example, George Orwell's setting of *1984* is London, *The Man in the High Castle* (1963) by Philip Dick takes place in real places as San Francisco, *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley has London as a setting). The fact that the story is in 2039 reminds a careful reader of World War II in 1939. The post-war atmosphere described in the novel is similar to the post-war atmosphere of 100 years ago. In this context, Rademacher's dystopia can be regarded as a warning-text. The interview with Andrea Kachelrieß for "Stuttgarter Nachrichten" on 12 February 2016 proves it. In the interview, the author stated that the purpose of writing this book was to allow the reader to shape his future by taking lessons according to what happened in the past and is happening now (Kachelrieß 2016: online).

Climate changes due to global warming and the destruction of nature are also other important themes in the work. The author indicates already at the beginning of the story with the symbol of *blue flower* the value of nature for people and in fact for the World. By emphasising the dichotomy between nature and human beings with an approach combining them, Rademacher aims to show the dystopian atmosphere as a result of destroyed nature. The standardized nature reduces to the standardized people or vice versa, and this brings a standardized dystopia. Essentially, Rademacher warns the reader also about nature within the scope of social criticism.

The use of the lower cases and capital letters as a language strategy attracts attention within the work. The author has used capital letters in sentences for the points that he wants to emphasise, or she indicates the initials of the words by using capital letters as seen in some chapters. It can be considered as a language strategy that makes the reader to think, evaluate, perceive and question.

As a result, Rademacher creates a work which can be described as a warning dystopian text by intertwining reality with fiction. The main dystopian characteristics have been attempted to be identified within the work

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