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Bakalářská práce

The Divergent Trilogy as a Young Adult Modern American Dystopia

Román Divergence jako příklad literární
dystopie pro dospívající čtenáře

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Anotace

Předmětem zkoumání práce je žánr literární dystopie v současné angloamerické literatuře pro dospívající čtenáře. Práce v úvodní části na základě studia sekundárních pramenů představí dystopický žánr v porovnání s žánrem literární utopie ve stručném historickém přehledu britské literatury 20. století (Orwell, Huxley, Burgess, Golding) a dále nastíní vývoj žánru v tvorbě současných amerických autorů (Cormac McCarthy, Suzanne Collins, Kiera Cass, James Dashner). Práce vytyčí základní motivy a témata literární dystopie a v interpretační analýze se bude zabývat trilogií Veroniky Roth *Divergence* (2011-13). Práce se zaměří na změnu v pojetí prostředí trilogie a na dospívání hlavní hrdinky a v závěru se pokusí zhodnotit význam žánru dystopie v literatuře pro dospívající čtenáře.

Klíčová slova: dystopie, utopie, dystopická fikce, dospívající čtenáři, *Divergence*

Abstract

The subject of the thesis is the genre of literary dystopia in contemporary Anglo-American literature for young adult readers. Firstly, the thesis will introduce the dystopian genre in comparison with the genre of literary utopia in a brief historical overview of 20th century British literature (Orwell, Huxley, Burgess, Golding) and will outline the development of the genre in the works of contemporary American authors (Cormac McCarthy, Suzanne Collins, Kiera Cass, James Dashner). The thesis will outline the basic motives and themes of literary dystopia and in the interpretive analysis, it will deal with the trilogy of Veronica Roth, *Divergent* (2011-13). The thesis will focus on the change in the concept of the environment in the trilogy and on the growing up of the main heroine, and in the end, it will try to evaluate the importance of the dystopian genre in literature for young adult readers.

Key words: dystopia, utopia, dystopian fiction, young adult literature, *Divergent*

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Introduction

In my bachelor thesis, I will deal with an analysis of a young adult dystopian trilogy, *Divergent*, written by an American writer, Veronica Roth. In the beginning, I will introduce the dystopian genre, its themes, and motives through the works of British and American authors. The interpretive analysis of *Divergent* will focus on the growing up of the main heroine and the environment. In the end, I will evaluate the importance of dystopian fiction for young adults.

In the first chapter, I will describe the dystopian genre with the help of secondary sources. Firstly, I will introduce utopian fiction by its development throughout history and then I will compare it with the dystopian genre. I will introduce dystopian themes and motives through classic British dystopian works of 20th century and contemporary young adult dystopian fiction.

In the core of the thesis, I will analyse the *Divergent* trilogy. I will introduce its author and briefly compare the novels to other works of this genre. I will describe the dystopian world and the changes it undergoes. I will summarize the main plot points from the novels and outline the main themes and motives. In the last part of the analysis, I will focus on the growing up of the main protagonist, her personality, and thoughts.

In the end of my thesis, I will try to evaluate the role of dystopian fiction in the process of growing up of adolescents. I will list the main reasons why the genre is important for young adults. I will focus on the political reasons as well as on finding one's identity and speaking up the person's mind.

I have chosen this theme as this genre is one of my favourite literary and film genres. I have read the *Divergent* books many times while growing up and they helped me with understanding my identity and the world. I used to relate to the main heroine as she was dealing with the same problems and there were not many other characters that I found relatable at that time.

The goal of my thesis is to introduce the dystopian genre in a way that someone who has not read any of its works will get to know the genre and become interested in it. I would also like to show how important dystopian works can be for young readers.

1 Dystopian Fiction

Dystopian fiction is one of the genres belonging to the speculative fiction category. Speculative fiction is a broad genre which includes science fiction, fantasy, superhero fiction, supernatural fiction, horror, alternate history, apocalyptic and postapocalyptic fiction, utopian fiction and dystopian fiction. These genres can be combined and there are often more elements of these genres used in speculative fiction. Any fiction that includes supernatural, futuristic or fantastical elements belongs to this genre.¹

1.1 Utopian Fiction

To understand dystopia, we need to introduce the term utopia first. These genres are often combined as both of them explore social and political structures that usually take place on Earth in the near future, however, they are actually two sides of a coin. They generally depict a science fiction setting of two extremes.²

The word utopia was first coined by English writer and composer Thomas More, who had used it as a name of an imaginary island state in his socio-political satire which was published in 1516 and named *Utopia*. The word was a neologism and its meaning changed many times. It has been used as the root for the formation of new words like eutopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, etc. With the creation of every new word the word utopia took on a more precise meaning.³

As Vieira mentions in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, More created the word by joining “two Greek words – *ouk* (which means not and was reduced to *u*) and *topos* (place), to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place. Etymologically, *utopia* is thus a place which is a non-place, simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial.”⁴

However, More’s *Utopia* was not the first utopian work, its roots date back to ca. 375 BC when Plato wrote his book *The Republic*. Classic utopias would be usually set outside our history in a golden age or in a mythical time. Their societies would be governed by their own rules and everything and everybody would work in total harmony creating

¹ MasterClass staff. "What is Speculative Fiction? Defining and Understanding the Different Genres of Speculative Fiction" [online]. In: *MasterClass.com*, 1. 9. 2021 [cit. 2022-04-06]. Retrieved from: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-speculative-fiction-defining-and-understanding-the-different-genres-of-speculative-fiction#the-history-of-speculative-fiction>.

² MADHUSUDANA, Dr. N.P. “Utopian and Dystopian Literature: a comparative study.” In: *International Journal of Engineering Development and Research (IJEDR)*, December 2018, Vol.6, Issue 4, p.89.

³ VIEIRA, Fátima. “The concept of utopia.” In: CLAEYS, Gregory (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p.3.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.4.

perfect places to live in. Other well-known classical utopian examples include *The City of the Sun* written in 1602 by Thomas Campanella and Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* which was published in 1624.⁵

In the eighteenth century, utopias were influenced by the discoveries of “*Enlightenment discourses on progress, perfectibility, reason, sociability and reform.*”⁶ During this period, utopian novels started taking place in the real world, projecting hopes and desires of the society onto the New World. The narrative was often centred on the adventures of the utopian traveller as for example in the Jonathan Swift's 1726 book *Gulliver's Travels*. Other examples are *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) written by Daniel Defoe or Voltaire's *Candide, ou l'Optimisme* (1759).⁷

New discoveries that were made in the field of science, more specifically in geology and biology, during the period of the Enlightenment gave man new perspectives of the world and humanity. This led to the birth of euechronia, the good place in the future or no-time, an analogy to utopia's non-place. While in France roots of this idea started taking place in the second half of the eighteenth century, it took England more than another century to incorporate the euechronic belief into literary utopias as we can see it there only towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, its ideas can already be seen in political and philosophic essays of the last decades of the eighteenth century and throughout the whole nineteenth century, for example in William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793).⁸

1.2 Dystopian fiction

After the First World War, the optimism of the Enlightenment's development of science and reason was now replaced by a fear of the human incapacity to restrain their newly invented destructive powers. Since then, the view on the ideal society changed, they have been portrayed more negatively rather than in the utopian way. This led to the expansion of dystopia, otherwise known as 'anti-utopia', 'utopia gone wrong' or 'negative utopia'.⁹

⁵ MADHUSUDANA, cit., p.90.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, p.91.

⁸ VIEIRA, cit., pp.9-11.

⁹ CLAEYS, Gregory. “The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell.” In: CLAEYS, Gregory (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p.107.

The term dystopia was formed by adding a Greek prefix *dys-* meaning bad or abnormal, to an ending abstracted from utopia.¹⁰

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, dystopia is “*a very bad or unfair society in which there is a lot of suffering, especially an imaginary society in the future, after something terrible has happened.*”¹¹

While utopias describe ideal societies, dystopias critique the possible realizations of utopias and their features through abstract social impacts. Dystopian stories highlight humanistic ideas in comparison to dehumanising ideas and ideologies.¹²

Regarding the method and approach of the ruling party towards maintaining the stability of the system, we can divide dystopias into two major types. With the first type being noetic dystopias based on terror and the second one being technical dystopias based on specific methods. For the first type it is characteristic to have the governing elite introduce a new system of alternative reality and establish it by terror, or it has been already established and they are protecting it. Technical dystopias can be divided into two subtypes based on the method, mathematical and scientific. In mathematical dystopias, mathematics is considered as the primary method of social engineering. Mathematics is superior to everything as quantification brings order and certainty in system which leads to the social good. While in scientific dystopias, science is the sole key to maintain the society and its peace and welfare.¹³

1.3 British Dystopian Literature of 20th Century

In the first half of the 20th century, dystopian works gained on popularity and the number of utopian works of fiction went down. Great Britain, as well as the rest of the world, had to deal with the economic depression of the thirties and the threat of totalitarian Communism and Fascism. The societies in the books were manipulated through new technology for political and commercial reasons.¹⁴

¹⁰ HARPER, Douglas. "Etymology of dystopia" [online]. In: *Etymology Dictionary*, [cit. 2022-06-08]. Available from: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/dystopia>.

¹¹ Cambridge University Press. (n.d.). "Dystopia" [online]. In: *Cambridge dictionary*, [cit. 2022-06-08]. Retrieved from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dystopia>.

¹² NAXERA, Vladimír, STULÍK, Ondřej, & BÍLEK, Jaroslav. *Literární a filmové dystopie pohledem politické vědy*. Banská Bystrica: Belianum, 2015. pp.14-17.

¹³ Ibid, pp.28-29.

¹⁴ GOWER, Roger. *Past into Present: An Anthology of British and American Literature*. Longman Publishing Group, 1990. pp.287-289.

Dystopias of the mid-20th century were the first to depict futuristic societies that from the outside resembled utopian places, however, on the inside they were dark with totalitarian regimes which were coercive and controlling. Authors of these dystopian works would usually investigate concepts such as freedom, individuality, repression, religion, advanced technologies and class distinctions.¹⁵

The biggest milestones for the British, and other, dystopias were publications of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). These titles have inspired many authors not only to write dystopian literature but also to start creating dystopian films and other works of art and types of media.¹⁶ Among other important 20th century dystopias belong George Orwell's first dystopian work *Animal Farm* (1946), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and Anthony Burgess' *The Wanting Seed* (1962) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1962).

1.3.1 Aldous Huxley – Brave New World

Brave New World is a classic bourgeois dystopia written by Aldous Huxley in 1932. The novel depicts a future society which is devoted to capitalist ideals and hedonistic pleasure. The story takes place in London and focuses on a technical sophistication of its society, which is thanks to a highly advanced genetic technologies separated into classes.¹⁷

*“The world’s stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can’t get. They’re well off; they’re safe; they’re never ill; they’re not afraid of death; they’re blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they’re plagued with no mothers or fathers; they’ve got no wives, or children, or loves to feel strongly about; they’re so conditioned that they practically can’t help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there’s soma.”*¹⁸

Huxley's dystopia works through subtle manipulations which inform modern bourgeois society in the West unlike other dystopian novels that usually work through the similar exercise of power that was used during Hitler's or Stalin's reign. The society spends most of their free time pursuing instant happiness through sex, drugs (soma) or mind-numbing

¹⁵ MADHUSUDANA, cit., p.93.

¹⁶ GALDÓN RODRÍGUEZ, Ángel. “Urban and Natural Spaces in Dystopian Literature Depicted as Opposed Scenarios. In: *Ángulo Recto. Revista de estudios sobre la ciudad como espacio plural*, 2014. Vol.6. Num.2. pp.85-100.

¹⁷ BOOKER, M. Keith. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. London: Greenwood Press, 1994b. pp.47-49.

¹⁸ HUXLEY, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Vintage Classics, 2007. p.173.

multisensory entertainments (feelies). These leisure activities prevent the society from developing any strong feelings which might cause any revolution against the official authority.¹⁹

This class-oriented society is manufacturing infants which are designed according to the class to which they will belong. With Alphas, intelligent members of the society, on the top of the hierarchy and low-class citizens such as Deltas and Epsilons on the bottom of the society. The lower classes require physical strength and endurance while having low IQ to perform unskilled jobs, they are mass-produced by a Bokanovsky process in which up to 96 identical infants can be created from one egg.²⁰

Like in other dystopian books, the major conflict is between the conformist society and a non-conformist individual. There are two rebels against the society, Bernard Marx, an alpha-plus who is different than the rest of the society, probably due to an accident which occurred during his prenatal process, however he wants to belong and does not realize that in the eyes of the society he is viewed as a rebel, and John the Savage who is brought to London by Marx.²¹

John was born (a natural birth is a horrific idea to the inhabitants of the civilised world) in one of the Savage Reservations where uncivilised indigenous people live. As he was brought up outside of the World State and therefore, he has not undergone the process of conditioning like others, it might seem that he is a figure of natural humanity. However, he has been conditioned by the indigenous people, making his values no more natural. He has also been conditioned by an old copy of Shakespeare's complete works.²²

Shakespeare has been banned by the World Controllers as his works evoke emotions and passions that they seek to suppress. However, the contrast between the high art and the banality of popular culture is far from simplistic. John's perception of Shakespeare's plays is inappropriate as he still lacks the powers of abstraction and analysis to be able to appropriately apply the learned information to conditions in the real world. This leads to him being even stranger while he is already an outsider. In the end he cannot bear the pressure of the society and its media anymore and commits a suicide.²³

¹⁹ BOOKER, M. Keith. *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*. London: Greenwood Press, 1994a. p.171.

²⁰ Ibid, p.172.

²¹ Ibid, pp.173-174.

²² Ibid, p.174.

²³ BOOKER, cit. (1994b), pp.58-59.

1.3.2 George Orwell – Animal Farm

Animal Farm (1945) is an allegorical dystopian satire written by George Orwell. The novella targets on the Bolshevik Revolution and its utopian hopes which unfortunately descended into the tyranny of Stalinism. The characters are based on the important figures of the revolution and the following era of Stalin's tyranny.

Animals from the Manor Farm decide to eject the farm's owner, Mr. Jones, and start their own society. The revolution is incited by the boar Major (a Lenin/Marx figure), however, Major dies and the animals are now under the leadership of other two boars, Napoleon (based on Stalin) and Snowball (Trotsky). At first, the philosophy and rules of Animalism are adopted, however, there begin to be factional disputes between supporters of Napoleon and supporters of Snowball. Snowball is soon driven from the farm and everything that goes wrong on the farm is blamed on him and other animals are executed as his agents after pretended trials and public confessions. Meanwhile the pigs and their loyal supporters start to act like people and force the other animals to do all of the hard labour for them. All of the original utopian commandments settled by Major are now broken by the pigs and are reduced to a single phrase:

“ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL
BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.”²⁴

The book deals with the same subject matter as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which is described in the following chapter. As the atmosphere of *Animal Farm* is more fairy-tale-like, it makes the novella an interesting companion to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which is written in a mode of vivid realism.²⁵

1.3.3 George Orwell – Nineteen Eighty-Four

George Orwell's masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published in 1949. Unlike many dystopian regimes, the Party which rules the dystopian Oceania, does not make any attempts to save humanity or to improve the quality of the life of its inhabitants. The utopian dream is therefore betrayed by those who assumed their power in its name. However, it is one of the defining texts of the dystopian fiction genre as it deals with almost all of its central motifs like manipulation of history, attempt to institute a new language by the Party, strong emotional connections between people are forbidden, for example it is prevented by

²⁴ ORWELL, George & CARTER, Ronald, ed. *Animal farm*. London: Penguin Books, 1999. Penguin student edition. p.77.

²⁵ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.208.

controlling sexuality among partners. Propagation of the official ideology is done through art, culture and religion which has been changed by the state.^{26, 27}

Technology in Oceania is not as advanced, however, it is a key tool of the Party, therefore it is politicized, along with science. The only developed technology are telescreens which are ever-present and are used for the electronic surveillance of the behaviour of the inhabitants. They are used to constantly streaming video propaganda while spying on the citizens at the same time, they are on at all times and can not be turned off, only the members of the Inner Party have the privilege to turn them off.²⁸ The Party is developing weapons, that are still relatively primitive. The dictators of the three totalitarian superpowers create fictional unceasing war between two of the three partners as they want to use up the newly developed weaponry.²⁹

The Party does not reject history entirely, but they claim the right to rewrite it. The Ministry of Truth, where the main character Winston Smith is employed, continually modifies history based on the needs of the Party. Winston is constantly changing articles in the previously released newspapers so that they would be in line with the new policies of the Party as they change as the ideology evolves. Members of the Party still remember what happened before the Party's dictatorship, however they tend to accept the new versions of history even if they contradict their own memories.³⁰

1.3.4 William Golding – Lord of the Flies

The name of William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954) comes from a biblical description of Beelzebub, a powerful demon in the hell otherwise known as Satan. The book begins as a group of schoolboys stranded on a remote tropical island after being evacuated from Britain by a plane during a nuclear war. The presumed innocence of the young boys suggests that the society that they are about to create will represent a chance for a fresh start for humans who are at the same time destroying the human race with powerful weapons. As there are no adults on the island, the boys need to organize themselves, their first attempts are successful, but they soon revert to barbarism.^{31, 32} As a final act of abandoning all their

²⁶ GOTTLIEB, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. p.78.

²⁷ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.208.

²⁸ Ibid, pp.208-209.

²⁹ GOTTLIEB, cit., p.78.

³⁰ BOOKER, cit. (1994b), pp.86-88.

³¹ CLAEYS, Gregory. *Dystopia: A Natural History: A Study of Modern Despotism, Its Antecedents, and Its Literary Diffractions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. pp.457-458.

³² BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.161.

moral constraints scruples, the boys commit a murder. And are in the end rescued from the island and return to civilization.³³

As Booker states, “*whereas most dystopian fictions are designed to function as cautionary tales that warn against the specific social and political problems, Golding suggests that all human societies are inevitably doomed.*”³⁴ Golding makes his point as clearly as possible, which makes the plot look simplified in many ways, causing the entire predictability of all developments. The newly created island society consists only of boys and therefore it is impossible to maintain it forever. The boys are already influenced by the disintegrating society of the outer world, which spoils their innocence.³⁵

1.3.5 Anthony Burgess – The Wanting Seed

In 1962, Anthony Burgess wrote and published his dystopian novel called *The Wanting Seed*. The book deals with a serious decline of the life quality which was caused by overpopulation. To prevent further problems, children are rationed allowing only one birth per family, even if the family is expecting twins or more babies. The Poppol’s (Population Police) job is to enforce these measures as they are frequently broken by the proletariat and God-followers. The dead bodies are recycled and used as fertilizer. The world is dominated by two empires, which are based on the language of its inhabitants, English-speaking union, Enspun, and Russian-speaking union, Ruspun. The world is at peace and racial integration has been successfully achieved.³⁶

Homosexuality is encouraged and homosexual people are given preference and therefore virtually run the country since they have no children. This leads to some people pretending that they are gay to advance themselves. The government produces slogans like “It’s Sapiens to Be Homo” and organizes night classes in homosexuality. Misogyny, hatred against women, is becoming popular and the state discredits the idea of family to an extent in which they even encourage fraternal enmity. Religion is banned. Almost everybody does not smoke nor drinks alcohol and is vegetarian.^{37, 38}

There are still problems with illegal pregnancies and families are executed for disobeying the birth-control laws. However, these illegal pregnancies become integral to rebellion

³³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Lord of the Flies" [online]. In: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 6. 2. 2019 [cit. 2022-06-15]. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lord-of-the-Flies-novel-by-Golding>.

³⁴ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.163.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ CLAEYS, cit. (2017), p.463.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.93.

against the system, which corresponds to God's will to 'go forth and multiply'. And in the end, regime promoting fertility returns.³⁹

1.3.6 Anthony Burgess – A Clockwork Orange

A more known dystopian novel written by Anthony Burgess is *A Clockwork Orange* which was also published in 1962. The novel is set in a nightmarish near future England, where gangs of teenagers torture adults after dark. The book follows a story of Alex, member of one of these gangs. He and his droogs (friends) engage in violent activities like robbing houses, gang raping or drinking milk laced with drugs that make them even more brutal.⁴⁰

Alex is sentenced to 14 years in prison as he was caught robbing, raping and murdering an elderly woman. During his time in prison, Alex is selected to undergo a new experimental therapy called the Ludovico's Technique and in exchange he will be released from the prison in a much shorter period. He is being injected with a substance that makes him feel sick and later he is forced to watch exceedingly violent movies. Because of this form of brainwashing and associative learning, Alex associates violence with nausea. After two weeks, his treatment is completed, causing him to dislike classical music, which he used to cherish, as he used to imagine brutal things while listening to it. Since his treatment is considered successful, the State decides to implement it on a larger scale. The ethics of removing someone's free will is questioned by the prison chaplain who thinks that good behaviour should be a choice.⁴¹

After two years in prison, Alex is released but he has been left harmless and defenceless. He is beaten up by his former droogs and ends up seeking a shelter in a nearby cottage. Alex soon recognizes the man as a writer whose wife he raped and later he learns that she shortly after that, died of shock. But the man has not recognized him yet. Instead, he becomes interested in the Ludovico Technique and wants to exploit Alex's story to incite public outrage against the State. However, Alex gets tired of being used and starts talking in nadsat, a slang used by Alex's former gang which is a combination of Russian and Cockney English. The man recognizes him and wants him to commit a suicide and blame it on the State. He locks Alex in a room and forces him to listen to Beethoven music which used to be his favourite. To escape the torture, Alex jumps out of a window but survives and is taken to a hospital. There his conditioning is undone by the doctors. Alex immediately returns back

³⁹ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), p.463.

⁴⁰ LOWNE, Cathy. "A Clockwork Orange" [online]. In: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 12. 5. 2020 [cit. 2022-06-11]. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/A-Clockwork-Orange-novel>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

to his previous behaviour and joins a new gang. In the final chapter, which has been removed from the versions published in the United States, Alex grows tired of his lifestyle and decides to live a normal adult life like his old friend who has left the gang and has a family.⁴²

One of important parts of dystopian fiction is language and a control over it. However, what makes this novel different from other dystopian fictions is that instead of being narrated in the language of the official authority, it is narrated in the language of a marginal group. Even though, the gangs of teenagers almost seem to rape and steal at will, the real power in this dystopian world is still in the hands of the traditional authority. Other thing that makes *Nadsat* different from Orwell's *Newspeak*, is that while *Newspeak* is used by the masses and is used to influence and manipulate them, *nadsat* is only used by Alex's gang as they lack the power to spread it. It is also not used to spread political ideology like the Party does in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but to imply a certain attitude towards society.⁴³

1.4 Dystopia in Contemporary American Literature

With the arrival of the 21st century, contemporary young adult dystopian fiction gained on popularity among American authors, especially after the success of Suzanne Collins' 2008 novel, *The Hunger Games*. In comparison to British dystopias of the 20th century, contemporary American dystopias tend to focus on younger readers with young heroes and particularly heroines.

Contemporary dystopias deal with pressing global concerns like "*liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming catastrophe, questions of identity and the thin boundaries between technology and the self.*" These dystopian warnings are described in exciting adventures and as these books are directed at young readers who are trying to understand the world and their place in it, readers find themselves connected to these gripping stories. Their narrative techniques include first-person narration, engaging dialogues, or diary entries, and these techniques place the reader close to the action and these messages might have the potential to motivate the young adult generation.⁴⁴

The aesthetics and political orientation may vary as each young adult dystopia has its own. But we can distinguish two major preoccupations of dystopian imagination based on the way in which the central fears and concerns of the contemporary world are influencing

⁴² LOWNE, cit.

⁴³ BOOKER, cit. (1994a), pp.97-98.

⁴⁴ BASU, Balaka, et al. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers*. Routledge, 2015. p.1.

the dystopian landscape. The first one is the threat of environmental destruction, the world in these fictions as been damaged by global warming or other ecological problems. These scenarios often include storms, drought, rising sea levels or the end of fossil fuels, young protagonists have to learn how to adapt and survive in the social, political and economic nightmares which have been created by these scenarios. The second type is postapocalyptic dystopia which emphasises a variety of other world-changing events like World War III, plague, catastrophic asteroid crashes, aliens, or zombies. These events destroy civilization as it once was and leave only few groups of survivors that are struggling to survive in the new world. These new communities turn into dystopian societies which are marked with fear, secrets, power, violence and repression in order to maintain at least the rests of social structure.⁴⁵

1.4.1 The Road – Cormac McCarthy

The Road (2006) is a Pulitzer Prize winning post-apocalyptic novel with dystopian elements written by Cormac McCarthy. The story follows an unnamed man and his young son some years after an unspecified disaster which has killed most of the humanity, as they are trying to cross the destroyed landscape of the United States. Later in the book the father dies, but the boy finds a new family and lives on.

Unlike in other dystopias, we are not told what has happened to cause the present state of things, in fact, the event is mentioned only once in the novel: “*The clocks stopped at 1:17. A long shear of light and then a series of low concussions.*”⁴⁶ It seems like it happened all of a sudden and it appears to be an almost undramatic event as the characters show no interest in getting to know what happened as if the reasons to the near extinction of the human race did not matter. There is nothing and no one to be blamed for the situation since there is no clear cause. And there can also be done nothing about it, as there is no regime to be overthrown and no moral effort that could possibly save the humanity.⁴⁷

As Claeys mentions: “*The book is a political dystopia only insofar as the social relations of substantial groups play a role.*” People are slowly reverting to animality, some are cannibals as the struggle to find food predominates here, and to protect themselves most are armed and some even only with spears. And some people have become slaves to draw

⁴⁵ BASU, cit., p.3.

⁴⁶ MCCARTHY, Cormac. *The Road*. London: Picador, 2006. p.54.

⁴⁷ SØFTING, Inger-Anne. “Between Dystopia and Utopia: The Post-Apocalyptic Discourse of Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*.” In: *English Studies*. 2013. Vol.94, Num.6, pp.704-713.

wagons for the “bad guys”. Everything decays and is covered in grey ash, houses are ruined, and corpses are scattered on the ground.⁴⁸

1.4.2 The Hunger Games – Suzanne Collins

Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* is the most famous young adult dystopian fiction series in the context of contemporary American fiction. The trilogy consists of *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). In 2020, a prequel novel titled *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* was released. The story takes place in North America after civil war and follows 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen.

The state called Panem consists of the Capitol where the elite lives, and twelve districts. To maintain peace among the districts and the Capitol, the Capitol annually organizes the Hunger Games, a gladiator-style event broadcasted on TV. One boy and one girl from each district are chosen as tributes to fight one another to the death.⁴⁹

The trilogy is a noetic dystopia based on terror, the elite keeps the established system through terror and ideological propaganda through medial manipulation. Citizens can think freely, however, it is impossible to make an independent decision as their opportunities are limited since they cannot change their social status, they live almost on the poverty level and the way the Capitol would treat their relatives if they revolted. The system can be understood as a metaphor of the selfishness of the current capitalistic society in which in order to survive one cannot think about the consequences his actions might cause to the others. This dystopian reality is full of illogicality, however, its inhabitants do not have time to figure it out since they spend most of their time fighting for survival or they are bombarded by propagandistic entertainment to prevent criticism of the system. It can be said that if they manage to survive, they are sentenced to overworking or entertaining themselves to death.⁵⁰

Katniss’ subversive power relies on her ability to manipulate and perform her identity to her benefit. She is a natural survivor and quickly learns how to manipulate the Games Arena and even Panem, she starts playing the game right from the moment she volunteers as a tribute to save her sister. She learns how to mislead viewers in order to gain support, she knows that she must not show her weakness and that her knowledge can be used to deepen

⁴⁸ CLAEYS, cit. (2017), p.485.

⁴⁹ FRITZ, Sonya Sawyer. “Girl Power and Girl Activism I the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young” In: DAY, Sara K., GREEN-BARTEET, Miranda A., & MONTZ, Amy L. (ed.). *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014. p.22.

⁵⁰ NAXERA, Vladimír, STULÍK, Ondřej, & BÍLEK, Jaroslav, cit., pp.100-101.

her subversive power and ability. She claims her own power by asserting a full control over her life and identity, making sure that they will not be destroyed by the regime.⁵¹

She is stubborn and determined and these personal traits help her with her rebellion against the Capitol and later in the trilogy against President Coin. As she is aware of her actions and that they helped to form a rebellion in districts against the Capitol, she becomes worried about the consequences of her behaviour. It is not until the last book, that Katniss fully discovers the power she has over the people following her cause. She embraces her own rebelliousness as empowering and effective and becomes the symbol and mouthpiece of the rebellion. All that she wants is to kill President Snow as he terrorized and manipulated her. However, as she realizes that President Coin, on whose side she was fighting, sacrificed innocent rebels to be able to control Panem herself, Katniss decides to assassinate her instead. By doing so, Katniss shows that she is capable of critical thinking and is able to act as an independent political entity.⁵²

1.4.3 The Maze Runner – James Dashner

Like many other contemporary young adult science-fiction dystopias, James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series consists of the main trilogy, *The Maze Runner* (2009), *The Scorch Trials* (2010) and *The Death Cure* (2011), and later other books have been added to the series. There are two prequel novels, *The Kill Order* (2012) and *The Fever Code* (2016), and a companion book, *Crank Palace*, was released in 2020. The books follow Thomas, a teenage boy who wakes up in an elevator which brings him to a community living in the Glade which is surrounded by a maze filled with monsters. The Gladers is a community of teenage boys and one girl that lives in the Glade. They were sent there by the creators as test subjects only knowing their name, however they only find out at the end of the first novel.⁵³

1.4.4 The Selection – Kiera Cass

The Selection is another series of young adult dystopian fiction. However, its author Kiera Cass does not consider it to be dystopia. As written in her biography, she admits that while writing the novel, she did not even know the genre and had to Google it after a phone call with Veronica Roth. She was aware of other young adult dystopian novels, but she had not

⁵¹ HALSALL, Alison J. "'Girl Talk' with Katniss and Tris: The Politics of Identity in Collins's *The Hunger Games* and Roth's *Divergent*." *Handmaids, Tributes, and Carers: Dystopian Females' Roles and Goals*, 2018. p.53.

⁵² FRITZ, cit., pp.22-24.

⁵³ PLAUE, Ethan. "The Maze Runner Plot Summary" [online]. In: *LitCharts LLC*, 22. 7. 2015 [cit. 2022-06-12]. Retrieved from: <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-maze-runner/summary>.

read them prior to the publishing of *The Selection*. She describes the novel as a fairy tale and a light girlie book.⁵⁴

The series consist of the main trilogy: *The Selection* (2012), *The Elite* (2013) and *The One* (2014), and two books which take place twenty years after the trilogy, *The Heir* (2015) and *The Crown* (2016). There are also spinoff novellas and prequels to the series. The story takes place in Illéa 300 years in the future and follows sixteen-year-old America Singer and later her daughter.

Illéa was formed from what remained of the United States of America after the World War III. The society is divided into eight castes with Ones consisting of royals and elites and Eights being unemployed, homeless, handicapped or orphaned. America is a Five, her caste consists of artists like musicians, actors or dancers, their earnings and prosperity depend on their desirability as if the upper classes do not find them amusing, they might starve and become homeless.

America is an average, short tempered and stubborn girl who thanks to her personal traits, has a rebellious attitude. She does not mind speaking her mind, especially if she sees that someone is being mistreated or taken advantage of. Her greatest fear is that she might lose her identity, which other girls are willing to do, just to become the future queen. She is protective of the people she loves and is afraid of losing them. She does not like girly stuff. Like Collins' Katniss or Roth's Tris, she lacks self-esteem and does not know how to be flirty.

She is chosen along with other 34 young women to compete for the hand, and heart, of the crown prince Maxon. The competition is in a publicized *Bachelor*-like environment, the girls must stay at the palace, go on dates with the prince and try to win his affections. The girls spend most of the time fighting each other, instead of trying to change the caste-based monarchy. However, America is different as she does not care about the competition and wants to help others while staying at the palace. She is concerned about the rebel attacks, the starving people in the lower castes, and the lack of information about history. Since she recognizes the problems within the system and the society, she gets inspired to rebel against

⁵⁴ WILLETT, Edward. *Kiera Cass*. Rosen Young Adult, 2015. p.54.

them. The realization that she can do it ties in with the realization that she lives in a dystopian world.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ MONTZ, Amy L. "Rebels in Dresses: Distractions of Competitive Girlhood in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction." In: DAY, Sara K., GREEN-BARTEET, Miranda A., & MONTZ, Amy L. (ed.). *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014. p.108.

2 The Divergent Trilogy

The *Divergent* trilogy is a series of novels written by Veronica Roth, an American writer, born in August 1988 in New York. Roth grew up in Barrington, Illinois, which is a northwest suburb of Chicago, where the trilogy takes place. She is the youngest of three children. Her grandparents were Jewish, but she decided to become a Christian and religion plays an important role in her books. She studied creative writing at Northwestern University and during her studies, she started writing the first instalment of the trilogy. She wrote the first draft of the novel in less than a month while she was on a winter break during her senior year of college.⁵⁶

The trilogy consists of the novels *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012) and *Allegiant* (2013). One month before *Allegiant* was published, Roth released a promotional electronic book named *The World of Divergent: The Path to Allegiant*. In 2014 Roth published the fourth book named *Four: A Divergent Collection* which is a collection of short stories and additional scenes from *Divergent*. The last short story of the series *We Can Be Mended: A Divergent Series Epilogue* was released in 2018.

The series is written in the present tense and the trilogy is narrated by the main heroine Tris, while the short stories are told from the perspective of Tobias otherwise known as Four. The last book of the trilogy, *Allegiant*, is narrated from Tris' and Tobias' perspective. Its genre is young adult science fiction dystopian adventure, and it is a prose. The trilogy has its film adaptation. However, the second part of *Allegiant* has not been filmed.

The trilogy is often compared to Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy and James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series. All of these young adult science fiction novels are set in a dystopian United States of America and follow a story of a young adult hero or heroine. These protagonists have to navigate through futuristic dystopian worlds where they do not belong, as well as face the problems relating to becoming adults. They still have childish innocence and curiosity, but at the same time they deal with aggression, jealousy, intimacy and desires.

⁵⁶ JACKSON, Am. "Divergent" [online]. In: *LitCharts LLC*, 2016 [cit. 2021-06-28]. Available from: <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/divergent>.

2.1 The Dystopian Features in *Divergent*

As *Divergent* reflects the elements of contemporary dystopia, it features many themes and motives of the genre. It is set in a post-apocalyptic world, where the society is divided into malfunctioning groups that are oppressed by its leaders. It is almost impossible to escape from the society and if somebody is different, he is considered an enemy.

2.1.1 The Dystopian World and Society

The trilogy takes place in post-apocalyptic dystopian Chicago and is set in an unspecified time in the distant future. The society in the books is divided into five factions which are based on aptitudes and values: Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Erudite (the intelligent), Candor (the honest) and Amity (the peaceful). Each faction serves a specific purpose in maintaining peace in the society. The structure of the society and its organization is totalitarian. It can be seen in the way Erudite try to take control over the city and later, by the way they govern it. Or in the way the Dauntless leaders treat the rest of the faction which itself has an army-like structure and trains like the military.

The main social division is between the factions and the factionless. People living in factions represent the elite, they are provided food, homes, work, and other privileges like entertainment. While the factionless represent the outsiders, they live in poverty and have to rely on the aid provided by Abnegation.

The city is surrounded by a fence which is supposed to protect the city from things behind it, but nobody knows what is out there and what has happened. It is not until the end of the second instalment, that readers and people living in the city learn the truth. Yet the fence has a second purpose which is to keep citizens from escaping the city. It is impossible to run away and only few managed to do it and it required a help of others. People are not allowed to leave even after they learn the truth about why the fence exists as the new leaders would lose their power.

It might seem that this futuristic society would be using modern technologies, but that is not exactly true. Erudite use computers for research and cameras are used for spying on people and for security but on the other hand when the Dauntless initiates are shown their results, it is done by writing on a simple chalkboard. As Tris points out: "*Maybe it has something to do with Dauntless priorities: training comes first, technology comes second.*"⁵⁷

⁵⁷ ROTH, Veronica. *Divergent*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2012a. p.83.

However, there is one thing that is highly developed, serums, an advanced technology that just by one injection allows the leaders to mind control masses or make people forget their memories. But other than that, there is no mention of special technologies used within the city. In *Allegiant*, we learn that it was the Bureau of Genetic Welfare that developed the serums, and their technologies are more advanced than the ones used in the city.

The regime points out whoever is different, is not willing to participate, or has special abilities, like the main protagonist. Tris is Divergent which means that she belongs to multiple factions and is therefore a threat to the regime. This is one of the reasons why factions use serums during the initiation process as it helps them to find Divergent people as they can resist the effect of serums. Dystopian regimes are against originality and individualism, that is why finding enemies is so important.

Surveillance is another important dystopian theme. Besides serums, the regime also relies on people watching over other citizens and reporting everyone who shows signs of behaving differently than the members of the faction are supposed to. Whoever is found guilty of being Divergent is executed but some people are naive and do not believe it, like Tris at first: “*The leaders of the Dauntless wouldn't kill me. People don't do that. Not anymore. That's the point of all this...all the factions.*”⁵⁸

Throughout the trilogy the leadership of the city changes, firstly, it is led by a city council and a government consisting of Abnegation members as they are selfless and the most trustworthy. Later, Erudite accuse them of corruption and along with leaders of Dauntless take the control over the city by force. The factionless are not happy with the faction system and Erudite's rule, so they revolt and are now in power. However, people are still not satisfied, and the factionless rule does not last long. While it might seem that these changes should end the dystopian rule over the city, all these regimes still hunt down everyone who does not agree with them.

In *Insurgent* and later in more detail in *Allegiant*, we learn that the city is actually a part of an experiment to produce more Divergent people. The city is therefore under the control of the Bureau that keeps the city away from the rest of the world while everyone in the laboratory watches every minute of the life in the city as if its inhabitants were laboratory rats. They are even willing to erase everyone's memories in order to protect their experiment.

⁵⁸ ROTH, cit. (2012a), p.258.

2.1.2 Factions

As previously mentioned, there are five factions in this dystopian version of Chicago, Abnegation, Dauntless, Erudite, Candor and Amity. The protagonists have only one life-time chance to change the faction to which they were born. At the age of 16 young adults must take the aptitude test and based on its result, they can either stay in their parent's faction or choose a new one. The people who do not belong to any faction are factionless. Members of factions can be easily recognized by their clothing and the way they act in public. Each faction has its own symbol and its substance that represents them during the Choosing Ceremony.

The faction that values selflessness and simplicity is Abnegation. They have plain hairstyles and wear grey clothes without accessories; they are only allowed to have watches. The members are very quiet and polite and all of them live in the same simple houses, that do not have any decorations. Because of their selflessness, they are leaders in the government and work as volunteers. They provide food, clothes and help to the factionless. Their substance are grey stones, and their symbol are two clasped hands in a circle. Tris and her family belong to this faction, her father is one of the council members.

Dauntless are brave, courageous, and wild. They are easily distinguished by their black clothes, piercings, and tattoos. They work as protectors and guardians of the fence that surrounds the city. They are represented by lit coals and their emblem is a circle with flames inside. To be accepted into the Dauntless, initiate need to undergo a military like training, making sure that there are fit physically as well as mentally.

The faction dressed mainly in blue is Erudite. They value knowledge above everything else and they usually carry books or newspapers with them. They work as teachers and researchers but would like to gain more power in the government. Erudite's substance is water, and their symbol is an eye in a circle. They are quite problematic and ambivalent, they want to take control over the city and do not mind making sacrifices.

The loudest faction is Candor as they enjoy lively debates. They cherish honesty and blame duplicity and deception as the basis for human nature's faults. They wear black and white clothes. The faction is represented by glass and their symbol is a set of unbalanced scales in a circle. The members have jobs in jurisprudence.

Amity is a peaceful faction. They are kind, loving and free. They are usually dressed in warm colours like red, yellow, or brown. Their substance is earth, and their emblem is

a circle with a tree inside. The members usually work as counsellors, caretakers or farmers in the country outside of the fence. Their lifestyle is similar to hippies.

People that do not belong to any faction are factionless. They either failed to complete the initiation into the faction they chose, decided to leave or else were expelled from their faction. There are many Divergent people there as well as the elderly Dauntless members as they have to leave the faction when they become old. They live in poverty and rely on the things and food that Abnegation gives them. They work as janitors, construction workers, garbage collectors, bus drivers, train operators or make fabric. They are outsiders and like in other dystopian totalitarian regimes, outsiders are not welcomed and are considered enemies.

2.1.3 Aptitude Tests, Simulations and Serums

Annually, every 16-year-old must take the aptitude test. They drink a simulation serum that takes their mind into an altered state in which they are shown different situations and based on their decisions they will be told which faction they belong to. These results can therefore help them to choose which faction they will join for the rest of their life. They state their final and permanent decision the next day at the Choosing Ceremony.

Simulations play an important role in the trilogy as they are used to manipulating people, an important theme of the dystopian genre. They are illusions or hallucinations created in one's mind and are triggered by a serum. There are different types of serums, and each faction has its own. Throughout the books, Tris has to face most of them but is able to resist them to a certain level.

The fear serum is used by the Dauntless and they use it during the initiation process. The serum stimulates the fear centrum in the brain and induces strong hallucinations. With the aid of this serum, initiates can learn how to conquer their fears.

Candor owns the truth serum, which forces people to tell only the truth. It is really difficult to resist this serum and even Tris who is immune to other serums finds it hard. Erudite tried to develop the serum so that Tris could not resist it, but they were unsuccessful.

The peace serum is used by the Amity and its effects are similar to marijuana. People will feel relaxed, dizzy, their mood will be positive, and they might lack inhibition. In *Insurgent*, Amity laced their bread with the serum to prevent the refugees from other factions from destroying their peace.

Erudite possesses the death serum used for executing people. Tris was supposed to be killed by it on Jeanine's command, but Peter replaced the serum with a paralysis serum to save her life. But eventually Tris faced the serum during her breaking into the Bureau's Weapon Lab, she was able to resist the serum, but it made her dizzy.

The memory serum is owned by the Abnegation and it is used to erase the memories of an individual or a group. Abnegation received the serum from the Bureau as a way of protecting the experiment and allowing them to reset it when needed.

2.2 Divergent

The first novel of the trilogy narrates a story of 16-year-old Beatrice Prior told from her perspective. She lives in an Abnegation family and has a brother, Caleb, who is also 16. She does not know which faction would suit her the best and hopes that the aptitude test will tell her how to choose. However, her results are inconclusive as they showed that she belongs to Abnegation, Erudite and Dauntless. The people whose results are inconclusive are called Divergent and are considered dangerous for society. During the Choosing Ceremony her brother decides to become a member of Erudite making her choice even harder. In spite of that, she chooses to leave her family too and chooses to become Dauntless.

To get to the Dauntless headquarters, the initiates have to get onto a moving train and then jump from it onto a roof from which they have to jump into a hole. Beatrice decides to jump first and once she stands on the ground again, she decides to tell her instructor, Four, that her name is Tris. Soon the recruits learn that not all of them will become the members as only 10 of them will make it. Tris quickly becomes friends with Christina, Will and Al, and they have to confront their enemies Peter, Drew and Molly together.

The process of initiation is divided into three stages, during the first one, the transfer and Dauntless-born initiates are having their physical training separately, this stage focuses on combat skills and as Tris is small and weak, she does not do very well. As time passes, she gets better and finishes in sixth place out of nine. She also starts to get attracted to Four and he is flirting with her, which makes her excited as well as a little uncomfortable, because she is not used to receiving compliments or physical contact.

Erudite starts releasing defamatory articles about Abnegation, accusing them of hoarding supplies instead of giving them to the factionless. There are also rumours that the Abnegation leader Marcus used to abuse his son, who later left the faction, and since Beatrice, Caleb and

other young Abnegation members transferred to different factions, these accusations spread more quickly.

In the second stage of initiation, the young protagonists have to face their worst fears as quickly as possible. They are injected with hallucinogenic serum and since Tris is Divergent, she can manipulate the simulation. As she can resist the effects of this manipulation, she quickly solves every problem, so Four realizes that Tris is Divergent. During this stage they both start to get close, and Tris becomes friends with some of the Dauntless-born initiates, Uriah and Marlene. When the rankings are released, Tris sits at the top of her class, which makes some of the initiates angry. At night, Peter, Drew and Al sexually assault her and try to throw her into a chasm, but Four quickly intervenes and saves her life. Later, Al begs Tris to forgive him but since she is still very angry, she rejects him. He later commits suicide by jumping into the chasm.

The final stage takes place in a fear landscape, a room in which the initiates have to face all their fears through simulation. As Tris and Four are very close, he lets her join him in his landscape. His last fear is his father, Marcus, who used to beat him when Four was a child. She learns that his nickname is Four because he has only four fears (which is extraordinary), and that his real name is Tobias. When she is training in another instructor's landscape, she panics and leaves to see her brother, which is prohibited. Later, Tobias reveals to her that Erudite are preparing an attack on Abnegation. Tris performs excellently in her fear landscape even when she has to overcome her fear of having sex with Tobias. After that, the leaders inject her with what they claim to be a tracking serum. Tris is ranked first, and she finally reveals that she is dating Tobias, but her satisfactory situation will not last for long.

In the story's climax, Tris wakes up to discover that the Dauntless initiates are dressing up unconsciously. She later realizes that the serum she was injected with is supposed to transform all Dauntless members into hypnotized soldiers to attack Abnegation. Since she is Divergent, the serum does not affect her. She tries to imitate the movements of others as precisely as possible and hopes that her assumption about Tobias being Divergent too is right. When she joins him, he grabs her hand assuring her that he is conscious too.

They march into the Abnegation's part of the city and hear gunshots. When they reach Eric, one of the Dauntless leaders and an enemy of Tobias, he tries to shoot Tobias in the head, but Tris succeeds in saving him. Guards capture Tobias and Tris and bring them to Jeanine, the leader of Erudite and the inventor of the serum. She injects Tobias with a new

stronger serum which works on him, and as Tris is wounded, Jeanine decides to put her in a tank and fill it with water. However, her mother, Natalie, saves Tris before she drowns. They sneak out of the building, running to another building where Caleb, Tris' father and other Abnegation members are hiding. They are attacked by the soldiers and Natalie sacrifices herself to save her daughter. Nevertheless, Tris is followed by the remaining soldier and as he gets closer, she realizes that it is Will, but she has to shoot him because he would otherwise kill her.

Once Tris joins the refugees from Abnegation, they plan how to escape the city. Tris, Caleb, their father and Marcus decide to break into the Dauntless headquarters to stop the simulation, while the rest run to seek a shelter at Amity. When they get into the building, Peter attacks them but Tris defeats him, and he agrees to help them if they take him with them. Tris and her father look for the control room but her dad is killed.

In the control room, Tris finds Tobias who is still under the influence of the serum. They fight and Tris gives up as she is weaker than him so she cannot stop him and the simulation. She cannot kill him because she has feelings for him. Fortunately, he is able to overcome the simulation and wakes up. They shut the program down and get the data from the computer, so Erudite cannot use them again. The Dauntless soldiers are released from this mind controlling and are broken.

The first part of the trilogy ends with Tris, Tobias, Caleb, Peter and Marcus leaving Chicago on the train to join the others at Amity, and Tobias declares his love to Tris.

2.3 Insurgent

Starting where the previous book left of, we follow the group on their way to the Amity compound. There they meet one of the Amity representatives Johanna Reyes and she allows them alongside with few of the Abnegation refugees a shelter for one night. The next morning the faction issues a statement that everybody will be granted refuge as long as they remain peaceful during their stay there.

Tris is haunted by nightmares of Will and decides to keep it a secret as she does not want her friends to find out what she did during the attack. She overhears Marcus talking to Johanna about a secret information which is that important that most of the Abnegation leaders, including Tris' parents, sacrificed their lives to protect it. She is focused on figuring out what the information is.

After some time, Erudite and the Dauntless traitors arrive to Amity to look for the refugees. Fortunately, Tris and her group manage to escape and have to return back to the city. Once they get on the train, they are surprised by a group of factionless and they have to go with them to the factionless safe house. There they meet Tobias' mother, Evelyn, who was supposed to be dead. She is the leader of factionless and they have a plan to overthrow Erudite and form a new society without factions. To do that they would need some help from the rest of the Dauntless.

Tris and Tobias head to the Candor headquarters where the rest of the Dauntless have sought a refuge. However, they are arrested as soon as they get into the building. Jack Kang, the leader of Candor, accuses them of running the simulation and trying to destroy the data as he saw the footage from the security cameras in the controlling room where Tobias was unconsciously running the simulation under the power of the serum.

The couple has to face a trial under the influence of truth serum, which makes it impossible for them to lie. During the interrogation Tobias reveals the reasons why he transferred to Dauntless, which makes him look weak, and Tris decides to share her story about killing Will in self-defence, which worsens her relationship with Christina who was dating Will at that time. Tris' revelation also disappoints Tobias because he thought that they can tell each other everything. Some of the Dauntless start calling Tobias a coward, so he decides to assault his father in front of everybody. To make things worse between the young couple, Tris starts cooperating with Marcus since they share the same goal of finding out the secret information.

The Dauntless traitors invade the Candor headquarters injecting people with long-lasting simulation transmitters. Another part of their mission is to find the Divergent people. While Tris is trying to save other Divergent people, she is captured by Eric, a former Dauntless leader and now one of the traitors. As he is preparing to execute her, she stabs him with a knife and at the same time the loyal Dauntless get into the room and save her and the others.

Jack Kang no longer feels that hiding Divergent people is safe as it puts his faction members in danger. He meets with Jeanine's representative, former Dauntless leader named Max, to negotiate peace between Erudite and Candor. Tris, Tobias and other two Dauntless girls, Lynn and Shauna, decide to spy on the meeting since they do not trust Jack Kang. Tris realizes that Max is not using a language typical for Dauntless and thinks that Jeanine must be nearby to order Max what to say via earpiece. They say that Candor is an unimportant

faction so they cannot place demands, and they demand that they turn over Eric, the Divergent and a list of people that have not been injected with the new long-lasting serum.

Tris wants to find Jeanine but before she can act, Lynn fires at Max and the bullet hits him in the chest. There is a gunfight, but the group manages to escape with only Shauna being shot in her back and she ends up paralysed. As they are running away, they see Jeanine and her guards, including Peter, escaping from their hiding place. Tris wants to get to Jeanine, but Tobias stops her as they have to return back to Candor to save Shauna. He later warns her that if she continues to risk her life, he will break up with her.

Once they are back at Candor, the Dauntless have a secret meeting where they elect Tobias, Tori and Harrison as their new leaders. They do not trust Candor anymore and decide to head back to the Dauntless compound. But before they leave, they hold a trial for Eric in which they find him guilty and he is to be executed. He demands that Tobias is the one who shoots him.

The Dauntless return back to their headquarters and cover all security cameras. Tobias asks Tris to come with him to a meeting with his mother, there they form an alliance with the factionless and make an agreement that the Dauntless will help Evelyn to destroy Erudite, delete all their information and establish a new government. However, Tris does not trust Evelyn, since she abandoned Tobias when he was a child and she left him with his cruel father.

Erudite soon use the new serum to force three young Dauntless to jump of a roof after they say that they will make Dauntless members commit a suicide every other night until one Divergent turns themselves over. Tris managed to save one of them but feels guilty and wants to sacrifice herself. Christina forgives Tris for what she had done to Will as now she understands that because of the simulation that he was under, she had no choice. Tobias suspects that Tris wants to turn herself over to Erudite and tries to talk her out of it and she promises that she will not do that, but she is already determined to leave.

While everybody is sleeping, Tris sneaks out and heads to the Erudite compound. She agrees to let Jeanine run tests on her as long as she can see the results and they explain them to her. She is shown a room in which she will be executed once they find a serum that will allow them to control her, and Tris accepts her fate. She is taken to a cell by Peter, and she has to undergo several simulations and a magnetic resonance imaging. She feels betrayed by

her brother as he has returned back to Erudite and is now helping Jeanine with the research, he is also the one who told Jeanine to which factions Tris has aptitude.

Tobias decides to go to Erudite and tells Tris that his life without her would not make a sense. Jeanine later injects Tris with a drug that is hurting her to force Tobias to show her where the factionless safe houses are located. We get to know that the main reason, he decided to get arrested by Erudite is that he wanted to search the place, so that once the Dauntless and factionless army attack, they would know, where to go.

Jeanine's experiments are unsuccessful, and Tris tells her, that she will never be able to control her. Which makes Jeanine angry, and she decides to schedule Tris' execution on the next morning and continue her research on Tobias. Peter takes Tris to her execution and injects her with a death serum. However, he exchanged the death serum with a paralyzing one, so everyone would think that she is dead, because he did not want to be in her debt. Tris, Tobias and Peter manage to escape and go to the old Abnegation headquarters, which is now occupied by the Dauntless and the factionless.

The alliance is planning their attack on Erudite and decide to destroy everything that would stay in their way and all the data, that the faction owns. Meanwhile Tris, Christina and Marcus leave to go to the Amity to get their help as they do not agree with the plan Evelyn and Dauntless leaders have prepared. However, the Amity decides to remain neutral and only a few members, including Johanna, help them, even if they have to abandon their faction.

Tris and her group manage to get into the Erudite headquarters but the factionless and Dauntless are already there. Tris and Marcus go to Jeanine's private lab, however, to get there, they need to fight a simulation, which is protecting the room. Since Tris' divergence is exceptional, she gets past the security, only to see that Tori is already there too and is holding a gun pointed at Jeanine. Tris knows, she must stop her as she needs Jeanine to get to the information. Tori and Tris are fighting and Tris succeeds in stealing Tori's gun, but before she can fire it at her, Tori draws a knife from her boot, stabs Jeanine in her stomach and she dies.

A moment later, Tobias and Uriah get into the room and everybody thinks that Tris is a traitor and she is sent to stand trial among other traitors. Once they are all down, Evelyn announces a new government, consisting only of the factionless, and a new society without factions. The Dauntless try to protest, but they all realize that they are unarmed since after

the invasion was over, the factionless took their guns without them suspecting anything. Fortunately, Tobias, Caleb and Marcus appear in the room with the secret information. Tobias tells Tris that he believes her now and that he convinced Caleb and Marcus to help him with getting the information from Jeanine's computer.

The secret information is a video footage featuring a woman named Edith Prior, previously named Amanda Ritter, who explains that she is the leader of an organization fighting for justice and peace. She talks about how the world became corrupted by violence and evil and that the society in Chicago was formed to become the cure to help the humanity gain back the moral sense. They erased everyone's memory and sealed the city. The goal was to create more Divergent people, whose minds are flexible and virtuous. Once the Divergent people become abundant among the society, Amity should open the gates for everyone and let them re-join the rest of the world.

2.4 Allegiant

Due to revealing the secret information, Tris, Christina, and Cara are imprisoned and are about to undergo a trial by the truth serum. Evelyn is now the leader of factionless Chicago and does not like Tris since she is dating her son. Yet Tris manages to resist the serum and the group is pardoned. Rebel organization called the Allegiant wants to restore the faction system and send people outside the city. There are conflicts between the factionless and the Allegiant and several people die. Tris and her friends are chosen for the expedition to explore the world behind the fence. She asks Tobias to break out her brother from prison and take him along with them. During their escape from the city, Tori is killed but the others manage to get away. They meet Tobias' mentor Amar, who was supposed to be dead, and are taken to the Bureau of Genetic Welfare where they meet its leader, David.

David explains to them that they were part of an experiment sanctioned by the United States government after the Purity War which was caused by a failed attempt to correct human genes. The goal of the experiment is to produce more genetically healed humans, Divergents, as the majority is genetically damaged. Tris learns that her mother was a refugee and joined the Bureau and later volunteered to go to Chicago as the Erudite were killing Divergents. Tobias learns that he is not genetically pure and decides to join a rebellion led by Nita against the genetically pure staff. Tris does not want to join the rebellion at first but then agrees to help. During the rebels' attack Uriah is severely injured and ends up in coma. Tris saves David from being shot by Nita and stops the rebellion. Nita is imprisoned for her

crimes, Tris is appointed a member of the Bureau's council and decides to temporarily end her relationship with Tobias.

Tris realizes that the Bureau supplied Erudite with the serums that were used in the Dauntless invasion of Abnegation. Marcus joins Allegiant in their preparations for a war against the factionless. David has to protect the experiment and therefore needs to stop the violence. He decides to use a memory serum to wipe everyone's memories and restart the experiment. Since Tris does not agree with David's plan and is mad at the Bureau for the destruction of Abnegation, she leaves and reconciles with Tobias. They admit their deep love for each other and sleep together for the first time.

Tris makes her own plan in which she wants to release the memory serum on the Bureau, they need to break into the Weapons Lab, however it is protected by a strong dose of a death serum. Caleb volunteers to do it, knowing that it will be a suicide mission. Tobias, Christina, Peter, and Amar go to the city to save their loved ones from the serum. Tobias confronts his mother and asks her to stop the war and to become his mother again. She agrees and exiles herself for two years. Peter decides that he wants to become a new person as his previous actions were not good and takes the memory serum.

At the Bureau, Tris decides to replace Caleb as she knows that he volunteered out of regret for what he did to her rather than out of his love for her. She hopes that she will resist the death serum, but tells Caleb that if she does not return, he should tell Tobias that she did not want to leave him. Tris survives the serum but is shot by David. However, she manages to release the memory serum before she falls into darkness, sees her mother, and embraces her. She succumbs to her wounds and passes away.

Tobias, Christina, and Peter return to the Bureau and learn of Tris' death. Tobias returns to his old home in Abnegation and wants to take the memory serum but is stopped by Christina. Two and a half years later, Chicago lives in peace, and everybody co-exists regardless of the gene purity. Tobias, Christina, and others ride a zip line, where Tobias scatters Tris' ashes and finally accepts her sacrifice.

2.5 Motifs

One of the aspects that a reader of the novels may realize, is the importance of names. They play an important role as they correspond with the main theme, the complexity of identity. Each faction carries a less known and more elegant name of a virtue they value the

most. This makes them sound important and uplifting. The main heroine carries a lot of names and nicknames. Her birth name is Beatrice Prior, her surname meaning “before” suggests that she used this name before changing factions. When she becomes a Dauntless initiate, she changes her name to Tris, which sounds bolder and firmer. She is also known as “the first jumper” and “Stiff”, which refers to her Abnegation origin.

Fears are the motive of the first novel. The initiates have to face their fears in the simulations. Fear reveals a lot about the characters’ personalities. Even though the Dauntless are supposed to overcome their fears, the initiates are constantly facing them, even outside of the simulations. They live in fear of becoming factionless if they fail in the process of becoming members.

Rankings along with hierarchy are important for the Dauntless, in contrast with Abnegation where everyone is supposed to be equal. The initiates are ranked by their skills and their rank will decide their future as only few of them can become members and they will choose their jobs in order based on the rankings.

From the second part of *Divergent*, Tris is surrounded by death, either she has to watch people that she cares about die or she is the one trying to face her death. Especially in *Insurgent*, she is senselessly risking her life in order to help others and she does not even think what impact it could have on her surroundings. And in *Allegiant*, she sacrifices her life instead of Caleb.

2.6 Themes

The *Divergent* trilogy has many themes. One of them are choices, which are important throughout the whole series. Tris has to constantly make important decisions, which have big influence on the future. In *Divergent*, she has to choose her future faction, in *Insurgent*, she is choosing between cooperating with Tobias or Marcus and in *Allegiant* she makes a choice which leads to her death.

Many characters have to deal with guilt, ever since Tris had to kill Will, she has been suffering from insomnia and she has been having nightmares. She feels guilty for almost everything bad that happens. Throughout the story, most of the main characters feel guilty for something, Caleb sent Tris to her unsuccessful execution and Tobias feels guilty for participating in the plan that resulted in Uriah being put into a deathly coma.

In *Divergent*, Tris is struggling with the role of intimacy. Since she grew up in Abnegation, she was not exposed to any acts of intimacy and once she gets to the Dauntless, she is surrounded by people kissing and being intimate in public spaces. As the time goes, she has to deal with her feelings towards Tobias, which makes her uncomfortable and scared at first. This leads to her having an intimate moment with Tobias as a fear during her final simulation.

Manipulation plays an important role within the series as it is a major theme of the dystopian fiction. People are manipulated by the serums and the ideology of each faction, as the readers are reminded many times and as is said in the Faction History book, "*Faction before blood.*"⁵⁹ People are brainwashed by the serum's hypnosis, leading to a misuse of technology.

2.7 The Growing up of the Main Heroine

At first, Beatrice seems to be a weak teenage girl who is unsure where she belongs. Finding out that she is Divergent, makes her choice that will forever change her life, even harder. As if the choice was not already hard enough, her brother transfers to Erudite. She wants to stay with her family and few seconds before making her final decision, she thinks about marrying her friend and spending her life as an Abnegation member. She feels a duty to stay since somebody must take care of her parents. Her blood drops between the Abnegation and the Dauntless bowl but then she chooses Dauntless, while she reminds herself: "*I am selfish. I am brave.*"⁶⁰

She shows off her bravery as she jumps out of the moving train onto a quite distant rooftop and is than the first one to jump off the ledge, thinking to herself: "*I am proud. It will get me into trouble someday, but today it makes me brave.*"⁶¹

She changes her name to Tris as her full name does not sound right anymore, she exchanges her dull grey clothes for new and more daring ones. She also gets a tattoo of three ravens, one for each member of her family. These changes make her feel like a new person and like she might finally belong but she is always mocked down for coming from Abnegation and for being tiny and skinny, almost childlike. She learns that only the best ten initiates will become members of the Dauntless, there are eleven Dauntless-born initiates

⁵⁹ ROTH, cit. (2012a), p.43.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.47.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.57.

and nine transfers, so there is a small chance of making it. She does not do well in fights as she is bad at shooting a gun, so she starts getting worried. But since she is stubborn, she starts training really hard and makes it.

Tris is struggling to find her identity as her old one is almost the opposite of the new one. As she is Divergent, she struggles to differentiate between the values of factions, like during her training: *“And is it selfish of me to crave victory, or is it brave?”*⁶²

She is surrounded by new feelings and things that make her feel uncomfortable at first, e.g., she has never seen people kiss each other near her before. She also realizes that Four is flirting with her, to which she does not know how to respond, and that she is also starting to develop feelings for him, *“Then I realize what it is. It’s him. Something about him makes me feel like I am about to fall. Or turn to liquid. Or burst into flames.”*⁶³

During the second part of the initiation, she is performing better than the rest of the initiates as she is able to use her Divergent powers and she starts gaining confidence. However, it does not last long as she is betrayed by her friend and ends up being sexually assaulted and almost killed. This helps her with strengthening her relationship with Four, whom she already trusts enough, as she told him her deepest secret of being Divergent. Four advises her to show more vulnerability as her new strength presents a threat to people around her and the system.

She makes reckless decisions like when she breaks the rules to visit her brother when she feels homesick, this is her first time outside the Dauntless compound and for the first time and she realizes how her new faction changed her, *“I expect to weave through the crowd, dodging elbows and muttering “excuse me” the way I always do, but there is no need. Becoming Dauntless has made me noticeable. The crowd parts for me, and their eyes cling to me as I pass.”*⁶⁴ But most of the time, she makes these decisions in order to protect others, like when she speaks up to save Al from being thrown knives at but ends up risking her life, showing that she is selfless even though she does not admit it to herself.

Tris manages to become a member of Dauntless, but she does not get a chance to enjoy her new life as a revolution begins the next day. Tris wants to protect her former faction and the innocent Dauntless who are forced to kill people without knowing. She loses her mother,

⁶² ROTH, cit. (2012a), pp.97-98.

⁶³ Ibid, p.143.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.349.

the person she admires the most, while she is helping Tris to escape from the Erudite. But shortly before passing away she helps Tris to accept her true identity, *“I feel like someone breathed new air into my lungs. I am not Abnegation. I am not Dauntless. I am Divergent. And I can’t be controlled.”*⁶⁵ At the same moment, she has to shoot her friend Will to save her life. And to make her grieving even worse, her father is killed during their mission to rescue Tobias and stop the stimulation.

Her world is destroyed, she does not know what will happen next, *“We are creatures of loss; we have left everything behind. I have no home, no path, and no certainty. I am no longer Tris, the selfless, or Tris, the brave. I suppose that now, I must become more than either.”*⁶⁶

Throughout the second book, Tris is dealing with posttraumatic stress disorder, she has to face nightmares of Will and she is grieving and feels guilty for the death of her parents. The book begins with Tris waking up from one of her bad dreams, *“I wake with his name in my mouth. Will. Before I open my eyes, I watch him crumple to the pavement again. Dead. My doing.”*⁶⁷

Tris becomes a new person again, her anger issues are worse and she is more suspicious. She accentuates this change by cutting her hair. She is incapable of holding a gun and is therefore unable to protect herself. Her guilt worsens over time as she does not want to tell others what she did. It is not until she is being questioned under the influence of the truth serum, that she decides to tell the truth about what happened during the stimulation. She loses her best friend as Christina does not understand that Tris had no other choice. Which causes that she does not feel good about herself. *“I am tired of being Tris. I have done bad things. I can’t take them back, and they are part of who I am. Most of the time, they seem like the only thing I am.”*⁶⁸

Her reckless actions occur more regularly as she goes on several suicide missions. She thinks about dying a lot and these thoughts harm her relationship with Tobias, whom she needs now more than ever, as he does not want to see her risking her life anymore. This leads to her admitting to herself: *“Deep inside me I know the answer: I am being reckless. I will probably gain nothing. I will probably die. And more disturbing still: I don’t really care.”*⁶⁹

⁶⁵ ROTH, cit. (2012a), p.442.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.487.

⁶⁷ ROTH, Veronica. *Insurgent*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2012b. p.1.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.157.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.181.

Tris learns that Evelyn wants to remove the faction system and establish a new factionless society referring to the current system as corrupted and reminding them that they do not want to be tyrants. For factionless, and for readers, it seems to be a better reality, as they have already been living without belonging to any faction and were able to develop their own identities. But for the others, who have only known the faction system, it feels like losing their own identities and even Tris, who knows that she could belong to multiple factions, cannot imagine it: *“My mouth goes dry. No factions? A world in which no one knows who they are or where they fit? I can’t even fathom it. I imagine only chaos and isolation.”*⁷⁰

Tris is yet again struggling between being on the side of her friends and working on her own as her goals are different. She is determined to get back the information that Abnegation was keeping safe, and starts working with Marcus, Tobias’ dad and his worst enemy at the moment. She is lying to everyone as she wants to protect them, but everyone thinks that she is being selfish. One time, she even tries to stop Tori from shooting at Jeanine whom Tris needs to open the secret information and is considered traitor for doing so. This is the same problem in *Allegiant* when Tobias and others want to rise up against the genetically pure staff.

She finally learns what her Divergence means and how important it is to the rest of the world. She becomes loyal to the Bureau but once she learns of their past actions like being responsible for the attack on Abnegation, and their new plan to protect the experiment, she changes her mind, *“I feel sick with anger. That they want to stop a revolution, not to save lives, but to save their precious experiment, would be enough. But why do they believe they have the right to rip people’s memories, their identities, out of their heads, just because it’s convenient for them?”*⁷¹ She still deeply cares about the inhabitants of the city and is willing to do anything to save them.

Despite her problems with Tobias and their temporary breakups, they both deeply care for one another. They decide to move their relationship to another level and have sex together for the first time. Tobias assures her that he is her family now as it is what she needs at that moment: *“That is how it feels. Like everything between us is twisted together, friendship and love and family, so I can’t tell the difference between any of them.”*⁷²

⁷⁰ ROTH, cit. (2012b), p.110.

⁷¹ ROTH, Veronica. *Allegiant*. London: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2015. p.377.

⁷² Ibid, p.412.

Although Caleb let the Erudite almost execute Tris, she still decides to sacrifice herself instead of him. She knows, she has a better chance of surviving, but it is her love for him that helps her to make this decision. She even admits this to David after he confesses that he used to love her mother and that her foolishness and not understanding making sacrifices for the greater good, killed her.

Before David shoots her, she tells him: “*She (my mother) taught me all about real sacrifice. That it should be done from love, not misplaced disgust for another person’s genetics. That it should be done from necessity, not without exhausting all other options. That it should be done for people who need your strength because they don’t have enough of their own. That’s why I need to stop you from ‘sacrificing’ all those people and their memories. Why I need to rid the world of you once and for all.*”⁷³

Her selflessness brought therefore the end to her short life. Even when she is dying, she is thinking about the others and worries who will take care of them. But her mother reassures her that they will manage on their own. She dies with her last thought: “*Can I be forgiven for all I’ve done to get here? I want to be. I can. I believe it.*”⁷⁴

⁷³ ROTH, cit. (2015), pp.473-474.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.476.

3 The Importance of Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults

The genre of dystopian fiction has become popular in the 21st century especially among young adults. This sudden rise in the interest began with the arrival of *The Hunger Games*, previous literary dystopias were usually targeted at adults as the main protagonists were older, while these new contemporary dystopias are mainly written in teenager's perspective. Young protagonists are discovering themselves and are trying to find their role in the world they live in, and young adult readers therefore feel close to these heroes or heroines as they are dealing with similar issues.

Young adult dystopias use metaphors to compare the issues within the novel to the current affairs happening in our world. These problems are described in an almost black and white way, making the problems more recognizable, which might help young readers to find the evil within the real society. They might help them to become interested in the issues of today's society as young adults sometimes do not care about them but seeing how far things can go within the dystopian world might warn and inspire them to critically think about the problems.

Adolescents have rebellion hidden inside them but are often afraid that their voice does not matter. The rebellion in dystopian novels seems exaggerated, however, it can motivate readers to speak up for what they believe in. Problems in the books are fictional but they seem realistic as they are similar and can be compared to the ones within our own world. As they admire these brave heroes and heroines, they want to be like them and therefore these books give them confidence to do what they feel is the right thing to do. As an example, we can use Greta Thunberg, young environmental activist who inspired many students who later participated in global climate strikes organized by the Fridays for Future movement.

Societies within these novels are like student structures of secondary schools, especially American high schools, where students are divided into social classes where popular children represent the upper class that runs the school, and the rest represents the lower class that is in a sense controlled by the popular children. At first it seems almost impossible that the character will be able to change their social status but as the story evolves it becomes possible, students want to change their status too as being unpopular sometimes leads to

being bullied, e.g., Tris is bullied by Peter for coming from Abnegation, but manages to stand up to him.

Young readers usually live in a safety of a democratic country and therefore they do not understand what living in a non-democratic regime is like. For example, dystopias might help the young population of post-Communist countries to realize how the system worked and how people were oppressed by it. There is also a possibility that the scenarios of the books will come true, climate change is already happening, we can see dictatorship in Belarus and other countries and with the war in Ukraine, the idea of World War III is not as dystopian as it used to be.

Major theme in dystopian fiction is media manipulation. With the spread of social media, we can see, how fake news and hoaxes are influencing our society. The propaganda in Russian or Chinese media shows us that what might seem unrealistic while reading dystopian novels is actually happening. It is important that adolescents learn that what they read or see on the Internet is not always real and that they need to critically think about it.

Main protagonists are relatable to young readers as they think that they are different from the rest of the society and are afraid of the loss of individualism. They are also dealing with first loves as they are figuring out intimacy and are discovering new feelings. They have a big choice ahead of them which can change their life forever, like Tris in *Divergent* who has to choose her new faction, students have to choose one secondary school, leading to choosing their future at a really young age.

Dystopian genre therefore has a significant place in the young adult literature as it helps readers to understand the world they live in and helps them figure out their personality and their role in society. It motivates young adults to take action when it is needed and to think critically. Readers can relate to main protagonists as they share in some way similar process of growing up to adulthood.

Conclusion

In the first part of my thesis, I covered the dystopian genre. I found out that utopian literature has a long tradition and that it shares many common things with dystopia as in dystopia, the system's original premiss is utopian and it has gone wrong. I wanted to show some of the most important dystopian works and their themes and motives, but I also covered a less known *The Wanting Seed* by Anthony Burgess. In the contemporary American fiction, I focused mainly on *The Hunger Games* and *The Selection* as they share many themes with *Divergent*.

The main part of the theses focused on the literary analyses of Veronica Roth's *Divergent*. I described its regime in detail as it plays an important role in dystopian literature and it is a little bit different than in other works, since it exists only within one remote city. I summarized the trilogy and its most important themes and motives. The books start where the previous one left of, but the plot's quality decreases with each book, that is why I focussed mainly on the first instalment as *Divergent* involves most character development, the system is introduced there, and the plot is successfully elaborate.

The principal part of the analyses focused on the growing up of the main heroine. Throughout the first book, and the rest of the trilogy, Tris is discovering her identity and like other dystopian protagonists she finds it hard to find her place in the society as she is different. She makes reckless but selfless decisions that eventually lead to her death, which is an exception among contemporary young adult dystopias.

In the final part, I evaluated the importance of the dystopian genre in the process of maturing of adolescents. With events that are happening over these past years, the dystopian idea does not seem dystopian after all. Dystopian fiction focuses not only on regimes but also finding your identity. I therefore concluded that dystopias play an important part in the young adults' growing up.

While I was rereading the *Divergent* trilogy, I came to realization that it was truly written for younger audience, and I found the classical British dystopias more appealing. Their stories are more complex and focus mainly on dystopian themes, while *Divergent* was mainly about the relationship between the main heroine, her love interest and her friends. However, that did not make me change my opinion on its importance for adolescents as it is

important for them to have some kind of a distraction from the terrible things done by the totalitarian regime.

To conclude, I would recommend reading these books to young adults and as for adults, classical dystopias might be more interesting to read. These types of fiction can give readers another view on our society and the events that are happening, and it is therefore important to read them to prevent our world from becoming like the ones described in dystopias.

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