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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Srovnání dystopických témat v *Konci civilizace* Aldouse Huxleyho a *Dárci* Lois  
Lowryové

A Comparison of Dystopian Themes in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and  
Lois Lowry's *The Giver*

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### **Čestné prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně pod vedením Mgr. Petra Anténeho, M.A., Ph.D. s využitím pramenů a literatury, jež jsou uvedeny v bibliografii.

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Podpis .....

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## Anotace

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<b>Název práce:</b>	Srovnání dystopických témat v <i>Konci civilizace</i> Aldouse Huxleyho a <i>Dárci</i> Lois Lowryové
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	A Comparison of Dystopian Themes in Aldous Huxley's <i>Brave New World</i> and Lois Lowry's <i>The Giver</i>
<b>Zvolený typ práce:</b>	Výzkumná práce – přehled odborných poznatků.
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Tato bakalářská práce srovnává dystopická témata v <i>Konci civilizace</i> Aldouse Huxleyho a <i>Dárci</i> Lois Lowryové. V první části práce je definována dystopie jako literární žánr a životy autorů. V druhé části práce jsou srovnávána díla autorů především ve třech kategoriích, a to postavy, společnost a kontrola nad společností vyobrazená v dílech. Cílem práce je porovnat odlišné a společné prvky dystopických témat těchto děl.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	dystopie, Aldous Huxley, Lois Lowry, společnost, kontrola společnosti
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	This bachelor thesis compares dystopian themes in Aldous Huxley's <i>Brave New World</i> and Lois Lowry's <i>The Giver</i> . The first part defines dystopia as a literary genre and authors and their biographies. The second part compares the novels in three main categories: the characters, the societies, and the control over the societies depicted in the novels. This thesis aims to compare the dystopian themes in the novels.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	dystopia, Aldous Huxley, Lois Lowry, society, control over society
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## **Abstract**

This bachelor's thesis compares dystopian themes in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. The first part of the thesis introduces dystopian literature, young-adult dystopian literature, and the division of the genre. There are also biographies of the authors. The second part analyses and interprets the novels and compares their themes, namely the characters, the societies, and the control over the societies in the novels. Quotes from the novels illustrate the points stated. The similarities and differences are then compared in the conclusion of the thesis.

## **Introduction**

Among all the literary genres one can decide to read, dystopia and its themes carry a significant warning message for the readers. Such themes can be analysed in the novels *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley and *The Giver* (1993) written by Lois Lowry.

The aim of this thesis is to compare the themes of these novels and find their similarities and differences, namely in the characters, the societies, and the control over the societies depicted in the books. The first chapter of the thesis will describe the difference between utopia and dystopia and their significance in literature, followed by a description of different dystopian types, also focusing on young-adult fiction. The authors of the novels will be described to give an idea about their lives and their motivation to write about such themes, both authors being known to the wide public interested in literature.

The third and fourth chapter will analyse and interpret the novels and their themes, trying to showcase the most important passages of the books that present the dystopic features and their key ideas. Working with the information from the first and second chapter, the analysis will explore the similarities and differences between the novels, specifying the main points found.

The last chapter will connect all the information provided in the thesis and form the conclusion about the themes of dystopic literature showcased by Lois Lowry and Aldous Huxley, finalizing the whole thesis into a finished comparison of the novels and describing the thoughts of the authors about the dystopic societies.

# 1. Dystopia as a Genre

## 1.1 Utopia and Dystopia

To understand dystopia as a literary genre, one must first think about what utopia is. Utopia in literature depicts an imaginary society, which fulfils the reader's idea of a safe and fully working society. It does not have many flaws and is seen as the ultimate destination everyone should aspire to reach. Utopia can force the readers to think about the contemporary society they live in and provoke them to take some actions to reach such a state. Many utopian works follow the trend of a wanderer who finds himself or travels to a land unknown. There he explores and discusses the utopian idea of the country. When the political, religious, or other message is forwarded to the wanderer, he feels the need to return home and share ideas to make his surroundings better (Gregory, 2011, 6-7). So rather than describing a complex story with many characters involved, it is a tour through the unknown land, guided by someone who knows what to tell the visitor. The characters are there to present these ideas to the reader (Seeger & Davison-Vecchione, 2019, p. 45-63).

Dystopia, on the other hand, shows the societies that failed to continue to live in a utopia. They are flawed and corrupt even though they might seem normal at first glance. The people or characters in the works are going through horrible things and they try to cope with them and find solutions. In contrast with utopia, it is often seen by the eyes of an inhabitant of the society, not a newcomer. The person lives in these bad conditions throughout his life, trying to free himself or his closest ones of the dystopian order (Seeger & Davison-Vecchione, 2019, p. 45-63). The freedom of heroes depicted in the books is very limited, they often lack their individuality, and they need to find a way to get their life back. That turns out to be very difficult, as they work alone or with just a small collective of people with the same gift of seeing the problems of the dystopic society around them (Purkar, 2013, p. 2). While the difference between the two terms might seem obvious when defined, many utopias can turn into dystopias very quickly, as there is a close line between the two genres.

The mood and atmosphere of dystopian literature can have many faces, however, there are key features of such literature. Depictions of a gloomy, dangerous, and almost post-apocalyptic world with dysfunctional societies will be easily identified as dystopias by the readers. The plot takes place in near future, thus underlining the warning messages from the authors of the books.



Other depictions can seem more peaceful, evoking utopic ideas in the readers. However, in this type, the readers find out how society is corrupted gradually and often through the eyes of the main hero or heroine. Both described types convey an urgent warning and call to action for the readers to think about the near future (Grubisic & Baxter & Lee, 2014, p. 3). Dystopias also become more believable to the readers as they are presented as theoretically possible future scenarios of humanity. They showcase the flaws and dangers of modern and advanced societies to make the reading more relatable for the audience (Afnan, 1989, p. 7-8).

While defining dystopia, it is also important to look at the history of the genre. The genre became more known throughout the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the World Wars, people were shocked by the horrible events, and they became more realistic rather than hopeful and cheerful. This of course formed and evolved the literary genres at that time, as they showed the criticism and flaws of the societies that failed the expectations of human beings (Gregory, 2011, p. 107-108). There was also a lack of critique of the contemporary society where the authors lived in. To stand out with their works and to make them more interesting to the readers they needed to distinguish themselves from the others. Hiding the intended meaning of the texts, the critique, and the non-acceptance of the conditions that might turn the real world into dystopia, behind stories that readers could see through the eyes of the characters and still receive the message from the authors (Chrostowska, 2021, p. 26).

## **1.2 Division of Dystopian Literature**

Dystopia can be further divided into many smaller categories, different in their structure or themes conveyed in them. One of them is a dystopia of tragic failure, which emphasizes the failure of humans, who cannot manage to hold on to some utopian scheme. The failure can be blamed on human nature or the omnipresent antagonists who question the utopic ideas. The heroes are then forced to work against the antagonist or the whole system to liberate themselves and find a peaceful life once more.

Dystopias of authoritarian repression showcase the flawed and misleading application of utopic ideas and rules onto society, the state is to blame and the people in it are oppressed, live in fear or rules so strict, that they are no longer able to follow them. At first, the rules of the society seem to be fitting to form a working environment, but the inability to apply such requirements dooms the state and citizens in it (Balasopoulos, 2006, p. 59-67). This is also further developed by the total control over the society by people that are elevated above the so-called equal society and the history of the older generations is consciously hidden from the

residents to evoke the feeling of perfection of such living conditions. In addition, the stories follow the inner path of the characters, being emotive, ethical and moral (Alimuradov, 2021, p. 12).

Dystopias of catastrophic contingency enable the readers to find out what would happen if some large-scale natural disaster happened, for example, an outbreak of a dangerous virus, or an unknown illness spreading amongst the people. Even the visit from aliens and their invasion can cause the story to move forward and create dangerous and unsafe life conditions. Here, the inability to defend against the threats is what forms the dystopia.

One of the most frightening types of dystopia is nihilistic dystopia. It shares similarities with authoritarian repression dystopias, but the scale of it is much bigger. It features not only one state but multiple countries or even the whole world united and controlled by one or more corporations. They form the dystopian world to benefit the corporations and use the lower class and unfortunate people as their tools. These people then need to find a way to revolt against the oppression to survive in such harsh conditions (Balasopoulos, 2006, p. 59-67). Huxley also warns of nihilistic dystopias in his works, emphasizing the problem of whole societies being flawed rather than a failure of individuals which might lead to such state. He also specifies that it is hard for people to recognize ethical and non-ethical ways of living at first glance, which is reflected in his works (Graff, 2001, p. 37-38).

Critical dystopias tend to criticize current world problems and events. They often try to warn people of their lifestyle which could turn our real world into a dystopic world. The warning is present to avoid inevitable doom, and to strike thoughts in the minds of the readers (Balasopoulos, 2006, p. 59-67).

With this information in mind, dystopia seems to belong to the hands of adults and older people, who can relate to the situations and problems in the stories, as they have more knowledge of the world in general. However, not all dystopian books need to be targeted at such readers all the time.

### **1.3 Young Adult Dystopia**

Utopia, as an older genre, is no longer very popular among readers. According to Clayes, several authors have proclaimed that utopia is no longer a sustainable literary genre in recent years. Utopia is no longer a state of mind that one can reach. That shows that the contrasting genre, dystopia, is an evolving genre that continues to grip new readers of all types, including

young adult readers, thus forming another part of the division of dystopic books (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, 11-19). Being close to science fiction, young readers like to read stories that involve future, possibly reachable technologies or other fictional things that could exist in our world. Dystopian literature often features the near future with such technologies, which helps the readers to feel more interested and connected to the topics. Take, for example, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, or *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Both show imaginary societies with flaws and corrupted core of their function, but they also mention new technologies or substances that help to form the collective of people in the story. The technology in the books is twisted and abused to serve the puppeteers to control society, which is unaware of such abuse, as it is an integral part of living in a world controlled by villains. Orwell used the theme of technology abuse in his dystopian books, serving also as a warning to the readers. Other authors of dystopias also include these means of control as it is a necessary part of showing the dictatorship and control over the people. Connecting this information shows, that dystopia is very close and connected with science fiction, both having a part in forming the genre as a whole (Purkar, 2013, p. 3-4).

Also, a big role to play is the intellectual change of young adult readers. Adolescence brings an understanding of more complicated themes and concepts that may occur in the literature. The readers might want to try reading something they have no experience with, and dystopia provides just that, as it is an imaginary scenario full of thoughts or situations to form opinions on. Thanks to the development of human minds, young readers can use dystopian literature to help them navigate through their real lives, as they will encounter many similarities between the book story and the life they are living (Alan, 2013).

#### **1.4 Chapter Conclusion**

It is important to know the difference between utopia and dystopia. When talking about literary genres, it is crucial to mention how both types are depicted in the books. Utopic ideas are showcased by a guide who shares his experiences and life lessons learned while living in a utopic society, the person receiving the information often comes from a place unknown to the guide and is eager to find out the rules and functions of the society he visits. On the other hand, dystopic worlds are explored and lived through the eyes of a hero or heroine who is trying to break free from the bonds that hold them in unsuccessful or even corrupted societies. They encounter many obstacles and often question their decision to fight against the system, but ultimately, they are doing the greater good for everyone involved. Dystopic books can be

divided into subcategories, helping to understand the meaning and the message of the literary work. Thanks to this division, the books mentioned in this paper can be compared and contrasted, and their message to the reader understood. The characteristics described above form the genre to be self-sufficient and interesting to read even for the younger population, which is important to keep the genre functional and alive. Combining moral and ethical questions and science fiction provides challenging themes for the readers to think about and enjoy, while still keeping real-life elements that might be seen as a warning for the readers. Dystopic books have a lot of depth to them, and they can often have many different interpretations and points readers can analyse and think about.

## 2. Authors

### 2.1 Aldous Huxley

Aldous Huxley was born on 26 July 1894 in Godalming which is located in the Surrey countryside. Since his childhood, he enjoyed the life in countryside, and in many of his works, he recalled living in such a peaceful environment even if he spent most of his life abroad. In fact, in the book *Brave New World*, the readers can find the mention of county Surrey, when one of the characters films a movie called *The Savage of Surrey* (Murray, 2003, p. 11-13). His literary journey began with poetry and short stories, which he wrote in his early twenties. However, he became increasingly famous once his first novel, *Crome Yellow*, caught a broader spectrum of audience. The novel was followed by works such as *Those Barren Leaves* and *Point Counter Point*. These works mostly satirize the contemporary society in which the author lived, and this style followed throughout Huxley's literary life (Bradshaw, 1994, p. 1).

Huxley's works became darker and more melancholic when he was going through his career. He was afraid of the direction in which society was heading, and he was also sceptical about scientific progress and modern technology. His thoughts were captured in *Brave New World* which was published in 1932 and to this day is one of the most known books by Huxley. Later in his life, he was affected by war and turned to pacifism and believed that the world could be saved by forming the individual with mystical enlightenment. For the rest of his life, his works were focused on exploring the inner life through mysticism, he also used hallucinogenic drugs to write some of his books (Bradshaw, 1994, p. 1). Aldous Huxley died in 1963 in California at age 69.

As for his personal life, Huxley encountered some tragic moments in his personal and family life. When he was young, his mother died of cancer which weakened the bonds of his family. Later in his life, his closest person, his brother, committed suicide. As for Huxley's health, he suffered an eye infection which made him almost blind in his eye (Bradshaw, 1994, p. 29 - 30).

The writing style of Aldous Huxley shows the grotesque and satirical life of human beings failing to keep the order of utopia and their inner feelings and needs. He was influenced by his study of parapsychology, but he found his own way of describing the conflict of the human mind. The characters require inner peace and to reach this state, they are depicted stripped of their identity and individuality. Huxley's style was criticized for being weak-minded and too idealistic, often showcasing mysticism rather than reality, however, Huxley was able to create

his unique literary style and share his thoughts and ideas of utopian and dystopian societies through his works (Quina, 1962, p. 636-637).

## 2.2 Lois Lowry

Lois Lowry is a contemporary American writer born on March 20, 1937. She was born in Cena Hammersberg located in Hawaii. Growing up among three other siblings in New York and Japan, she began to read books and enjoy literature from a young age. Lowry also travelled the world which gave her inspiration as her father was an army dentist, which led to many trips out of her place of living (Dellinger, 2023). When she turned 19, she married a naval officer Donald Lowry and the tradition to move to different places continued in her life. In 1977, Lowry's first novel *A Summer to Die* was published, a story of loss of a loved one inspired by personal experience, as her older sister died (Biography, 2014). The book received the International Reading Association Children's Book Award.

Lowry then focused on a saga of children's books following the story of Anastasia Krupnik and later became famous for her quartet of dystopian novels. *The Giver* was the first book presented to the readers, followed by *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger* and *Son*. All the books are connected by the world the dystopian stories take place in and by the characters that occur in the novels. Many schools or parents wanted to ban such books, as they found them too drastic or violent for such young readers, but Lowry wanted to present dystopic ideas even to young-adult readers, wanting them to delve deeper into complex and complicated themes of dystopian societies (Dellinger, 2023).

### **3. Brave New World**

*Brave New World* depicts the story of a society that is constructed and working on a caste system, benefiting mostly the people of the highest caste. To maintain stability and conformity, humans are bioengineered and hypnotized to follow certain rules to keep the balance of society. Everything and everyone must have its purpose and be utilized for the greater good of the world, however, no society can exist without its flaws, which are discovered throughout the story of the book. Yet there are remains of traditional societies living outside the World State, representing people who do not want to fit into the new ways of life. They are called savages and live in reservations to emphasize their difference from those in the World State. Readers learn most of the important functions of society through the words of a “Director”, who is giving a tour to the younger humans. The slogan “community, identity, stability” is ever-present and indicates the whole theme and idea of the book.

#### **3.1 The Main Characters Depicted in *Brave New World***

##### **3.1.1 The Director**

The first important character that sets the background and expectations of the dystopic society of the World State is the “Director”. The Director belongs to the caste of Alphas and plays a big part in the story. His power and standing in society can be understood from the following excerpt.

*Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled.* (Huxley, 1994, p. 1-2)

He is respected and almost feared by the young people who are assigned to go on a tour with him. He feels his importance and sense of duty to pass on all the important knowledge the new members of society need to know. He speaks with joy and even jokes about certain situations, but the students do not understand such jokes and think that all the information he says needs to be written in their notebooks.

*“Tomorrow,” he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, “you’ll be settling down to serious work. You won’t have time for generalities. Meanwhile...” Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse’s mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad. (Huxley, 1994, p. 2)*

The emphasis on scribbling down the notes and the idiom “straight from the horse’s mouth” evokes the feeling that the Director is well-respected and old enough to be capable of explaining all the processes and functions of the hatcheries and fertilizers. The reader cannot learn this information from the physical appearance of the Director, as he is described as tall and thin, with a long chin and noticeable teeth. With all these characteristics in mind, the Director might seem like a perfect example of a person living life in the highest caste and contributing to society, however, even he has some flaws.

Later in the book, the readers discover that although he acts and looks like a perfect individual, he lives with his inner shame of failing the rules of society.

*At the sound of his voice the Director started into a guilty realization of where he was; shot a glance at Bernard, and averting his eyes, blushed darkly; looked at him again with sudden suspicion and, angrily on his dignity, “Don’t imagine,” he said, “that I’d had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal.” He handed Bernard the permit. “I really don’t know why I bored you with this trivial anecdote.” Furious with himself for having given away a discreditable secret, he vented his rage on Bernard. (Huxley, 1994, p. 84)*

When talking to a different member of World State, he got carried away by an image of his younger years. He shared his secret without caution which led to the degradation of his social status and even retirement from his workplace. The problem was, as seen in the excerpt, that he showed normal human emotions such as love, which led to him being no more different than the “savages” living outside the dystopic society, given by the rules. He even fathered a child which was then brought up among the savages. He then tried to use his social status to intimidate the receiver of his secret and knew that if the information would ever come out, it would be his end.

### **3.1.2 Bernard Marx**

Bernard is another key character in understanding the dystopic features of ‘*Brave New World*’. Although he belongs to the highest part of the hierarchy, which means that he should



be quite the same as other alphas, he is described as an outcast of society. His physically inferior body evokes that he should rather fit into a lower caste.

*“But his reputation?”*

*“What do I care about his reputation?”*

*“They say he doesn’t like Obstacle Golf.”*

*“They say, they say,” mocked Lenina.*

*“And then he spends most of his time by himself - alone.”*

*There was horror in Fanny’s voice.* (Huxley, 1994, p. 38)

This dialogue between the two women shows what people think about Bernard. There is horror in the voice of one of the speakers, as she describes his social status and his abilities to fit into ordinary life. Bernard is capable of thinking differently than others around him, which is unusual and dangerous for all the people living in the World State. He despises the sexual practices of society and compares humans to just meat without any value or dignity. Spending time alone and receiving no attention from others even deepens the roots of his hatred.

*It was John, then, they were all after. And as it was only through Bernard, his accredited guardian, that John could be seen, Bernard now found himself, for the first time in his life, treated not merely normally, but as a person of outstanding importance. There was no more talk of the alcohol in his blood-surrogate, no gibes at his personal appearance.* (Huxley, 1994, p. 135)

As the story evolves, Bernard finds himself in the company of a savage named John, who is the son of the Director. He brings him and his mother from their reservation back to the dystopic society from a vacation. Bernard is then praised by people, and he gets the attention he always wanted to have. He was no longer an anomaly among the people, he was respected and accepted among others. He continues to use John as a medium to stay relevant and popular. This behavior shows the flaws of this character depicted in the book. He hated the society he was forced to live in, criticizing the functionality, but once he got the chance to become part of it, he did not hesitate to take his chance and act like others around him.

### 3.1.3 John

John the Savage differs from the characters described earlier, as he lives in different conditions and environment. Although his mother was once part of the World State, she was stranded on the reservation of New Mexico. His father is the Director. He grew up in a society of savages but was viewed as an outsider among them. Still, he managed to find his way of life and took over the customs of the savages. He gained wisdom through reading the only book available to him, "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare". His mother calls the book full of nonsense, as she was once part of the World State, but John thinks the opposite and often quotes parts of the book. He meets Bernard and is taken to the World State with his mother. He is shocked by the dystopic ideas and rules of society and shows his emotions and feelings to others.

*"But do you like being slaves?" the Savage was saying as they entered the Hospital. His face was flushed, his eyes bright with ardour and indignation. "Do you like being babies? Yes, babies. Mewling and puking," he added, exasperated by their bestial stupidity into throwing insults at those he had come to save. (Huxley, 1994, p. 186-187)*

John tried to resist the order he found himself in but no one around him was open-minded enough to understand him. He was furious and called them slaves but felt like he needed to save the people around him. However, everyone was led to believe in the World State from the first time they drew breath, there was no point in convincing them.

*"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin." (Huxley, 1994, p. 211)*

The Savage flees the World State to live alone in an old, abandoned lighthouse. His flaws are exposed as he is unable to live with things he has seen and lived through, he lives in penance, prays to God, and whips himself. When groups of visitors see his behaviour, they are interested in his manners and watch him hurt himself. When a group orgy starts, John once again cannot bear the harsh reality and becomes crazy, hanging himself in the lighthouse, fleeing from reality rather than fighting it.

## 3.2 Society depicted in *Brave New World*

With the characters described in mind, one can start to understand the rules and problems of the society depicted by Huxley. The first and alarming fact of the World State is that people

are no longer born naturally. Rather than that, they are hatched in a specific way, so they can belong to their predetermined caste.

*“Bokanovsky’s Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!” Major instruments of social stability. Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg. “Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!” (Huxley, 1994, p. 5)*

Bokanovsky’s process is a way of producing humans in masses, specifically the lower castes, as they are needed to work in unwanted occupations, so the Alphas and Betas can live their perfect lives. In this excerpt, one can also see the emphasis on “standard men and women” further specifying that the higher castes see themselves as special human beings. The people brought up and living in the World State also have specific visage.

The castes are divided by clothing colors, for example, the Alphas wear grey, Gammas wear green, and Deltas are connected with khaki. In addition, each group has its different psychological and physical capabilities, to further separate them from each other. Every person belonging to a certain caste is aware of its purpose and role in the society. In a way, they all respect each other and know that to survive, they need all the parts of the chain. However, as Alphas and Betas are more unique, they are not cloned and they have much better capabilities, they tend to look down on the other castes with irony. The two highest groups are the brains of the World State, they work in laboratories and try to develop contemporary technology even more than they think is possible. They value their personal time so for the less important jobs they use the lower group to do their bidding. Alphas and Betas also have higher intelligence, they tend to spend their free time connecting with other people, they can go on working holidays, and they are conscious of their life. This cannot be said about the lower castes, as they live only to work and to obey. With these characteristics in mind, one can see the problems of the caste system depicted, as there is no equality among all humans, which Huxley shows as a dystopic theme.

Another part that stands out and is commonly discussed in the book is the abandonment of traditional families and the promiscuity of people. Throughout the text, the readers can listen to many dialogues of the characters discussing how they feel about the other members of the World State, and how it is not normal to feel any emotions towards them.

*Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. But there were also husbands, wives, lovers. There were also monogamy and romance. “Though you probably don’t know what those are,” said*

*Mustapha Mond. They shook their heads. Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, a narrow channelling of impulse and energy. "But every one belongs to every one else," he concluded, citing the hypnopædic proverb.* (Huxley, 1994, p. 34)

As stated earlier, the World State believes in artificial procreation so there is no longer a need for a typical real relationship to occur. In this excerpt, one can see that the Director teaches the younger students about the history of relationships, but the students do not know what it even means. In their world, everyone belongs to everyone else, and they do not create any emotional bonds with their partners. If a person spends more time with someone, they are questioned why they are not trying something new or they are just told to simply move on and find someone else. The comparison to the tradition is drawn with the Savages. They represent the classic way of life outside all the progress the world made. People living in the World State find the ways of the Savages ridiculous and often poke fun at each other when they feel like they came too close to their behavior. With this contrast, Huxley shows the problem of development and the urge to change the natural order of human life.

It is also important to mention that the World State believes in unity. The people, the machinery, and the environment are made so that there are no differences and abnormalities between them. This closes the door for the minds of humans to think of their individuality. There is no room to think about someone's age, to judge by the clothes one is wearing, or to discuss personal preferences in style. The only real difference that separates the people is the caste system, which is carefully constructed not to raise any unwanted questions about its morality. The society depicted in *Brave New World* might seem as functional and acceptable to live in, but with further exploration, the readers can find how Huxley demonstrates its flaws and problems and emphasizes the dystopic characteristics occurring throughout the book.

### **3.3 The Control over Society Depicted in *Brave New World***

*Brave New World* contains many examples of how the people living in the World State can be controlled. The first and most noticeable is the slogan "community, identity, stability". This motto can be seen as a description of what the society is trying to reach.

*"When the individual feels, the community reels."* (Huxley, 1994, p. 81)

There is no place for individuality and people are reminded of that constantly. They are manipulated to believe that they live under the best conditions and if they disobey the rules, they will fail the whole community. The World State achieves this with a method called

“hypnopædia”, from childhood, the people listen to certain recordings of key phrases the State needs them to learn while they sleep. Thanks to this method, they can then hypnotize and manipulate the population. They focus not only on mottos but also on the division of the castes, forcing what people must think about other members of the World State. Hypnosis is a key factor in controlling society as a whole, making the residents obedient and destroying their individuality.

Soma, the drug that is used by the population to cure all the unpleasant things that may occur while living in the World State, is another mechanism to control the society. The residents seem to carry doses of Soma everywhere they go, and they abuse it to feel positive emotions. The abuse makes them forget about real-world problems, so they are easily manipulated to feel like everything around them is perfect and without flaws.

*“What you need is a gramme of soma.” “All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects.”* (Huxley, 1994, p. 46)

This part of a dialogue between people feeling uneasy captions the drug's use. It is described as having the advantages of two seemingly unrelated things but with no backlash which would affect the users. The people do not feel the pressure and the control over them as they see Soma as a necessary part of their life, but Huxley describes how the population can be manipulated since childhood with exposure to things such as the drug or the hypnosis. Soma is also used as a social medium to connect people, so it would be unacceptable not to use the substance in a society where a sense of community is expected.

The source of the manipulation of the society in *Brave New World* is the Controller. He sits atop the hierarchy chain and possesses valuable knowledge that he keeps hidden from the people. He remembers the time preceding the dystopic era and he has a collection of books, such as the Bible. This sparks a conversation between him and John the Savage.

*“Call it the fault of civilization. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness. That's why I have to keep these books locked up in the safe. They're smut. People would be shocked if...”* (Huxley, 1994, p. 206-207)

The Controller comments on how society had to make its choice, as the ways were not compatible with the technological growth of the world. He emphasizes how people now experience happiness which he feels was not a regular thing until the development. He is scared

of people finding the books, he needs to keep them hidden because he knows that if anyone ever finds out, they will immediately start to question the rules and principles of the World State, no matter how manipulated they are. It would open the way to history which would probably destroy the hierarchy chain and the control over the people.

## 4. The Giver

Lois Lowry wrote a book called *The Giver* which is a young-adult dystopian story about a flawed society. The people live in peace and prosperity; however, they lack individuality and freedom. Everything in life is lined up for them and there is no place for personal interests and to stand out from the others means to be condemned. The book follows the life of a young boy called Jonas, who explores the social standards as he grows up; however, he finds out that he differs from everyone else around him. He starts to see the problems and atrocities around him and decides to make a change, as he feels it is impossible to live in such reality. Lowry depicts the dangers of utopic ideas which can turn out to be fatal for people and shares them in a gripping book accessible even for younger readers.

### 4.1 The Main Characters Depicted in *The Giver*

#### 4.1.1 Jonas

Jonas is the main character of the story and throughout the book, the readers find out that he differs from everyone else around him. That is needed to stand against the dystopic laws and to fight against them. He was assigned to a family as everyone is and he does not feel the emotions he expects to feel when he interacts with his “parents”.

*He probably should have brought up his feelings of bewilderment that very evening when the family unit had shared their feelings of the day. But he had not been able to sort out and put words to the source of his confusion, so he had let it pass. (Lowry, 1993, p. 23)*

This excerpt shows that Jonas can feel and think about his emotions and he is scared to share them with his family because it is not usual to discuss problems in life. When each day in society ends, the family shares the good things that happened to them, and they are in a good mood. Bringing up something troublesome could raise suspicion and Jonas could become dangerous for society. Jonas even feels strong emotions towards his friends, and he is afraid of losing them as he becomes older, which is also seen as unusual, and his friends often notice his increased concern about them. He feels different than everyone else which makes him confused.

*“Well...” Jonas had to stop and think it through. “If everything’s the same, then there aren’t any choices! I want to wake up in the morning and decide things! A blue tunic, or a red one?” (Lowry, 1993, p. 97)*

The boy is chosen to become the new keeper of memories, which allows him to see and feel things others around him cannot. He can see colors and the history before his eyes, he knows how horrible wars felt, but he also finds out what freedom is. This shocks him the most and he recognizes the dangers of living in a society without freedom, which makes him want to try and change what he can.

#### **4.1.2 The Giver**

Jonas is set to receive the knowledge of the people from a man who is called the Giver. He must endure living in a society where only he knows, how real life looks and feels like. At first, the man is capable of doing such a thing, although he lives in isolation and does not share the same values as the other people. He also helps to solve problems in the community and serves as a counsellor, as people know he has much more experience in life than any other human.

*“Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back. We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences.” He thought for a moment. “We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others.” (Lowry, 1993, p. 95)*

The Giver has a discussion with Jonas, as he is teaching him the ways of his job in the community. He describes how the people before them lived and how the society in which they are now had to choose their way. He stays calm and presents things to Jonas as they are, trying to show him that it must be like this. However, the inner struggle of the Giver becomes clearer as he hears the confusion from the young boy. It makes him rethink his values and he feels motivated to help Jonas change the set rules of the society they both live in. Both of them know that to live a life, one requires freedom and the ability to choose, which residents of the community do not have.

#### **4.1.3 Jonas’ father**

The exemplary citizen of the community depicted in the book is the father of Jonas. He is not his real biological father, as children are imported to certain families. The father is working as a nurturer, and he loves working with kids. His character is present to often remind Jonas of how he feels about living in the community. He is described as kind and peaceful, but he lacks the emotion of love as other people living around him. Also, he is not helping Jonas solve his inner problems and he is trying to obey the rules of the society not to have any unwanted problems.



## 4.2 Society depicted in *The Giver*

The community in *The Giver* obeys certain rules to keep peace and to stay protected from the outside world. People in the society know about other nearby settlements but they see them as a whole different kind of humans, they have their own rules and want to live by them. The first alarming thing is that the residents of the community do not see colors, and they do not feel emotions, such as love. This destroys the individuality of the community; everyone lives a constructed life, and they have no opportunity to choose for themselves. There is also a kind of caste system. When people are growing up, they are called by the year of their age, and they often share their lives only with kids that are the same age. When they reach twelve years of age, the Elders of the community choose their job.

*“The Ceremony of Twelve,” she whispered in awed voice. Even the smallest children – Lily’s age and younger – knew that it lay in the future for each of them. (Lowry, 1993, p. 9)*

The Ceremony of Twelve is the process of choosing the future life of each individual in the community. The people are then forced to do their jobs even if they do not agree with them, but they often accept the result they are given. Some jobs are seen as unwanted in society, such as the “Birthmothers” whose job is to give birth to the babies which are then taken away and given into the families. When people are no longer suitable for work, they are moved to the House of the Old.

*Normally such a newchild would be labeled Inadequate and released from the community. Instead, as a result of Father’s plea, Gabriel had been labeled as Uncertain and given the additional year. (Lowry, 1993, p. 42)*

The shocking thing comes to the surface when Jonas discovers what it means to be released from the community. Newborns who are found not suitable for society, people who do not obey the rules, or old residents who are not useful for the settlement are said to be released. The community has a rather positive attitude toward this event, as they do not feel emotions, and they have no problems letting people go. Jonas however discovers that it means to kill the person that is set to be released. He is shocked that people in society kill even small children, and this makes him rethink his whole life living in such conditions. As he and the Giver are the only ones who feel the emotions of loss and disgust, the other residents do not feel like they are doing something wrong. People are killed even for a small disobedience against the rules, and they are publicly announced to be released as a warning to other people who would make the same mistake.

People in the community also do not form typical families, they are predetermined to have a partner and two children, that are chosen by the Elders. This dystopic theme shows that the rules are set so strictly so there is no place for individuality or choice. As there are no emotions, the function of the family is rather useless, it serves only as an artificial construct.

### **4.3 Control over the Society in *The Giver***

Lowry depicts control over society in much simpler ways than Huxley. The main problem lies in hiding the history and certain things such as emotions from the community. Only one person is allowed to keep them to take the burden upon himself so the rest can live undisturbed lives guided by the rules. When people do not know the times preceding the community, they are forced and manipulated to believe in the orders they are given without any questions. Lack of emotions and even simpler things like seeing color make the society unified and part of one big community.

*“Listen to me, Jonas. They can’t help it. They know nothing.”* (Lowry, 1993, p. 153)

The Giver also describes how people are unaware of their doing when Jonas confronts him about the ruthless killing of the community members. The only time the community comes into contact with other settlements is when they have visitors, they are looked at as animals, and people hate it when they break their rules. There is no attempt to empathize with different communities as they are taught their way is the only and rightful way.

The Elders control the society in a way, so everything is lined up for the people. They choose which children are allowed to live and into which families they should be incorporated to keep the system working. They even choose the jobs of the residents to make everyone useful and to strip them of their individuality. People are expected not to make any complaints and live in such conditions. The community is also controlled by certain pills or drugs that everyone is expected to take. They make the user feel happy and forget their problems and failing to take the pills is seen as breaking the rules, thus leading to the release from the society.

## 5. Comparison of Dystopian Themes in the Novels

With the themes and main points of the novels stated, many similarities and differences can be seen. Both novels capture dystopian society which at first looks like a perfect place the characters would love to live in, but as the plot progresses, the flaws and corruption of the society start to surface. It is important to note that *The Giver* is a young-adult dystopian novel which is reflected in the complexity of the story and the characters which are more straightforward, and the novel is more story-driven. On the other hand, *Brave New World* contains many different characters and their inner fights with emotions and personal struggles, the story serves as a window into the lives of such people living in a dystopian society. However, both books provide a detailed look at how the rules of the societies affect the people and how they are controlled and manipulated in order to keep the communities under control.

### 5.1 Characters Depicted in the Novels

In the first part of *Brave New World* Bernard Marx is seen as the main character, later however the view changes and we see the World State through the thoughts of the savage John. Bernard is an Alpha which means that he should have his life sorted and he should have little to no problems, however, he feels and is seen as an inferior Alpha. Jonas on the other hand is a young boy who is gifted with special abilities and is determined to become the keeper of the memories of his community. Bernard feels hate towards the rules of the World State and is trying to find a way to escape, Jonas finds the flaws of the society one by one and wants to save himself and the people. When John the Savage visits the World State he is in shock and cannot imagine how anyone is supposed to live in such conditions and he is trying to protest and argue against such life. However, he has little to no understanding from others. Jonas is not alone on his journey as he has the Giver by his side, they both share the motivation to change the community into a better place and work together to achieve it.

The Director is present to show the readers how the society in *Brave New World* functions. He explains many difficult-to-imagine situations and forms the background of the World State. The Giver does this in a way too, as he introduces Jonas to the problems he has to live with. The Director wants to secure his spot atop the hierarchy chain and live an undisturbed life and fails, the Giver in contrast is not afraid to help the main hero even if it would cost him his life. Both characters possess important information on how society is controlled; however, only one of them is willing to change it. The Director and the Giver are rather passive until the main

character shows up and forces them to think about their lives, which makes them more active in the story.

In *Brave New World*, all characters present in the novel are depicted as having a flaw that is exposed to the reader when the story progresses, in *The Giver*, the characters seem more innocent and their actions are explained to the main character, and also to the reader, as an action they cannot alter, because they do not know any better. Overall, there are more differences than similarities in the characters depicted in both novels.

## 5.2 Societies Depicted in the Novels

Both societies depicted in the novels follow the idea of community and stability. The people in the books mostly look similar to each other so there is no place for individuality among them, they are controlled by the manipulators, and they respect the orders they are given. The community in *The Giver* as well as the World State had forsaken traditional families and the natural birth of children. Lowry depicts artificially created families that exist only to keep the community united and to help raise the children whereas Huxley goes even further describing mechanically produced humans that are created with unique abilities and appearance according to their caste. Jonas feels isolated and different from the others even while he lives in a constructed family, Bernard and John are outsiders too, struggling to find their place to exist.

There is a somewhat similar type of caste system introduced in both novels. Huxley describes a more complex and complicated system, where people of each caste have designated physical attributes, intelligence, and employment. They are encouraged and taught to dislike other castes but also to respect them in the wide spectrum of usefulness to the World State. Lowry presents division among the people on the basis of their age. Children are called by their age and they are encouraged to spend time only with kids of the same age. There are also adults and elderly people who come into contact with others only rarely. This isolates people from others and makes them belong to a certain group that shares the same characteristics as them.

Both authors also work with the depiction of unified visuals and colors which give the communities even more unity. *The Giver* is for the most part colorless to make everyone see the same reality, only when Jonas starts to see colors does he know how little freedom the community has. The village has no leisure time places or spots for people to go to, everything is there to be used for consumerism. *Brave New World* is full of colors and places people can visit but each of the castes has different clothing connected to them. People are hypnotized and

taught to hate the colors of others, and this separates them from each other. They also have unified physical attributes, but there can be some exceptions; while Bernard should be an Alpha-looking male, he is inferior to his peers in appearance which makes him a target to society.

### **5.3 Control over the Societies Depicted in the Novels**

The authors work with societies that have people placed at the top of the social hierarchy. Huxley describes the Controller as the leader of the World State, who knows how manipulated and hypnotized the people living there are, but he is willing to live in such a state. He also carefully chooses which people he should work with, so he does not put himself in danger of losing control over the people. Lowry works with a scheme where the Elders control and set the rules of the community, but they obey the advice of the Giver, who is the only one who knows how the society functions. In both books, the readers can see the sovereign authority controlling the people, which stands against the set rules of unity in the communities.

Lowry and Huxley describe the use of drugs that keep people obedient, as they have calming effects. Soma is also seen as a substance indicating the higher castes in the World State which makes it even more tempting to stay addicted to it, residents use it whenever they feel only slight mood swings. In the community where Jonas lives, they use pills that help them get through their day too. They must take them every day not to break the rules which could lead to them being killed. Both authors show the theme of drug use to emphasize the strong grip holding the people obedient against their will.

*The Giver* and *Brave New World* contain information about how lack of access to history is used to control the communities. Both authors describe how important it is for societies to forbid the knowledge of older memories. When there is no knowledge of the past, people do not know anything better than the circumstances they are living in now. The Controller talks about history and mainly books such as the Bible as useless pieces that would only distract people from their true purpose. They try to avoid the traditional ways of living to reach a carefree life where everyone is part of one united community. Where the Controller knows about the history and thinks it is only a bad example that would ruin the minds of the residents, the Giver possesses the whole history and emotions of the community he lives in. When he is forced to show Jonas the bits of history to teach him his ways, he is shocked at how the young boy reacts to it. Jonas feels that society is missing freedom, they cannot see colors or feel love and when he experiences knowing history, he wants everyone to experience it as well. In *The Giver*, the

readers can see what would probably happen in the World State, if the people got access to the history of the world.

#### **5.4 Conclusion of the Comparison**

With all of the characteristics described in previous chapters and the comparison of the dystopian themes depicted in the novels, the readers can understand how each author used the dystopian subgenre focused on sharing their thoughts on dystopias. Both authors share a very similar choice of themes, however, there are some differences. The biggest difference is between the primary target readers of the authors, as Lowry wrote the novel with young-adult readers in mind and Huxley focused on a more complex depiction of the fictional world. Lowry describes the journey focused mainly on exploring the dystopia through the eyes of a young boy whereas Huxley introduces many characters that all take part in forming the story. Huxley presents a caste system and state powered by machinery and artificial human production, Lowry showcases the family life and problems of a growing child. The communities are kept in strict conditions and forced to live by the rules of the controllers in order for them to keep the grip and use them for their good. Being dystopias, both books can attract the attention of both adult and young-adult readers, although some young adult readers might prefer reading *The Giver* because of the young age of its protagonist.

## Conclusion

This thesis focused on comparing the dystopian themes depicted in the novels *Brave New World* and *The Giver* written by Aldous Huxley and Lois Lowry. The first part of the thesis works with secondary sources to explain the differences between utopic and dystopic literature, to define what the readers can expect from the characters and environment depicted in dystopian books, and to distinguish among the different types and functions of dystopian literature. It also focuses on defining young-adult dystopias as a gateway for younger readers into more complex themes and its connection to science fiction literature. The authors' brief biographies are included to provide a survey of their works, and their lives which inspired them to start their literary journeys.

The theoretical background from the first part is used to interpret and compare the two novels, focusing on three main aspects, namely the characters, the societies, and the control over the societies depicted in the novels. Quotations from the books are used to illustrate the points of the interpretation and to help compare the themes the authors worked with while describing their ideas of dystopic worlds. The interpretation shows that there are many similarities between the themes depicted, such as controlling societies through drugs, forbidding history and knowledge, and abandoning traditional families and lifestyles. The main difference in the novels can be seen in the target audience as *The Giver* is a young-adult dystopia intended for younger readers. Both novels show that the genre of dystopia is very attractive to the readers and engages them not only with the story but also with the wider message that might work as a warning to be careful about utopian ideas in real life, as a utopia may turn into a dystopia.

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## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce srovnává dystopická témata v *Konci civilizace* Aldouse Huxleyho a *Dárci* Lois Lowryové. V první části práce je definována dystopie jako literární žánr, young-adult dystopická literatura, také autoři a jejich biografie. Ve druhé části jsou analyzovány a interpretovány díla autorů ve třech kategoriích, a to charakteristiky hlavních postav, vyobrazená společnost a kontrola nad danou společností. Dystopická témata děl a jejich podobnost a rozdílnost jsou porovnány v závěrečné části práce, která se zabývá výsledky analýzy a interpretace textů.