

“Dauntless” in the Face of Adversity:
The Politics of Hope in Veronica Roth’s *Divergent Trilogy*

Sarah E. Griffith

Mount Saint Vincent University

A Thesis submitted to the Department of Child and Youth Study
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts (Child and Youth Study)

August, 2015

ABSTRACT

Since the turn of the millennium, there has been an increase in publication and popularity of dystopian narratives in young adult literature. Most contemporary research on the genre has focused on consideration of its popularity, and its merits and shortcomings, resulting in little consensus among scholars, often stemming from lack of a concrete definition of the term 'dystopia'. Differing from classical (Orwellian) dystopia, this thesis analyzes Veronica Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* and whether it conveys hope, based on the criteria of critical dystopia, those being recovery of history and protagonists' responsibility for their choices (Baccolini, 2003 & 2004), protagonists' political agency and the text's relatability to the reader (Donawerth, 2003), and the proposed addition of the young protagonists' unconscious and social sense of self, all considered within the context of Jacobs's (2005) philosophy of hope.

Using Jung's (1958) theory of integration, gender representation was found to be skewed, favouring the trilogy's male protagonist while undermining its female protagonist. This analysis provides evidence that the hero achieves integration and an unconscious sense of self, while the heroine does not, therefore compromising its standing in terms of how protagonists claimed responsibility for their choices given the heroine's disproportionate guilt.

Within the framework of reader reception and response theory, it was also determined that the *Divergent Trilogy* misrepresents and underrepresents racially and

sexually diverse characters. Succumbing to stereotypical racial and LGBTQI tropes, as well as ignoring qualities associated with class, the narrative does not exhibit recovery of history, and does not successfully extend its reach towards diverse teenagers, therefore failing in comprehensive relatability to its audience.

Finally, employing Erikson's (1964) psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion, and the importance of Jacobs's (2005) philosophy of hope, *Divergent's* hero and heroine were determined to have achieved their own political agency, along with a social sense of self among their chosen community.

Because the *Divergent Trilogy* fails to meet the majority critical dystopian standards, falling into stereotypical traps of misrepresentation in terms of gender and diversity, its overall conveyance of hope is weak. Implications of this analysis and other scholarly observations suggest that young adult literature has a way to go in terms of rectifying these shortcomings, but encouraging critical literacy in a young adult audience is imperative if they are to see and understand the social implications of these limitations in current contemporary young adult literature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sometimes, it is easy to empathize with Tris Prior's struggle in wanting to give up. There is a certain appeal to the idea of throwing in the towel and being done with the problems and anxieties that plague you. It was that very siren song of defeat that almost didn't make completion of this document possible. But it is complete, and I still stand undefeated, but only because of the support and understanding that I received when I was ready to welcome my own failure. I am therefore impelled to acknowledge that this document does not exist in a finalized form for my efforts alone. For a thesis that addresses hope that cannot exist on the level of the individual, this small victory pays homage to that philosophy.

I dedicate this to those who listened without judgement, when they were not obligated to, and when times were at their darkest, and my words did not make sense, not even to me.

I dedicate this to those who genuinely understood and validated my struggles, when others would have been quick to hold me personally accountable for the obstacles that I faced.

I dedicate this to those who let me cry and did not call me weak, and who reminded me of my strength for the fact that I was still going, however slowly.

I dedicate this to those who were patient, and did not demand my presence or attention when it was necessary for me to withdraw.

I dedicate this to those who helped me stand, and who held me up, when others would have let me fall.

I dedicate this to those who believed in me, when I could not believe in myself.

Thank you. You know who you are.

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Chapter 1

Critical Dystopias and Veronica Roth's *Divergent Trilogy*: An Introduction

Dystopia in young adult fiction began to come to critical attention with works such as William Sleator's *House of Stairs* in 1974, and later with the widely acclaimed *The Giver* by Lois Lowry in 1994. The past fifteen years have yielded an abundance of popular titles, some examples being M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002), Neal Shusterman's *Unwind* (2007), Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* (2008), Lauren Oliver's *Delirium* (2011), Lauren DeStefano's *Perfect Ruin* (2013) and, the subject of this study, Veronica Roth's *Divergent Trilogy*, spanning 2011 to 2013. Some scholars have believed it unlikely that dystopian narratives would be popular among teenagers (Nilsen & Donelson, 1989, p. 209), but earlier and contemporary works suggest otherwise. Their successes provide ample evidence for adolescent interest in the dismal, dark themes that explore and critique society and its underpinnings, and caution the reader about how present day choices and decisions affect the near and distant future. As a result, Nilsen & Donelson, who had claimed that young readers have "no wish to think about societal issues, let alone read about them" (p. 209), have amended this view (2009).

Given that the nature of themes embedded in these thought-provoking narratives about societies turned morally and ethically corrupt are typically packed with action,

suspense and the relativity of good and evil, it is not difficult to comprehend teen interest in and engagement with dystopian literature. At the center of the chaos and suspense, young adult dystopian novels feature young protagonists who, like the adolescent reader, are “questioning the underlying values of a flawed society and [their] identity within [it],” so that young adult readers can allegedly connect with the heroes and heroines of these captivating stories (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 14).

Hintz & Ostry (2003) observe that through utopian (and dystopian) writing, a young audience learns about “governance, the possibility of improving society, the role of the individual and the limits of freedom” (p. 17). The latter theme is significant to teenagers as they explore and realize the agency and limitations of their coming of age (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 14). In addition to this exploration of freedom and realization of individuality, Scholes and Ostenson (2013) recognize that the overarching themes of agency, moral choice, isolation, and the platonic and romantic relationships that drive dystopian narratives are specifically relevant for teenagers in that they are “an appropriate fit with the intellectual changes that occur during adolescence” (p. 14). As teens approach adulthood, they are able to grasp concepts that they may have previously found irrelevant, and engage in critical thinking about society and the world at large. As the black and white dichotomies they understood as children begin to dissolve to reveal an expanse of grey area, the transition can lead them to develop more complex values and opinions, as they encounter uncertainty regarding their identities and futures (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 14). Not only, then, is youth interest in dystopia explainable, but with the pedagogical insights into fictional societies corresponding to key interests in adolescent emotional and cognitive development, the literature can serve

as a means for teenagers to engage in a mental playground to “consider [their] reality” (Ames, 2013, p. 6), and vicariously, to contemplate themselves acting within the limits of that reality.

The publication of dystopian young adult literature has spiked, as has teen interest in the bleak, fictitious futures. The reasons are currently speculative, but there is no shortage of theories for the rapid escalation in interest. Ames (2013) notes that, while the themes have been present in young adult literature for decades, there has been a noteworthy trend in their abundance and popularity in young adult dystopias. She suggests that some millennial crises have spurred augmented youth interest in political themes, posing the 2001 attack on the New York World Trade and Convention centre and the succeeding events as one example (p. 18), and that these dystopian works provide “safe confines to wrestle with them” (p. 3). This is congruent with Zipes’ (2003) powerful statement, in his forward prefacing Hintz & Ostry’s *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*, that “We are living in very troubled times. More than ever before, we need utopian and dystopian literature” so as to “provide hope for a more humane world” (p. 12). While there likely has never been a point in history where humanity has not been faced with darkness, danger, or discontent, Zipes, like Ames, alludes specifically to the claim that in light of disasters such as 9/11, “American children are becoming more controlled, every minute of their time measured out in supervised, organized activity, and increasingly influenced by the market and media,” and that as children and adolescents are increasingly more controlled, “the need for books that address the desire for agency increase” (Hintz & Ostry, 2003, p. 32).

Zipes continues with the assertion that while these narratives may stem from a “lack we feel in our lives, a discernable discontentment, and a yearning for a better condition or world,” (p. 12) the pursuit of this very perfection—this utopia—can, and most likely would, also lead to rigid and totalitarian societies (p. 14). For young adults, this cautionary depiction, the quintessential impossibility of social perfection and harmony, may be particularly significant as their binaries—black and white, good and bad—begin to fade with cognitive maturation, and as they weigh the merits and the means of improving their lives and the imperfect world in which they live. Finally, corresponding to both Ames’s and Zipes’s arguments on dystopian appeal for Western teenagers, Morrissey (2013) states that we live “crisis to crisis,” going on to observe “we live in dystopian times, and young readers know it, which is why the subgenre is so popular.” (p. 190). In addition, “[dystopian] writers challenge young readers to understand that there are ways to make sense out of our times and to salvage our future.”(p. 190). With political and economic disasters exposing youth to the darker mechanisms of life and society, dystopian themes might lead them to realize the economically as well as physically secure futures that their parents possibly envisioned are farther from their reach than they may have been raised to believe.

Barring differences and disagreements in the varied contexts of scholarly opinions, what is perhaps the leading theory for the rise in popularity for dystopian young adult literature in North America is clear enough. Whether due to contemporary crises (Ames, 2013), or even through the more rapid sharing of news and information through social media and the internet, (Dutta-Bergman, 2006, p. 109), teens are becoming more aware of worldly injustices and frightening reality. Therefore, not only

are they relating to the motifs in these narratives on a developmental level, but are consuming them with heightened social criticism. Ames (2013) points out that the popularity in the dystopian trend indicates teenagers “may be disheartened by contemporary politics and current events.” The consequence of these strong sentiments of fear and despair for their future implies that “they are willing to entertain social critiques” (p. 18). Perhaps, however, the more important query is not necessarily what draws teenagers to these ominous futures and corrupt societies that impose oppression in the most nefarious and misguided of ways, but what they are taking away from the narratives and how they influence the way a young person perceives society, as well as their view of the future. In other words, examining how a fiction is affecting them, or if it is affecting them at all, may serve as a means to shed valuable light on not only the popularity of dystopia among today’s young adults, but how their concept of present day reality, and their hope for and/or dejection about the future may be affected by this prevalent theme.

A reader’s reception of, and mental and emotional response to, a novel can be shaped by both what the story includes, as well as what it excludes, in terms of plot devices, character arcs and ultimately anything that leads to or hinders what can be considered an encouraging resolution of plot trajectories and character development. In examining utopian and, alternatively, dystopian literature, scholars have determined two essential elements that define and validate the utopian/dystopian endeavor in these narratives. These elements consist of: desire for a “better way of being” (Moran, 2003, p. 184) and hope “for a better world” (Weik Von Mossner, 2013, p. 72). This concept of

hope is of particular interest to scholars studying teen reception to these texts, as well as some authors of young adult fiction.

Weik Von Mossner (2013) states that some would consider it unethical for writers of young adult fiction “not to provide this glimmer of hope” (p. 71) in their novels.

The catastrophic scenario must be devastating enough to create a fully realized dystopia,” she asserts, “yet salvageable enough for the protagonist to survive and even thrive in these altered conditions, requiring a balancing act that may threaten the very possibility of the dystopian world. (p. 72)

Lois Lowry, author of the award winning dystopian middle-grade novel *The Giver*, concurs with this school of thought. Given that “Young people handle dystopia every day: in their lives, their dysfunctional families, their violence-ridden schools,” she declares in an interview with Hintz and Ostry (2003), “I can’t imagine writing a book that doesn’t have a hopeful ending” (p. 254). Considering a despairingly bleak conclusion to a narrative could have the potential to inspire equally dismal expectations for the outcome of any given crisis, this proclamation, the necessity of ending young adult novels on an encouraging note, can be said to hold its ground.

Despite the belief collective belief that dystopian narratives for young adults should provide a glimmer of hope, the measure of it is largely dependent on the uniqueness of individual narratives, as well as the interpretation of what constitutes a dystopia. Herein lies a prominent obstacle in critiquing these genres: the lack of widespread agreement within the research community regarding a definition of dystopia. Scholars have a tendency to describe rather than define the concept, and

instead refer to specific elements that should be present in order for a work to be considered dystopian. Hintz, Basu and Broad's (2013) simplified definition of dystopian fiction is that of a "non-existent societ[y] intended to be read as "considerably worse" than the reader's own" (p. 2). This oversimplification, however, leaves too much unaccounted for, such as the relativity of the reader's outlook on his or her own society in comparison to the fictional society portrayed in the narrative.

In a subsequent essay, however, Basu (2013) goes on to discuss the far more complex rhetorical model of dystopia suggested by Rob McAlear (2010), who proposes distinctions between dystopias and anti-dystopias, as well as utopias and anti-utopias, all of which correspond to the "politics of social change" in respect to the fictional society's goals, how it proceeds to realize these goals, and the social perceptions, desires and understandings of the people under the rule of the society (p. 29). These discrepancies, however, directly conflict with the school of thought of those scholars who assert dystopia and utopia represent a "false dichotomy" (Totaro, 2003, p. 167). Zipes (2003) illustrates this with the paradox: "Without discontent, there is no utopia" (p. 12). A realization that the world can and must be improved, could drive a keen desire for change borne of extreme dissatisfaction. These contradictory proposals likewise leave the pivotal element of hope in young adult dystopian literature open for interpretation, with the potential to turn arguments circular and resting on no solid conclusion.

With the propensity of theories and rhetoric, to oversimplifications or else a lack of consistency and agreement in definitions, it is not difficult to understand why scholars resort to describing and explaining in lieu of defining the concept. Scholes and

Ostenson (2013) propose a number of components that may cast a dystopian shadow on a narrative, which can include but are not necessarily limited to, an excessive measure of policy and unjust laws, media manipulation and propaganda, pressure to conform, attempts to erase or revise history, limited or complete lack of individual freedom, division of people into privileged and unprivileged groups, economic manipulation, flawed, misunderstood, or abused advances in science and technology, and suppression of emotions. (p. 11)

Whether or not a narrative missing any number of these elements excludes it from a dystopian theme remains speculative, and a final element that the authors suggest in direct contradiction of what many scholars assert, is that young adult literature must include “little hope for change” (p. 11). In her Masters thesis, Robertson (2005) points out that

It is as if ‘dystopia’ is such a familiar term that its meaning is assumed, and no need is felt on the critical front to clearly define it as anything more than a work of literature which portrays a setting in which one would not want to live. (p. 10)

In the study of young adult literature, this observation leads to deliberations about how to determine what is essential to promote hope in a dark setting. If there is no agreement on the fundamentals of a dystopian narrative, then there is, likewise, no operational way in which to determine what constitutes a “glimmer of hope” (Weik Von Mossner, 2013, p. 71).

Among the abundance of scholarly and popular interpretations of dystopia, one which encompasses and establishes the necessity for hope is that of the critical dystopia,

a form which is observed to “maintain a utopian core” (Baccolini, 2000, p. 13; as cited in Moylan, 2000,

p. 188). The term was first used by Lyman Tower Sargent (2001), who vaguely describes it as a

non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia. (p. 222)

In addition, it comprises a dystopian form which “interrogate[s] both society and [its] genetic predecessors” (Moylan, 2000, p. 188), but the term itself still appears to lack a clear, concrete definition. It is viewed in contrast to the classical Orwellian dystopia, due to the presence of historical awareness and agency, both of which contribute to the potential for hope.

In light of Sargent’s lengthy but vague definition, other scholars have attempted to further clarify the term by proposing what it must include. Baccolini (2003) presents a sound comparison of classical and critical dystopias as pertaining to both history and agency, stating that “whereas the protagonists, in classical dystopia, usually do not get any control over history and the past, in the critical dystopia the recovery of history is an important element for the survival of hope.” (p. 115). This more recent take on dystopia “negate[s] static ideals, preserves radical actions, and creates a space in which opposition can be articulated and received” (Baccolini, 2000, p. 17). Baccolini emphasizes acquaintance with history and how it can beget reclamation of control,

highlighting the importance of learning about, or simply not forgetting, the roots from which society has developed.

Maintaining historical reference is not the only aspect of a critical dystopia, but it sheds light on other important factors that distinguish it from a classical Orwellian definition. In contrast to a classical dystopia as one in which protagonists have no control over the past, in a critical dystopia, the “recovery of history” is essential for the persistence of hope. The basis for the critical dystopia, therefore, appears to directly rest with the protagonists, their knowledge of the past, awareness of the present, and their desire for a better future achieved by realistic means as opposed to a nostalgic return to bygone times (Baccolini, 2003, p. 115-116).

Baccolini (2004) further posits that “awareness and responsibility are conditions of the critical dystopia’s citizens,” and clarifies that the ending of a critical dystopian novel “leaves its characters to deal with their choices and [those] responsibilities” (p. 251). This includes both the decisions of the protagonists as well as the villains portrayed as responsible for the dystopian regime; in both cases, the onus for any given action ultimately rests with the individual, a message that can further serve to dissolve the good-and-evil dichotomy. Not only does it underline that no action is without consequence, but also that however genuine the intentions, even allegedly “good” people can and will make decisions that, in a particular light, are unfavourable. Unlike cartoon heroes and villains, the alleged “bad guys” have a vision for a positive future or solution to a problem. That said, although it often it comes at ethical expense, there is nothing to say the hero, desperate to stop them, will fully adhere to an ethical framework to achieve their own goal. Good and evil in these cases are not binary, but

relative terms, and teens can become more familiar with and explore this dimension through their critical engagement of dystopian fiction.

Baccolini's interpretation of the fundamentals of Sargent's critical dystopia is one that establishes a compelling argument about accountability and the acceptance of personal responsibility, and how both can create a "locus of resistant hope and subversive tension in an otherwise pessimistic genre" (Baccolini, 2000, p. 30) and, subsequently, "lay the foundations of utopian change" (Baccolini, 2004, p. 251). In relation to young readers, who struggle with their attitudes towards an uncertain future, the message may be particularly influential. At face value, believing that one's actions and decisions have a direct impact on their future can appear daunting and overwhelming, but the purpose of a critical dystopia is not to point fingers, ascribe blame or draw attention to the fault of an individual for the miserable condition of the dystopian society. Instead, this agency has the potential to empower the young adult reader by correlating hope with knowledge and understanding of the conditions of the past, and awareness of agency and the capacity to incite change.

Despite the upsurge of dystopian themes in young adult literature in the last fifteen years, and the immense popularity that some such titles have gained among teen readers, not all narratives that supposedly promote the notion of hope should, however, be considered critical dystopias. Weik Von Mossner (2013) cites Donawerth (2003) in claiming that "critical dystopian texts articulate a specific political agency not only on the level of the narrative but also in terms of the reader's relationship to the world" (p. 70). Returning to the notion of the narrative influence on the reader's self-perception, and the world and society that surrounds them, Donawerth's point suggests a

compatible dynamic between the reader and the text, and the reader and their world. More specifically, if the narrative does not encourage critical insight into one's world in such a way that it fosters hope in respect to personal agency and aptitude, then it is not an example of a critical dystopia. For the purpose of this thesis, I examine the contemporary young adult dystopian series, *The Divergent Trilogy* by Veronica Roth, for its potential to be considered a critical dystopia, taking into consideration the interpretations and extrapolations of the term by Baccolini and Donawerth.

The dystopian society illustrated in *The Divergent Trilogy*, consisting of *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012), and *Allegiant* (2013), takes place in futuristic Chicago, isolated from the rest of the world by a guarded fence and governed by a strict social protocol. In an attempt to moderate the flaws of human personality, which is assumed to be the core foundation of devastating wars of the past, and therefore "humankind's inclination toward evil" (Roth, 2011, p. 42), citizens are divided into five distinct factions, each with unique values and practices encompassing the virtue it represents. In the endeavour to maintain a balanced and functional society, the composite faction system includes Abnegation, the selfless; Dauntless, the brave; Erudite, the intelligent; Amity, the kind; and Candor, the honest. An individual may belong only to one faction, and is expected to master and embody only one virtue and conduct. At the age of sixteen, young citizens undergo an aptitude test prompted by a hallucinogenic serum designed to reveal an inherent inclination for the faction to which they should ideally belong.

Should an individual forsake their faction or fail their initiation, they become factionless; outcasts of the system, they are delegated the most unfavourable jobs and

excommunicated as members of the city (Roth, 2011, p. 25). This failure to conform within the faction system stems beyond shame and discomfort, however, for “To live factionless is not just to live in poverty and discomfort; it is to live divorced from society, separated from the most important thing in life: community” (p. 20). So adhered are the citizens of Chicago to the faction system that they believe that without a faction, their life is purposeless and void of worth. Conformity to one of five ways, therefore, represents not only a social standard, but lends personal meaning to life—for better or for worse.

The series opens with Beatrice Prior, a sixteen-year-old girl born to an Abnegation family who discovers she has an aptitude for three distinct factions, classifying her as Divergent—a result that she is advised not to reveal, because the penalty is execution. The rare classification brands her as a threat to society in that those who exhibit multiple aptitudes are observed to exhibit the ability to resist the influence of serums designed to exert direct control over their minds and bodies. Aside from the blatant social control that grips Chicago’s citizens, and the inequality that rises out of the factionless’ lack of conformity, the idea of divergence poses a threat to the system because it inhibits control, and the consequences for being discovered as Divergent—imminent death—unveils Chicago is a dystopia borne of a corrupted illusion of a peaceful, harmonic, functional society. All would be well should everyone conform to one of the five factions—or not conform at all, and live a factionless life—but individual differences cannot be accounted for, and evidently, being too good, or having an aptitude to represent more than one faction and embody more than one virtue, will disrupt the community’s delicate balance, and thus must result in death.

On leaving home, Beatrice adopts the moniker “Tris” by which she is most frequently referred for the remainder of the trilogy, and heeds the advice of a concerned ally to remain discreet about her divergence. She transfers to the Dauntless faction, where she meets a young man called “Four”, formerly Tobias Eaton (a name he later re-adopts) who also transferred from Abnegation and who is likewise classified as Divergent. Common to young adult fiction, (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 17) the two discover intimacy, mutual chemistry and explore feelings for one another, while they simultaneously begin to detect the underpinnings of corruption within their society once the immoral schemes of overzealous governing figureheads come to light. As the trilogy progresses, Tris and Tobias work together with a wide array of allies to uncover the secrets behind Chicago and its faction system, the implications of being Divergent, and socio-political influence of the world beyond the fence that has kept them ignorant and controlled for years. Meanwhile, through these shocking discoveries, they unearth more about themselves as individuals, about each other as friends and romantic companions, and discover the “hidden price of utopia” in that it is “built on the suffering of others” and “characterized by who it excludes and why, and by the labeling of the outside as ‘barbaric’” (Mendlesohn, 2003, p. 516).

Measuring the merit of a narrative as being a critical dystopia is arguably as challenging as concretizing the definition of dystopia itself. Robertson (2005) suggests the greatest issue that afflicts prevalent definitions of dystopia is

that they have become so closely attentive to the social critiques operating in the dystopian classics that they have taken these temporally specific aspects of classic

dystopian novels as qualities that should be assumed as inherent in all dystopian fiction. (p.9)

Essentially, these classic expectations are dated, given that the term surfaced and found a place in the English lexicon in 1952 (Robertson, 2005, p. 5). Adamantly maintaining the qualities of definitions that emerged when literature was influenced by social conditions specific to its era stunts the term's ability to change and encompass events and particularities of contemporary society.

Another facet to consider is that the definitions of dystopia and critical dystopia have been examined in light of literature geared primarily towards adult audiences. The issues of young adult literature, including but not limited to pregnancy, family conflicts, divorce, racism, substance abuse, and political injustice are relevant to teens who experience or encounter such crises, and may provide an indirect means of coping (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 638). Although these crises are not exclusive to the lives of teenagers, the task of discovering oneself during the transition from adolescence to adulthood can be a struggle during this period (Weise Taubenheim, 1979, p.518), and the outcome of which may be affected by intense external stressors. Because these themes manifest more prominently in young adult literature, and are emphasized with more meaning to the intended audience, superimposing the definition of dystopia or critical dystopia may yield an inaccurate analysis. My intent is not to redefine dystopia, but to adapt the concept of critical dystopia as pertaining to the components of young adult literature, and to explore Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* as a potential critical dystopia in light of this specific adaptation.

For this thesis, the standards for the young adult critical dystopia that I propose use Baccolini's (2003; 2004) ideas of the recovery of history/past awareness, and the assumption of responsibility for choices made, as well as Donawerth's (2003) notion of political agency, and the relationship between the reader and the narrative as compared to his or her relationship to their world. In addition, corresponding with identity development and the evolution of personal values (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 638), I include the concept of a sense of self as a means for young readers to "better understand how they are being constructed in texts and how such constructions compare with their own attempts to form their identities" (p. 639). Finally, given that the pivotal feature of critical dystopias which distinguish them from classical dystopias is that of inspiring realistic hope, the interpretation of the term that I incorporate as a reference point is that of Dale Jacobs's (2005) theory of hope and pedagogy. "Hope is only possible on the level of *us*," (p. 784) Jacobs claims, adding that it must not be "confuse[d] with ambition," (Jacobs, 2005, p. 785) which resides on the level of the individual. Using his suggestion that hope is "social in nature, rather than individual" (p. 785), and that it invariably "rests in a collective, rather than an individual future" (p. 786), the focus of this thesis spans beyond the heroic accomplishments of the individual protagonists, and explores their roles among people who accept and reject them, follow and abandon them; of their friends as well as their enemies. Jacobs clarifies that "seeing oneself as part of a larger social fabric of responsibility provides the impetus for people to consider how exercise of their individual agency affects the world and the people in it" (p. 788).

As teens born post-millennium anticipate facing dark times, this communal hope can be particularly relevant to their concerns. Realizing the relationship between agency

and hopeful outcomes does not connote the change that a single individual can incite, but how his or her actions can inspire others collectively towards an encouraging future. This approach “anchor[s] the individual to the social even when not in the presence of others” (Jacobs, 2005, p. 788), and in the face of despair, hope’s perpetual adversary (p. 792), believing in a communal endeavour towards positive change can be enough to remind an individual that they are not alone in their struggles, and therefore need not combat those struggles alone. Hope, therefore, is not contained in the individual; that context, instead, connotes desire, which serves as another threat to a collective hope, if the desire is not shared by others (Jacobs, 2005, p. 786). It exists only when it is nurtured by a community that believes the burden of positive social change is a shared charge; it is because the weight of hope is equally distributed that no individual feels the need to bear such a responsibility alone.

Many dystopian stories feature a hero, a protagonist charged with making the change. In light of Jacobs’s communal interpretation of hope, however, this thesis will examine how their actions affect their world, and how their world and the people in it likewise influence their decisions. Ultimately, the collective outcome of the analyses of these principles of critical dystopias, combined with how the textual features they expose either support or antagonize collective hope, is what I propose will ultimately determine the measure of hope in Roth’s *Divergent Trilogy*.

In the following four chapters, I closely examine the themes, plot features, and character arcs in the *Divergent Trilogy* by drawing on a number of theoretical frameworks to explore five principles of a young adult critical dystopia to determine the final measure of hope. First, using the principles of Carl Jung’s (1958) anima and

animus, and the shadow self, I consider the character development of the trilogy's two protagonists by exploring the implications of a hero/heroine dyad and the representations of the leading male and female roles, their relationship, dependence and autonomy. The themes of independence and interdependence and how they shape unconscious identity, choices and consequences, and what the protagonists represent to one another will be explored in light of the relationship between Tris and Tobias. Furthermore, the implications of the roles and actions of hero and heroine will be discussed in terms of how they are represented regarding their gender, and whether these protagonists (and their actions) can be considered representative of hope.

Secondly, I address racialized and gender identities and the prevalence of socially normative ideals in the world of the *Divergent Trilogy*. Drawing on the insights of scholars who have investigated reader reception and response theories, I explore whitewashing and the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of characters. This includes transient and supporting characters, portrayed as being of diverse racial backgrounds, as well as the shadows of homosexuality in a predominantly heterosexual society. The contribution to an overall measure of hope will correspond primarily to the connection to and awareness of history of oppression, and diverse reader relation to *Divergent's* characters and fictional society as compared to the norms and values of their own contemporary society.

In the third chapter, using the framework of Erik Erikson's (1963) psychosocial stages of development (in particular that of adolescent identity crisis), I will discuss the ideas of agency and empowerment. Through this lens, I examine individual factions and the comprehensive faction system of futuristic Chicago, the struggle for free will when

being sorted into distinct categories, and what that implies for the political agency of the rebels fighting the corrupt government system. I also examine the roles of children versus adults in this setting, and the implications of the young largely assuming the roles as heroes, and the elders portrayed as villains. In this light, the tendency for the young to make more ethical decisions than their adult counterparts, and to rise above the higher power to serve as catalysts of hope and new possibilities will be explored. Aspects of hope will be determined by the young characters' potential to discover themselves apart from the corrupt system and find a place among others who contribute to a genuine sense of community at the dissolution of the dystopian regime, and whether or not the political agency of the characters is largely driven by collective effort.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss how and why the *Divergent Trilogy* ultimately does not meet the standards that I have proposed constitute a young adult critical dystopia. The teen attraction towards and popularity of the trilogy will also be considered, pending its impact on an overall contemporary measure of hope, in both its positive influences and hindrances of the concept. Finally, inferences of the proposed assessment are considered in terms of how trends in contemporary young adult fiction lend themselves to classical dystopian themes and critical dystopian narratives. These observations and reflections may ultimately provide insight into critical assessment of young adult dystopian fiction, and bring to light the ways in which certain tendencies found in these novels either promote or discourage the idea of collective hope for the future. Furthermore, this in-depth analysis will not only provide the foundations for a close critical analysis of teen works bearing dystopian themes, upon which future scholars might build, but the limitations and potential improvements of this model

measuring a critical young adult dystopia are also discussed, along with contemporary teens' potential for critical readings of dystopian narratives.

Chapter 2

Gender and Divergence: A Jungian Analysis of *Divergent*'s Heroine and Hero

This chapter utilizes Carl Jung's theory of integration to analyze the differences in gender representation between *Divergent*'s male and female protagonists, and its implications in light of a critical dystopia. While the trilogy meets the critical dystopian standard of heroes/heroines taking responsibility for their mistakes, Tobias successfully achieves syzygy and accomplishes a balanced, unconscious sense of self, while Tris does not achieve integration, and struggles with her demons until her death. These findings advise that the *Divergent Trilogy*'s standing in terms of a critical young adult dystopia is undermined by the problematic nuances of gender identity and the outcome of an unconscious sense of self for its heroine, compared to the textbook-perfect outcome of its hero. Furthermore, this suggests that the absence of cop-out endings and damsels in distress tropes alone do not assure an empowering female protagonist, and illuminates the need for young adult heroines who need not exhibit masculine qualities in order to be considered strong and successful.

On the subject of gender representation in literature, Garcia (2013) points out that headway is being made on the empowerment of women in young adult novels. "Women are fighting, leading, and generally kicking a lot more ass than traditional

readers might expect in today's books," (p. 77) he acknowledges. While these factors might contribute to adolescents' attraction to these narratives and their heroes, there remain a number of particularly limiting and disabling tropes that young adult literature, dystopian or otherwise, have yet to overcome. Garcia further observes that despite the physical power and supposed intellectual superiority attributed to female characters, "depictions of traditional femininity still finds these characters as subservient and meek," as well as "jealous" (p. 77). Furthermore, the power bestowed on these heroines is defined in limiting ways, considering that they are, for the most part, "white, traditionally beautiful, and heterosexual," and subscribe to societal views of female image and identity which are considered "normal" (pp. 77-78).

The construction of male identity in young adult literature is, likewise, not without its defects. While women are constructed through what Garcia perceives as socially normative in terms of identity, male identity is more complicated to determine, in that it is developed "largely as a result of what is absent within current young adult novels" (p. 83). Garcia posits that male identity in young adult literature is limited for three main reasons: firstly, young adult literature is largely written by women (p. 83); secondly, novels intended for a predominantly male audience "fall into readily identifiable tropes," bearing themes that concern sports, urban violence, and survival, and genres such as fantasy and science fiction, with few exceptions; and, finally, Garcia observes that male readers "may skip the YA genre entirely" (p. 84).

Considering how these observations pertain to the genre's assumed audience seems to affect the way in which male identity is more complicated in young adult fiction. This issue has implications for the assumptions regarding male readers. If there

is truth to the statement that many adolescent males do not partake of the YA genre, male identity may be more complicated in that it is undermined, less developed, or less explored than female identity. On this note, Garcia goes on to argue, "In looking at these limiting forms of male identity constructed within YA texts, it is also worth considering that the YA constructions of male readers imply, to an extent, that males are not avid readers" (2013, p. 84). Based on that possibility, the supposed lack of defined male identity in young adult texts could lead to further sexist assumptions, in that it implies that young adult literature is being consumed only by females, and that there is little point in making male identity stand out, based on the unfair supposition that females may not care much about a hero's character development versus that of a heroine's.

While these observations summarize complications in reference to the construction of female and male identity in young adult literature, none of this is to say that the relationships between heroines or heroes, and their counterparts of the opposite gender, bear no significance. Garcia takes the argument full circle and suggest that these relationships are constructed for romantic intrigue, thus returning to the assumption that readers of young adult fiction are predominantly female (2013, p. 84). Others, such as Scholes & Ostenson (2013) argue for the merits and importance of relations between characters depicted in these novels: "Dystopian fiction is not compelling to teens **because** of its romantic relationships," but rather "it is the nature of those relationships as depicted in this genre that speaks to young readers" (p. 18; emphasis in original). They posit that as young protagonists gradually understand the flaws at the core of their society, "this growing awareness can isolate them from others around them" (p. 17). Furthermore, they observe that "the actions they take and even their increased

understanding of the truth are often aided by a relationship of some kind with another character in the story” (p. 17), which serves to offset this feeling of isolation, and can also reassure them that they are not alone in their opposition to oppression.

Often, it is these very friendships and romantic relationships in young adult literature that “expose the protagonists to different opinions and perceptions of life” (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 18), and can therefore serve as the “catalyst for both the protagonist’s changing perceptions about the society and his or her willingness to take action that runs counter to conventions of that society” (p. 17). These arguments, then, lend credence to the significance of friendships and romantic relationships in young adult dystopian fiction. Such relationships go beyond exploring sexuality in acknowledging that intimacy includes more than physical attraction, and that to strongly connect with another person can powerfully affect “the way you see the world, the actions you take, and the level of responsibility you feel toward another person” (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, pp. 18-19). Beyond young love and sexual awakening, relationships in young adult literature demonstrate that the protagonists are not considering their world with self-centered tunnel vision; emotional connection to another person urges them to consider how their actions might affect the people they care about, and their world as a whole. This suggests that romance and relationships in young adult literature does not encompass the sole purpose of aesthetic appeal for teens.

The problematic construction of gender representation in young adult literature paired with the marked occurrence of relationships in dystopian themes results in an uneasy congruency between these two components. Specifically, it raises the question as to whether the perceived significance of relationships in young adult dystopian

literature ignores problematic constructions of gender, or worse, celebrates—however unintentionally—the perpetuation of these tropes considered “normative” (Garcia, 2013, p. 78). Conversely, the question is whether the genre challenges traditional gender depictions by presenting protagonists with opportunities to fully discover themselves and realize agency through connection with another person (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 17). Weighing these generalized assumptions against Veronica Roth’s protagonists, Beatrice Prior (“Tris”) and Tobias Eaton (“Four”), yields some insight into these arguments and elucidates the questions that they raise.

Since gender bias is a largely unconscious mechanism (Garcia, Weber & Kiran Garimella, 2014, p. 131), it can be challenging to systematically analyze, as many tropes are embedded in the social consciousness. To determine whether or not a medium warrants closer inspection for gender inequality, some scholars apply the Bechdel Test to define women’s roles and if their behaviour is stereotypically female (Garcia, Weber & Kiran Garimella, 2014, p.131). Originally established by Alison Bechdel in 1985 as a punchline about gender roles in her comic strip “The Rule,” the Bechdel Test asks three questions to determine the role of women in fiction: “Does the work feature at least two main women?”, “Do they talk to each other?”, “Do they talk about something besides a man?” (Garcia, Weber & Kiran Garimella, 2014, p. 131). Should any of these result in the answer ‘no’, the medium is deemed to have failed.

By Bechdel test standards, the *Divergent Trilogy* warrants close inspection of gender roles. The trilogy features more than one ‘main’ woman, but only under the subjective judgement that Tris’s best friend, Christina, who is fundamentally presented as a sidekick, is awarded enough of a presence to be considered a strong, supporting

role. They talk and interact frequently, and do hold conversations that encompass more than discussions revolving around men, but not often. Tris and Christina's friendship largely hinges on romantic intrigues, predominantly Christina's crush on, and later, romance, with their mutual friend, Will, and occasionally Tris's fascination, and later, romance, with Tobias. Even after Will dies, towards the end of the first book, he remains the source of tension between Christina and Tris. Ultimately, the *Divergent Trilogy* appears to fail the Bechdel Test, suggesting that gender roles in this series require closer attention.

In terms of plot trajectory, it seems as though *Divergent's* female and male protagonists, Tris and Tobias, partake of similar journeys on a comparatively equal footing. Both are Abnegation-born transfers into Dauntless, who sense that something is suspiciously amiss in Chicago's government, a cause that draws them together beyond physical and emotional attraction. Both have negative past experiences and current anxieties, from confusion and conflict in relationships with their parents, which in turn inspires their drive for self-exploration and discovery. Although they appear to be navigating similar territory, the presence of these themes in both character arcs alone is not enough to determine the nature of each character's agency.

It is the way in which the themes of this narrative function, what inspires the protagonists and how they come to reconcile their personal demons that lends more insight into the drive behind their behaviours and actions, thereby painting a more comprehensive picture of gender representation. With gender being central to this chapter's analysis, a fitting method by which to investigate components of the protagonists' gendered identities is the application of Carl Jung's theory of

individuation, where the development of personality can be examined through the roles of archetypes (Shelburne, 1988, p. 15). In this case the shadow self, the anima, and the animus are examined (Jung, 1958, pp. 6-19).

Jung introduces his theory of differentiation by delineating the notion of the personal unconscious as that which is “acquired during the individual’s lifetime” (Jung, 1958, p. 6). This is in contradistinction to that of the collective unconscious, consisting of archetypes, or “categories of objects, people, and situations that have existed across evolutionary time” that are said to exist in the mind from birth and profoundly influence the nature of one’s “happiness, self-understanding, and effectiveness” (Walters, 1994, pp. 287 & 290). This happiness and self-understanding is contingent on the ability to become aware of and confront these archetypes and ultimately integrate the conscious and unconscious selves to form a “healthy, well-adjusted, mature personality” (Walters, 1994, p. 290). Failure to confront and reconcile the archetypes, and thereby to effectively integrate the conscious and unconscious selves due to imbalances and disharmony within the psyche, Jung claims, results in unhappiness and uncertainty (Walters, 1994, p. 290).

The most accessible of these archetypes is the shadow self, the dimension of an individual’s psyche which is “a moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality,” requiring the individual to “recogniz[e] the dark aspects of the personality as present and real” (Jung, 1958, p. 7). Resistance to this realization can result in projections, or perceived inferiorities and/or deficiencies in someone else. Jung argues that to “isolate the subject from his environment” (1958, pp. 7-8) hinders self-understanding as the individual thickens a veil of illusion between the ego and the

subject's environment (pp. 7-8). Until the individual confronts the shadow self, which is "always the same sex as the subject," recognition of the subsequent stage of this analytic process is impossible (p. 161). While integration of the shadow "marks the first stage in the analytic process," recognition of the subsequent archetypes, the anima and animus, is crucial in achievement of integration (Jung, 1958, p. 161).

These corresponding archetypes represent where gender becomes integral to the theory of the collective unconscious. As the shadow self "can be realized only through a relation to a partner [of the same sex]," the anima and animus can only be recognized "through a relation to a partner of the opposite sex" (p. 161). Known united as "syzygy," a state of the persona's wholeness and completion, the anima and animus represent the distinct male and female dichotomies of the persona inspired by societal practices and what society perceives as gender norms (Boeree, 2006, p. 7). As society encourages men to embrace inherently masculine qualities, such as dominance and aggression, the anima represents the female aspect of a man's collective unconscious, and is associated with socially feminine qualities, including emotionality, spontaneity, intuition and the force of life itself (Boeree, 2006, p. 7). For women, who are encouraged to be nurturing and passive, the animus compensates with identification with masculine characteristics such as logic, reason, and even "argumentativeness" (Boeree, 2006, p. 7).

These dual archetypes are often identified by way of projections that manifest in specific forms, with reference to members of the opposite sex with whom we hold or seek personal relationships. Men may find the anima embodies the role of the mother, the young girl, or the witch; for women, the animus is most commonly personified as

the father, the wise old man, or the sorcerer (Boeree, 2006, p. 7; Jung, 1958, pp. 10-13). The particular qualities associated with the anima and animus fundamentally depend on who is ultimately identified as an individual's anima or animus, and the unique characteristics of the anima/animus symbol with which the individual identifies. The struggle of gender identity, therefore, begins with identification of the shadow and reconciliation with the anima/animus, the outcome of which can either lead to syzygy, or an unbalanced or incomplete persona, essentially leaving the individual a stranger to themselves.

Identity and the factors that influence it persists as a theme throughout the *Divergent Trilogy*. Much can be gleaned from the individual journeys of Tris and Tobias in considering their unique dispositions through a Jungian lens. While the two protagonists have a lot in common, the unconscious mechanisms by which their identities form throughout the trilogy are considerably less similar, and yield significantly divergent implications as pertaining to their gender and acts of heroism. Likewise, while they appear to embrace similar goals as they uncover the secrets of their society and world, the thoughts and sentiments that drive them to pursue these goals are notably dissimilar.

Taking into account the difference between Tris and Tobias's resolutions, or failure to resolve their shadow dilemma, the results that they ultimately face are fitting in terms of their personal, unconscious journeys. Coming to terms with his shadow and recognizing Tris as his anima, Tobias emerges a balanced and better-informed individual, with a future that is not devoid of hope. Tris, who does not find a way to see past her shadow, and whose realization of an animus is stunted by this failure, dies with

deep-rooted uncertainty about herself and about a hopeful future for those about whom she cares. Ultimately, with the survival of the hero but the death of the heroine, *Divergent's* primary protagonist is inadequately fashioned to be the successful girl warrior that Roth perhaps intends. Instead, her character development suggests that this supposedly 'strong' female lead ends with doubt and connotes feelings of disappointment, which Jacobs identifies as a result of thwarted hope (2005, p. 796).

Tris's journey of self-discovery is most prominent during the first novel, where she is informed of her divergence and forsakes her Abnegation family for Dauntless, only to discover that she has far to go in her self-evaluation. From the first page of the first book, where Tris sits in her spartan bedroom as her mother braids her hair, the reader is exposed to the core of her self-doubt: that she is "not selfless enough" (Roth, 2011, p. 43), and therefore, unworthy of identifying with Abnegation. Tris's belief that she does not embody the normatively feminine qualities endorsed by Abnegation, even though her aptitude test reveals her compatibility with her home faction, marks the beginning of her realization that her shadow self is defined by her identification with Dauntless, whose conduct encourages the normatively masculine traits of recklessness and aggression.

As she begins to distinguish friends from enemies, Tris realizes how she associates feminine traits with weakness, while she further distances herself from 'Beatrice' of Abnegation. In particular, her thoughts and sentiments towards Al, a young man who embodies highly feminine traits, illuminate her disposition towards rejecting what she has been brought up to embrace as a young woman in Abnegation, and what she feels she truly embodies in Dauntless. Tris, on top of abhorring Al's

crying and criticizing him for being “too kind for Dauntless” (Roth, 2011, p. 107), constantly rejects his advances and affections on the basis that she could never be attracted to anyone “that fragile” (p. 114). Since she considers crying and kindness as characteristic of someone who is weak, she strives to identify with the opposite. Tris wishes to become worthy of being Dauntless, so much so that she toys with thoughts of violence towards those who do her wrong, namely her tormentors, Peter, Molly and Drew, something her Abnegation identity would never permit..

Near the end of the first novel, Tris's shadow is finally manifest; after killing her friend, Will, her thoughts, actions and sentiments towards Abnegation and Dauntless are illuminated. At the beginning of the novel, she criticizes herself for not being selfless enough, going so far as to deny that she embodies such a quality at all, despite what others are quick to point out to her. Even when Tobias insists that Tris is at her bravest when acting selflessly, which suggests she *does* have the capacity for selflessness, and when she, too, recognizes that selflessness and bravery are the same thing, she struggles to believe it is something of which she is truly capable. It is only after witnessing her mother's death, a selfless act to save Tris's life, and killing Will, which she considers a selfish act serving the same purpose, that Tris's shadow is demystified for her recognition.

Tris sees her shadow as the darkest rendition of her conscious self: a selfish killer who has forsaken her family, and who is more concerned with saving herself and pursuing goals that only matter to her. This idea is manifest in a simulation serving as an obstacle between herself and Erudite's corrupt leader Jeanine Matthews, where she faces a double of herself, and is forced to defeat this doppelganger in order to reach and

destroy her nemesis. Although she finds a way past the simulation, she is not the one who takes Jeanine's life, which could suggest that she has not overcome herself (her shadow) in a way that truly matters.

Ultimately, it remains unclear, even after others declare they can forgive her for the act, given the circumstances, whether or not Tris reconciles her shadow and makes peace with it and her perception of 'selfishness'. Although she seems to successfully identify her shadow self, her seeming inability to move past it, always analyzing her thoughts and actions for traces of the person she fears she has become, directly plays into the curious dilemma of her animus.

According to Jung, a woman with a poorly developed persona tends to have a well-developed animus (Jung, 1966; as cited in Helson, 1973, p. 509). Careful consideration of Tris's actions and introspection spanning the *Divergent Trilogy* lends credence to the argument that this might be the case for her. For Tris, it does not appear to be her animus with which she struggles, but rather, the feminine qualities (namely selflessness) that could very well constitute the anima. This is not to say she has a perfectly developed animus from the beginning, but rather, a stronger disposition to identify with the masculine because of her doubt about doing justice to positive and empowering feminine qualities.

This is not to suggest that her relationship with Tobias has no bearing on her animus. She openly admits that she could not have killed him when he attacked her under Erudite's simulation, because "It would have been like shooting myself," (Roth, 2011, p. 486) which could suggest her relationship with him is integral to her psyche. While far from unaware of his shortcomings, and his own personal demons, Tris loves

and admires Tobias for his virtues, at one point going so far as to think “He’s strong, steady, unstoppable. All the things I need to be, but I am not” (p. 312). Even recognizing his faults, such as his penchant for stubbornness, gives her pause to reflect on her own stubborn disposition. Allowing a “woman’s consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge” (Jung, 1958, p. 15) is precisely the sort of balance the animus is theorized to instill, and Tobias successfully serves as a means for Tris’s introspection.

Through Tobias, Tris recognizes the value in her own life, and better comprehends the difference between sacrifice and needlessly throwing her life away. She even turns down her nomination to lead the Dauntless for fear of relating too closely with them: “The more reckless I get, the more popular I am with the Dauntless” (Roth, 2012, p. 266). She recognizes through reflection how she comes across to Tobias, and comes to the conclusion, “I can’t be popular with the Dauntless, because Tobias is right—I’m not Dauntless; I’m Divergent. I am whatever I choose to be. And I can’t choose to be *this*. I have to stay separate from them” (Roth, 2012, pp.266-267).

Even when he himself fails to be logical, or finds his actions driven by irrational emotions, Tobias serves as a mirror for Tris’s reasoning, helping her distinguish sound rationale from emotion-driven compulsions. This constantly helps her define and redefine Divergence as it pertains to her own unique persona. However, that is not enough for her to achieve syzygy. Early in *Allegiant*, Tris confronts Tobias regarding the condescending way he responds to her near self-sacrifice at the hands of Jeanine Matthews, in an effort to spare the lives of all other Divergent antagonized by Erudite. Tobias argues, “What else was I supposed to do? You wouldn’t see reason!” to which

Tris responds, "Maybe reason wasn't what I needed! I felt like I was being eaten alive by guilt, and what I needed was your patience and kindness" (Roth, 2013, pp. 28-29).

The lack that she expresses is not that of the logical animus-father, but rather traits very much representative of the mother.

Borsellino (2014) points out that two ongoing themes embedded in the trilogy's narrative (and which are particularly relevant in *Allegiant*) are sacrifice and motherly affirmation (p. 103). While the latter theme makes sense in the exploration of anima discovery and development, although more relevant to Tobias, in his quest for his persona's feminine counterpart, Tris is not exempt from having it affect her thoughts and actions. A looming constant in Tris's character development is her longing for her mother. Ultimately, Tris's self-discovery diverges from what, in light of a Jungian analysis, would be expected of a young woman. Colman (1996) outlines that the task of a girl is to "leave the security of her father's house and suffer the pain of rejecting him in favour of an uncertain future with a wayward and possibly bestial suitor" (p. 43). Tris does leave her home, laden with guilt about choosing an uncertain future over a predictable life in her family's faction, but the pain she suffers is not necessarily that of rejecting her father (their relationship is only marginally explored), but losing the support of her mother. "The ultimate test for [the protagonists]," Borsellino (2014) posits, "involves coming face-to-face with [their] mother[s], and hop[ing] that these mothers will be proud, accepting, and affirming of the young adults they've become" (p. 103). This is certainly the case for Tris, who never loses sight of what her mother might want from her. On first transferring to Dauntless, she considers what her mother might do or say in light of particular situations and crises, and thinks to herself, "If I can't be

with her, the least I can do is act like her sometimes” (Roth, 2011, p. 209). When her mother sacrifices herself to save Tris’ life, that sacrifice becomes a point on which Tris obsesses for the remainder of the series.

Throughout *Insurgent*, Tris is convinced that the only way to honour her parents’ deaths is to sacrifice herself to save the lives of others, to the point where she loses sight of the fine line between sacrifice and recklessness. Tobias points this out to her, reminding her that she is a “sixteen-year-old girl who doesn’t understand that the value of sacrifice lies in its necessity; not in throwing your life away!” (Roth, 2012, p. 260). It is not until the option to die to save the lives of other Divergents presents itself, and she is actually faced with death, that she realizes she does *not* want to die: “I believed that I wanted to be with my parents and for all of this to be over. I was sure I wanted to emulate their self-sacrifice. But no” (Roth, 2012, pp. 383-384). There, it becomes obvious that Tris’s ultimate goal is not rooted in selfless desire to save the lives of many by sacrificing herself, but that she is tired of fighting and longs to be with her parents, driven by some unconscious certainty that she cannot feel whole without them, in the war-torn world from which they had departed. While it may seem that Tris realizes she can “honour her parents and their sacrifice by living and by helping people without violence” (Norris, 2014, p. 75), after being pulled from Jeanine’s clutches, the conclusion of her character arc suggests otherwise.

The end of the *Divergent Trilogy* leaves only one protagonist, Tobias, standing. To spare her undeserving brother from facing a death serum, as part of an endeavour to stop the trilogy’s ultimate antagonists—the Bureau of Genetic Welfare—from erasing the memories of everyone in Chicago, Tris forcibly declares that she will face it instead,

as her divergence has granted her immunity to most serums. That she tells Caleb, "If I don't survive, tell Tobias I didn't want to leave him" (Roth, 2013, p. 456) suggests she is not actively seeking to die. When ultimately she suffers fatal gunshot wounds after foiling the Bureau's plan, she sees her mother in her dying moments, and asks her, "Am I done yet?" (Roth, 2013, p. 475). Although she no longer seeks death, Tris does not resist it, but greets and accepts it; the apparition of her mother draws her into her arms, and Tris "go[es] gladly into her embrace," with one final thought: "Can I be forgiven for all I've done to get here? I want to be. I can be. I believe it" (Roth, 2013, p. 476).

That Tris never comes to terms with her shadow self becomes evident. She cannot forgive herself for killing Will, or the myriad of other decisions she has made that perhaps spared one person's life over another. It is not only that she cannot erase what she has done, but she cannot fully forgive herself. It is not enough that Cara and Christina forgive her for shooting Will, or that her friend Lynn thanks her for saving her younger brother, Hector, at the expense of another friend's life, or that Tobias continually forgives her reckless actions and all the times that she lies or withholds the truth from him.

Ultimately, it is her mother's forgiveness that Tris so desperately requires to be at peace; and, because she does not project her mother's image onto anyone else, it is clear that no one but her mother will suffice. Not even Tobias's unconditional love, or all of the self-reflection her relationship with him prompts, is enough to pacify her guilt. Tris is a strong person from the beginning. She is strong enough to leave her home and take her chances in different, potentially perilous arenas. She is strong enough to pass Dauntless initiation, and to save others more frequently than she, herself, requires

saving. She is strong enough to reflect on her actions and admit when she is wrong, and, ultimately, she is strong enough to determine the difference between self-destruction and sacrifice, and when it is truly necessary.

Tris's strength potentially seems to fail her only when, in spite of all the good she has done for the people she cares about, and the population of Chicago as a whole, she cannot let go of the bad, or everything she has done that correlates to her shadow. The real tragedy, here, is arguably not Tris's demise, but that she cannot come to forgive herself; and because her shadow has continued to haunt her, identification with an animus is not what she needed. First and foremost, she needs to come to terms with what she has done, and she needs it from the one person who was like a saint to her. This opportunity does, at long last, present itself to her, but not until the moment of her death.

For *Divergent's* second protagonist, Tobias ("Four") Eaton, the personal journey of his unconscious self follows a far less convoluted path than that of his female counterpart. Also born to Abnegation, Tobias readily transfers to Dauntless on the day of his Choosing Ceremony to escape his abusive father, Marcus. Eager to leave his identity as Marcus' son behind, he adopts the name Four, derived from his noteworthy feat of possessing the fewest fears of his initiate cohort, and is quickly promoted to become a Dauntless instructor for subsequent initiates. Despite his successes, emotional baggage from his past haunts him, with little resolution until his budding relationship with Tris.

Woolston (2014) points out that "more than any other character in the book, Tobias is identified with and by his fears" (p. 93), and despite having only four of them,

they are a potent presence in his subconscious, and continue to influence his thoughts and behaviours. "Four fears then; four fears now," he confesses to Tris, on showing her his fear landscape; "They haven't changed, so I keep going in there... but I still haven't made any progress" (Roth, 2011, p. 333). This is because among his more predictable fears, such as claustrophobia and a fear of heights, is the core of his shadow: Marcus. "Tobias is afraid he will become like Marcus," Woolston observes; "It is a legitimate fear. One of the tragedies of child abuse is that those who experience or witness abuse are more likely to become abusers" (p. 93). Tobias is so desperate to vanquish this fear that he faces it again and again, in hopes that his father will no longer manifest as part of it.

Tobias's shadow is introduced in the first novel, but he does not begin to truly explore it until the second and third of the trilogy, in which his unhealthy manner of confronting it is made clear. In *Allegiant*, Amar, Tobias's former instructor and friend, informs Tris that Tobias is so determined to overcome his father that repeatedly returning to his fear landscape has become something of an obsession. When his father re-enters his life, Tobias goes so far as to attack him with a belt before his Dauntless allies, as if driven by the belief that if he can take Marcus down, he can annihilate his own shadow. When Tris calls him on it, he makes the excuse, "I needed to prove to the Dauntless that I am not a coward" (Roth, 2012, p. 247). Instead, he risks identifying with his own shadow self, as opposed to overcoming it. It is not until he enters his fear landscape alone, early into the third novel, that Tobias begins to realize that the answer to this dilemma does not lie in vanquishing Marcus, but in defining himself apart from to his father's influence.

When his father emerges this time around, it is in a mirror that Tobias is facing. This fear illustrates his dread of the possibility that he could become identical to Marcus, and in desperation, he reaches out to choke the reflection, thereby choking himself. But when he begins to picture his hands as his own, and remake himself in his own image, the fear dissipates, and he realizes how much he has been afraid of the threat Marcus posed “to [his] character, to [his] future, to [his] identity” (Roth, 2013, p. 73). This also spurs the realization of what he and Marcus have in common, and identification with his shadow is reshaped as a simple recognition of it. Like his father, he admits to himself, “I do like to hit people—I like the explosion of power and energy, and that feeling that I am untouchable because I can hurt people. But I hate that part of myself, because it is the part of me that is the most broken” (Roth, 2013, pp. 79-80). It is then that Tobias realizes the key to reclaiming himself in his own image lies in overcoming his fears in the real world, where he need not exist as Four, a reactive identity inspired by his father’s cruelty, but once again as Tobias, a person in his own right and in spite of his father (Woolston, 2014, p. 96).

While coming to terms with his shadow is a task he has to pursue on his own it becomes clear that it is Tobias’s relationship with Tris that grounds him, and that her presence in his life influences his realization of his anima. Although he keeps her from falling to her death when they climb a ferris wheel during a game of capture-the-flag, and intervenes when Peter, Drew and Al attempt to sexually assault her, Tris’s role in his life hardly comprises that of a damsel in distress, and her influence on Tobias’s ultimate well-being is not inferior to those feats. Taking Tris through his fear landscape for the first time, and having her coach him through it awards insight into the strong

suggestion that she can provide the balance and alternate point of view that he needs; that she is the key to helping him elucidate his complementary feminine potential. After all, despite the masculine attributes that he emphasizes as a Dauntless instructor, Tobias's potential to integrate his anima is present from the beginning.

Early on, Tobias expresses to Tris that he desires the balance in embodying the positive attributes of all the factions, not simply that of Dauntless. Furthermore, he is described as having particularly feminine traits, such as "long, narrow fingers" and "hands made for fine, deft movements. Not Dauntless hands, which should be thick and rough and ready to break things," (Roth, 2011, p. 337) not to mention that he describes Amity's camaraderie as "beautiful" (Roth, 2011, p. 20), a word one would not expect a Dauntless instructor to use. Feminine potential aside, it can be argued that Tris's prominent influence on his thoughts and behaviours could be contributed to her addressing the needs that his mother, Evelyn, fails to meet. Not unlike Tris, a significant part of Tobias's personal journey comprises maternal affirmation and support, or at least a possible semblance of it.

When Tobias is young, his mother, who he sees as a safe haven because she counters the physical and emotional abuse of his authoritarian father, leaves him with Marcus after being convinced to fake her own death and flee Abnegation in shame of having committed adultery. When Tobias learns years later that she is living among the factionless, he cannot help but feel betrayed that she has never reached out to him, and what little trust in her that remains is shattered when she explains that she thought he might be safe with Marcus. This causes Tobias to question everything he felt he had

invested in his mother, and he comes to the conclusion that he cannot take her word for truth.

As a result, Tris becomes a lens of clarity regarding Evelyn's advice and proposals; not trusting himself not to be duped, he seeks Tris's opinion when it comes to reading people, and asks her to accompany him when his mother requests a meeting. When Evelyn questions Tris' presence, he unabashedly explains: "She's here to help me decide whether or not to trust you" (Roth, 2011, p. 291). However, Tris's assessment of the situation leads to an argument between the two protagonists. As Jung points out, "in both its positive and negative aspects, the anima-animus relationship is always full of animosity," but all the same—as is the case with Tris and Tobias's relationship—"the two are equally likely to fall in love" (Jung, 1958, p. 14). Tobias continually challenges Tris's perceptions of matters of trust and courses of action, but usually concedes with an apology after realizing she was right, and in spite of their quarrels, he never ceases to seek her advice.

The influence that Tris has on Tobias's thoughts and behaviours is not limited to simply being a compass for the best courses of action, or a sincerity-versus-deception detector when it comes to dealings with Evelyn. When it comes to his own self-perception, Tris truly balances him, and her reassurances compensate for the lack he perceives in himself. Amar, in what little time he gets to know the two protagonists, observes that Tobias's self-doubt severely hinders his leadership abilities, and that without Tris, Tobias is "a much different person. He's... obsessive, explosive, insecure..." (Roth, 2013, pp. 354-355) all of which are considered inherently masculine traits. Amar's opinion is validated in light of Tobias's behaviour when Tris is not

involved; for example, he decides to work with a rebel within the Bureau of Genetic Welfare without knowing the true nature of her plan. It results in several peoples' injuries, and ultimately, the death of one of their own friends. Remorseful, yet defensive when Tris confronts him about the tragedy, Tobias accuses her of merely seeking his compliance and agreement in any and all decision making, in a sense projecting his own doubt onto her reasoning.

Tris's recognition of the nature of Tobias's damage encourages his projections as a defense mechanism, and in an attempt to prove her wrong he denies her grounding point of view and acts on his own gut feeling—one that lacks the balance of an anima perspective, and consequently results in an unintentional yet highly unfavourable outcome. This lends evidence to the argument that Tris is a crucial influence on his decision making and sense of self, as someone who is just as quick to point out his virtues as his vices. Despite their quarrels and Tobias's culpability in acting against Tris's advice, she never loses sight of the good in him, something he desperately needs to hear. "You're whole, you're worth loving, you're the best person I've ever known," she tells him towards the end of *Allegiant*, to which he replies, "No one has ever told me that before" (Roth, 2013, p. 414). Anyone could point out Tobias's mistakes, criticizing his recklessness in the heat of stubborn, passionate resolve, but criticism alone would do nothing to assuage the self-doubt at the root of the majority of his poor decisions. It is because Tris manages to level his less favourable characteristics and decisions, while still encouraging his better qualities and reminding him of his importance and worth, and the difference he can make when he applies his skills constructively, that she is the key to his balanced psyche.

Interestingly, for all that Tris provides Tobias with the balance he needs offset his one-sided, doubt-filled persona, the narrative does not make her out to be the one who causes him to realize psychic integration. Throughout the trilogy, Tobias clings to Tris as someone trustworthy and reliable, while resenting his mother for having neither of these characteristics. Yet towards the end of *Allegiant*, when he is determined to reconcile with one of his parents, he reaches out to Evelyn one last time, offering her the choice between taking the memory serum and erasing the part of her he has come to despise, or giving up her dictatorship of the factionless and calling off the war against those who are not in agreement with how she chooses to govern Chicago. Had Tris's presence in his life been adequate to satisfy his unconscious self, then this likely would not have been a task he would have undertaken, and behind his comrades' back. Despite her vices and the corrupt revolution she inspired, Evelyn still loves Tobias, something he comes to realize early on in *Allegiant*: "She must love me, to worry about me. She must still be capable of love" (Roth, 2013, p. 39). It is because he realizes this that he decides reconciling with her (on his own terms) no longer seems unattainable, dangerous, or ill-conceived. "I thought about going to see Marcus tonight, but... but I didn't," he explains to his mother, not long after (though unbeknownst to him) seeing Tris alive for the last time. "I came to see you instead because... because I think there's a hope of reconciliation between us. Not now, not soon, but someday. And with him there's no hope, no reconciliation possible" (Roth, 2013, p. 465).

This exchange highlights the strong and consistent theme of motherly affirmation (Borsellino, 2014, p.103), particularly as found in *Allegiant*, and Evelyn's agreement with her son's terms arguably marks the first true sign that he has achieved

syzygy; not through his relationship with Tris, but through that with his mother. This notion is supported by the fact that, even when Tris dies, Tobias is able to push onward in a productive fashion, instead of being broken and beyond hope. He secures an influential role in the new government, and continues to allow Evelyn into his life, hesitantly, but the effort remains, meaning he maintains a relatively hopeful outlook on the future.

None of this belittles Tris's influence on his personal growth. It is because of her influence that Tobias's personal journey unfolds as it does, presenting him with just the right tools and circumstances to decide he wants Evelyn in his life, and that the path to a hopeful future need not be achieved through violence and vengeance, but rather through peace and forgiveness. In *Allegiant's* afterward, Tobias does experience an intense moment of weakness where he considers taking the memory serum, thereby erasing any trace of having known Tris, and purging himself of the pain of her loss. Fortunately, another female voice—that of Christina, Tris's best friend—reminds him of the dire importance of keeping memories of her intact. She points out, "The person you became with her is worth being. If you swallow that serum, you'll never be able to find your way back to him" (Roth, 2013, p. 507).

While Tris might not have been completely responsible for Tobias's unconscious self's pursuit and realization of syzygy, she was the means by which he learned to realize his anima and achieve syzygy through making amends with his mother. Tris instills in him a reassurance that he can invest and benefit from trusting and identifying with a woman, therefore encouraging the strength and courage to forgive

Evelyn, and mend their relationship, the lack of which initially leaves him damaged and incomplete.

Through the lens of Jungian analysis, Tris and Tobias are certainly dynamic and intriguing individuals on their own. Their intentions and behaviours are further clarified by the unconscious mechanisms of their relationship, as friends and allies as well as lovers. This provides evidence that their relationship serves as far more than a token to spark teen interest, although what it means for the representation of their roles as a heterosexual male and female is less clear, considering the qualitative difference in the nature of their anima/animus and shadows, and that their relationship operates differentially in the way it affects them as individuals. In light of the conventional parallels between his mother and father, and the discovery of his shadow and anima, Tobias's quest to identify with his unconscious sense of self is far simpler than that of Tris's.

Tobias's journey is glaringly oedipal in nature, considering the resentment of and wish to overcome his father, while desiring the love of his mother. Colman (1996) claims that the "successful resolution of the Oedipus complex depends on freeing the anima/animus from its bonds so that its function as a bridge to the unconscious can be realized" (p. 37), which appears to be the crux of Tobias's personal unconscious journey. Ultimately, the resolution of the struggle between his shadow and anima does lead to a successful oedipal resolution, whereby he expels his father from his life entirely while winning over his mother's favour and cooperation, and ultimately achieving autonomy. Apart from a textbook Oedipus complex, and exhibiting

stereotypical male traits of aggression and impulsivity, Tobias is not the stereotypical male hero that one would expect to find in a young adult novel.

At first, it might seem that way. Tobias is initially depicted as a fearless, capable and handsome young man, who has chosen to associate with a faction with a distinctly masculine behavioural code. There is no doubt that part of his role comprises that of the love interest of Tris, and on more than one occasion, he plays the hero to her damsel in distress. However, he, like Tris, originally hails from Abnegation, a faction that endorses selflessness, a quality considered socially feminine (Hartrick, 1997, p. 263), and he is not in total agreement with Dauntless's conduct. Considering that he does not have his own narrative voice until the last book, he is defined by his relationship with Tris for the majority of the series. The balance he finds in this association makes him despise many of the masculine qualities he has embodied, and inspires him to endorse more peaceful approaches to problem solving.

Overall, Tobias is depicted as capable and with good intentions, but with flaws that require personal growth. He finds this through Tris's influence, so that by the end he appears to have found an appropriate path for further growth and opportunities. Realizing his errors or potential misconduct as he learns to become a better listener when Tris offers advice, he accounts for his mistakes by seeing past his defensive projections, and feels impelled to proceed less impulsively in the future. Most importantly, it is through successful recognition of personal errors and their consequences and constructive reflection on them that he is able to resolve his shadow and anima dilemmas. Tobias is, in the end, left standing, knowing himself and his place,

or at least realizing the means of figuring it out, and with the opportunity to further build on his identity and personal growth.

What Tris's shadow and animus dilemma reveals about her heroism and how this is depicted is less straightforward than is the case with Tobias. While their relationship appears more integral to the resolution of Tobias's personal unconscious dilemma, her involvement in it is enough to make her realize pursuing identification with her animus is not actually her priority. This is because the masculine potential that the animus characterizes is already part of her persona. Her struggle is not one of identifying with more masculine characteristics through realization of an animus, but reconciliation of her Dauntless, masculine drive with her feminine traits.

This is not to say that Tris has no feminine qualities. In the beginning, others are depicted as seeing her as small and meek, something that she resents. "[People] think that because I'm small, or a girl, or a Stiff, that I can't be cruel. But they're wrong," (Roth, 2011, p.463) she thinks, when Peter does not believe she will shoot him.. Despite her doubt, she exhibits selflessness numerous times throughout the series, to the point where she almost seems obsessed with self-sacrifice. Yet in her denial of favourable feminine qualities and resentment at appearing weak, Tris is already very much aware of her socially more masculine potential. Early in *Insurgent*, she goes as far as to cut her hair short to feel more the part, which Tobias later observes to be "hair for a warrior and not a girl" (Roth, 2013, p. 5). Although he considers this in a positive light, deeming it was "what she would need" (Roth, 2013, p. 5), the insinuation remains that being a warrior and being feminine must be mutually exclusive.

'Warrior' vs 'girl' could be the crux of Tris's shadow/animus dilemma. That the two terms cannot be integrated is initially reinforced by the faction system, only to be challenged by Divergence. Yet in spite of Tris's divergence, and having an aptitude for three factions, she continues to struggle with the idea of being a girl *and* a warrior, as well as notably intelligent. Desperate to be taken seriously, she embraces her masculine qualities, yet at the same time fears the way they shape her in reference to her shadow, in the absence of identifying with the socially feminine qualities associated with Abnegation. In her recurring obsession with self-sacrifice, she eventually comes to the conclusion that the only way to pair bravery and selflessness is to put her life in danger so as to spare the lives of others, in particular a treacherous brother. It is an act that results in her death.

Contrary to Garcia's (2013) generalization, Tris is not stereotypically female in terms of being "subservient, meek" or even "jealous" (p. 77). What is problematic regarding her efforts and participation in a group endeavour to overthrow a corrupt government, is that in the end her guilt for the decisions she has made is markedly disproportionate to her mistakes. Not only is her unconscious sense of self too fraught with uncertainty to have achieved psychic integration, unlike Tobias, but she is not awarded with the opportunity to further pursue self-growth. And, with that, readers are left with Tobias, a feminized white male with victory written in a minor (yet triumphant) key, while Tris's—the trilogy's primary protagonist—ends in a broken chord.

There is speculation surrounding the series, its themes and its conclusion for both protagonists. On one hand, Tris and Tobias's personal journeys are, at face value,

quite similar. Borsellino (2014) speculates that “Tris’s arc, beginning as it does before her Choosing Ceremony, demonstrates how family plays a fundamental role in her emotional hero’s journey” while “Tobias’s struggle to work out what it means to be an adult, and to be Evelyn’s child, when he has no blueprint to follow in playing these roles, is a different but equally important kind of heroism” (p. 106). Both protagonists are heavily influenced by their families. Both are up against similar odds and dangers throughout, and both make an impact on their world by the end of the trilogy. The one area where they truly differ is in that of their genders, and the circumstances that correspond.

On the one hand, it is with regards to their gender that a closer look reveals *Divergent’s* protagonists have never quite been on equal footing, which ultimately affects the outcomes of their separate journeys. Certainly, it can be argued that Tris’s final act leading to her sacrifice is the more noteworthy feat. After all, had everyone in Chicago fallen victim to the memory serum, then Tobias’s venture to win over his mother’s cooperation in an effort to negotiate with the Allegiant would have been in vain, if it had even managed to take place. Unlike Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, the *Divergent Trilogy* does not conclude on a ‘cop-out pattern’, where “heroines give up their independent vision and subside into traditional behaviour” (Broad, 2013, p. 129). Tris seems to hold onto her vision for a better future for those for whom she cares. However, it remains that she struggles with her unconscious sense of self—that of living in fear of her shadow, as well as losing sight of her positive feminine attributes for fear of appearing weak—and this suggests that she dies without feeling fulfilled as an individual.

Tobias, conversely, as a capable white male, is never at risk of being underestimated or perceived as weak. He struggles with his masculinity, but his struggles are resolved for the better. Furthermore, endeavouring to tame violent urges is a different venture than struggling with appearing strong and capable. The *Divergent Trilogy* might avoid the trope of rendering Tris as a damsel, or stereotypically ending her journey with marriage, children and a happily ever after, but it undermines socially feminine qualities. Tris appears to be successful *in spite of* being a girl, playing up her short hair and stubborn attitude, but laments losing touch with the feminine merits that tie her to her mother, so that the only way left for her to demonstrate selflessness and bravery is through sacrificing her life.

In terms of how a Jungian analysis of *Divergent's* two protagonists plays into the trilogy's potential to be considered a critical young adult dystopia, the results are divided. On one hand, considering Baccolini's (2003) stipulating responsibility for choices and accountability for consequences, both Tris and Tobias recognize when and where they should have acted differently in given situations, in order to achieve more favourable outcomes. What is problematic is the discrepancy between how they individually deal with the knowledge of their mistakes. Though it is not instantaneous, Tobias seems to overcome his own pride to admit that he makes inauspicious choices, and deals with his mistakes by taking ownership of them, and learning from them. Tris, on the other hand, experiences guilt that is disproportionate to the nature and consequences of her choices. Even in death, Tris wonders if she can ever be forgiven.

Compared to Tobias's more reckless behaviours, Tris's 'mistakes' hardly live up in severity. She was the right person, in the right time and place, therefore forced to

make difficult life-or-death decisions, with little to no time to weigh the pros and cons. She does not seem to learn from the experiences, but instead, laments them. Given that she is the sole narrating voice in the first two novels of the *Divergent Trilogy*, and therefore arguably the 'main' protagonist, the circumstances surrounding her fate as compared to her male counterpart's is not a hopeful conclusion, as far as heroic depictions of gender are concerned.

Jacobs's (2005) philosophy of hope posits that "love is what allows us to push past disappointment" and "fuels our orientation towards the future and our belief that change can and will happen" (pp. 796-797). In light of that statement, the love between Tris and Tobias is ultimately what fuels Tobias's decision to push forward in hopes of a brighter future in her absence. She helps shape him as a person, and the person he has become can hold out for hope that society can be rebuilt for the better. This further supports the proposal that the protagonists' relationship amounts to more than mere intrigue and traditional gender roles, and that it has an impact on the narrative as a whole. However, due to the difference between the fates of the two protagonists and the circumstances surrounding them, it does bring to light the possibility that more than simple portrayal of gender roles should be accounted for when determining the heroics of men versus women in young adult literature. Tris is certainly not subservient or even irrationally jealous, as per Garcia's (2013) generalization. The tragedy of Tris's fate is not the fact that she dies with good intentions. It is the enduring internal struggle that leads up to her death, and the unresolved decisions surrounding her identity and dying unfulfilled, while Tobias emerges with his demons largely in his past, and with a hopeful outlook on the future, that makes her tragic and what obstructs the critical

dystopian qualities of responsibility for choices (Baccolini, 2003) and fulfillment with reference to an unconscious sense of self.

Roth seems to have made an attempt to portray a strong, female protagonist in Tris, but sacrificing oneself to pave the way to a better future does not constitute an inspiring hero. There is, therefore, evidence of Garcia's (2013) claim that "the YA genre still has a *long* way to go" (p. 77; italics in original) in terms of generating empowering female protagonists, as compared to their male counterparts, though this alone cannot be determined by the Bechdel test or simply looking for damsels versus heroes. The *Divergent Trilogy*, with its arguably "kick-ass" (Garcia, 2013, p. 77) leading lady, elucidates the need to more profoundly investigate the circumstances that surround female protagonists in young adult literature, what exactly makes them come across as potentially empowering, and the connotations of their heroics. Furthermore, this observation reflects the need to examine what publishers believe is marketable to a young adult audience when it comes to representation of heroines in these narratives, and the societal implications that drive these assumptions.

Finally, it is imperative to note the limitations of the theory that drives this analysis. While Jung's theory of integration shed light on some important aspects on internal conflict as well as gender roles, its roots are inherently heterosexual in nature. It is therefore unable to account for queer, transgender, and otherwise non-binary and non-heterosexual identities (McKenzie, 2006, p. 407). Given the complexity of sexual and gender identity of post-millennium teens, I would therefore encourage the use of more contemporary theories that can account for the complexity and fluidity of gender identity as well as sexual orientation in future analyses.

Chapter 3

The Diversity of Divergence: Disposable Identities in Futuristic Chicago

In its examination of racial and sexual minority representation, this chapter addresses *Divergent's* failure to meet the critical dystopian criteria of recovery and/or recognition of history (Baccolini, 2003). I argue that instead of a recognizing history, the trilogy depicts its erasure. Ethnically diverse characters are only portrayed in terms of physical descriptors to distinguish them from their white counterparts, and are not awarded the same opportunities as white characters, while homosexual characters are diminished by both lack of clarification of their sexuality or achievement of romantic relationships. Both racial and sexual minorities adhere to stereotypes, and their importance is limited to that of plot devices, which further inhibits the trilogy's ability

to relate to a diverse audience seeking to see themselves in the characters. Ultimately, in its adherence to cultural “melting pot” (Bishop, 1982) tendencies, the *Divergent Trilogy* reinscribes white, heteronormative ideals instead of challenging them. The implications of youth readership are discussed.

According to Kiah (1981), the upsurge of racial and ethnic consciousness, particularly in Western society, has significantly influenced the inclusion of diverse races and ethnicities in young adult literature (p. 61). Looking at post-millennial young adult books, this trend appears to have continued. “Currently, although the numbers of multicultural titles being published remain relatively low, the quality in terms of authority and authenticity is improving” (Agosto, Hughes-Hassell & Gilmore-Clough, 2003, p. 259). But according to other scholars, teen literature still has a way to go in terms of full inclusion and representation of non-white characters, as well as the number of books in which diverse races and ethnicities are depicted at all. This very lack of fairly depicted diversity may hinder a sense of hope for a narrative’s diverse audience, and would thus—in terms of young adult dystopias—impede the potential to meet the standards of a critical young adult dystopia.

While African American characters have been historically portrayed in light of stereotypical tropes, such as “the superhumanly strong laborer, the broadly smiling entertainer, the long-suffering but faithful servant,” and “the stern but nurturing mammy” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 169), ethnic identity in post-millennial young adult literature is observed in light of a “mode of experience,” in lieu of a “characteristic that individuals or groups possess” (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 642). In that sense, Bean &

Moni (2003) observe that in young adult novels featuring multicultural characters, ethnic identity is “forged in the interpretation of events and experiences that are part of postmodern societal practices in changing communities,” and is influenced by “critical life episode[s] or encounter[s]” (Ponterotto & Pederson, 1993; as cited in Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 642) as well as through the “examination of past beliefs and practices, often initiated by an act of racism and feelings of disequilibrium” (Bean, 2001; as cited in Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 642).

Kiah (1981) notes that literature that in the past, literature that concerned African Americans, for example, was mostly written by “white observers” (p. 63) who reported on experiences that they perceived, backed by their own personal assumptions. Essentially, people of colour were often defined by what white people assumed they were (or should be). This is problematic in that “race depends on who experiences it,” meaning that it is “as personal as sexuality or imagination” (Aronson, 2001, p. 15). Unfortunately, this bias has continued in young adult literature that features persons of colour written by white authors.

Cart & Jenkins (2006) outline Bishop’s (1982) chronological model of African American representation, that emerged from her study of books from 1965 to 1979 (p. 170). In those she categorizes as “social conscience books, race is portrayed as the problem” and “desegregation [is] the solution.” (p. 170). In this type of narrative, the plot focuses on relationships between blacks and whites, with “racial stereotypes and prejudice remedied by “getting to know you” efforts (p. 170). In “melting pot” books, “racial diversity [is depicted] as present but generally unacknowledged and integration

is a given" (p. 170). Finally, in "culturally conscious" books, "African Americans are portrayed in a culturally authentic manner" (p. 171).

Contemporary scholars such as Aronson (2001) draw similar parallels to Bishop's model. Aronson highlights three common instances of multiculturalism in young adult literature. The first is what he terms "political multiculturalism", and asks "should whites be writing stories about blacks?" Ultimately, this portrayal which resembles Bishop's socially conscious category, can "turn the reader into a receptacle of ideology, not a creative mind" (p. 16). The second category he identifies is that of "small world multiculturalism," which points out similarities between cultures as opposed to addressing differences, but at the expense of "insult[ing] the reader" and "mak[ing] them less interested in other cultures" (p. 16). This parallels Bishop's melting pot category. Finally, similar to Bishop's culturally conscious category, Aronson identifies "authentic multiculturalism," as that which is "intensely curious about all cultures in all of their ambiguous, complex, self-contradictory splendor" and which "encourages [readers] to explore all of [their] selves" (p. 16). Aronson claims with regard to the first few forms that "The reader is the crucial actor ignored, or patronized, by the first two forms of multiculturalism" (p. 16). While his last proposed portrayal rings as ideal, it does not appear to be the most common trend, particularly in narratives where the protagonist is white.

Bishop and Aronson's modes of inclusion get to the heart of the problem of minority representation in Roth's trilogy. In particular, the series relies on the small-world multiculturalism or melting-pot patterns. Despite the "increasing but relatively small number of young adult authors [who] are writing quality literature that features

multicultural characters” (Younker & Webb, 2005, p. 197), when the subject matter does not concern themes that reinforce stereotypes of minority and nonminority readers, such as crime, drugs, and poverty, differences are likely given short shrift. “Differences may be noted in passing,” Bishop (1982) claims, “but are then ignored as the characters assume a homogeneity that is seen as the key to cooperation” (p. 170). In other words, multicultural characters are portrayed as no different from their white counterparts save for the colour of their skin. Racialized difference is thereby simply a given, and the characters of colour are absorbed and assimilated into white culture, with the significance of difference being entirely lost.

Racial and ethnic representation is not the only area of concern when it comes to diversity in young adult literature. While some scholars argue that literature for teens is slowly but surely becoming more diverse, and “doing an increasingly better job of giving faces to teens from a range of races, ethnicities, cultures, classes, natural origins, abilities/disabilities, and religious beliefs” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006), homosexual characters, and characters who simply do not identify as mainstream heterosexual, have “largely been absent” (p. 2). Garcia (2013) points out that “heterosexual behaviour is construed as *normal*” in young adult literature, and in doing so, “these books reinforce assumptions about what are *normal* sexual feelings and *normal* ways to associate gender and behaviour” (p. 87). Garcia further explains that heteronormativity in these novels is maintained through “suppression of LBGTQI presence,” as well as “pejorative assumptions about LBGTQI behaviour or LBGTQI identity as abnormally different” (p. 87). Because of this misrepresentation and underrepresentation of LBGTQI experiences in the literature, it runs the risk of “not offer[ing] a view of a diverse world for the broad

audience of readers” (Garcia, 2013, p. 90). This hinders a queer audience’s ability to relate to or find themselves in the text, and a lack of a queer perspective in YA literature can reinforce heteronormative ideals in those who partake of dominant identity by insinuating that their identity and point of view matters more, is more correct, or is more likely to succeed.

Jones (2013) points out that part of this problem stems from the fact that “queer sexual orientations are still an ‘issue’ for publishers, booksellers, and many readers” (p. 74). Due to this unease, even texts specifically geared to appeal to LBGTQI audiences present problems. For instance, in “coming-out” stories, “the protagonist is most likely a troubled teenager,” and the resolution—the realization of homosexual identity—ends up “*creat[ing] what [it] purports to describe,*” thereby contributing to the “cultural construction of this identity” (Saxey, 2008, p. 1&5; as cited in Jones, 2013, pp. 77-78; emphasis in original). Garcia (2013) likewise points out that “these books tend to focus primarily on gay, white men” (p. 90) who are “socioeconomically privileged” (p. 91), therefore “reinforcing cultural practices and assumptions about how readers should live and judge the world around them” (p. 93). Furthermore, heteronormative cultural assumptions find their way into the depiction of homosexual characters by perpetuating cultural stereotypes.

Jones goes on to describe what she terms as “traditional texts” representing female homosexuality. These tend to “stereotype lesbians as either butch or femme,” limiting unique and personal expressions of lesbian identity, and “conflate issues of sexual orientation and gender identity” (p. 78). Fair representations in fiction geared towards LBGTQI teens are still in the minority. Rockefeller (2009) points out that

“similar to earlier gay and lesbian fiction for young adults, many of the available transgender-inclusive texts [also] featur[e] stereotypical or offensively written characters and unbelievable, farfetched plots”, and that “many are moralistic and pedantic” (p. 300). This suggests that mainstream fiction for LBGTQI young adult audiences still fails to depict diverse homosexual identities with which the target audience might identify. Despite the effort of some writers to do LBGTQI characters justice, many young adult texts are still written from a heterosexual perspective (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 172).

As problematic as is LBGTQI literature for non-heterosexual and non-cisgender teens, the majority of mainstream young adult novels—namely those that feature heterosexual protagonists—can be considered equally damaging to both heterosexual and non-heterosexual and/or cisgender and non-cisgender audience. The mere inclusion or identification of a non-heterosexual character, simply for the sake of fulfilling the need for diverse presence in a text, is not sufficient. On the contrary, this trend simply perpetuates the *illusion* of diversity, and not necessarily the *inclusion* of it. When “gay/lesbian characters... appear to be no different from the heterosexual norm *except* for the fact of their sexual orientation” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, pp. 170-171; emphasis in original), the author deflects the purpose of including them. In this case, “same-sex orientation [is] simply a given” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 171). This negation of differences limits the acceptance of LBGTQI identity texts, because the “noticeable indication of gay/lesbian identity is often viewed as ‘flaunting it’; the closet appears to be mandatory for peaceful coexistence” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 171).

LGBTQI characters are overtly stereotypical, or their sexuality is so underplayed that they are assimilated into heteronormative identity. Banks (2009) admits that “the desire to include LGBT characters is laudable, but there also needs to be something in the books beyond just queer characters” (p. 34). Similar to the case of racial diversity, simply including LGBTQI characters in a narrative for the sake of diversity without actually exploring their identities turns them into plot devices as opposed to depicting them as realistically complex persons worthy of explorative character arcs: “from 1980 to 1995, most of the LGBT characters in YA fiction were secondary, often dead or killed off during the narrative” (Banks, 2009, p. 35). Young adult literature “needs to be more all-inclusive to offer a better reflection of the complexities of the real world and to insure that all young readers might see their faces reflected in it” (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 165). As Jones (2013) asserts, “presence is not enough. Inclusion is not enough. Adolescent readers deserve the highest standards of depth, realism, and complexity in all of their fiction, including LGBTQI texts” (p. 91) just as much as heterosexual, cisgender readers.

The predominant issue at the core of young adult literature’s tendency towards lack of and misrepresentation of diversity stems from reinforcing dominant perspectives in culturally normative readers. This issue extends to the reader’s relationship with the text, and whether or not they find they can relate to the protagonist and other characters. “Teens have long sought themselves in the pages of adolescent literature,” Jones (2013) comments, “not for answers, but simply to see themselves there, to remember that they are not alone” (p.74). Bean & Moni (2003) in citing Bean & Rigoni (2001) further elucidate that this relatability is largely embedded in “adolescent readers view[ing]

characters in young adult novels as living and wrestling with real problems close to their own life experiences as teens” (p. 638). This supports Mar & Oatley’s (2008) claim that fiction can act as a simulation, “model[ing] and abstract[ing] the human social world,” thereby “allowing for prediction and explanation while revealing the underlying processes of what is being modeled” (p. 173). Some adolescents—namely white, heterosexual, and middle-class—more readily find themselves in literature than those who are not (Jones, 2013, p. 74). A reader’s relation to the fictional characters and world depicted in a text pertains to the idea of reader reception and response theory.

According to Eagleton (2008), reception theory “examines the reader’s role in literature,” inviting the reader to “construct a piece of language into meaning” (p. 66), that piece of language being the text. He further explains that “readers will bring to the work certain ‘pre-understandings,’ a dim context of beliefs and expectations within which the work’s various features will be addressed,” and “as the reading process proceeds, these expectations will themselves be modified by what we learn” (p. 67). His is not the only perspective, and Wolfgang Iser’s interpretation of reader reception theory is particularly applicable in terms of contemporary literary criticism of young adult literature. He posits “reading should be flexible and open-minded, [and we should be] prepared to put our beliefs into question and allow them to be transformed” (Eagleton, 2008, p. 69). This take on reader reception theory puts an emphasis on critical reading, taking into consideration not only how the reader is receiving it, but also what the texts provides in its structure and other elements to incite the reader to question not just what they mean, but *why* they are the way they are.

Couzelis (2013) points out that young adult dystopias have a tendency to “reinscribe current social and racial hierarchies through their character depictions,” and that “these portrayals often privilege the dominant race” (p. 131). This leads to the implication that the participation of ethnic minorities in these futuristic worlds is “not important” (Couzelis, 2013, p.131). “When [social and racial hierarchies are] left unexposed and unquestioned in literature,” the text can “encourage attitudes that deepen social stratification” (Couzelis, 2013, p. 133). The reader, therefore, “through identification with the protagonist unaware of white privilege, risks becoming socialized into the institution of white privilege” (Couzelis, 2013, p. 133). The white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class reader can unconsciously come to further embody hegemonic culture, while readers of diverse races, sexual identities, sexual orientations and certain economic classes are left without a fairly represented textual other. This textual other is described as the “focus of [the reader’s] dialogic connection in the process of reading” (Pearce, 1997, p. 29; as cited in Rothbauer, 2004, p.65), and is integral to the reader’s relationship with a character who they perceive as being similar to them in some way. If diverse readers are not presented with characters with whom they can relate, privileged white culture is perpetuated as normative.

In *Divergent*, racial minorities are depicted, but only in terms of the colour of their skin and/or the texture of their hair. Otherwise, they accept the need for assimilation into white culture. Without rooting their racial and ethnic identity in today’s Chicago, which in *Divergent*’s futuristic plot represents the Chicago of the past, these ethnically diverse characters are depicted as no different from anyone else, because the features of their race are simply a given. Furthermore, *Divergent*’s

homosexual characters likewise “assume a homogeneity” (Bishop, 1982; as cited in Cart & Jenkins, 2006, pp. 170-171).

Homosexuality returns to the closet in futuristic *Chicago*, as it is against the law; heterosexuality is deemed required for procreation and the passing on of desired genes. Similar to the texts’ representation of race, certain qualities of sexual diversity are hinted at, but never fully explored. *Divergent*’s erasure of Chicago’s diverse history, and the silencing and underplaying of ethnically specific and non-heterosexual practices that contribute to diverse identities, compromises the relationship between the reader and the text, and ultimately impedes the potential for hope. If there is no real faction for non-white, non-heterosexual characters in futuristic Chicago unless they conform to white, heterosexual, middle-class standards and conventions (or, worse, become reduced to plot devices because of their differences), this reinstatement of normativity may not only hinder diverse readers’ perceptions of their own agency, but also their ability to see themselves or aspects of their identity.

Evidence of *Divergent*’s attempt to be racially inclusive is manifest. Many African American, Hispanic, Asian, gay and lesbian characters have noteworthy roles relevant to the plot, as well as to the protagonists’ character development. However, as soon as these characters are introduced, the “melting pot” (Bishop, 1982) quality of the narrative becomes apparent. Diverse characters are depicted as being different only by having non-white qualities brought to light, and yet these qualities otherwise do not appear to contribute to their identities. The most significant is Tris’s best friend, Christina. On meeting for the first time, Tris passively takes into account Christina’s physical appearance, describing her as “tall, with brown skin and short hair. Pretty”

(Roth, 2011, p. 51); the reference to colour striking her as noteworthy, and the latter essentially coming across as an afterthought. This is one of many occasions throughout the trilogy where people of colour are noted primarily by their skin tone, or other features that depict them as not being white. This suggests the narrative's primary protagonist is one of those who are "unaware of the white privilege" (Couzelis, 2013, p. 133).

Other characters fall into the same white/not-white binary of Tris's first impressions. Tori, of East Asian descent, is described as having "small, dark, angular eyes" (Roth, 2011, p. 11). Jack Kang, leader of Candor, "handsome... with short black hair and warm, slanted eyes, like Tori's, and high cheekbones" (Roth, 2012, p. 126), also has unmistakably Asian qualities. Molly, a bully Tris encounters during her initiation at Dauntless headquarters, "has broad shoulders, bronze skin, and a bulbous nose" (Roth, 2011, p. 92). Uriah, a Dauntless-born comrade, Tris notes as having a "smile [that] looks white against his bronze skin" (Roth, 2011, p. 152), and whose brother, Zeke, "is slight and short and looks nothing like Uriah, apart from his colouring" (Roth, 2011, p. 152). Amar, Tobias's former mentor, is ambiguously introduced having "dark skin and long hair that is in a knot at the back of his head" (Roth, 2013, p. 104), and Juanita, a Hispanic rebel plotting against the bureau, is vaguely described as "having light brown skin" (Roth, 2013, p. 168). Roth therefore creates the impression futuristic Chicago is predominantly white, despite its culturally diverse racial history (Arrow, 2014, p. 40).

Furthermore, the melting pot tendency of the narrative is perpetuated by the vague descriptors attributed to these racially diverse characters. There is no real

indication as to Tori Wu and Jack Kang's Asian heritage, beyond describing their eyes and tagging on surnames that suggest their ancestors at some point hailed from China. The remainder of racially diverse characters are even worse off, with ambiguous allusions to their skin tones: "dark", "warm", "olive", "brown" and "bronze" (Roth, 2011, pp. 51, 54, 92 & 152; Roth, 2012, pp. 125, 130, 133, 432 & 448) are the only descriptors that the first-person views of the protagonists provide, and given the range and variety of different skin tones *within* any given ethnicity, aside from *between* them, these characters' roots, their histories, and therefore, crucial parts of their identities are erased. Aside from Tris's comrade, Will, being described as "pale"—and only in comparison to dark-skinned Christina (Roth, 2011, p. 89)—white people are not noted for being white, because the trilogy depicts that as being the norm. Ethnic qualities are stirred and dissolved into the pot by protagonists who are very much "white observers" (Kiah, 1981, p. 63).

The dissolution and ultimate erasure of ethnic history are not the only disservices done to *Divergent's* racially diverse characters. Closely examining the roles that many of these characters play, it becomes evident that despite the widespread, melting pot assumption that everyone is the same, they are not awarded the same opportunities as their white counterparts, and that some fall into racist tropes. For example, Christina, *Divergent's* most prominent person of colour in the trilogy, plays the stock role of the "long-suffering but faithful servant" (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 169).

Christina is there for Tris from the moment she jumps off the building at the Dauntless compound during initiation. Though stubborn, she is depicted as kind and helpful, at one point even tying Tris's boots for her, when she is too hurt by a Dauntless

brawl to do so herself. While Tris is awarded the chance to explore a romance with Tobias, Christina's hopes for such a luxury are very quickly extinguished when her boyfriend, Will, dies at the hands her best friend. And yet, in spite of this tragedy, which continues to resonate with her throughout the remainder of the trilogy, Christina forgives Tris. From start to finish, Christina remains Tris's faithful sidekick and friend, putting all of her hurt behind her in favour of solidarity.

Unfortunately for Christina, lost love does not cease at Will's death. Towards the end of *Insurgent*, an inkling of chemistry manifests between her and an Erudite boy, Fernando. While she shies away from his flirtation at first, a connection is confirmed when she rushes to save him from falling to his death. She does not succeed, and whatever might have developed between them, friendship or otherwise, ends there. Later on, when she appears to be recovering from her former boyfriend's death, and sparks between her and Uriah are insinuated, any further potential is likewise cut short by Uriah suffering a fatal injury, one indirectly caused by Tobias. Simply put, any romantic hope for one of *Divergent's* strongest racially diverse character is extinguished by both of the narrative's protagonists—the two characters who the reader would expect to *establish* hope. At the narrative's end, both Christina and Tobias share in the pain of losing loved ones and yet, their personal tragedies do not equate. Tobias's loss might resonate more heavily with readers, considering his relationship with Tris develops over three volumes. Christina, who time and again is denied young love, and who has hardly been awarded the opportunity to explore it when tragedy strikes, has heartbreak equivalent to Tobias's.

Christina is not the only person of colour denied love and intimacy. There are also complications in the relationship between Amar, Tobias's former mentor, and George Wu. Although neither character loses the other by means of death, the sadness of this pair is manifest in that their romantic relationship appears to be stunted, as it goes against the convention and wishes of a bureau. The insinuation that the two are closer than friends and colleagues is hinted at when they embrace following the news of Tori's death, and is later confirmed when Tris confronts Amar about his feelings for Tobias. Not only does Amar confess that, yes, he has harboured romantic feelings for Tobias in the past, but was rejected, but whatever feelings he and George share have to remain clandestine in nature: "I'd prefer if you didn't say anything," he tells Tris (Roth, 2013, p. 356). Although the obstacle separating Amar and George from a healthy and fulfilling relationship is not death, but, homophobia, the fact remains that these two racially diverse lovers are, like Christina and Matthew, denied love. At every turn, the lives *Divergent's* racially diverse cast are rooted in tragedy and heartbreak.

In addition to the erasure of history, absence of ethnic identity, death and denial of love compared to those available to white characters, one final way in which the *Divergent Trilogy* undermines its racially diverse characters is in situating them in the narrative so that they appear to be more useful to the storyline as plot devices than as complex characters. For example, more than any other faction, Candor is depicted as comprising of many people of colour. Many are described as "loud" (Roth, 2011, p.370) and "dark-skinned" (Roth, 2012, p.125, 126 & 133), like Christina, who was raised as Candor, with the exception of the faction's leader, Jack Kang who, who is of Asian descent. Jeanine declares that they are the "only disposable faction" (Roth, 2012, p.

252): “Candor does not provide us with protection, sustenance, or technological innovation,” she goes on to say; “Therefore you are expendable to us” (Roth, 2012, p. 252). The one faction which the city of Chicago can allegedly do without also happens to comprise the most racial diversity of all five factions, punctuating the undermining of the city’s citizens of diverse ethnic origins.

Perhaps going hand-in-hand with the insinuation that the racially diverse people of futuristic Chicago are unimportant or, even worse, “disposable” (Roth, 2012, p. 252) is the disproportionate number of people of colour who die in the narrative. The details surrounding these deaths distinguish them from those of the white people. First, the most ‘disposable’ of these characters are perhaps the minor, racialized characters. For example, the character of Fernando, the Hispanic boy, has a name, is identified as Erudite-born, and flirts with Christina, but no further information is provided. This lack of established identity and character, along with his quick death, depicts him as a truly disposable character.

While he certainly is not the only character to be killed off in haste, the same sort of ‘disposable’ fate does not appear to apply to white characters nearly as frequently, because white characters are seldom described in passing. Marlene, for instance, unlike Fernando, is not in-and-out of the plot in under twenty pages; she persists through at least one and a half of the three novels. Furthermore, unlike Fernando’s, her death resonates in the aftermath, particularly with Tris. Overall, white characters are not disposable.

The lack of presence and deaths that happen to resonate versus those that occur and are never thought of again are not the only signs of inequality assigned to the

importance of white versus racially diverse characters in *Divergent*. This inequality in representation can also be found among the more prominent characters, such as Tori and Uriah, who make it through all of the adversity of the trilogy's first two installments, only to finally die in *Allegiant*. In the case of Tori, her death is very abrupt, and none of the other characters has time to grieve it. Only after news of her death is broken to her brother, George, does it appear to resonate, and only briefly. If it at any point resurfaces further along in the narrative, it is only in passing.

Uriah, on the other hand, is grieved. Unlike Tori's, his death is drawn out for a good portion of the trilogy's final installment, when he ends up in a coma and on life support. It even contributes to the protagonists' motivation to stop the Bureau from wiping the memories of everyone in Chicago, when the social experiment is deemed a failure, as it would result in Uriah's family forgetting about him and not being awarded the closure that they need in seeing him before his life support is ended. While the attention paid to his death might establish him as significant, his death resonates so intensely because it serves as a plot device and contributes to Tobias's character development. Uriah's death is as an 'I told you so' moment between Tris and Tobias, when Tobias goes along with Nita's plan in spite of Tris's caution and skepticism. It is also a point of maturity for Tobias, where instead of arguing that he could not have known Uriah would be in the wrong place at the wrong time, he wholeheartedly holds himself accountable for his actions, and later not only takes responsibility for delivering the message of Uriah's coma and imminent death to his family, but openly admits that he had taken part in the uprising that resulted in the tragedy.

In this sense, Uriah's death seems to parallel that of Will's in the trilogy's first installment. Both his demise and Will's contribute to a period of reflection for *Divergent's* protagonists, with Tobias wallowing in regret for being partially responsible for Uriah's death, and Tris having nightmare after nightmare, knowing she was fully accountable for Will's death. However, Will's death appears to serve multiple purposes, whereas Uriah's simply awards Tobias the opportunity to finally feel bad for acting rashly. Will's death serves as the catalyst that leads Tris to question herself continually, but it also affects Christina, serving to paint her more vividly as a strong girl shouldering tragedy. When Tris admits to all of Candor, including Christina, that she is responsible for killing Will, it not only causes a rift between her and her best friend that weighs on them until they can reconcile, but her culpability also highlights a newly developed aversion to guns. Will's death at the hands of Tris stands throughout the trilogy as the quintessential example of tragedy within the throes of war, as well as brings to light the difficulty of quick thinking in the midst of danger. When it comes to a choice between your life and that of another, there is no 'good' or 'correct' choice.

Uriah's death, which is not the result of a tough moral dilemma, but a deadly accident, does not hold the same significance. Furthermore, while Will's life is shorter, his opportunities are not as limited as Uriah's; he is notably intelligent (an Erudite transfer), and explores a romantic relationship with Christina. Uriah, whose identity does not extend much further than being a Dauntless-born adrenaline junkie, is denied the exploration of love and intimacy. His affection for Marlene is cut short but this affection's potential is cut short by her death—once again, due to a difficult moral dilemma forced upon Tris, when she has to choose between saving Marlene, and a

young boy named Hector. In addition, his love for Christina in *Allegiant* ends when he falls into a coma. Despite the similarities between Will and Uriah's deaths, when taking into consideration both what is available to these characters prior to their deaths, as well as the way in which their deaths resonate reveals that they are not only on an unequal footing in life, but that this discrepancy in equality follows them in death.

White normativity is not the only symptom of a grossly unbalanced futuristic Chicago. Even more underrepresented are the non-heterosexual characters who, as opposed to their race, stand out for their lack of normative sexuality which, as the reader discovers in *Allegiant*, goes against the wishes of the Bureau. First, in *Divergent*, the reader is introduced to Lynn, whose notable feature is her shaved head, and whose tomboy nature is later clarified in *Insurgent*, where Tris describes her as being "taller than I am by just a few inches, and though her baggy shirt and pants try to obscure it, I can tell that her body bends and curves like it's supposed to" (Roth, 2012, p. 172). Lynn's androgynous appearance is complemented by a clandestine romantic attraction to Marlene. She is jealous of Marlene and Uriah's budding relationship, confessing to Uriah that she "loved [Marlene], too," to which Uriah responds, "Yeah, we all loved Marlene," followed by Lynn's final words: "No, that's not what I mean" (Roth, 2012, p. 513). In light of the hints leading to Marlene's alleged non-heteronormative preferences, her appearance is stereotypical in nature, colouring her as the stereotypical lesbian "butch" and hearkening back to the traditional assumptions that "those types are the only way lesbians express themselves" (Jones, 2013, p. 78).

Stereotypical representation of lesbianism, and the limiting way in which Lynn is depicted as butch or tomboy are not the only disservices done to this character, and

the LBGTQI audience who might otherwise hope to identify with Lynn. Her love for Marlene comes dangerously close to “queer-baiting,” which Vrolijk (2014) describes as occurring when “LGBT viewers get drawn to a show looking for representation, which is often implied but never overt, only to never see actual queer characters emerge” (p. 16). While this description pertains to television, the notion of queer-baiting is not exclusive to that form of representation alone, and applies to the case of Lynn in *Insurgent*. Moreover, the LBGTQI reader trying to find representation in the trilogy is presented with a lesbian character conforming to a stock identity applied to lesbians, or a character who may or may not be a lesbian at all, depending on how you interpret her words and behaviour. Her death highlights one final disservice done to Lynn’s character. Returning to Banks’s (2009) observations that YA novels from the 80s to 90s depicted LGBT characters as secondary, and that they were often “killed off” (p. 35) during the narrative, it is disheartening to find that, in 2012, both of these aspects pertain to Lynn; she is secondary, and her death ultimately serves as a plot device to pique queer interest and questions pertaining to her sexuality without a concrete resolution or direct answer.

Returning to the aforementioned characters of Amar and George, race is not the only quality that plays against them. Amar comes out to Tris when he explains his earlier romantic attraction to Tobias. While these characters’ sexual orientations are not mystified by the queer-baiting trap, and although they do not die, they are cheated by the very nature of their relationship. Nothing says ‘rebel’ like embracing your non-normative sexual identity when it is wholeheartedly discouraged by the government, and that George and Amar’s relationship appears to endure, as do their lives, is hopeful.

Though in the grand scheme of the plot, which in *Allegiant* is redirected from the flaws of the faction system to focus on those of the overarching government that has controlled the factions, their relationship and confirmed gay identities serve little more than to frame how despicable the Bureau truly is.

Amar explains to Tris that because both he and George are considered genetically pure, their homosexuality is discouraged in favour of pursuing a reproductive relationship that would perpetuate more genetically pure offspring. The focus, then, is not the relationships or exploration of queer identity; rather, it is the Bureau. Queer relationships act as fodder to magnify the Bureau's disregard for human rights and freedoms in favour of their own agenda. And while it is likely that LBGTQI youth are aware of the inequalities to which they are subject in this day and age, and that they might perhaps identify with the inhumanity of this injustice, they may also be hard pressed to find kindred identities not only in Lynn, but also George and Amar, because homosexuality in the futuristic world of the *Divergent Trilogy* is little more than another passive fact. It is something acknowledged for the sake of acknowledging, and only relevant to the plot in terms of playing up the bad guy, while failing to be embedded in and explored through character identity.

Despite Roth's seemingly concerted effort to address racial and sexual diversity in her novels by including an array of characters who differ from socially normative white, heterosexual convention, this analysis of the underpinnings of diversity in the world of *Divergent* highlights Banks's (2009) declaration that "mere inclusion is not enough" (p. 34). The narrative's failure to satisfactorily explore the unique identities of racially diverse and non-heterosexual characters both renders them little more than plot

devices, and marginalizes their importance to the overall plot. This marginalization hinders the trilogy's potential to meet some of the proposed standards of a critical young adult dystopia. Where Baccolini (2003) argues for a recovery of history or acknowledgement of historical events that contribute to the fictional dystopian society and the stance and standing of the narrative's unique characters, the *Divergent Trilogy* fails to comply with this element. Instead, it erases the history of both its ethnically diverse characters, as well as the city of Chicago.

Arrow (2014) argues that "while Chicago's long history may be unknown to Tris, it does seem to continue on through many of the characteristics of the other factions" (p. 40). This argument is backed by substantial evidence, especially in terms of paralleling futuristic Chicago's faction system to contemporary Chicago's history of gangs. "As of 2012, over 400 gangs were active in Chicago," and "it would be almost impossible to create a social system like the factions and base it in Chicago without drawing comparisons to gang culture" (p. 42). Given that Tris and her comrades remain unaware of this crucial historical standpoint throughout the trilogy, these parallels do not constitute a true recovery or recognition of history. As Counzelis (2013) posits, if a protagonist remains unaware of historical underpinnings and institutional social oppressions, then the young reader who identifies with the protagonist is denied the opportunity to recognize the historical social oppressions that might have contributed to the fictional dystopian society (p. 133). With only vague parallels to historical landmarks and gang culture, and a failure to acknowledge at any point that racial tensions contribute to that culture and the overall history of Chicago, the *Divergent Trilogy* does not meet with the critical dystopian notion of a true recovery of history.

This lack of racial background likewise affects the trilogy's potential to connect with the reader in terms of how it reflects their relationship with their own world, the importance of which Donawerth (2013) defines in terms of critical dystopias. Weise Taubenheim (1979) cites Hannah (1970) who argues that young adult literature should "communicate" to the reader, in that "the adolescent can identify with [a] character and feel he or she 'belongs'" (p. 519). This potential—specifically for racially and sexually diverse readers—to identify or relate to *Divergent's* racially and sexually diverse characters is hindered, not only because they remain underrepresented, but because of the erasure of unique ethnic or personal history. Their personal importance is limited to plot devices and without the opportunity to explore their own identities apart from their white counterparts. Mar & Oatley (2008) argue that "narrative fiction [should] mode[l] life, commen[t] on life, and hel[p] us to understand life in terms of how human intentions bear upon it" (p. 173), but diverse readers are denied these simulations of their unique experiences and feelings, especially their own accounts of oppression, when diversity is simply "a given" (Cart & Jenkins, 2006, p. 171), without any historical contextual grounds.

Furthermore, *Divergent* does not provide diverse readers with a first-person narrative through diverse characters, which Bean & Moni (2003) argue contributes to the appeal of young adult literature in terms of seeing the world through the "unique point of view offered by an adolescent character" (Herz & Gallo, 1996; as cited in Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 638). While young adult literature is certainly not limited to first-person narratives, in the case of the *Divergent Trilogy*, it is once again imperative to take into consideration the problems associated with identifying with a protagonist who

is unaware of social inequities and white privileged culture. Perhaps more problematic than failing to identify with racially or sexually diverse characters is a diverse reader identifying with a white protagonist who is unconsciously socialized into institutional white privilege and heteronormative culture. This identification could further “encourage attitudes [in the reader] that deepen cultural stratification” (Couzelis, 2013, p. 133), and therefore foster the internalization of white, heteronormative values at the expense of exploring the roots of their own distinct identities.

Jacobs (2005) cites Macquarrie’s (1978) assertion that “true hope lives in the awareness of the world’s evils, suffering, and lacks,” and that hope must remain vulnerable to evidence that counts against it, humble in the face of the evils that have to be transformed and, above all, compassionate towards those whose experience has been such that their hopes have grown dim or have been dissolved in despair. (p.797)

This statement speaks to the importance of the recovery and awareness of history, and how it gives context to hope. Consequently, for a trilogy in which historical context is lost, hope does not thrive as it should, at least not for everyone. The ending of the *Divergent Trilogy* supposedly lays the foundations of a better world, with the dystopian regime largely dissolved and everyone finding new, “fitting jobs” (Roth, 2013, p. 517), and the protagonists learn about discrimination and systemic oppression through the faction system. However, the Bureau of Genetic Welfare, the people responsible for the faction system and the broad array of other social experiments, literally forget the turmoil they have caused. Ultimately, one of the biggest threats to hope in *Divergent* is

the memory serum given to Abnegation, and largely used as a method of control by the Bureau, that wipes the minds of anyone and everyone who threatens the authorities.

When David, a high ranking employee of the bureau, proposes to wipe the memories of everyone in Chicago, Tris immediately recognizes that it is not a sound decision; and yet, not long after, she proposes the solution of turning the serum on the Bureau itself, maintaining that “I think they’re lucky that I’m not going to kill them” (Roth, 2013, p. 384). Tobias senses that this solution is not ideal, but perhaps in recognizing that there *is* no ideal solution, decides to support Tris in her plan anyway. This is where the true danger lies in *Allegiant*’s ending: simply forgetting about poor social decisions and the systemic oppression of the past hinders the ability of future generations to learn from them. While Tris’s comrades’ memories remain unaffected, and they know the consequences of the decisions planned and executed by the Bureau, they remain oblivious to what occurred before the purity war, a crusade against the government by those declared to have “damaged genes,” and the very roots of what has led to the social experiments developed and put into place by the government (Roth, 2013, p. 123). In their ignorance of how government structure in the past systemically oppressed racial minorities, as well as those whose sexual orientation and identity were not congruent with heterosexual norms, there remains a risk of history repeating itself, and returning to (or maintaining, as achievement of equity and equality are not made clear at the end) the very systemic oppression that affects visible minorities, non-heterosexual individuals, and others who do not hold power in the white, heteronormative, patriarchal society.

The *Divergent Trilogy* does not succeed in fairly representing racially diverse and non-heterosexual individuals with reference to the systemic oppression that they face today, not while its protagonists condone a tool such as the memory serum, for example, that is literally responsible for the historical erasure. Furthermore, the suggestion that widespread amnesia to counter past and future mistakes is not only dangerous in its failure to address where government systems go wrong and why but also fails to speak to the diverse reader who may themselves be aware of their oppression, or, more dangerously, may perpetuate internalized oppression in the reader. Without addressing these issues, narratives such as Roth's trilogy may cause the young reader difficulty in "better understand[ing] how they are being constructed as adolescents in the texts and how such constructions compare with their own attempts to form their identities" (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 639).

As Couzelis (2013) points out, "if these dystopian/utopian novels are to critique current society, then ideologies about race and class and privilege must be exposed" (p. 132); otherwise, they run the risk of perpetuating the very dystopian elements of reality against which their protagonists fight. Couzelis goes on to suggest that the "inclusion of multiple races in a futuristic setting could potentially acknowledge minority contributions to culture, prevent ongoing marginalization, and unsettle white privilege ideology" (p. 138). Furthermore, while acknowledging that "dystopia [paradoxically] depends on and denies history," in that "it shows how our present may negatively evolve, while showing a regression of our present" (p. 138), this appears characteristic of the classic or Orwellian dystopia, and not that of a critical dystopia. It can therefore be argued that while the denial of history might be characteristic of classic dystopias,

critical dystopias depend on historical grounding and awareness. This allows for context and more enlightened protagonists, given the questions historical context can raise in terms of racially and sexually diverse identities, and how they are formed.

All that considered, Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* does not present the means to empower its diverse readers, as it does not to justice do their history or representation. This comes as no surprise when publishers of young adult literature assume not only that the market is comprised of mainly "white and middle or upper-class individuals" (Garcia, 2013, p. 91), but that "queer sexual orientations are still an 'issue' for many readers" (Jones, 2013, p. 74). These problematic societal assumptions are, therefore, what perpetuate unfair representation of non-white and non-heterosexual character in young adult literature, including young adult dystopias like *Divergent*.

Chapter 4

Community Beyond Categories: Agency and Communal Hope in the *Divergent Trilogy*

This chapter examines the influence of *Divergent*'s world, the faction system and beyond, and how its adolescent characters navigate Erik Erikson's psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion within the world's restrictions. At risk of over-identification with faction and family, the stifled teenagers take their right to psychosocial moratorium through experimentation with roles as the faction system crumbles, and see the necessity of defining themselves apart from their parents and other adults due to their notoriety. Furthermore, in realizing the gang mentality of over-identification with factions, along with the danger of alternatively acting singularly out

of personal desire, they find the balance between personal agency and a healthy sense of community as they discover the ways in which they can uniquely contribute to their society, and find a sense of hope. The way the *Divergent Trilogy*'s character developments interact with its plot trajectory, therefore, validate Erikson's theory without antagonizing Jacobs' view of hope, as these characters illustrate that the development of independence and introspection at the beginning of identity formation do not negate the ultimate desire for social contribution and acceptance, and a communal endeavour toward hope.

Lois Lowry, author of the widely acclaimed middle grade dystopian novel, *The Giver* (1993), claims, in Hintz & Ostry's *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults*, "it is the task of a writer for young people to present, as a fictional protagonist, a young person who makes moral choices" (p. 249). While this element is not limited to dystopian themes, the development of agency, and the freedom and ability to refine one's moral compass and make personal choices accordingly, appear to be a constant in young adult dystopian narratives. This contributes to its wide appeal to teen audiences. These narratives "place us close to the action, with first person narration, engaging dialogue, or even diary entries imparting accessible messages that may have the potential to motivate a generation on the cusp of adulthood," with many of these novels featuring "awakening, sudden or gradual, to the truth of what has been really going on" (Hintz, Basu & Broad, 2013, p. 1).

As a result, young adult dystopias have the potential to acknowledge teen readers' voices by "offering a gratifying view of adolescent readers as budding political

activists—a portrayal that flatters adolescents and reassures adults that they are more than apathetic youth” (Hintz, Basu & Broad, 2013, p. 5). This complements Ames’s (2013) observation that “the popularity of these novels may suggest that young adults do not warrant being classified as politically disengaged” (p. 4), and that they have ideas that warrant consideration. Young adult dystopias therefore have the potential to “empower[r] young people to turn against the system as it stands and change the world in ways adults cannot” (Hintz, Basu & Broad, 2013, p. 7), inspiring individual agency and positive social change.

This element of agency is not only common, but critical to dystopian fiction, due perhaps to the genre’s most crucial component, the theme of control. It is central to other characteristic of dystopias, where “roles are assigned, rigid, and nonnegotiable” (Clement-Moore, 2014, p. 14). Characters are “wrestling with the idea of control and how we resist it” (Wilson, 2014, p. 9), and the protagonist searches for and eventually realizes their identity. Garcia (2013) points out that series like the *Divergent Trilogy* “play deliberately with plot conceits involving mind control,” and “in particular, savvy and able-bodied youth are at the mercy of sinister adults to takeover [sic] or destroy the livelihood of many” (p. 95). Readers coming into adulthood can therefore relate in “learn[ing] vicariously that the ability to choose for yourself what your role will be, whom you will love, and whom you will (or won’t) fight is worth overthrowing the powers that be” (Clement-Moore, 2014, p. 14). As the adolescent protagonists struggle to find themselves within the confines of government control, or in an attempt to rebel against it, their coming of age through rebellion and revolution closely parallels the

stressors that contemporary teenagers face as they negotiate their own identity crises and attempt to find a place in a complex world.

While a number of theories have been proposed to address the complexity of adolescence and coming of age, one particularly appropriate to the character arcs in the *Divergent Trilogy* is Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Erikson theorizes a negotiation of the relationship between the developing individual and the social aspects of their society, proposing a series of stages in which a child "must find his or her own sense of regulation," and defining maturity as emerging when "a person works (or is so guided by the social spheres of influence) to find balance between the strengths and weaknesses, the positives and the negatives, of each stage" (Batra, 2013, pp. 250 & 256). The subject's failure to successfully reconcile these strengths and weaknesses within any given stage yields either "emotional discomfort or, in extreme cases, mental ill health" (Batra, 2013, p. 257). An individual, therefore, "may not find the emotional strength to cope" with challenges in later stages of life (Batra, 2013, p. 257).

The period of adolescence, which Erikson defines as the stage of identity versus role confusion, with an age range of anywhere from 10 to 24/26, specifically concerns itself with the development of a sense of place and purpose in the world, in terms of refining their own sense of morality and points of view on the cusp of adulthood, as well as their sense of belonging. Furthermore, it explores the evolution of their personal interests and ideals, and the need to "locate [themselves] in a social context," considered paramount for the healthy development of their identity (Barta, 2013, pp. 265-266). This yearning for social belonging and personal identity in the context of a group is so

significant that Erikson claims that “to keep themselves together, they temporarily over-identify, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity” (Erikson, 1968, p. 132). Batra points out that “young people seek to express their voices and seek culturally acceptable ways of generating trust, finding a purpose and establishing caring relationships,” yet “when their voices are not heard, or when they are not provided legitimate spaces for self-expression, they tend to seek or create subcultures for the development of their identity” (pp. 266-267). The implication, here, is that should this psychosocial stage be successfully navigated, the adolescent should outgrow this temporary over-identification, and come into an identity that is inspired and influenced by, but not strictly limited to, group identity. The ideal is a feeling of community, as opposed to taking group identity to the extreme and potentially assimilating hive mind and gang membership.

Arrow (2014) points out that “the identity of Chicago is, and has always been, one of rivalries,” and as a result, has an extensive history of gangs (pp. 40 & 42), and that “as of 2012, over 400 gangs were active in Chicago” (p. 42). As mentioned in chapter 3, with such a deep and consistent history of gang membership, and the rivalries and the violence that ensue, “it would be almost impossible to create a social system like the factions and base it in Chicago without drawing comparisons to gang culture” (Arrow, 2014, p. 42). Given that gang membership draws parallels to adherence to the specific behavioural conducts of *Divergent*'s factions, and that the very resistance to over-assimilation and over-identification with any given faction is a key factor in the trilogy's plotline, Erikson's psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion is directly applicable to the young adult characters of Roth's trilogy, with the trilogy itself

serving as an exaggerated cautionary tale about the dangers of over-identification with a particular group taken to the extreme.

Similar to the strict behaviour of the factions, “the gang norms, its functions, and its roles help shape what a person thinks about himself and others, and the gang provides models for how to look and act under various circumstances” (Vigil, 1988, p. 421). While gang identity is often perceived as a transient phase, for some young adults it can be more enduring when,

through immersion in gang routines and affairs, [the young adult] accomplish[es] the personal task of age and sex role clarification, contribute[s] to the role definitions of others in the group, and support[s] such salient gang practices as defending their territory. Thus personal needs merge with group needs. (Vigil, 1988, pp. 421-422)

The seasoned adults within the faction system, who go about their daily lives according to the specific behavioural conduct, factors as a risk to *Divergent*'s protagonists and their allies. A large part of their personal struggles, as well as the plot, comprises the need to refuse blind conformity *and* the need to maintain a stable perspective of who they are beyond their chosen faction. They must realize the importance of a healthy sense of community and its potential to help hope thrive in the midst of war and adversity.

Jacobs's (2005) philosophy of hope, which serves as a contextual grounding point for this thesis, is largely inspired by the works of Paulo Freire, an educator and philosopher who sees social change as becoming possible through the act of reading and writing, to create a communal endeavour against oppression (Garcia, 2013, p. 96). As

such, the application of a theory such as Erikson's which focuses on individual and not necessarily group identity, especially while addressing a stage that can warn against group-conformity, may seem counter-intuitive. In light of Roth's series, however, which is very much a narrative that addresses the dangers of blind conformity while illustrating the means for genuine community, Erikson's and Jacobs's views mediate rather than contradict each other. While Erikson's identity versus role confusion entails individual identity development, it is not devoid of concern for others or group-acceptance. It addresses the effect and importance of peer groups and society on the maturation of adolescent identity, and the individual's desire to be accepted, but also cautions against over-identification with any given group "to the point of apparent complete loss of identity" (Erikson, 1963, p. 262). Jacobs, on the other hand, maintains that hope is "only possible on the level of *us*," resting in a "collective, rather than an individual future" (2005, pp. 784 & 786; emphasis in original text), while warning against the temptation of "individual desire" (p. 786). Both of these themes surface in the *Divergent Trilogy*, presenting the protagonists with myriad moral dilemmas, but in considering Erikson's identity versus role-confusion as a prerequisite or stepping-stone towards what Jacobs advocates—community and communal hope—this specific sequence illustrates and highlights the importance of the protagonists' journeys, from their complacency in their initial faction identities to their discoveries of themselves and their place in a newly-formed community beyond the faction system.

Erikson's (1968) assertion of over-identification as a means for the young person to "keep themselves together" is, ideally, a temporary phase (p. 132). He posits that the adolescent mind enters a state of "moratorium," a period of time "during which

the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society” (Erikson, 1968, p. 156). This moratorium, however, is not without the potential to fail, posing the danger that “through experimentation with identity images,” the adolescent is at risk of “ending up in a social “pocket” from which there is no return” (p. 157). Erikson deems that, should this occur, “the moratorium has failed” as the individual ends up being “defined too early” (p. 158). Given faction restrictions, and the mandatory aptitude test that youth of *Divergent*'s futuristic Chicago, Roth's narrative demonstrates how the protagonists and their allies fight for and claim the right to their own moratoriums, first through transferring to new factions, and then disbanding the notion of factions altogether.

Through the crumbling of the dystopian faction system, and later the termination of the social experiments executed by higher powers with selfish, individualistic views, *Divergent*'s young adults come to realize who they are, what they stand for, and what it means to form community neither on the basis of personal desire nor strict conformity, but rather through the acceptance of diverse traits and unique strengths that all contribute to a collective endeavor for positive social change. The sequence of Erikson's identity versus role confusion, followed by Jacobs' view of hope, are what Roth's trilogy addresses: the dangers of blind group conformity within a closed-minded community, as well as the disaster that can result from pursuing personal desires in the guise of promoting the best interests of everyone involved. Roth's protagonists, therefore, illustrate the ideal outcome: successful navigation of this psychosocial stage through the completion of a moratorium, and the achievement of a solid sense of identity. Then they are able to distinguish between the excessive control of the faction

system, and realize that they belong among others with a likeminded, collective, as opposed to individualistic, per Jacobs's philosophy/vision of hope.

From the stifling, gang-like mentality and expectations of faction life, to the literal and figurative loss of parents, and the poor decisions and sinister endeavours of untrustworthy adults in authority, *Divergent's* adolescent characters come to see the importance of finding and defining themselves beyond the confines of family and faction. They are better aware of their personal values and loyalties and they come to realize the difference between visionless conformity and a meaningful community commitment. With a sincere contribution to a collective effort to build the future, void of the strict behavioural conducts that lead to exclusion, the notion of "faction before blood" (Roth, 2011, p. 43) is replaced with what is community beyond categories.

The theme of exaggerated conformity and control is not exclusive to the *Divergent Trilogy*. Hintz, Basu & Broad (2013) observe that in young adult dystopias, government authorities have initiated strict policies to manage personalities, choices, and appearances, ostensibly eliminating the discord said to threaten communal well-being, [and that] as they depict the struggle between adolescent protagonists and oppressive governments, these novels attempt to tease out the appropriate balance between personal freedom and social harmony. (p. 3)

What proportion of contemporary young adult dystopias achieve this remains to be analyzed, but the *Divergent Trilogy* presents a good case for addressing the tenuous balance between these two social ideals. The characters come to know themselves through recognizing the flawed faction system and government behind its existence, and gain political agency when they realize the ways in which they can unite and dissolve

the dystopian regime, finding the true meaning of community and the healthy benefits of belonging.

The faction system of *Divergent's* futuristic Chicago relies on the security of categories in order to govern society, under the illusion of community—group membership that is contingent on adherence to strict behavioural conduct—that is at the expense of an individual freedom to explore their identity. The stage of introspection and exploration, Erikson's moratorium, is replaced with a drug-induced aptitude test undergone to reveal their supposed true potential for any of the five factions. At a choosing ceremony, teenagers are then presented with forced choices. Despite what their aptitude test reveals, they are at liberty to decide where and how they will conduct the rest of their lives; however, this freedom is still limited to only five choices, lending the decision to specific rules. The most frightening part is that these teens are happy to be categorized.

The implications of *Divergent's* faction system in terms of appeal and identity is a topic of interest for some scholars. Despite the seeming absurdity of committing one's life to the restrictions of a single category, there can be some appeal to making such a commitment. Clement-Moore (2014) draws parallels between factions and categories to zodiac signs, further exemplifying the irrationality determining one's personality by one distinct classification (p. 14). Basu (2013) points out that because of these forced choices, characters are “distilled into simple and visible signs of group membership itself rather than reflecting the complex interplay of traits that make up authentic personality” (p. 20). Consequently, there is a forced harmony within factions, and therefore a false sense of community. Futuristic Chicago's teenagers, particularly in the

case of those who are divergent, do not commit to an 'ideal fit;' instead, they commit to a 'best fit,' while forced to set aside their individual differences or any way in which their sentiments or beliefs might contradict the values of their faction.

Karr (2014), while acknowledging the danger and oppression woven into futuristic Chicago's faction system, recognizes why its citizens invest so much faith in it. It is "empowering and affirming to be part of a group with others whose beliefs are in sync with your own" (p. 131). Moreover, "spending time with people with similar experiences or values validates the way we think and feel about ourselves and the world around us" (p. 131). Furthermore, group membership can "provide structure and guidance, a safe haven where things make sense" (p. 133). These benefits do not diminish in the shadow of the consequences of committing to group membership by unhealthy or premature means. "Segregation, by its very nature, focuses on exclusion, rather than inclusion," Karr acknowledges, and this segregation runs the risk of "not only setting person against person, but group against group—no matter how respectable, principled, and ethical a group might be" (p. 133). The consequences of adherence to group membership at the expense of further exploration or moratorium is what Erikson refers to as role or identity confusion, which is incited by the adolescent's "inability to settle on an occupational identity" (1963, p. 262). This spurs the need to over-identify with a clique or group. In agreement with Karr, Erikson also posits that defending "against a sense of identity confusion" often results in "the exclusion of all of those who are different" in order to define the "in-grouper[s] or out-grouper[s]" (p. 262).

This is precisely what results from Chicago's faction system, a direct symptom of not only sorting people into inflexible groups and forcing them to discover

themselves within the confines of the group's conduct, but "allowing [the factions] to evolve into egocentric entities whose members have little or no respect for anyone outside of the group" (Karr, 2014, p. 140). Karr concludes that the key flaw in the faction system is that it has no "empathy for fellow humans," and that "in any successful group, it is the inclusion of and compassion for all of its members [and their differences] that truly allow the group to flourish" (p. 142). This is similar to Vigil's (1988) description of the details and mechanisms of gang mentality and membership, which suggests that Chicago's faction system is, at best, little more than a semi-civilized organization of gangs.

Despite the limiting, stifling nature of committing one's life to the framework of a single category, the endurance of the faction system appears to be rooted in the intense fear of not belonging. Citizens of futuristic Chicago are willing to conform to the practice and principles of their chosen faction because they are otherwise relegated to the factionless. To a group that is purposeless, lost, and seemingly alone. Between the sole choices of conformity or alienation, there is little wonder as to why an individual would strive for the former. Makaresz (2009) observes that group-oriented identity, or more specifically, that of "the formation of a positive group identity" is a "necessary component in Erikson's process" (p. 7). "In adolescents who fail to make positive group affiliations," she explains, "the result of the crisis is a negative resolution that leads to alienation from one's peers" (p. 10). Furthermore, in order to avoid social estrangement, teens can become "bound to a group that is not right for them" (p. 10). Makaresz goes on to clarify that lack of group identity, or alienation, if it is chronic, can "lead to life long [sic] difficulties," particularly that which Erikson defines as "identity confusion"

(1968, p. 131). Erikson claims that youth who are “bewildered by the incapacity to assume a role” tend to “run away” or withdraw in one form or another, turning “delinquent” and, at worst, assuming “psychotic and criminal” traits which, if gone unaddressed, could have “fatal significance” (p. 132). In light of this potential, *any* group identity—positive or otherwise—can easily appear to be the more attractive option.

In fear of being factionless, the ultimate form of social alienation, Tris and all faction members are quick to believe that conformity and community are one and the same, and that concealing or refusing to acknowledge differences for the sake of harmony is the key to maintaining the city as a functioning society. Essentially, this suggests that they forego a psychosocial moratorium to find their “niche” (Erikson, 1968, p. 156), as their society does not present them with any other option. The aptitude test, Chicago’s transition point from childhood to adulthood, defines *Divergent’s* adolescents too early, and they therefore find themselves committed “because circumstances, or indeed, authorities, have committed [them]” (Erikson, 1968, p. 158).

As she proceeds through her initiation, Tris’ over-identification with her new faction intensifies, to the point where she believes:

I didn’t jump off the roof because I wanted to be like the Dauntless. I jumped off because I was already like them, and I wanted to show myself to them. I wanted to acknowledge a part of myself that Abnegation demanded that I hide. (Roth, 2011, p. 263)

Tris’s attraction to the reckless lifestyle of the Dauntless is a reaction to the stifling environment of Abnegation from which she came. “The phrase “do whatever you like”

sticks in my mind,” she muses, early on in her initiation; “At home [Abnegation], I could never do what I wanted, not even for an evening. I had to think of other peoples’ needs first. I don’t even know what I like to do” (Roth, 2011, p. 70). Reckless, wild Dauntless, compared to self-effacing Abnegation, appears to be an opportunity for real self-exploration, and it is, to a point, for Tris, until she realizes the dangers of the Dauntless’ hive mind, and consequently the perils of over-identifying with it.

What Tris thought to be identity achievement through group identification with the Dauntless becomes an element of her role confusion. However, although Erikson frames role confusion as a danger in this stage, others argue that it could be a necessary component of identity development. Wager (2011) suggests that “ironically, it is also necessary for all to experience role confusion at some point in order to successfully work through the identity process” (p.21). This is congruent with Erikson’s belief in “free experimentation” as a remedy for premature “total commitment [to] role fixation” (1968, p. 184), that can lead to identity confusion.

A turning point for Tris’s perspective on Dauntless conduct occurs when the faction celebrates the suicide of one of her comrades, Al. Taking into consideration her background, noting that “Abnegation considered suicide selfish” (Roth, 2011, p. 307), she acknowledges her bias towards the event, yet simultaneously sees the danger in her potential to share in the same flaws that lead the Dauntless to behave in such a way. “Pride is what killed Al,” she observes, “and it is the flaw in every Dauntless heart. It is in mine” (Roth, 2011, pp. 308-309). This cognitive dissonance, unimpressed as she is with the way they deal with Al’s death, she simultaneously identifies with the ultimate Dauntless vice, causes Tris to question herself and her belonging to this faction:

Abnegation is what I am. It is what I am when I'm not thinking about what I'm doing. It is what I am when I am put to the test. It is what I am even when I appear to be brave. (Roth, 2011, p. 379)

Through this shift in perspective, Tris experiences the turmoil of her role confusion, dreading the answer to the question, "Am I in the wrong faction?" (Roth, 2011, p. 379), although it is one of the most important questions, according to Erikson's psychosocial theory, that she should ponder.

Tris's struggle to belong, to shake her role confusion and become part of a group that shares morals and values continues throughout the first novel, until her mother tells her that, "We [the divergent] can't be confined to one way of thinking, and that terrifies our leaders. It means we can't be controlled" (Roth, 2011, p. 439). The last five chapters of *Divergent* are crucial to her awareness of the fallacy concerning community within factions. "I am Divergent," she confirms for herself, "And I can't be controlled," a sentiment that she carries with her to the end of the book. She acknowledges that she is not *only* selfless or *only* brave, but that she "must become more than either" (Roth, 2011, p. 487) if she is to find her place in the world, along with a sense of community and camaraderie that is not forced or fabricated simply by being sorted. This is the point where she discovers the answer to that question that she so dreads, and recognizes that the answer is, yes; Dauntless *is* the wrong faction and there is no one faction that is right for her. It becomes clear to her that in adhering to the conduct of any given faction, she would define herself too early and too quickly. While her divergence, her aptitude for more than one virtue might have begun as the crux of her role confusion, the conclusion

of the first book reveals that it is also her ticket to navigate that role confusion, and pursue the experimentation and moratorium that the faction system denies her.

While the first book in the *Divergent Trilogy* largely focuses on Tris and her own self-discovery beyond the factions and how she comes to realize the fallacy of cohesion within them, the trilogy proceeds to provide further evidence of oppression disguised as community through Tris's newly developed critical point of view. Having discovered who she is *not* by escaping the simplicity of the faction system, she and her comrades proceed to search for people they can trust and, more importantly, to whom they can genuinely relate. This is to be anticipated, according to Erikson's model, given that an individual navigating this stage is not only "learning effective steps towards a tangible future," but that they seek to define themselves in a "social reality" (1963, p. 235). Adolescents do not find self-definition or a sense of identity devoid of social influence. Rather, Šarić (2006) clarifies the "ultimate goal of adolescence" is to develop "a sense of self through interpersonal interaction" which in turn, leads to "greater social acceptance" (p. 104) and ideally, a sense of community among those who offer this acceptance. In light of adolescents' potential to identify with a "group that is not right for them" (Makarecz, 2009, p. 10), Roth's trilogy continues to shed light on the people and communities within its fictional world, exploring and depicting further examples of a fallacious sense of community. This emphasis not only further elucidates the importance of deeper self-awareness prior to committing to group membership, but in examining the varied nature of group harmony and cohesion, sheds light on the reasons why these communities are toxic. The importance of *Divergent's* protagonists looking beyond them to feel a true sense of community and belonging is, therefore, clarified.

An extreme example is that of Amity, the only other faction apart from Abnegation that portrays an idealistic harmony among its faction members. However, this illusion is quickly dispelled in *Insurgent*, when Tris and Tobias learn the sinister secret of its peace serum, which is cooked into the food, ensuring passivity throughout the faction. Camaraderie and group membership among Amity are predominantly the result of drug-induced passivity, not genuine cohesion. A far more dangerous example is the case of the factionless who are, ironically, in and of themselves a faction, and whose group membership can only be attributed to being misguided by the corrupt desire of a single person. Rejected by society for their inability to conform, they are bonded only by mutual failure and their resentment towards a common enemy, the faction system and the government that enforces it. Led by Evelyn Johnson, who preaches freedom via governmental overthrow, the factionless are therefore not a cohesive community or a true beacon for hope. Essentially, albeit unknowingly, they are pawns in one person's plan to realize her ultimate goal of having revenge on her husband, Marcus.

These examples of false community serve as clarification for the dangers of, as Makaresz suggests, falling into a group that is "not right" (p. 10) for an individual, and Šarić's claim elucidates the potential of this danger. "Within the context of psychosocial identity formation," autonomy is not necessarily an individualistic endeavor, but rather it "involves the balance between core and context, or the self and society" (p. 103). That suggests that without the opportunity to experience moratorium or to first establish autonomy and the foundations of a personal moral framework, the risk of affiliating with groups that do not promote a healthy sense of community is increased. Jacobs

(2005) cites Marcel (1951) in arguing that hope must not be “confuse[d] with ambition” (pp. 784-785), and that often, “attention to individual desire [can] impede hope” (p. 786).

Those who undergo Chicago’s aptitude test and are initiated into Amity, foregoing introspection or experiencing temporary role confusion, are consumed by Johanna Reyes’s desire for drug-induced peace. Those who forsake the faction system altogether, yet who find themselves desperate for some form of group membership without taking the time to consider who they really are and where they stand, are quick to ally with the factionless and buy into Evelyn Johnson’s deceptive and selfish vision for governmental overthrow. Šarić asserts that “the development of an autonomous self is considered one of the key normative psychosocial developmental issues of adolescence” (p. 103), and neither in the case of peaceful Amity nor the revolutionary factionless is it evident that group members know themselves better than they know the group and its rules. When an individual is quicker to conform to group standards than they are to question them first, pitting them against a pre-existing moral framework, the necessity of individual self-awareness prior to group commitment is emphasized.

Throughout the trilogy, many of the characters exhibit resistance to the collapse of the faction system. It is what they grew up with and all that they know, a consensus so deeply embedded in their social consciousness that they believe society could not function without the factions, or, worse, that it could result in another war, and that “without [the factions], survival would be impossible” (Roth, 2012, p. 34). The pivotal moment, the realization that there could be hope beyond factions, occurs after a process of self-discovery, maturation and introspective analysis. “In *Allegiant*,” Clement-Moore

(2014) observes, “instead of factions, our heroes are struggling with questions of individual identity” (p. 26). With the idea of factions dissolved, only to be replaced by sorting via the theoretical quality of one’s genes, the characters are faced with the new challenge of finding validity and definition beyond the results of their aptitude tests, their genetics, as well as beyond the fact that they may or may not be divergent.

Despite finally finding the space beyond Chicago to truly explore and experiment within their achieved moratoriums and come into their own, discovering their identities is no easy task. Early on in *Allegiant*, Tris confesses her tendency to continually sort people into factions when she sees them, realizing “it’s an old habit, hard to break” (Roth, 2013, p. 16). Later, Tris’s newfound ally, Cara, expresses distress at the idea of identity beyond factions, stating “I need other words for what I am” (Roth, 2013, p. 133). This is a result of the faction system stifling *Divergent’s* young characters in their crucial period of identity development, denying them the right to psychosocial moratorium through limited choices and non-negotiable, strict behavioural conducts. Therefore, when these adolescents realize that the opportunity to discover themselves is available, they find themselves feeling relatively, albeit temporarily, lost.

From the argument that individual development is “increasingly shaped by the choices that the young person makes to determine [their] place in society, one that establishes her as a person who has the power to, in turn, influence society” (Batra, 2013, p. 268), *Divergent’s* faction system is guilty of robbing Chicago’s teenagers of this potential. Citizens are not expected to change society, they are simply molded to perpetuate the oppressive structure already in place, hence its perception of the divergent — those less likely to be controlled and, therefore, less likely to conform —

as a direct threat to everything that has already been established. As Clement-Moore states, "When you divide people up into factions, districts, ideologies, etc., it's pretty easy to keep them arguing with each other instead of noticing you're taking over the world" (p. 14).

When teenagers from Chicago are forced to choose their preferred faction, this choice does not emulate or even parallel their need (at this psychosocial stage of development) to "switch [their] loyalty from the family to the peer group, which becomes the authority in the adolescent's life and the agent of approval" (Wiese Taubenheim, 1979, p. 518). Without the freedom to establish oneself beyond categories and to find the value of individual differences within certain categories, adolescents are not provided with the opportunity to interact with various individuals and personalities. The freedom to befriend others beyond their given or chosen faction, who may or may not be likeminded, ultimately expands and challenges their world view to help them perceive society as a whole instead of fragmentally, and find a truer sense of belonging amongst people of their choice. This is what the faction system, and the Bureau, for that matter, does *not* want, which serves to promote the importance of establishing individual identity *before* establishing oneself as part of a group. After all, there is no hope to be found in a community that is restricted from seeing beyond the social system's plan for it, at the expense of understanding the bigger picture. Yet the importance of true community is not lost in this message. As Tobias sums up in *Allegiant's* last words: "Life damages us, everyone. We can't escape that damage. But now, I am also learning this: We can be mended. We mend each other" (Roth, 2013, p. 526).

Genuine commitment to a chosen community of likeminded yet qualitatively varied individuals aside, the emphasis of the onset of adulthood in the *Divergent Trilogy* allots further weight to the Eriksonian psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion for the adolescents of futuristic Chicago, as well as introduces another obstacle for emerging adults. According to Karr (2014), it makes sense that the Choosing Ceremony takes place at the age of sixteen, because “teens are at a point in life when they are beginning to question the values they grew up with and look for their own place in the world” (p. 131). Roth is not the only one to emphasize the idea that the chosen age of sixteen embodies the point at which teenagers are assumed to have acquired adequate life experience and introspection to make informed decisions that determine their future.

Borsellino (2014) parallels futuristic Chicago's tradition of the choosing ceremony at age sixteen to that of the event of Amish society's Rumspringa. “When [Amish] teenagers turn sixteen,” they have the “opportunity to experience life outside the world they've grown up in, which like Tris's is one where pride is strongly discouraged and simple, community-centric lives are considered the best possible lifestyle” (p. 98). Like Amish youth, adolescents in *Divergent* leave behind their families and original faction. This means “being forever an outsider,” in that “all family ties cease to exist: you no longer have a mother, or a father, or any siblings from your old life” (p. 98). Hence the imperative “faction before blood” (Roth, 2011, p. 43).

The stress of being forced to choose between family and calling is pivotal to the stage of identity versus role confusion, and while faction before blood may be too rigid to serve as an appropriate analogy, letting go of, or re-evaluating family ties is crucial

towards redirecting adolescent attention to the peer group and setting out feelers as to with whom they best identify (Wiese Taubenhein, 1979, p. 518). Borsellino (2013) emphasizes this claim, stating that

in order to discover who we are and what our personal moral stances on the issues in our lives entails, we have to go through a process of rejecting our parents, [because it is through] rejecting your role as your parents' dependent child [and] discovering who you are apart from them is a huge part of what it means to grow up. (p. 98)

The *Divergent Trilogy* highlights this point with the loss of parents, either literally or figuratively. While not all of its characters choose to switch factions and/or lose their parents, the reader is most exposed to the details of the protagonists' coming of age, and both Tobias and Tris suffer the loss of their parents in one way or another.

Regardless of the means by which they physically and/or emotionally lose their parents, the changes that Tris and Tobias embrace in themselves only begin to take place when they accept and envision themselves as part of something new and different, something that they have chosen for themselves, a decision void of influence or pressure from their mother and/or father. It solidifies a semi-successful first step towards individual identity, which is, once again, hindered by their limited choices in factions, and the pressure to temporarily "over-identify, to the point of apparently complete loss of identity" (Erikson, 1963, pp. 261-262).

The portrayal of adults in dystopian young adult literature emphasizes the importance of adolescent characters discovering themselves beyond parents and adult figures in positions of authority in dramatic ways. According to Hintz, Basu & Broad

(2013), “kids learn adults are lying, their parents have problems, the system can’t protect them, and they have to take care of themselves” (p. 6). In addition to their lies and their seeming inability to change the world for the better (Hintz, Basu & Broad, 2013, p. 7), the adults in dystopian literature for teenagers are often portrayed as stubborn and/or incompetent, and at the extreme, they are vilified.

This further encourages young protagonists to venture through the stage of identity versus role confusion, distancing themselves from their parents and other adult authorities, and forming their identities apart from them. Lauer (2013) emphasizes that in more traditional dystopian fiction, there is often the subversive subtext that things are so wrong in society that children are better able to set the world right than adults, or that children/teens cannot rely on the adults already in power. (p. 45)

Often times a worst-case scenario is depicted where, as Stewart (2013) articulates, “adults make bad decisions [and] kids pay the price” (p. 161). Young protagonists are therefore provided with little reason to wish to identify with their parents and other adults, if not for their failure to make a difference, then out of their fear and resentment of the dismal situation to which adults decisions have led.

Perhaps the worst of poor adult decision making in these narratives is not only the inevitable result that their children suffer the consequences, but that in some cases adults outright sacrifice children as a means to a desirable end. Stewart (2013) explains that the literal “sacrifice of the young, whether explicit or implicit, is frequently woven into novels of dystopia.” In many cases this is the element that specifically colours the narrative as dystopian, and “sacrificing the young for the good of the community (adult

community, usually) makes these kinds of narratives simultaneously striking and horrifying” (p. 162). Furthermore, Stewart argues that the “ideological nature of dystopia becomes even more reprehensible when the sacrifice results from adults’ mistakes, benefits adults, or is enforced by adults” (p. 162), and that ultimately children are used as scapegoats for the consequences of adults’ mistakes. Sacrifice is, in this sense — as a means to end and/or to prevent violence or other perceived crises — “the cornerstone of scapegoating” (p. 164).

While it may not be central to the overall plot, the *Divergent Trilogy* does not fall shy of this theme of making sacrifices and scapegoats of children as a means to maintain futuristic Chicago’s corrupt patterns that benefit the adults in power. Ultimately, this gives the protagonists and their comrades more reason to identify beyond their families and authority figures.

Adults inflict just about every possible cruelty on the youthful characters depicted in young adult dystopias: drugged, brainwashed, or otherwise forced by adult tutors to become docile and compliant, or actually die in order to highlight the negligence and corruption of the adult-created world they have inherited.

(Stewart, 2013, p. 170)

These are all elements that contribute to the mechanisms of *Divergent*’s dystopian world, which provides various examples of “intolerable and contemptible” adults (Stewart, 2013, p. 70).

While children and teens in dystopian novels or otherwise are, as Stewart points out, “by no means entirely virtuous,” adult notoriety in the *Divergent Trilogy* credits teens with a capability for higher level thinking and informed decision making, and

emphasizes that in this case, as with many other young adult dystopian novels, “only when youth depicted in these narratives assume control of their futures can they provide any sense of hope” (p. 71). Therefore, unless these characters find a means of identifying beyond the public and domestic values of the adults, any hope of change for the better, and not at the expense of the lives of the young or the older, is slim. Erikson (1963) argues that children must defend their sense of a separate and unique identity “against the necessity of over-identifying with either one or both of their parents” (p. 241), and *Divergent*'s protagonists, in light of the wrongdoings of the adults in their lives, realize this necessity. Therefore, it is because Tris and Tobias manage to see the importance of defining themselves outside of their families and in terms of a future different from what controlling adults desire that their endeavours are hopeful.

The Bureau's scapegoating is unveiled during Tris's final confrontation with David towards the end of *Allegiant*, when she endeavours to foil his plans to sacrifice the long term memory of everyone in Chicago because the experiment is not unfolding as he saw fit. Just like Jeanine's desire to destroy everyone with divergent aptitude results since their resistance to serums hinders her ability to control them, it is because David has lost control of Chicago as a social experiment that he wishes to start over. His solution to the problem stems from individual desire and suffocates hope because it is very clearly *not* for the good of any community, not even his own, divided as it is between the privileged genetically pure individuals and the undermined genetically damaged, a fact that does not escape Tris's awareness.

While this final confrontation ends in Tris's death, it can still be considered the moment where identity and community come full circle. Having learned from and

respected her family, yet finding her own strength to self-identify along with her ability to make autonomous decisions in and of others, she is able to find true community beyond her initial and chosen factions, enough to broaden her view that hope cannot be categorized, and most certainly cannot be exclusive. With the conviction borne of her struggles with identity and belonging throughout the trilogy, she manages to stop David, therefore contributing to a more positive future for her loved ones and friends.

Although the *Divergent Trilogy* does not do justice to Tris in terms of her gendered identity, she nonetheless has some sense of personal identity, free of parental or faction influence, before she dies. “When [Tris] dies, it is not as a “GP” or a “Divergent,” not as “Abnegation” or “Dauntless,” Barnes (2013) posits, “but as a sister and a lover, a daughter and a friend” (p. 38). She is all of this, and more, including a social activist. Having emerged from the system of categories in which she has been raised, she becomes part of a broader world, and yet no less an individual in light of the much larger community in which she has invested her love and trust, and with which she ultimately identifies as an individual. Barnes further elaborates, with regard to Tris never seeing the hopeful future for which she fought, that her death

serves a purpose, not just in the atrocities it prevents, but also in the way that it might cause other people to introspect, to question who they are, their vices, their virtues, [and that] for the second time in her life, Tris has seen a group of people dazed and sleepwalking, and she’s woken them up. (p. 38)

While the narrative’s conclusion may strike readers as bittersweet, Barnes’ argument supports the idea of Erikson’s theory in its application to for *Divergent*’s primary protagonist.

Tobias is left to carry the torch of hope, but his identity beyond the scope of his parents and faction is not confirmed until *Allegiant*'s afterward. It is Tris who, at the one moment where it matters the most, realizes that hope does not encompass individual desire, and that sacrifice only resonates with value if it is at no one else's expense, and if it will ameliorate the lives of a valued collective. Šarić (2006) argues that developing autonomy and discovering a sense of self is not devoid of social consideration for others (p. 104), and thus, as Wager (2011) states, is "not just a selfishly motivated or a coddled pampering of today's youth," as it precedes "becoming a functioning, contributing adult in society" (p. 18). Tris's sacrifice for the hopeful future of the ones she loves, therefore, serves as a prime example that successfully navigating Erikson's identity versus role confusion, likewise, need not end on an individualistic note. By seeing herself as part of the very community she wishes to and does save, it can be argued that when she asks her mother, "Am I done yet?" (Roth, 2013, p. 475), she is not giving up the fight: she has already won.

Looking at futuristic Chicago, and the world of the *Divergent Trilogy* as a whole, while taking into consideration its mechanisms that directly and indirectly affect the characters' lives, as well as the means by which the characters grow and respond, both the development of and the outcome for *Divergent*'s youth are hopeful. Roth's characters meet the young adult critical dystopian standards of exhibiting both political agency, as well as a true, communal sense of self. As the novels recount the personal growth and identity struggles of Tris and Tobias, uneasy with the nature of their home factions, the trilogy demonstrates how, through both distance from adults and family and meaningful identification with cohorts, peer influence can clarify the young

protagonists' perspectives of their world and the people in it, as observed by Scholes & Ostenson (2013, p. 17).

In successfully navigating Erikson's identity versus role confusion, *Divergent's* adolescent protagonists thus become agents of their own political action and develop goals and values external from familial and/or authoritarian expectations that would have otherwise stifled their ability to develop. Furthermore, they find the freedom to locate a genuine and voluntary community among their peers. That group inspires the collective effort to reinvent and rebuild their broken world and grasp at hopeful possibilities for the future.

Looking at Tris' death alone, it might be tempting to write her off as unsuccessfully completing Erikson's adolescent stage of development. While there is no doubt that her ending is tragic, it can be argued, however, that concluding death as a failure is an intrinsically limiting assumption. The truth is, Tris has already succeeded this stage of development prior to her death; she has already won. Although she does not survive to see the beginnings of that, her death is not selfish or defeatist; after all, she expresses her desire to remain a part of Tobias's life, and tells Caleb during their last moment together, "If I don't survive, tell Tobias I didn't want to leave him" (Roth, 2013, p. 456). Her final contribution to the people she loves is the beginning of her legacy, and by removing the final, dangerous obstacle standing in the way of her comrades' hope for a better future, she remains an integral part of her chosen community, even in her death. Just because she is not physically present for the foundations of this hopeful future does not mean she has altogether diminished. Like the phoenix which perishes, only to rise from its own ashes, Tris's hope and spirit endure,

maintaining a presence in the way she has influenced Tobias and her allies, and in the hopeful opportunities she has left them. Although they are forced to move on without her physical company, it is *because* of her that they are able to move on at all, and repair and rebuild what has been broken. The tragedy of Tris's death, therefore, resonates in her psychic conflict, as pertaining to Jungian analysis, but in terms of a social sense of identity and a contributor of enduring hope, she is not limited by or failed in her demise.

While certain underpinnings of the *Divergent Trilogy* present as problematic, in terms of the injustices to representation or negligence of gender and sexual orientation, and racial and class identities, the shape and trajectory of the narrative's overall plot address issues to which young adults can relate on a developmental level. This trilogy sheds light on certain trends in white, western culture of growing up, discovering their self and ability to belong that youth might find appealing. The series also addresses the dangers that accompany over-conformity without prior introspection. It addresses Roth's characters' need to come into themselves as well as to belong, and the importance of their own values and beliefs and what that says about where they fit in society, before blindly endorsing those of a chosen group, despite how attractive that option may be.

Basu (2013) mentions that "there are pleasures to be found in 'loving categories'," (p. 31), and Roth addresses this, from the moment that Tris expresses disappointment and fear for her divergence instead of that automatic sense of belonging that the aptitude test is supposed to provide (Basu, 2013, p. 24). Tris's struggles throughout the first two novels convey what Basu refers to as a "wildly fluctuating rhetoric," (p. 27) as her thoughts bounce between adherence to faction values, to the

meaning of divergence, and overall defining herself as something more than both. While the idea of automatically finding a sense of group belonging may very well have its appeal, there is a necessity to navigate this period of self-discovery with the help of friends and peers, but not if it is to accommodate their personal desires with only the hope of acceptance as a reward.

Roth's representation of factions and the adherence to their rigid regimes dramatizes over-conformity to a group, that which Erikson cautions against (1963, p. 241), because to do so means becoming a product of the category. However, gang mentality and hive mind are not fictional concepts, and rushing through or passing over the opportunity for individual self-discovery in order to gain group acceptance is a risk that remains very real for contemporary teens. The trilogy cautions its readers against defining themselves by who they are not, and portrays tainted leadership by megalomaniac adults, interfactional aggressions as well as supposed genetic differences to show Tris and Tobias discovering true belonging and a sense of community through a commitment to hope for a positive future and surrounding oneself with others who both bear similarities and differences to them.

Wilson's (2014) suggestion pertaining to the crux of *Allegiant's* plot in particular parallels this former statement well by addressing one key element of the trilogy's trajectory, that being the true meaning of divergence:

By the end of *Allegiant*, Divergence comes to mean more than just awareness within simulations or having an aptitude for more than one faction. It also suggests awareness, in the real world, of our ability to choose, no matter what our

genes say. Of our ability to act independent of influence, whether that influence comes in a serum or from the ones we love. (p. 10)

That said, by exerting this independence to act and to choose, it is up to the individual to decide not only where or to whom they belong, but as belonging alone is not a catalyst for self-identification or hope, it is also up to them to choose what and who matter to them, and why, and how these choices and values will influence their outlook on the future, as well as the belief in and endeavour towards hope.

Finally, it is important to note how this analysis is limited by the restrictions of the theory used to examine it. Like Jung's theory, it has foundations in white, cisgender, heteronormative culture, and one of its main weaknesses is that it creates a "very general picture based on particular groups" (Makaresz, 7, 2009). Makaresz goes on to suggest that "in order to provide a more accurate picture, identity theory requires a narrowed lens to account for diverse populations" since "society and its adolescent population in particular, are constantly changing" (p. 7), and cites Kroeger (2000) in his assertion that, therefore, "there is a need to examine identity development in relation to the multiple social contexts many adolescents now experience" (pp. 7-8; as cited in Makaresz, 2009, p. 8). For future analyses, more contemporary theories that take these aforementioned variables into account would be advised, such as Newman & Newman's (2001) proposed alternative interpretation and additions to Erikson's theory, which suggests "new directions for growth in understanding of the crisis of group-identity versus alientation" (Makaresz, 2009, p. 7).

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Hope on the Horizon

This thesis has proposed six criteria for a successful critical young adult dystopia: unconscious mechanisms that affect one's personal sense of self; responsibility for choices; recovery of history; the reader's relationship relatability to the fictional world; the recognition of political agency; and a social-communal sense of self. The *Divergent Trilogy*, although it does not altogether fail in meeting at least two of the criteria, exhibits far too many contradictions to be considered hopeful. On one hand, the trilogy appeals to the social necessities and tendencies of young people, its plot complementing their stage of development in terms of an integral need to belong, while conveying a strong message cautioning against hasty group-identification without preliminary self-identification,. This is based on its parallels to contemporary Chicago's gang culture (Arrow, 2014, p. 42). Furthermore, both Tris and Tobias, in successfully navigating the Eriksonian stage of identity versus role confusion, appear to have achieved a sense of self apart from their factions, while they are no less influenced by their own social

awareness. As a result, they are able to realize their political agency and overall potential to make a difference on behalf of their newfound sense of inclusive community among others who share in a vision for a hopeful future. And Tris, despite her untimely demise, realizes her place among her friends and the difference she is able to make, and her influence remains as an immortal presence among her friends and comrades as they endeavour to rebuild their world. This vision acknowledges that only through collaboration and collective support can they recover from all that they have suffered without forgetting the implications of everything they have learned.

These successes do not stand on their own to constitute *Divergent* as a hopeful series; the trilogy has shortcomings with regard to the other aspects of a critical young adult dystopia. Tris realizes her sense of self in a social context, apart from the hive mind of the factions and the Bureau, but according to Jungian analysis, her unconscious mechanisms reveal her to suffer too much internal conflict and uncertainty to achieve integration. This is especially problematic in terms of gender representation. Tobias, contrariwise, resolves the confrontation with his shadow and identifies an appropriate anima, achieves syzygy and lives to reflect upon it. Although Tris's presence in the minds of her comrades is not extinguished along with her physical form in her death, she struggles to reconcile herself as a girl *and* a warrior, two identifiers that Tobias implies are mutually exclusive. This in addition to the moral dilemmas she faces are a burden to her psyche that is too heavy to bear. Unable to see past her own reflection in her shadow, and therefore unable to appropriately identify an animus for fear of over-identifying with what she perceives as her penchant for violence and other aggressively masculine qualities, she is faced with gendered challenges that Tobias is not.

Because the mechanisms of Tris's subconscious mind result in her failure to achieve syzygy, Roth does not meet the critical dystopian standard that portrays protagonists and other characters as taking responsibility for their choices. Tobias makes errors in judgement and often comes to realize as well as atone for them. Tris, on the other hand, feels less certain about her response to moral dilemmas. She often experiences irrational guilt, regardless of the outcome. While Tris is an exception to Garcia's (2013) assertion that women in young adult literature still come across as "subservient and meek" (p. 77), the fact remains that Roth's protagonists do not end up on equal footing by the end of the trilogy, which leaves gender equality in the trilogy wide open for criticism.

Garcia (2013) also goes on to point out that, although there has been an increase of "kick-ass" female protagonists, much contemporary young adult literature continues to portray women in "particularly limiting ways" (p. 77). "Unless you are white, traditionally beautiful, and heterosexual," he argues, "you're not going to be getting a lot of mileage as a female in YA books at the moment" (p. 77). This is true for the *Divergent Trilogy*, and as far as gender representation is concerned, Roth also deploys stereotypical representations of race, class, sexual identity and sexual orientation. Her series fails to meet the critical young adult dystopian standards of successfully acknowledging its broad audience, as well as recovering or recognizing diverse histories. Racially diverse characters are described by little more than basic portrayals of their skin colour, or other descriptors that depict them as not-white, such as the shape of their eyes or the texture of their hair. Not only are they are blended into the melting pot of white, mainstream futuristic Chicago, with no reference given to contemporary

Chicago's racial diversity or the fact that "issues of race and economics" play a large part in its gangs and rivalries (Arrow, 2014, p. 40), but many characters illustrated as simply not-white are predominantly found in Candor, the city's only "disposable faction" (Roth, 2012, p. 252), which further undermines race as a factor. The trilogy's ability to relate to racially diverse readers is, therefore, compromised by framing people of colour as sidekicks or plot devices.

Divergent's potential to be relatable to non-heteronormative as well as non-cisgender readers is also largely compromised by its stereotypical representation, from its queer-baiting in the representation of Lynn, to the minimal attention allotted to Amar and George's relationship, whose sexual identities remain clandestine. Such underrepresentation and, therefore, perpetuation of cisgender heteronormativity "do[es] not validate the experiences or feelings of these [LGBTQI] individuals, [and] they also in turn do not offer a view of a diverse world for the broad audience of readers" (Garcia, 2013, p. 90). The *Divergent Trilogy* therefore adheres to the tendency for young adult novels to appeal predominantly to "white and middle or upper-class individuals" (Garcia, 2013, p. 91), and it disregards the connotations of racial and non-heteronormative differences. It is limited in its outreach towards a diverse young adult audience and, overall, limited in its promotion of hope.

The conclusion of these analyses is that, while Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* encompasses strong messages pertaining to normative identity, it fails to touch on the identities of its non-white, non-heteronormative audience or to challenge gender norms and assumptions by leaving its male and female protagonists on different, unequal footing. Yet another product of white, heteronormative culture, the hope that it conveys

is limited to a white, heteronormative audience. Moreover, Tris's tragic end and the notable differences in her struggles, compared to those of Tobias's, does not demonstrate the portrayal of a strong, female protagonist. Overall, the outcomes of these analyses attest to Garcia's (2013) claim that "YA's depictions of society (even futuristic societies) and people (even non-human, paranormal people) tend to conform to specific standards," and that "in general, these standards reinforce cultural assumptions about how readers should live and judge the world around them" (p. 93). *Divergent* fails to exceed these limitations.

As mentioned in chapter 3, these findings are a symptom of white, heteronormative, middle-class ideology that permeates mainstream society. The biased assumption is that the "book buying audience" is comprised mainly of "white and middle or upper-class individuals" (Garcia, 2013, p. 91)—who also identify as cisgender and heteronormative. "While increased societal awareness of the relative normalcy of nonheterosexual orientation and identification has led to increasing production and marketing of YA novels with LGBTQ characters," Jones (2013) points out, "these exceptions remind us of the rule: queer sexual orientations are still an "issue" for publishers, booksellers, and many readers" (p. 74). Because a racially diverse and non-cisgender, non-middle-class, non-heteronormative young adult audience may find it difficult to relate to the shallowly depicted and misrepresented diverse characters in series such as the *Divergent Trilogy*, there exists the potential to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. If publishers continue to favour narratives that feature white protagonists and heteronormativity, youth of diverse ethnic background and nonheteronormative sexualities may not feel inclined to read them, for lack of

relatability; from a business standpoint, this would reinforce the assumption that the young adult market is primarily white, middle-upper class, and heterosexual. After all, with much of young adult literature — dystopian narratives included — failing to fairly and accurately represent diversity, while maintaining societal gender norms, a diverse young adult audience is unable to “find themselves” (Jones, 2013, p. 74) in the pages of these narratives.

While the *Divergent Trilogy* does not fit the proposed standards of a young adult critical dystopia, its shortcomings do not necessarily lie in simply failing to fall within the parameters of those particular criteria. Rather, it succumbs to same trap as the majority of contemporary young adult novels of diverse genres, suggesting that the problem is not a matter of what makes or does not make it a critical dystopia, but that for a novel that depicts the unveiling of the roots of a corrupt fictional society, it does not investigate or acknowledge the oppressive influences of contemporary society. This is not necessarily a fault of the series alone, however, nor that of its author. It serves, instead, as both evidence of and a reminder that issues of misrepresentation and underrepresentation of diversity, and assumptions pertaining to gender roles and expectations continue to permeate the social consciousness of mainstream society, while still managing to glide under the radar of immediate awareness.

Young adult dystopias and young adult literature in general perpetuate oppressive mainstream ideals. Garcia (2013) points out that “the nature of inequality and education are just as appropriate to consider when looking at the nature of young adult literature and its power of influence over impressionable youth” (p. 97). Before hastily pointing fingers at the authors of these novels and their publishers, it is important

to take into consideration, for example, the nature of power functions in schools. Garcia (2013) cites Henry Giroux (2001), who states that “it is...important to remember that ideologies are also *imposed* on students who occasionally view them as contrary to their own interests and who either resist openly or conform under pressure from school authorities” (p. 97). These power structures are associated with what is considered the “dominant curriculum,” which is “designed primarily to reproduce the inequality of social classes, while it mostly benefits the interests of an elite minority” (Friere & Macedo, 1987; as cited in Garcia, 2013, p. 97). That said, young adult novels such as Roth’s *Divergent Trilogy* are not the crux of this perpetuation of oppressive ideals, but yet another product of a white, patriarchal, capitalist mainstream culture.

Whether or not these books are either the source of or fuel for this problem, however, Garcia (2013) discusses “the role of literature as a controlling mechanism”:

If the majority of the texts that are available by mainstream media simply reify mainstream practices, their consumption by youth of colour, youth of varied sexualities, and youth that—in any way—deviate from white supremacist, capitalist patriarchal values are subordinated. (pp. 97-98)

However, given that novels deviating from such a theme remain, as it stands, few and far between, and that youth will and should continue to read literature written for them, there is clearly a need for useful methods for approaching these novels more critically. Garcia, therefore, suggests critical literacy as one possible solution. Closely affiliated with critical pedagogy, critical literacy “refers to the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing social fields of everyday life” (Luke, 2012, p. 5; as

cited in Garcia, 2013, p. 100). Maintaining the central question, “what is ‘truth’?” (Luke, 2012, p. 4; as cited in Garcia, 2013, p. 100), critical literacy directly impacts the “reading, producing, and interpretation of texts from standpoints of power” and “empower[s] youth to treat texts as sites for cultural understanding and critique” (Garcia, 2013, p. 100). Furthermore, it concerns “the possibility of using new literacies to change relations of power, both peoples’ everyday social relations and larger geopolitical and economic relations” (Luke, 2012, p. 9; as cited in Garcia, 2013, p. 100). This approach to the consumption and analysis of young adult literature, therefore, presents a glimmer of hope in the dark that contemporary young adult literature, and therefore young adult dystopias, can still serve as a tool to inspire a critical look into the underpinnings of society.

Although there remains the issue of mainstream schooling’s dominant curriculum, and the white supremacist, patriarchal norms that it perpetuates, school is fortunately not the only opportunity available to teenagers in terms of exposure to the inspiration to read novels critically. Garcia (2013) suggests, for example, the notion of a “wireless critical pedagogy,” which “acknowledge[s] the shifts in technology and participatory culture that affect the kinds of experiences of young people in classrooms and schools today” (p. 105). Garcia points out that perhaps one of the most important components of the notion of wireless critical pedagogy is “the recognition that young people are included as individuals that research and not as simply subjects in someone else’s research” (p. 105), hence confirming that teenagers are capable of higher level thinking, and that they put this higher level thinking to use. One limitation to this wireless critical pedagogy, however, concerns means of access and participation in this

wireless critical pedagogy. Therefore, although it might remain as a means of hope to combat dominant ideology, it is by no means an all-encompassing solution to this problem, as it cannot account for youth in poor neighbourhoods who may not have access to the technologies that Garcia suggests.

With critical literacy as one possible solution for youth with access to contemporary technologies against simply absorbing the hegemonic values that young adult literature perpetuates, and with the potential for young adults to engage with wireless critical pedagogy, a feasible possibility for making ‘the best of the bad’ in literature written for young adults presents itself. Garcia (2013) asserts that critical literacy—and critical pedagogy, from which it stems—“should not merely rely on canonical or “good” literature”

(p. 108). This suggests that

whether a student is reading a *Twilight* clone or a curriculum approved YA novel like *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, [encouraging critical literacy can] engag[e] readers in dialogue around power structures that exist: both in the book and in one’s own society. (p. 108)

Banks (2009) comments that “concern for the limits...of currently available YA literature are not meant to encourage teachers to wait for “better” books or to avoid completely the enterprise of bringing these texts into their classroom,” but rather to approach them by “using a lens of critical literacy” (p. 36), with the guidance of informed teachers and mentors. Garcia’s idea of wireless critical pedagogy may, therefore, offer a way for youth to explore issues in literature, but it does not negate the

need for guidance via informed teachers and mentors to encourage critical approaches to interpreting texts.

There is little wonder as to why young adult dystopias have increased in popularity over the past decade. They address issues relevant to young adults at their current developmental stage, and acknowledge and validate their voices by presuming them to be “budding political activists” (Hintz, Basu & Broad, pp. 1 & 5). Furthermore, the genre addresses contemporary social issues, tackling such concerns as “liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction” and the “looming catastrophe” that ensues, as well as “fragile boundaries between technology and the self” (Hintz, Basu & Broad, 2013, p. 1). Despite the tendency of this theme or genre to uncover and magnify oppressive societal issues, there is ample room for it to improve in terms of “question[ing] dominant ideological assumptions” (Jones, 2013, p. 75) regarding issues of race, gender norms, and heteronormativity. While wireless critical pedagogy and critical literacies may help young adults “recognize that the texts that surround us actively shape our lives” (Banks, 2009, p. 34), Jones (2013) points out that “readers and critics will be more effective in their roles as readers and critics by surfacing [these novels’] passive ideologies” (p. 75). There is potential for dystopian young adult literature to “build cross-curricular connections” in schools, such as, for example, “English and Government or Civics,” thereby “help[ing] students explore the implications of parallels for what’s going on in society right now” (Scholes & Ostenson, 2013, p. 19), should young adult dystopias improve in areas such as appealing to wider racial and sexually diverse audiences.

Lois Lowry states, “I don’t hope for young people to “learn” from my books. I hope only that they learn to question” (Hintz & Ostry, 2003, p. 254), presenting evidence that this author of young adult dystopias is not oblivious to the way teenagers will receive or react to her novels. However, while a novel can offer a story to which young adults can respond, Wilson (2014) points out that “it can’t control what that response is” (p. 12). While that may be true to a point, authors and their novels can influence the extent to which a text resonates with a diverse audience, by calling attention to, and therefore validating, the struggles that girls and women, LGBTQI individuals, the economically disenfranchised, racially diverse groups and other marginalized minorities face in terms of the effects of institutionalized oppression and dominant social norms. Couzelis (2013) points out that “not all utopian and dystopian fiction creates worlds where readers reflect on their contemporary society, and especially not to the point of considering action” (p. 133). This observation establishes the need not only to promote critical literacy, but ideally, to illuminate the need for authors of dystopian fiction for young adults to realize that the roots of dystopia go deeper than the presentation of totalitarianism and excessive measures of government control.

“*The Divergent Trilogy*, like any book,” Wilson (2014) claims, “is an invitation. It’s an invitation to think, and to feel, and to experience” (p. 11). She goes on to acknowledge that “the way you read a book—the way you react to events and characters, the conclusions you draw—depends on you: your history, your interests, your values” (p. 12). In some ways, *Divergent* does inspire thought, especially in terms of meditating on belonging and what it means to belong to a group. However, unless

critical literacy frames or guides the venture into this text, a young adult audience may not be inspired to consider its limitations in terms of underrepresentation and misrepresentation of minority groups, and the overall dominant ideological agenda of white, heterosexual, capitalist mainstream society. Banks (2009) suggests that “part of our work” as educators, caregivers, and anyone involved in the lives of children and adolescents “can be to encourage students to read the available texts both empathetically and critically, aware of the contexts that bring these books into existence and how changes in our culture could provide more positive, complex experiences for us all” (p. 36).

Young adult literature in general appears to have a long way to go in terms of racial, gendered, and sexual diversity (Agosto, Hughes-Hassell & Gilmore-Clough, 2003, p. 271; Garcia, 2013, p. 93; Jones, 2013, pp. 74-75), and Roth's *Divergent Trilogy* is not an exception. However, having teachers and mentors encourage critical literacy as a tool to unveil dominant society's influence on these novels, their importance may lie in offering the opportunity to unveil contemporary society's oppressive underpinnings, and how it influences the content of these texts. All that considered, *Divergent* might not be not a shining example of a widely hopeful narrative. However, given the critical stances on young adult literature in general, helping youth find their way to calling out this trilogy's tendencies to adhere to dominant ideals, and shedding light on what makes it problematic, hope remains on the horizon for dystopian young adult literature and its potential to inspire critical thought.

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