Teaching Values Through Literature

Open-Mindedness, Equality and Love in Nnedi Okorafor’s

Akata Witch and Akata Warrior

Diplomarbeit

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
einer Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.a phil.)

eingereicht von

Eva Stalter

Matrikelnummer: 01217595

bei

Dr. phil. Ulrich Pallua

Innsbruck, im Mai 2019
Plagiarism Disclaimer

I hereby declare that this diploma thesis is my own and autonomous work. All sources and aids used have been indicated as such. All texts either quoted directly or paraphrased have been indicated by in-text citations. Full bibliographic details are given in the bibliography, which also contains internet sources including URL and access date. This work has not been submitted to any other examination authority before.

May 2019

__________________________________________
Date                                             Signature
Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Ulrich Pallua, who pointed me towards Nnedi Okorafor and her novels and has thus sparked a fascination for African-based fantasy in me that has enriched my personal reading life. Dr. Pallua also encouraged me to work independently while still providing me with valuable feedback. Additionally, I am grateful for his patience in answering all my questions.

I would also like to thank my parents for making both my studies and my graduation from these studies possible. Their never-ending support and constant belief in me encouraged me to pursue my goals and to never give up.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my husband, who has continuously supported me by listening and talking to me and thus helping me to form ideas and opinions about this thesis, being the external processor that I am. He also helped me to get out of my head every once in a while, which has proven to be crucial in gaining perspective on my thesis and leading a balanced lifestyle while writing this thesis.

Thank you for support!
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 7

2. Definition of Values ..................................................................................................... 11

3. History of Teaching Literature .................................................................................... 13

4. Moral Education ......................................................................................................... 16
   4.1 Jean Piaget’s ‘Development of Moral Judgment’ .................................................. 16
   4.2 Lawrence Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development ............................................. 17

5. Values in Literature .................................................................................................... 24
   5.1 Which Values Are Found in Literature? .................................................................. 24
   5.2 How Are They Transmitted? ................................................................................... 25
   5.3 Common Values in Fantasy Literature .................................................................. 26

6. Afrofiction – Afropolitanism ....................................................................................... 29
   6.1 Afro-Fiction ............................................................................................................. 29
   6.2 Afropolitanism ....................................................................................................... 31

7. Analysis of *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior* ........................................................ 33
   7.1 Open-Mindedness .................................................................................................. 34
      7.1.1 Definition ........................................................................................................ 34
      7.1.2 Examples ........................................................................................................ 35
      7.1.3 Interpretation .................................................................................................. 38
   7.2 Equality .................................................................................................................. 41
      7.2.1 Equality of Race or Origin ............................................................................ 42
      7.2.2 Equality of Gender ........................................................................................ 44
      7.2.3 Interpretation .................................................................................................. 48
   7.3 Love ....................................................................................................................... 55
      7.3.1 Definition ........................................................................................................ 55
      7.3.2 Examples ........................................................................................................ 56
7.3.2.1 Love in Family.................................................................56
7.3.2.2 Friendship.......................................................................62
7.3.3 Interpretation.......................................................................69

8 Teaching Values Through Fiction Read in School.................................76
8.1 Why Work with Literature to Convey Values?.................................76
8.2 Fictional Versus Nonfictional Texts..............................................80
8.3 Relation to the Lehrplan................................................................81
8.4 Theories of Teaching Literature....................................................84
8.5 Methods of Teaching Literature....................................................87
8.6 Theories and Methods of Teaching Values Through Literature..........92
8.6.1 The Portfolio.........................................................................94
8.7 Teaching Model..........................................................................100
8.7.1 Context..................................................................................101
8.7.2 Working with the Akata Series in Class.................................103
8.7.3 Material.................................................................................105

9 Conclusion......................................................................................108

10 Works Cited..................................................................................111
10.1 Primary Sources.......................................................................111
10.2 Secondary Sources....................................................................111

List of Figures
Figure 1: Reading Books in Spare Time..............................................77
Figure 2: A Specific Overview of the Reading Habits of Adolescents........78
Figure 3: Model of a Simple Grading Rubric.......................................100

List of Tables
Table 1: Overview of Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development..............17
Table 2: Detailed Description of Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development...21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Percentage of Subjects of Each Age Group at Each Stage</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>The Two Meanings of Explicitness and Implicitness</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Positively and Negatively Connotated Gender-Specific Female Characteristics</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Negatively and Positively Connotated Gender-Specific Male Characteristics</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Ingendahls Model</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Waldmann’s model</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Tasks Allocated to the Stages of Ingendahl’s Model</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Tasks Allocated to the Stages of Waldmann’s Model</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

“To tell a story is inescapably to take a moral stance, even if it is a moral stance against moral stances.”

(Bruner 51)

Morale and values surround us, they are ever present. For example, fair play is a value that is huge in sports. Or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is based entirely on values such as tolerance and equality. It only makes sense that values find their way into literature, too. Each author has their own set of values which influences them either consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously. This is what Bruner means by his statement as quoted above. No matter one’s attitude towards values, one cannot deny the fact that they are always present whenever you tell a story. An author could claim to tell a story without values, but then this in itself becomes the value. The value could be described as the wish not to impart any values. But what is the significance of ever-present values? People need to learn how to deal with them properly and this is why moral education has become increasingly important. This is where pedagogues and teachers come into play: they are meant to take on this task (cf. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 8).

Stories, especially in written form, can help with the imparting of crucial values. Stories contain values, they stick to our mind, and we can remember them better than most other things. Furthermore, they carry meaning because they touch us in ways we cannot fully understand and through being submersed in reading, we can experience what the characters are feeling. They also open up new worlds and strange cultures for readers to better understand them. One could object and say that it is naïve and irresponsible to view literature as reflection of a strange culture as they do not show real worlds but invent new or semi-new worlds, characters and stories (Bredella 306, my emphasis). However, the conclusion that texts do not have anything to do with the exterior world to which they refer is wrong as the fictional world manages to enlighten the exterior world better than the relating of events that actually occurred.
Therefore, fictional characters and events help to experience and uncover parts of reality that would have been less clear otherwise. Fictional literature includes a creative perspective on the world and thus, fiction and reality are not opposites but rather two sides of the same coin (306).

It has become clear that literature contains values. However, in how far values can be taught through literature remains unclear. This will be the focus of this thesis. In order to answer this question, two novels by Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Witch and Akata Warrior*, will be examined and analysed. It is the aim of this thesis to show that literature can contribute to the teaching of values with a special focus on how this is done in the context of school.

In this thesis, I argue that values are an integral part of literature and that they are transmitted either explicitly or implicitly. I also state that values cannot or should not be taught per se; rather, people should be encouraged to think critically about and reflect on them, which might lead to a change of opinion towards a certain value. Teaching values, however, implies some sort of forcing values on other people, which, on the other hand, means indoctrination and taking away the right to form an opinion about something. In order to find evidence for these hypotheses, the two novels of the *Akata* series will be analysed in relation to the values open-mindedness, equality and love. This examination will show how the values are transmitted and what role they play in the narratives.

As part of fully understanding the analysis of the novels, a short overview of the author, Nnedi Okorafor, and the novels themselves must be given. Okorafor was born in the United States to two Igbo (Nigerian) parents and is a novelist of African-based science fiction and fantasy for both children and adults. She has received multiple awards for her novels, including the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award. She was also the first black woman to win the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel. The first novel of the *Akata* series, *Akata Witch*, introduces Sunny Nwazue, a twelve-year-old albino Igbo who was born in New York and lived there for the first nine years of her life. She discovers that she is a ‘free agent’ of the Leopard society, people with magical power, or juju. She becomes part of a quartet of magic students and learns
to perform juju alongside Chichi, Orlu and Sasha, her new Leopard friends. Their group is told by the magical authorities to track down and fight a Leopard criminal, Black Hat Otokoto, who is trying to summon Ekwensu, the actual antagonist and villain of the series. In *Akata Warrior*, the sequel to *Akata Witch*, Sunny studies under her mentor Sugar Cream and tries to unravel the mysteries of her Nsibidi book. She is plagued by nightmares about a city of smoke and realises that she must travel there to confront her destiny. Her three friends Chichi, Orlu and Sasha accompany her to Osisi, the city of smoke, where they once again face Ekwensu and fight a battle to save the world.

The reason why I chose the novels of the *Akata* series is due to the aspect of interculturality. The Nigerian perspective gives insight into a completely different culture from our own European one which contributes to intercultural learning. This is especially important in our time, in which migration is a key characteristic of our political and social society. Thus, it is important to give other views on different cultures. I was sceptical about reading African-based fiction and in the course of reading, I realised how full of stereotypes about African-based literature I was. Our European society looks down on African societies and they often see their own cultures as superior to the ‘other’ ones. After all, they are ‘third-world countries’ which means they must be primitive and uncivilised. As soon as I read 50 pages of *Akata Witch*, I realised my own arrogance and felt so ashamed of it. This, however, led me to wanting to use African-based literature to confront stereotypes. The values chosen for the analysis – open-mindedness, equality and love – challenge this view of European superiority as they show that even in those ‘lesser’ countries, universal values such as tolerance and equality transform society and are being challenged every day. The novels of the *Akata* series also reveal that people in Africa are much the same as people in Europe and America and they all deal with inequality and intolerance. Okorafor’s works thus challenge discrimination and racism and call for open-mindedness, equality and love towards all people.

This thesis will first give an overview of the definition of values and of the history of teaching literature. Then, Jean Piaget’s ‘Development of Moral Judgment’ and Lawrence
Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development are discussed in the light of moral education and its relevance to imparting values through literature taught in school. Chapter 5 focuses on values in literature, how they are transmitted and which values are commonly found in fantasy fiction. For this, *The Lord of the Rings*, the *Harry Potter* series and *The Chronicles of Narnia* will be analysed on a rather superficial level. In chapter 6, a short overview of afro-fiction and the term Afropolitanism will be given. Chapter 7 contains the analysis of the values open-mindedness, equality and love in the *Akata* series. A concrete concept of how values can be imparted through literature read in school will be given in chapter 8. This chapter will not only give a theoretical approach to the topic of conveying values through literature, but it will also propose a specific and concrete example of how it can be done. A summary of the findings of this thesis will be provided in the last chapter, the conclusion.
2 Definition of Values

The Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary defines the term value as “a strongly held belief about what is valuable, important, or acceptable” ("Value"). Another – more detailed – definition is given by Günther Gugel: values are desirable conditions, or ideas, which we attribute to certain things (goods, commodities) or relations and which we want to attain. Values are defined but not invented by us; they are not constituted through one set of ethics but rather clarified, justified, approved and ranked by this set of ethics; they cannot be abolished by us but only denied (13). It thus shows that values are very hard to define and that the available definitions of them are quite vague. For the sake of this thesis, however, the two definitions provided above suffice.

Every society has their own set of values and ethics. The same holds true for any religion on earth. Sometimes, these sets of values are so contradictory that it seems impossible for these two groups to coexist peacefully (cf. Gugel 30). Take Christianity and Islam, for example. Or Buddhism and the Rohingya, a Muslim minority, in Myanmar. Or Christianity and Judaism, especially during the Nazi Regime. Different sets of values have often been a reason for stereotyping, oppression and persecution of the minority group. Thus, both the past and the present have shown that different sets of values cause violence. The question that arises here is: can values be global? The aim of global values would be to stop unnecessary and discriminating violence and work on a united world so that tragedies like the Holocaust or genocide will not happen again.

One approach of global values pertaining to the human existence is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. This Declaration was a response to the terrors of World War II and the Holocaust as it defined fundamental human rights that needed to be universally protected. In theory, whenever the UDHR is violated, the United Nations and its members can put moral and diplomatic pressure on the government under which the violation took place. However, as can be seen in numerous examples, this often does not work. ISIS and the Taliban keep terrorizing the Near and Middle East. The militias in South Sudan, the
Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Central African Republic still kidnap children and turn them into child soldiers. Nonetheless, it must be noted that without the UDHR, there would be no leverage over countries that defied human rights and the world would be a much darker place. Therefore, it can be said that there were at least attempts of defining global values and even though there are still violations against these global rights, our world is a better place with them than without them.
3 History of Teaching Literature

Teaching literature originally started out as a form of training grammatic, rhetoric and stylistic skills (Paefgen 1). For this, classic literature such as Homer and Virgil was prominently used, which means that the predominant languages in literary education were Latin and Greek. In Germany, for example, no German literature was taught in school until the end of the 19th century even though there were initiatives to bring German literature to school. These initiatives, however, mostly failed (Paefgen 1).

The first values displayed in literature were of religious origin. For instance, the Puritans Anne Bradstreet and Edward Tayler – the first American poets – always included a religious aspect into their poems. This, however, changed during the Age of Enlightenment with its shift towards secularisation. This shift in values did not go uncriticised, as Lynn Hunt noticed: “Reverend Vicesimus Knox summed up decades of lingering anxieties in 1779 when he proclaimed novels degenerate, guilty pleasures that diverted young minds from more serious and edifying reading. The upsurge in British novels only served to broadcast French libertine habits and accounted for the corruption of the present age” (51). Knox had a special aversion for novels and newer literature whereas the classics were still considered as highly valuable in education. Reading novels, however, was considered a loss of morality that affected girls and women most of all. Immanuel Kant was the German representative of such criticism. He suspected that arts – especially novels – had a harmful effect on the rational being (Schilcher 259).

In the 18th century, the communication of values and of (primary and secondary) virtues became more important than the imparting of knowledge and other skills. In the late 18th century, the conviction arose that literature was a better means of educating virtues than the expedient genres of the previous centuries such as the ‘Tugendspiegel’ (Ewers 107). Kaspar Spinner referred to this as the beginning of the ‘Geschichte einer unseligen Allianz’ (13) – the story of an unfortunate alliance – between morale and the teaching of literature in which especially literature for children and young adults was soon used as a tool for the socialisation of young citizens (Schilcher 260). The same concept of using literature as a means for moral
education can be found in both the United States and the United Kingdom. After the end of the Civil War in the US, literature was seen as “a repository of moral and spiritual values which could be mobilised on behalf of an all-round ‘humane’ education and of the enhancement of the national culture” (Widdowson 45). In the United Kingdom, English literature became a course of study at University College London in the 1820s with its purpose being “to moralize, civilize, and humanize” (Showalter 22).

Starting at the end of the 19th century, literature then became a tool to establish national identities. In the German Empire under Wilhelm II., German literature reached a recognition that was unknown and denied prior to this development (Paefgen 8). This same literature was then used to create a German identity (9). In terms of English literature and national identity, the First World War proved to be extremely important: it intensified the patriotic enthusiasm for an ‘Englishness’ that also showed in its literature. The victory over the ‘Germanic’ philology played a major role in this. Rupert Brooke’s sonnet ‘The Soldier’ is the perfect example for this patriotic enthusiasm in England (Widdowson 46). The poem emphasises the immortality and goodness of England and demonstrates the proud and patriotic mood dominant in the first months of the war. This development of strengthening and communicating the national identity continued throughout the 20th century and was radicalised during the Nazi regime. Literature then served only one purpose: to educate the Nazi-influenced subject (Paefgen 14–15). Literature was manipulated to convey only Nazi values and literature containing world views that did not correlate with Nazi views was prohibited.

This highly manipulative way of dealing with literature led to a more neutral approach after 1945. Literature was still seen as valuable and ideal-forming, but it could be dealt with in a neutral manner. In Germany, texts by Nazi authors were taken off the curriculum but even in the 1950s, there was still a tendency to idyllic, moralising, close-to-nature, or traditionally narrated literature (Paefgen 16). Up until the 1950s and 1960s, education of values, formation of ideals and aid in life were key concepts for a lot of didacts of literature (Spinner 13–14). In the first decade after the war, ‘contemporary’ German literature such as works by Franz Kafka,
Rainer Maria Rilke and Georg Trakl found its way into the classroom. This shows that this change and opening of the literary canon only happened very slowly (cf. Paefgen 17).

The 1970s were a time of profound reforms. The renunciation of a traditional canon as well as the rediscovery of historically and socially buried literature, orientation towards the interests of students, and a more pronounced emphasis on oral communication were the main developments. Furthermore, the literary education was temporarily dominated by the emancipatory language instruction in which functional texts threatened to supersede aesthetic texts. In the US, the teaching of literature at universities in the 1960s and 1970s was characterised by the political activism of radical and minority groups. Feminist and African-American critics started courses and thus put pressure on the curriculum to incorporate black and women writers (Showalter 23).

In the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of different concepts arose. One saw literary education as a medium of historic awareness whereas aesthetic education believed that the dealing with literature created space for finding oneself. In addition, there were numerous versions of project- and activity-oriented approaches to deal with literature.

Today, teaching literature has become so multi-dimensional that it is difficult to pinpoint its significance. Literature is still being used as a vehicle to transmit values and norms (cf. Kreft 131; Schilcher 260). In the language learning classroom, the training grammatic and stylistic skills remains the focus of literary education. Nowadays, teaching literature incorporates the reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. One could even claim that a teacher could choose any focus of the history of teaching literature as their own focus of teaching literature. However, when looking at the history of teaching literature, it becomes apparent that literature has been connected to values from the beginning – from literature’s introduction to education – and has never ceased to play its role in moral education.
4 Moral Education

4.1 Jean Piaget's ‘Development of Moral Judgment'

Jean Piaget's model of the development of moral judgment emerged out of his observations of children playing with marbles. He discovered that the matter of justice and of the obedience to and awareness of rules was strongly related to the age of the children. He noted that younger children strongly linked the obedience to rules and thus a fair game to criteria given by authorities. The established rules were sacrosanct, and the violation of the rules had to have consequences. Piaget further discovered that children only overcame this stage, which he called the stage of heteronomous moral, at the age of seven to eight years (Lohaus and Vierhaus 218).

In Piaget's eyes, two crucial factors facilitated the transition of childlike thinking into an interphase (between the ages six and eleven): the cognitive maturing and the change of their social surroundings. Their everyday life was increasingly influenced by being amongst peers. This time spent with peers was primarily organised by rules agreed upon with the other peers. These rules are thus not seen as irrefutable anymore as they can be modified. The experiences made in this interphase are crucial in the transition to the stage of autonomous moral (at the age of eleven or twelve years) in which the development of the comprehension of rules and justice has been more or less established.

Along with his observations, Piaget also used another method: in his interviews, he confronted children of different ages each with two stories in which the protagonist brings about damage. He then asked them to grade the severity of the offence. Two aspects in these stories varied: the intent of the actor as well as the extent to which damage is done. Assumingly, they have to be analysed taking age and stage of development into consideration. For example, John enters a room in which a lot of glasses are located right behind the door. By opening that door, John knocks the glasses over and unintentionally brings about a lot of damage. The other story talks about Henry who climbs on a chair to reach the bowl of sweets that his mother
keeps in this rather hard to reach place on purpose. The bowl slips from his grasp and shatters. From Piaget's point of view, the obvious difference between the two stories (great vs. little damage or absent vs. existing intention) leads to a different evaluation of the two aspects: younger children in the stage of heteronomous moral argue that the greater extent of the damage caused by John is worse (and thus immoral) whereas older children – in the stage of autonomous moral – attach less importance to the extent of the damage done by John but focus more on Henry’s intention, which they believe should be assessed negatively (Lohaus and Vierhaus 218–19).

4.2 Lawrence Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg built on Piaget’s model when he created his own model. He began the work on the development of moral judgment in 1955 and out of his wish to continue Piaget’s study ‘The moral development of the child’. He intended to prove and demonstrate Piaget’s hypothesis that moral judgment “had really moved from heteronomous to autonomous thinking by the age of twelve to thirteen” (Garz 39). However, where Piaget’s model only depicts a development that children go through and that is completed when they reach adulthood, Kohlberg’s approach is that moral development is a lifelong process that is never fully completed.

Kohlberg’s model consists of three levels with each level being comprised of two stages. The higher the stage, the less self-centred the individual becomes and the more capable they are of taking different perspectives and of comparing their own perspective to the collective perspective. The three levels and six stages are depicted in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Stage 1: Punishment and obedience</th>
<th>Stage 2: Instrumental purpose, and exchange</th>
<th>Stage 3: Interpersonal expectations, relationships, and conformity</th>
<th>Stage 4: Preservation of the social system</th>
<th>Stage 5: Social contract and individual rights</th>
<th>Stage 6: Universal ethical principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postconventional Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Overview of Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development*
The following table gives a detailed description of the different stages, which is vital to understanding the model.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level and Stage</th>
<th>What is right</th>
<th>Reasons for doing right</th>
<th>Social perspective of stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL I. Pre-conventional</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stage 1: heteronomous morality</td>
<td>Avoiding breaking rules backed by punishment; obedience for its own sake; to avoid physical damage to persons and property.</td>
<td>Avoidance of punishment, and the superior power of authorities</td>
<td><strong>Egocentric point of view.</strong> Doesn't consider the interests of others or recognize that they differ from the actor's; doesn't relate two points of views. Actions are considered physically rather than in terms of psychological interests of others. Confusing of authority's perspective with one's own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: Individualism, instrumental purpose and exchange</strong></td>
<td>Following rules only when it is to someone's immediate interest; acting to meet your own interests and needs and letting others do the same. Right is also what's fair, an equal exchange, a deal, an agreement.</td>
<td>To serve your own needs or interests in a world where you have to recognize that other people have their interests too.</td>
<td><strong>Concrete individualistic perspective.</strong> Aware that everybody has his own interest to pursue and these conflict, so that right is relative (in the concrete individualistic sense).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL II. Conventional</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stage 3: Mutual Interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity</td>
<td>Living up to what is expected by people close to you or what people generally expect of people in your role as son, brother, friends, etc. “Being good” is important and means having good motives, showing concern about others. It also means keeping mutual</td>
<td>The need to be a good person in your own eyes and those of others. Your caring for others. Belief in the Golden Rule. Desire to maintain rules and authority which support stereotypically good behaviour.</td>
<td><strong>Perspective of the individual in relationships with other individuals.</strong> Aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations which take primacy over individual interests. Relates points of view through the concrete Golden Rule, putting yourself in the other guy's shoes. Does not yet consider generalized system perspective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relationships, such as trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude.

Stage 4: Social system and conscience
Fulfilling the actual duties to which you have agreed. Laws are to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties. Right is also contributing to society, the group, or institution. To keep the institution going as a whole, to avoid the breakdown in the system “if everyone did it,” or the imperative of conscience to meet your defined obligations (easily confused with stage 3 belief in rules and authority).

LEVEL III: Post-conventional or principled
Stage 5: Social contract or utility and individual rights
Being aware that people hold a variety of values and opinions, that most values and rules are relative to your group. These relative rules should usually be upheld, however, in the interest of impartiality and because they are the social contract. Some nonrelative values and rights like life and liberty, however, must be upheld in any society regardless of majority opinion.

A sense of obligation to law because of your social contract to make and abide by laws for the welfare of all and for the protection of all people’s rights. A feeling of contractual commitment, freely entered upon, to family, friendship, trust, and work obligation. Concern that laws and duties be based on rational calculation of overall utility, “the greatest good for the greatest number.”

Stage 6: Universal ethical principles
Following self-chosen ethical principles. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on

The belief as a rational person in the validity of universal moral principles, and a sense

Differentiation of societal points of view from interpersonal agreement or motives. Takes the point of view of the system that defines roles and rules. Considers individual relations in terms of place in the system.

Prior-to-society perspective. Perspective of a rational individual aware of values and rights prior to social attachments and contracts. Integrates perspectives by formal mechanisms of agreements, contract, objective impartiality, and due process. Considers moral and legal points of view; recognizes that they sometimes conflict and finds it difficult to integrate them.

Perspective of a moral point of view from which social arrangements derive. Perspective is that of any rational individual recognizing the nature of morality or the fact that
such principles. When laws violate these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle. Principles are universal principals of justice: the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

of personal commitment to them. persons are ends in themselves and must be treated as such.

Table 2: Detailed Description of Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development

Anne Colby et al. also examined the percentage of subjects of each age group at each stage. The next table illustrates this percentage.

**Table 3: Percentage of Subjects of Each Age Group at Each Stage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Stage</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>16-18</th>
<th>20-22</th>
<th>24-26</th>
<th>28-30</th>
<th>32-33</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean MMS</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D. MMS</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It becomes apparent that there is a strong correlation between age and stage: the lower stages are well represented in the lower age groups. The higher the stage, the older the participants of the study get. When looking at the mean moral maturity scores (MMS), it is noticeable that they steadily rise from 189 at age ten to 375 at age 36. Important to this thesis are the age groups ten, 13 to 14 and 16 to 18 as that is the age of the students of secondary school in Austria. The stages represented in these three age groups are stages 1 to 3/4 which makes these stages the relevant stages for this thesis. In chapter 8 of this thesis, comparisons will be drawn between adolescent readers and their moral development.

Kohlberg’s model has been widely discussed and acclaimed but it was also the centre of much criticism. One point of criticism is the doubt that morality can be depicted or that other factors than cognition play a more significant part than Kohlberg states. Furthermore, one may have justified doubts that individual differences in moral judgment are connected to differences in moral behaviour (which Kohlberg has tried to verify from the beginning) (Lohaus and
Another point of criticism is that the model does not differentiate enough between moral judging and moral acting (Gugel 25). Carol Gilligan also criticises Kohlberg for only focusing on the male values and leaving the female perspective out of the equation. Kohlberg’s model is “based empirically on a study of eighty-four boys whose development Kohlberg has followed for a period of over twenty years…. In this version of moral development, however, the conception of maturity is derived from the study of men’s lives and reflects the importance of individuation in their development” (18). She further argues that men’s morality is that of rights whereas women’s is that of responsibility. Kohlberg’s model is limited to the morality of rights – men’s principle of judging – and neglects the female morality – the morality of responsibility and welfare (19).

Even though some basic assumptions about his model of moral judgment have not or only hardly been able to withstand scientific inquiry, the model has to be seen as a fundamental principle of developmental psychology. If nothing else, it has caused a scientific argument and has prompted a multitude of scientists to develop alternative models, which they tried to prove scientifically (Lohaus and Vierhaus 218). Furthermore, the pedagogically significant turn brought about by Kohlberg is to be found in the fact that a person is taken seriously as an active subject rather than a passive being with regard to their morality. Thus, children and adolescents do not think less morally than adults – they think in a different way following their own reasoning (Schuster 177).
5 Values in Literature

5.1 Which Values Are Found in Literature?

All pieces of literature contain values or at least a specific set of values since all authors belong to a certain society or group with a specific set of ethics (Bruner 51). These values can either be satirized and criticised as in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, or supported as in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.

Each society has its own set of values, and each group within that society has, in turn, more specified values. For example, Austria is strongly influenced by both Christian and western values. The lives of Turkish immigrants in Austria, however, are based on oriental and Muslim values. Thus, religion plays a huge role when dealing with values. Other sets of values which influence an author are of political, social, national and personal origin. Some of these sets are shared by more than one group or society as can be seen in religious groups or in the Western world in general; others belong specifically to one group.

As mentioned above, Austria is built on western values. Central values of this western civilisation are liberty, equality, solidarity, peace, justice, and the right to own property. Fundamental for these values is the firm belief in the dignity and liberty of the human being which in turn has found its expression in the French Revolution (and its credo “liberté, égalité, fraternité”) (Gugel 13). These values are also the underlying and elementary values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Western literature is often characterised by these values.

A general statement regarding the values in literature cannot be made. Different religious, political, social, national or personal views and opinions strongly influence authors and the values that go along with these views and opinions almost always find their way into the works of these authors. Western literature is different to the literature of any other place of the world. They display other values because the society of that other place highlights other values.
5.2 How Are They Transmitted?

There are mainly two distinct ways of how values are expressed and transmitted in literature: implicitly and explicitly. Various genres thus deal with values in different ways. Most genres contain implicit values. But fables and fairy tales explicitly refer to values which becomes obvious in the style of German fables which always end with the sentence “und die Moral von der Geschicht” followed by the value taught by the story put into words.

According to Sebastian Susteck, there are two meanings of explicitness and implicitness which are illustrated in the table below (275):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicitness</th>
<th>Implicitness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulated</td>
<td>Not articulated, not predicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something clearly visible,</td>
<td>Not aware of it, something in the shadows,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aware of it, focused</td>
<td>not focused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The Two Meanings of Explicitness and Implicitness

Both meanings are relevant when dealing with values in literature. Fables are explicit on both levels as the values are both articulated and clearly visible. It is difficult to ascertain whether there are any literary works that contain only implicit values. In fictional texts, most values are implicit, but the key values are often articulated and very clearly visible. In the *Harry Potter* series, for example, the most explicit value throughout the series is love as it is both articulated and clearly visible. Implicit values include selflessness, courage, trust and more. These values are sometimes articulated; however, most of the time, they remain in the shadows, unfocused and unarticulated and can only be seen in the actions of the characters. Nevertheless, the actions of the characters often render the value clearly visible which makes the value explicit again.

The question that arises from this is: how do you as a teacher or your pupils deal with implicit values? Implicit values become explicit when students are made aware of them. Through setting tasks that deal with these implicit values, students start thinking about and reflecting on them. To finalise the process of making the values explicit, students exchange
their views and opinions with each other (Susteck 283). Thus, school and literature taught in school should not teach values, but practice reflecting on them (Gugel 20).

5.3 Common Values in Fantasy Literature

Different scholars have made different attempts of structuring and dividing fantasy into various sub-genres. Colin Manlove, for example, divides English fantasy into secondary world, metaphysical, emotive, comic, subversive and children’s fantasy in his book *The Fantasy Literature of England*. Pamela S. Gates, Susan B. Steffel, and Francis J. Molson created three sub-categories for children's fantasy: fairy or folk tales, mixed fantasy, and heroic-ethical fantasy (7–8). Fairy or folk tales are self-explanatory: folk tales “mirror the lives and aspirations of the folk or common people” whereas fairy tales, or court or art fairy tales, take elements from folk tales and craft the tales specifically for a courtly audience (8). Mixed fantasy includes several different types: journey fantasy (travel in space or time), transformation fantasy (protagonist undergoes some sort of change, e.g. from toy to real), talking animal fantasy (which, obviously, features talking animals), and magic fantasy (which contains some sort of magic) (8).

The heroic-ethical fantasy is the last category: it encompasses heroic deeds and adventures through which the main character arrives at a moral decision with potentially unexpected and far-reaching consequences (8). However, it has to be noted that a work can hardly ever be placed into one single category or sub-category. Okorafor’s two novels contain elements of magic fantasy, journey fantasy, transformation fantasy, talking animal fantasy and heroic-ethical fantasy. Since the focus of this thesis is the transmission of values, I will focus on heroic-ethical fantasy. Pertaining to the value system contained in fantasy literature, it has to be noted that fantasy literature “orients itself towards Western society and its values of equality and freedom” (Fenske 389).

In fantastic stories, especially in heroic-ethical fantasy, the two worlds of good and evil often clash together (Gates et al. 114–15; Fenske 388). In *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior*, it is the Leopard people – and especially Sunny and her friends – who must fight the evil
Ekwensu and Black Hat Otokoto. In the *Harry Potter* series, Harry and his friends face Voldemort and his followers, the Death Eaters. Sauron is the antagonist in *The Lord of the Rings*, who is eventually destroyed by Frodo and the Fellowship of the Ring. In the *Narnia* series, there is not one single evil force but rather multiple: e.g. the White Witch, the Telmarines, and the ape Shift as opposed by the good characters of the Pevensie siblings, Prince Caspian, Aslan and others. This sort of fantastic writing contains a certain set of values: good always prevails over evil and the heroes or heroines display positive attributes such as bravery, trust, love, loyalty and selflessness whereas the antagonists’ qualities include lust for power, pride, cruelty, unfairness and cowardice (Fenske 389–90; Kulik 59, 335).

In *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien, for example, the values love, loyalty, friendship and trust can be best seen in the fellowship itself. Especially the relationship between Frodo and Sam is characterised by these values. Courage, perseverance and selflessness are three other prominent virtues featured in the series: they all prove extremely courageous on the quest, they never give up no matter how hopeless everything seems and Sam’s commitment to Frodo is a prime example of selflessness. All protagonists further strive for peace and freedom. Some more covertly expressed values are mercy, pity and humility. Frodo pities Gollum and has mercy on him which ultimately results in the destruction of the Ring. Sam resists the temptations of the Ring because of his humility and love for Frodo (cf. Blount 97).

C.S. Lewis also features a number of values in his *The Chronicles of Narnia*: friendship, for example between Lucy and Mr Tumnus, Eustace and Jill, or Caspian and the Pevensies, results in trust, love and loyalty. Again, all protagonists show that they are brave at some stage. Aslan is the embodiment of selflessness as he gives himself and his life for Edmund Pevensie. Another central value in this series is honesty, as can be seen in *The Last Battle*. The donkey Puzzle is forced by the ape Shift to pretend to be Aslan and suffers immensely from lying to the other Narnians. As soon as he is freed from the burden of the lie, he becomes a completely
different donkey. Similar to *The Lord of the Rings*, all protagonists are fighting for a peaceful world.

In the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling, values such as equality and racism are shown by depicting an unequal and racist (pure-blood versus muggle-born) world. Furthermore, freedom and oppression play a big role: slavery is an accepted institution and Hermione’s quest to free the house elves – the slaves – is met with panic and discontent by the house elves themselves (Fenske 302). The oppression by Voldemort is visible in all seven books and the ultimate goal of the protagonists is freedom from this oppression. Bravery is also to be found in the novels: in the Battle of Hogwarts, but also in all the other adventures of the trio. However, perhaps the most important and conspicuous values are selflessness on the one hand and friendship, trust, loyalty and love on the other. Harry’s greatest act is sacrificing himself in an act of selflessness in order to save his friends. The other set of values can be seen in the friendship of the trio, the love of Harry’s mother, the relationship between Harry and Dumbledore and a lot of other examples.

In the last few paragraphs it has become apparent that different pieces of fantasy literature share their most common and basic values. These values are love, friendship, trust, loyalty, peace, selflessness, and courage. The same set of values can be found in Okorafor’s novels *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior*. 
6 Afrofiction – Afropolitanism

6.1 Afro-Fiction

In her essay “Organic Fantasy”, Okorafor quotes a passage of Ben Okri’s *Birds of Heaven*:

Africa breathes stories. In Africa everything is a story, everything is a repository of stories. Spiders, the wind, a leaf, a tree, the moon, silence, a glance, a mysterious old man, an owl at midnight, a sign, a white stone on a branch, a single yellow bird of omen, an inexplicable death, an unprompted laughter, an egg by the river, are all impregnated with stories. In Africa things are stories, they store stories, and they yield stories at the right moment of dreaming, when we are open to the secret of objects and moods. (276)

This is the essence of afro-fiction: the richness of stories and tales that can be found everywhere in Africa. Okorafor has come to that same realisation when she calls Nigeria – the home country of her parents – her muse: “To set foot on Nigerian soil is to be filled with another 10 novels and 50 short stories” (Okorafor, “Organic Fantasy” 276). Most of her stories are set in Africa even though she herself has never lived there. Her strong connection to Africa and the effect her stories had on the representation of Africa in science fiction and fantasy are the reasons her stories can be classified as afro-fiction.

These stories that Okri was talking about were originally transmitted orally and have since been adapted into the written tradition, especially the novel (Irele, “Introduction” 1; George 15). Orality has thus always been significant in African culture and societies as it plays a role in forming a cultural identity (Quayson 159). This oral tradition is also important in African fiction as orality serves to create a unique account of the African world (159). Brenda Cooper claims that almost all contemporary African writers

incorporate elements from the oral tradition, ranging from using the stories to illustrate moral points, to echoing the worldviews of the stories, to incorporating narrative devices and strategies into their fictions, along with all the other traditions and influences which have moulded them, and which they select and transform (40).

This means that the novel has not only developed out of oral traditions and is now equally important but also that it is still inspired by them and uses these traditions as resources. In the
Akata series, elements of oral tradition can be found in the Igbo mythology that plays a huge role in the novels. The belief system of the Igbos concerning the Supreme Being (Chukwu), Ekwensu and Anyanwu are examples of this mythology.

Magical realism is also an important feature in African literature. The *English Oxford Living Dictionaries* define magic realism as “a literary or artistic genre in which realistic narrative and naturalistic technique are combined with surreal elements of dream or fantasy” (“Magic Realism”). There are several other definitions and opinions vary on it but for the purpose of this thesis, this definition suffices. As can be seen in the mythology of the Igbos, most African oral stories have an element of the supernatural or the magical in them (Quayson 159). Okorafor relates magical realism to her own writing in the following way: “I tried to tone it down and write ‘normal’ fiction. Despite all of this effort, magic, mysticism and weirdness burst forth from my stories like wildflowers and spawning beasts” (Okorafor, “Organic Fantasy” 276). She then goes on to say that the world is a magical place for her and that she sees magic all around her (276-277). Thus, her stories are infused with magic and magical realism.

The genre of fantasy literature has long been dominated by white and Western authors. Heroes and heroines predominantly carry Caucasian traits and are hardly ever of any other descent. Famous recent fantasy franchises such as *Harry Potter*, *Percy Jackson* and *Twilight* and more classic ones such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* have their roots in European mythology and legends (Alter). There have been African or African American fantasy tales by writers such as Ben Okri. However, these have long been marginalised in regard to fantasy literature of the world (Alter). In recent years, fantasy writers of colour have gained popularity which can be seen in the awards that Okorafor, amongst others, has received for her stories. Nevertheless, heroes or heroines of African descent are still scarce. Okorafor notes that – much like other children of any skin colour – black children yearn to identify with a main character, be able to empathise with them, accompany them on their adventures and perform magic. On the other hand, non-black readers tend to enjoy the change of scenery and the uniqueness of the stories featuring coloured heroes or heroines (Okorafor, “Organic
Fantasy” 285). Thus, it can be seen that African fantasy has recently experienced an increase but they are still “plump drops to this near-empty bucket” of African fantasy (Okorafor, “Organic Fantasy” 285).

6.2 Afropolitanism

Afropolitanism is a discourse in literature, philosophy, music or arts in general. Anima Adjepong gives the following definition of an Afropolitan: “‘Afropolitan’ refers to people who were either born or raised in the West but maintain affective and physical ties to Africa” (248). For centuries, Africans have left their continent either involuntarily (slavery) or voluntarily, e.g. for educational reasons. Due to the poverty of most African nations, their professionals had to leave their home in order to find economic success elsewhere (Takougang 190). Thus, Africans have spread across the world and the term ‘Afropolitan’ has been introduced. Achille Mbembe gives a more detailed description of Afropolitanism: the awareness of the intertwining of the here and the there, the presence of the there in the here and vice versa, the relativization of the roots and original affiliations and the manner of welcoming the strange, the strangers and the distant in the proximity, the skill to find oneself in the face of a stranger and to value the traces of the distant in the proximity, to tame the unfamiliar and to work with what seems to be contrary to the familiar (285). To him, being Afropolitan is obviously much more than just being an “African of the world” (Adjepong 249). It also encompasses a cultural, historic and aesthetic sensibility (Mbembe 285).

Okorafor can be qualified as an Afropolitan due to her “complex African experience, which on many levels has been a series of cultural mixes and clashes between being American and being Nigerian” (Okorafor, “Organic Fantasy” 276). Her parents emigrated to the U.S. for educational reasons with the intention of going back to Nigeria but were stopped by the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War. Okorafor was thus born in the U.S. but has travelled to Nigeria a lot since she was young as her family spent most holidays there (Alter). Her strong emotional and physical connection to Africa, especially Nigeria, finds it expression in her African-based
stories. Were she not an Afropolitan, her stories would most likely be centred on the U.S. as this is where she grew up.

In her essay “Afropolitan Projects: African Immigrant Identities and Solidarities in the United States”, Adjepong examines Afropolitan projects and how they try to formulate an identity of “Africans of the world”, stating that not all of the Afropolitan projects are the same but “they are all concerned with advancing a modern non-victimized narrative about Africa” (249). *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior* most definitely tell such a tale of a modern non-victimized Africa as Sunny and her friends take their destinies into their own hands. In Afropolitan projects, the subject matter of creative work is the story of a broken human being who slowly rises again and sheds the restraints of his or her origin (Mbembe 280). *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior* are thus perfect examples of Afropolitan stories as Sunny, a character who suffers greatly from being albino, learns to trust herself and does not resent herself for being albino. Instead, she realises how powerful she truly is.
7 Analysis of Akata Witch and Akata Warrior

In this chapter, the two novels of the Akata series will be analysed according to the three chosen values open-mindedness, equality, and non-romantic love. These values will first be defined with the aid of three dictionaries: the Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary, the Macmillan Dictionary and the English Oxford Living Dictionaries. Each value will then be demonstrated with the help of several examples. The examples are highlighted by situations taken out of the two novels. Both the list of examples and situations that illustrate the examples are only a sampling. Many more instances of how the values are transmitted in the novels can be found through close examination of the narratives. However, the selected examples and situations best illustrate how the novels impart certain values. In a last step, the examples and situations will be analysed and interpreted with the focus on the respective value.

The first two values were chosen in accordance to the Lehrplan (see Chapter 8.3). Open-mindedness is a globally accepted value that is highlighted in many western societies. Articles 18 and 19 of the UDHR state that everybody has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including the right to change their religion or belief as well as the right to freedom of opinion and expression (cf. United Nations). The base of such rights is open-mindedness, as people have to accept that other people have different beliefs, thoughts, and opinions than themselves and in order to live together peacefully, these rights have to be granted to each other. This requires a certain amount of open-mindedness. Equality, too, is very important in our time and is also a part of civic education as people have to understand that both race and gender are a social construct. The UDHR explicitly devotes the first two articles to equality. Article 1 is a general statement that “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” whereas Article 2 states that the UDHR is applicable to everyone, “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations). In this analysis, the focus will lie on equality of race and gender. The third value, non-romantic love, is the
base of humane interaction with all mankind and thus, it is also the foundation of both open-mindedness and equality.

7.1 Open-Mindedness

7.1.1 Definition

The *Macmillan Dictionary* describes openness as “a tendency to accept new ideas, methods, or changes” ("Openness") and the *English Oxford Living Dictionaries* refers to it as “acceptance of or receptiveness to change or new ideas.” ("Openness"). The *Merriam Webster Learner’s Dictionary* defines being open-minded as being “willing to consider different ideas or opinions” ("Open-Minded") and tolerance as the “willingness to accept feelings, habits, or beliefs that are different from your own” ("Tolerance"). The definition that best describes the open-mindedness that is being analysed in this chapter is the definition of “open-minded” given by the *Merriam Webster Learner’s Dictionary*. All other definitions display the word “accept” or “acceptance” which suggests that the new ideas, feelings, etc. must be, or at least are likely to be, adopted without scrutinising them critically. However, the word “consider” suggests an openness towards those opinions, etc. without the compulsion to take them on. William Hare summarized this perfectly: “Open-mindedness is an intellectual virtue and educational ideal that involves being receptive in a critical manner to new ideas and to ideas that conflict with one’s own beliefs; without a critical component, there would be no contrast with credulity and open-mindedness would be no virtue at all” (6). Nevertheless, the other definitions do play a role in grasping the whole concept of open-mindedness as they include not only ideas or opinions but also methods, change, feelings, habits and beliefs.

A remark has to be made on the term ‘tolerance’ as it is being interchangeably used with the word ‘open-mindedness’ in this thesis but the definition given by the dictionaries does not do it justice. The word is widely and commonly used and generally very positively connoted. Tolerance in itself is a virtue worth pursuing; however, it is not sufficient to only tolerate the other. Zygmunt Bauman discusses this issue in his *Intimations of Postmodernity*. He states
that tolerance itself does not stop humiliation and it does not stop people from exercising power and superiority over others. For example, you can say “You have your opinion, I have mine. But I know that mine is right. But for the sake of tolerance I will bear your being wrong” (xxi).

He also gives a description of what tolerance should encompass:

Tolerance reaches its full potential only when it offers more than the acceptance of diversity and coexistence; when it calls for the emphatic admission of the equivalence of knowledge-producing discourses; when it calls for a dialogue, vigilantly protected against monologic temptations; when it acknowledges not just the otherness of the other, but the legitimacy of the other's interests and the other's right to have such interests respected and, if possible, gratified. (xxi–xxii)

This definition of tolerance strongly coincides with my notion of open-mindedness. Therefore, I will use both terms interchangeably when analysing tolerance and open-mindedness in Okorafor's novels.

7.1.2 Examples

Example A: Reading about other cultures

Example B: Sunny's albinism

**Situation B.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 27):

“You are Ezekiel Nwazue's daughter, no?” Chichi’s mother asked, sitting back down on her book stack.

“Yes,” she said. “You know my father?”

“And your mother,” she said. “And I know of you, I've seen you around.”

“Who doesn’t notice her?” Chichi said. But she was smiling.

**Situation B.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 116):

Sunny frowned but held Anatov’s eyes.

“What has the Supreme Being endowed you with, eh?” he said. “They say your kind has one foot set in the physical world and one foot in the wilderness — that’s what we call the spirit world. Do you believe you have that ‘here and there’ quality?”

“No,” she said.

“Believe it. To be Leopard and albino is often a rare gift,” he said.

**Situation B.3** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 58–60):

“Who is this?” Auntie Uju snapped.
“Auntie,” Orlu said. “This is Sunny. She’s my …”
“She is albeeno,” she said, her face curling with disgust.
“Yes, Auntie,” Orlu said. “That’s obvious.”
“Good afternoon,” Sunny softly said, holding out a hand.

[...]
“Look at this evil girl!” his auntie shouted. “Look at her! Like ghost. She’ll bring illness, poverty, bad luck into the house! Child witch full of witchcraft!”
“Auntie, come on,” Orlu pleaded. He glanced at Sunny apologetically. “Relax. This is my friend. My best friend. She …”
“This is your best friend?!” his auntie exclaimed, with bulging shocked eyes. She turned to Sunny with such a mean scary look, scrunching her painted face, that Sunny jumped back. “Go and die!” she shouted at Sunny.

[...]
Orlu followed her out, and they stood at the front door as Sunny blew her nose again. Orlu handed her more of the toilet paper Kema had given him. “Sorry,” he said.
Sunny only shook her head. “It’s not the first time,” she said. “People go crazy on albino people more often than you want to imagine.”
“My auntie is involved in Mountain of Fire,” Orlu said.
“So I noticed.”
“I should have known this would happen, I guess. I’m just so used to you that I … I don’t see your albinism as more than just part of what you are. I forget that other people … have issues.”

**Situation B.4 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 410–11):**

Also, for a moment, Sunny saw through four pairs of eyes at one. She saw herself, Orlu, Sasha, and Chichi in ways that she didn’t normally see them. She saw herself as yellow-skinned and yellow-haired, but different. She was herself, but she was beautiful. Was this how Orlu saw her? She saw Sasha as lighter-skinned with sharper features and a warm red aura wafting from him; this was Sunny seeing through Chichi’s eyes. She saw herself again, her yellow features glowing like the sun, her spirit face not visible but looking ready to burst forth at any moment. This was how Sasha saw her?

**Example C: Sunny’s strength**

**Situation C.1 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 31):**

Sunny’d always been somewhat tall, but even she had to admit, she’d become quite strong. It was probably all the soccer she was playing with the boys, but there was something more to it, too. She wasn’t bulking up like a body-builder, but there were … changes, like being able to kick the soccer ball so hard that it hurt if it hit anyone, and being able to lift things she hadn’t been able to lift last year.
**Situation C.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 354–55):

“Then go,” Udide said. “But there is one thing.” She pointed a great leg at Chichi and then at Sunny. “The venom of my people is in both of you now. It will never leave you. It has decoded and bonded to your DNA. I can find you anywhere. I will know where you are at all times.”

Sunny shivered. […]

Chichi gasped.

“Yes, you know what I am talking about, Chichi. You know more than you let on. You are not ignorant. Not completely. You have heard rumor. You have heard myth. You have heard gossip. You know who to ask. When you finish this quest, bring me what is mine. Go to your people and bring it back. This one, Sunny, she is of the warrior clan of your people. She will be your ‘woman show’, your bodyguard. If you don’t bring it back, I know where to find you.”

**Situation C.3** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 462–63):

“It’s a story,” the spider said. “My story. Written as a ghazal on a tablet-shaped Möbius band made of the same material as your juju knife, albino girl of Nimm, so you will recognize it. It will call to you. It cannot be broken. It is mine. One of my greatest masterpieces. It belongs to me. Go there, get it, and bring it back to me. My venom is in your blood. The doubled albino girl is a Nimm warrior; this story has made that clear. She will be your woman show.”

Sunny frowned, rolling the idea in her mind. Woman show? Her brother had worked as a “man show” during wrestling matches when he wasn’t wrestling. A bodyguard. She would be Chichi’s bodyguard.

“You are a Nimm warrior, Sunny. Like your grandmother,” Udide said, retreating into the trees.

**Example D: chittim**

**Situation D.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 44)

*Chink, chink, chink, chink!* Ten heavy copper *chittim* fell onto the floor in front of Sunny’s bed. The Leopard currency dropped whenever knowledge was earned, and these were the most prized kind. Shaped like curved rods, *chittim* came in many sizes and could be made of copper, bronze, silver, or gold – copper being the most valuable and gold being the least. No one knew who dropped them or why they never injured anyone when they fell.

**Situation D.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 81–82):

“Let me tell you something Chichi and Sasha have a hard time respecting,” Orlu said, putting his fork down. “Leopard People – all our kind all over the world – are not like Lambs. Lambs think money and material things are the most important thing in the world. You can cheat, lie, steal, kill, be dumb as a rock, but if you can brag about money and having lots of things and your bragging is true, that
bypasses everything. Money and material things make you king or queen of the Lamb world. You can do no wrong, you can do anything.

“Leopard People are different. The only way you can earn chittim is by learning. The more you learn, the more chittim you earn. Knowledge is the center of all things. The Head Librarian of the Obi Library of Leopard Knocks is the keeper of the greatest stock of knowledge in West Africa.” Orlu sat back. “One day, we’ll take you to the Obi Library. You’ll see.”

“Wow,” Sunny said. “I like that.”

Orlu smiled and nodded. “It’s great, isn’t it?”

“People are too focused on money. It’s supposed to be a tool, not the prize to be won.”

Example E: Sunny’s open-mindedness

**Situation E.1 (Okorafor, Akata Witch 226–27):**

The food was the usual, and Sunny was grateful. She ordered a large bowl of okra soup and garri and a bottle of Fanta. It was hot, spicy, and good. But as she sat at the table with the others, that feeling of being completely out of her element crept back in. Suddenly, she felt claustrophobic, drowning in the unfamiliar and unpredictable. “Where do you think the bathroom is?” she asked, wiping her hands with a napkin.

“On the other side of that booth,” Chichi said, pointing.

She got up before Chichi could say anything about coming with her. She needed a moment alone. There was a long line. She tried to hold back tears. Still, a few harmless tears were better than picking a fight or destroying things. She walked past the bathroom and came to an open field of dry grass. After making sure no one was around, she broke down sobbing.

**7.1.3 Interpretation**

Example A refers to how the two novels implicitly impart open-mindedness by presenting the readers with a completely different culture to their own. Literature is generally considered an effective medium to convey an unfamiliar, or other cultural reality (cf. Schubert 21). It also provides insight into strange cultural realities and thus it creates ties between people who would – with great probability – otherwise remain strangers (cf. Richter 106). In the Akata series, this is done effectively and in a very positive way as the Nigerian culture is not portrayed to be under-developed and poor as is most often the case in most western literature. Joseph Conrad, for example, presents the indigenous people in his *Heart of Darkness* as very primitive and brutal. Okorafor, on the other hand, introduces her readers to a vibrant and thriving society.
The readers are made aware of a new world view – that of Nigerians – and the values that are connected to them. With this positive representation of Nigeria’s culture, the readers’ eyes and minds might be opened to the idea of Nigeria as a civilised and positively vibrant place and that its inhabitants have every right to be treated the same way as ‘normal’ westerners – with respect, tolerance, and open-mindedness. This receptive attitude towards strange or other cultures leads to interculturality, a concept widely acknowledged and strived for in the European and thus also in the Austrian context (see Chapter 8.3). One significant aim of interculturality is multi-perspectivity, or the ability to change perspectives (cf. Volkmann 171). Reading fiction – especially Okorafor’s novels – can help achieve such an objective. Thus, reading about other cultures proves to be beneficial on multiple levels.

Sunny’s albinism is another example of how the need to be open-minded is portrayed in the *Akata* series. Albinos are regarded in a very specific – and often stereotypical – way in every society. In Africa, they are discriminated, rejected, stigmatised and marginalised (cf. Franklin et al. 3–4). However, this aspect pertaining to a form of racism will be discussed in Chapter 7.2.3. Here, it needs to be pointed out that Okorafor chose an albino girl to be the main protagonist and heroine of her novels. She thus challenges the negative beliefs about albinos and might just manage to change people’s minds about them. Situation B.2 illustrates this when Anatov refers to Sunny’s greatest weakness – her being albino – as a gift that turns out to be her biggest strength and her natural ability. Okorafor thus handles albinism in a completely different way than her fellow Nigerians when she takes a bullied albino girl and turns her into a powerful heroine that ultimately saves the world twice.

Similar to Sunny’s talent in football (Example H in Chapter 7.2.2), Sunny’s strength (Example C) is both an enforcer of open-mindedness and equality. Sunny’s strength will be analysed in connection to open-mindedness whereas her talent in football will be examined in relation to gender equality. In the second novel, Sunny repeatedly describes her own body as getting unusually strong and muscular which she attributes to her physical activities (see Situation C.1 as one example). However, the reader cannot help to wonder whether her strength
might have to do with the fact that she is not only a descendent of but also a Nimm warrior (Situation C.2 and C.3). This suspicion cannot be confirmed by the end of the second novel due to a lack of information. Nevertheless, it is unconventional for a female character to display physical strength similar to the strength usually ascribed to male characters or to be described as a bodyguard and warrior. The definition of a warrior is being strong and knowing how to purposefully use that strength to win a fight ("Warrior"). Okorafor thus challenges the predominant world view that girls cannot be physically strong and do not know how to fight. With Sunny as the strong and warrior-like heroine, readers’ minds are opened to the idea that women can be strong and courageous and are not that different to men. This, on the other hand, leads to a more balanced belief that women and men are in fact equal, which will be discussed further in Chapter 7.2.3.

A special role in the domain of open-mindedness can be ascribed to *chittim*, the currency of the Leopard People (Example D), as it challenges the status of material goods in our world. Orlu summarises the attitude of the world towards money and material goods perfectly in Situation D.2 when he says that you can be “dumb as a rock” but as long as you have money all is okay. *Chittim*, however, can only be earned by learning; therefore, one can only get rich by gaining knowledge. This puts a highlight on knowledge and learning that is very uncommon in western societies. *Chittim* itself also turns the notion of what is valuable and what is not inside out. In Situation D.1 it becomes apparent that gold, the metal that is the most valuable in our world, is actually the least valuable *chittim* in Leopard society and copper *chittim* – not that much worth in reality – is the most treasured for the *ekpiri* – Leopard People. This makes the readers question their attitude towards what people normally uphold as valuable. All in all, *chittim* and the notion that stands behind this currency opens minds to the possibility that our society is too fixated on money and material goods and that knowledge might occupy the wrong space in our society.

Example E demonstrates the effects of open-mindedness. Sunny needs to be open-minded as she is new to the Leopard society. Up until the point described in Situation E.1, she
was dealing with the overload of new ideas and feelings in quite an open way. But in this situation, she breaks down because open-mindedness can be very challenging and overwhelming since one needs to rethink everything one thought one knew. Sunny experiences feelings of helplessness and the need to be alone. She needs the information and impressions to stop flowing for a moment in order to gather herself, calm down, and gain perspective on everything she has experienced. She thus takes a step back from her open-mindedness because she feels deep in herself that she needs to re-evaluate everything she ever knew. This is not a bad thing in itself, but it shows the power of open-mindedness and the stress it can put on a human being. However, in the scene that follows, she manages to re-open her own mind after being shown open-mindedness towards herself by Miknikstic and his utter kindness towards her.

It has become obvious that open-mindedness is a vital value in the *Akata* series. This open-mindedness includes one towards race and origin, as demonstrated by Examples A and B, one towards gender, as illustrated by Example C, and one towards beliefs and ideas prevalent in our society that need to be reconsidered, such as Example D. Furthermore, Examples B and C have also made it clear that open-mindedness and equality are often interconnected and that open-mindedness is the base for equality as one needs to be open-minded to fight for more equality.

### 7.2 Equality

#### 7.2.1 Definition

The three dictionaries give the following definitions of equality:

- “the quality or state of being equal: the quality or state of having the same rights, social status, etc.” (*Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary*, "Equality")
- “the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.” (*English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, "Equality")
• “the state of being equal, especially in having the same rights, status, and opportunities” (*Macmillan Dictionary*, “Equality”)

Equality gained political popularity through a number of declarations, beginning with the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 in which it said: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (National Archives). The French Declaration of Right of the Man and of the Citizen of 1789 states in Article 1 that “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights” (The Avalon Project). Both these statements refer to men which leads to much controversy as it leaves out the status of women. However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights changed this in 1948. Article 1 contains this sentence: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (United Nations). It becomes obvious that equality has long been an issue in this world. There are many domains in which equality plays a role but the most widely discussed forms are equality of race and gender. These are also the forms to be analysed in the novels.

7.2.2 Examples

7.2.2.1 Equality of Race or Origin

Example F: Racism

**Situation F.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 27):

“So what are you reading?” Sunny asked.

“This dried-up old book?” Chichi’s mother answered. “It’s one of the few that I’ve read many, many times and will never trade back.”

“Why?”

“Carries too many secrets yet to be unlocked. Who’d have thought this would be the case with a book written by a white man, eh?”

**Situation F.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 303):

Sugar Cream politely said in English, “It must be this way. Sasha’s American. And this one here is American, too, though she’s Igbo also and speaks the language.”

The toucan man scoffed. “They don’t teach them to understand others, they teach them to expect *others* to understand *them,*” he said in English. He humphed and said, “Americans.”
### Example G: The word *akata*

**Situation G.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 11):

Someone behind her kicked her chair and hissed, “You stupid pale-faced *akata* witch! Your hours are numbered!”

Sunny shut her eyes tight and gulped down a sob. She hated the word “*akata*.” It meant “bush animal” and was used to refer to black Americans or foreign-born blacks. A very, very rude word.

**Situation G.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 58):

Orlu scoffed. “Why don’t you tell them why you’re here? Give them some details.”

Sasha thrust his hands deeper into his pockets. “Self-righteous African,” he mumbled.

“Troublemaking black *American*,” Orlu spat. “*Akata* criminal.”

“Hey!” Sunny said.

“As if I don’t know what that means,” Sasha said, looking mildly annoyed.

“As if I care,” Orlu said.

“Both of you, shut up,” Chichi said. “Ugh, this won’t do! Sasha, what’s your story? Just tell us.”

“Why should I?” Sasha said.

“Because we asked,” Sunny said quietly, sitting down at the foot of the tree.

Sasha paused, then sighed.

“So you know,” she continued, “I was born in the States, too. I came back with my parents when I was nine. That’s only three years ago.” She paused and looked meaningfully at Orlu. “I may not talk about it much, but most days I feel very much like an … *akata*.”

Orlu looked at his feet, obviously ashamed. *Serves him right for being so thoughtless*, Sunny thought.

**Situation G.3** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 339–40): In the context of the story that Sunny tells to Udide, she admits to using the term herself and also meaning it at that time when she was bullied and beaten by a group of older African American girls. When she spots a blood stain on Faye’s (the leader) white pants, she retorts by saying the following:

“I’m filthy?” I growled. “You, YOU’RE the one who is filthy. Look at your pants. You’re bleeding all over them. Phew! Stinking! Filthy *akata*! Who are you?”

### Example H: Fast Facts for Free Agents

**Situation H.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 96-97):

After your initiation, make sure that someone is there to help you, for you will not be able to help yourself, so new the world will be to you and so fragile your ego. You’re like an infant. You will be dumbfounded and disoriented. What’s important is —
Sunny threw the book across the room. *How am I supposed to read this?* she thought. *What a pompous, discriminating idiot of an author. If they have racism in the Leopard world, this book is so “racist” against free agents!* 

**Situation H.2 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 112–13):**

“Lesson one,” Anatov said. “And this is for all of you. Learn how to *learn*. Read between the lines. Know what to take and what to discard. Sunny, we don’t teach as the Lambs do. Books will be part of your learning but experience is important, too. You’ll all be sent out to see for yourselves. So you have to know how to *learn*. For example, that book *Fast Facts for Free Agents*.” He spat the title as if he had little respect for it.

“It was written by a woman named Isong Abong Effiong Isong, one of the most knowledgeable Leopard People of all time, of the world. She passed the fourth level. The problem was, for her learning experiences, she chose to move to Europe and then America, where she thought the truly civilized ideas were being knitted.”

Sasha scoffed.

Anatov nodded at him. “Exactly,” Anatov said. “You know the deal. Anyway, while there, she developed the idea that free agents like you, Sunny, are the scourge of the Earth. She believed them ignorant and misguided. You can imagine what this African woman thought of us African Americans.”

[...]

“But useful,” Anatov emphasized. “Sunny, wade through her vile way of speaking. You’ll see that her book is good. She’s the only scholar who took the time to *write* a book for free agents. Just know that most Leopards as a whole don’t often consider your kind. Free agents are so rare.”

---

### 7.2.2.2 Equality of Gender

**Example I: Sunny’s talent for football**

**Situation I.1 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 3)**

Being albino made the sun my enemy; my skin burned so easily that I felt nearly flammable. That’s why, though I was really good at soccer, I couldn’t join the boys when they played after school. Although they wouldn’t have let me anyway, me being a girl. Very narrow-minded. I had to play at night, with my brothers, when they felt like it.

**Situation I.2 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 210):**

“There’s an arts and crafts fair all day and a student social tonight,” Anatov said. He looked at Orlu and Sasha and smiled. “And, as always, there’s the Zuma Football Cup match around five o’clock.”

Sunny frowned. Why didn’t he look at her when he said this? She liked soccer, too. And she was *good* at it.
“Dammit,” Godwin said. “Shouldn’t have left it to my little brother.” He gave the boy a dirty look. Godwin sucked his teeth and said, “Even less reason for a girl.”

“Why not?” she demanded.

“Because you’re a girl,” Agaja said in his monster voice. “It’s simple.” Several of the others agreed.

“So?”

“Give her the test,” Sasha said. “It’s stupid to judge without knowing what you’re judging.”

Godwin threw the soccer ball hard at Sunny. She caught it and glared at him. Then she turned and glared at all of them. *Idiots,* she thought. “What do you want me to do?” she asked Godwin.

“Agaja,” Godwin said, “go stand in front of the goal. No, better yet, I will.” He handed his clipboard to his brother. “Agaja, you play defender.”

She watched Godwin walk to the goal and Agaja position himself in front of him. Her palms were sweaty. Godwin bent into a ready position. “Okay, Sunny,” he said. “Get the ball past us.”

She dropped the ball, placed her foot on it, and glanced at Sasha. […] She dribbled, weaving left and right as she worked to avoid Agaja and move the ball toward Godwin – her feet flew faster, forward, back a half step, forward, diagonally, in a circle around the ball, faking to the right. She got the ball past Agaja and he grunted in frustration. […]

She brought her foot back and fired the kick. The ball flew to the far right. Godwin jumped, his eyes wide, his mouth open. It was almost in. Almost. Then Godwin managed to tip it away just in time. He fell onto his side.

She slowed down, putting her hands on her hips. She looked down, ashamed that she hadn’t made the goal.

“Wow!” she heard one of the team members say, impressed.

She looked up.

“Man!” another cried. “Ah-ah, you see that?”

One of the French speakers excitedly said something in French.

Agaja patted her on the shoulder. “Not bad.”

Godwin rose. He walked up to Sunny and just stared.

“See?” Sasha said, grinning.

“Yeah,” he said, taking the clipboard from his brother. “Okay.”

She looked them up and down. “Who’s your teacher?”

“Anatov,” the other said. He pointed at Sasha and her. “At least those two. They’re the football players from the green team.”

“Oh!” she said, recognizing Sunny. “You were great! I always wanted to play, but I didn’t know I could. At least the girls who come after you will know now.”

Sunny was delighted. She hadn’t even thought of that.
The boy chuckled. “They’ll have to play as well as her, or they shouldn’t bother.” Sunny frowned. Why should girls be held to higher standards to play?

**Situation I.5** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 70–71):

“We are,” Sunny said. She gently kicked the soccer ball up, kneeed it, and caught it in her hands.

“You are pretty good,” Uncle Chibuzo said. “You want to be like your older brother?”

“No,” Sunny said. “He’s not as good as me.”

Uncle Chibuzo laughed heartily. Too heartily. *Pft, he has no idea,* Sunny thought, annoyed. She wished he’d been there when she’d made five goals in a row last week playing with her classmates.

Example J: Oha covens

**Situation J.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 83–84):

Sasha frowned and looked at Chichi. “You know what? We’re an *Oha* coven, aren’t we?”

Orlu sucked his teeth. “Come off it, we’re too young,” he said just as Chichi smiled at Sasha and said, “You think so, too?”

“Think about it,” Sasha said. “First, there are four of us. There aren’t any more in our group, right?”

“Nope,” Chichi said.

“Right. Second, one of us is an outsider – me, being from a different country, a descendant of slaves and such. Right, Orlu?”

Orlu shrugged, refusing to respond.

Sasha chuckled. “And one of us is outside in.” He gestured at Sunny. “Black on the inside but white on the outside.”

Sunny sucked her teeth but said nothing.

“Just telling it like it is,” Sasha said lightly.

“And two of us are girls and two of us are boys,” Chichi added.

Then together, Chichi and Sasha said, “Balance.”

Example K: Orlu’s unconventional and Sasha’s conventional maleness

**Situation K.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 166):

“Humility,” Taiwo said, standing up and looking down at them. “Sasha, Chichi, you both lack it. Sunny, you have it because you’re new. You’ve still yet to realize your own potential.” She looked at Orlu and her face warmed. “But you, Orlu, were born with it. A rare gift these days.”
Her eyes met Orlu’s and again she nearly melted into tears. It was as if he could see right through her, witness at that she’d been through. His hands were at his sides, clenching and unclenching. She stepped up to him and Orlu gathered her into a quiet hug. “It’s all right,” he said. “You’re with us now.”

“Sasha, like me, you definitely have African America running through your veins – irrational rebelliousness straight out of Chicago. May the gods help you.”

Sasha jumped up and did the Crip Walk.

“I said Chicago, not Compton,” Anatov said.

“South Siiiide!” Sasha proclaimed, laughing.

Orlu laughed scornfully. “He set a masquerade on three boys in his class!”

“What?” Chichi exclaimed.

“They talked smack about my parents and were harassing my sisters!” Sasha shouted.

[...]

“Man, there are books and I read them,” Sasha said. “Plus, it was only a minor masquerade.”

“So?” Orlu cried. “There are rules! And two of those boys are mentally messed up because of what you did. I heard my father on the phone talking to your father just after it happened.”

“Oh, well,” Sasha said with a shrug. “Shouldn’t have disrespected my parents or touched my sisters.”

“Sasha hasn’t mentioned that he also switched the minds of two police officers,” Orlu added.

“They were harassing me and my friends,” Sasha said. “They were pushing around this girl I know. And they were just … they were abusing the power they were given! Y’all don’t know what it’s like for a black man in the U.S. And y’all certainly don’t know Chicago cops on the South Side. Here everyone’s black, so you don’t have —”

“Oh, don’t give me that!” Orlu said. “You rationalize everything. That’s why your parents sent you here.”

“Sunny, you going to get in that soccer game with me?” Sasha asked. “Or football, I mean. Whatever you guys call it here.”

“I still call it soccer, too,” she said, laughing. “Part of my Americanness, I guess. You think I can play in the game?”

“Definitely. I’ve seen you handle the ball, man,” he said. “Orlu, you in?”

“Nah, I’ll watch with Chichi.”
When she reappeared in front of Orlu, a silver chittim dropped and she caught it in her hand absentmindedly as she stared into Orlu’s wet eyes. He was covered in the strange dust, and it glowed orange yellow on his skin like jewels. He twitched as his eyes met Sunny’s, then his eyes grew wide. “Sunny?” he whispered.

### 7.2.3 Interpretation

Racism or racial intolerance plays a big role in the *Akata* series. In addition to Example B from Chapter 7.1, Examples F, G, and H are devoted to illustrating how not just races but also different groups within a race are discriminated against. What becomes rather clear when looking at Example F is that the members of Leopard society that Sunny meets throughout the series show a certain dislike and disrespect for white people (Situation F.1), especially Americans (Situation F.2). Their dislike of white people might be connected to the time of colonialism and imperialism, when most of Africa was occupied, governed, and exploited by European forces. The disrespect towards Americans stems from their arrogance that they are the best and that they need not try to understand others but expect that others will understand them (Situation F.2). What is surprising about the racism that Sunny encounters in her adventures is that even friends sometimes show racist behaviour to each other. Situation G.2 illustrates this as Orlu calls Sasha an “akata” after they first met.

This is the second source of racism in the novels (Example G). The meaning of the word ‘akata’ is being described in Situation G.1. Especially interesting about this example is the free usage of this word by all characters. Sunny experiences being called an “akata” in Situation G.1, witnesses her friend insult another friend as an “akata” (Situation G.2), and admits that she even used it to attack someone who assaulted her (Situation G.3). This shows that nobody is above racism even though they do not want to be that way. The story around Situation G.3 shows that racism and intolerance act like a spiral: Sunny is being attacked by older African American girls because she is albino, she gets scared and angry, and as soon as an opportunity opens up she fights right back, using the same derogative language that her
attackers used to hurt her. They again retaliate by physically abusing and making fun of her. In the end, Sunny admits that she regrets using that word even though it made her feel better in that situation. This vicious circle turns even the best souls into monsters. It is surprising that the novels are so full of racism – especially towards Africans born outside of the Dark Continent – when the concept of Afropolitanism has just been introduced in Chapter 6.2. Afropolitanism is the opposite approach to “Africans of the world” than the use of the word “akata”. It is positive whereas calling someone an ‘akata’ is negative and it inspires people to view Africans all over the world as a positive entity.

Sunny also experiences a sort of racism towards her for being albino (Example B). Especially in *Akata Witch*, she is repeatedly teased and bullied because of her albinism, and in the beginning she does not have any friends. However, this changes as soon as she starts hanging out with Orlu and Chichi, and after her initiation into Leopard society they befriend Sasha. They are Sunny’s first real friends that the readers know of and Sunny slowly learns that they do not reject her due to her albinism. Shortly after meeting Chichi for the first time, she gets introduced to Chichi’s mother in Situation B.1. This is the first time that someone makes a reference to her albinism without discriminating against her. Anatov’s statement that her being an albino is a gift in Situation B.2 strengthens her self-esteem even further. Situation B.3 is important because it shows Sunny that even though she might be accepted in Leopard society, the outside world still stigmatises and rejects her. This also acts as an eye-opener to Orlu and the readers as both parties realise what Sunny has suffered all her life for something that is not her fault at all. Even though Orlu admits that he does not see Sunny’s albinism as something negative, both he and Sunny realise that this is not the case for most other people. However, Sunny slowly learns to accept herself and her albinism as part of who she is. Situation B.4 is vital for this process because for the first time in her life, she really knows how people see her and that her friends see her in a completely positive way. She realises that her friends think she is beautiful and strong which surprises her. However, it would have astonished her even more if this had happened in the course of the events of the first novel as she
would not have known and trusted them as much as she does by the end of the second novel. Therefore, even though Sunny’s albinism is often a source for bullying and racism, she ultimately overcomes her own issues with her condition and thus creates more open-mindedness.

Even though Sunny does not experience racism towards her as an albino in Leopard society, she does experience some sort of racism towards her as a free agent (Example H). As Anatov says in Situation H.2, Leopard People often forget about free agents. This ignorance, in addition to the fact that only one scholar ever wrote a book for free agents, symbolises a mild form of racism. The book itself, however, is more openly racist as can be seen in Situation H.1. This is only one example of how the book repeatedly discriminates against free agents – and thereby Sunny – and portrays them as stupid and incompetent. However, Anatov mentions looking beyond the judgmental language of the book to learn about being a free agent.

This wisdom can also be applied when looking at the racism displayed in the Akata series. Okorafor calls attention to racism by presenting it – sometimes veiled and sometimes unveiled – in her novels. She tries to counteract inequality by showing what pain it can cause. However, she does not stop there; she gives her characters the ability to challenge racial inequality and eventually to rise up beyond the boundaries of race and racism.

In a parallel approach, Okorafor also tries to enforce gender equality. She does this mainly by messing with stereotypes pertaining to gender. Example I perfectly illustrates this. The common belief in most societies is that girls are bad at football. However, Sunny proves to both the other characters in the book and the readers that she is actually really talented in this sport (Situation I.3). She herself does not fully understand why people believe that girls either cannot or do not want to play football (Situation I.1 and I.2). In situations in which she is confronted with this stereotype, her first response is always annoyance. She also repeatedly meets this prevalent belief and even though she manages to turn some minds around, there is always someone who does not know her well enough to be aware of the fact that she is really good at football – sometimes even better than boys. The Zuma Football Cup in the first novel is a perfect example for this. First, she has to prove herself to be worthy and then it
becomes apparent that she is one of the green teams’ best players. Her Uncle Chibuzo in Situation I.5, however, is an example for a mind she cannot turn around. He has never seen her play and thus only makes fun of her when she says that she is better than her brother. However, her insistence on playing football with her friends and classmates and her talent in it pave the way for other girls to find the courage to step up and play if they want to, both inside (Situation I.4) and outside the book. This ultimately leads to the denunciation of the stereotype.

Sunny is also one of the few female heroines and protagonists in fantasy literature, which is still a predominantly male domain and consistently marginalises women (cf. P. Hunt and Lenz 3). For example, Arwen from The Lord of the Rings and Hermione from the Harry Potter series are both relatively marginalised. Arwen only plays a minor role and does not contribute to the success of the fellowship whereas Hermione is smart and – along with Ron – helps Harry win the battle against Voldemort over and over again. However, she is only Harry’s sidekick and it is him who eventually defeats Voldemort. The Chronicles of Narnia poses an exception as women or girls repeatedly take action into their own hands. For instance, Lucy Pevensie is one of the main protagonists in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Prince Caspian and The Voyage of the Dawn Treader and she plays a vital role in achieving success in the particular quests of each book. She, too, is thus a heroine. However, Sunny is not just one of many main characters but she is the main character (my emphasis). Chichi, Orlu and Sasha can be seen as her sidekicks, just as Hermione and Ron are Harry’s sidekicks; they are important, but the plot revolves around Sunny and not them. Therefore, Okorafor breaks with tradition and introduces a female heroine. This again gives female readers a strong female character to relate to and identify with, which again leads to women and girls being regarded as having an equal heroic potential as boys.

However, Okorafor does not only point out inequality towards females, she also emphasises the need for balance – also in terms of gender equality. The concept of Oha covens (Situation J.1) exemplifies this best. Chichi and Sasha mention that in an Oha coven, there is always balance. The group consisting of two boys and two girls creates such a balance.
Okorafor suggests here that you need both the male and the female to make something whole, something that is in balance. Neither the male nor the female is worth more than the other. In recent years, an emphasis has been laid on equality pertaining to women. This is not wrong per se. Women need to be seen as equals to men, be paid the same salary for the same job, have the same rights. But we must not neglect men and their rights. Okorafor highlights this by introducing the notion of balance to the concept of the Oha coven. Both men and women are represented in it as equal parts and they have equally important jobs.

Furthermore, the rather untraditional gender characteristics in the Akata series, especially concerning Sunny, Chichi, Sasha and Orlu, give boys and girls who read the novels different and untraditional characters to identify with. This results in another sort of equality and open-mindedness as eyes are opened to the possibility that there are several different types of boys and girls and they each possess admirable and dishonourable characteristics.

The following table shows positively and negatively connoted and traditional and untraditional characteristics of girls in literature (Crisp and Hiller 197; Fox 84-85; Schilcher 55):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positively connotated, untraditional characteristics</th>
<th>Negatively connotated, traditional characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Confidence</td>
<td>- Feelings of inferiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individual set of characteristics that might include elements of the traditional image of boys, e.g. thirst for adventure, wildness, courage, physical strength, etc.</td>
<td>- Set of characteristics that exclusively belongs to the traditional image of the girl: fearfulness, sensitivity, physical weakness, helplessness, vanity, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Activity/activeness, self-assertion</td>
<td>- Passiveness, introversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- High articulateness</td>
<td>- Clothes and looks that are impractical and typical for girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unconventional looks</td>
<td>- Acted upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adventurers</td>
<td>- Sweetness and light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thunder and lightning</td>
<td>- Tentative, careful decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wild, impetuous risk takers</td>
<td>- Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Imitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Positively and Negatively Connotated Gender-Specific Female Characteristics*
Neither Sunny nor Chichi inhibit many negatively connotated or traditional characteristics. Even though Sunny does not display a lot of confidence in the beginning of *Akata Witch*, her self-esteem continually grows as she becomes a steady member of Leopard society. As Situation P.3 shows, she does have feelings of inferiority but this, too, is mainly due to the fact that she is new to the Leopard society and juju. The more she becomes an established member of *ekpiri* society, the more she displays untraditional and positively connoted characteristics. For example, when her brother’s life is threatened, she herself takes action to revenge him (Situation O.3). Her physical strength is another dead giveaway of an untraditional female character. Both Chichi and Sunny have unconventional looks, Sunny being an African albino and Chichi wearing old clothes and no shoes most of the time and no one being able to guess her age. Whereas Sunny’s transformation into an untraditional girl is a process, Chichi possesses most of these qualities from the beginning. These two girls may inhibit some of the same characteristics, but they are still very different from each other. Where Chichi is wilder and a more impetuous risk taker than Sunny, Sunny is more gentle, pensive and even-tempered than Chichi. This gives different female readers someone to identify with but it also prompts them to consider the other type they do not identify with and be able to understand them more. By understanding the other more, the risk of unequal treatment of the other is diminished.

Just as balance in an *Oha* coven is important, Okorafor stresses the fact that the image of boys in literature is changing, too. In Example K, the different types of boys and their characteristics are portrayed most dominantly in Orlu and Sasha. This, too, is important for equality because it gives different types of boys a character to identify with. The two tables below show how the image of boys and new and traditional characteristics have changed in literature (Crisp and Hiller 197; Fox 85; Schilcher 64):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old/traditional image of boys</th>
<th>New/untraditional image of boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>− Physical strength, courage</td>
<td>− Sensibility, fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Self-assertion, endeavour not to put up with everything</td>
<td>− Ability to communicate and to build relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Activities that are typical for boys and physical (baseball, machine gunners, etc.)</td>
<td>− Activities that are creative and atypical for boys (painters, ballet dancers, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Integration in a clique of boys</td>
<td>− Close friendships, often with girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Not allowed to cry</td>
<td>− Work together with females to achieve success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− When they grow up, their main responsibility is to provide for their family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Aggressive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Persistent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Negatively and Positively Connotated Gender-Specific Male Characteristics

Sasha can be located more in the traditional and old image of boys whereas Orlu is an example of the new boy. However, it becomes clear when reading the two novels that Okorafor is of the opinion that there is not one cool boy and the other stands in his shadow. Rather, Okorafor emphasises that boys can be either traditional or untraditional or a little bit of both and still be regarded as a male being. Orlu, for example, is portrayed as humble (Situation K.1), sensitive and not afraid to admit feelings (Situations K.2, K.6 and P.8) and not very much into physical activities (Situation K.5). These attributes are considered to belong to the new image of boys. However, Orlu is not afraid of confrontation, which can be seen in Situation K.4. He is an idealist and when Sasha breaks the rules, Orlu confronts him and gives him a hard time. He is also described to be proud (Situation P.8), a characteristic usually attributed to traditional men. Orlu might seem to be weak, but this impression is misleading. He steps up to save his friends multiple times (e.g. Situation P.7), takes the lead in dangerous situations (Situation P.2), and is loyal to Sunny. Sasha, on the other hand, displays more of the characteristics of the traditional boy. In Situation K.3 it becomes apparent that he got in trouble for acting aggressively (setting a masquerade on three boys) and switching the minds of two police...
officers who were harassing him and his friends, which shows that he does not put up with everything. He also likes physical activities, especially football (Situation K.5). In comparison to Orlu, Sasha is livelier (Situation K.3) and wilder. Orlu on the other hand is calmer, more thoughtful and more caring. The effect of portraying the two boys the way Okorafor did is the same as with Sunny and Chichi: it gives boys the opportunity to realise that there is more than one way of being and being regarded as a boy. This can relieve social pressure to be exactly what the image of boys tells them to be and this again acts as an enforcer of gender equality.

To summarise this chapter, it can be said that Okorafor’s goal is to counteract inequality of both race and gender by giving us a female, African heroine in an all-black setting. She wants to give black children the opportunity to identify – also on the basis of race and not just gender – with characters and especially heroes and heroines in her books (Okorafor, “Organic Fantasy” 285). She ends her essay “Organic Fantasy” with the following statement:

After my talk with the grade school children, they mobbed me on my way to the door. Can your daughter fly? Can you fly? How can I get to Ginen? Their brains were buzzing with fresh images and ideas of flying people, swinging dreadlocks, super-modern cities that were really ancient metropolises, eccentric science, strong girls, brave boys, yes, of a darker shade this time. Mission accomplished. (285)

This emphasises her fight for equality perfectly and gives the reader an insight into her motivations for making Sunny her heroine.

7.3 Love

7.3.1 Definition

Generally, it can be said that love can be divided into two strains: romantic and non-romantic love. Since this thesis only analyses non-romantic love, only one definition of romantic love will be given here in order to demonstrate the difference between romantic and non-romantic love:
• “to be very strongly attracted to someone in an emotional and sexual way” (Macmillan Dictionary, "Love")

The definitions for non-romantic love are similar in terms of deep affection but miss the sexual component:

• “a feeling of strong or constant affection for a person” (Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary, "Love")

• “an intense feeling of deep affection” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, "Love")

• “to care very much about someone, especially members of your family or close friends” (Macmillan Dictionary, "Love")

In this analysis, I will concentrate on non-romantic love with a focus on the two domains of love in family and love in friendship. Love in family, however, can again be further divided into love between children and parents and love between siblings.

7.3.2 Examples

7.3.2.1 Love in Family

Example L: General relationships in Sunny's family

**Situation L.1** (Okorafor, Akata Witch 174):

Her mother seemed pleased with the “fresh look” Sunny suddenly had and the happiness that radiated from her. Her father, on the other hand, avoided her. Maybe he sensed the change in her most. Her brothers actually began to talk to her. They played more soccer after dark. Several times, she even joined them in their room to watch movies on their computer.

Example M: Sunny’s relationship with her father

**Situation M.1** (Okorafor, Akata Witch 5):

I’d creep up on my father, stand right beside him, and wait. It was amazing how he wouldn’t see me. I’d just stand there grinning and waiting. Then he’d glance to the side and see me and nearly jump to the ceiling.
“Stupid, stupid girl!” he’d hiss, because I’d really scared him — and because he wanted to hurt me because he knew that I knew he was scared. Sometimes I hated my father. Sometimes I felt he hated me, too. I couldn’t help that I wasn’t the son he wanted or the pretty daughter he’d have accepted instead.

**Situation M.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 87–88): after returning home two hours late

“Where were you?” her father demanded.

“With Orlu, Chichi, and Sasha — he’s Orlu’s family friend who just came from America,” she said quickly. She flinched as her father moved toward her. His hand was always heavier than her mother’s and far less predictable.

“Your mother’s been worried sick,” he bellowed. “She was sure you’d been taken by that Black Hat criminal! How dare you cause her that kind of stress, stupid girl. If you ever, ever return home late again, she won’t be able to hold me back, o! I will flog you tirelessly!”

“I’m sorry,” Sunny said quietly, her head down. She knew she wasn’t out of danger yet. “It just got late and …” She rubbed her stinging cheek.

Her mother sniffled and wiped her face. She glanced at Sunny’s raffia dress, but said nothing. She pulled Sunny into a hug. Only then did Sunny know that she was safe. In that moment Sunny hated her father more than she’d ever hated him before. *As if he really cares about me,* she thought. “Your mother’s been worried sick,” he’d said. *Obviously, he wasn’t. As far as he’s concerned, Black Hat can have me.*

Her brothers had never been slapped for coming home late. They didn’t even have a curfew, not even when they were her age. It was only her mother who yelled and scolded them. Her father would only laugh and say that “boys should be boys.” Sunny didn’t ever want to be a boy — but she didn’t want a father who hated her, either.

**Situation M.3** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 337–38):

“Hi, Mama,” she said.

Her mother whirled around, her eyes inspecting every part of Sunny for injury. She grinned and tears came to her eyes. Then the grin fell from her face. Sunny turned around to face her father.

Neither of her parents had been to work in a day and a half because of the rain. It was rare for them to enjoy free time. Her father wore his favorite home outfit, a yellow and blue wrapper and a T-shirt. But there was not a trace of relaxation on his face.

*Where in hell have you been all day?*

“Dad,” she said. Her voice shook. “I was up to nothing unholy or shameful or dirty. I was with my friends and —” She skipped back as her father’s hand flew at her face. He missed. She held up a shaky hand. “No more, Dad!” He came at her again and again. She dodged him each time.

**Situation M.4** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 341–42):

“Does he hate me?” she asked.
Her mother paused. “We moved back to Nigeria because of you. I had this strong feeling that something bad was going to happen to you in the United States, and I told your father this. He didn’t want to move back here.”

Sunny frowned. “So that’s why he agreed? Because he thought your feeling was right?” Her father had moved back to Nigeria because of her? She found it hard to get her mind around this idea.

**Situation M.5 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 182–84):**

When she returned home, she made it into the kitchen before anyone knew she was there. Her father stood in the doorway in his nightwear. “Sunny,” he said in a low voice. “Where were you?”

Sunny’s heart slammed in her chest as she felt her throat tighten. She couldn’t tell him even if she wanted to. “Dad, I …”

He held up a hand. “Something has always been wrong with you,” he muttered. “What kind of daughter has God given me?”

“I swear, Dad, I’m not …”

[…]

“Don’t swear,” her father snapped. “Don’t swear a thing to me. What are you … What is wrong with you?”

Sunny was afraid to speak. But as her spirit face retreated, she relaxed. She turned back to her father’s angry face. Two years ago, he’d surely have beaten her when he was this angry … and this scared him. She could see it in his eyes. She was old enough now and had faced enough scary things herself to recognize it. “Are you all right?” he asked in a low voice.

She nodded.

“Did anyone hurt you?”

“I’m okay, Dad,” she said. […]

He touched his forehead and closed his eyes, letting out a breath. He opened them. “Will this happen again, Sunny?”

She pressed her lips together, steadying herself. […] And her father made her angry. She had always known he resented her for not being what he wanted. He was like so many other Igbo fathers. Sons, sons, sons, even when you had two. And if not a son, then a beautiful, polite, docile daughter.

“No,” she said, just wanting to escape to her room.

“I’ll tell your mother that you’re home,” he said, making to leave. He turned back to Sunny. “We love you more than life itself.” He paused, his own words seeming to take his breath away. Then his face became hard and angry as she’d known it most of her life when he looked at her, and he continued. “But you worry her like that again and I will disown you from this family and throw you out of this house.”

**Situation M.6 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 211–13):**

When she saw her father that evening, she went to him.

It had been a while since they had watched the local news together, but today Sunny needed his company.
Sunny sighed as she watched, trying not to think of her own problems. As Anatov said, the world was bigger than her. In some parts, the world was literally dying. Her father held his bowl of groundnuts down for her and she took a few. As she shelled one of them, he offered his bottle of beer. “Need a sip?” he asked.

When she looked up and met his eyes, they both burst out laughing. He took a gulp and put the bottle back on the side table, and Sunny popped a groundnut into her mouth.

Example N: Sunny’s relationship with her mother

Situation N.1 (Okorafor, Akata Witch 87):

She unlocked the door.

“Sunny, is that you?” her mother shouted from the kitchen.

“Yes, Mama,” she said. “Sorry I’m late.”

She glanced at her watch. It was six o’clock. She was two hours late. As she walked in, she remembered the raffia dress she wore. Before she could think of a possible excuse, her mother came hurrying from the kitchen, her father behind her.

“Mama, I —”

Slap!

“Why didn’t you call?” her mother yelled. She had tears in her eyes.

“I – I tried!” Sunny stammered. “The phone wouldn’t work! I tried, I swear!”

Situation N.2 (Okorafor, Akata Witch 311): Sunny calls her mother on her way to face Black Hat.

The line remained quiet, but she knew someone was there. “Mama, hello? I can hear you breathing.”

“What do you want?” her brother Chukwu said. “What did you do?” There was the sound of a struggle. “I want to know!” her brother demanded.

“Let me talk to her,” she heard her other brother Ugonna say.

“Give me the phone,” she heard her mother snap. “Sunny?” Her voice sounded thick and she sniffed loudly. “You there?”


Silence.

“Is – is it raining there?” her mother finally asked.

“Yeah.”

“Of course it is,” she said quietly.

“Mama, do you …” Sunny tried to speak, but it felt like something was softly squeezing her throat.

It was the pact she’d made with Orlu and Chichi.

Silence.

Sunny closed her phone, wiped her tears, and put all her questions out of her head.

Example O: Sunny’s relationship with her brothers

**Situation O.1** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 103–04): After Sunny finds Chukwu all beaten up in their garden.

She sat beside him on her bed. “You’re not leaving until you tell me everything.”

“No.”

“Why?”

He looked at Sunny with eyes so ablaze that she nearly jumped off the bed and ran out of the room. “Why?” she asked again, grasping the rim of the bed to keep her steady. “What happened? Armed robbers? What …”

“She knew if I tell you, I’m putting you in danger. Even seeing me here tonight isn’t good,” he said, looking away. “The less you know, the better it will be if they come looking for me here.”

She touched his hard muscular shoulder and he winced. “Don’t,” he whispered.

“Is anything broken?” she quietly asked.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Maybe one or two of my ribs.”

“Will you see a doctor?”

“Yes. When I can. I promise.”

“Please, Chukwu, what happened?”

The pained look crossed his face again. And he thought for a long time. He glanced at the door. And then he started talking. And the very thing that Sunny suspected and had feared from the moment he left for school turned out to have happened.

**Situation O.2** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 120):

She blinked away tears as she felt something hard and hot in her chest. Rage. Her brother had been one of the banes of her existence for most of her childhood, though since she’d become a Leopard Person, their relationship had improved. Nonetheless, she could not ever, ever, ever bear anyone harming him. This realization surprised her as much as the intensity of her rage did.

**Situation O.3** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 139–41): In this situation, Sunny’s revenge on the people who hurt her brother is described. However, a short summary of the events suffices. The Murks were Chichi’s revenge, but that was not enough for Sunny. She stopped time and confronted Capo, revealing herself to him and telling him who she was and threatening him to let her brother be or she would kill his family and him. She ultimately scared him so much that the Red Sharks disbanded.
Sunny only nodded. Not even Sasha would understand the consequences. When he’d used juju to switch the minds of two police officers back in the United States, he’d been caned. She, on the other hand, had nearly lost her soul. But both he and Samya were right; it was worth it.

Situation O.5 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 258): Sunny asks Chukwu to take them to Lagos.

“I’ll take you.”

“Really?”

“Yes, I owe you.”

Sunny shook her head. “No, you don’t.”

“You did something that got me out of a bad situation.”

“You’d do the same for me. You’re my brother.”

They stood looking at each other for a long time. Sunny’s heart beat fast with emotion as she remembered how he’d looked that night. She couldn’t keep the tears from welling up in her eyes.

“Oh, he said softly. “I don’t owe you.”

“So why help me?”

He shrugged. “I want to make sure you’re safe.”

“Okay,” Sunny said, her throat tight.

Situation O.6 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 265–66): Sunny talking to Ugonna about going to Lagos.

“If you want to go,” Sunny said, “you could squeeze in. We talked about this.”

“I’m not going,” he said. “I just want to know why you are.” He put his arms across his chest. “I got a weird feeling about it.”

Sunny was about to say he was just imagining things. She was about to laugh and say he sounded like their superstitious Aunt Udobi. But she couldn’t do it. For months her brother had been sensing things about her, drawing and drawing pictures that she now realized were of Osisi. He was worried about her in a way that only a brother could worry about his sister. “It’s something I have to do,” Sunny said, taking his hands and looking right into his eyes.

He looked back into hers. He let go and said, “Okay.”

Sunny breathed a sigh of relief. She couldn’t have said more if she wanted to.

“Text me,” Ugonna said. “Not Mom, not Dad, me. Both of you.”

“We will,” Sunny said.
There was an awkward pause among the three siblings. The air was so heavy with secrets that Sunny could practically feel them pressing down on her shoulders. But at the same time, never in her entire life had she felt so close to her brothers. And that’s why she did something she’d never done: she reached out to both of them and pulled them to her in a tight hug. For a moment, they resisted, but then they gave in.

Situation O.7 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 467):

“Our brother,” a tiny dark-skinned man about her mother’s age said. “We didn’t alter his memory. We gave him the choice of forgetting or entering a trust knot. We told him that to enter the trust knot was the hazardous choice. He was still under the Ujo, screaming with terror every few moments. And even then, he chose not to forget. Instead he chose to remember and suffer because he can never share the memory. We don’t normally allow this with Lambs, because with the wrong people this can cause madness. But for your brother, due to the circumstances and his passion to protect you, we allowed it. What will you do with him now?”

“Protect him,” Sunny said, before she’d fully thought her answer through.

7.3.2.2 Friendship

Example P: Sunny, Chichi, Orlu and Sasha

Situation P.1 (Okorafor, Akata Witch 66):

Chichi smiled. “So, to cross you have to call up your spirit face.” She looked around. Sunny looked around, too. They were alone.

“I’ll show you mine,” Chichi whispered.

“Okay,” Sunny said, though she wasn’t sure if she wanted to see it, especially if it was supposed to be like being naked.

“Don’t think I’ll ever do this for you again, either,” Chichi said. “And don’t you ever dare tell Sasha or Orlu what it looks like.”

Sunny considered giving an even more cutting response, but then she realized that Chichi was dead serious. “Okay,” she said again.

Chichi stepped back. Right before Sunny’s eyes, Chichi’s face melted, shifted, and morphed into something inhuman.

Situation P.2 (Okorafor, Akata Witch 122–27): When entering Night Runner Forest on the quest to experience camaraderie, the four have to work together to survive. Everybody plays a role, even though Sunny does not do much because she is new to the Leopard society. Orlu and Sasha take the lead, but it is ultimately Chichi that saves them.

Note: For the full scene, please refer to the novel itself, as it would go beyond the scope of this thesis to copy the entire situation here.
Situation P.3 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 127-28):

Orlu and Sasha picked up their *chittim*. “We got them for camaraderie, right?” Sasha said. “Teamwork.”

“Yeah,” Orlu said. “Lesson learned.”

“How many?” Chichi asked.

“Fifty,” Sasha said. “You can’t divide that by four,” Chichi said.

“Maybe you guys earned more than me,” Sunny said.

Orlu shook his head. “It doesn’t work like that. How about we pool whatever we earn together?”

Sasha looked annoyed. “I know exactly what I want to buy with my share.”

Sunny felt utterly useless and undeserving.

“Sasha, don’t be greedy,” Chichi said.

“Whatever.”

“Let’s vote on it,” Chichi said. “All in favour of —”

“No, no, forget it,” Sasha said with a wave of his hand. “You’re right. I’m being greedy. Sunny, put it all in your purse. It’s probably best that you carry it. You keep it, too. I’m voting you as treasurer. All in favour?”

“Aye,” Orlu and Chichi said.

“All against?”

Sunny laughed.

Situation P.4 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 153):

“How’d you get here so fast?” Chichi shouted, laughing.

“I did this invisibility thing! It was like flying without leaving the ground!” she said. And something else she couldn’t quite describe. She looked at Orlu and Sasha. “I shot right past you guys.”

“So that was the warm breeze we just felt,” Orlu said.

“I thought it was someone else who didn’t want to be seen,” Sasha said.

“This is crazy.” Sunny couldn’t stop grinning. Life was getting weirder and weirder. But this weirdness she really liked. If she could do this at will, nothing could harm her. Not even her father when he was angry.

“It’s not *that* amazing,” Sasha said coolly. “I can do that with a little powder and a few words.”

“Well, Sunny was born able to do it,” Chichi said.

Sasha just scoffed and pursed his lips. Sunny was too excited to care that he was jealous.

“You best hope she doesn’t treat you like that when you’re learning Igbo, Sasha,” Orlu said, as they started walking.

“I don’t need my ass kissed to learn,” Sasha grumbled.

Situation P.5 (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 244–45):

A boy of about nine walked up to their table. “Either of you want to join the football match?” He spoke only to Orlu and Sasha.
“Yeah,” Sasha said. “Put me on the list. Name’s Sasha.” He pointed to Sunny. “Put her on, too.”

The boy frowned. “I don’t think —”

“You don’t think what?” Sasha asked, leaning menacingly toward the boy.

The boy looked adequately scared. “Well … she’s a girl.”

“So?”

“What about him?” the boy said, pointing at Orlu. “He can play instead.”

“Nah, man,” Sasha said. “Put her name down. If they ask you, just say she’s a dude. My name’s girly, and I’m a guy. So same with ‘Sunny’, you hear? We’ll deal with the consequences when the time comes, not you.”

“O-okay,” the boy said, writing her name on the list.

**Situation P.6** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 258): This happened during the football match.

She heard someone shout her name and saw Orlu and Chichi standing up and jumping in the front seats. She blew a kiss at them and they cheered louder: “Sunny, o! Sunny, o!!!”

**Situation P.7** (Okorafor, *Akata Witch* 273–82): Upon being challenged by Yao and Ibou at the student social of the Zuma Rock festival, Chichi calls up a masquerade. However, this goes wrong and she nearly kills everyone present. It is said that the only thing that kept Sunny from running was friendship. Orlu then stops the masquerade by undoing its juju and thus saves everyone. Orlu then reprimands Chichi and Sasha for being so utterly stupid and that they were lucky that he was there to undo the juju.


“What is it, Orlu?” Sasha asked.

“I don’t know,” Orlu said. “As we were getting closer, I kept feeling – you know when I undo things, it’s not always voluntarily.”

“Something there?” Chichi said. “Protecting the place from Leopard People?”

“I think so,” Orlu said. “You didn’t feel anything?”

“But you can undo it, right?” Sasha asked.

“I’m scared,” he said simply. Sunny felt sick. Orlu was a proud person. For him to admit this was serious. He let out a deep breath. “If I do this – everything starts. I know it.”

“Then do it,” Sasha said. “That’s what we’re here for.”

**Situation P.9** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 124–25):

When she arrived at Chichi’s hut and saw her sitting on a chair outside, she knew she’d done the right thing. Her eyes filled with tears as she approached the one person she thought could help her. Chichi was reading a think book and when she looked up at Sunny, she grinned. “You’ve gotta see this book! It’s a novel set entirely in the wilderness! Of all people, you’ll …” The smile dropped from
her face. She closed the book and got to her feet. She placed the book on the chair. “Sunny! What’s wrong?”

Sunny let her backpack drop to the dirt path that ran up to Chichi’s hut, not able to control her tears. “I … I … I …” she sobbed.

“What happened?” Chichi, said, running up and taking both of Sunny’s hands. […]

“Sunny,” she softly said. “Did someone …”

“It’s my brother!” she managed to wail. “He’s in terrible trouble! They’ll kill him!”

Sunny told Chichi everything. […] There were three reasons Sunny went to Chichi. The first was that she knew Chichi had always liked Chukwu. Chichi thought he was pretty and liking him had always been a source of argument between her and Sasha. The second reason she went to Chichi was because Chichi could keep secrets, even from Orlu and Sasha. And the third was that Chichi would be willing to break the rules and risk punishment to help Chukwu because trouble-making and daring were in her blood.

**Situation P.10** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 201): Upon losing her spirit face.

“Wha—” She looked at her friends, tears filling her eyes.

“Sunny, what is it?” Chichi screeched, grabbing her hands. “Are you all right?”

“She’s … she’s not there,” Sunny said. “I can’t bring her forth. My spirit face … I can’t … What’s happening? Anyanwu, where are you?” Her toes ached and she felt the world swim around her; the spot between her eyes where the bead hit her felt warm and itchy.

“Here,” Orlu said, putting an arm around her waist. “Lean on me.”

“You can’t call your spirit face?” Sasha asked. “How can that be?” He looked at Chichi and blinked. “Oh, I can’t even imagine that.”

Chichi nodded but frowned for him to shut up, and this made Sunny panic even more.

**Situation P.11** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 243–44):

On the way back, she came upon Sasha walking up the road, his hands shoved in the pockets of his jeans. By this time, the air had taken on so much humidity that breathing was almost like drinking water.

“What are you doing in the rain?” Sunny asked, slapping and grasping hands with him.

“Looking for you.”

“I was playing soccer,” she said, tossing her wet ball up and catching it.

“With the lightning and thunder?”

“You could say that.”

“You’ve been avoiding us all weekend.”

Sunny shrugged. They began to walk.

“How come Orlu didn’t come?”

Sasha shrugged again. “Said you probably needed some time to yourself. Me, I don’t mess around. I came to see what’s up. So, you good?”

“Yeah, I’m fine,” she said.
“Even after … after what happened with …”

“Yeah. We can go to Leopard Knocks today, if you all want.” She hesitated and then said, “The river beast won’t stop me.” She could feel Anyanwu within her as she said it. And she could feel that her presence was different. Not so locked. And this was verified when she realized she suddenly didn’t feel Anyanwu within her. Anyanwu had gone off again, to wherever she went off to.

Sasha looked at her, narrowing his eyes. “You’re different somehow.”

“Yeah,” she said. Then she laughed, tossing her soccer ball in the air and catching it with her feet. She passed it to Sasha, who caught it and then tapped it back to Sunny. She caught it, brought out her juju knife, and worked a quick juju that rubbed off the mud. […]

“Jollof rice and goat meat at Mama Put’s Putting Place?” Sasha asked.


---

**Situation P.12 (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 247–52):**

“If you’ve got something to say, don’t bother saying it,” Sasha snapped. “Nothing comes from your mouth but lies.”

“Come on, you guys,” Sunny whined. “Can’t you just …”

“Just what?!” Sasha screeched. “She’s been cheating on me with your brother! She doesn’t deny it!” He looked at Chichi. “Deny it.”

Chichi slowly blew out smoke. “How old are we? We’re not attached at the hip.”

“Why am I even here?!” Sasha shouted. He started to walk away, but Orlu caught his shoulder.

“Because I asked you to come,” he said. “Please. We’re an *Oha* coven, remember? We can’t …”

“Black Hat is dead,” Sasha snapped. “Nigga killed himself. We all saw it. Our coven is dissolved.”

“It’s not over,” Sunny said. “Ekwensu is here now! We …”

“If we are a coven, then there should be trust,” Sasha insisted as he looked at Chichi.

“You think I don’t know about Ronke? *Months*, you and her,” Chichi spat. Sunny and Orlu looked at Sasha with raised eyebrows. Sasha’s mouth hung open with shock.

“Trust, *sha*. It goes both ways,” Chichi quietly said.

“Who is Ronke?” Sunny asked.

But Sasha’s and Chichi’s eyes were locked. They stayed like this for several moments. Chichi was the first to look away. She looked at Orlu. “There is a reason I asked you to have us meet here,” she said. She momentarily looked at Sasha. “*All* of us. I have been thinking about it all. Black Hat, Ekwensu, Sunny, your dreams, that first vision you had in the candle. I’ve been thinking most about your … condition.”

“You mean being doubled?” Sunny said. “Sheesh, it’s not like Voldemort’s name, you can say it aloud.”

“Sorry,” Chichi said, wrinkling her nose as if she smelled something bad. “It’s just so … ugh.”

[…]“It’s not your fault, Sunny,” Chichi said. “Plus, I think it will change. Soon.”

“What are you talking about?” Sunny asked, frowning. […]

Sasha stepped closer. “It’s obvious. Chichi has an idea,” he said flatly. “What is it?”
Again, Chichi and Sasha looked at each other for a long time. Sunny looked from one to the other. She hated when they did this. Even when they were fighting, they shared some weird telepathy-like communication. […] Orlu put his hands in his pockets, waiting. He was also used to it.

“Okay, so, Sunny, you … we have to get to Lagos to find Udide, according to Bola, right?” Chichi said. “You can’t do this alone and it only makes sense for all of us to go.”

“Well, yeah,” Sunny said, biting her lip. “But how are we supposed to …”

“Your brother can take us,” Chichi blurted.

Sasha cursed loudly and walked away.

“What?” Sunny said. “But Orlu and I are in school. It’s not …”

Sasha turned back and was looking at Chichi again, his face still angry. But not as angry. Chichi nodded at him. “This is messed up,” he blurted.

Chichi shrugged. “But you know it’s a good idea.”

[…]

Orlu turned to Sasha. “If we go, will you come?”

He paused. Then said, “Yes. For Sunny. If Sunny goes.”

Orlu smiled and so did Sunny.

[…]

“Chichi,” Sasha said.

“Fine,” she said, getting up.

Neither Sunny nor Orlu said a word as Chichi and Sasha walked up the road, several feet between them, backs stiff, talking softly.

Orlu took Sunny’s hand and Sunny smiled. He squeezed it.

“Do you really want to do this?”

“Do I have a choice?” Sunny asked. […]

“Yes,” Orlu said.

Sunny chuckled. “If my parents allow it, I do. Will you come?”

“You need to ask me?”

“For this, I think I do.”

He nodded. “I’ll come.”

Situation P.13 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 334): Meeting Udide.

“I want to speak to Sunny Nwazue. Because she wants to speak to me.”

The others stood behind her as she let Anyanwu retreat into her.

“We’re here, Sunny,” Orlu whispered.

“Yes,” Udide said. “But what difference does that make?”

“We’re her friends,” Chichi said, stepping up beside her. She leaned heavily on Orlu, trying to look tough. “We’ll suffer whatever she suffers. She’s not alone.”

“And we don’t suffer without making others suffer,” Sasha added.
Example Q: Chukwu and Adebayo

Situation Q.1 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 67):

Sunny’s brother’s Jeep was full of suitcases. “I can’t wait,” Chukwu declared. “First semester, I’ll have chemistry and biology classes. I will show them what I am made of.” His best friend, Adebayo Moses Oluwaseun, sat in the passenger seat. The two had been friends for years, but in the last year they’d become inseparable. Both were good soccer players, though Sunny’s brother was easily better. And both had discovered weightlifting at the same time.

“I was going to say that you should watch for armed robbers on the road, but you two look too dangerous to bother.” Their father laughed.

Adebayo flexed a muscular arm. “No bullet can penetrate my flesh,” he said.

Chukwu laughed hard, and they both exchanged a look, sharing some sort of inside joke.

Situation Q.2 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 115–16):

I don’t know how long I lay there. Maybe about a half hour. Sometimes things were very dim; other times, I was wide awake with terrible throbbing pain. Then I heard rustling and footsteps. Someone was beside me. That someone put his hands beneath my body and helped me stand up. I groaned and whimpered. I must have sounded like a dying old man. But at that time, I didn’t care. I was barely conscious. The world was swimming, and I didn’t know up from down. My chest was a knot of pain. My legs were numb. I felt wet all over. I could smell myself … I may have … there was more than the reek of sweat and blood on me. Slowly, we started walking.

“Never let anyone know I helped you,” he said. I started weeping. He helped me get to my hostel. It was almost four A.M.

“That was the first phase of initiation,” Adebayo said, looking at me gravely. “The next will be tomorrow night. It will go up to seven days.”

“Oh my God,” I whispered.

“Remember when I said I was robbed by those guys that first week we were here?”

When I realized, I gasped. “You were all bloody.”

He nodded.

“And cut up. Your arms were … That was them?”

“If I can survive it,” he said, “you can.”

“No,” I said. We stood outside my room whispering like devils in the night. Inside, my hostel mates were all asleep.

“There’s nothing you can do to stop it now,” he said. “You either make it through or you die. Now you know everyone’s face. You can betray us.” He gave me a first-aid kit and quickly left.

Situation Q.3 (Okorafor, Akata Warrior 113–14):

“Lie down,” Capo said.

“Why?” I asked, surprised.
Before I knew it Adebayo, my best friend, stepped up to me and slapped me hard across the face. I didn’t even think; I hit him right back with a powerful uppercut blow. He fell to the ground. I know how to take a man out. Adebayo is my best friend, but I was terrified and angry as hell. No one slaps me!

**Situation Q.4** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 120):

But, Sunny, there was no way in hell that I was going to stick around for any of it. I was sure one of those tasks was going to be that I hurt and kill someone! They are looking for me right now. Probably turning my entire hostel room upside down. I feel sorry for my roommates. I took all my things, though. I didn’t tell Adebayo. How could I trust him? He’s the one who told them about me.

**Situation Q.5** (Okorafor, *Akata Warrior* 307–08):

Adebayo was waiting for them in the front of the house as they drove onto the large curved driveway. He was wearing costly jeans and a brand-name T-shirt. Sunny rolled her eyes; he didn’t normally dress so flashily. […]

Adebayo and Chukwu slapped hands. Then Chukwu introduced his friend to Sasha and Orlu. When he came to Chichi and Sunny, the smile on Adebayo’s face wavered. His whole demeanor was false. How much did Adebayo understand about Sunny and Chichi’s involvement in the destruction of his confraternity? Was that understanding conscious or subconscious? Judging by the way he quickly turned his back on them both, he recalled something. Sunny was glad. It would be a long time before she forgave him for introducing her brother to the Red Sharks and slapping him in the face that night, if she ever did.

“Welcome. Come in,” Adebayo said, putting his arm around Chukwu’s shoulder.

7.3.3 Interpretation

Love in general is a very complex and complicated issue that is often one-sidedly portrayed in literature. Relationships are black or white and there are no grey areas. In friendships, they are either best friends who never do anything wrong or worst enemies who can never do anything right. Okorafor, however, portrays relationships as they are in real life: complicated and messy. She is not concerned with the black and white, but the grey areas.

Love in family is particularly complicated as you cannot choose who your family is and thus are somewhat obliged to love the members of your family no matter what. Sunny’s relationship to her family continually develops towards a more positive condition throughout the series but starts out as rather strained as Sunny is dependent on them for protection and
spending time with them (see Situation I.1). Their family situation is not terrible even though Sunny suffers verbal and physical abuse from her father. Her mother readily shows affection towards her and Sunny never questions that she loves her. Her brothers mainly ignore her, which is why they do not often appear in *Akata Witch*. However, as Sunny is being introduced to the Leopard society and finds her strength there, her relationship with her family changes. The turning point is Situation L.1. After that, only her relationship with her father gets worse before it gets better and her brothers start spending time with her. This is also why they play a role in the second novel; their changing relationship is why Sunny tells us about them.

To understand the relationship between Sunny and her father, one has to take a short look on the four parenting styles. The authoritarian parents expect their children to submit to their beliefs; they never act lovingly, tend to use violence, set strict rules, expect blind obedience, do not tolerate explanations and do not engage in conversations with their children. Authoritative parents have high expectations for achievement and maturity, but are also warm, responsive, affectionate, supportive, set rules, enforce boundaries by having open discussion and using reasoning, and encourage independence. Permissive parents set very few rules and boundaries, are warm and indulgent but reluctant to enforce rules, and do not like to say “no” or disappoint their children. Last but not least, uninvolved parents do not set firm boundaries or high standards, are indifferent to their children’s needs and uninvolved in their lives, tend to have mental issues themselves such as maternal depression, and suffered from physical abuse or child neglect when they were kids themselves. Sunny’s father is unquestionably authoritarian at the beginning of the narrative but this changes slightly in the second book. Sunny, however, is not submissive and sometimes even tries to challenge her father by doing things she knows he does not like (Situation M.1). Situation M.2 is a depiction of Sunny’s relationship to her father at the beginning of the first novel. In this scene, he is only verbally abusive, but in other incidents, he also hits her. This situation also shows how much he hurts Sunny with the things he says to her and his apparent indifference towards her. After the turning point (Situation L.1), Sunny begins to stand up for herself. In Situation M.3, she evades her father’s slaps
and tells her father to stop hitting her even though she is so scared that her hand shakes. It is the first time that Sunny does not simply let her father hit her and it further changes their relationship towards a more loving one. Shortly after this scene, Sunny’s mother tells her that her father agreed to the move back to Nigeria because of her mother’s suspicion that something terrible might happen to Sunny in the United States (Situation M.4). For the first time, Sunny realises that her father might actually love her – or at least care about her. So not only does the attitude of Sunny’s father toward her change, but also Sunny’s perception of her father. She realises that he might not be indifferent to her but that he does not understand her, being a girl and an albino on top of that. Her impression that he does love her is being confirmed in Situation M.5 in which he tells her that both her mother and he love her “more than life itself.” Her father is particularly surprised by this confession and taken aback by this reaction so that he backslides into the old pattern of threatening and verbally abusing Sunny. However, the feeling of love prevails in this scene as he shows real concern for his daughter’s well-being and safety which can be seen in the two questions he asks her, “Are you all right?” and “Did anyone hurt you?” Situation M.6 finally present a component of the relationship between Sunny and her father that has previously not been seen. Children need parental closeness and comfort (cf. Schilcher 144). In this situation, Sunny goes to her father for comfort in a time where she feels incredibly lost. He, of all people, gives her the feeling of security and comfort that she needs in this moment and in the end even manages to make her laugh. This shows that their relationship is not purely negative; rather, it is a complex and complicated construct that neither one of them really know how to navigate. It also reveals that children need their parents, no matter how difficult their relationship is.

Sunny’s relationship with her mother is less complicated than the one to her father. As mentioned above, Sunny feels loved by her mother from the beginning on. However, she gets slapped by her mother in Situation N.1 for being two hours late. Instead of being mad at her mother, the reader has the feeling that Sunny accepts this slap as righteous punishment. This might be easier to do when the slap is coming from her mother because she knows that her
mother loves her nonetheless. Situation N.2 captures the quintessence of their relationship: her mother deeply cares about and loves Sunny. It does not matter what Sunny does, she knows her mother’s love will never cease. At some points, this breaks her heart, for example when she knows she needs to face death at the end of the scene in Situation N.2. But it also gives her courage and strength to keep doing what she is doing.

The relationship between Sunny and her brothers is the one that changes the most throughout the series. From being the annoying little sister Sunny becomes more and more a concern for both Chukwu and Ugonna. In most pieces of literature that feature siblings, there is some sort of rivalry – usually quite strong – between the siblings that is later resolved through a catalytic event (cf. Schilcher 190). The rivalries between Sunny and her brothers lie in the competition for their father’s love, which Sunny loses, and for respect, which is performed through the playing of football in which she beats her brothers. The catalytic event that resolves the issues between the Nwazue siblings is Chukwus’s involvement with the Red Sharks and him telling Sunny about this (Situation O.1). In Situation O.2, Sunny and the readers realise that Sunny loves her brother and would do anything to protect him, which she ultimately does in Situation O.3. She is aware of the fact that her actions will have harsh consequences, but she carries out the revenge anyway. After actually suffering through the consequences and nearly dying because of them, she realises she would do the same thing again if she needed to (Situation O.4). Her love for her brother is so strong that she does not care about suffering and facing death that much. She wants to make sure that her brother is not only safe but also able to go back to university. Usually, it is the job of the older sibling to worry about the younger sibling (cf. Schilcher 185–86). Chukwu and Ugonna both worry about Sunny (Situation O.5 and O.6). They both want to protect Sunny, which is why Chukwu agrees to driving the four friends to Lagos and Ugonna shares his “weird feeling” about this trip with Sunny. Sunny is so moved by both of them that she does something she has never done before: she hugs them (Situation O.6). Situation O.7 is the ultimate testimony of Chukwu’s love for Sunny. He wants to protect Sunny but eventually realises that he cannot do that. Rather, he enters a trust knot
that enables him to remember what Sunny is – a Leopard Person – but prevents him from sharing this with anyone else. Hence, the relationship between Sunny and her brother evolves from a non-existing one into a strong one full of affection.

Love in friendship will be analysed by the two Examples P (friendship between Sunny, Chichi, Orlu and Sasha) and Q (friendship between Chukwu and Adebayo). Both examples give the impression of complex relationships and values such as honesty, loyalty and trust are stressed.

The friendship between Sunny, Chichi, Orlu and Sasha – in short, the quartet – is characterised by trust and love for each other. Chichi, for example, is willing to show Sunny her spirit face – which is the equivalent of seeing someone naked – in order to help Sunny bring forth her own (Situation P.1). They also know that in their group, they are accepted and loved no matter what. Sunny knows that her albinism does not play a role when she is with the other three. She also receives complete and utter support by the others. Sasha, for instance, stands up for her when the other boys do not want to let her play at the Zuma Football Cup (Situation O.5). Or Chichi and Orlu cheer for her with no restrictions at the football match itself (Situation O.6). Even in the face of death, or Udide, they do not leave her side (Situation O.13). All these examples are signals of loyalty in its best form. But they also soon realise that if they all want to survive, they have to work together (Situation P.2). In the face of mortal danger, their bond and their trust grow incredibly strong. Another facet of their friendship is their openness and honesty towards each other. They can admit their feelings to each other (Situation P.8) about what is deeply upsetting to them (Situation P.10). Sharing joy and laughter is easy but telling friends about negative feelings or things that are scary is a lot harder. This, too, is an indicator of how much they trust each other. There is also an element of democracy in their friendship as they make decisions together and even vote on them (Situation P.3). Situation P.9 shows that Sunny can always count on Chichi, even when it means breaking the rules. It also shows how much Sunny trusts Chichi because in a time of great need and emotional upheaval, she turns to Chichi for help. When Sasha goes looking for Sunny in Situation P.11, he mentions
that Orlu wanted to give her space. This gives us two ways of letting friends deal with emotional stress: either seek them out or let them be. Both approaches are valid as each has its advantages and disadvantages. What counts is that friends recognise emotional stress in the other and try to deal with it. These have all been examples of positive features of friendship. However, Okorafor also demonstrates that friendships are not only white, but they can be black, too. For instance, she tells us that jealousy amongst friends is not only possible but also probable (Situation P.4). And even though Orlu is there to save everybody when the masquerade is threatening to kill them at the student social in Situation P.7, he does not take Chichi’s arrogance and mistake lightly. Instead, he is mad and shouts at her and chastises her for being stupid. This signifies that friends sometimes have a right to be angry and to tell the other off for making a mistake. True friendship not only survives this but is made stronger by it. The quartet also repeatedly fight with each other. In Situation P.12 it is Chichi and Sasha fighting. This scene shows that fighting as friends is okay as long as you still stick together. It also bears witness to the love the three have for Sunny. No matter how much they are fighting, they will forget their quarrels to help out one of their best friends. The friendship of the quartet is multi-layered and complex and gives a realistic representation of friendship.

The friendship of Chukwu and Adebayo is only portrayed on the borders of the storyline. However, much can be gained from an inspection of it. Chukwu and Adebayo are best friends who go off to university together. Their friendship is characterised by inside jokes (Situation Q.1) which highlights the lightness of their relationship. However, as soon as they get to university, this begins to change. Adebayo is the one who introduces Chukwu to the Red Sharks. He breaks Chukwu’s trust by telling the Red Sharks about Chukwu (Situation Q.4) and by becoming physically violent with him in the initiation process to the confraternity (Situation Q.3). On the other hand, he is the one who comes back for Chukwu when he is all beaten up and helps him to get back to his dorm (Situation Q.2). If they had been caught, both of them would have been in even more serious trouble. It becomes apparent that Adebayo still loves Chukwu as a friend and is feels responsible for what happened to Chukwu. After Sunny’s revenge on
the Red Sharks, Adebayo and Chukwu become friends again and have a similar easy-going relationship as in Situation Q.1 (Situation Q.5). This shows that no matter how much a friend messed up, there is always forgiveness between friends.

The theme of love in the Akata series is a strong one. Not only is Sunny able to gain more acceptance within her family, she also finds good friends who stand by her side no matter what. It becomes apparent that friends making mistakes is natural in friendships. But no matter how much they mess up, friends always forgive friends and this forgiveness can conquer anything. The relationship with her father mirrors Sunny’s process of maturing into a more confident adolescent: the more self-assured she becomes of her own identity, the better her relationship with her father get. All in all, Okorafor shows her readers in all instances of relationships that they are messy and complicated and never black or white. Rather, they all carry positive and negative characteristics which makes the relationships in the Akata series – and thus love – so relatable and close to real life.
8 Teaching Values Through Fiction Read in School

In children’s literature of the different epochs, but also of other media and groups within society, one can find heterogenic systems of values and norms. Thus, education in a pluralistic society must enable the individual to learn how to reflect on which decisions pertaining values they have and want to make. Such a skill of reflection, however, cannot be obtained if fixed values are predetermined. Fixed values do not let the students reflect on these values, but they are to be simply accepted and consequently, indoctrination becomes a real threat (Schilcher 269–70). Therefore, confronting students with literature containing values that might challenge them to reconsider their status quo in the world and their own lives is a promising way of dealing with values without this same threat of indoctrination. In this chapter, the relevance of literature – especially fiction – in relation to the imparting of values in school will be relayed and a connection to the Lehrplan will be established. Furthermore, common theories and methods of teaching literature will be introduced in order to develop theories and methods of conveying values through literature. Before an example will be presented, however, a short theoretical input on the portfolio, the chosen method for the imparting of values through literature, will be given. The last point is dedicated to a practical approach on how to encourage students to reflect on values portrayed in the Akata series is given in the form of an example of a portfolio and a possible realisation of working with a portfolio with students.

8.1 Why Work with Literature to Convey Values?

The history of teaching literature has shown us that literary texts have often been used to convey certain ideologies and values. This supports Crisp and Hiller’s opinion that “a primary means of transmitting cultural values from one generation to the next is through the telling of stories” (197). However, this can become very dangerous when it is used to brainwash an entire nation as the Nazis have done. But it also holds great possibilities: values and human rights can be beautifully portrayed or cause disturbance and anger by showing unfair treatment in literature.
One could argue that in times of social media and films, literature has become outdated and no student actually reads in their spare time. The Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest (mpfs) has conducted a study on the reading habits of twelve- to 19-year old adolescents in which it has become apparent that reading has not become less important in the era of social media. As can be seen in Figure 1, the number of adolescents reading in their spare time – and that means not for school but for themselves – has consistently remained at around 40 percent in the last decade. Two out of five adolescents read books on a regular basis. Roughly a fifth of the adolescents read at least once every two weeks whereas every forth teenager reads once a month or less. 16 percent state that they have never read a printed book (Feierabend et al. 18–19).

**Bücher lesen** 2008-2018
– täglich/mehrmals pro Woche –

*Figure 1: Reading Books in Spare Time*

Figure 2 shows that, according to this study, girls read more than boys and that the older the teenagers get, the less they read: there is a drop from 48 percent in twelve- to 13-year-olds to 37 percent in 18- to 19-year-olds (Feierabend et al. 19).

This means that roughly 40 percent of young adolescents read on a regular basis and this number has remained steady in the last 20 years. Therefore, the argument that literature is outdated is invalid.

In the 18th century, the assumption arose that reading narratives leads to a more philanthropic attitude because it promotes empathy (Bittner and Kaul 49). Lothar Bredella supports this belief by saying that literature encourages to not only adapt different perspectives but also to recognise the worldview that is either explicitly or implicitly embodied in the story (307). Furthermore, he states that especially when reading fiction, readers do not need specific expertise, but they can rely on their pre-existing knowledge of actions and moral values such as good and bad, fairness and unfairness, and beauty and ugliness. This is the reason why
fictional texts involve their readers that much. They not only convey unfamiliar expertise, but they also appeal to the life experiences and moral values of the readers. However, that does not mean that literature only seeks to support what is already believed. Rather, it usually challenges the pre-conceptions of the reader. The readers gain insight into the thoughts and emotions of the characters, they accept their perspective and view the world with different eyes – with the eyes of the characters (307). However, empathy and the change of perspective always require the willingness to take the unfamiliar perspective seriously and to relativize one’s own perspective. Thereby begins a dialogue between familiar and unfamiliar positions in the reading process in the course of which the distance between the familiar and the strange is being reduced and thus the understanding of the other is being promoted (Sommer 25). Summarising these statements by Bredella and Sommer, it can be said that literature helps willing readers to step out of their own comfort zone and deal with different values and perspectives from a more objective point of view than when confronted with them in another situation and thus intercultural and interpersonal understanding is encouraged.

However, it is important not to deliver a moralising lecture on the values contained in the book, but rather let the book speak to the students and let the student become submerged in the story and thus work by themselves on these values. They should form their own opinion on the transmitted value (cf. Schilcher 258). This can and should be done interactively (Prothero 33). This is particularly important considering the age teenagers are in, i.e. puberty. In puberty, teenagers hardly ever like to be told what to do and what to think. More often than not, being told what to do or think leads to the exact opposite action on the side of the students as they like to rebel at that age. This is good as it signals a process that they are starting to be able to form their own opinions and also their character is being developed. The task of the teacher is to prepare suitable materials to support this development. Therefore, it is better to let a neutral agent be the deliverer of the message and thus let literature be the conveyer of values.
Hall and Siber mention that public education is responsible for an entire society. They also acknowledge that there is no generally binding moral code that applies to all the people of the world (5). Instead, as pointed out earlier, there are different moral codes that apply to different people or societies. Literature can be used to portray different codes and sets of values. R. Baird Shuman even goes so far as to say that “when a teacher is forced by local pressures to limit student reading and discussion only to those works which are supportive of local codes and prejudices, he cannot teach literature” (236). Thus, literature can be considered a medium for which it is possible to reach out across borders without ever being physically present in another culture, to open eyes to different customs and to make students realise that these customs and cultures have their own values and are worth just as much as any other culture in the world.

### 8.2 Fictional Versus Nonfictional Texts

There are three main reasons why I chose fictional over nonfictional texts for this thesis. The first is that fictional texts give the reader pleasure because they can understand the depicted world (Bredella 308; McGann 144). Both pleasure and understanding are key terms. Reading fictional texts is fun whereas the reading of nonfictional texts is work. Additionally, students understand the fictional world since it is similar to their world and characters encounter situations that the readers themselves have experience with.

Secondly, as Lynn Hunt has so keenly remarked, readers identify with characters in texts (38). She observed this especially in the epistolary novels of the 18th century but it is still relevant and accurate today and not only pertaining to epistolary novels but all fictional texts, particularly novels. By identifying with characters, empathy is being schooled which, in turn, leads to improved interactional and social skills. Students will see how other people think and feel and this might contribute to a better understanding of different people and their opinions, cultures, beliefs, and so on.
Both the first and the second reason have the effect that students respond more willingly and freely to fiction than to other genres (Showalter 89). However, the most crucial argument for using fictional texts in a classroom can be found in the following statement by Sibylle Baumbach, et al.:

It is through narratives and fictional worlds that we are sensitised to ethical questions and moral inquiries insofar as they open up possible ways of life, which we can either subscribe to or reject. Literature and the media thus provide the incentives for engaging in ethical discourse by confronting us with both admirable and corrupted characters, triggering our moral reasoning in every character and each event they depict. (3)

As they noted, fictional texts make us think about our own set of values and why we think that a certain kind of behaviour is praiseworthy whereas a different kind is perceived as negative. It makes us question our own values and behaviour and can ultimately lead to being person more self-aware than before.

A comment also has to be made on why I chose fantasy literature as a subgenre of the fictional narrative. As James Prothero so wisely put it, “The well-written science fiction or fantasy is every bit as ‘serious’ as mainstream fiction” (Prothero 33). In the same passage, he also states that just because they deal with myths and are obviously not real – since they are set in a fantastic world – does not mean that they are ‘false’. Our society emphasises reason and science whereas fantasy literature plays with imagination and metaphor to teach us about meaning. Therefore, “we may learn of courage and perseverance from Tolkien’s Frodo or Ursula Le Guin’s Ged, but not in a lecture followed by a quiz” (33). Fantasy literature contains numerous values that are considered virtuous (see Chapter 5.3): from courage to perseverance, loyalty and trust. Characters either support these virtues or defy them; in any case, they are quite obvious. Therefore, the genre of fantasy puts itself forward when it comes to imparting values through literature.

8.3 Relation to the Lehrplan

The imparting of certain values is legally defined in the Lehrplan of the AHS Unterstufe as well as the AHS Oberstufe. Therefore, there is no question about whether values have to
be conveyed in school. The “Gesetzliche Auftrag” proves this in stating that the conveying of values is a key part in the task of contributing to the education of young people (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 8).

Important values and educational goals are "Akzeptanz, Respekt, gegenseitige Achtung und Diskursfähigkeit unter Bezugnahme auf die individuellen Grundrechte" (9), appreciation of oneself and others (11) and the dignity of all human beings, their freedom and integrity, their equality as well as solidarity towards the weak and marginalized (9). Another value that is repeatedly mentioned in the Rechtsvorschrift is open-mindedness (9, 11).

Another aspect to be considered when contemplating reading Akata Witch and Akata Warrior in class is intercultural learning. By dealing with a text from a completely different culture, intercultural learning is being supported. Through Okorafor’s novels, students have the chance to encounter another culture and thus the foundation of open-mindedness and mutual respect is laid (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 11). Intercultural learning is particularly important in an increasingly international and multicultural society. The values that give direction in this field are “Humanität, Solidarität, Toleranz, Frieden, Gerechtigkeit, Geschlechtergleichstellung und Umweltbewusstsein” (11). In order to achieve the best results in intercultural learning, students’ own experiences and Austrian circumstances need to be contemplated (55).

As can be seen, both open-mindedness and equality are explicitly mentioned in the Rechtsvorschrift. This justifies the selection of these two values for the analysis in this thesis. The third value, love, cannot be found directly in the Lehrplan. However, it is repeatedly mentioned that one primary goal of secondary school is to support young people in their development of becoming adults and to lead a meaningful life (9, 10, 11). Most people argue that love is an integral part of adult life and gives life meaning.
Since the students are dealing with novels in a foreign language, a short reference has to be made to the teaching of foreign languages. The *Rechtsvorschrift* says the following about the goal of teaching foreign languages:

Ziel des Fremdsprachunterrichts ist die Entwicklung der kommunikativen Kompetenz in den Fertigkeitsbereichen Hören, Lesen, an Gesprächen teilnehmen, Zusammenhängend Sprechen und Schreiben. Sie soll die Schülerinnen und Schüler befähigen, Alltags- und Unterrichtssituationen in altersgemäßer und dem Lernniveau entsprechender Form situationsadäquat zu bewältigen. (55)

However, this thesis does not focus on strengthening the reading competence. Depending on the amount of time spent with the novels, especially with only little time to discuss it, only one focus can remain: teaching values. Reading for the sake of gaining a more profound understanding of the world and its cultures is extremely valuable and thus, it is important to teach students not only the competence of this skill but also a more in-depth kind of reading – a kind that teaches them knowledge on how to interpret a narrative, its characters and its plot. Teaching the skill of reading may go hand in hand with this but it is not the focus of this teaching model. As Kohlberg’s model suggests, this in-depth kind of reading and dealing with values requires a more mature readership in addition to a relatively high level of English in order to understand the narrative verbally and grammatically. A B1 level is thus recommended at least. I would recommend teaching the novels by Okorafor to students between the ages of 16 and 18. In reference to Kohlberg, most student between the ages of 16 and 18 are positioned at either stage 3 (44.4%) or between stage 3 and 4 (24.4%). In these stages, they are still heavily influenced by what society and people close to them think and consider those things good that society and friends and family do. Only in stage 5 will they realise that “people hold a variety of values and opinions, [and] that most values and rules are relative to your group” (Power et al. 9). Thus, dealing with values from a different culture will certainly challenge students and they will need very specific tasks and a lot of guidance from the teacher.
8.4 Theories of Teaching Literature

There are two major camps of teaching literature: the “literary scientists” and the “literary aestheticians” (Shuman 232). The literary scientists focus on teaching facts about literature such as biography, terminology and literary history. In an exam, questions can be asked that demand exact answers. Literary aestheticians, on the other hand, are concerned with the beauty of literature, the literary experience or literature’s ability to impact the reader in developing their identity and understanding their place in society. It has to be noted that there are hardly any teachers or scholars who strictly belong to one camp (Shuman 232). When teaching values through literature, the second camp – the literary aestheticians – undoubtedly play a greater role as the experience the students have when reading is supposed to make them question their own set of values and consider other (cultures’) values.

Another facet of teaching literature is one of centricity. There are subject-centred, teacher-centred, student-centred and eclectic approaches (Showalter 27–38). The subject-centred theory focuses on the content and thus is about a transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the students (27–28). The teacher-centred theories include both teaching as a performance and teaching as a spiritual journey (32–35) whereas the student-centred approach literally lets students take matters – or learning – into their own hands (35–37). The eclectic approach is the most favoured one: it combines and uses whatever works to teach literature (37). This is also the approach that is most relevant for this thesis. Sometimes, the knowledge about background information is crucial in understanding the novels and the teacher also provides guidelines in dealing with the text. However, most of the time, the students are required to work on their own and are thus taking part in an “active, collaborative learning” (Thorpe Miller 57).

Since hermeneutics is the theory or science of understanding and of interpretation (Waldmann 22; Zimmermann 1–2), it is only natural that the most relevant approach to literature – the productive approach– has developed out of this theory. As opposed to the productive approach, the analytic approach focuses on analysing literature. However, since the focus of
this thesis and teaching model is teaching values through fiction, an analytic approach is hardly necessary as we do not need to know linguistic paradigms to interpret the values portrayed in fiction. As repeatedly mentioned above, students need to deal with the texts by themselves. In the productive approach, experience and thus learning by doing are highlighted. One cannot know experiences; rather, one has them. One does not learn experiences, one makes them. It is an active and productive activity and therefore, it is not enough to give information about literature and let students learn this. Rather, literary experiences can only be made actively in one’s own doing. Another crucial aspect of the productive approach is the verbalisation and cognitive understanding of the experiences made by the students. However, that does not mean that the experiences vanish if they are not talked about. On the contrary, they are still there and might help students later on in life (Waldmann 93). It has to be mentioned, however, that there is not one single productive way of dealing with literature. Instead, different approaches within the productive way focus on different stages (see Table 8 and 9) and are thus completely different from each other (Waldmann 38). Both the analytic as well as the productive approach are valid and have its value when dealing with literature and both of them should be used. However, as illustrated above, the productive approach is more useful than the analytic in most stages, but for example in stages 3 and especially 4, the analytic approach is predominant (Waldmann 41–42).

When speaking about teaching literature, the question of grading the work of the students arises. There is no consensus on the question if and how the students’ performance should be graded. Mainly written comments or statements – from a summary up to an interpretation – can be easily graded as they are subject to the assessment criteria of essays (Abraham and Kepser 222). Analytic assignments, too, can be marked without great difficulties since the answers are a matter of true and false. However, it becomes increasingly difficult with productive tasks. Waldmann suggests that these tasks should not be marked at all. However, he also remarks that it can be institutionally required to grade them. He proposes talking to the students, giving them feedback on and thus evaluating their work so that the students
can assess it (94). Abraham and Kesper disagree with Waldmann: they suggest that all productive tasks can and are supposed to be graded with the addendum that there should be a space for ‘grade-free’ creativity (222-223).

Both Werner Ingendahl and Günter Waldmann have developed models that illustrate a productive interaction with literature. Both models are comprised of four stages but Waldmann’s model also includes a pre-stage. The stages themselves are quite similar. Below are two tables that illustrate both models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingendahl’s model (Ingendahl 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: Understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: Interpreting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3: Acquiring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 4: Applying</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Ingendahls Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waldmann’s model (Waldmann 28–38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-stage: Introduction into the text through games</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: Reading and comprehending of the text</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 2: Subjective acquisition of the text

A text needs to be filled in with the reader’s imagination before it can be fully understood which in turn lets the text, its characters, plot, processes, developments and spaces become concrete. Each student reads a text differently as they bring their own feelings and experiences, needs and interests, vision and opinions with them and thus associatively and emotionally fulfil their own subjective acquisition of the text.

Stage 3: Textual acquisition of the text

The focus of this stage lies in the analysis of the formal features of the text (content, form, plot, characters, conflicts, scenes, location, tenses, function, etc.).

Stage 4: Dealing with the text outside the textual world

Readers need to understand the context(s), background, conditions in which the text was written: historical, social, political, economic conditions and backgrounds of a text, cultural, literary-historical conditions of a text, intertextuality (relation to other texts), relation to the person and biography of the author and their other works, condition of the origins of the text and the relation to its plans, drafts, versions.

Table 8: Waldmann’s model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Subjective acquisition of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A text needs to be filled in with the reader’s imagination before it can be fully understood which in turn lets the text, its characters, plot, processes, developments and spaces become concrete. Each student reads a text differently as they bring their own feelings and experiences, needs and interests, vision and opinions with them and thus associatively and emotionally fulfil their own subjective acquisition of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Textual acquisition of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The focus of this stage lies in the analysis of the formal features of the text (content, form, plot, characters, conflicts, scenes, location, tenses, function, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Dealing with the text outside the textual world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readers need to understand the context(s), background, conditions in which the text was written: historical, social, political, economic conditions and backgrounds of a text, cultural, literary-historical conditions of a text, intertextuality (relation to other texts), relation to the person and biography of the author and their other works, condition of the origins of the text and the relation to its plans, drafts, versions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both models have their advantages. A closer look at the methods of both models, which will be undertaken in the next subchapter, sheds more light on the stages of both models. After this examination, the model I propose for this thesis will be presented.

### 8.5 Methods of Teaching Literature

The methods of teaching literature are strongly intertwined with the respective approach that the teacher has chosen. Since I have chosen the productive approach, I will focus on methods of this particular theory with a focus on methods that are meaningful for the dealing with and imparting of values.

Both Ingendahl and Waldmann have developed or assigned certain tasks to be completed by students to the various stage of their models. In the following tables (Table 10 and 11), these allocations are illustrated:
### Ingendahl's model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I</td>
<td>• The text is being coloured: with markers, the students colour words or passages according to their instinct or underline them with different colours (Ingendahl 29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Active, discovering reading: While students read the text armed with a pen, they comment on or underline certain passages that either surprised or disappointed them. They jot down their spontaneous responses and can also use question or exclamation marks (Ingendahl 30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The story line can be re-enacted in order to document the first understanding. Short texts or passages are being acted out as detailed as possible by small groups that have prepared for this. Sentences can uttered either in its original or in an adapted form (Ingendahl 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• When reading, everyone is confronted with memories of their own experiences triggered by situations or scenes in the text. Let some students share them with the class. Questions should also be asked such as ‘Why do you think this experience is similar to the text?’ and ‘What do you think triggered this memory?’. Some students will not want to share their experiences with the class. They should be given the chance to visualise them for themselves (in written form, pictures, drawings, comics, etc.) (Ingendahl 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making feelings concrete while reading as emotions such as boredom, reluctance, resistance, curiosity, pleasure, fun, etc. are vital in further working with the text. They can be voiced in reading out loud with the expression or tone usually allocated to the particular feeling (Ingendahl 36). When working with a written format, such feelings could also be expressed, for example in the form of a reading journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II</td>
<td>• Automatic writing: the students sit in front of a blank sheet of paper and listen to a text repeatedly without talking. Then they try to write associatively and uncontrolled where their imagination is taking them. Sometimes the sheet stays blank either because they did not want to write anything or because they could not. This has to be accepted. The writing can also be replaced by drawing (Ingendahl 40).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The students address a written document to a character. This can be in the form of a letter, commentary, gloss or enquiry. The characters can also answer (Ingendahl 53).

Change of perspective: the students tell the story or part of the story from the perspective of another character (Ingendahl 54).

Every text can be confronted with another text with the same topic; this topic needs to be put into words by the students. The texts might seem to be very similar but each one has a distinctive point (Ingendahl 73).

Stage III

The readers take notes (either alone or with a partner) on general insights or opinions regarding the topic or form of the text which they want to hold and express to their classmates. Then, they have to find arguments in answer to possible counter-statements (Ingendahl 104).

The students write a response to a text or topic (Ingendahl 104).

Description of one’s personal learning development: the reader describes their own journey of discovery and their experiences made while reading the text and working on the tasks. The reader should write about their true emotions and thoughts (Ingendahl 105).

Reading diary: students write either while or after reading. This makes clear what the conveyed messages of the text mean to the reader personally (Ingendahl 109).

The students can write a letter to either themselves, the author, a character or another living of fictional person. In this letter, they can write about what could not be talked about in class (Ingendahl 109).

Stage IV

Posing the question “To which contemporary or historic events could the text have answers?” (Ingendahl 119)

Posing the question “How could and should different insights gained from the text impact my present situation, my experiences, my opinions, my future tasks and decisions?” (Ingendahl 120)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waldmann’s model</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Stage</td>
<td>Sandwich-story: everyone writes two or three sentences of the beginning of a story on a sheet of paper and then hands it over to their neighbour. They continue the story with another two to three sentences, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the sheet of paper reaches the author of the beginning of the story, they write the ending and find a headline (Waldmann 65).

- Towards-each-other-stories: everyone chooses a partner and with that partner a situation in which two persons go towards each other (e.g. piano lessons, tutoring, visiting a friend, visiting someone in a hospital). They specify the characteristics of the two persons (name, age, occupation, appearance) together and then each chooses one person and tells the view of this person (in an inner monologue) as they are walking towards or waiting for the other person. This monologue can include what the person thinks, feels, experiences, does, etc. Then they both read the texts to each other and divide them into different segments to create one story out of the two (Waldmann 67).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active reading of a text:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Commenting reading of a text or part of a text: the student comments on a text in segments or they write comments, objections, questions, exclamations, etc. next to it (can also happen in speech and thought bubbles) (Waldmann 69).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Reading of a text by the students and underlining of passages that a) they find generally interesting or important and which make them think of their own experiences or where they acted in a similar manner, b) they find unacceptable or incomprehensible and where they would act differently. Then they copy those passages and add them to both aspects on big posters/sheets of paper. In a next step they comment on both aspects and add changes, counterproposals, etc. The posters are then hung up and talked about (Waldmann 69).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o ‘Colouring’ reading of a text: colouring important words or word groups with different colours (Waldmann 92).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipative reading of a text:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Reading of the beginning of a text (chapter or act/scene) and anticipating what will happen in this text (either in written or oral form) (Waldmann 70).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active and productive reading of an altered text:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Critical adopting of an altered text; the altercation may lie in the time or location of the plot, appearance, behaviour, social position of the character(s), kind of or solution of conflicts. The students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
then determine possible irritations and provide suggestions how to remove them. In the end, they compare the altered text to the original (Waldmann 71).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage II</th>
<th>Stage III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Staged enactment of a short passage of the text (Waldmann 73).</td>
<td>• Re-writing of the ending of a text to an ending or a solution that could also match the manner of the narration and the characters or that matches one’s own basic values and opinions; considering which literary, cultural and other standard values would be depicted then and which values determine the original text (Waldmann 76).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustration of passages which are interesting to a student through images and collages which are put beneath the passage to which they refer (Waldmann 73).</td>
<td>• Altering of the age, gender or occupation of the main character and rewriting of a sequence in order to explore in how far their actions are determined through specific views on age, gender and occupation (Waldmann 77).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transformation of a text/text passage into a comic which uses, if required, text passages as speech bubbles or as transitions (Waldmann 73).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustration of the message of a text through a picture, a montage, a picture-text-collage, or a video clip. Illustration of the atmosphere of a text through an abstract form or colour composition (Waldmann 73).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific description of the appearance of a character by writing a profile/signalment: their face, their shape, their way of speaking, their facial expressions and gestures, their behaviour, their clothes, etc. (Waldmann 74).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illustrating inner processes of a character by drawing speech bubbles into the text (Waldmann 74).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The students comment on a character’s attitude towards what they have done or what has happened. This can be done through the writing of a journal entry, the drafting of a letter which they write to another character, or through the writing of dreams the character has had about it (Waldmann 75).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting into the mind of the main character and writing down how they would have acted or spoken in their place (Waldmann 75).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This collection of methods will serve as a base for the tasks contained in the teaching model in either their original or adapted form.

### 8.6 Theories and Methods of Teaching Values Through Literature

When attempting to impart values through literature, conventional theories and methods of teaching literature only go so far. Rather, a specific manner of dealing with values in literature is required. It is not effective to present the set of values contained in a narrative to the students as a fait accompli. That will not aspire them to critically think either about the value system in the text they have read or about their very own set of values. The expectation of teachers to impart values through a traditional form of teaching is misguided and cannot or should not be fulfilled. Instead and to avoid indoctrination, teachers should only encourage their students to carefully consider both the values presented in the text and their own ones (Shuman 234). Shuman then goes on to express his belief that students do not need to share their values or even answer and hand in the questions posed by the teacher and quotes Theodore Hipple’s argument that the goal is introspection and nothing else in order to support his claim (234-235). However, this point of view can nowadays be seen as obsolete. Yes, introspection is absolutely an important goal, but as the studying of values is conducted as a part of a subject in school, students can be required to answer. This is also a good way of teaching students how to form and stand by their opinion.
In an attempt to develop theories concerning the imparting of values, Gugel has defined four ways dealing with media in connection to values (22). Following his concept, only two of those approaches are relevant to this thesis:

- Media ethics: Which worldviews, values and norms are being conveyed in literature? Children and adolescents should consciously recognize the values represented in the media, develop their own norms and form a sagacity – also in an ethical sense – in relation to the quality of the media.

- Media analysis: In what way and how are the values and norms expressed; by which can one recognise this? With the help of media analyses, teenagers and adolescents should gain the skill to critically review and examine media in order to become acquainted with the structure, style, used devices, etc. and their effects. In addition, they should know about the significance of media for the individual and society and should learn how to deal with possible negative repercussions.

Furthermore, he presents different approaches of the pedagogic practice on how to convey values (23-31). For this thesis, the two most important approaches are ‘acquiring media competence’ (23) and ‘being able to judge – sharpening the conscience’ (24-26). The approach ‘acquiring media competence’ focuses on how values become visible and disputable through the critical and constructive examination of content and representations in advertisements and computer games, and on TV and the internet (23). The approach ‘being able to judge – sharpening the conscience’ claims that moral development and moral learning can be significantly promoted through the analysis of problematic situations or dilemmas which focus on the consideration and judging of and deciding between various values. These dilemmas are often found in books or stories, which again makes them easier for students to examine for they can remain objective since they are not directly affected as it would be the case in the resolving of conflicts.
Out of the four presented approaches a concept of teaching values can be derived. When reading, students are introduced to a different world with its distinctive set of values that will most likely differ from their own. By examining these values and comparing them to their own as objectively as possible, the students must have the opportunity to stand back in order to gain a new perspective on them (Shuman 236). This can be done in numerous ways, but most effectively in the independent treatment of tasks by the students. Said tasks are meticulously prepared by the teacher who functions as a mentor and guide rather than a conveyor of knowledge. Therefore, I propose the format of the portfolio when working with values in literature.

8.6.1 The Portfolio

This pedagogic concept contains a great number of terms such as language portfolio, process portfolio, learning portfolio, showcase portfolio, classroom portfolio, personal portfolio and many more (cf. Häcker 33). This makes it apparent that the term is difficult to define. There are two versions of the portfolio: the narrow and the broad one (Häcker 36). The narrow version refers to the portfolio as an alternative tool for assessment. However, this is not the understanding of the term in this thesis. The broad version defines the portfolio as a tool for teaching, learning and development which is applicable to how the term is used in this work.¹ The definition I have decided to work with:

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of the student self-reflection. (Paulson et al. 60)

This matches most closely the definition I have in mind when I talk about portfolios in this thesis since it reflects my view on the portfolio and my personal experience with it. Furthermore, there are two major types of portfolio: the best work portfolio and the growth portfolio (Rolheiser et al. 4–5). The best work portfolio gives the students the opportunity to show their best work

¹ Therefore, whenever the term portfolio is used from this point on, it will refer to the broader version.
whereas the growth portfolio focuses on the development and growth of an individual over time. The growth portfolio is more suitable for working with values in literature because students are expected to show how the dealing with values of another culture has affected and changed them and how they have grown through working on this literature portfolio. The growth portfolio gives them the room to illustrate their learning curve with pieces of “evidence of struggle, failure, success, and change” (Rolheiser et al. 5). Another crucial point of the growth portfolio is that the students need to be aware of their own growth and can recognise what caused it.

The reasons why I have chosen the portfolio are manifold: firstly, it can be personalised easily as it is an open concept and there is no ‘right’ way to complete it (Breuer 183). Therefore, the teacher can expect as much diversity as is in their class because everybody creates their own individual portfolio. Secondly, students receive feedback from peers and teachers and are required to reflect on their own work and learning process. This means that they receive support in the development of their ability to reflect on themselves (Breuer 203). In the case of this thesis, the portfolio will also encourage students to reflect on their own values as they are confronted with a completely different value system and the portfolio is the perfect arena for this as it requires students to work independently on tasks. Thirdly, in the era of globalisation and individualisation it is required of (young) adults to attain “skills in self-management, self-regulation, continuing learning, self-evaluation and planning of future work” (Klenowski 132). The portfolio gives students the opportunity to work on and develop exactly these skills. Fourthly, and finally, portfolios train students’ abilities in critical thinking, decision making, and self-evaluating because they need to critically work on the set tasks and select tasks that most reflect their growth or working habit, which again boosts their self-evaluating skill (cf. Rolheiser et al. 34–37).

When working with portfolios, teaching goals or purposes should be set. These vary depending on what the teacher aspires to achieve by the work on portfolios. These goals help to establish which type of portfolio is more suitable and which tasks can help to achieve them.
One of the goals to be achieved by the portfolio presented in this thesis is that students learn to work independently. The second and much more important goal is that students reflect on and evaluate their own set of values and compare it to the one contained in the novels and, if necessary and appropriate, adjust their values.

Another integral part of portfolios are criteria, or indicators for success, that help both students in selecting suitable tasks as entries to the portfolio and teachers in assessing and grading the work. The definition of the portfolio given at the beginning of this chapter states that students should have a say in the criteria. One possible way to facilitate this is in defining two or more criteria by the teacher and letting the students choose two or more that seem relevant to them (cf. Rolheiser et al. 19–20). This will deepen the students’ investment and they will “view the process as fair and meaningful because they understand what is expected of them and they can target what will be evaluated” (20). Rolheiser et al. also provide a list of possible criteria (18)

- completeness
- creativity and originality
- evidence of understanding
- depth of reflection
- knowledge of content
- knowledge of concepts
- accuracy of information
- perseverance
- quality of product
- self-assessment and goal setting
- variety of entries
- visual appeal

This is an adaption of the list found on page 73 in Burke et al. The Mindful School: The Portfolio Connection. Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight, 1994.
• cross-circular connections
• neatness
• organization and presentation
• communication of ideas
• problem solving

There are certain requirements that go along with producing a portfolio: firstly, the students need to be able to work independently with little to no guidance. This requires a suitable learning culture in which the students take the tasks at hand seriously so that the teacher can rely on them to finish the portfolio with their best effort. In order to achieve this, students need support, supervision, guidance and attention when working on portfolios (Breuer 186).

A portfolio can be structured individually. However, the overall structure remains as there are three main pillars of the portfolio: there are several compulsory and elective tasks to be completed, one or more sections devoted to reflection and self-evaluation and grading and assessment makes up the last pillar. The teacher can decide on other elements of the portfolio: learning goals set by the students which will help them experience learning more positively and gain a realistic insight into their own strengths and weaknesses (Rolheiser et al. 77), peer evaluation and a cover letter to name three examples.

The tasks need to be made up from both compulsory and elective categories as this guarantees the selection of tasks by the students which the definition notes as a requirement for a portfolio. Tasks can then be distinguished on two levels: format and guidance. In terms of format, there are three types of tasks: open or extended production tasks, semi-open or limited production tasks, and closed or selected response tasks (Carr 26–27; Leubner and Saupe 135–36). These terms refer to the type of response that a task calls for. In open or extended response tasks, students are expected to produce their own text which needs to be longer and more complex in comparison to the ones required in the semi-open or limited production tasks for these are tasks to be completed in bullet point form, one short sentence or at most a few short sentences. Closed or selected response tasks do not require students to
make their own linguistic statement at all; rather, they are usually a matter of underlining passages or choosing the correct answer as in true or false and multiple-choice tasks. The aspect of guidance determines to which degree the students have to fulfil the tasks independently (Leubner and Saupe 137). When talking about guidance in relation to tasks, one could also speak of items and prompts (Carr 27). Items or guided tasks deal with pre-determined categories or passages and are always semi-open/limited response or closed/selected response tasks. On the other hand, non-guided tasks or prompts call for an extended response or the production of a text. A classic example for a non-guided task or prompt would be the following: *Analyse and interpret Sunny’s behaviour towards Orlu.* Choosing the right format and level of guidance is crucial in ensuring the achievement of the goals set by the teacher. Many of the tasks presented in Chapter 8.7.3 are derived from Waldmann’s and Ingendahl’s models; however, some were devised and created by myself.

The second pillar of the portfolio is the reflection and self-evaluation. These are two separate entities both performed by the students themselves. Reflection deals with critically thinking about their own work, how they have developed and changed, why they have selected certain tasks to be contained in the portfolio, how they have grown, etc. Reflection can also be achieved as a part of a task when they have to think critically about how the text has affected them or how it has changed their world views. An example of such a kind of reflection would be: *How has Akata Witch challenged your views of Africa?* Self-evaluation, on the other hand, deals with the evaluation and assessment of their own work. Students are encouraged to examine and evaluate their own performance. To name one example, this can be done in the form of a survey. A teacher can also require students to reflect on their own goals that they have set at the beginning of the portfolio work. Students then need to reflect on and evaluate the achievement of their goals. It is a powerful tool for students to assess themselves and their work and the knowledge how to do this can be transferred to other areas in their lives.

The third and last pillar is that of the grading and evaluation by the teacher. Opinions are divided on the question whether portfolios can and should be graded. From personal
experience I can say that I believe portfolios are worthy of being graded and especially evaluated as it ascribes a lot of importance to the work done by the students and they feel that their endeavours are appreciated. However, I also agree with Breuer when she says that a portfolio may be graded if – and only if – it is made transparent to the students what, how and why it is being marked (207). The most appropriate system for grading portfolios is the rating scale or scoring rubric as their transparency makes it easier for students to comprehend their grade and there is also room for comments by the teacher to justify the mark. Both terms “refer to a set of generic descriptions of student performance which can be used to assign scores to an individual student’s performance in a systematic fashion” (Carr 125). The rubric also helps in clarifying expectations, criteria and expected standards of quality for a work (Rolheiser et al. 91). Two further classifications of a rating scale can be made: holistic or analytic. In holistic scales, the focus lies on the overall performance and quality (Carr 126). Analytic scales give a more specific description of the expected standards of quality and, more importantly, of the levels of performance. In the context of this thesis, the analytic scale is more suitable for one main reason: it gives better feedback than the holistic scale, especially to learners of an L2 (Carr 132; Green and Hawkey 303). Each scale contains criteria, descriptions, levels of performance, scores and tasks. The following figure visualises these elements of the rubric:
These rubrics can also be used by the students to evaluate their own work and then compare their self-evaluation to the evaluation given by the teacher.

8.7 Teaching Model

How can we transfer the understanding that the readers – the students – have gained through the fictional world to the real world? How can we as teachers assure that the values they were confronted with in the novels and the change of perspective will affect and be integrated into the students' lives? How can we make sure that it does not remain a development that rests as soon as the students put down the book but rather continues to grow even when the students are not reading? The following teaching model will provide one possibility.
However, it will always remain the students’ responsibility to grow – if they do not want to grow they will most probably stagnate.

8.7.1 Context

Age of students: 16 to 17 years

Year: 6th or 8th year AHS

Language level: B1+ or B2 level

Specifics concerning age and language level: Reading Okorafor’s novels will be challenging to students because the books are B1+ or B2 level. Therefore, they will need guidance and help, but it is good to challenge students to help them grow both on a linguistic and cognitive level. Furthermore, students sometimes like to be challenged because that means that the teacher thinks that they are capable of completing difficult tasks. They will be particularly challenged in reference to Kohlberg’s stages (see Chapter 4.2) as most students in the allocated age group are situated in Stage 3 or between Stage 3 and 4. Realising that everyone has their own values is a developmental step of the fifth stage, however (see Table 2 in Chapter 4.2). This means that the work on values will demand a lot from students. Not all students will be able to enter Stage 5 and the teacher has to accept this. In order to think critically about values and thus complete the tasks set by the teacher in the portfolio, the students also need a certain stage of cognitive development to be able to process the values in the novels. According to Piaget, the highest stage of the cognitive development is called formal operational stage. This stage begins at around eleven years and reaches into adulthood. Students develop the ability to think about abstract concepts and logically test hypotheses in this stage. While it does not start earlier than age eleven not always does it actually begin at this stage but could also commence only later in life. These newly acquired cognitive abilities allow the process of decentration to take place: the student learns to face a situation from a different point of view than their own with at least some detachment or distance. They can now perceive situations more appropriately and motives more differentiated, they can reflect about themselves in
situations in which they are participating and can do so better and more authentic than before, which ultimately leads to them forming an opinion which is much more carefully considered than before (Ingendahl 18). This means they are better able to deal with their own conceptions of the world and are readier to throw prejudices they have over board and rethink their world views. Students that have not arrived at this stage will have a hard time processing the information provided by the novels and the teacher and will most likely not undergo any developments regarding their values. Therefore, it makes sense to wait until the students have reached the proposed age guaranteeing that most of them have entered the formal operational stage to ensure that they are able to deal with values on a cognitive level.

**Prior knowledge**: The students have worked on portfolios before and are thus capable of working independently and reliably, reflecting on and self-evaluating their work. They have not worked much with values.

**Time frame**: The students have one semester to read the novels and compile the portfolio.

**Goals in accordance with the five dimensions by Michael Schratz and Bernhard Weiser**:

- **Dimension of knowledge**: The students gain insight into the Igbo culture.
- **Dimension of understanding**: The students work independently on their portfolio and are thus explorers of the text. They understand that each person – and every society – has their own set of values and they become aware of their own. They understand that values are sometimes based on stereotypes.
- **Dimension of application**: The students realise that they have stereotypes and are willing to think about them critically. They are also exposed to new perspectives which will influence how they see the world and they are being made aware of this. This will improve their intercultural learning.
- **Personal dimension**: The students can actively take part in decision making (criteria of the portfolio, selection of tasks they want to display in their portfolio).
They actively start thinking about their own values and why they have them. They can reflect on their own experiences with values in their portfolio. They also reflect on and self-evaluate their work.

- Social dimension: They are encouraged to exchange opinions on certain tasks which trains their social and interactional abilities. When confronted with a problem, they will first try to work it out themselves and only if they cannot do this will they turn to the teacher.

8.7.2 Working with the Akata Series in Class

In Chapter 8.6.1 I have introduced the method most suitable for working with values and literature: the portfolio. In this section, I will present the procedure of how the portfolio will be used in class.

Each of the students will be handed a copy of Akata Witch and Akata Warrior with the information that they have to compile a literature portfolio on these two novels and the task to read them and, accompanying the reading process, write a reading diary (see Material M.1 in Chapter 8.7.3). This reading diary will be checked for progress every week by the teacher. The teacher will not actually grade or read through all reading diaries but will take a sample each week and give feedback on the selected reading diaries. Thus, every reading diary will be looked at by the teacher at least once. This guarantees that the students actually write a reading diary. The writing of the reading diary will be part of the Mitarbeit and thus be graded as such.

The next step is to define criteria how the portfolio will be evaluated and graded. For this, the teacher will pick three criteria and then present the students with a few others from which they can pick two. The three criteria picked by the teacher are the following: completeness, quality of texts and reflection, and grammar, vocabulary and spelling. The students can choose from the following pool: layout and organisation, creativity and originality, variety of entries, and self-assessment and goal setting.
Simultaneous to the selection of the criteria, the students will be informed that the portfolio will be graded on the basis of the criteria. The extent of the portfolio also lets the possibility of letting the portfolio replace one exam arise. This makes especially sense if both novels have to be read and are included in the portfolio tasks. It also shows the students that their work on the portfolio counts a lot and loosens the strict form of traditional grading.

Another integral part of the portfolio is self-evaluation and reflection. On the one hand, the students have to reflect on the novels themselves, the values portrayed in them, their own values and how the novels have affected them personally. On the other hand, another focus of reflection lies on their own work, how they have grown, why they have selected certain tasks to be part of the portfolio and in how far the students themselves have changed (see Material M.2). Self-evaluation, however, asks the students to evaluate their work in relation to the criteria. For this, they will use the same scoring rubric as the teacher to evaluate their own portfolio (Material M.3).

Since the work on the portfolio is not meant to be completed merely at home, students have to be able to work on the portfolio in class as well as. Certain lessons are therefore allocated for the work on the portfolios. In these lessons, the teacher can give assistance and watch the progress of the students. However, it is important to note that the teacher is still in the background and remains the linguistic mentor who can provide facts inaccessible to students (Hermes 135). In addition to the teacher being present to give assistance, working on the portfolio in school also gives the students the opportunity to exchange views on certain tasks or topics raised by reading the novels. Furthermore, students who have no or only limited access to the internet, dictionaries or other resources can work on the tasks that require in these allocated lessons.
8.7.3 Material

M.1 – Write a reading diary
While reading the novels, write a reading diary. This will be a part of your grade in “Mitarbeit”.

The reading diary can be creative, diary-like or anything else but it is important that you respond to what you read.

Feel free to use a dictionary for vocabulary unknown to you or this website for information on the Igbo culture: https://www.igboguide.org/

Here are some suggestions for your reading diary (a reading diary can be composed of many different parts):

- Colour, highlight or underline passages and comment on them (either in the book itself or in your reading diary): How do you feel when you read them? Are you surprised/disappointed/angry/sad? Why?
- Draw a comic/picture that represents one important scene for you.
- What do you feel when you read? Are you bored by the novels or excited? Do you like reading or not?
- Write a poem on the text either from your point of view or from a character’s perspective.
- Compare elements of the story to your own experiences. Have you ever experienced anything similar? If yes, in how far?
- Write down your general insights or opinions of the text.
- Keep a vocabulary log in which you write down words that you did not know before and a German translation or an English explanation of the word.
- After finishing one chapter, anticipate in writing what happens in the next.

M.2 – The Portfolio
This portfolio is meant to reflect your process when reading and completing the tasks. It should reflect your growth in relation to values and stereotypes that you have been confronted with while reading and working on the portfolio. You have one semester to complete the portfolio. This portfolio acts as a substitute for one exam.

Compulsory Tasks:
You can choose whatever type of text you want to use to complete the tasks.
Another compulsory part of your portfolio is the reflection. In this part, please reflect on your growth (e.g. your struggles, successes, insights, etc.) while working on the tasks.

Task 1: Write a cover letter that guides readers through the portfolio.

Task 2: Comment on Sunny’s atypical girliness (her talent in football, her strength). What gender stereotypes does Nedi Okorafor challenge and why do you think she does that?

Task 3: Compose a letter to Nedi Okorafor in which you comment on how the two novels have opened your mind towards and changed your thinking of Africa and Africans.

Task 4: Analyse and interpret the role of Sunny’s albinism. How does she feel about it? How do others feel about it?

Task 5: Analyse and interpret either the friendship of Adebayo and Chukwu in Akata Warrior or the friendship between Sunny, Chichi, Orlu and Sasha.

Task 6: Write a text on what Sunny feels towards her family. Describe her relationship with her mother, father and brothers.

Task 7: Reflection: In how far have your views on racial and gender stereotypes changed by reading Okorafor’s novels? What values are being enforced in the Akata series? How have those values challenged how you see the world?

Task 8: Let one of your peers/your critical friend write a response to your portfolio and include this in your own portfolio.

Elective Tasks:

You can put anything you like in this section. The only criteria are:

- it has to do with the two novels you read
- you have to justify your selection
- you have to include 3 different samples

Feel free to be creative. You can also put parts of your reading diary in this section. If you are completely clueless what you could put in this section, ask your friends or your teacher for ideas.
### M.3 – Grading rubric for self-assessment and assessment by the teacher³:

**Portfolio of …………………………………………………..**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completeness</strong></td>
<td>• All compulsory and the adequate number of elective tasks have been completed</td>
<td>• More than half of the tasks have been completed (5 compulsory, 2 elective)</td>
<td>• Less than half of the tasks have been completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of texts and reflection</strong></td>
<td>• Very good quality of texts • Shows significant depth of reflection • All content points addressed and fully developed</td>
<td>• Moderate to good quality of texts • Moderate to good depth of reflection • Some content points addressed and most of them are fully developed</td>
<td>• Bad quality of texts • No or hardly any depth of reflection • No or hardly any content points addressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar, vocabulary and spelling</strong></td>
<td>• No or hardly any mistakes in grammar and spelling • Uses a range of complex sentence structures • Wide range of vocabulary • Expresses him/herself clearly</td>
<td>• Some mistakes in grammar and spelling • Uses some complex sentence structures • Good range of vocabulary • Expresses him/herself adequately</td>
<td>• A lot of mistakes in grammar and spelling • No use of complex sentence structures • Limited range of vocabulary • Does not express him/herself clearly or adequately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

³ This grading rubric is not complete because the students can choose the last two criteria, whose descriptors will then be defined together in the class.
9 Conclusion

The question that was posed in the introduction has been answered in the course of this thesis and a short summary of the answer is to be given here. The research question at the centre of this thesis was “In how far can values be taught through literature?” The hypotheses that went along with this research question were (1) values are an integral part of literature, (2) values in literature are either transmitted explicitly or implicitly, (3) the values open-mindedness, equality and love play a big role in the Akata series, (4) values should not be taught, but people should be encouraged to reflect on them, and (5) teaching values implies indoctrination and taking away the right to form an opinion about something. The first two statements pertain to the general role of values in literature, the third hypothesis is specific to the novels by Okorafor, and the last two assertions concern implications for the teaching of values at school. Each of the hypotheses will be shortly summarised in the following paragraphs.

Concerning the first statement, values are an integral part of literature, Chapter 5.1 has shown that values are influenced by religion, political affiliations and social, national or personal views. Bruner’s statement at the beginning of the introduction claims that “to tell a story is to take a moral stance” (51). This would mean that whatever our religion, political affiliation and social, national or personal views, our values find their way into what stories we tell, either in oral or in written form. Furthermore, values are especially important in fiction with fantastical elements. Chapter 5.3 corroborates this in illustrating that the most common values in fantasy literature are love, friendship, trust, loyalty, peace, selflessness, and courage and that they are all present in the three given examples of fantasy fiction. Both arguments confirm the first hypothesis.

The analysis has shown that values are either transmitted explicitly or implicitly. Open-mindedness is mostly conveyed implicitly as it challenges certain stereotypes about gender and race and opens the horizon of the reader to the possibility that Africa is not as under-
developed and primitive as commonly thought by Westerners. The other values are imparted both explicitly and implicitly. For example, equality of gender is addressed openly and explicitly when it comes to Sunny’s talent in football and her strength. The example of the Oha coven, on the other hand, is a more implicit approach to gender equality as Okorafor does not put as much emphasis on it as Sunny simply accepts this to be natural. All the examples given in relation to equality to race or origin are instances of explicitly addressing this value. However, by focusing on a female, African-American albino heroine, Okorafor calls for more equality of race and origin and of gender in an implicit manner. Love, with all its facets and values, is displayed explicitly in the friendship of the quartet as they repeatedly verbalise what makes a friendship good (e.g. trust and loyalty). Chukwu and Adebayo’s friendship, on the other hand, is a more implicit attempt of imparting this value. It is not completely implicit as there are some instances in which their friendship is being put into words, but it still counts as an implicit way because their friendship is only related on the margin of the narrative. Furthermore, a very powerful component of love is being implicitly portrayed through their friendship: forgiveness. Chukwu is able to forgive Adebayo for introducing him to the Red Sharks. This forgiveness is never explicitly mentioned but it is displayed in the behaviour of the two.

The third hypothesis, the values open-mindedness, equality and love play a big role in the Akata series, can be proven through Okorafor’s own statement that she wants to challenge stereotypes and wishes to give black girls and boys characters – especially heroes and heroines – to identify with (“Organic Fantasy” 285). The amount of situations given to illustrate the examples in each subchapter of the analysis further supports this statement. There are numerous situations that back up each example and these are only a selection of the huge pool of situations from the books to choose from. The sheer extent of examples and situations shows that all three values are very important in the series.

The fourth statement, values should not be taught, but people should be encouraged to reflect on them, emphasises the proactiveness of students when it comes to dealing with values. Literature gives a perfect setting for this because it is a neutral base for discussion and
no one present in the discussion gets threatened by saying that one does not believe in this value or considers this value to be redundant. The perfect method to guarantee such a proactiveness is the portfolio as it requires students to work on their own on the tasks and are thus encouraged to think critically about the values contained in the text.

The last hypothesis, *teaching values implies indoctrination and taking away the right to form an opinion about something*, accentuates the possibility of misunderstanding the word ‘teach’. In order to avoid this, I moved away from this word during writing the thesis. Instead, I started using the words ‘impart’ and ‘convey’ because these words are more open and imply that the students do not necessarily accept said values; rather, they are confronted with them and have to think critically about them. Additionally, as Chapter 3 has highlighted, history has shown us that literature has often been used to brainwash and manipulate people into thinking about something in a very specific way. For example, nations have used literature to impose national ideas on its citizens. The most terrible and significant example, however, is how the Nazis used literature to convince the population of Germany and Austria of the Nazi values. A way to counter-act this indoctrination in school is to confront students with different values in a text that might collide with their own ones and let them work on tasks dealing with values on their own. This is another reason why the portfolio was chosen as the appropriate method of imparting values through literature as it leaves the choice of altering their values up to the students.

The last 100 pages or so have proved that values can be imparted through literature. However, it is up to the reader how much they do with the values and how they let the different perspective offered by the narrative change their own view of the world. They have also shown that in the context of school, working with values in literature should primarily be done by the students and the teacher should only act as a guide and mentor. To sum this thesis up, working with values through literature can prove to be very valuable if done in a responsible and student-centred way.
10 Works Cited

10.1 Primary Sources


10.2 Secondary Sources


www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10008568/


