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Dystopian themes in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and Veronica Roth's *Divergent*

Čestné prohlášení

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Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Abstract

This bachelor thesis is concerned with the dystopian themes in two American novels, *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry and *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth. It is divided into two main parts: the theoretical and analytic parts. The theoretical part aims to introduce the concept of dystopia and its use as a literary genre. The analytic part of the thesis focuses on depicting major dystopian features in the novels, namely control over society, loss of individuality, and manipulation. The main goal is to compare several dystopian features in both novels and to examine their similarities and differences.

Introduction

In an effort to highlight the evils in the form of war, violence, fear, and suffering, the development of dystopian literature is growing as a critique of these events. The dystopian works refer to the specific concerns of the eras in which they were written, pointing out the problems of these periods, such as inequality between people, freedom of choice, self-determination, and questions of personal relationships. Nowadays the majority of these works target young adults who often struggle in search of their identity and their place in society. With this in mind, dystopian writing is considered a source of entertainment, but it is also an educational tool for the younger generation, warning them of humanity's mistakes from the past and frightening them with a gloomy vision of the future.

One of the goals of this thesis is to examine several dystopian themes illustrated in two American novels, *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry and *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth. The main goal is to compare some of the dystopian features that portray the vision of the future world from various points of view of the authors. The reason for selecting this topic is primarily the rising popularity of this genre and its connection to the current world's concerns. Furthermore, my long-standing interest in dystopian novels also played a significant role in choosing the topic.

The bachelor thesis is organised into two main parts: theoretical and analytic. The theoretical part consists of two chapters, where the first one introduces the terms utopia and dystopia and provides the difference between them. Moreover, it defines dystopia as a literary genre and displays several dystopian features. The second chapter is dedicated to short biographies of Lois Lowry and Veronica Roth.

The analytic part first focuses on Lowry's *The Giver*, namely on its summary and the analysis of dystopian elements contained in this novel. These elements include control over society, predetermination of life, loss of individualism, and other limitations of people's lives. Then, Roth's *Divergent* is being examined in the same way. The final chapter is comparative; it is divided into three subchapters, each analysing different element that is shared by both novels, such as the role of the main protagonist or the question of the importance of emotions. Since these authors may interpret these elements differently, the comparison displays similarities and even differences between these novels.

1 Terminology

1.1 From utopia to dystopia

For a complex understanding of what the term dystopia means, it is also essential to fully understand the concept of utopia. The term utopia can be comprehended as a designation for an ideal world. A world that is not afflicted with constant fear, violence, harm, or anger (Szacki, 1971, p. 11). Unfortunately, this world is fictional, providing only a visualization of a perfect place where one wants to live (Davis, 1981, p. 12–13). Whether it can be turned into reality or not is controversial. Rothstein (2003, p. 3) is convinced that this place is not supposed to exist, even though it is achievable. Nevertheless, he also mentions that utopia can signify the world's transformation for the better.

In terms of etymology, utopia was created by combining two Greek words, *ou* (no) and *topos* (place), indicating a place that does not exist. A literal translation of this combination of words may be noplace or nowhere. Sir Thomas More first introduced the term in his well-known book *Utopia* at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Kimbriel, 2021, p. 34). He created the island of Utopia, ruled by King Utopus, and divided it into fifty-four cities of similar appearance and sharing the same customs and laws. Furthermore, the island has some rules that have to be followed; otherwise, people are at risk of slavery for committing a crime. Overall, this masterpiece points to how people and the state should behave to achieve perfection (More, 1989).

More's *Utopia* has become an inspiration for several authors writing about the ideal state and society. Moreover, the term utopia refers to some pieces of work written before the term was used for the first time. For instance, Plato's *Republic* is classified as a utopian work, even though this term was unknown during that time (Szacki, 1971, p. 11). Naxera and Stulík (2012, p. 24) mention that Plato himself is considered the founder of utopian thinking. As stated before, More influenced many authors interested in the concept of the ideal state of society. His successors include Tommaso Campanella, author of *City of the Sun*, and Sir Francis Bacon, who wrote a utopian novel titled *New Atlantis* (Szacki, 1971, p. 11-12). These works are among those that not only gave rise to a new literary genre, utopia, but they also paved the way for its counterpart – dystopia.

In order to define dystopia, the knowledge of the etymology of the word utopia can be used. Both mentioned terms include the Greek word *topos*; however, there is a difference in prefixation. The term dystopia contains a negative prefix *dys,* meaning "bad" or "hard,"

which gives it the meaning of a "bad place" (Voigts, 2015, p. 1). It indicates a community whose seemingly perfect system has a hidden flaw, and those who can see that flaw rebel against the system (Naxera & Stulík, 2012, p. 22). As Kumar (1991, p. 91) points out in his book, dystopia is strongly influenced by unpleasant events of the modern world, covering world wars, authoritarian regimes, and global problems.

According to Voigts (2015, p.1), the word dystopia is freely interchanged with cacotopia, black utopia, negative utopia, pessimist utopia, and many others. Nevertheless, dystopia is more often confused with anti-utopia without being distinguished from each other. Whereas some authors, such as Kumar (1991), consider these two terms synonymous, some claim that there is a slight difference between them. Thus, dystopia criticizes the limitations and rules set by the system, and anti-utopia is presented as the very opposite of a perfect state (Wegner, 2002, p. 152–153).

There is quite a thin boundary between utopia and dystopia. It depends on the interpretation and perception of people because what seems ideal to some may not be suitable for others. Plato's *Republic* can be retaken as an example. Although it is regarded as a projection of an ideal state, there are some disturbing aspects, such as assigned clothing and hairstyle (Szacki, 1971, p. 96). This opinion is shared by Naxera and Stulík (2012, p. 11-12), who ponder the number of utopias. They deal with the fact that if utopia is an ideal, there should be only one. They conclude that there are more utopias because each individual has different opinions and expectations.

To sum up the mentioned definitions, utopia and dystopia indicate an imaginary society with fixed order guaranteeing safety. Nevertheless, dystopia reveals problematic aspects that are enshrined in these rules. These aspects primarily concern freedom and rights, equality between people, justice, and ideology. In dystopian texts, these features are often endangered by a group of people who are convinced that their ideology would be the right one, flawless. As a matter of fact, no system can ever be considered perfect by everyone. Therefore, the term mainly refers to a critique of utopia and its seemingly impracticable realization (Naxera & Stulík, 2012, p. 12-13).

1.2 Dystopian genre

Utopian literature strongly affected the dystopian genre, sharing many features with it, such as a vision of an imaginary society that is ideal thanks to its well-thought-out system. Kumar (1991, p. 94) claims that *"utopia, the nineteenth-century ideal, had prepared the way for anti-utopia, the reality of the twentieth-century world."* Not only wars, climate change, and the threat of nuclear warfare but also the rise of science and technology during the 1900s have contributed to the emergence of dystopian ideas (Voigts, 2015, p. 2). Without knowledge of these dominating events and the consequences they caused, people would not be trying to create a better world and follow utopian imagination. In short, books written in this genre reflect the current sufferings of society (Szacki, 1971, p. 104).

Dystopian literature can serve as both a source of entertainment and a teaching tool with an educational aim. It can provide young adult readers with basic knowledge of the leading worldwide events and their impacts on contemporary humanity and its behaviour. Reading dystopian works can help adolescents gain new attitudes, knowledge, values, and morals. Voigts and Boller (2015) mention that some classic dystopian books became part of standard reading in schools. Something similar can be seen even in the Czech Republic because the curriculum includes examples of dystopian literature. Adolescents are close to dystopian fiction because they usually face problems with keeping rules, rebellion, and generally growing up. This ties with the statement that *"the loss of utopian ideals equals the end of childhood and that the road from utopia to dystopia is the road from innocence to maturity."* Considering this, it is no wonder that the utopian genre is typical for children's literature, while the dystopian one is for young adults (Voigts & Boller, 2015, p. 412-413).

The dystopian genre can be divided into several subgenres; however, this division varies from author to author. Naxera and Stulík (2012, p. 22-23) suggest three types of dystopian genres according to the position of the ruling group of people and their approach to maintaining power. They mention epistemological and technical dystopia, whereas the latter is further divided into scientific and mathematical dystopia. Not surprisingly, they all are based on science, so it provides us with a thought that the expansion of science plays a significant role in the future of humanity. On the contrary, in *Dystopia, Science Fiction, Post-Apocalypse*, the authors focus on more specific dystopian subgenres, dividing them by the main aspects that are contained in each dystopian book. For instance, Jeanne Cortiel describes feminism, which is still a current topic in contemporary society, in the works by Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (1975), and Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), taking them as examples of feminist

dystopia. Other subgenres of dystopia include mechanistic dystopia, surrealist dystopia, religious dystopia, and a large number of others.

The control over the whole society is one of the main characteristics of the dystopian genre. It is connected with totalitarianism and hateful propaganda that influence people's opinions negatively (Voigts & Boller, 2015, p. 413). It is also linked to mistrust of technology because today's society is too dependent on it. In fact, it can be a warning of rapid technological development, which can do more harm than good in terms of the threat of replacing people with machines (Voigts, 2015, p. 2). The other typical elements that are used in dystopian narratives are loss of individualism, assigned labour, limited relationships between people, manipulation, violence, and last but not least, obedience to ruling authority (Barton, 2016, p. 8–10). Later in the thesis, some of these features are further described in selected American novels.

Dystopian features can be observed through the eyes of the main protagonists of dystopian novels. These people are aware of the imperfections of the state structure, and they try to eliminate them. With this in mind, they break the rules, rise against the system, or reject life within such a society (Naxera & Stulík, 2012, p. 22). An example is Winston Smith from the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* written by the British writer George Orwell. Winston is opposed to the regime that rules the country, trying to reveal the lies presented by the Party. This dissenting attitude and distrust towards the state leadership become the main reason for his demise (Orwell, 1981).

Speaking of examples of dystopian literature, the novel *We* (1920) by the Russian author Yevgeny Zamyatin must be mentioned briefly. It is regarded as one of the most influential dystopian works of the previous century. Moreover, it had an effect on many other writers dealing with the concept of dystopian imagination, such as Orwell and his masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which was mentioned in the previous paragraph (Wegner, 2002, p. 147–148). As Kumar (1991) puts it, Zamyatin himself was inspired by another dystopian author, H. G. Wells, and his novels comprising, for example, *The Time Machine* (1895). Other works that belong to the most famous representatives of the dystopian genre include *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley and *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) by Anthony Burgess.

The interest in reading declines with the rise of technology. Nonetheless, there are still genres such as fantasy, science fiction, post-apocalypse, or dystopian genre that grab primarily young adult readers' attention. The reason which makes dystopian literature so attractive may be the interpretation of contemporary problems of modern society by an adolescent protagonist.

The genre is even more popularized thanks to movies dealing with this theme. In other words, a large number of dystopian books were made into movies, including *The Hunger Games trilogy* (2008-2010*)* by Suzanne Collins and *The Divergent trilogy* (2011-2013) by Veronica Roth (Voigts & Boller, 2015, p. 411). Furthermore, non-book-based dystopian films have also begun to emerge, involving *28 Days Later* (2002) or *Equilibrium* (2002), making this genre even better known (Voigts, 2015, p. 7).

Utopian thinking develops in connection with the problems that affect the whole society. In the twentieth century, people imagined the world without wars, intolerance, and injustice, whereas in the twenty-first century, they faced a pandemic situation that shook the world. This situation had some dystopian features connected to the functioning of society. Even though state officials and the government tried to develop a possible solution that would help us overcome the pandemic, it was always far from being accepted by everyone. As was previously stated, this is a matter of the subjective perception of each individual.

The pandemic situation was recently overshadowed by the war in Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia at the end of February 2022. Russian soldiers brought uncertainty and fear to Ukraine and other European countries through this step. With these attacks, the concerns about safety, money, and availability of goods grew worldwide. However, the biggest fear is the growing threat of the third world war. Given these facts, dystopian works are significant because they show us the mistakes made in the past, and at the same time, they allow us to learn from these mistakes. Finally, if people realized what they could cause by faulty and selfish decisions, they would turn the perfect fictional world into reality.

2 About the authors

2.1 Lois Lowry

Lois Lowry, originally named Lois Ann Hammersberg, was born on May 20, 1937, in Hawaii. Because of her father, who worked as an Army dentist, she spent several years living worldwide. As a result, Lowry studied in Tokyo, New York, and finally at Brown University in Rhode Island. However, she decided to leave the university and married naval officer Donald Lowry at a young age. Due to her husband's career, she had to move from one place to another again until the couple settled in Maine with their four children. Finally, Lowry had the chance to graduate from the University of Southern Maine, and she began to write for the public.

Lowry was less than ten years old when she became interested in a career as a writer (Biography, 2014). She stated on her website: *"I was a solitary child who lived in the world of books and my own vivid imagination."* Lowry's first novel, *A Summer to Die* (1977), describes the pain she experienced due to the untimely death of her older sister (Lowry, ©2020). Another personal loss for Lois Lowry came in 1995. Her son Grey, a pilot in the United States Air Force, died in a plane crash. For this reason, she wrote a memoir titled *Looking Back* (1998).

One of her most popular books is the historical novel *Number the Stars* (1989), focusing on Denmark during the Second World War. The plot follows the main character Annemarie and her Jewish friend. In 1993 another famous novel, *The Giver*, was published, winning the Newbery Medal price for Lowry a year later. During the following years, other dystopian works were added to this one, forming a quartet together - *Gathering Blue* (2000), *The Messenger* (2004), and *Son* (2012) (Biography, 2014).

2.2 Veronica Roth

Veronica Roth was born on August 19, 1988, in New York to Edgar Gustave Roth and Barbara Ross. Her father travelled for work, so the family left New York for Hong Kong and subsequently moved to Germany. In the end, the family returned to the United States and began to live in Barrington. Roth's parents divorced when she was a little child, notwithstanding that her mother remarried. Surprisingly, Veronica and her stepfather formed a strong relationship (Niver, 2015, p.10).

Roth studied at Barrington High School, and after graduating, she decided to apply to Northwestern University because she was interested in its creative writing program. The program she studied was rough at first because it was difficult for her to bear her

classmates' negative comments on her writings. Eventually, it helped her find and overcome her writing mistakes (Niver, 2015, p. 11-16). During her last year at the university, she wrote her bestseller *Divergent* (2011), the book that made her famous. Not long after that, she published two other dystopian novels that created a trilogy together. These books are called *Insurgent* (2012) and *Allegiant* (2013), and they are directly related to the plot of *Divergent*. These novels were supplemented by another book titled *Four: A Divergent Collection*, telling the whole story of the trilogy from the perspective of Tobias Eaton, who plays a vital role in these books.

Veronica Roth admired writings by Lois Lowry, particularly the book *The Giver* and its dystopian themes. It may be one of the reasons for Roth's interest in this genre. In 2017 her science fiction novel, *Carve the Mark*, was introduced to the world. It was followed by its sequel, *The Fates Divide*, which was published a year later. The plot focuses on the fate of two main characters, Akos and Cyra. The last piece of work introduced recently is called *Chosen Ones* (2020), and it is dedicated to the adult audience (Blumberg et al., 2016).

3 Analysis of dystopian themes in the novels

3.1 The Giver

The Giver by Lois Lowry was released in 1993 and was significantly dissimilar to her previous writings. In the eyes of the author, it was supposed to be an adventure book written for children. In any case, the plot was more complex and contained a hidden message which was not originally intended. For this reason, the book is more popular with young adult and adult readers. While the book was adored by the majority of people of different ages, some cities refused to have its copies in their libraries or schools probably because they considered the story provocative (Mahy, 2008).

The story is set in an ostensibly utopian world occupied by a group of people calling themselves "the community." They are controlled and ruled over by the Elders, who provide them with regulations determining their behaviour. The Elders have the power to decide about the future professions and relationships of inhabitants. People willingly accepted these laws in exchange for safety and comfort. The existence of wars, natural disasters, poverty, and other issues causing pain and fear are unknown in this world. Due to the injections that people have to undergo every morning, they are exempted from emotions. All differences between people have been eliminated to avoid hatred and jealousy, leaving only the "Sameness."

The story focuses on a twelve-year-old boy named Jonas, who lives happily with his parents and younger sister Lily in a dwelling, and spends his leisure time with his two best friends, Fiona and Asher. His life turns upside down when he is selected to be a new Receiver of Memory. Soon he finds out that all memories of the past were intentionally lost to make life easier and safe, and the only person who has access to them is a mysterious man called the Giver. Jonas is expected to take his place in a few years, which means that the Giver has to transmit all forgotten memories to Jonas. Based on them, Jonas finally realizes that the seemingly perfect community is not flawless. He understands the utterance to return memories to people by crossing a boundary located several hundred kilometres from his home (Lowry, 2008).

With increasing interest in dystopian literature, interest in its film adaptation is also growing. Even Lowry's masterpiece, *The Giver*, was turned into a movie. It entered the world in 2014 with Brenton Thwaites in the leading role, portraying Jonas. Jeff Bridges played the role of the Giver, and Meryl Streep starred as the leader of the Elders (Biography, 2014).

3.1.1 Control over the society

As was previously stated, the story describes a highly ordered community that lives in a place separated from the rest of the world by an imaginary frontier. The frontier is in the form of a river, and it keeps people from the outside world called Elsewhere (Lowry, 2008, p. 1-2). The majority of people are forbidden to cross the frontier, except for pilots. There is no reason anyone would do that since people are happy and carefree within the community. The society is headed by the Committee of Elders, who make laws, approve citizens' requests and organize ceremonies and rituals (Lowry, 2008, p. 16-17, 61). The leader of the Elders is titled the Chief Elder, and he or she is elected for ten years. This post is currently represented by a woman, and she has the main word in the community (Lowry, 2008, p. 65).

People and their activities are constantly observed and controlled by the Elders. The observation of society guarantees compliance with the law and helps the Elders assign jobs and spouses to each individual (Lowry, 2008, 18-19). Additionally, speakers are located throughout the community, in public places, and in each dwelling. The primary purpose of these devices is to warn in the event of potential danger, unscheduled holidays, and other pieces of information that need to be announced quickly to citizens (Lowry, 2008, p. 2, 165). Even though speakers are omnipresent, there is one exception. The speaker in the Giver's dwelling is non-identical because it can be turned off (Lowry, 2008, p. 100). Another purpose of speakers is the ability to replay records of all private ceremonies if people have access to them. In brief, some people, such as the Giver, are allowed to watch recorded videos through the speaker (Lowry, 2008, p. 186-187).

In order to ensure peace and safety, people voluntarily relinquished their emotions and memories of the past. The community not only surrendered hurtful and sad memories, but people also lost the beautiful ones. Loss of memories and feelings is caused by the morning injections, which people take thoughtlessly. Only one person keeps all memories of the past in his head, the Giver (Davis, 2014). His work is admired and valued by the whole society. His knowledge of the world is essential for the proper functioning of the community as he is an advisor to the Committee of Elders (Lowry, 2008, p. 17). Another means of controlling people's nature are pills that suppress "Stirrings," which means sexual instincts. Young adults are non-violently persuaded to take them in the early stages of puberty (Davis, 2014).

As has been noted, the obliteration of beautiful memories from the world was implemented because they could pose a threat to the population. These no longer existing remembrances

cover dancing, music, singing, sledding, sunbathing, and primarily being with people whose love and care are sincere. To put it closer, being able to sing or dance can be considered unfair by those who are not able to do that; sledding and sunbathing can harm an individual; love is unforeseeable, unstable, and can easily turn into hatred (Lowry, 2008). By the same token, there is no memory of snow, rain, or storm because climate control was established as one way of protection. The reason for this was simple; unpredictable weather was dangerous, slowed down traffic, and could ruin the crop. Universally, none of this was practical, and it only brought concerns and caused pain (Lowry, 2008, p. 106).

3.1.2   Predetermined lives

The world created by Lois Lowry is highly organized and controlled. The life of each individual is predetermined from the moment of their birth. In other words, the whole society has to strictly follow the established rules, leaving them with almost no own choices in their lives. The major choices are made for the community by the Elders to protect them from making wrong choices. It applies to jobs, life partners, having children, and even the number of children is determined by the committee (Davis, 2014).

Children are being prepared for their future jobs while attending school. Before they turn twelve and can be given the "Assignment" (the job), they have to complete the required number of volunteer hours (Lowry, 2008, p. 35). One of the decisions to which they are entitled is to choose the field in which they will volunteer. Meanwhile, they are scrupulously monitored by the Committee of Elders, who will assign them their professions according to their abilities, interests, and personal traits (Lowry, 2008, p. 18-19). Before these young adults are fully prepared for the job, they must successfully master the training (Lowry, 2008, p. 21). There is a wide range of available positions within the community, such as nurturer, pilot, doctor, instructor, labourer, engineer, but the most important one is the Receiver of Memory. This job is extraordinary since only one person is suitable for it (Lowry, 2008).

Since people cannot even decide about their spouse and having children, the nature and importance of family are also suppressed. Furthermore, no one refers to their family members as a family but as a family unit. Not even the word home is often used, and if so, its true principle is lost. In this case, the term dwelling is used instead (Lowry, 2008). If someone wants to get a spouse, they have the opportunity to apply for one. Taking into account factors such as intelligence and temperament, the committee can match two people together. After "Matching of Spouses," the couple can adopt children. Children are split into family units

during the ceremony called "Naming and Placement of newchildren" (Lowry, 2008, p. 61), proving that families are not biological. Each couple is entitled to two children, a girl and a boy (Davis, 2014). Children are taken away from their birth mothers, and they are placed in the Nurturing Centre until they are assigned to a family unit.

The daily routine of each community resident is generally the same, based on numerous rituals and ceremonies. Two rituals take place every day, the "dream telling" and the "evening telling of feelings" (Lowry, 2008, p. 42, 6). These rituals are held in each family unit, encouraging everyone to share their dreams and express how they felt during the day. Besides the ceremony called Matching of Spouses and Naming and Placement of newchildren, there are other ones, such as Ceremony of Loss (in case of an unexpected death) and Murmur-of-Replacement Ceremony (welcoming a newchild to the community by chanting their name). Moreover, there are other ceremonies according to the age of children taking place in December. The most significant is the Ceremony of Twelve because the children become contributing young adult citizens. At last, the Ceremony of Release is the final ceremony that people experience. This special ceremony is held for senior citizens, newchildren, or people who ask for it in order to leave the community forever (Lowry, 2008, p. 55-56, 61).

3.1.3 Loss of individualism

In an effort to ensure welfare, people relinquished their memories, emotions, and freedom of choice, and they decided to enter the Sameness. Sameness is primarily characterized by equality between people based on eradicating differences between them. Each group of people in the community has the same rules, the same opportunities, the same rights, and the same responsibilities that are assigned to them according to their age and occupation. As a result, the value of individuality is buried beneath the surface of this dystopian world.

To assure equality between people, colour vision and colours themselves were also erased, leaving the world black-and-white. The Giver himself makes the explanation for this: *"Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back. We relinquished colour when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences"* (Lowry, 2008, p. 120-121). That was a huge step forward in forming a new system, which guaranteed the elimination of condemning attitudes and envy. After that, people could no longer be judged by the colour of their skin, hair colour, or clothing (Couzelis, 2013, p.133-134).

Another dystopian feature in *The Giver* is the system of clothing and hairstyles. The appearance of people and the clothes they wear depends on their age, sex, and profession (Lowry, 2008, p. 50–51). In this world, children are divided into groups according to their age and developmental stage which they should reach; the groups are called Ones, Twos, Threes, and continues up to Twelves. At the age of twelve, children are preparing for their adult lives. Each developmental stage is characterized by acquiring new clothing, haircuts, or equipment. For instance, Fours, Fives, and Sixes wear jackets with fastening on the back. At the age of seven, children receive jackets with buttons on the front. When children are nine-years-old, they are given a bicycle, which is the only means of transport available to everyone in this world. Tens are assigned a new style of hairstyling that distinguishes females and males from each other (Davis, 2014).

All people always grow a year older in December, even if they were born in any other month during the year. Their birthdays are celebrated through the December ceremony; nevertheless, age is not important anymore once one reaches twelve and becomes an adult (Lowry, 2008, p. 13-14, 21). Despite the mentioned features that suppress individualism, a unique element that makes each person different from the others is the first name. In other words, there are not two people sharing one name within the community. In case of somebody's death or release, their names can be assigned again. No first name is identical, and last names do not exist (Lowry, 2008, p. 55-56).

The community is strongly affected by the regulations created to ensure a safe environment for each citizen. As a result, everyone blindly obeys the same rules without realizing that they limit their lives to a large extent. Laws that have not yet been mentioned include the precision of language, no bragging or rude behaviour, ban on looking at a naked person (newchildren or seniors are exceptions) or touching another person except for family members. Reading books is also forbidden, and there is a strict prohibition on lying (Lowry, 2008). Furthermore, the mentioned dream telling and the evening telling of feelings are required of all people daily. As a matter of fact, these rules are accepted and perceived positively by the community because they make life easier and more comfortable.

Nevertheless, some rules may vary depending on the job. For instance, there is a rule that only applies to pilots that prohibits them from flying over an inhabited part of the community. In the case of the Receiver of Memory, orders are markedly different from the other citizens' rules. Although he is allowed to read books, he is not permitted to talk about his training with

anybody, and he cannot ask for release. The most striking dissimilarity is that the Receiver is allowed to lie (Lowry, 2008, p. 1, 86-87).

In *The Giver*, many dystopian features limit each inhabitant of this world. The community residents are constantly monitored by the group of people who decide most of the things in their lives. Because of the strict rules and the surveillance of private life, individuality is wholly lost. People in the community are being told what to wear, what to do, and how to behave. They are not aware of the concept of family, friendship, and emotions because they have no idea that all of these were stolen from them in exchange for order and safety. Due to unawareness, people identify with the rules without a rebellion against the system or fight for their rights. Except for the Giver, Jonas is the only one who knows that the community was robbed of memories, experiences, and opportunities, and he is of the opinion that the lost things should be restored.

3.2 Divergent

As has been mentioned, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth was introduced to the public in 2011 for the first time. Not long after, two other books were presented as its sequels, making a dystopian trilogy together. Roth has been attracted to the dystopian genre since she read world-famous narratives that included not only Lowry's *The Giver*, as was already stated, but also Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. These imperfect worlds and imaginary communities inadvertently affected her work (Niver, 2015, p. 42). In the beginning, she intended the story to be told from the perspective of Tobias "Four" Eaton, who is one of the main male characters of the *Divergent trilogy*. Having written several pages from his point of view, she suddenly changed her mind and decided to choose another main protagonist. Eventually, she chose a female heroine Beatrice Prior who revealed the mistakes lying behind the utopian system of *Divergent* to its readers (Niver, 2015, p. 31).

The novel *Divergent* portrays the future version of Chicago, where the society is divided into five factions (Voigts & Boller, 2015, p. 413-414). These are Abnegation, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, and Erudite, and each of them has its role in the city. Factions have to follow certain norms that determine their personality types and behaviour. Outcasts and divergent people are also part of society, even though they do not belong to any faction.

The plot centres on the main protagonist Beatrice Prior, a sixteen-year-old girl who lives together with her parents and her brother Caleb within the community of Abnegation. Beatrice's seemingly carefree life is getting complicated when taking the aptitude test that should determine the most suitable faction for her. Nonetheless, the test is inconclusive because it shows three different outcomes. To fit in more than one faction is called Divergent, and it puts Beatrice at risk of her life. Eventually, Beatrice decides to leave Abnegation and her family for Dauntless and changes her name to Tris. With the rising attempt to overthrow Abnegation by Erudite and the army of Dauntless, Tris and Tobias, the instructor of recruits in Dauntless, have to prevent Abnegation from its destruction (Roth, 2013).

With the growing popularity of Roth's *Divergent*, it was decided that the book would be a template for the film of the same name. As well as the book's story, the film takes place in Chicago. Roth was allowed to visit the filming location, where she met famous actors who turned her imaginary world into reality. Shailene Woodley starred as Beatrice Prior, and the leading male role was given to Theo James, who played Tobias Eaton. Interestingly, Veronica Roth herself appeared in the film for a moment, portraying a character from Dauntless

(Mortensen, 2017, p. 24). The *Divergent* movie was introduced to the world in 2014. Its sequel, *Insurgent*, was released next year with the same actors in the lead roles. The last novel, *Allegiant*, was supposed to be divided into two movies, but in the end, only the first part was released (Martin, 2022).

3.2.1 Control over the society

Chicago city is divided by the fence from the outside world and thus remains protected from the unknown (Bernard, 2014, p. 5). The society is led by a council of fifty people coming exclusively from the Abnegation faction. It is believed that only they are entirely devoted to the system and the people living in the city, without any selfish motives. Representatives from other factions may express their ideas at the meetings, but only the council's decision truly matters. Tris' father is persuaded that only people who do not want to be leaders are the most suitable for this position, and this is the reason for having the Abnegation in charge (Roth, 2013, p. 33, 68). The city, at least some parts of it, are monitored by cameras. In the Dauntless compound, there are screens on the walls with a view of the fence and different parts of the city (Roth, 2013, p. 472).

A system of factions was formed to ensure the functioning of the society. It was created to eliminate people's negative thoughts and limit human nature, which tends to be evil. These natural inclinations were condemned by humans, and therefore each faction was based on the opposite of the criticized trait. People who criticized selfishness formed a faction called Abnegation, which covers people who wanted to help others. Those who were against aggression created Amity, a peaceful faction. Candor, the honest ones, wanted to abolish insincerity. Dauntless were created by those who opposed cowardice. They are described as brave and fearless. The last faction, Erudite, made up of intellectuals, blamed ignorance.

The division into factions was to secure mutual stability and complementarity between them. For this intention, cooperation between these groups, mainly in maintaining peace in the city, is essential (Roth, 2013, p. 42-43). Abnegation lead the community, perform administrative activities, and offer help to people who need it, especially those without faction. Members of the Amity faction produce food and supply the whole community. Candor are lawyers, judges, and advisers. They make laws that are binding on all factions. Dauntless not only provide protection within the city but also protect its citizens from potential external threats. They act as police officers or soldiers and are the only ones who can use weapons. Erudite try to make life easier; they are the smart ones who educate future teachers, doctors, and researchers who can

contribute to the development of society in science and knowledge (Clement-Moore, 2014, p. 19-20).

The factions differ mainly in values, but each also has a set of rules and responsibilities that form their identity and determine their place in society. Some apply to the whole community, and the others are followed only by members of a particular faction (Roth, 2013, p. 9). For instance, the Choosing Ceremony, a public event in which young adults choose a faction, is organized every year by a different faction. They also leave the ceremony in the specified order, with Dauntless leaving first and Abnegation leaving last (Roth, 2013, p. 40, 48-49). In the case of transferring into another faction, transfers are not supposed to mention their old ones. Another rule states that the aptitude tests that adolescents take before the ceremony cannot be conducted by people from the same faction as the tested person is. Another regulation that applies to the whole community is forbidding citizens from visiting their family or friends from another faction. For each faction, a manifesto was written, providing them with rules and beliefs that differ from each other (Roth, 2013, p. 201, 8, 127, 206).

Although people can organize their lives to a certain extent, the fact is that even choosing the faction means choosing one of the ways of living that are already predetermined. Even though the factions are based on aptitudes and personality traits of humans, their individuality, nature, and desires are suppressed. In other words, citizens of dystopian Chicago are not allowed to do everything that they would like to (Roth, 2013, p. 42). For example, the Abnegation are good-natured, they help people from different factions, but the Dauntless are not supposed to care about people. However, some are eager to learn the values of other factions, such as Tobias, one of the Dauntless soldiers, who claimed: *"I want to be brave, and selfless, and smart, and kind, and honest"* (Roth, 2013, p. 405). Although factions were formed for a good reason, they began to move in the wrong direction. The aims set with the emergence of the faction system were not fully achieved (Roth, 2013, p. 206-207). To sum up, in spite of the idea of division of society to create a peaceful environment being the right thing, it broke ties between families and friends. Moreover, it also limits people in personality development. Arrow (2014, p. 49) believes that the division of society is a beneficial way to control the behaviour of each individual.

According to Clement-Moore (2014, p. 19-20), the seemingly perfect system of factions is not without mistakes because the factions value one virtue at the expense of the rest, and under those circumstances, it means instability for the society that allows corruption. As stated by this

author: *"Any quality, no matter how admirable, becomes a negative when taken to the extreme. Courage becomes recklessness. Pushing someone to their limits becomes bullying. Honesty becomes rudeness and self-absorption. Peace becomes passivity. Self-sacrificing austerity becomes martyrdom and/or a joyless existence. Erudition becomes valuing knowledge over people."* To put it briefly, if people concentrate too much on one quality, it can do more harm than good. As a result, a conflict between Erudite and Abnegation arose, providing an example of mentioned corruption. The Erudite faction wanted to destroy Abnegation and take their place in the city's leadership. Using a serum, Erudite could command Dauntless, who began killing the people from Abnegation thoughtlessly (Roth, 2013).

3.2.2 Division of society

The society of dystopian Chicago is organized into five factions, each of which teaches a certain virtue that defines the identity of the people who live in them. Each group follows specific rules and norms that determine their behaviour and personality. Factions differ in job offers, physical traits, and personality traits of people. Children are born into the factions, and they live there with their parents and siblings until they reach the age of sixteen. Once they turn sixteen, they are given a chance to choose a different faction and begin to live a new life dedicated to a particular virtue. However, this choice is final, and it cannot be taken back once it is made. Before choosing a faction, all sixteen-year-olds have to undergo an aptitude test that recommends them the faction that would be ideal for them. The results are indicative; everyone still has the freedom of choice, regardless of the test result (Niver, 2015, p. 56-58).

The choice is made at the Choosing Ceremony, in front of the community. Afterward, those who decided to remain in their faction of origin; leave the ceremony with their parents and acquaintances. Those who decided to transfer from the original faction to the other leave the ceremony with their new faction, their new family. Before becoming rightful members of a new faction, they must pass the initiation; otherwise, they will become factionless. The Choosing Ceremony is held in a room with five bowls, one for a faction filled with an element representing the faction. There are grey stones for Abnegation, earth for Amity, glass for Candor, lit coal for Dauntless, and water representing the faction of Erudite. A person choosing a faction has to cut into their hand, and by a drop of blood, they confirm their choice for the rest of their lives (Roth, 2013, p. 39-40). The system of factions follows a simple motto constantly repeated in the book: "faction before blood," meaning that there is nothing more important than the faction of the individual. Faction is much more than family ties and relationships (Roth, 2013, p. 43).

As was previously stated, each faction is genuine; it honours a particular value and has to obey specific rules. The first faction is Abnegation, the one that values selflessness. They put other people first and are glad that they can help others. People from Abnegation wear plain clothes, usually of grey colour. Their hairstyles and hair colours are also ordinary because they do not want to be at the centre of attention (Niver, 2015, p. 62). From accessories, they are allowed to wear only watches because this is the only kind of adornment that is useful (Roth, 2013, p. 27). In connection with assigned hairstyles and clothing, looking into the mirror can be mentioned. Abnegation can look at their reflection once in three months and only for a moment. They do not even celebrate birthdays, and children are allowed to speak during eating a meal only if their parents ask them to (Roth, 2013, p. 1-2, 34).

Amity are described as peaceful and kind, spreading happiness around them. They are interested in art, poetry, and music. This faction is the only one that allows transfers wearing clothes from their factions of origin (Niver, 2015, p. 63). People from the Amity faction are the only ones that greet each other with hugging (Roth, 2013, p. 126). The third faction is Candor, valuing honesty. They say only the truth, and they can recognize a liar according to their body movement (Roth, 2013, p. 195). Candor members can be recognized from their formal clothing. They always wear black and white clothes (Niver, 2015, p. 64).

The main virtue of the Dauntless people is courage. They are described as pierced and tattooed individuals who always wear black clothes. Furthermore, their hairstyles and hair colours are unusual and extravagant (Niver, 2015, p. 60-62). They function as police and soldiers in the community, defending the fence that divides the city of Chicago from the rest of the world. Moreover, they are the only ones who can ride trains (Roth, 2013, p. 4, 7).

Finally, the last faction, the Erudite, believes in intellect. They are connected with knowledge and ingenuity, and they are often seen with newspapers and books (Roth, 2013, p. 206, 9). As a result, they do not show emotions very often, and to the rest of the population, they may seem imperious (Niver, 2015, p. 64). Erudite people always wear at least one piece of blue clothing because they believe that the blue colour has a calming effect which is crucial for them since they follow the motto "a calm mind is a clear mind" (Roth, 2013, p. 348).

As was mentioned before, renegades and divergent people are also part of society. The former term refers to a group of people known as factionless, composed of people who failed in the initiation or fulfilling their role within the society. The factionless have to live on the streets or outside the city, apart from the rest of the community. They have to do menial work that no

one wants to do, such as garbage collectors and janitors. They get food and clothes in exchange for the work (Roth, 2013, p. 20, 25). The latter word describes a unique group of people who are different from the others because they usually fit in more than one faction, such as Tris. She showed features appropriate to the three factions (Niver, 2015, p. 66). These people can unconsciously manipulate simulations, and they are immune to a serum developed by Erudite, through which the leaders can manipulate the injected ones (Roth, 2013, p. 255, 417-419). They are unpredictable and difficult to control and therefore considered a threat that needs to be destroyed (Niver, 2015, p. 66).

3.2.3 Manipulation through fear and violence

The last subchapter is focused mainly on the Dauntless faction because there is a higher level of aggression and bullying. The biggest obstacle for initiates is to master the Dauntless initiation. It is the most demanding initiation to any faction. It is divided into three stages, three extreme tests, through which members-to-be have to face their fears, their nightmares, and primarily their friends. According to the ranking, people can continuously monitor whether they manage training or become factionless. The number of people who will get into the faction is limited, and the number of desirable jobs is also insufficient (Bernard, 2014, p. 133). It means that people have to compete for a place in the faction even with their friends (Roth, 2013, p. 200).

Furthermore, the initiates are led by a sadistic and cruel Eric, who does not care about people's feelings, and he cannot stand cowardice and weakness. His cruelty is shown when he sends one of the recruits for a knife while the others are throwing knives in his direction. Another example of his evil nature is punishing recruits when they show signs of fear (Roth, 2013, p. 160, 99-101). Privacy almost does not exist for Dauntless initiatives; they only have access to shared bathrooms, and they have to sleep in one room no matter what their sex is (Bernard, 2014, p. 122). In connection with the lack of privacy, some initiates bully Tris by laughing at her body and making inappropriate jokes (Lashley, 2015, p. 167).

Fear and feeling insecure affect one's thinking and behaviour in a negative way. When people feel threatened, they are not afraid to use violence. An attack on one recruit, Edward, can be mentioned as an example. During the initiation, he was ranked first, and that is why a group of other recruits stabbed the knife in his eye, eliminating him from the faction (Roth, 2013, p. 201-202). Something similar happened to Tris when she was attacked by three men, including one of her friends. The purpose of the attack was to dispose of her. Even though she

was saved by Tobias (Lashley, 2015, p. 167-168), she came to a conclusion: *"I can't even trust the leaders of my faction. My new family"* (Roth, 2013, p. 292). People make wrong decisions out of fear and jealousy, but not everyone can live with the guilt. As a result, Tris' friend committed suicide because he knew he would not be forgiven (Roth, 2013, p. 302).

Another means of manipulation and controlling people's lives are false facts. The majority of false facts are distributed by the Erudite, who distribute reports about the inappropriate behaviour of the Abnegation faction (Roth, 2013, p. 35). One of the reports claims that the leadership was probably entrusted to the wrong faction because they could not eradicate poverty from the city (Roth, 2013, p. 243-244). The other accuses the Abnegation people of hoarding food only for themselves even though they argue that they keep the food for the factionless (Roth, 2013, p. 184). These reports and frequent transfers from the Abnegation faction question their teachings and upbringing. Consequently, people from other groups believe that children in Abnegation are brought up strictly and with violence. Some people also support these statements on purpose (Roth, 2013, p. 242-243). In connection to this, another article accuses one of the Abnegation political leaders, Marcus, of being cruel to his son. Allegedly, this was why his only son chose to leave Abnegation (Roth, 2013, p. 34). As a matter of fact, this piece of information is truthful because Marcus beat his son Tobias with a belt with the intention that he would teach him good manners (Roth, 2013, p. 329-330).

These reports, pointing out Abnegation's infidelity and inability to lead the community, served as an excuse for preparing war plans to overthrow the political leadership of Abnegation (Roth, 2013, p. 375). The false accusations and subsequent conflict were provoked by Erudite, who called for revolution and the establishment of a new government (Roth, 2013, p. 245). Since Erudite could not fight, their leaders decided to ally with the leaders from Dauntless (Roth, 2013, p. 376). Members of the Dauntless faction were injected with a tracking device (Roth, 2013, p. 398). Nevertheless, this was a lie because this "tracking device" was actually a serum developed by Erudite. As a result, all Dauntless were turned into obedient soldiers (Roth, 2013, p. 415), except for Divergent. With the help of the brain-dead Dauntless army, Erudite tried to destroy the Abnegation faction by killing its members.

Even though it seems that life in dystopian Chicago is orderly and systematic, the division of society into factions negatively influences people's lives. It has an impact on their behaviour, thinking, and decisions. Each faction is based on specific values, teachings, responsibilities, and rules that have to be followed. The chosen faction determines the members' choice

of occupation, and it limits their personal development. In the faction of Dauntless, fear, violence, and humiliation are commonly used to manipulate people. Furthermore, society is trapped in the circle of false facts without any chance to differentiate between lies and the truth. The main aim of the faction system was to eliminate people's negative thoughts and acts. Nevertheless, this goal was not fully achieved because a few people were trying to enforce their vision of society, no matter what.

4 Comparison of dystopian themes in the novels

Whereas the third chapter was dedicated to analysing several dystopian features portrayed in the story of *The Giver* and *Divergent*, the final chapter displays elements that have not yet been mentioned. It focuses primarily on the main protagonist protruding from society, a system of renegades, and the relationships between people living in these dystopian communities. The analysis is not based only on similarities of the dystopian themes in these novels but also on their differences.

4.1 The main protagonist fighting against the system

One of the standard features depicted in dystopian works is the role of the main protagonist in society and their endless struggle between obedience to authority and searching for the meaning of life and their identity (Barton, 2016, p. 9). Consequently, the main characters differ from the rest, and they do not fit into society. Jonas protrudes in the world of *The Giver* because he has "the capacity to see beyond," which makes him exceptional. Thanks to this, he is able to see what others do not – colours. However, he keeps this ability secret because he does not want to draw attention to himself. Furthermore, being selected as a new Receiver of Memory makes him even more dissimilar from his peers and the adult citizens since this job is unique (Lowry, 2008, p. 79-80).

Having received several memories from the Giver, Jonas longs for experiences and possibilities stolen from every individual in the community. Thus, he begins to rebel against society and its rules. Jonas' first violation of rules is when he stops taking pills, thanks to which he is capable of emotions (Lowry, 2008, p. 210-211, 164). Jonas realizes that he does not live a valuable life compared to the gained memories. In his opinion, everyone should have a chance to be themselves; otherwise, there is no purpose for living. With the knowledge of the past, Jonas intends to cross a boundary to release the forgotten memories. In addition, he also wants to save Gabriel, a baby who is in danger of his life because he has not reached the set stage of development. Jonas leaves his birthplace with Gabriel to change the future and restore what was lost in the past in the depth of the perfect system (Lowry, 2008, p. 196-198, 209-211).

The main protagonist of the *Divergent trilogy*, Tris, does not fit into society either. Whereas the vast majority of residents of Chicago are suitable for one faction, Tris has a choice of three. This ability is called Divergence, and it is considered not only extremely rare but also dangerous. Divergent people are being hunted and killed by some faction leaders because they are afraid of their dissimilarity (Roth, 2013, p. 276-277). Tris believes that she is not in danger

because murder is against society's rules. Nevertheless, one of the Dauntless members, Tori, convinces her otherwise by telling her about her divergent brother, who was found dead after the second stage of the Dauntless training (Roth, 2013, p. 258-259).

The cause of Tris' rebellion begins to manifest when she finds out that false facts, distributed by Erudite, attack the faction in which she grew up. To avoid suspicion, Tris claims that she agrees with these statements and that she does not care about her family anymore. In fact, she lies, and with the help of Tobias, she does everything to save her old faction and her loved ones; she even shoots one of her friends, who is under the influence of a manipulation serum. Tris is not trying to change the system through the riot; she believes that factions are worth saving even though she does not support all their teachings (Roth, 2013, p. 206-207). At the end of the novel, two factions are destroyed, leaving the future of the faction system and the future of the main characters uncertain (Roth, 2013, p. 487).

Both main protagonists of the novels protrude from their communities because of their unusualness. Being different means being a threat because no one can know what one's intentions are (Bernard, 2014, p. 142). At first, Jonas and Tris only want to fit in the society. Nevertheless, Jonas finds out that he is living a lie and is eager to change the determined future. As for Tris, the reason for breaking the rules is more primitive; she only wants to survive and ensure the survival of the Abnegation faction and her family. When it comes to rebellion, it is much less violent in *The Giver*, probably due to Jonas' age. His kind of riot seems calm and innocent. Compared to that, in *Divergent*, people are killed, biological families are separated, and long-lasting peace is violated. It can be concluded that both protagonists break the rules with good intention: to change the world for the better.

4.2 Renegades

Not being beneficial to society is another theme that both novels have in common. Isolation or exile are typical features of the outcasts. In *The Giver*, the group of renegades consists of senior people, the weak, or children who do not reach the assigned developmental stage (Lowry, 2008, p. 195). The policy of *The Giver*'s world is also strict when it comes to identical twins. Unfortunately, they cannot be both accepted, so one of them must be released from the community (Lowry, 2008, 145-146). People who either do not want to fulfil their obligations or violate the system by breaking the rules are also released (Lowry, 2008, 195). A particular group consists of people who have voluntarily been excluded from society (Lowry, 2008, 60).

To release a person means that the one leaves the community for a place called Elsewhere without an option of returning (Lowry, 2008, p. 53, 61). Citizens of the world blindly believe that to be released to Elsewhere means leaving for a beautiful place outside the community. As it is later revealed, this is a euphemism for murder because "release" is accomplished by a syringe with a lethal substance. Thus, it can be compared to euthanasia because the substance is injected into one's vein, leaving the person dead (Lowry, 2008, 189-190).

This cruel truth is revealed by Jonas when he sees his father releasing one of the twins. Being familiar with the concept of death, Jonas begins to blame his father: *"He killed it! My father killed it!"* (Lowry, 2008, p. 191). The Giver justifies the father's action by explaining to Jonas that the father is unaware of what he does (Lowry, 2008, 195). Another example is the previous Receiver of Memory, Rosemary. When she became acquainted with the feeling of loss and solitude, she refused to do the assigned job and asked for release without knowing that she had sentenced herself to death. Her decision directly influenced not only the Giver but also the set of rules that Jonas received after the Ceremony of Twelve (Lowry, 2008, 192). After she decided to give up her life, the Elders established a rule forbidding new receivers from applying for release (Lowry, 2008, 176-177).

The system of renegades in Roth's novel is formed of factionless people and divergent people. As mentioned before, factionless people live within the community, but they do not belong to any faction. This group consists of people who either left a faction or did not succeed in the initiation. Even though they do not have many responsibilities or rules and are not based on any teachings or values like the factions, they can still be contributing citizens. Abnegation provides them with some basic needs, but for the other factions, they basically do not exist (Bernard, 2014, p. 45-46).

Another group that does not fit into the faction system consists of divergent people. These people do not have a faction, and they do not form any particular group like the factionless. They are members of one of the factions, but they have to keep their identities hidden. They are constantly at risk of their lives if anyone reveals them. Some people not only want to remove the divergent people, but they want to destroy the factionless as well. For example, Jeanine, the Erudite leader and the main initiator of attacks on the Abnegation members, wants to eliminate factionless people because they are "a drain on our resources," in her opinion (Roth, 2013, p. 429).

Overall, the authors of analysed novels have a slightly different attitude to renegades and their function in society. Whereas in *The Giver*, the elderly, weak, and unnecessary people are killed off, in *Divergent*, some renegades are accepted as members of society. In the second novel, people have the opportunity to live even though they do not fit into the community unless they are divergent. However, from the point of view of some characters, namely Tris, being a renegade means worse destiny than being dead (Roth, 2013, p. 207). In Lowry's *The Giver*, society removes people who are no longer helpful without remorse. As for Elsewhere, it does exist, but not in the form of a utopia, as the community believes, but in the form of a world of danger and pain.

4.3 Relationships and emotions

The absence of relationships and emotions in *The Giver* is evident. Since people entered the Sameness, they lost their natural ability to feel. In other words, their emotions, memories, and even attraction to other people were suppressed by medication. Although people often use words such as anger, fear, sadness, or happiness to express their feelings, these expressions are empty because people no longer understand their meanings and cannot feel real emotions.

When Jonas begins to understand what love is, he becomes curious and demands the answer from his parents if they love him. In the eyes of his parents, love is an archaism without any meaning. In connection to this, it is also revealed that there are not any real bonds between family members and friends (Davis, 2014). Even the word "grandparents" does not exist, and there is also no mention of family relatives (Lowry, 2008, p. 163). The only real mutual relationship is between Jonas and the Giver, simply because they are the only ones who understand the concept of love and emotions and thus form a strong bond with each other. It is also uncovered that the previous Receiver of Memory, Rosemary, was the Giver's daughter (Lowry, 2008, 206). Throughout the story, the reader discovers that the Giver still has not overcome the fact that he has lost her (Lowry, 2008, 179-181). Jonas's emotions slowly begin to show toward Gabriel, the baby living temporarily in the same family unit, and to both his friends Fiona and Asher. Nonetheless, he regrets that they cannot reciprocate his feelings: *"He felt such love for Asher and for Fiona. But they could not feel it back, without the memories"* (Lowry, 2008, p. 171).

In the case of Roth's *Divergent*, personal relationships play a significant role in a person's life. The story is mainly focused on Tris' family, where the members have strong bonds. They are not ashamed to show love throughout the story, and Tris, now living apart from them in

a different faction, still thinks of her family members, which indicates that she genuinely misses them (Roth, 2013, p. 137, 209-210). After joining the Dauntless, Tris decides on a tattoo portraying three birds as a reminder of three family members that she left (Roth, 2013, p. 90). Strong emotions also manifest between the two main protagonists, Tris and Tobias, who fall in love. The importance of friendship also plays a significant role in *Divergent*, showing that even people from different factions are tightly connected.

Even though society follows the motto "faction before blood," family is the only thing that truly matters for some people. We can take Natalie Prior, Tris' mother, as an example of this statement. When hiding with Tris before soldiers, Natalie suggests that family is much more than a political system, saying: *"You're my daughter. I don't care about factions"* (Roth, 2013, p. 441). By the end of the novel, both Tris' parents die to protect her (Roth, 2013, p. 485), proving that people are able to sacrifice everything, including their lives, to save those they love.

A striking difference can be seen when it comes to the subject of family and friendship to show emotions and their reciprocation. *Divergent* is more based on relationships and family ties than *The Giver*, even though families and friends are separated because society's rules forbid them from visiting members from other factions. While the society in *Divergent* is divided into five factions, *The Giver* is based on togetherness and the complete elimination of emotions. It means that love does not truly exist in Lowry's world. People are being matched together in a way that society wants. Children are taken away from their parents and assigned to family units, proving that the families are not biological. People in *The Giver* do not understand it because they cannot feel mental pain. On the other hand, in *Divergent*, people know how painful it is to face the loss of children or parents, either because of their death or moving out from the faction of origin. In conclusion, from both novels, it can be seen that the nature of family is essential because love and its reciprocation is one of the basic human needs.

Conclusion

In recent years interest in dystopian writings has grown significantly. The age of the main protagonists is one of the reasons why dystopia is famous, especially among young adult readers. Most of them encounter numerous aspects in dystopian novels connected to their life situations; personal relationships, including family ties and first love; loneliness; the feeling of being different; and the effort to find their place in society. It is believed that dystopian writings bring us closer to the problems and worries of when they were written.

The theoretical part explained the differences between the main terms, utopia and dystopia, which are essential for understanding the central message of the thesis. Several worldwide novels, mentioned as examples of dystopian literature, also explained why this genre is so popular nowadays. The analytic part of the thesis aimed to find and compare various dystopian themes in two American novels: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth.

In both cases, people living in the imaginary worlds are controlled by a group of people who organize their lives. Even though people have some freedom of choice (more in *Divergent*, less in *The Giver*), their choices are still limited to a large extent. The people's lives in both novels are predetermined and, thus, hard to change. In the case of Jonas' story, the predetermined lives play an essential role; people's behaviour, relationships, and jobs are dictated by the Elders, leaving them almost no free will. In Roth's story, the young adults can choose a way of living, but these ways are still predestined, and the choice is permanent.

Both novels examined the importance of personal relationships and emotions. In both cases, human relationships are dying away. In *The Giver*, the reason for this is unawareness and inability to feel because the Elders decided to dispose of emotions without giving people the opportunity to decide for themselves. In *Divergent*, a cause for this is the division into factions, which does not allow people to visit their friends and family members living in a different faction.

The comparison of the main protagonists showed different motivations behind the acts and rebellion against society. Whereas Jonas wanted to get back opportunities taken away from each individual in his world, Tris only wanted to find her identity. It is also connected with the theme of violence. There are no signs of violence and no need for rebellion in *The Giver* because people have nothing to fight for due to their unawareness. When it comes to Jonas, his riot against the rules is almost innocent since he is only twelve years old. On the other hand, in *Divergent*, violence is one of the means of treating people, mainly in the Dauntless faction.

Generally, the need for rebellion shows us that there is something unfunctional in the system, something that has to be remedied.

In conclusion, Lois Lowry and Veronica Roth use similar dystopian themes to portray imaginary communities. However, these features are interpreted differently, making each novel unique. The knowledge of the dystopian texts leads humanity to realize that what we have nowadays, such as freedom of choice or equality between people, is not a matter of course. It is crucial to know the past that can help us solve the problems in the present and create a better place for a living. Thus, dystopian literature is an educational tool, showing humans that they should be grateful for everything because nothing can be taken for granted.

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Résumé

Bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem dystopie a dystopických rysů, přičemž je primárně zaměřena na analýzu a komparaci těchto rysů v literárních dílech *Dárce* od Lois Lowryové a *Divergence* od Veroniky Rothové. Teoretická část práce se soustřeďuje na charakterizování pojmu dystopie, následný výčet jejích rysů a v neposlední řadě definuje dystopii jako literární žánr. Analytická část je zaměřena na identifikaci dystopických prvků a následnou komparaci společných a rozdílných rysů ve zmíněných románech. Mimoto se práce zaměřuje také na rozdílné přístupy autorek k zobrazení odstrašujících vizí budoucí společnosti.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení	Veronika Hrdá
Katedra nebo ústav	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Petr Anténe, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby	2022

Název práce	Antiutopické rysy v knihách *Dárce* Lois Lowryové a *Divergence* Veroniky Rothové
Název v angličtině	Dystopian themes in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and Veronica Roth's *Divergent*
Anotace práce	Bakalářská práce se zabývá dystopickými tématy v amerických románech *Dárce* od Lois Lowryové a *Divergence* od Veroniky Rothové. Je rozdělena na dvě hlavní části: teoretickou a analytickou část. Cílem teoretické části je představit pojem dystopie a její využití jakožto literárního žánru. Analytická část práce se zaměřuje na zobrazení hlavních dystopických rysů v románech, zejména na kontrolu nad společností, ztrátu individuality a na manipulaci. Hlavním cílem je porovnat několik dystopických rysů v obou románech a prozkoumat jejich podobnosti a rozdíly.
Klíčová slova	utopie, dystopie, Lois Lowry, Veronica Roth, dystopické prvky, manipulace, strach
Anotace v angličtině	This bachelor thesis is concerned with the dystopian themes in American novels, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth. It is divided into two main parts: the theoretical and analytic parts. The theoretical part aims to introduce the concept of dystopia and its use as a literary genre. The analytic part of the thesis focuses on depicting major dystopian features in the novels, namely control over society, loss of individuality, and manipulation. The main goal is to compare several dystopian features in both novels and to examine their similarities and differences.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	utopia, dystopia, Lois Lowry, Veronica Roth, dystopian features, manipulation, fear
Přílohy vázané v práci	-
Rozsah práce	39
Jazyk práce	Anglický jazyk