

## THOUGHT CRIME: THE BARRIER TO THINK WITH THE FACTION FACTOR

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### ABSTRACT:

Aristotle is always right to have discovered one of the most binding factors which divide as well as unite a man, the entity of being in a society. When he means to tell his readers that man is a social animal, he means to say that man can also be tamed and trained like an animal when he is cornered or conditioned to do a specific task over a specific period without even telling him the reason as to why he should be doing it. The paper looks at the entity of thought, the removal of it, the introduction of oligarchy through collectivism which makes a man think only things he is dictated to think about. *The Divergent Series* explores the idea of dividing people so that they are confined to think what they have been asked to cite the welfare of the country as a whole. The paper looks at the way they are conditioned to do a piece of work through a series of tests which itself is a catalyst to make them devoid of independent thinking.

**KEY WORDS:** Faction, Divergent, Collectivism, Segmentation

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Science Fiction plots always have a burning question of what if? And the rest of the novel gets to answer the supposed premise. Every author tries to outline a problem, a nightmare, a fear factor which is imminent and tries to either warn or offer corrective measures to resolve it. Utopias and Dystopias do form a kernel of the science fictional universe because both of them have the society at its centre and its happenings at the periphery. On the whole, a writer is intensely dissatisfied with the current society and in case he wishes to create a better one from the existing one, there comes a utopia while the reverse of it makes space for a dystopia. One of the factors concerning dystopian writing is the element of extrapolation or even projection. Set in the far future, these fictional narratives create a bleak picture of the future and try to warn its readers concerning the perils of technological advancement in case society progresses the same way in a more linear manner.

Every Utopia or Dystopia thus created is an imagined present predicted in the future or the history of the present seen at the far- fetched prospective. A closer look at these works might also make one conclude that a utopia and a dystopia are nonetheless the same. The perfection is embellished to the core making one imagine a society close to utopia and hence it would rather be difficult to distinguish or even define the futuristic society which an author has envisioned.

To give an example, one could find the same in the novel *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley where the future is imagined of a cloned society that produces babies in factories. The words, mother, motherhood mean nothing at all, and breast feeding is itself seen as a taboo. More overtly, death is celebrated as a grand gala where the ones around the corpse rejoice at the sight of death. In a nutshell, the entity of pain is itself removed from the society created by Huxley. The word emotion is rendered obsolete because Mustafa Mond, the director of central hatcheries in the novel, wants to create a new world which is much more different from the perishable old world. The following is a quote from the novel which explicates the ambiance of the future. There are two distinct conflicts which the novel talks about, the first is the fragility of nature which is full of imperfections with death, disease and distress. The other is the world of scientific marvel where humans are cloned, they would be conditioned into being what is expected of them. There would be no physical handicaps and every cloned human would represent perfection. This is yet another example to show how the world of the future is perfectly imperfect by doing away with nature and clinging on to science.

For of course, said, Mr Foster, “in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred, that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we have to have a good choice. And of course, one must always have an enormous amount of safety. So, we allow as many as thirty percent of the female embryos to develop normally. Out of the realm of merely slavish imitation, of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention. (12)

Young Adult fiction or commonly called Y.A is also a kind of speculative fiction which is written to the teens between twelve and sixteen years of age. There is a premise where the young adults are given a problem which is social and contemporary like the use of drugs, alcoholism, unemployment or any other issue which would stand as a preparatory to these prospective adults to become proactive so that they come to decide things for themselves thereby they could confront a problem and take the bull by its horns. Roth was specific about the decision-making skills which would be the most paramount skill required for the young adults so that they understand that life is best when things are decided by one's own self by not allowing the others to decide for himself or herself. In a more categorical manner one could precisely come to a common consensus that *The Divergent Series* is a new beginning or a sequel to *The Hunger Games* because the latter is concerned about the problems of a society while the former deals with the problems of an individual. Roth warns her readers about the possibility of the government to intervene into the personal space of every single individual in case the people are more negligent about the ways and means of government or their governance.

The thought of writing this series came to her mind when the stock crash of 2008 had made a tremendous impact on the social as well as the personal life of the people. This was the second time the scenario was repeated after the great depression that struck the U.S in the year, 1929 which is called the wall street stock market crash. This was the time when the stocks at the New York Stock Exchange collapsed and the economy of the U.S had faced a severe downturn. This resulted in the increase in the problems of unemployment, the banks which went broke for the customers could not pay back their loans and much more. The same situation had a repeat in the year 2008 and Roth wanted to know the ways of the government in the financial crash. The situation was a humanitarian and a monetary crisis. This would have still worsened had the International Monetary Fund and the Central Bank of Europe had not held their helping hand in this crisis.

The defaulters could not pay, the inflation soared, and the banks had to shut down owing to severe economic beating. The quote below from the book, *the 2008 Global Financial Crisis in Retrospect* by Gyfi Zoega gives a glimpse of the crash which looks at race as one of the reasons for the downturn. The white people had claimed loans for they did not wish to be sidelined with the black people. They wanted housing allowances first and felt that the black people need not demand them when the needs of the low-income white people had not been fulfilled. This made the banking sector shell out huge loans of the ones who did not have a steady income and this specific group became the defaulters who insinuated the crash.

American housing policy and mortgage practice since the war had systematically favored home ownership for the white majority. In the 1990s, promoting home ownership for the lower income and undeserved minority communities became a congressional priority. Many of the new home owners were ethnic minorities who had been denied mortgages under the regime of redlining institutionalized by the New Deal Housing Policy. (24)

*The Divergent Series* is a post-apocalyptic novel set in the futuristic Chicago where the government decides the course of lives the citizens would have to live after they are administered by a battery of tests which would check their aptitude for contributing to the government through an aptitude test. The novel begins with the sense of routine, a more systematized life, to hint and assert the turn to the future where the central character sits for a haircut, a compulsory routine which surfaces on the second week of every third month, an indication of the date and time which is absent. The nameless narrator begins with her experiences she blurts out outlining the principles of the government. It is only after the novel runs through a couple of pages, does one know the name of the narrator, Beatrice. The faction precedes the name which is to show how much the personal lives of a citizen take a back seat giving priorities to their chosen personality. There is a mirror which is the room, a reminder of the way life is reflected in the future. Tris says that she is not allowed to look into the mirror too often because this would make her, self-conscious. The novel gives a eulogizing ode to the mother of the novelist, Veronica Roth and the same is seen when Tris begins to be in all praise for her mother as she had been the most selfless woman Tris ever knows. Their family is the one which belongs to the faction called abnegation, a sign of selflessness. This is seen under two contexts, the first is, despite the fact that the mother of the narrator is beautiful, she is not particular about exposing her beauty to the world outside, this is to show that she is selfless and puts the needs of the government before her own needs. The other is when Caleb, the older brother of Tris tries to offer a seat to a man in the bus because he belongs to the faction called abnegation who are known to serve the rest of them with a selfless nature.

There has been a very conscious effort taken by Roth to make sure that the novel belongs to the future where she employs a language which is coded, programmed and even cramped. There are also a few new coinages in the novel to show the novel is for the future and a warning to the present. The newspaper reading, which the narrator's father reads at the beginning of the novel is also sectioned. The citizens are given only the pieces of information which they require,

and the rest are sealed from them. Every faction is expected to do only what is expected of them. There is also a sense of conflict between them, an attempt made by the government to segregate them, through their faction as well as their communication. This is a kind of divide and rule where the people are divided by the opinions of the government, and they listen only to what is instructed by the government. The quote below looks at the novel's ominous beginning and the way the tone is set to keep the ball rolling.

I pause by the window in the E Wing and wait for the dauntless to arrive. I do this every morning. At exactly 7 :25; the Dauntless prove their bravery by jumping from the moving train. My father calls the Dauntless, hellions. They are pierced, tattooed and black clothed. Their primary purpose is to guard the fence that surrounds the city, from what, I don't know. They should perplex me. (7)

The faction system allows the government to make sure that there is no rebellion among the citizens so that they could be governed collectively. One of the sins which the administration perpetrates is the forbidding to think. There are no individual thoughts, there is no free will for anyone. Each one is expected to be within the confinements of the faction they belong to. There is always a section called the factionless who are the ones who fail the tests and are allowed to do menial jobs like being the garbage picker, construction worker or drivers at the rickety buses. These factionless do not get treated like the rest, they are the ones who are seen as destitute, and they never earn a penny for their jobs. All that they get is the stale food which they are supplied with for their labor. Even when one of the men from the factionless comes to encounter Tris, he asks her for some bread, but she gives him some apples instead. The novel on the whole looks at the way the government gets into the personal front of the lives of its subjects so that they do not think anything which the government forbids them to think.

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