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THESIS Title page



**Master of Arts Thesis
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**Becoming Citizens:
Representations of Citizenship in European Children's Literature**

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Abstract: This thesis examines the representations of citizenship in award-winning children's novels from Finland, France, Sweden and the UK to analyse how the effects of recent cultural and economic developments affecting European societies are described and explored in children's literature. In recent years, both the EU and the nation-state have seemed to be in a state of crisis. I hypothesise that increased cultural and ethnic diversity, new alternative arenas of citizenship and economic scarcity are currently driving the crises and changes in European states, and each of these developments influences our conceptions of citizenship. Reading the novels, I use a qualitative method based on critical content analysis to identify the issues relating to citizenship that the novels deal with and then analyse what they say about said issues. I argue that the novels show some awareness of increased cultural diversity, for example by having diverse casts of characters or by addressing cultural difference. The theme of scarcity is especially evident in characters experiencing precarity and a concern for the environment. Furthermore, they focus on how using one's voice, giving an account of one's life and being listened to, can lead to empowerment. In some of the novels, the protagonists are presented as models of active citizens bravely changing society, whereas the other novels contain more of the characters' internal musings of where they belong, in terms of which nation-state they belong to, but also their place within the state.

Key words: children's literature, citizenship, Europe, nation-state, critical content analysis

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Jean-Claude Juncker gave his second State of the Union address as president of the European Commission on September 14, 2016. Juncker's message was fairly pessimistic, going as far as to suggest that the EU was experiencing “an existential crisis.”¹ In addition to the demoralising results of the Brexit referendum, the EU was troubled by what Juncker termed “the continuing crises of our times”, ranging from “high unemployment and social inequality, to mountains of public debt, the challenge of integrating refugees, to the very real threats to our security at home and abroad”.² These crises still drive changes in European countries: they create pressure to perform better economically and increase social cohesion, while also respecting everyone's rights and providing sufficient safety nets. This thesis examines representations of citizenship in a selection of European children's novels that were awarded prizes that year to explore how these pressures affect conceptions of the nation and democratic communities. The issues Juncker refers to, such as inequality, integration and internal security threats, relate to questions of coexistence in modern society. The notion of 'citizenship' is a means of regulating this coexistence through a system of recognition that grants rights and obligations. Novels, on the other hand, are especially useful for analysing coexistence because of their significance in helping people to imagine nations, making them seem like natural entities, as Benedict Anderson has argued.³ If we believe Anderson, all novels provide representations of nation-state citizenship, but I analyse specifically children's literature because it is future-oriented and educational: it explains complex issues to young readers, gives them tools to cope with problems, and imagines futures for its young protagonists. Children are prepared to assume the role of a citizen in many ways and by many actors: the educational system is often mentioned in this context, but there are also other factors. In one study, when young people were asked what they had learnt in citizenship education classes, most said “‘nothing’, ‘I don't remember’, ‘irrelevant’, ‘useless’, ‘we didn't learn anything’ and ‘not sure’”.⁴ The answers suggest that ideas of citizenship are learnt mainly in other spheres than education, one of which might be literature. So, I ask what kinds of societies and individuals are represented in children's literature and how the characters act upon their societies. What are the problems the authors focus on, and

¹ Jean-Claude Juncker, “State of the Union 2016”, Authorised Version by the European Commission (2016), 6.

² Juncker, 7.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed (London: Verso, 2006), 25.

⁴ Reza Gholami, “The Art of Self-Making: Identity and Citizenship Education in Late-Modernity”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 38, no.6 (2017): 802.

what changes do they imagine? Ironically, the children's novels I read seemed to have much more faith in their public than Juncker in his, as he declared that “[w]hat our citizens need much more [than a grand vision] is that someone governs.”⁵ Most of the novels examined for this thesis suggest that what citizens need is that somebody listens to them and respects them so that they can take care of each other and do what they think is right or good for them personally.

Citizenship has not been studied in children's literature, which is surprising given that related topics such as identity and agency have received ample attention.⁶ Perhaps they seem more directly relevant concepts to children, since developing a personal identity and becoming empowered to act independently are crucial aspects of growing up. Furthermore, most scholars of children's citizenship understand it in terms of identity and/or agency, whereas rights or responsibilities are seen as the domain of adult citizens.⁷ However, while both identity and agency are relevant to citizenship, the three are not synonymous. Firstly, some kind of collective identity is often posited as a prerequisite for active citizenship within a polity. Secondly, our conceptualisations of citizenship have changed as different identities have become incorporated into the nation-state, for example through the achievement of women's suffrage. Agency is an equally important dimension of citizenship. In her study about agency in international children's literature, Mathis lists “[i]ndividual freedom and autonomy; humanity’s free will and self-determination; personal decision making, carrying out intention, and acting on one’s own purposes; enactment or making choices and realizing responsibility for them; and manifesting self-reliance and personal responsibility” as aspects of agency, but most of them tend to get cited as features of democratic citizenship as well.⁸ However, studies of identity and agency in children's literature are often not about citizenship per se. For example, Knuth's *Children's Literature and British Identity: Imagining a People and a Nation* focuses on “the effect that children’s literature has had on a particular nation’s consciousness (and vice versa) and how it has served as a form of intangible national heritage” rather than presenting diverse ways of being a citizen.⁹ Mathis, on the other hand, explains that agency is important

⁵ Juncker, 8.

⁶ Janelle Mathis, “Demonstrations of Agency in Contemporary International Children's Literature: An Exploratory Critical Content Analysis Across Personal, Social and Cultural Dimensions”, *Literacy Research and Instruction* 54, no.3 (2015): 206.

⁷ See for example: Kate Bacon and Sam Frankel, “Rethinking Children's Citizenship: Negotiating Structure, Shaping Meanings”, *International Journal of Children's Rights* 22, (2014), Rachel Mason, Fiona Richardson and Fiona Collins, “Schoolchildren's Visualisations of Europe”, *European Educational Research Journal* 11, no.1 (2012), and Marc Jans “Children as Citizens: Towards a Contemporary Notion of Child Participation”, *Childhood* 11, no.1 (2004)

⁸ Mathis, 207.

⁹ Rebecca Knuth, *Children's Literature and British Identity: Imagining a People and a Nation* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 7.

because it ensures more authentic and positive representations of other cultures to “dispel the stereotypical media presentation of populations.”¹⁰ She justifies her project by the fact that young people must become “global citizens able to take a critical stance in decision making as well as having a keen sense of the role culture plays in the lives of all global citizens.”¹¹ So while Mathis is attuned to new formulations of citizenship, her main concern is with developing tolerant attitudes towards people from different backgrounds and empowering all young people rather than exploring the significance of citizenship and what it consists of. Analysing citizenship means that my thesis is not rooted in a specific cultural identity, or a normative conception of the global citizen. Rather, the turbulence experienced by European states relates to a wider, longlasting crisis of the nation-state in the current world order. I take this crisis of the nation-state as a starting point, and focus on the implications of identity and agency to a sense of belonging in national democratic communities.

It has been more common to study national identity rather than citizenship also in adult literature, but some recent studies have switched the focus. Janice Ho's *Nation and Citizenship in the Twentieth-Century British Novel* studies literary representations of citizenship. Ho understands citizenship as “a discursive and narrative frame in which issues of membership (of who counts as a citizen), of political subjectivity (of who is the citizen-subject), and of the practice of citizenship (of what counts as political) are (...) contested”.¹² This contestation happens, not only in politics, but also in other arenas, such as literature. She describes the debates surrounding citizenship in twentieth-century Britain and how novelists reflected and responded to those debates. She takes issue with studies that “read the nation in terms of a cultural identity of Englishness” and, in the process, “occluded alternative frames through which the constitution of the nation-state and the incorporation of its members might be understood.”¹³ Therefore, her analysis focuses on the liberal principles of citizenship, “liberty, democratic equality, self-determination and agency”, and their reinterpretation in political debate and literature.¹⁴ For example, Ho's analysis of Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* highlights the failure of depoliticised, moderate politics of liberal multiculturalism to provide citizenship rights for second-generation immigrants. This concept of citizenship allows her to go beyond thinking of national democratic communities solely in terms of national culture and identity, to the political question of rights and responsibilities. Her work is based on the premise that “to read

¹⁰ Mathis, 216.

¹¹ Mathis, 206.

¹² Janice Ho, *Nation and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century British Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 14.

¹³ Ho, 4.

¹⁴ Ho, 10.

the changing meanings of citizenship is thus also to read the conflicts that reshaped twentieth-century”, or, for this thesis, the conflicts currently shaping European states and worrying Juncker.¹⁵ Therefore, to answer my research question of how European children's books represent citizenship, I first outline what the conflicts currently shaping European states mean for citizenship, and some of the proposed solutions to these conflicts. In the methodology chapter, I introduce the assumptions that underlie my research, such as what children's literature is and what a literary prize signifies as well as explain my choice of texts and method. In the third chapter, I analyse each novel, and finally discuss my findings.

¹⁵ Ho, 3.

Chapter 2: Crisis of the Nation-State – Crisis of Nation-State Citizenship?

Nation states were a European invention, and as Milward argues, “lives in Western Europe for almost two hundred years have been moulded by the nation-state.”¹⁶ They became the dominant form of political organisation on the continent after the French revolution made the state, rather than the ruler, “into the representative of the nation and the people”, and the model was exported to several countries.¹⁷ In the nineteenth-century, the state became identified with “linguistic, ethnic and cultural nationalism”, implying that people who shared a language and culture had the right to autonomy.¹⁸ It is still widely accepted that a shared language and culture facilitate social cohesion, though whether they are necessary for a functional democracy is debated.¹⁹ In any case, Europeans became keen nation-creators, and most European states since were built around the myth of the nation. Naturally, the concept and practice of citizenship have greatly evolved since the dawn of the nation-state and the conceptions of citizenship vary widely between European states, as evidenced for example by Rogers Brubaker's study of the differences in German and French understandings of citizenship.²⁰ As there was no German state for a long time, being a German citizen depended on blood and ancestry, whereas membership in the French nation was based on political unity.²¹ Still, whatever citizenship consists in, and whatever it is based on, citizenship and the accompanying rights and responsibilities have been granted by the nation state.

Nation states remain the administrators and main arenas of citizenship, but they are challenged by several phenomena, most notably globalisation. The challenge is so serious that it prompted Milward already to ask “whether national government, which has so long shaped the basic organizational framework within which [people] live, will continue to do so.”²² Andrea Schlenker and Joachim Blatter outline the problem: the increased flows of capital, people, information and goods create global interdependencies which “endanger the self-determination of national peoples

¹⁶ Alan Milward, *European Rescue of the Nation State*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 1.

¹⁷ Milward, 3.

¹⁸ Milward, 3.

¹⁹ Kok-Chor Tan, “Cosmopolitan Citizenship,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*, ed. Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad and Maarten Vink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 699-700.

²⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

²¹ Brubaker, 1.

²² Milward, 1. Milward writes specifically in the context of European integration and argues that the EU was not the end of the nation-state, as is commonly thought, but its rescue. However, whether the EU is the attempted solution or the problem, the crisis of the nation-state remains

within territorial states.”²³ States created supra-national institutions to regain political control, but the very same institutions also “compromise democratic self-determination if the new institutions are not connected to citizens through individual rights, shared identities, and participatory practices.”²⁴ The EU is a good example of just such an institution, as it was created to protect European nation-states within a competitive global economy as well as from each other, but it is often seen to lack democratic legitimacy. The results of these developments include that on the one hand, people increasingly do not live in the territory of the state that grants them rights, and on the other, numerous international treaties and organisations, such as human rights law, implicate citizens in a “web of rights and responsibilities”.²⁵ Therefore, the nation-state may no longer be the unique determinant of citizenship. However, even while some predict the demise of the nation-state, others call to restrict the criteria for citizenship and to define the nation according to language, ethnicity or religion. For example, far-right politicians routinely demand the de-islamisation of their countries or setting language requirements for receiving welfare benefits. Though nation-states face serious challenges, they still wield power, and the issue of nation-state citizenship is particularly urgent in contemporary European politics. Economic hardship and uncertainty lead people to seek to delimit who belongs to the nation, which is likely to happen according to ethnic or cultural boundaries in multiethnic, multicultural states. Meanwhile, the concept of the nation-state might begin to lose its primacy for some citizens, as suggested for example by Schlenker and Blatter's work on new forms of citizenship between nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

One challenge posed by globalisation is to develop non-national forms of citizenship. Schlenker and Blatter categorise and evaluate some of the proposed forms, covering a wide range of issues from how to be a citizen of a state without being its national, to citizenship in communities wider than the state, such as the EU or even the whole world. In this section, I discuss multicultural citizenship and cosmopolitan citizenship, because European states are currently grappling with issues related to multicultural citizenship, and because cosmopolitan citizenship is the concept that most differs from traditional understandings of national citizenship. These terms are not directly comparable, the first one being a practical suggestion for rights and responsibilities in multinational, polyethnic states and the other a vision of an individual citizen in a globalised world or a metaphor for global justice. I introduce them, because both assume that the community of citizens an individual relates to is not

²³ Andrea Schlenker and Joachim Blatter, “Conceptualising and Evaluating (New) Forms of Citizenship Between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism”, *Democratization* 21, no.6 (2014): 1091.

²⁴ Schlenker and Blatter, 1091.

²⁵ Engin Isin, “Theorising Acts of Citizenship” in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin Isin and Greg Nielsen (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 15.

homogenous, whether they be citizens of the same state or different states. These two forms of citizenship subvert the assertion that “a shared national identity is the source of [the] solidarity, the ‘fellow-feeling,’ necessary for generating and sustaining [the citizens’] mutual respect and trust” and thus offer ways of conceptualising citizenship differently from the norms of the nation-state.²⁶

Kymlicka develops his concept of multicultural citizenship to determine what rights cultural or ethnic minorities should have vis-à-vis the majority within a state context. According to him, this is necessary because contrary to the national romantic ideal of a “polis in which fellow citizens share a common descent, language and culture,” very few states actually have such a homogenous population.²⁷ This diversity is not only a recent consequence of immigration, either. A state may be home to several nations for historical reasons, and immigrants, refugees and guest workers add to the number of ethno-cultural groups. These last groups, transnational people who “maintain strong, enduring ties to their homelands even as they are incorporated into their countries of residence,” and whose number has recently grown according to Schlenker and Blatter, represent the most urgent problem for nation-state citizenship.²⁸ They challenge traditional conceptions of citizenship, as their homelands cannot be relegated to the position of a local identity which fits under the umbrella of the nation, as a minority culture might. Kymlicka argues that recognising human rights is not sufficient to solve the most controversial questions surrounding the rights of minorities, and therefore they must be complemented by specific, group-differentiated rights. National minorities should have more extensive rights, such as the right to self-government, as their communities likely already possess institutions that uphold their national culture.²⁹ Immigrants, on the other hand, do not have a similar right to re-create their national culture in their new homeland.³⁰ Kymlicka lists practical obstacles (many immigrant communities are too small or dispersed) as well as theoretical objections (leaving the home country's culture is a choice) to this option. However, they do have a right to “express their cultural particularity and pride without it hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society,” which requires, for instance, anti-discrimination laws and some exemptions from common rules.³¹ This idea is controversial because it seems to abandon the principle of equality and to treat citizens as “carriers of group identities and objectives”

²⁶ Tan, 700.

²⁷ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 2.

²⁸ Schlenker and Blatter, 1098.

²⁹ Kymlicka, 78.

³⁰ Kymlicka, 97.

³¹ Kymlicka, 31.

rather than as individuals.³²

The problem that Kymlicka seeks to solve is in fact broader than the rights of ethno-cultural minorities. His work reflects the broader recognition of cultural rights as a component of citizenship. According to Bryan Turner, cultural citizenship can be understood as cultural empowerment, involving “access to educational institutions, the possession of an appropriate ‘living’ language, the effective ownership of cultural identity through national membership and the capacity to hand on and transfer to future generations the richness of a national cultural heritage.”³³ Given the importance of culture in shaping identity and helping people lead meaningful lives, cultural rights ought to be protected. Multicultural citizenship is thus a part of what is called identity politics. The identity politics debate centres on the demand that different social groups be recognised, because “behind the veil of ‘universal citizenship’ and ‘equality before the law’ there [lie] systemic forms of domination and oppression that misrecogniz[e] and marginaliz[e]” certain social groups.³⁴ Contrary to the view that identity and citizenship are antonyms, multicultural citizenship acknowledges that several forms of exclusion may exist within citizenship, and that claims for group-rights seek to redefine, not undermine, citizenship. Similar claims can be made for other than ethnic groups, such as sexual minorities or women. In these cases, the “right to citizenship through community membership defines one’s identity as a public person.”³⁵ Citizenship is a public identity, and identity politics seeks to expand the range of possible public identities to increase equality between citizens.

While Kymlicka's proposition for multicultural citizenship concerns citizenship within multinational, polyethnic states, cosmopolitan citizenship presumes that the nation-state is no longer the most relevant arena for citizenship. The awareness that many of the problems facing human societies exceed national borders calls for supranational forms of citizenship, such as cosmopolitan or global citizenship. Though these concepts have no set definition, they are based on the assertion that people's rights should be recognised not as members of a particular state, but of humanity. Global or cosmopolitan citizenship usually refers to either citizenship in a world state, participation “in global decision-making through new transnational institutions, empowered international

³² Kymlicka, 34.

³³ Bryan Turner, “Outline of a General Theory of Cultural Citizenship” in *Culture and Citizenship*, ed. Nick Stevenson (London: Sage, 2000), 39.

³⁴ Engin Isin and Patricia Wood, *Citizenship and Identity*, (London: Sage, 1999), 1.

³⁵ Turner (2000), 37.

organizations” or to a specific moral perspective.³⁶ Some of these meanings have obvious weaknesses: currently, there is no world state, and since citizenship usually refers to membership in a political community, cosmopolitan citizenship may sound oxymoronic. Furthermore, whether the term connotes legal membership in a global political community or an individual's participation on the global stage, its critics remain unconvinced of the feasibility of solidarity and active citizenship in such a large and diverse community.³⁷ Nevertheless, the discourses of cosmopolitan citizenship are widespread. For example, global citizenship education is a rapidly growing field that recognises that people might have rights and responsibilities beyond the nation state. The contents of global citizenship education vary, but often it involves nurturing “an awareness of other perspectives, a single humanity as the primary level of community, and a moral conscience to act for the good of the world.”³⁸ This kind of global citizenship is a “moral category”, concerned with global justice rather than global participatory democracy.³⁹ Kok-Chor Tan elucidates that this kind of cosmopolitan citizenship does not contradict traditional nation-state citizenship, but rather demands a specific perspective on it.⁴⁰ Namely, other states should not be considered competitors, and the nation-state should promote the equality and wellbeing of all peoples, not only its own citizens. Tan argues that while not an actual form of citizenship, cosmopolitan citizenship is nevertheless a suitable metaphor to deliberate on global justice. Even if cosmopolitan citizenship does not directly challenge nation-state citizenship, it persistently lives alongside it and demands that people consider and act also for the good of the world outside their home country.

Multicultural and cosmopolitan citizenship question the notion that a shared national identity is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy, but contemporary nation-state citizenship is affected by more issues than the increased movement of peoples. In the previous paragraphs I addressed cultural factors, but globalisation combined with neoliberalism fuels also economic developments that challenge nation-states, for instance by making them struggle to provide social security and prosperity for their citizens. As a consequence of globalisation, national economies are more interdependent: they depend on imports and exports of goods, and changes in large economies severely impact smaller ones.⁴¹ This interdependency means that states are increasingly hit by economic crises that they cannot predict or control, “[bringing] into sharp focus the problem of

³⁶ Tan, 696.

³⁷ Schlenker and Blatter, 1092.

³⁸ Jeffrey Dill, “The Moral Education of Global Citizens,” *Society* 49, no.6 (2012): 542.

³⁹ Wiel Veugelers, “The Moral and the Political in Global Citizenship: Appreciating Differences in Education,” *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 9, nos.3-4 (2011): 473.

⁴⁰ Tan, 707.

⁴¹ Milward, 4-5.

sustaining citizenship entitlements in societies that have suffered severe economic decline.”⁴² Bryan Turner argues that conditions such as “economic slowdown, outsourcing, ageing populations, energy crises and so forth” make scarcity a fundamental issue for nation-states.⁴³ European nation-states thus face the problem of how to provide welfare for more people from diminishing budgets. This reality has implications for citizenship. Turner observes that in a context of scarcity, for a neoliberal mindset, citizenship becomes “a contract where the unemployed (or more exactly, the unemployable) are thought to have broken their social contract.”⁴⁴ Turner writes about the American context, but the idea of a social contract dependent on earning and/or paying taxes is equally valid in Europe despite the differences in welfare policies. According to this mentality, citizenship would be the prerogative of those who earn a salary or produce the equivalent market value of citizenship privileges. No state actually has such a citizenship regime, but problematic attitudes such as this one might and do guide citizenship policies in conditions of economic scarcity. For example, policies that require the unemployed to prove that they are actively seeking employment or otherwise benefit society in order to receive benefits⁴⁵ may be intended to avoid social exclusion, but they also imply that citizens must prove their worthiness.

Indeed, Engin Isin argues that the current ideal citizen is a professional: someone with “skills, credits, accreditation, and rank” rather than wealth or property, as used to be the case in the past.⁴⁶ This change relates to the shift in industrialised countries' economies from mass production to post-fordism, benefitting the highly educated and disadvantaging blue-collar workers. Consequently, Isin explains, the new citizenry is made up of “career hierarchies of specialized members ostensibly selected by merit and based on a trained expertise,” and the only way to accumulate wealth, status or power is through being a member.⁴⁷ Though these professionals are “a cosmopolitan class” (because knowledge is nation-independent), they are not necessarily cosmopolitan citizens in the sense discussed earlier.⁴⁸ Rather, Isin's description invokes the idea of global elites, a highly mobile mythical class who travel around the world to take up lucrative economic opportunities. Avril Keating's analysis of EU policy documents demonstrates that at least the ideal European citizen corresponds closely to Isin's description. She finds that European educational rhetoric and policies

⁴² Bryan Turner, “Contemporary Citizenship: Four Types”, *Journal of Citizenship and Globalisation Studies* 1, no.1 (2017): 14.

⁴³ Turner (2017): 14.

⁴⁴ Turner (2017): 19.

⁴⁵ For example the Finnish government has developed such a policy this summer.

⁴⁶ Engin Isin, “Who Is the New Citizen? Towards a Genealogy”, *Citizenship Studies* 1, no.1 (1997): 128.

⁴⁷ Isin (1997): 129.

⁴⁸ Isin (1997): 130.

“almost suggest that it is education, rather than legal rights, that governs access to citizenship in the so-called ‘Knowledge Society’.”⁴⁹ The educated citizen roughly corresponds to Isin's professional citizen, as many of the professions Isin mentions, such as research, engineering and planning, belong to the knowledge economy. For the EU, the emphasis on knowledge relates to their goal of becoming “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world”, and thus the ability of citizens to re-educate themselves and adapt to the changes of an unpredictable global economy.⁵⁰ When nation-states struggle to provide welfare and security for all their citizens, the ideal citizen is someone capable of producing economic value. In the knowledge economy, status, power and wealth will be gained through education and, as Isin suggests, working in a position at the top of the professional hierarchy.

Increasing cultural diversity and economic scarcity are currently shaping conceptions of citizenship in European nation-states, and the educated/professional citizen can be seen as one solution to these pressures: they are theoretically able to provide for themselves anywhere in the world, in any field. I will return to these issues in my analysis of the novels. Following the scholars I have referred to thus far, I understand citizenship as legal membership in a political community that is accompanied by political, civic and social rights and responsibilities. However, this membership has further implications. Firstly, it is often associated with a collective identity that interacts with personal identity in different ways: for example, citizenship responsibilities differ according to age and gender. Secondly, the legal membership forms the basis for claiming rights and entitlements within the national community. Thirdly, it prescribes and allows for certain kinds of practices and behaviour. My thesis examines the representation of citizenship in children's literature. As fiction rarely discusses the criteria for citizenship or its rights and responsibilities, my analysis will not focus on the legal status, though I acknowledge that it forms the backbone for collective identities and citizenship practices. Rather, I explore how current pressures affect conceptions of the nation and/or democratic community through everyday, lived experience. But first, I elaborate on two analytical concepts, belonging and voice, that allow me to connect questions of identity and behaviour with citizenship as a legal status in a political community.

As questions of citizenship, group membership, and identity have become increasingly entwined, belonging is a key term for my analysis. However, as Yuval-Davis shows, belonging is not just a

⁴⁹ Avril Keating, “Educating Europe's Citizen's: Moving from National to Post-National Models of Educating for European Citizenship” *Citizenship Studies* 13, no.2 (2009): 146.

⁵⁰ Keating, 147.

warm, fuzzy feeling. She distinguishes three analytical levels of the notion of belonging: “social locations”, “individuals' identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings” and “ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging/s.”⁵¹ Social location refers to a person being identified with a certain nation, race, age group, gender or some other category that has “particular implications vis-à-vis the grids of power relations in society”.⁵² These locations should not be conflated with the person's emotional attachments to different groups, the second layer of belonging that Yuval-Davis defines as “stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not).”⁵³ For instance, *Et Kävele Yksin*, one of the novels I analyse, is very clear that just because someone has Kosovan parents, this does not mean that they themselves identify with or have an emotional attachment to Kosovo. The third analytical level of belonging are the ethical and political values according to which social locations, constructions of individual and collective identities, and attachments are judged.⁵⁴ This is where membership in a community and the politics of “us” and “them” comes in. The judgement Yuval-Davis refers to is “the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a part of a community, and of what roles specific social locations and specific narratives of identity play in this,” reconnecting us to debates about citizenship.⁵⁵ For example, immigrant children and middle-aged teachers' belonging to the nation are judged differently, for instance in terms of what they are seen to contribute to the community and the behaviour that is expected of them. Since the politics of belonging define differences within a supposedly equal community of citizens, this term helps me analyse the exclusions hidden behind the supposedly universal status of citizenship. I start my analysis of the novels with questions of identification and belonging to see how they impact the characters' actions and decisions.

Voice is an equally useful concept for examining identities, especially public identities, and the reciprocity that citizenship implies, both between citizens and between an individual and the state. Couldry defines voice as the capacity of all human beings “to give an account of their lives”, a part of human agency that “must be taken into account in any form of social, political or economic organization.”⁵⁶ The concept of voice implies listening, “recognizing what others *have to say* [and] recognizing *that they have something to say*”.⁵⁷ Therefore, voice relates closely to Yuval-Davis'

⁵¹ Nira Yuval-Davis, “Belonging and the Politics of Belonging,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no.3 (2006): 199.

⁵² Yuval-Davis, 199.

⁵³ Yuval-Davis, 202.

⁵⁴ Yuval-Davis, 203.

⁵⁵ Yuval-Davis, 205.

⁵⁶ Nick Couldry, “Rethinking the Politics of Voice”, *Continuum* 23, no.4 (2009): 580.

⁵⁷ Couldry, 579.

second layer of belonging as narration of who we are and are not, but Couldry stresses what these stories mean for the relationship between the individual and the community. Any form of social, political, or economic organisation should *listen* to people's voices, which in turn should inform any decisions made. Couldry laments that dominant neoliberal discourses erase “not just particular voices that might matter”, but the value of voice altogether.⁵⁸ Even though voice seemingly plays a role in democracies, “the offer is elsewhere, and indirectly, retracted.”⁵⁹ Therefore, the struggle for voice is central to citizenship. Indeed, one way to examine the exclusions within citizenship is to trace which voices are more often listened to than others. For example, Bellamy explains the difference between permanent residents and citizens as that of voice, since a permanent resident “may express her views, but is not entitled to have them heard on an equal basis to citizens.”⁶⁰ Fiction often consists of accounts of people's lives, and therefore a novel may be seen as an instance of using voice, though we might argue about the authenticity and value of imagined voices. But more importantly, in the course of the novel, the characters may try to use their voice in politically relevant ways, they may or may not be listened to, or there might be other consequences.

⁵⁸ Couldry, 580.

⁵⁹ Couldry, 581.

⁶⁰ Richard Bellamy, *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 25.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this section, I explain how this thesis understands children's literature in order to determine the significance of representations of citizenship in this genre. I also provide a description of my method, deriving from critical content analysis, and justify my choice of texts: *Et Kävele Yksin* by Juuli Niemi, *Les Petites Reines* by Clémentine Beauvais, *Ishavspirater* by Frida Nilsson and *One* by Sarah Crossan.

Literature provides imaginative representations of human experience. Therefore, literature is particularly useful for examining citizenship as lived experience. In addition, literary works can present several different perspectives, often told in first-person perspective. Thus they can potentially give a voice to otherwise marginalised people, even if the account of their lives is imagined. The representations of citizenship in texts for children are particularly worth examining as children's literature is often presumed to be inherently educational. If that is the case, the representations have a normative dimension. Lesnik-Oberstein argues that “the narratives adults attempt to convey to children are controlled and formed, implicitly and explicitly, by the didactic impulse.”⁶¹ Nodelman also asserts that the objective of children's literature “is to educate, [but] it refuses to do so directly,” instead masquerading as pleasure.⁶² Nodelman actually claims that this education might be citizenship education, as all children's literature performs the pull between freedom and constraint that characterises citizenship in capitalist democracies. Children/citizens have “the freedom to be themselves and please themselves only in return for learning and acting on the knowledge that the freedom takes place within the context of, and is constrained by, the needs of other individuals and of the whole communities to which they belong.”⁶³ The opposing view sees children's literature as “a liberation movement, away from didacticism, artificiality, and moralism.”⁶⁴ Clémentine Beauvais, an academic as well as a children's author, belongs to neither camp. She argues that the power dynamics of children's literature “are of a sophistication which precludes any easy attribution of 'empowerment' or 'disempowerment' to one or the other party.”⁶⁵ According to

⁶¹ Karin Lesnik-Oberstein, *Children's Literature: Criticism and Fictional Child* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 38.

⁶² Perry Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) 36.

⁶³ Nodelman, 249.

⁶⁴ Lesnik-Oberstein, 51.

⁶⁵ Clémentine Beauvais, *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children's Literature* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 3.

her, “any educational 'message' delivered to the child now will find its enactment or realisation in the future.”⁶⁶ Therefore, she characterises children's literature as “adult wishes (...) channelled through representations of what the child should do and become.”⁶⁷ Following these critics, I conclude that children's novels represent the kinds of citizenship that adults wish children to learn, and they constitute an attempt to teach them that kind of citizenship. I do not imply that all adults agree on what kinds of citizens are needed in the future. However, creating and circulating children's literature requires a great deal of overt collaboration as well as covert approval from a large group of adults: publishers, authors, librarians, teachers and parents. It is this group and their collective, negotiated views that I refer to. In summary, I expect the texts to show how to cope with the perceived problems of the present and what kinds of citizenship will be needed in the future.

3.1. Choice of texts

In this thesis, I analyse four award-winning children's books from Finland, France, Sweden and the UK. The countries were chosen because of the researcher's language abilities in order to read them in the original language and access information about the awards. I used books that were awarded prizes in 2016, because they were the most recent ones available within the time frame of this project and can therefore be said to reflect specifically contemporary citizenship and the current crisis of the nation-state. I analyse awarded books, because I take these awards to symbolise value within the national literary canon (in the case of Finlandia and Nils Holgersson -plaketten), and educational value (because children's literature is inherently didactic).

That said, deeming books especially “valuable” within the literary field is complicated. According to Bourdieu, in the literary field, symbolic and market value remain “relatively independent of each other,” meaning that commercial success and critical recognition do not go hand in hand.⁶⁸ Bourdieu does not explicitly mention children's literature, yet as a genre it would seem to fit to the category of texts that have market value, but are unlikely to be critically recognised. According to Nodelman, “children's literature exists specifically and mainly in the context of consumer-oriented, middle-class culture.”⁶⁹ As a consequence, it is considered enlivened science, thinly veiled middle-class life lessons, or a commercial enterprise with little artistic value, “a kind of educational junk food” that is

⁶⁶ Beauvais, 46.

⁶⁷ Beauvais, 50.

⁶⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'Art: Genèse et Structure du Champ Littéraire* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1992), 201.

⁶⁹ Nodelman, 250.

unimportant for literary studies.⁷⁰ Even works of children's literature with classic status, such as *Treasure Island* or *The Secret Garden*, are not always perceived as possessing symbolic value because they do not receive “interpretive attention of the sort critics usually provide for adult texts”.⁷¹ Kidd criticises the assumption that children's books are “utilitarian rather than literary texts (...) motivated by practical rather than aesthetic or cultural needs” and argues that children's literature prizes “assert its value beyond the merely or crudely utilitarian.”⁷² Therefore, prizes “are neither purely economic nor aesthetic”.⁷³ After all, if all children's texts were crudely utilitarian, none of them would be worth awarding. The symbolic and cultural value of children's literature and the significance of prizes in constructing that value is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, I conclude that while an award does not automatically signal exceptional literary value, it also signals other values than market value, such as what is considered beneficial for children in the sense of both education and enjoyment. According to Kidd, the Newbery medal (a children's literature prize in the US) “linked texts to a tradition of merit while responding to the pressures of the day” and stood for “the middlebrow culture of public schools and libraries.”⁷⁴ The prizes mentioned in this paper function in much the same way, for example they are all specifically for children's literature and all but one are awarded by librarians' associations. To make this point, I introduce each award and the selection criteria for each novel. The cited selection criteria may be taken as indications of how the boards read these novels and what they deemed valuable in each work. In general, most refer to an especially vicarious reading experience and in some way “responding to the pressures of the day”, for example through an intelligent or moving treatment of relevant or complex themes. The Nils Holgersson -plaketten and the Finlandia prize have a function to promote national children's literature, whereas Prix Sorcières and the Carnegie Medal are not tied to nationality or the original language.

The Finlandia is awarded by the Finnish Book Foundation (established by the Finnish Book Publishers' Association and Ministry for Education and Culture) to a work of any genre aimed at children or young people originally written in Finnish. A board of three members select candidates, and the winner is selected by a fourth person: in 2016, the board members came from the fields of culture, arts education, and journalism, and the fourth person was an actress and a singer. There are

⁷⁰ Jan Susina, “Editor's Note: Kiddie Lit(e): The Dumbing Down of Children's Literature”, *The Lion and the Unicorn* 17, no.1 (1993): vii.

⁷¹ Nodelman, 15.

⁷² Kenneth Kidd, “Prizing Children's Literature: The Case of Newbery Gold”, *Children's Literature* 35, (2007): 166.

⁷³ Kidd, 167.

⁷⁴ Kidd, 169.

no set guidelines or criteria for choosing the winner, and therefore the prize may reflect just one person's taste. In fact, at first glance *Et Kävele Yksin* seems to have been chosen for appealing to adults and not its target audience. When shortlisted, the board stated that it “makes even an adult remember what it was like to be young”⁷⁵ and in the awards ceremony the final judge introduced it by saying that “reading this book I remembered what it is like to fall in love and what a first kiss feels like.”⁷⁶ However strange these statements may seem, they also speak of a vicarious experience, suggesting that the novel is realistic and believable. The board and the final judge also praise Niemi's “beautiful”⁷⁷ and “poetic”⁷⁸ language and the novel's timeless themes that speak to young people's everyday experience, from schoolyard politics to growing up.

The Prix Sorcières is awarded by the Librairies Sorcières, an association of bookshops specialised in children and young people's literature, and the French National Librarians' Association for works of children and teenagers' literature written or translated into French. The board is composed of thirteen librarians and booksellers from around France, and all member libraries and bookshops may nominate a work for consideration. Their aim is to award “books that do not leave you indifferent, made of tears and laughter, of violence and gentleness, books that let young people grow in a spirit of freedom and curiosity”.⁷⁹ The mention of growth connects to the idea of educational literature, and the list of desirable experiences suggests that the work should expose children to challenging topics and experiences. It is therefore unsurprising that the winners are chosen for being “surprising and remarkable” as well as for literary merit.⁸⁰ The board appreciates Beauvais' “sense of humour, solidarity and the capacity to look at the world critically” evident in her topic, the “cult of appearance”.⁸¹ The board emphasise an intelligent, funny and moving treatment of relevant contemporary topics.

⁷⁵ Pekka Vartiainen, Mervi Riikonen and Sanna Sommers, “Raadin perustelut 2016,” 1. <https://kirjasaatio.fi/lastenjanuortenkirjallisuudenfinlandia> “saa aikuisenkin muistamaan, miltä tuntui olla nuori”. All the translations in this paper are my own.

⁷⁶ Vuokko Hovatta, “Valitsija Vuokko Hovatan Puhe,” 1, <https://kirjasaatio.fi/lastenjanuortenkirjallisuudenfinlandia>. “Lukiessani tätä kirjaa muistin, millaista on rakastua, miltä tuntuu ensi suudelma”.

⁷⁷ Hovatta, 2. “kaunista”

⁷⁸ Vartiainen, Riikonen and Sommers, 1. “runollinen”

⁷⁹ “Le Prix Sorcières: Pourquoi, Comment, et Son Histoire,” Association des Bibliothécaires de France, published August 2, 2017, <https://www.abf.asso.fr/4/25/13/ABF/le-prix-sorcières-pourquoi-comment-et-son-histoire>. “livres qui ne laissent pas indifférents, faits de larmes et de rires, de violence et de douceur, des livres pour se construire en toute liberté, en toute curiosité”

⁸⁰ “Le Prix Sorcières: La Charte et le Règlement”, 2, <https://www.abf.asso.fr/4/25/13/ABF/le-prix-sorcières-pourquoi-comment-et-son-histoire>. “le caractère surprenant et remarquable”

⁸¹ “Les 5 Romans Ados Nominés Pour Les Prix Sorcières 2016”, March 21 2016, <http://librairies-sorcières.blogspot.nl/2016/03/les-5-romans-ados-nomines-pour-les-prix.html>. “l'humour, la solidarité et la capacité à développer un regard critique sur le monde”

The Nils Holgersson Plaque is awarded to the year's "best book for children or young people" by the Swedish Library Association.⁸² A board of six librarians selects the winner from candidates nominated by schools and children's librarians. The rules do not specify if the author has to be Swedish, but only a few of the winners have been foreign citizens and all their novels were originally written in Swedish.⁸³ Accordingly, the jury commended *Ishavspirater* for being "anchored in the Swedish tradition of storytelling," explicitly placing it among great classics such as Selma Lagerlöf.⁸⁴ They describe it as a gripping and moving "fairytale adventure" in a magical "fantasy world" provoking "amazement".⁸⁵ The novel is also "deep and nuanced", dealing with themes such as "development", "courage, humanity, hatred, betrayal, sisterhood and oppression."⁸⁶ Themes such as development or oppression, for example, seem to possess a contemporary flavour. The emphasis on fairytale fantasy, on the other hand, indicates what is particularly enjoyable about the novel.

The Carnegie Medal⁸⁷ is awarded to an English-language work of any genre aimed at children or young people. Members of the UK Librarians' association CILIP may nominate works, and 12 youth librarians form a panel of judges who read them, shortlist candidates and select the winners. The awarded work should be "of outstanding literary quality" and "provide pleasure (...) of a good read, but also the deeper subconscious satisfaction of having gone through a vicarious, but at the time of reading, a real experience that is retained afterwards."⁸⁸ The criteria thus emphasises an immersive reading experience and literary merit. There are also more specific criteria regarding literary style, plot and characterisation, considered when appropriate to the work. Many of these focus on whether the work makes sense, such as whether the characters are "believable" and "consistent" or whether the plot is "well-constructed" and the resolution "credible".⁸⁹ The stylistic criteria includes whether the author uses "literary techniques and conventions" and reveals the characters effectively.⁹⁰ In

⁸² "Stadgar Nils Holgersson -plaketten," Svensk Biblioteksforening, accessed March 15, 2018 <http://www.biblioteksforeningen.se/evenemang/sveriges-biblioteks-utmarkelser/>. "föregående års bästa barn- eller ungdomsbok"

⁸³ "Alla Tidigare Mottagare av Nils Holgersson -plaketten," Svensk Biblioteksforening, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://www.biblioteksforeningen.se/evenemang/sveriges-biblioteks-utmarkelser/>.

⁸⁴ "Frida Nilsson Tilldelas Nils Holgersson -plaketten", Svensk Biblioteksforening, published September 29, 2016, <http://www.biblioteksforeningen.se/nyheter/frida-nilsson-tilldelas-nils-holgersson-plaketten/>. "väl förankrad i den svenska berättartraditionen"

⁸⁵ "Frida Nilsson Tilldelas..." "sagoäventyr", "fantasivärld", "som får läsaren att häpna"

⁸⁶ "Frida Nilsson Tilldelas..." "har en djup och nyanserad klangbotten", "utvecklingstematik", "mod, det mänskliga, habegär, svek, systerskap och förtryck"

⁸⁷ Named after the Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who founded around 2500 libraries in the English-speaking world, also in Britain.

⁸⁸ "Awards Process," The CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Children's Book Awards, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/awards-process.php>.

⁸⁹ "Awards Process".

⁹⁰ "Awards Process".

accordance with the criteria, the chair of judges calls *One* “emotive and engaging” and “deeply moving”.⁹¹ She also highlights its “unusual” structure which is “perfectly crafted”.⁹² The emphasis is on form, literary techniques and the strong emotional experience provided.

3.2. Method for reading the texts

My approach to reading the texts is similar to Ho's in *Nation and Citizenship in the Twentieth-Century British Novel*, but I focus on different conflicts because my texts come from different countries with different traditions and notions of citizenship. The novels also relate to citizenship in different ways. *Et Kävlele Yksin* is concerned with the tension between ethno-cultural notions of identity and supposedly universal citizenship, while *Les Petites Reines* tells the story of three bullied girls achieving their right to have a voice. *Ishavspirater* asks how to be a good citizen in an unjust world and *One* addresses several problems related to citizenship, including dependence, welfare and who counts as a person. They respond to circumstances and conflicts that arise from immigration, gender inequality, unregulated capitalism, and stripped-back welfare systems. Therefore, reading these texts, I ask which contemporary issues of citizenship they relate to, and what they say about that issue in relation to my definition of citizenship. My focus is on the issues the protagonists face, reading them against the backdrop of the current crises of the nation-state and the EU rather than the historical development of citizenship in a given society.

This approach matches John Stevens' definition of critical content analysis. Critical content analysis asks “What happens here?”, which Stevens laments is a question deemed “too obvious to rehearse” in literary criticism.⁹³ However, in asking “What happens in these novels and how does it relate to citizenship?”, I aim not merely to describe the plot, but also to address the “larger significances such as underlying ideas or patterns or ideological positionings” of the texts.⁹⁴ In other words, it is research “that openly takes a political stance toward reading children’s and young adult books,” as Brooks and Cueto define critical content analysis.⁹⁵ In my thesis, this means acknowledging children's books as sites for the contestation of citizenship. Otherwise, I follow a qualitative

⁹¹ Sioned Jacques, “A Message from the 2016 Chair of Judges”, July 5, 2016, <https://cilipckg.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/a-message-from-the-2016-chair-of-judges/>.

⁹² Jacques, “A Message...”

⁹³ John Stevens, “Editorial: Critical Content Analysis and Literary Criticism”, *International Research in Children's Literature* 8, no.1 (2015): vi.

⁹⁴ Stevens, v.

⁹⁵ Wanda Brooks and Desiree Cueto, “Contemplating and Extending the Scholarship on Children's and Young Adult Literature”, *Journal of Literacy Research* 50, no.1 (2018): 17.

adaptation of the mixed method Mathis used in her critical content analysis of agency in international children's literature. She provides “descriptive narrative information while allowing for counting and putting coded material in emergent categories,” in her case the categories of personal, social and cultural agency to define which one featured most prominently in her choice of texts.⁹⁶ As I use fewer texts than Mathis (she read 27, and I have 4), and a qualitative rather than a mixed method, I do not code or categorise the material. Instead, I approach the texts individually and do not aim to make generalisations. However, I also began my reading by providing descriptive narrative information as opposed to close reading and literary analysis. Furthermore, Mathis combines “an ongoing close reading of text [with] moving back and forth between the theoretical framework and identified textual units, all the while documenting emerging themes and evidence from the text.”⁹⁷ Similarly, my initial research helped me identify issues relating to citizenship in the source texts, but my reading of the texts also informed the theoretical framework. On first reading, I tracked several themes relating to citizenship, and as I began to write my analysis, focused on those that were most relevant to each text. This allowed me to ask more specific questions about each text. The set of questions that guided my first reading was as follows:

1. Regarding group membership and belonging, what groups are presented and who belongs to them. How does belonging impact the characters' actions and decisions?
2. Do the characters clearly use or claim their rights as citizens or are they denied their rights? How?
3. Do the characters make claims about justice in their society or actively contribute to achieving justice?

They are intended to answer the overall question: “How do these texts represent citizenship?” The more specific questions that I sought to answer after the initial reading were more varied. For example, *Ishavspirater* and *Les Petites Reines* both begin with the protagonists identifying an injustice in their respective societies and then trying to achieve justice. The more specific questions I asked about these novels were:

1. What is the injustice, what causes it and what does it reveal about citizenship?
2. Does the injustice relate to rights? Are they established citizenship rights or a proposition for new forms of citizenship?
3. How do the characters go about solving the injustice and do they succeed? What does that

⁹⁶ Mathis, 208.

⁹⁷ Mathis, 208.

suggest about citizenship in their communities or more generally?

In *Et Kävele Yksin* and *One*, by contrast, the characters do not make sweeping claims about justice in society. Instead, they contain personal reflections about the characters' place in society. For example, in *Et Kävele Yksin* one of the protagonists moves from feeling like an unwanted outsider to building the life he wants and in *One* conjoined twins struggle to discover autonomy while being dependent. The more specific questions I asked about these novels were:

1. What are the social locations that define the characters' status and what is that status?
2. How does the outsider / dependent status manifest itself? Are the characters denied rights or are there other obstacles they face that others do not?
3. Do they overcome these obstacles and how? What does that suggest about citizenship in their communities or more generally?

I identify citizenship in instances where characters make a claim about justice and/or act to achieve a more just society as well as in instances when characters are recognised as belonging to the political community as equal and full human beings with the right to participate, express their views or access public goods.

Chapter 4: Analysis

In this chapter, I analyse each novel individually, first providing a brief plot summary followed by an analysis of the representations of citizenship. The analysis is necessarily limited to the themes, narratives or characters most central to the theme of citizenship.

4.1. *Et Kävele Yksin* by Juuli Niemi, (2016)

Et Kävele Yksin was Niemi's first novel. Previously, she has written film scripts and poetry. Niemi herself describes the novel as an exploration of the turning points in youth that transform people's lives.⁹⁸ Indeed, the jury of the Finlandia prize as well literary bloggers bring up the themes of first love and puberty. They describe the melancholia and pain of first love as part and parcel of growing up, thus also seeing some hope in the novel. Translation rights have been sold to Latvia.

Plot summary: Ada is a quiet girl who takes care of her penniless, alcoholic art teacher mother. Egzon's parents are Kosovan refugees who are having difficulties integrating into Finnish society - his family has been scarred by his older brother's sudden departure to Berlin. Ada and Egzon fall in love and start dating. The relationship transforms their lives, but it is fraught with tensions: Egzon does not want to tell Ada about his family so she feels like he is hiding something, and Ada would like to begin having sex whereas Egzon does not yet feel ready. However, he does not tell Ada and when they try having sex for the first time, it goes badly, and they never speak to each other again. Both try to understand what happened on their own, and move on with their lives.

As *Et Kävele Yksin* depicts the love affair between a Finnish girl and second-generation immigrant, questions of ethno-cultural identity feature in it prominently. Egzon does not feel like he belongs to Finnish society, but through his relationship with Ada he begins to find his place and build his life. It is a story of integration, which understands citizenship as individual development: Egzon grows into a citizen through the support and encouragement of his Finnish girlfriend and her mother, which enable him to gain confidence in his abilities and rights. His newly found citizenship is best defined as having a voice: being someone who has something legitimate to say and the right to be

⁹⁸ Pia Parkkinen, "Lasten- ja Nuortenkirjallisuuden Finlandia-Voittaja Syntyi Salakuuntelemalla," *Yleisradio*, November, 25, 2016, <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9311656>.

listened to. As Egzon's Kosovan roots seem to be merely a problem to be overcome and do not feature prominently in his new life, citizenship seems to be a question of choosing between his background and his country of birth and residence. This development could be seen as a “natural” movement from Kosovo to Finland, but as Egzon has never lived in Kosovo, it appears more like solving a problem from the past.

Et Kävele Yksin highlights the problems with cultural-ethnic understandings of the nation through the theme of Egzon's belonging. Both his personal narrative and the way others perceive him locate him in the twilight zone of being neither Kosovan nor Finnish, and consequently he lacks the cultural identity that Turner finds essential for cultural citizenship.⁹⁹ Egzon calls Kosovo “[o]ur home” but, paradoxically, he “[has] never been at home.”¹⁰⁰ Instead, Egzon has to rely on his mother and other Kosovan immigrants' descriptions. However, he only hears unflattering things such as “the roads are so poor and busy that the ten kilometers' drive from the airport to the city takes an hour” and “there are dead dogs lying in ditches and it's dirty”¹⁰¹ While Egzon expects his family history to connect him to Kosovo, these unappealing stories make it an unfavourable association. Also others expect him to belong to Kosovo: Ada's mother asks him what his “other home country” is like and Egzon feels “that [he's] not allowed to say that this is [his] only home country, just like yours.”¹⁰² Similarly, Ada's uncle asks her where Egzon is from, only to get the answer “from here.”¹⁰³ However, sometimes the idea of the Balkans helps Egzon understand who he is despite the negative associations and false assumptions. His brother gives him a note with a quotation from an academic textbook: “In international politics, the term 'balkanisation' has long been used to refer to a fragmented region formed by several states and nationalities, where wars and other atrocities occur one after the other.”¹⁰⁴ Egzon connects the quotation to his stormy family situation and wonders if he should show it to Ada to explain that “this is what we look like on the inside.”¹⁰⁵ Tellingly, he connects with academic discourse and the idea of violent fragmentation. Egzon's Kosovan identity comes from a book, not from himself, and it is a source of conflict rather than strength. However,

⁹⁹ Turner (2000), 39.

¹⁰⁰ Juuli Niemi, *Et Kävele Yksin* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2016), “Meidän koti”, “[ei] ole käynyt koskaan kotona”, 78.

¹⁰¹ Niemi, “tiet ovat niin kuoppaisia ja ruuhkaisia, että kymmenen kilometrin matka lentokentältä kaupunkiin kestää tunnin”, “ojassa makaa kuolleita koiria ja on likaista,” 77.

¹⁰² Niemi, “toisessa kotimaassasi”, “[ettei] saa sanoa, että tämä on minun ainoa kotimaani, ihan niin kuin sinullakin”, 212.

¹⁰³ Niemi, “täältä kotoisin”, 178.

¹⁰⁴ Niemi, “Kansainvälisen politiikan kielenkäytössä käsite 'balkanisoituminen' on jo kauan sitten vakiintunut tarkoittamaan useiden valtioiden ja kansallisuuksien muodostamaa pirstaleista aluetta, jossa sodat ja muut väkivallanteot seuraavat toinen toisiaan,” 80.

¹⁰⁵ Niemi, “sisältä me näytämme tältä,” 80.

his home in Finland is no more a source of strength than the foreign Kosovo home. Egzon and his family “have been dropped into a suburb the colour of dirty snow like a beer can into the water in the middle of the sea.”¹⁰⁶ Like a tossed beer can, they are seen as unwanted trash and a problem by the authorities and society at large, abandoned and drifting rather than secure. Egzon thinks that their apartment is “only glass, cement and stone. Just a house, not a home.”¹⁰⁷ Later, he rephrases this statement to “the crazy thing is not that this is just one bleak house in the midst of others. The crazy thing is that this is really a home.”¹⁰⁸ Egzon realises that his flat and the suburb were not designed to be homely, yet he has to call it home. The bleak surroundings hint at his worth in Finnish society. Formally, Egzon is only a member of the Finnish nation-state: even if he had a Kosovan passport, he has never been there and his only ties to the country are his family members. The problem is generational, as second-generation immigrants must “surf between two cultures and negotiate their own identity in such a way that they maintain their links with their family and achieve full citizenship”: Egzon's parents have different struggles.¹⁰⁹ Still, Egzon's Kosovan roots are an important aspect of his identity and influence his citizenship in Finnish society. Unfortunately, they mainly exclude him.

Annoyed at his friend Iman's insistence that “[she] is no ordinary Somali girl”, Egzon reflects on the dilemma of ethnicity in Finland: “As if you could just wash it away. As if all of them would not just have washed their backgrounds off their faces every morning and painted it back when they returned home if that were the case.”¹¹⁰ Even if “Iman shakes hands with all boys and men”, at sixteen she had a child with “the Finnish asshole next door”, so “[h]ow does she differ from those Somali girls she dreads so much?”¹¹¹ Iman tries to rebel against the Somali label, but Egzon suggests that firstly, behaviour such as shaking men's hands is not enough because her ethnicity and assumed religion overrides it. Secondly, having a child at sixteen is “Somali” or “immigrant” behaviour and unacceptable in Finnish society. Interestingly, even if the father is Finnish, the child reinforces rather than erases her difference. Though this example is not about himself, Egzon's thoughts of washing away one's background also apply to him. As Iman originally intended *not* to be a stereotypical

¹⁰⁶ Niemi, “on pudotettu likaantuneen lumen väriseen lähiöön kuin oluttölkki veteen keskellä aavaa merta,” 62.

¹⁰⁷ Niemi, “vain lasia, sementtiä ja kiveä. Pelkkä talo, ei koti,” 76.

¹⁰⁸ Niemi, “hurjaa ei ole se, että tämä on vain kolkko talo toisten samanlaisten keskellä. Hurjaa on se, että tämä on oikeasti koti,” 77.

¹⁰⁹ Colette Sabatier, “Ethnic and National Identity Among Second Generation Immigrant Adolescents in France: The Role of Social Context and Family,” *Journal of Adolescence* 31, no.3 (2008): 186.

¹¹⁰ Niemi, “[hän ei] sitten ole mikään sompputyttö”, “Ihan kuin sen voisi vain pestä pois. Ihan kuin he kaikki eivät olisi siinä tapauksessa aamuisin pesseet taustan pois naamaltaan, maalanneet sen takaisin kotiin palatessaan,” 71.

¹¹¹ Niemi, “Iman kättelee kaikkia poikia ja miehiä”, “suomalaisen naapuritalon kusipään kanssa”, “[m]iten se eroaa niistä kammoamista somalityöistä” 71.

Somali girl, it seems that young immigrants might accidentally behave in ways that lead to them being seen as outsiders, or that their behaviour is selectively perceived: only the problems and differences are noticed. Indeed, Egzon's arts teacher has not paid attention to his work and talent. For example, after hearing that Egzon has applied to an upper secondary school specialised in visual arts, his teacher “for the first time really tries to remember [his] face,” even if he “[has] taken all the possible arts modules and all have been As.”¹¹² This is not the whole truth, though. Through Ada's best friend, Sanni, Niemi provides a simpler conception of a second-generation immigrant's belonging. Sanni pragmatically states that Egzon is not a “real immigrant” because he was born in Finland.¹¹³ In an ideal world, Sanni's statement would be the whole story. Still, while Egzon might not be a real immigrant, his ambiguous belonging restricts his behaviour, for example in terms of how he uses the city space and his aspirations. Through his relationship with Ada Egzon overcomes some of these obstacles and learns to live and make decisions more freely.

Egzon's experience of the city is a perfect example of citizenship as a site of exclusion. On the one hand, he is disgusted by his home suburb and its “down-and-out hag [who] has crouched down to piss and [whose] old man is injecting drugs next to her.”¹¹⁴ On the other, the suburb is the only place where he feels safe and “where you can be sure not to be taunted, or if you are, you know that there will be assistance.”¹¹⁵ In comparison, he associates the city centre with “cars and hot dog stands and the fights that happen there” where he and his friends “would immediately be beaten (...) and lose the bus money and beg some from the busy city dwellers, our faces covered in blood.”¹¹⁶ For Egzon, Helsinki is a place of violence and humiliation where his rights would disappear. This division between the suburbs and the city suggests a politics of belonging where Egzon may show himself in only the most disadvantaged areas, but not in the refined ones such as the city centre, a significant restriction to his citizen status. However, a date with Ada forces Egzon to go to a cinema in the city centre. It is a feat requiring careful preparation, for example Egzon brings along a map with “arrows and circled places” and the bus schedule written on the back.¹¹⁷ Initially, Helsinki confirms all of his negative preconceptions. In the tram, he smells “electric heating, wet shoes and the urine of a hobo

¹¹² Niemi, “ensimmäistä kertaa yrittää todella painaa kasvojani mieleen,” “[on] ottanut kaikki mahdolliset kuvataidekurssit, aina ne ovat olleet kiitettäviä,” 233.

¹¹³ Niemi, “oikea mamu,” 240.

¹¹⁴ Niemi, “puliämmä [joka] on kyykistynyt kuselle ja [jonka] äijä piikittää vieressä suoneen,” 79.

¹¹⁵ Niemi, “jossa voi olla varma, ettei kuule huutelua takaapäin, tai jos kuulee, niin tietää, että sivuilta tulee varmistusta,” 79.

¹¹⁶ Niemi, “autot ja nakkikioskit ja niiden liepeillä käytävät tappelut”, “saisimme heti (...) turpaan ja hävittäisimme bussirahat ja kerjäisimme niitä sitten naamat veressä kiireisiltä kaupunkilaisilta,” 108.

¹¹⁷ Niemi, “piirtämiä nuolia ja ympyröimiä kohtia,” 102.

asleep in his seat” as he is pushed around by the other passengers.¹¹⁸ However, after their date, having held hands in the cinema, the city appears “smooth and shining like a pearl” and “[t]he city dwellers are beautiful and smiling” because of a positive, deeply personal experience.¹¹⁹ His mind has transformed the city as a consequence of the closeness he experienced with Ada, and suddenly Egzon can use the public space as an equal, undisturbed. It is not clear whether the transformation is caused by Egzon projecting his feelings for Ada onto the city, or perhaps by his having overestimated the hostility of the city, but the scene indicates that the experience of closeness and connection with another person affects his personal narrative about belonging. While not always conceived as a citizenship right, using the city space confidently indicates having an equal right to public spaces and being a public person, both relating to narratives of who is accepted as belonging. In any case, Egzon's newly-found confidence becomes useful at the entrance examinations of the visual arts upper secondary school and in going to the city's graffiti wall.

Egzon's artistic development and his decision to follow his interest in the arts indicate his integration into Finnish society, as they go against the options that would be offered to him as an “immigrant”. Ada's mother teaches him new artistic techniques and encourages him to apply to the visual arts school. The novel ends before we discover whether Egzon is admitted, but just applying appears to be “the beginning of a whole new story, aimed for a wholly different life” than his.¹²⁰ Ordinarily, immigrant students are directed to vocational schools, and Egzon thinks that his family would appreciate vocational training over academic education. Thus, in applying to the school Egzon rises above his identity as an outsider immigrant who accepts whatever he is given, and behaves instead as a citizen with the right to educational opportunities and to making autonomous decisions. His choice is even more significant in light of Isin and Keating's analyses of citizenship concluding that nowadays, higher education and the career options it provides define one's citizen status.¹²¹ So not only does upper secondary school signal integration because it is not a stereotypically immigrant choice, it is also the education that makes citizens and might endow Egzon with more power and status than his parents.

Furthermore, as Egzon's first artworks are acts of vandalism, his development also signals increased legitimacy as an artist, person and citizen. All of his notable works are portraits of Ada:

¹¹⁸ Niemi, “sähkölämmitys, märät kengät ja penkillä nukkuvan spurgun virtsa,” 109.

¹¹⁹ Niemi, “helmiäishohtoinen ja sileä”, “[k]aupunkilaiset ovat kauniita ja hymyilevät,” 112.

¹²⁰ Niemi, “aivan eri tarinan alku, aivan erilaiselle elämälle suunnattu,” 98.

¹²¹ Isin (1997) and Keating (2009).

he first gets her attention by graffiting her on the headmaster's car, then he uses painting her portrait as an excuse to spend time with her, and after they break up he paints her on the city's graffiti wall. Through his art Egzon asserts himself as someone whose views should be taken into account. For example, Egzon himself sees painting the principal's car as more than vandalism. He reasons: "By drawing Ada I made the image my own. Because the world should understand one thing by now. I, too, have the right to something of my own."¹²² The artwork is, in fact, about developing voice. It demands that Egzon's observations, interpretations and visions of the world also matter and be recognised. In addition to being heard, Couldry's term can be applied to being seen. At school and in the city, Egzon is in the margins, invisible. However, his public artworks betray a desire to make a mark on his surroundings and, through them, make also himself visible. Thus, his graffiti is an example of a vernacular voice in the public space. However, the painting is a clear transgression of rules and Egzon never takes responsibility for it. For this reason, it remains an act of vandalism rather than citizenship. The narrator explains this as a part of the politics of belonging by asking: "Would Ada ever understand how great a risk Egzon took?"¹²³ It is implied that a student with an immigrant background would suffer more serious consequences than a "native" Finn. Again, the boundary for belonging to Finnish society for an immigrant is perfect behaviour, not painting on cars or having children at sixteen. Egzon's final portrait of Ada shows a development to more acceptable forms of public expression. He meets a fellow aficionado at the city's graffiti wall, and they create paintings together. His unknown fellow painter asks "which one are you, an artist or a vandal?" Egzon responds that he is both.¹²⁴ This time, the graffiti is in a legal place, but Egzon is still not a legitimate artist. It is perhaps significant that the artistic value of his preferred format, graffiti, continues to be contested, standing uneasily between art and ruining public property. Thus his marginal position within the artistic field mirrors his marginal position within society. While Egzon develops a way to express himself publicly in an acceptable manner, which constitutes becoming a citizen, he is still an "alternative" artist and perhaps an "alternative" citizen. There is a possibility that Egzon could develop his personal, new way of being a Finnish citizen, though the use of "vandal" does not frame this hypothetical project positively.

As Egzon's story centers around integration, it necessarily makes citizenship into a question of individual development, where the individual learns to act without disturbing the common rules.

¹²² Niemi, "Piirtämällä Adan minä tein kuvasta oman. Koska yksi asia maailman tulisi vihdoon ymmärtää. Minullakin on oikeus johonkin omaan," 70.

¹²³ Niemi, "Tulisiko Ada koskaan ymmärtämään, kuinka ison riskin Egzon tosiasiasa otti?" 62.

¹²⁴ Niemi, "kumpi sinä olet, taiteilija vai vandaali?" 348.

Also the local community plays a significant role in supporting the individual's integration, for example by going on dates with them or by giving them confidence to seize opportunities that bring them closer to citizenship. Thus Niemi offers a view of citizenship responsibilities in a multicultural society, for both majority and minority groups. It corresponds closely to traditional forms of citizenship: a particular national community on particular territory, where “[m]igrants should either assimilate into the new society by abandoning their heritage or try to preserve their ethnic identity to return to the country of origin; but in the end, they are supposed to belong to either one of them.”¹²⁵ Egzon has the legal status of a Finnish citizen, though he does not always feel like one. Discrimination and his own fears sometimes restrict his activities. *Et Kävele Yksin* shows how “a change in [legal] status [into citizen] does not necessarily bring about a similarly clear transformation of identities and activities” and how difficult these transformations are to achieve, but Niemi assigns no role for Egzon's Kosovan roots in the story.¹²⁶ The background is a source of confusion, something to be overcome since the opportunity to imagine a different kind of society and citizenship is not developed. To use the terms of the debate on multicultural citizenship, *Et Kävele Yksin* understands citizenship as an individual status, achieved by an individual decision to integrate, and secured by individual rights. Group rights do not feature, apart from when Egzon's local youth centre organises a “Winter Day Celebration” instead of a Christmas party to be inclusive. Nevertheless, through Egzon and his immigrant friends Niemi presents an image of Finnish society that reflects contemporary realities of multicultural societies rather than idealised myths of nationhood. Finland is not just an oasis of wellbeing and high PISA scores, but also a country that has a family abandoned in a gray block of flats without much support to make sense of the society they find themselves in. In this sense, the novel also gives a voice, though a fictional one, to marginalised communities.

Niemi's representation of multicultural Finland is not limited to immigrants. Ada's mother comes from Ostrobothnia in Western Finland, where they travel for Christmas, winter holidays and Easter. Their journeys demonstrate the existence of strong local identities within nations. Ada's mother has clear, separate identities for Helsinki and her home town in Ostrobothnia: “[i]n her home region mother always became a bit different.”¹²⁷ She “always wanted to show all the same places to Ada, tell the same stories a thousand times.”¹²⁸ The process involves nostalgia for her own youth, but the

¹²⁵ Schlenker, 1097.

¹²⁶ Schlenker, 1097.

¹²⁷ Niemi, “Kotiseudulla äidistä tuli aina vähän toinen”, 36.

¹²⁸ Niemi, “äiti aina halusi näyttää kaikki samat paikat Adalle, kertoa tuhat kertaa samat jutut”, 35.

places and stories are also important components of her personal identity. However, the mother's love affair with Ostrobothnia ends quickly. She gets bored of the small-town mentality and religiosity, as Ostrobothnia is a relatively conservative and religious region. Whenever the topic of religion comes up, “mother focused on her wine glass, at most mumbled something about the Texas of Finland or casting the first stone.”¹²⁹ “Texas of Finland” casts Ostrobothnia as backward and alien in comparison to Helsinki, yet only a few days before the mother had declared that only in the countryside “there is space to breathe”¹³⁰. Clearly, not all of Finland is the same and Egzon is not the only character divided between two cultures. In fact, Ada concludes that “Egzon would have fit into Ostrobothnia, much better than Alekski or Elias or some other boys at school” based on the terse, formal way that he greets her uncle.¹³¹ On another occasion, Ada tells her mother that she and Egzon are “from the same ordinary world of all the people their age. More from the same world than [she] and the stuffy relatives up north.”¹³² Comparisons between Helsinki, Ostrobothnia and Kosovo can be and are made in all ways. Ostrobothnia's religiosity is a useful point of comparison to some of the prejudices against Egzon. He is a muslim, and Islam is often (falsely) perceived as an exception in secularised European cultures. Niemi questions the taken-for-granted homogeneity within nations and differences between them, and through Ada's mother demonstrates that people's relationship to place and to home is not always coherent. Despite the importance of integrating, culture is not what ties a nation together and place of birth is not always where people feel they belong.

In conclusion, Niemi's representation of citizenship follows traditional lines, where being associated with two countries is seen as a problem and Egzon must choose one before his life begins to take shape. Even after deciding that he does not have to behave like “an immigrant”, Egzon still does not seem to fit the mould. However, this does not amount to claiming that immigration per se is a problem for nation-state citizenship. Niemi's examination of different cultures within Finland signals that the nation is already diverse, and so Egzon is not essentially different from the Finns. Though Niemi is not writing about the so-called refugee crisis, the fact that 2015 and 2016 saw a rising panic about refugees in the EU prompts interpretations through that lens. The focus on culture, home and belonging seem to respond to the persistent nativist demands that everyone simply “go back to their country”, insisting that the story is more complicated. If citizenship is not

¹²⁹ Niemi, “keskittyi äiti viinilasiinsa, korkeintaan mumisi lasin pohjaan jotain Suomen Teksasista tai ensimmäisen kiven heittämisestä”, 49.

¹³⁰ Niemi, “täällä mahtuu hengittämään”, 36.

¹³¹ Niemi, “Egzon olisi sopinut siltä osin Pohjanmaalle, paljon paremmin kuin Alekski tai Elias tai jotkut muut koulun pojista”, 178.

¹³² Niemi, “aivan samasta tavallisesta heidän ikäistensä maailmasta. Enemmän samasta kuin Ada ja pohjalaiset tönköt sukulaiset”, 183.

necessarily about sharing a past and a culture, in *Et Kävele Yksin* it seems to consist of being seen, heard and recognised by one's fellow citizens so that one is able to make independent decisions about how to live one's life. Egzon's relationship with Ada is the catalyst to his transformation from outsider to budding citizen. Thus connections between individuals can change their narratives of who they are as well as, in the long run, enable a more inclusive politics of belonging. The narrative thus underlines the affective components of citizenship, but perhaps this affective component does not need to be love of the country or the nation in the abstract.

4.2. *Les Petites Reines* (2015) by Clémentine Beauvais

After its publication in 2015, *Les Petites Reines* has been awarded and nominated for several prizes in France and the UK, adapted into a play and a production company has bought its film rights. It has been translated into several languages, including English, German and Polish. The novel can thus be characterised as a European-wide success. Beauvais writes in both French and English and translates children's fiction from English to French. In addition to being a writer, Beauvais is a researcher in children's literature at the university of York.

Plot summary: Mireille, Hakima and Astrid have been elected the three *boudins*, meaning the ugliest girls in school in a contest organised by Malo, the school bully.¹³³ They realise that all of them have business at the Élysée Palace on the 14th of July: Mireille wants to see her biological father who is the president's husband, Hakima wants to discredit an army general who was responsible for a military mission during which her brother lost his legs and his team was killed, and Astrid wants to see her favourite band, Indochine, perform. They start calling themselves the Three Boudins and bike from their home town to Paris to crash the president's Bastille day party. Hakima's war veteran brother Kader comes along to take care of them, and the girls pay for their journey by selling sausages in towns on the way. They unexpectedly become social media celebrities, and the whole nation follows them and helps them succeed in their mission – though the garden party at the Élysée does not turn out quite as they imagined.

A story of four outsiders entering French national consciousness and making their way to Bastille

¹³³ Beauvais herself has translated the word *boudin*, which in French is a kind of sausage, into “piglette”. However, I prefer the original since it is *boudin* the girls sell. Therefore, I have left the word untranslated.

Day celebrations, *Les Petites Reines* celebrates active citizenship. The novel shows the discrimination faced by ugly teenage girls and a disabled muslim war veteran and uncovers the rules that govern their belonging to French society. Though initially marginalised, as soon as the girls take ownership of their stories and demand to be seen, they discover that people respond enthusiastically, and the state takes their concerns, ranging from complaints against sexist bullying to the fate of war veterans, seriously. In addition to the belonging of specific groups such as young girls or muslims, the novel also meditates on the general nature of belonging, suggesting that it is a choice and not a fact. In summary, it provides a crash-course on how to achieve your rights, what is citizenly behaviour, and what keeps a nation together.

The setup of *Les Petites Reines* demonstrates how beauty ideals are used to control and marginalise women. The protagonists are bullied because of their appearance: Mireille's classmate Malo, who organises the *boudin* contest, mocks Mireille's "flabby bottom, sagging breasts, potato chin and small pig eyes"¹³⁴ on Facebook, getting 78 likes. Before meeting each other, the girls had no friends: for example, when Mireille and Astrid present themselves to Hakima's parents as her friends, the parents incredulously declare "Hakima! You have friends!"¹³⁵ Astrid, on the other hand, has "barely arrived in Bourg-en-Bresse and already [she's] selected as the top *boudin*."¹³⁶ The humiliating prize at school seems to confirm her outsider status in the city. However, the ugliness contest affects all girls, not just the protagonists, effectively allowing Malo to control his classmates' behaviour. Indeed, all the other girls diet, exercise, and dress fashionably to avoid being selected. The fear of ridicule dictates how girls spend their time and money, leaving less room for personal interests and autonomous decisions. Nobody questions the values of Malo's contest, which reduces women's worth to their appearance.

Not being beautiful enough to be worthy of respect is a problem, not only at school, but in society as a whole. When Astrid and Mireille go for a swim during their journey, they do it "very, very far to not let the other swimmers see their flabby, pink bellies, their squishy thighs and their trapeze-shaped bottoms"¹³⁷. Beauvais demonstrates that the fear of ridicule and judgment are not only symptoms of bad self-esteem, as after their swim, "boys [their] age bellowed that [they'd] better get

¹³⁴ Clémentine Beauvais, *Les Petites Reines* (Paris: Sarbacane, 2015) "Ses grosses fesses gélatineuses, ses seins qui tombent, son menton en forme de patate et ses petits yeux de cochon...", 10.

¹³⁵ Beauvais, "Hakima! T'as des amies!" 32.

¹³⁶ Beauvais, "j'arrive à peine à Bourg-en-Bresse, on [l]'élit déjà Boudin d'Or", 19.

¹³⁷ Beauvais, "on s'est baignées très, très loin, pour ne pas exposer aux regards des autres baigneurs [ses] ventres flasques et roses, [ses] cuisses qui s'entendent beaucoup trop bien et [ses] fesses en forme de trapèze", 155.

back in [to the lake] as it's [their] natural environment. *You whales, you fat seals.*¹³⁸ Even adults insult Mireille by comparing her to Jean-Paul Sartre.¹³⁹ The wider society shares a teenage bully's beauty ideals, and those who do not conform should be invisible – in this case, on the beach, but presumably in other public places as well. Beauvais insists that the problem is not the girls, but people who want to have power over others. Thus it is not solved by becoming beautiful, because that hands the power to the bullies. Beauvais parodies supposedly inspirational makeover stories when Mireille, Astrid and Hakima put on gowns and make-up for a polytechnic's end-of-year party. Mireille looks at herself in the mirror and admires “this proud young girl with her curls drawn back with diamond hair slides, draped in her blue dress folded like a toga which makes her legs look infinite, enhancing her beautiful figure... Is it... *Me? Me!... JUST KIDDING!*”¹⁴⁰ In fact, Mireille looks just as before. Beauvais lures the reader into believing the attractive but false storyline where any injustice can be solved with well-applied mascara instead of self-acceptance. After looking at themselves in the mirror, the girls burst into “an immense, liberating, ecstatic, new, grandiose laughter.”¹⁴¹ They do not have to be beautiful, and Beauvais' rather excessive, relishing descriptions of their fat bodies emphasise that the girls will not transform or go away. She points at a few obvious ways that women are excluded from equal citizenship: being discredited for one's looks is a form of exclusion that is reflected in all areas of life, not just the beach, while a frantic concern with one's looks constitutes oppression.

The girls overcome their marginalisation through a bike trip to the garden-party at the Élysée Palace on Bastille day. Though the *boudin* contest provides the inspiration rather than the reason for their trip, the public reads their adventure through the lens of the contest. Unlike some of their reasons for going, such as Indochine's performance, the bullying has a decidedly political dimension. The girls decide to tell their story after a local newspaper writes about the contest, interviewing many students but not the girls themselves. Hakima complains that the journalist was unfair. After all “it is [they] who is at the heart of the story”¹⁴² (sic), and the girls decide to call the writer to tell their perspective. After the publication of the new article, “this time, actually about [them]”, half the

¹³⁸ Beauvais, “des mecs de [leur] âge [leur] ont hurlé qu'[elles] ferai[en]t mieux d'y retourner [dans le lac] vu que c'est [leur] environnement naturel. *Espèces de balaines, espèces de grosses otaries*”, 156.

¹³⁹ Beauvais, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Beauvais, “Et cette jeune fille fière, aux cheveux retenus par des barrettes diamantées, enrubannée dans sa robe bleu tendre plissée comme une toge, qui allonge ses jambes à infini et souligne sa jolie taille... c'est... *Moi? Moi! ... MAIS NON, JE DÉCONNE!*” 130.

¹⁴¹ Beauvais, “un rire immense, libérateur, extatique, nouveau, grandiose”, 130.

¹⁴² Beauvais, “C'est quand même nous qui est au coeur de l'histoire!” 62.

nation begins to follow the girls' journey on social media.¹⁴³ Bringing their story into the public sphere makes it an issue of citizenship rather than a private grievance, to be solved by society at large rather than their school. Taking control of their representation in this way is an example of achieving the right to voice, including the right to being listened to. Mireille's conversation with her mother demonstrates that their strategy was intentional. Her mother complains that they should not call themselves *boudins*, because “[i]t is an awful word,” but Mireille assures her that they “will make it beautiful, you'll see. Or better, powerful.”¹⁴⁴ They follow in the footsteps of many civil rights movements by reappropriating the insults hurled at them. Becoming social media celebrities means that students invite them to their end-of-year party, feminist activists write blogposts about them, mechanics fix their bikes for free, and the mayors in the towns they pass come to offer them refreshments. Far from being marginalised, it seems that the whole nation helps the girls reach their goal. Mireille notices that as a consequence of their celebrity, they have “gained the right to be asked how [they] are doing and to be smiled at”¹⁴⁵. The right to be smiled at, while not a traditional right of citizenship, translates into the right to be seen as equals worthy of respect and consideration. This contrasts strongly with the demands that the girls transform their appearance or hide. It can be considered a visual equivalent of the right to voice and to being heard. As the girls go from success to success, Mireille's nemesis Malo feels threatened, sabotages their bikes and threatens Mireille with a knife, but she remains unfazed.¹⁴⁶ She does not call the police but tells him to give himself in, because she “will not be the one to punish [him].”¹⁴⁷ Personal vengeance does not matter, because Mireille is in the business of politics.

The girls' bike trip, partly a protest against bullying and prevalent beauty norms, is also a response to a perceived injustice against Hakima's brother Kader, a disabled army veteran. His entire team died and he lost his legs in a surprise attack, even though the general responsible for his operation had assured that the way was clear.¹⁴⁸ At the Élysée Palace, the girls hope to face the general and uncover his crimes. Kader's parents resent that while the general will be awarded a Légion d'Honneur, “Kader has been forgotten by everyone (...) It is the ultimate insult” by the French state.¹⁴⁹ They explain the mistreatment by the fact that they are “provincial immigrants,”¹⁵⁰ and as

¹⁴³ Beauvais, “Vraiment sur nous, cette fois”, 64.

¹⁴⁴ Beauvais, “- [c]'est un mot horrible. - On le rendra beau, tu vas voir. Ou pire, on le rendra puissant”, 95.

¹⁴⁵ Beauvais, “gagné le droit qu'on nous demande comment ça va, et qu'on nous sourie.” 197.

¹⁴⁶ Beauvais, 216.

¹⁴⁷ Beauvais, “ca sera pas moi qui te punirai. Ca te ferait trop plaisir”, 216.

¹⁴⁸ Beauvais, 37.

¹⁴⁹ Beauvais, “Kader est oublié de tous (...). C'est l'insulte ultime”, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Beauvais, “provinciaux, immigrés”, 84.

such, second-class citizens. Therefore, the injustice against Kader concerns the belonging of muslims to the French nation. Kader was wounded in “*Galéristan*”, a “sandy”¹⁵¹ country, where the military operation aims to “prevent desert people from blowing up the Eiffel tower with bombs hidden in fake pregnant bellies.”¹⁵² Sand, terror attacks and a country name ending with -stan obviously refer to the Middle East. Beauvais presents a complicated constellation of belonging: Kader is an immigrant muslim who fought against Islamic terrorism in the French army, but he is treated unjustly because French people associate him with the very terrorists he fought against. The girls deduce that the military awards white generals who have made fatal mistakes and discards soldiers who have made sacrifices because they are muslim immigrants. Beauvais highlights the injustice by comparing Kader and those who have not made sacrifices. After a polytechnic student declares that “The end of the school year is a time to celebrate, after all our hard work!”¹⁵³ Mireille notices Kader's darkening expression and thinks that “in the army, you don't celebrate the end of year with balls when there were around fifty, sixty dead in Galéristan”.¹⁵⁴ Beauvais also shows the everyday racism in French society. When Hakima and Kader first attempt to sell the sausages, no one wants to approach them. Hakima wonders whether that is because “they are ugly”¹⁵⁵ or “because Kader has no legs”¹⁵⁶, leaving out the obvious reason of them being muslim. Mireille takes over, and the sausages sell out quickly. The solidarity the girls show Kader's grievous instance of discrimination emphasises the political nature of their bike trip, allowing Beauvais to address another form of exclusion. At stake in the girls' mission is also the belonging of muslims to French society.

Though the girls begin their journey thinking that the state is unjust in respect to Kader, they discover the opposite: that the state helps individuals achieve their rights, full potential and recognition. Although Kader has suffered, the state has not treated him unfairly. The guilty general informs the girls that “for more than a year this young man has refused the Légion d'Honneur. He deserves it more than anyone.”¹⁵⁷ The overflowing praise of Kader overthrows their suspicions of racism. Regarding the deaths, the general admits that “the fault came from high up. To be entirely

¹⁵¹ Beauvais, “sablonneux”, 37.

¹⁵² Beauvais, “éviter que des gens du désert ne viennent faire sauter la tour Eiffel avec des bombes cachées dans des faux ventres de femmes enceintes”, 38.

¹⁵³ Beauvais, “Il faut bien célébrer la fin de l'année, avec tout ce qu'on a bossé!” 133.

¹⁵⁴ Beauvais, “dans l'armée, on ne célèbre pas la fin de l'année avec des bals, alors qu'il y a eu encore quoi, cinquante, soixante soldats morts en Galéristan”, 133.

¹⁵⁵ Beauvais, “[ils sont] moches”, 114.

¹⁵⁶ Beauvais, “parce que Kader n'a pas de jambes”, 115.

¹⁵⁷ Beauvais, “cela fait un an que ce jeune homme refuse la Légion d'Honneur. Personne ne la mérite plus que lui”, 257.

honest, most of it was mine, and (...) not a day goes by when I don't think about it.”¹⁵⁸ He shares Kader's version of the events as well as some of his pain and self-doubt. If the general has been awarded while Kader has not, it is because Kader vowed to wait for the results of the inquiry to be found innocent of the deaths. While the novel starts from the premise that Muslims will never be accepted as belonging to French society, it ends on a more hopeful note. It transpires that racism is not as all-encompassing as the characters initially thought. Looking at the girls' success in their mission and the turn of events in Kader's case, *Les Petites Reines* presents a rather positive image of the state: individuals may be nasty, but the government is fair. The girls never have to complete their mission of crashing the garden-party, as the president hears of their extraordinary popularity and invites them to join the celebrations. As Hakima's words “But now, if we're invited, it wouldn't be gate-crashing!” indicate, there is no need to rebel against such a state.¹⁵⁹ As soon as Kader meets the general, the truth comes out and he accepts the well-deserved Légion d'Honneur. The message conveyed is that individuals can achieve their rights as soon as they begin to act on society. The protagonists work for a better society, address the injustices they have witnessed, and turn the *boudin* contest into a public discussion instead of reveling in misery.

If the girls represent active citizens capable of participating in public life, it is instructive to examine the community of citizens they create between themselves. What sets the girls in motion is “this coincidence. These distinct but... *related* reasons to go there on the 14th of July.”¹⁶⁰ Apart from these related reasons, few things connect them. They never spoke to each other before the *boudin* contest. They are also from different backgrounds: Astrid is half Swedish and, before moving to France, lived in a Catholic boarding school in Switzerland. Hakima's family are Northern African immigrants to France, and Mireille has always lived in Bourg-en-Bresse. However, when they begin working towards a common goal, it becomes clear that the girls are stronger together and they learn to work as a team. A good example of this is when Astrid announces that she can fix bikes, a necessary first step for their journey. Soon, she organises tasks for all three: “You screw this; you unscrew this, you grease this, you inflate this.”¹⁶¹ They profit from each other's strengths and divide responsibilities fairly. Though they start as mere colleagues with a common interest, the girls become close friends by sharing an adventure. There are some hints of their emerging friendship when Mireille puts her own feelings aside to console the crying Astrid because “[t]onight I feel

¹⁵⁸ Beauvais, “La faute venait de plus haut. À vrai dire, c'était en très grande partie la mienne, (...) il ne se passe pas un jour sans que j'y repense”, 257.

¹⁵⁹ Beauvais, “Mais là, si on est invitées, on peut pas gate-crasher!” 235.

¹⁶⁰ Beauvais, “cette coincidence. Ces raisons disparaissent mais... *conjointes* d'aller là-bas, le 14 Juillet”, 41.

¹⁶¹ Beauvais, “toi, tu revisses ça; toi, tu dévisses ça; toi, tu graisses ça; toi, tu gonflés ça”, 51.

alright, and the First *boudin* needs me.”¹⁶² Again, Mireille uses the offensive word in a positive sense to create community, and she takes care of Astrid. The girls are an example of how different people with different goals can nevertheless work together to accomplish something good for all by bringing their goals together to form a single mission. This is discussed in citizenship studies as the difference between polities “composed of individuals with a common purpose and (...) of individuals with common interest.”¹⁶³ The story of *Les Petites Reines* demonstrates that interest may in fact be a better connecting factor than having a common grand purpose. It is more inclusive and requires individuals to “engag[e] each other over the meaning and definition of their common interests”, in other words, to do politics.¹⁶⁴ Beauvais gives us an idea of efficient self-organising behind social causes, but more importantly, the girls' ideal community of active citizens can also be interpreted as a model for the national democratic community. People may be different, but they will be capable of working together for common interests, or a common goal that incorporates their diverse interests.

Les Petites Reines also meditates on the idea of belonging through the storyline of Mireille's father. Her reason to bike to Paris is to meet her biological father, a German-French philosopher whom she calls with the pseudonym Klaus von Strudel. Klaus and Mireille's mother had an affair when he was her thesis supervisor. Mireille's mother never told him that she was pregnant because he was married to a politician who has since become the president of France. Mireille is obsessed with him and has read all of his books, whereas her stepfather, Philippe Dumont, is utterly unimportant to her. Dumont “has always been deeply sad for not being able to replace Klaus von Strudel in my life (...) He says: *Look to me as your father, Mireille, I am your father!* I put my hands in front of my mouth and go: *Hrrrrrrrrroooooah... Hrrrrrrrrroooooah... I am your father!*”¹⁶⁵ The intertextual reference to Star Wars and Darth Vader suggests that he is not a welcome or hoped-for father figure. Mireille endlessly ridicules Philippe, instead hoping that Klaus will recognise her as his daughter. In terms of belonging, Mireille believes that biological ties create family, whereas what she has in the present is inauthentic. However, at the Élysée Palace Mireille realises that belonging is not a fact of biology, but a choice. To her surprise, Klaus von Strudel does not immediately recognise her, nor does he take the hint when Mireille tells him who her mother is, her age, that she has read all of his books

¹⁶² Beauvais, “[c]e soir ca va, et le Boudin d'Or a besoin de moi”, 20.

¹⁶³ Isin and Wood paraphrasing Michael Oakshott's work, 23.

¹⁶⁴ Isin and Wood, 23.

¹⁶⁵ Beauvais, “Philippe Dumont a toujours été profondément triste de ne pas remplir la béance qu'a creusée Klaus von Strudel dans ma vie. (...) Il dit: *Vois-moi comme ton père, Mireille, je suis ton père!* Moi je mets les mains devant ma bouche et je fais: *Rhôôôôph... Rhôôôôph... je suis ton père!*” 14.

and written to him several times. Instead, he only seems interested in reminiscing how “talented, creative and rigorous” Mireille's mother was¹⁶⁶. When he asks her what her father does, Mireille responds: “My father is... My father is a notary. His name is Philippe.”¹⁶⁷ She goes on to list all the things Philippe does with her: “he helps me with my homework, without getting frustrated, like my mother does. He takes me to exhibitions and for walks in the forest. He teaches me how to taste wines...” and so on, realising that Klaus has nothing to do with her.¹⁶⁸ Beauvais foreshadows this conclusion when Mireille thinks that “[she] would not much care for going to an elite school in Paris and Sciences Po” like Klaus' children.¹⁶⁹ While Mireille is fascinated by her father's opulent lifestyle, she cannot imagine herself as a part of it. Thus, family and belonging within a family are created through everyday actions and continued commitment rather than genetic ties.

This is not only true of the family, but also of the nation. Mireille can get her father's recognition only on Bastille day at the presidential palace, a setting full of national symbolism. Furthermore, in her description of the *boudins'* mission to “go interrupt their little yearly fiesta and yes, why not, to remind them of our presence” the use of the third person is ambiguous.¹⁷⁰ It could relate to Mireille's father and the guilty general, but also, because of the symbolically important setting of their planned rendez-vous, it can also be taken as a more general demand to be seen and recognised by a state that so far has treated them as invisible. Therefore, the state and von Strudel are intertwined. The connection between father and the state is typical of some of the less savoury nationalisms, where nations are often imagined as a family. Terms such as “father of the nation” or “enfants de la patrie” evoke a people living on the same territory for generations, connecting to each other and the land through blood. Thus the storyline about Mireille's father can be read as a metaphor of what constitutes national belonging. Beauvais' argument, then, corresponds somewhat to Ernest Renan's famous formulation of the nation as an everyday choice to live together, rather than a group with a common history or language.

In line with this view, *Les Petites Reines* represents France as a multicultural state rather than offering the reader an idealised, homogenous polis. The girls have lived in different countries, their

¹⁶⁶ Beauvais “quelqu'un de très doué, de très créatif et rigoureux”, 260.

¹⁶⁷ Beauvais, “Mon père est... Mon père est notaire. Il s'appelle Philippe”, 262.

¹⁶⁸ Beauvais, “il m'aide pour faire mes devoirs, sans s'énerver, pas comme ma mère. Il m'emmène voir des expos et se balader en forêt. Il m'apprend comment goûter les vins. ...”, 262.

¹⁶⁹ Beauvais, “[elle] n'aimerai[t] pas beaucoup aller dans un grand lycée parisien et faire Sciences Po. (...) il faudrait toujours être en train de travailler ou de sortir avec les enfants d'autres gens importants”, 204.

¹⁷⁰ Beauvais, “d'aller interrompre leur petite fiesta annuelle et oui, pourquoi pas, d'aller leur rappeler notre présence”, 41.

parents represent different nationalities and the characters' belonging to the local community or France is not always straightforward. Beauvais also mentions some of the problems associated with multiculturalism, such as racist prejudice in everyday life and state level, but the overall narrative of France is positive since these problems are all presented as solvable. The characters solve their problems by participating in society, using their voices and giving an account of their lives through the bike trip. The girls reframe the public and personal narratives of who they are and act as independent, public citizens. In addition to raising their own status, the girls also increase community feeling by connecting their followers and initiating a public debate about appearance and bullying. In comparison to Malo, who puts others down to be more powerful, the girls demonstrate that doing exciting things is a superior method to be accepted and listened to. Though the three girls do not set out on their journey to make a point about citizenship, they end up showing that citizenship is about positive actions to improve their own and others' lives, not about being beautiful, white or Christian.

4.3. *Ishavspirater* by Frida Nilsson (2015)

Compared to the other authors mentioned in this thesis, Frida Nilsson already has a long career as a children's author (her first book was published in 2004). Her previous work has been translated into several languages and been awarded or shortlisted for Nordic, German and French prizes. *Ishavspirater* was enthusiastically received in Sweden, again receiving other prizes and nominations in addition to the Nils Holgersson Plaque. Critics compared Nilsson to Astrid Lindgren, which in my personal opinion is the highest compliment imaginable.¹⁷¹ The translation rights of *Ishavspirater* have been sold to most European languages.

Plot summary: *Ishavspirater* is set in the imaginary region of Ishav, a wintry sea dotted with islands.¹⁷² The adventure is set in motion when the pirate Vithuvud, who needs children to work in his mine kidnaps Siri's little sister Miki. No child has ever escaped, and so Siri enlists on a boat to rescue her sister, helped in her mission by the shipcook Fredrik. Fredrik decides to help her because his own sister was kidnapped by Vithuvud many years ago. Siri encounters numerous obstacles: the ship captain abandons her on Vargöarna so she and Fredrik are separated; two rogues who are

¹⁷¹ Reviewer quoted on the website of Nilsson's agency, <http://kojaagency.com/product/the-pirates-of-the-ice-sea/>.

¹⁷² Ishav literally means "Ice Sea" but, for purely aesthetic reasons, I have preferred not to translate proper nouns.

looking for Vithuvud to join his crew throw Siri into the sea; she finds an island with a warm cave where she looks after a baby mermaid; and she makes friends with a boy called Einar. Finally Siri reunites with Fredrik and they go to Vithuvud's ship, but both are captured. Siri kills Vithuvud with the help of his adopted daughter, who turns out to be Fredrik's long-lost sister, and all the children return home.

As the plot summary suggests, *Ishavspirater* is a fantasy novel. In the world of the book there is nothing comparable to nation-states or nation-state citizenship, but precisely for this reason it shows clearly the benefits of a system of rights, duties, and shared values. The lack of rights and duties causes most of the problems and injustices the protagonist Siri witnesses during her adventures, such as environmental degradation and child labour, as nobody is responsible for taking care of the environment or children, and children have no right to safety. As Siri's own values, such as protecting the vulnerable and only taking the natural resources you need, are in stark contrast with this reality, Nilsson offers one version of the values citizenship should be based on. Her version is as relevant to contemporary societies as to fairytale worlds, as *Ishav* follows an economic model similar to global capitalism. Indeed, many of the problem behaviours identified by Siri are encouraged by capitalist systems. The novel presents a conflict between noble ideals and a harsh world, where citizenship seems like a plausible tool for increasing wellbeing and equality.

The dominant characteristic of *Ishav* as a society is that the strong oppress the weak, such as children or animals, for financial gain. Miki's kidnapping is a perfect example of this, as Vithuvud's business model requires the free labour of children who fit into small mine tunnels. On her adventures, Siri discovers that what Vithuvud does is not an exception, but the norm. For example, on Vargöarna she sees hunters shoot wolfmothers to steal their cubs, tame them and sell them. Siri is horrified, but Fredrik explains that the hunters take the small ones because “[i]f they were bigger than that, the hunters would not be able to capture them.”¹⁷³ Siri also witnesses two hopeful pirates trying to capture a baby mermaid because “in the large villages there are scientists who pay well for new kinds of fish that they could put in formaldehyde and cut open with a knife.”¹⁷⁴ With the exception of killed wolfmothers, all the victims are children. Unsurprisingly, Siri is also acutely aware of her own vulnerability. She frequently agonises over how “a kid barely taller than the

¹⁷³ Frida Nilsson, *Ishavspirater* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2017), “[ä]r de större än så där så går det inte att ta dem”, 78.

¹⁷⁴ Nilsson, “i de stora byarna, där fanns det doktorer som betalade bra för nya fisksorter som de kunde lägga i sprit och undersöka med kniv”, 132.

gunnel, could defeat Vithuvud (...) without a gun and without a knife and without a single idea of what to do”.¹⁷⁵

Her problem is solved when the ship cook Fredrik decides to help her. Siri is elated, because Frederik has “a gun and was so big and strong that he could lift three sacks of grains with a straight arm.”¹⁷⁶ She feels safer and more able to complete her mission because of Fredrik's strength. Children's vulnerability thus translates into the need to be protected. The bad things that happen, from Miki's kidnapping to the abuse of animals and mythical creatures, are possible precisely because there no such protection exists. Miki is kidnapped when she and Siri are picking berries, alone, because their father is frail and mother dead. Their circumstances make them more vulnerable to dangers, such as pirates. Even after the kidnapping, nobody intends to save Miki. Siri runs to the village, expecting help. Instead, “[n]o one said anything. No one shouted: Yes, let's go after the pirates! No one ran off to fetch their gun.”¹⁷⁷ Siri is told that those Vithuvud takes simply “are no more.”¹⁷⁸ Contrary to Siri's expectations, the adults refuse to take responsibility for children. The situation is uneasy. The adults “looked away, looked down, started to mumble things to each other”.¹⁷⁹ The awkwardness suggests that the adults know that they are failing Siri. Clearly, it is wrong to let a pirate kidnap children. On the one hand, vulnerable groups such as children deserve to have more protection, because people may take advantage of their vulnerability. On the other hand, no one seems to have much at stake in protecting the vulnerable.

The main reason that no one cares for the vulnerable is that they have an opportunity to profit. To take the example of wolves on Vargöarna, Siri meets a hunter called Nanni who explains to her how the system works. She sells the wolves in the “sheds in the village. And the sheds sell the products to the ships. And the ships take the products far, far away. And the rich people on the big islands want white carpets on the floor and a group of wolves to pull their sleds.”¹⁸⁰ It seems that Ishav is on the margins of a larger economic system where the chains of production are long and products are not locally consumed. Somewhere along the chain, a wolf becomes a carpet. Siri herself learns that

¹⁷⁵ Nilsson, “en knapp inte mycket högre än relingen, kunna rå på Vithuvud (...) utan bössa och utan kniv och utan en enda idé om hur jag skulle bära mig åt”, 52.

¹⁷⁶ Nilsson, “som hade en bössa och var så stor och stark att han kunde lyfta upp tre kornsäckar på rak arm”, 62

¹⁷⁷ Nilsson, “[i]ngen sa något. Ingen ropade: Ja, vi far efter skeppet! Ingen sprang iväg / för att hämta sin bössa”, 28-29.

¹⁷⁸ Nilsson, “finns inte mer”, 29.

¹⁷⁹ Nilsson, “såg bort, tittade i marken, började mumla saker till varandra (...)” 29.

¹⁸⁰ Nilsson, “till bodarna nere i byn. Och bodarna säljer varorna vidare till skepparna. Och skepparna tar varorna med sig långt, långt bort. Till de stora öarna, där det finns rikt folk som gärna vill ha vita mattor på golvet och ett band med vargar framför släden”, 98.

nice, pretty things may in fact come from less nice places. After witnessing the killing of the wolfmother, she thinks back to a wolfcub that she dreamed of buying just a few moments earlier. She feels stupid for having thought that the men only caught “all the orphan wolves who came into the village,” and not considering what made them orphans in the first place.¹⁸¹ The violence and abuse of the weak that have occurred are shrouded along the chain. In addition, many of the wolf hunters are not originally from Vargöarna. Fredrik explains that “many come here to try and make a great deal of money in a year or two.”¹⁸² The fact that the wolves are valuable and that many of the hunters are on the island for short-term gain leads to indiscriminate killing. When Siri asks Nanni whether she spares the wolves with cubs, she responds that she “shoots all the wolves [she] see[s],” following no ethical guidelines in her line of work.¹⁸³ Her hunting zeal means that she “lets meat go stale because she has too much.”¹⁸⁴ The way Nanni reasons her activities is that “[e]veryone does their best to survive (...) The wolves do it, and so do I.”¹⁸⁵ While her argument may sound reasonable if one's daily life consists of wrestling with bloodthirsty wolves, indiscriminate hunting and letting meat go stale are not about mere survival. Her point also ignores that wolfcubs do not have rifles and the struggle for survival is far from equal. In many ways, wolfhunting in Ishav resembles the global capitalist system, and Vithuvud's kidnapping is a logical extension of these ways of thinking. No one feels they have responsibility for the wellbeing of others or for the consequences and ethical implications of their moneymaking activities. Thus Nilsson underlies the injustices of the global capitalist system. These injustices could be solved if those who hunt or buy the wolves cared more about the consequences of their actions and considered collective wellbeing as much as their personal benefit. In other words, they ought to be more like citizens whose rights are balanced by responsibilities and who feel solidarity with others around them.

Siri, her father and Fredrik exemplify Nilsson's version of the good citizen, as they act on moral principles and demonstrate a strong sense of collective responsibility. After Miki's kidnapping, the only adult who wants to go after the pirates is Miki and Siri's father. His desire is not merely because of family ties, but because unlike the other adults, he has a strong sense of right and wrong and recognises his personal responsibility to do what is right. The father explains to Siri: “The things one does leave traces. The good things leave good traces... and the bad ones leave bad

¹⁸¹ Nilsson, “varsin föräldralös varg som förrirat sig in till byn”, 77.

¹⁸² Nilsson, “Det är många som kommer hit för att försöka tjäna bra med pengar under ett år eller två”, 78.

¹⁸³ Nilsson, “skjuter alla varg [hon] ser” 92.

¹⁸⁴ Nilsson, “låter kött bli gammalt för att hon har för mycket”, 95.

¹⁸⁵ Nilsson “[v]ar och en gör sitt för att överleva (...) Det gör vargen, och det gör jag”, 98.

traces.”¹⁸⁶ His ethical code combines the categorical imperative (there are “good” and “bad” acts) and a hazy consequentialism (acts have traces, but what defines “good” and “bad” traces is unclear). Thus, the father considers his actions both in terms of their inherent rightness and their consequences, unlike most of the other characters. Most of the things Siri witnesses during her adventures clash with the values her father has taught her. For example, he tells her that he caught a mermaid in his net once, but let her go because “there is a difference between catching a codfish and catching a mermaid”.¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, at one stage of her journey Siri herself nurses a baby mermaid on an island for weeks. She and her father have a respect for life that, for example, the pirates-to-be who wish to sell a baby mermaid to scientists do not have. The father has also taught Siri that one “should not take more from nature than one has to” in order not to be “greedy.”¹⁸⁸ To an extent, these imperatives correspond to global citizenship as a moral category, because they demand “commitment and empathy beyond the individual and his/her own interests”¹⁸⁹ in order to “act for the good of the world”.¹⁹⁰ Essential for this view are “[s]haring, taking responsibility for each other and preventing exclusion.”¹⁹¹ Nilsson emphasises especially people's responsibility for the environment, as Siri and her father's concern for animals, mermaids and not being greedy reveals a concern for the world beyond human beings. This might better be termed environmental or ecological citizenship, but as Valencia Saiz reminds us, “the citizenship notions emerging from green thought are variations on the theme of global citizenship.”¹⁹² Ecological citizenship, like cosmopolitan citizenship, conceives political community in a fundamentally different way from traditional notions of citizenship because “the current world order is not suited to dealing with global environmental problems” such as the overuse of natural resources, loss of biodiversity and climate change.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the citizen skills Siri learns go beyond taking collective responsibility for the environment. For example, in order to avoid supporting wolfhunting, Siri needs to acquire knowledge of what happens on the other side of Ishav. To act for the good of the world she needs to think from a wider perspective than her personal interests and be aware of the balance of power in Ishav. While not quite as large and diverse as the real-world global community, Ishav's islands are described as distinct societies. They do not differ in culture, but in flora and

¹⁸⁶ Nilsson, “Saker man gör lämnar spår efter sig. De fina sakerna lämnar fina spår... och de onda sakerna lämnar onda spår”, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Nilsson, “det är viss skillnad på att ta upp en torsk och att ta upp en sjöjungfru”, 10.

¹⁸⁸ Nilsson, “man inte skulle ta mer av naturen än man var tvungen till”, ”girig”, 95.

¹⁸⁹ Dill, 541.

¹⁹⁰ Dill, 542.

¹⁹¹ Veugelers, 475.

¹⁹² Angel Valencia Saiz, “Globalisation, Cosmopolitanism and Ecological Citizenship”, *Environmental Politics* 14, no.2 (2005): 169.

¹⁹³ Valencia Saiz, 166.

fauna. For example, “[t]here are no wild hens on Ytterö”¹⁹⁴ and “on Vargöarna there were thousands [of wolves]”.¹⁹⁵ These lead to some characteristic features, for example the abundance of hunters on Vargöarna, but Nilsson mentions no differences in appearance, language or traditions. The omission of cultural differences means that *Ishavspirater* does not deal with some themes that are central to global citizenship, such as respecting and understanding other cultures. However, it also implies that people are part of the same humanity, because while places may be different, people are the same everywhere.

While Ishav is home to many unsavoury types, Nilsson represents also the less than ideal citizens with understanding. She and Siri judge the actions of characters such as Nanni, but these judgements are not absolute, nor are they a reason to reject or discredit someone. For example, after Siri has been abandoned on Vargöarna by the ship captain, Nanni offers her a shelter and food. Therefore, she believes in taking care of vulnerable (human) children. Also, she negotiates her values with Siri. After discussing her profession with Siri, Nanni feels so unsettled that she asks: “Is it really so bad? Shooting wolves?”¹⁹⁶ Neither ultimately manages to convince the other of their views, but through their conversation Nilsson shows that people care about what others think about them and want to find some common ground. Furthermore, for a brief moment Siri understands Nanni's perspective. When Nanni is attacked by a wolf in a snowstorm, Siri runs out with a gun to rescue her. In a state of panic, Siri thinks that “this wolf did not care about me or that I had cried for a wolfcub's sake at the harbour. No, it was as Nanni said, everyone only cared about themselves to survive.”¹⁹⁷ Still, she does not convert but only shoots at the wolf once, misses, and then shoots twice in the air to scare it away. Wrong Nanni may be, but the episode with the wolf suggests that she is not just cruel and stupid. Even without a satisfactory conclusion, Siri and Nanni's relationship exemplifies the kind of dialogue that can change society for the better. Siri has a similar experience with her friend Einar. Einar has a plan to become rich by training his wild hen to fish. However, his method has one drawback: “the chicken [must] never [become] too full, because then it would stop fishing.”¹⁹⁸ Siri blames him of “letting others slave away because [he] want[s] to become rich,” just like Vithuvud or the wolfhunters.¹⁹⁹ However, Einar also provides Siri with important help on her mission, and she comes back to make up with him. Siri reflects on how happy she is that they

¹⁹⁴ Nilsson, “[d]et finns inga valhöns på Ytterö”, 237.

¹⁹⁵ Nilsson, “på Vargöarna fanns det tusentals”, 70.

¹⁹⁶ Nilsson, “Är det så illa det här? Skjuta varg?” 97.

¹⁹⁷ Nilsson, “Den vargen brydde sig inte det minsta om mig och att jag hade grätit över en liten valp nere på hamnplatsen. Nej, det var som Nanni sa, var och en brydde sig bara om att själv överleva”, 101.

¹⁹⁸ Nilsson, “hönset [får] aldrig bli för mätt, för då skulle det sluta fiska”, 206-207.

¹⁹⁹ Nilsson, “låta andra slita för att [h]an själv har lust att bli rik”, 208.

“could have a laugh together, as the last thing, before [they] said [their] goodbyes.”²⁰⁰ It is important for her to reconcile and be able to think good of others even though they disagree on some fronts. Through the encounters with Einar and Nanni, Siri learns that not everyone who disagrees with her or does things she considers to be wrong are evil. They highlight the importance of dialogue, suggesting that a good citizen is someone who can get along and negotiate with others. Thus to an extent, community and solidarity appear to be more important than common values.

Furthermore, the less than ideal citizens are often themselves victims of oppression or in situations of fundamental constraint. For example, Siri overhears two rogues hoping to join the pirate Vithuvud. They came to Vargöarna to earn money, but their time there had been “one long accident” because they “had not shot a single animal!”²⁰¹ Misery presumably has led the men to seek their fortune elsewhere, but after a year of no success they are ready to turn to crime. Nilsson implies that the situation could have been avoided, had they found profitable employment and been able to live with dignity. Einar, too, only trains his hen because his father died in a fishing accident while reaching for a single herring in his nets. The hen ensures that he will “never get so hungry as to risk [his] life for a herring”.²⁰² The struggle for survival and personal trauma make Einar's decision more understandable. Even though people do wrong, the context of their choices makes judging them a nuanced affair. The most extreme example of this are Vithuvud's recruitment practices. As one pirate explains to Siri, most people join them because they “can choose between that and a bullet”.²⁰³ The rife oppression in Ishav is caused by deprivation and despair. Thus the central issue of *Ishavspirater* is how to behave morally or as a good citizen in conditions that encourage cruel or oppressive behaviours. And is someone a bad citizen if they choose life as a pirate over the bullet? Duva, the prison guard in Vithuvud's mine, exemplifies this haunting dilemma. She was also kidnapped as a child, but, unlike the others, was given a chance to survive if she accepted to become Vithuvud's daughter. She accepted, but became a prisoner to that choice, feeling that “there was nowhere to go for someone who had sold their soul in return for freedom.”²⁰⁴ It turns out that she is Fredrik's long-lost sister, and would now have a chance to go back home again, but still does not want to. She has seen other children from her community die and not done anything about it, so how could she be accepted into that community again? The high number of characters who do not have a choice

²⁰⁰ Nilsson, “kunde skoja med varann, det allra sista [de] gjorde, innan [de] sa hej då.” 246.

²⁰¹ Nilsson, “ett enda långt misslyckande. Inte ett djur hade de skujtit!” 123.

²⁰² Nilsson, “aldrig bli så hungrig att [han] sätter livet på spel för en sill” 242.

²⁰³ Nilsson, “får välja mellan det och ett skott” 278.

²⁰⁴ Nilsson, “det fanns ingenstans för en sån som hon att ta vägen, en som had köpt sig fri med själen som betalning”, 337.

suggests that making decisions based on morals rather than dire need, or thinking about global justice rather than personal necessity, is a privileged activity. Similarly, one of the great tensions in the concept of global or cosmopolitan citizenship is that those who most identify and behave as global citizens tend to be privileged elites. However, Siri, her father, and Fredrik are not such elites, nor lofty idealists who put planetary wellbeing before their own interests. Siri does not save the world, but her sister: hers is a personal mission. Good citizenship does not mean complete altruism. Indeed, the ideal of citizenship in *Ishavspirater* could also be interpreted as taking care of oneself and one's own family in the absence of a regulating, protecting state. However, this interpretation would not explain Siri's personal values. Thus it is more accurate to say that Siri's mission, though personal, makes a much wider claim for justice. Furthermore, it is not only the essence of her mission but how she conducts herself throughout that defines the ideal citizen.

Even if the ideal citizens, Siri, her father, or Fredrik, are neither saints nor especially fortunate in comparison to others, they are still a minority. However just their ideals and actions may be, they cannot bring about more solidarity any more than the discourses of global citizenship can bring about a world state, global democratic participation or global justice. Indeed, *Ishavspirater* ends on an ambiguous note. Siri reflects that she “had seen much of Ishav that [she] had not wanted to see, and that [she] would never erase from her mind.”²⁰⁵ She imagines the world as a table on which “people sit and count their money.”²⁰⁶ However, the “legs that hold it all up (...) are kids. Those who pull our sleds, those who we cut open with a knife, (...) and those we send deep underground with a basket and a hack,” referring to all the vulnerable creatures she has met on her journey.²⁰⁷ Even though Siri eventually decides that the world can get better, it is a dark metaphor to end the novel with. Disturbingly, Nilsson does not specify whether Siri herself is a part of the table's legs. Siri succeeds in bringing Miki home, but the bleakness of this worldview, where the strong oppress the weak to extract capital, leaves little room for celebration. It also makes leaving good traces, to use the father's terms, even more urgent. To conclude, *Ishavspirater* overtly ponders on the qualities of a good citizen and the importance of citizenship in creating and maintaining just societies. As its view of citizenship is not limited to the local community, some other arbitrary group, or even humanity, the novel can be interpreted to represent non-national forms of citizenship, consisting of attitudes and moral guidelines that are necessary to all rather than in a specific national context. This global

²⁰⁵ Nilsson, “hade sett mycket på Ishavet som [hon] inte velat se, och som [hon] nog aldrig skulle kunna tvätta bort ur huvudet,” 382.

²⁰⁶ Nilsson, “sitter människorna och räknar sina pengar,” 382.

²⁰⁷ Nilsson, “benen som håller alltihopa uppe (...) är ungarna. Dem som vi kopplar framför våra slädar, dem som vi skär i med kniv, (...) och dem som vi skickar långt ner i underjorden med bärkorg och hacka,” 382-383.

dimension of citizenship is not only moral, but also practical, as emphasised by the quest-shaped narrative where travelling and witnessing play a key role. Siri observes, compares what she already knows to other realities and other opinions to decide on her own views. Nilsson also singles out some concrete responsibilities of citizenship, such as respecting all forms of life, protecting and supporting the weak and the vulnerable, and not taking more than one needs from nature. Certainly the novel emphasises a citizen's duties over their rights, in opposition to liberal theories of citizenship that insists on the primacy of individual rights. Crucial citizen skills in this view are developing a critical attitude and knowledge of the world to be able to make informed and just decisions. They are also what allow citizens to discuss and negotiate with each other to find a way to coexist peacefully. Peaceful coexistence is, again, a radical redefinition of the liberal theory of citizenship based on individual freedom. *Ishavspirater* can thus be interpreted as a diagnosis of the main problems of liberal conceptions of citizenship, the lack of collective responsibility which creates few incentives to behave morally, resulting in a frequently unjust and dangerous world. The issues Nilsson includes in the story, from greediness to slave/child labour also represent the failures of capitalism. Some of them are long-term problems, while others have gained urgency with the financial crisis of 2008 and with climate change, which might require setting limits to economic growth. While Nilsson does not rail for the fall of capitalism, *Ishavspirater* points to the unholy alliance of liberal conceptions of citizenship and capitalism that deepens inequality and undermines citizenship.

4.4. *One* by Sarah Crossan (2016)

Much like *Les Petites Reines*, also *One* has been awarded several prizes in addition to the Carnegie Medal and has been translated to most European languages as well as Arabic. Originating from Ireland, Crossan was educated in the UK and, in addition to these two countries, also lived and worked in the US. She has written several novels for teenagers and young adults, some in collaboration with other writers. *One* has a very unusual structure: it is a collection of prose poems that form a story. Especially this feature has received much praise and attention from critics.

Plot summary: Grace and Tippi are 17-year-old conjoined twins living with their family in New Jersey. They have to go to school for the first time in their lives because their family cannot afford to home school them anymore. They expect the worst, but in fact they make friends, again for the first

time in their lives: Yasmeen and Jon. Grace falls in love with Jon, who seems to reciprocate: they read James Joyce at night and share a kiss. Their family's financial situation gets even worse, so Grace and Tippi agree to let a documentary maker to film their daily lives when suddenly they become ill. It transpires that they need a separation surgery. Tippi dies as a consequence of the operation.

One is narrated by Grace, one of conjoined twins, and, as might be expected, the novel examines what it means to be a disabled citizen. As Grace and Tippi lead fairly restricted lives, the novel depicts domestic settings and family life, in other words, the private domain, much more than the public context. Despite the intimate setting and storyline, *One* addresses several social issues, many of which have bearing on citizenship. For example, Tippi and Grace must question their rights and duties to their family members as they face financial struggles. On the other hand, the financial struggles and disadvantages depicted by Crossan highlight some of the inequalities that are concealed behind the supposed universality of citizenship, problematising concepts such as freedom and equality of opportunity. Finally, Tippi and Grace's disability and the dramatic choices they have to make reveal intricate distinctions between the categories of the citizen and the human – while nobody claims that they are undeserving of rights, other people frequently view them as a grotesque spectacle rather than equal citizens.

Tippi and Grace's family, and most other characters in *One*, come from low socio-economic backgrounds. At the beginning of the novel, Grace and Tippi start in a normal school because, as their mother puts it, “Donations from well-wishers have dried up / and we simply can't afford to homeschool you. / You know your dad hasn't found a job yet / and Grammie's pension / doesn't even cover the cable bill.”²⁰⁸ Readers are told that their family of six (Grace and Tippi have a sister called Dragon) is supported by just their mother's meagre salary. As a consequence, their alcoholic father lives in state of constant fear, “flinch[ing] when the mail arrives” and hiding away “hospital bills and parking tickets.”²⁰⁹ Eventually, also their mother loses her job, leading to a new life “with no more nights out at the movie theatre, / no new clothes or money for restaurants. / (...) no money for gas and no money for meat / and no money for any treats / or frittering”.²¹⁰ Crossan highlights social issues, such as the accumulation of problems on the poor, living with minimal security against any unexpected hardship, and the causes and effects of poverty. The initial issue, not

²⁰⁸ Sarah Crossan, *One*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 5.

²⁰⁹ Crossan, 52.

²¹⁰ Crossan, 236.

affording home schooling, sounds like regular downscaling, but the later developments such as not having money for gas or meat hint at the much more frightening prospects of extreme poverty. The twins' new friend Jon is in a similarly precarious situation. Living with his stepfather who “pays for [his] train tickets and lunch” and who has agreed to “stick around until [he goes] to college,” it is clear that Jon will have no safety net to turn to after he leaves home.²¹¹ However, even at present the safety net offered by the stepfather seems flimsy. At Jon's house, the “lawn is littered with empty beer-cans and / a rusting, tyre-less bicycle is tied to the chain-link / fence” and his house “smells of cigarettes. / Dirty dishes are piled high in the sink.”²¹² The mess signals the absence of any caring or organising adults in Jon's life, begging the question of how exactly he is meant to get on his feet once of age. The recurring scenes of hardship and deprivation draw an unflattering image of the wider community and the state, where people's lives are such a struggle and young people have to build their lives with few resources. It should be pointed out here that *One* is set in the USA, which may explain this emphasis. It does not describe European experience, even though to a certain extent the problems Crossan draws attention to are universal. For a European audience, *One* may offer a way to think of their own societies through comparison. Furthermore, the fundamental issue Crossan describes in this instance, “the tension between rights and the actual enjoyment of life chances [caused by economic inequality] has remained a dilemma of modern democracies”, not only in the USA but also in European states.²¹³ Citizenship is not meant to ensure complete economic equality, but the twins and Jon's lives question whether young people whose parents are absent because of work or personal problems can be said to have equal opportunities to build a prosperous life.

As Tippi and Grace's family is so hard off, the twins often ask themselves whether they should take more responsibility to help. Their sister, Dragon, gets a job and gives up many of her dreams to support the family. She is a talented ballet dancer, and becomes a ballet teacher for young children to pay for her own classes and skips travelling to an advanced training course in Russia. Grace and Tippi's medical costs are the family's financial priority, and since they are ill nobody expects them to get a job.²¹⁴ Despite the compelling reasons for this state of affairs, Grace feels like she and Tippi are a burden, thinking that they “have to own up to what [they]'re costing - / to what [they]'re making [their] sister sacrifice.”²¹⁵ The problem is that Grace and Tippi know exactly how to make

²¹¹ Crossan, 180.

²¹² Crossan, 178.

²¹³ Turner, (2017), 19.

²¹⁴ Crossan, 101.

²¹⁵ Crossan, 164.

money: by giving a documentary maker the permission to follow their lives. However, especially Tippi refuses to appear in a documentary, calling it a “fucking freak show”.²¹⁶ Her words equate sensational TV documentaries to old-fashioned circus grounds, leading her to conclude that if they “went on television, / [they]’d be giving up / [their] dignity.”²¹⁷ The question is whether Grace and Tippi have the duty to give up their dignity to contribute, taken that they also take up a lion’s share of the financial resources. It is a greater sacrifice than most have to make, though Crossan problematises the idea of dignity. Grace realises that paradoxically, it is deemed distasteful if she and Tippi were “paid for idiots to gawk at them” but no one minds when models do the same.²¹⁸ It is not being looked at, but their bodies which are the problem. Eventually, when their mother is made redundant, Grace and Tippi agree to let the documentary maker into their lives. The dilemma is whether the family, or by extension, society, can ask for greater contributions from members who are more dependent on others. On the other hand, the fact that Tippi and Grace can choose to provide for the family in this way demonstrates that people of different abilities are not necessarily “more dependent”.

Crossan sheds light on this category of “more dependent” citizens, not only through Tippi and Grace but also their friend Yasmeen, who has HIV. Much in the way that Grace and Tippi take priority in their family, all of them receive special permissions or privileges from the authorities. For example, the “city won’t fund [the twins]’ homeschooling but / they’ll pay / for a place / at a private school” so they will not have to go to a state school “with kids who pull knives on teachers / and drink Tipp-Ex for breakfast.”²¹⁹ Clearly, they are getting more than some. Their friend Yasmeen, on the other hand, shows up to school in “a denim mini / and a pair of leopard print pantyhose” on her birthday and nobody tells her off for not using the school uniform, because “birthdays / for the sick / are sort of sacred.”²²⁰ While these examples might not be great concessions, they illustrate that somewhat different rules apply for Yasmeen, Grace and Tippi than to others. However, what is notable about these concessions or minor privileges is that they might be withdrawn at any moment and they are permeated with uneasiness. For example, Tippi and Grace did not want to go to the school, whether private or not, and they also have to quit against their will when the family plans moving to a cheaper house. They have no say in the matter. At school, everyone avoids them and Yasmeen, because, as Yasmeen puts it, she “reek[s] of death, / of low life expectancy. Like you guys”,

²¹⁶ Crossan, 247.

²¹⁷ Crossan, 238.

²¹⁸ Crossan, 248.

²¹⁹ Crossan, 7.

²²⁰ Crossan, 201.

referring to the twins.²²¹ Thus whatever minor exceptions or concessions people make with them, they are made with fear, discomfort or even disgust, a sign of the girls' lesser worth rather than a positive special status. Indeed, the message from wider society seems to be that they are pitiful and not worth investing in. Grace questions what “lives like [theirs] are / worth to the real world / and especially / to the insurance company which / every day, / queries [their] need / for so much healthcare.”²²² She knows that doctors have examined their mother to “prevent / people like us from ever / being born / again.”²²³ Few people would claim that disabled or ill people are not citizens or deserving of life, but nevertheless the question of a limit to spending on the weakest and most unproductive members of society is relevant especially in the context of scarcity. For example, Turner argues that after the financial crisis of 2008, “by not earning, [American workers] have ceased being citizens” because they cannot meet their citizen obligations of paying taxes or taking care of their own and their children's survival.²²⁴ This narrative, then, criticises the welfare systems developed after the Second World War and the relationship they created between citizens and the state. Rather than seeing welfare as a right, according to the new narrative, those who depend on welfare are designated as “scroungers” and as having no “autonomy [or] self-worth.”²²⁵

As mentioned before, Crossan does give an example of how Tippi and Grace can earn money, and so calling them unproductive would be not only be morally reprehensible, but also factually inaccurate. Nevertheless, as both ill and disabled people require a great deal of medical attention and care, their rights often seem to be reduced to those of a patient rather than those of a citizen. Tippi and Grace feel like their bodies are public property, and even when they do give their consent to medical operations, Crossan describes the process as being very cruel and invasive. The twins have to allow themselves to be “ogled / by a dozen trainee doctors” because “[d]r Derrick's stethoscope and white coat / do not permit disagreement”.²²⁶ The doctor's uniform stands for authority, but also the fact that medical research is for the common good. It is as if Grace and Tippi feel obliged to do something they are not comfortable with to make amends for being different or perhaps for being “scroungers”. The nature of medical procedures often seems to further dehumanise them. After consenting to an operation to be separated, the doctors will “inflate us and / shape us and / slice us apart / and never stop to ask, / *Are you sure?*”²²⁷ The perverted connotations

²²¹ Crossan, 93.

²²² Crossan, 230.

²²³ Crossan, 216.

²²⁴ Turner, (2017) 17.

²²⁵ Turner, (2017) 19.

²²⁶ Crossan, 26.

²²⁷ Crossan, 361.

of “ogle” and the violent operations Grace describes imply that doctors, even while helping her and Tippi, take away their autonomy and interfere with their bodies. She also suggests that the doctors, who offer to do “the most expensive procedure of all / (...) for nothing,” are more motivated by the fame that would follow a successful separation rather than a genuine desire to help.²²⁸ Grace and Tippi's capacity for self-determination is restricted by their dependence on healthcare. For example, in a critical situation they cannot really refuse a procedure, such as the operation to separate them, even though they might prefer to.

In some ways, Grace and Tippi represent “bare life”, a term coined by Giorgio Agamben that Janice Ho uses in her analysis of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. The term refers to the distinction between a citizen and a human, the idea that “removed from political association, one is banished to the natural realm of the body and the private sphere.”²²⁹ Without a political community that recognises them, people are relegated to the category of animals who merely exist but have no protected rights. At its most extreme, bare life can be killed with impunity. Tippi and Grace's case is not as dire, but their lives seem to be continuously at risk of being defined as not worth living or sustaining. Their helplessness and the difficulties posed by their body seem to banish them to the natural realm, or *zo?*, away from public life proper to a group of human beings, *bios*.²³⁰ Indeed, their body is so disturbing to others that they have spent most of their lives at home, in the private sphere. The alternative semi-private and public settings they can imagine, the hospital or sensationalist entertainment, make them into samples to be examined or biological oddities to be ogled, into objects rather than subjects. Thus, they are seen as mere biological life rather than autonomous citizens. Again, nobody directly claims that Tippi and Grace have no place in the American nation, but Crossan documents continuous incidents that imply a deep societal discomfort which dehumanises their body. On a train, Grace spots someone's phone “aimed at [them] like a sniper rifle,” the simile suggesting that the dehumanising gaze may be lethal.²³¹ Even love and affection are risky: Tippi is certain that if “Jon is seriously interested in [Grace], / he's a weirdo.”²³² For Grace, strangers who regularly ask her and Tippi if they would like to be separated seem to insinuate that “they'd do / anything / not to live like [the twins], / that finding a way to look / normal / would be worth / any risk.”²³³ The word “normal” is significant here. What is considered normal changes

²²⁸ Crossan, 299-300.

²²⁹ Janice Ho, “The Human and the Citizen in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*” in *Around 1945*, ed. Allan Hepburn, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), chap. 5, EBSCO Academic Collection.

²³⁰ I derive the definitions of *zo?* and *bios* used here from Ho, who quotes Agamben.

²³¹ Crossan, 118.

²³² Crossan, 350.

²³³ Crossan, 96.

between communities and over time, such as the normal language to speak, the normal way to behave as a woman or a man, a young person or an old person, the normal way to express oneself. In the case of Grace and Tippi, the question of normal refers to the more high-stakes issue of what a human being should be like, an assumption that they challenge. This has implications for citizenship, as Ho points out that “definitions of citizenship [are] predicated on biologically normative theories of the human.”²³⁴ For example, mental illness or race were used as justifications to take away people's rights and transform them into “bare life”, because they were supposedly not intelligent, responsible, or human enough to be trusted with them. While Grace and Tippi are not in as desperate a situation, they similarly trouble definitions of the human being and of citizenship, because citizens are normally conceived of as individuals, for instance as the liberal opposition to group rights insists. As the title of the novel suggests, there is no easy way to determine whether they are two or one.

Most people see Tippi and Grace as only one person, which is by and large harmful. Falling in love with their friend Jon is such a dramatic event for Grace because it is the first time that someone looks at them “like [they] truly are / two people.”²³⁵ By contrast, even doctors deem separation operations “a success so / long as one of them lives. / For a while.”²³⁶ Their individual lives are not worth much. However, there are also problems to claiming that they are two people. For example, they cannot make decisions as individuals. When Grace is ill she feels wrong to “confine [Tippi] to bed / just because [she] can't get [her] / act together” and gets up anyway.²³⁷ In contrast, “[w]hen Tippi wants something / she takes it with / two hands / and / with a body that belongs to / us both,” which gets especially problematic when Tippi decides to smoke and drink alcohol, since they will both suffer the adverse health effects.²³⁸ Also, when the twins discover that Grace's heart has failed, but Tippi is still keeping her alive, Grace begins to feel guilty. In fact, she resorts to the language of welfare and dependency, agonising that she “freeload[s]” while Tippi “doesn't complain.”²³⁹ The addition about Tippi corresponds to the citizenship paradigm where freeloading is considered laziness and breaking the social contract between the individual and the state. Grace calling herself a “[p]arasite” also fits into the language of demonising people reliant on welfare.²⁴⁰ Her agonies are based on the assumption that they are two people, but Tippi insists that “all this *you* and *me* is a lie. /

²³⁴ Ho (2016), chap. 5, EBSCO Academic Collection.

²³⁵ Crossan, 56.

²³⁶ Crossan, 296.

²³⁷ Crossan, 33.

²³⁸ Crossan, 84.

²³⁹ Crossan, 303.

²⁴⁰ Crossan, 305.

There has only ever been *us*.²⁴¹ On the one hand, Grace and Tippi think it absurd to ask what would be best for them separately – they are a unit. Yet, they should be viewed as two individuals and two lives that are valuable in and of themselves. The second statement prevails at the end of the story. After Tippi's death Grace admits to having “hidden from the world for a long time” and “having been a coward” for not realising that hers “is a single story, / not two tales tangled up in each other”.²⁴² Still, conjoined twins offer a powerful real-life example and metaphor of the question whether citizens and their rights should always be considered individually.

The idea that Grace ceases to be a coward and appears to the world for the first time by owning her story indicates another way that Crossan deals with citizenship in *One*. Not being “hidden” anymore, Grace presumably develops a public citizen identity, and owning her story corresponds to the idea of having a voice, the capacity to give an account of herself and her experiences. The act of storytelling thus becomes an act of citizenship, as Grace and Tippi discover when they finally agree to make their lives into a documentary film. Initially, they fear that the filmmakers want to sensationalise them and invade their privacy. However, the family find that they can decide how their story is told. For example, contrary to the document-maker's wishes, they decide that their sister Dragon does not need to appear so that she can go to the ballet course in Russia. Also their father moves out, because “[h]e can't stay sober / and Mom won't let the world / watch him drink.”²⁴³ When the documentary makers start to follow Grace and Tippi to school, all the other students who used to ignore them become hungry for fame, but Grace and Tippi get to decide “who should be / getting airtime, / who deserves the limelight / (...) / [and] will be the stars”²⁴⁴ Despite their fears of becoming the stars of a freak show, Grace and Tippi and their family take control of the story. After Tippi's death, the documentary cameras return to Grace, but this time she tells the filmmaker that she “want[s] to talk (...) / [and] to speak [her story] out.”²⁴⁵ She is the one in control of the situation. What started as an undignifying invasion of their privacy becomes Grace's chance to build her own narrative.

In *One*, the atmosphere of a constant worry over the sufficiency of resources, the goodwill of others and over the perceptions of scrounging mirrors the wider social issue of precarity and its impact on citizenship. Some circumstances make Tippi and Grace's status as citizens a greater problem than it

²⁴¹ Crossan, 304.

²⁴² Crossan, 429.

²⁴³ Crossan, 264.

²⁴⁴ Crossan, 273.

²⁴⁵ Crossan, 427.

needs to be. On the one hand, receiving welfare is framed in such a negative way that they are made to feel undeserving. On the other, some of the limits placed on people's capacity to contribute to society or to earn for themselves and build their own lives are due to prejudice rather than actual obstacles, such as a lack of skill. Crossan demonstrates that scarcity affects the most vulnerable people in society the most, whether disabled, ill, or poor. Secondly, Crossan presents voice as a key tool for marginalised people to regain autonomy and claim their rights. Indeed the opportunity and ability to give an account of her life seems to be a prerequisite for Grace to understand herself as an individual, and to claim the rights that have been denied to her as one of conjoined twins. However, as the separation operation means that Grace no longer is disabled, or at least she does not look different from other people, the power of self-representation is somewhat compromised. The separation operation is a medical necessity, and it is frequently implied that given the choice, Grace and Tippi would have preferred to stay conjoined. For a brief moment, Grace dreams of a life without Tippi so that she could have a more straightforward romantic relationship with Jon, but she decides that Tippi is more important to her.) This desire is an abomination to most of the people around them, and from a citizenship perspective, it would require a paradigm change. While the novel underlines the importance of considering even conjoined twins as two individuals, they also provide a compelling case where the individual is not an appropriate or sufficient unit of citizenship. Naturally, conjoined twins are extremely rare, but the insight may be applied in other contexts as well. Perhaps all citizens are individuals and duos, trios, or whole groups at the same time.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

With the exception of *Ishavspirater*, all of the awarded novels were broadly realistic depictions of teenagers' lives. Even if it would be unlikely that three biking teenage girls be invited to the Élysée Palace on Bastille day and few boys ever get a chance to fall in love with one of conjoined twins, the novels are set in recognisable societies and they deal with more or less everyday problems. In addition, all of the novels are narrated in the first person. This is a fairly common stylistic device in children's literature, but in the case of these novels it also brings the perspectives of marginalised youth centre stage and testifies to the authors' belief in voice as a tool to achieve equality within citizenry. *Et Kävele Yksin*, *Les Petites Reines* and *One* also dramatise characters using their voice to empower themselves: by creating artworks, by reframing the word *boudin* and the bullies' narrative of themselves, and by telling the story of one's own life respectively. This emphasis on voice may reflect a child or teenager's relative powerlessness and half-citizen status. For example, even while the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child demands that a child be heard in all decisions that affect them, their opinion has to be taken into account only in accordance with their maturity, entitling “public officials, courts, and parents – to judge whether the child is old and mature enough to be capable of forming a view.”²⁴⁶ Voice and being listened to thus relate intimately to legitimacy and respect, things children and teenagers sometimes have to fight for. Accordingly, for the characters in these novels, beginning to use their voices is an integral part of becoming a publicly acknowledged rights-bearing subject – in other words, a citizen – despite obstacles to their belonging, such as being disabled, ugly or a second-generation immigrant.

In terms of the arenas of citizenship, *Et Kävele Yksin* and *Les Petites Reines* demonstrate an awareness of the world beyond the nation state and *Ishavspirater* beyond the immediate community. Kosovo and Somalia affect lives in Finland, for example Egzon's mother is profoundly homesick while Egzon himself tries to imagine his second impoverished “home”, destroyed by war. It is unclear whether Kosovo should still command some kind of loyalty or actions from Egzon's family because of their roots. Should Egzon travel there one day? Should Egzon try to improve the

²⁴⁶ Andrew Lockyer, “Young People as Active Political Citizens” in *Active Citizenship: What Could it Achieve and How?* ed. Bernard Crick and Andrew Lockyer, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 159.

conditions there and support the state? Should he try to build a connection? Or never set foot there? Niemi does not address these questions and it looks unlikely that Egzon do any of these things. Besides France, *Les Petites Reines* mentions also Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and a non-specified North African country (Beauvais does not say where Hakima and Kader are from) as places the characters come from and have lived in. People move freely around, not bound to their country of origin, and affect the lives of others as they do, for example by falling in love and having a child with them. There is a military operation in Galéristan because they are a threat to France, but Beauvais focuses on the situation of French soldiers, barely mentioning the idea that French citizens might also have responsibilities to people there. In *Ishavspirater*, Siri travels through the whole of Ishav, and realises that while her home island is fairly remote, a desire for wolf fur on one island may cause a pile of rotting meat on another. Thus, these novels all show awareness of the interdependence between countries and the movement of peoples between them, both of them factors that are said to challenge nation-state citizenship. However, *Ishavspirater* is the only novel where knowledge of the world beyond the home community influences the characters' actions to a significant extent. *Et Kävele Yksin* and *Les Petites Reines* occasionally consider the wider world and the characters' place in it, but these considerations do not lead to concrete actions or decisions. In terms of their belonging, though, the characters are all committed to their home countries. Even Egzon, whose relationship with Finland is somewhat complicated, eventually “chooses” Finland. Mireille cannot even imagine moving to Paris from Bourg-en-Bresse, let alone abroad. Foreign countries do not play a significant role in *One*, though the fact that an Irish author's novel set in the US receives a British award signals a belief that children's literature does not have to be national to be relevant. This constellation is not exactly a feat of global-mindedness, though, as Crossan has spent most of her career in Britain and the US, the two countries that also dominate the anglophone publishing world. While the novels demonstrate awareness of the wider world, the position of the nation-state as the main arena of citizenship remains a constant.

While cosmopolitan citizenship is embraced only by *Ishavspirater*, *Et Kävele Yksin* and *Les Petites Reines* deal more extensively with multicultural citizenship. *Et Kävele Yksin* is about integration, and accordingly Niemi presents Finnish society as multicultural. Furthermore, the multiculturalism is not only about immigration but also about regional cultures and the divide between urban and rural areas. Therefore, while Egzon's story fits into the traditional citizenship narrative of choosing between his roots and country of residence, Niemi also challenges the currently dominant definition of multiculturalism as a consequence of immigration. The diverse cast of characters in *Les Petites*

Reines is slightly more matter-of-fact. The characters guess Kader's religion and ethnicity to be reasons for his mistreatment, there is some casual prejudice and racism, and Astrid refers to the difficulty of moving from Switzerland to France, but the relationships between the characters are much less marked by their cultural differences than in *Et Kävele Yksin*. However, neither one of the novels presents a certain cultural identity as a must for national belonging. For Egzon, the important part is beginning to make independent decisions to try and create his place in society, and Kader and Hakima are already accepted by the majority as belonging. For them, cultural and ethnic difference are not obstacles to belonging as such, but to feeling that they belong. As soon as Kader behaves as a rights-bearing subject, his rights are recognised. Egzon, on the other hand, is clearly treated differently by many of his fellow citizens because of his roots, but for him, too, the crucial first step is not receiving a sign of acceptance, but acting on his own behalf. Thus both novels are sensitive to the disadvantaged position of minority groups, suggesting that they encounter structural discrimination. They do not promote profound changes to existing practices, such as considering group rights alongside individual rights, possibly because in both novels the “minority” characters have friends and are shown solidarity – in other words, improvement seems to be in the horizon. Writing in 2018, this sentiment appears optimistic. While multicultural, multiethnic societies are the rule rather than an exception, the debate surrounding them shows no signs of cooling down.

The second force shaping citizenship, economic scarcity, is especially evident in *One*: the twins struggle to have their needs met and secure their rights in a time of financial hardship for their family. In *Ishavspirater*, the theme emerges in relation to characters who are driven to act in immoral or harmful ways – for example, to join pirates or to harm animals – because they struggle to make ends meet. In addition, the moral code of not being greedy, or not taking more than one needs from the environment, reflects the scarcity of natural resources. Both *One* and *Ishavspirater* describe a situation where scarcity causes a lack of solidarity or safety nets, putting extreme pressure on individuals. Additionally, *Ishavspirater* suggests how citizens should alter their behaviour when faced with scarce resources: take more responsibility for their own resource use and respect also others' needs. Thus, all the novels depict some of the most serious problems affecting European states today: climate change, financial crisis, and displaced people. With the exception of *Ishavspirater*, they demonstrate what these problems look like in everyday life and what an individual can do in the face of these challenges. *Ishavspirater* does not present specific everyday problems, but it can be understood metaphorically, so that for example Vithuvud's mine represents child labour and the wolf cub Siri wanted to buy could be any product in a shop.

One and *Et Kävele Yksin* are stories of first love, which might initially seem like an intimate story with little ramifications to the grand political and social questions of citizenship. However, in both conflict arises as a result of the extra baggage that one of the parties brings into the relationship. For Ada, going on a date means going on a date, whereas Egzon prepares for an evening in a café and at the cinema as if for a military operation. There is affection between Jon and Grace, but their relationship is never straightforward. While Jon sees Grace differently than the rest of society – as an individual and as a person instead of a freak – they cannot find a way to date in the same way as two non-disabled teenagers. The authors employ personal relationships to explore refugees' and disabled people's rights and belonging to society, since these relationships reflect points of wider social discomfort. For example, it is common to justify an anti-immigration, especially anti-muslim, stance by one's concern for women's rights and safety and a disabled person's romantic relationships and sexuality are for the most part taboo. In the case of disabled people, this discomfort centres around what a human being is and who should be allowed to have romantic and sexual feelings and desires. Furthermore, personal relationships have the potential to change what the nation and its citizens consist of by starting a family, whether by having the state's recognition of the relationship or having children. The concern for women's safety and the love lives of disabled people are rooted in concerns of who people have the power to normalise as citizens. First love can be very political.

Les Petites Reines and *Ishavspirater* feature young people who act on the world and take part in citizenship debates much more overtly. *Les Petites Reines* with its optimistic mood is the polar opposite of *Ishavspirater*. We can imagine the first as a representation of how things should ideally go when citizens of a democratic state face adversity, and the second as how things will probably go when people who have no such state do. Ultimately, the two novels make a similar point: the existence of a democratic state enables individuals to achieve justice through activism. As Ishav suffers from problems common to European countries today, such as the abuse of natural resources, *Ishavspirater* can also be interpreted as a representation of the failures of capitalist democratic states, perhaps suggesting that grassroots action is necessary to get back on track. The state in *Les Petites Reines* is represented as benevolent, and the girls' activism targets public culture and debate rather than state structures. A second similarity in these two novels is the ways that the young people organise their missions and find collaborators. I mention that the girls in *Les Petites Reines* form a community bound by interest rather than a grand purpose, which requires them deciding what is right and wrong and what they want to achieve. In *Ishavspirater*, Fredrik helps Siri because he

himself had suffered as a consequence of Vithuvud's actions. Empathy allows him to see Siri's problem as his own, and ultimately he also finds his sister. In this case, Siri and Fredrik's interests and goal overlap somewhat, but Fredrik makes a decision to make Siri's mission also his, and he is not a mere altruistic helper. Furthermore, Siri's dialogues with Nanni and Einar can be seen as the primary phase of negotiating interests and values even though they do not lead into discovering common goals. Thus, conversation, creativity and motivation are more important to collaborating as a community than similarity.

5.2. Conclusions

In conclusion, the recent changes, pressures and challenges to citizenship can be observed in these awarded books' representations of citizenship. Aside the wider social issues that manifest themselves in the novels, the focus is on young people *becoming* citizens: finding the courage to claim their rights and the ways to be publicly acknowledged as having rights. The most frequent personal struggle the young protagonists face is to be seen and listened to, a component of citizenship that remains a constant through the changing world order and times of societal turbulence. The novels describe a yearning for a community of mutual worth and respect that has been undermined by scarcity and prejudice. Thus, though the novels address the great political issues of our times, such as climate change or migration, the representations of citizenship often boil down to care, friendship, and love rather than frenzied patriotism. By highlighting these affective components of citizenship, they also recognise its pragmatic, everyday dimension. Citizenship does not result from a mythical spirit of, say, Frenchness but from individual, sometimes messy, circumstances. In line with those who argue that nation-states still dominate the world order and our imaginations, these children's books presented young protagonists who were by and large only attached to their home countries. However, their awareness extended beyond them, and their nation-states are not defined by strict ethnic or cultural criteria. The books also defended the worth and rights of even the less productive or educated individuals, though some also acknowledged the importance of educating oneself. Education plays an increasingly important role in citizenship, but its goal may be better knowledge of the world as well as economic gain.

As there has been little research into citizenship in either adult or children's literature, there is plenty of scope for further research. For example, one could compare representations of citizenship from significant periods of history in a specific country or compare these representations with different

countries' conceptions and traditions of citizenship. The results of my analysis also suggest some more specific questions. Since the novels do not seriously challenge the role of the nation-state in the protagonists' lives, it would be interesting to study children's literature with truly transnational characters – people who actually “belong” or have loyalties to several places. Do these novels exist and how do they represent citizenship? Furthermore, as there was a clear divide between *Ishavspirater* and the more realistic novels, the former dealing with systematic issues and the latter describing personal experiences, it would be interesting to compare between genres more systematically. Is there a difference between representations of citizenship in realistic novels and fantasy or sci-fi? Lastly, as there is an existing body of research on using literature in citizenship education, my thesis could be complemented with more empirical research on how children and young people actually interpret these novels.

Et Kävele Yksin and *Les Petites Reines* are encouraging descriptions of young people beginning to behave as citizens in fairly accepted ways, whereas *Ishavspirater* and *One* do more to question some of the basic premises of citizenship, such as emphasising responsibilities over rights, and challenging the primacy of the individual. Maybe children's literature could provide inspiring reading for European politicians in crisis-mode as well as for youth in citizenship education classes.

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