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DIPLOMA THESIS

Influences on the 21st century English-written dystopian literature

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is completely my own work and that no sources were used in the preparation of the thesis other than those listed on the work cited page.

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá popisem, rozbohem a vysvětlením nejzásadnějších vlivů na vývoj anglicky psané dystopické literatury 21. století. Tyto vlivy jsou popsány a demonstrovány na vybraných dílech, konkrétně na románu *Oryx and Crake* (2003) od Margaret Atwood, *Never Let Me Go* (2005) od Kazuo Ishigura, *The Hunger Games* (2008) od Suzanne Collins, *Matched* (2010) od Ally Condie, a *The Bone Season* (2013) od Samantha Shannon. Cílem teoretické části je objasnit pojem dystopie, definovat dystopii jako literární žánr a popsat historii vývoje dystopické literatury. Dále se tato část zabývá vlivy na vývoj dystopie se zaměřením na 20. století, a stručným popisem obsahu knih vybraných pro použití v praktické části. Praktická část se pak zabývá nejzásadnějšími vlivy na vývoj dystopické literatury psané v 21. století, a to vlivy vycházejícími z metod sociální kontroly, objevů na poli vědy a techniky, a z různých představ o konci světa, jako jsou války a nemoci. Součástí praktické části je popis těchto vlivů a jejich vysvětlení, dílčí dělení, a následná ilustrace těchto vlivů a jejich projevů na vybraných literárních dílech.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Dystopie, dystopický román, 21. století, hlavní vlivy, vývoj žánru, kontrola, vývoj vědy a techniky, obraz společnosti

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to describe, analyze and explain major influences on the development of dystopian literature of the 21st century written in English. Those influences are described and illustrated on selected literary works, specifically on *Oryx and Crake* (2003) by Margaret Atwood, *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins, *Matched* (2010) by Ally Condie, and *The Bone Season* (2013) by Samantha Shannon. The theoretical part aims to explain the term dystopia, to define dystopia as a genre, and to describe its history. This part also deals with the influences on the development of dystopia, focused especially on the 20th century, and with the summaries of the books selected for the use in the practical part. The practical part focuses on the major influences on the development of dystopian literature of the 21st century written in English. Those are influences relating to methods of social control, scientific and technological advancements, and from various apocalyptic ideas and visions, such as wars and diseases. The practical part includes descriptions of the influences, their explanations, and subdivisions, following by illustrations of those influences on the selected literary works.

KEY WORDS

Dystopia, dystopian novel, the 21st century, major influences, development of the genre, control, science and technological advancement, social reflection

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Introduction

This diploma thesis aims to describe and explain the main influences on the development of English and American dystopian literature written since the beginning of the 21st century. The influences are going to be demonstrated on five selected books of the genre, namely on Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (published in 2005), Max Brooks' *World War Z* (published in 2006, better recognized as its film adaptation from 2013 directed by Marc Forster), Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (the first book of the trilogy, published in 2008, also better known as its film adaptation), Ally Condie's *Matched* (the first book of the trilogy, published in 2010), and on Samantha Shannon's *The Bone Season* (the first book of the upcoming trilogy, published in 2013).

It proved to be a difficult task to choose only the maximum of five books to demonstrate the main influences on the genre, since the variety of today's subgenres of the dystopian genre is quite wide, as it becomes increasingly more popular among the readers as well as the writers. Also the effort to include the books I have already read and really enjoyed but still which I believe to serve the purpose well, has not really simplified the process.

The main reason for choosing this topic is my interest in the utopian, dystopian (anti-utopian), science fiction and post-apocalyptic genre; not only in literature but in all the media available. This enthusiasm has been commenced, as I do not find unusual or surprising, by George Orwell's book *1984*, followed by Karel Čapek's allegory *War with the Newts* (1936, in the original Czech *Válka s mloky*), John Wyndham's science fiction novel *The Day of the Triffids* (1951) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931). Along with literature the interest has been deepened by various movies, television series and even video games, especially by George Miller's dystopian action film series *Mad Max* (1979), Ridley's Scott's neo-noir science fiction movie *Blade Runner* (1982, based on Philip Kindred Dick's novel of the same title published in 1968), Kurt Wimmer's action science fiction movie *Equilibrium* (2002), Alfonso Cuarón's dystopian thriller *Children of Men* (2006, a film adaptation of a book by P.D.James published in 1992) and by video game

series *Half-Life* (1996), *Fallout* (1997), *Deus Ex* (2000), and last but definitely not least, *Bio Shock* (2007).

What formed the more definite idea of the diploma thesis topic has been the moment when I was trying to find some additional information about the newer dystopian literature, such as the authors' commentary on their books or the idea behind the stories, but all the citations, references and indexes eventually led to the sources written after the Second World War until the 90s commenting on and analyzing the classical utopian or dystopian works. In other words, I was able to find only minimum of the information desired, which overall forms only a fraction of the amount of available papers written on the topics of analysis and study of the utopian and dystopian literature written in the 20th century. Also I have found interesting that there is quite a number of various publications dealing with the influences which helped to shape the famous literary works in the discussed genre of the last century, while there is no (or at least no generally available) publication or paper on the influences on contemporary dystopian literature, nor any acknowledged typology of dystopian/utopian genre. It has then been a natural development to narrow the topic even more and to choose to describe the main influences on the development of dystopian literature written in the 21st century in English, and by that to complete the range of the papers written on this topic but which are concerned only with the literary works written in the previous century.

THEORETICAL PART

1 What is dystopia?

1.1 Dystopia as a term

To define what dystopian literature is, it is first needed to have a look at the meaning of the word *utopia*.

The word *utopia* was coined by Thomas More and used as a title of his book about an imaginary island enjoying the utmost perfection in legal, social, and political system, in 1516.¹ The commonly used etymological analysis of the word is that it is derived from the Greek *ou* "not", and *topos* "place". However the current explanation of Greek *ou* "not" is an odd one, as it derives the word from the *pie* root *aiw*, which means "vital force, life; long life, eternity."² Calvert Watkins presumes a pre-Greek phrase (*ne*) *hoiu* (*kwid*) meaning "(not on your) life", with *ne* "not" and *kwid*, which is an emphasizing particle.³

Utopia is also understood as a pun, since *ou* or *u* and *topos* means "no place", but another viewpoint at the etymology could be that it is derived from *eu* and *topos*, which means "good place". Together the translations create an image of something "too good to be true" and the word is commonly understood as "good place". Nevertheless Anthony Burgess in his analysis of George Orwell's book *1984* called *1985* (1978), presents an opinion that the origin in *eu* is not correct: "The term Utopia, which More invented, has always had a connotation to ease and comfort, Lotus Land, but it merely means any imaginary society, good or bad. The Greek elements which make up the word are *ou*, meaning *no* or *not*, and *topos*, meaning a place. In many minds the *ou* has been confused with *eu* – well, good, pleasant, beneficial. *Eupepsia* is good digestion, *dyspepsia* we all know. Dystopia has been opposed to eutopia, but both terms come under the Utopian

¹ "utopia." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. www.etymonline.com/word/utopia. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

² Bomhard, R. Allan, and Kerns, C. John. *The Nostratic Macrofamily: A Study in Distant Linguistic Relationship, part 1*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994. p.593.

³ Watkins, Calvert. *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*. 2nd edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

heading.”⁴ The author of this thesis inclines to the theory of A. Burgess, but she does not condemn the idea of *utopia* having the connotation, more than a meaning, of “good place” or “too good place to be true”. It seems that the real meaning from Greek is “no place”, but that does not contradict the commonly used one. The place which was imagined by More does not exist, but also seems as a really good one to live in, even though the name (*Utopia*) does not say so.

The first term used for the opposite of *utopia* was *cacotopia* or *cacao-topia*, which was used for the first time in the English language in 1715, meaning “a nightmare society, in which morals mean nothing and the average citizen worships Mammon and proclaims atheism.”⁵ As far as it is known, no one employed the word again until 1817 and 1818, when the English philosopher, jurist and social reformer Jeremy Bentham used it in his *Plan of Parliamentary Reform*, who was using this term as a synonym to *dystopia*.

The term *dystopia* was coined in 1747, spelt as “dustopia”⁶, and it was defined as “an unhappy country”⁷. The next important use of the word *dystopia* was in 1868 by Jeremy Bentham’s follower John Stuart Mill, who used the term in his speech in the British Parliament. This termed the British policy in Ireland “too bad to be practicable”, and its proponents as “cacotopians”⁸. Almost ninety years later the word reappeared in Glenn Negley’s and J. Max Patrick’s anthology *Quest for Utopia*⁹, written in 1952. Since then *dystopia* has become an accepted and common part of English language. The last word, the most modern one, used as a synonym for *dystopia* is *anti-utopia*, which appeared around the year 1910¹⁰. Some authors do not acknowledge this term at all (for example A. Burgess does not use this term in any of his literary essays and books), some do not use it as a synonym for *dystopia* but as a different genre. From the etymological point of view the

⁴ Burgess, Anthony. 1985. Kindle edition. London: Serpent’s Tail, 2013

⁵ Birzer, J. Bradley. *Russell Kirk: American Conservative*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015.

⁶ Sargent, Lyman Tower. *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2010. p.4.

⁷ Budakov, V.M. “Dystopia: An Earlier Eighteenth Century Use”, *Notes and Queries*. Mar. 2010. academic.oup.com/nq/article-abstract/57/1/86/1182435?redirectedFrom=fulltext. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017. pp.86-88.

⁸ Mill, John Stuart. *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, in 33 vols.* Volume 28. ed. Robson, M. Johnson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. pp.248.

⁹ Negley, Robert Glenn. *The Quest for Utopia: An Anthology of Imaginary Societies*. New York: H.Schuman, 1952.

¹⁰ “anti-utopia.” Merriam-Webster's Learners Dictionary, *Merriam-Webster*. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anti-utopia. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

prefix *anti-* means in Greek “over, against, opposite; instead, in the place of; as good as; compared with”¹¹, which would shift the meaning from “the opposite of utopia” to “against utopia” or “the opposite of utopia”. It can be argued what was the intention of the first user of this term, but if we work with the idea that *utopia* means “no place”, the opposite would be “every place”, and so anti-utopias would be realistic fiction. Even though it may seem a little bit far-fetched, there are literary works categorized as dystopias which are not so far away from our reality. Probably the best example is *Stand on Zanzibar* by John Bruner, published in 1968, where the predictions about the year 2010 are terrifyingly accurate. For example some individuals are committing random acts of violence, often at schools; terrorists threaten American interests and attack American buildings, and Bruner also predicted that prices would increase sixfold because of the inflation – while it actually increased sevenfold.¹² He also predicted that America’s biggest rival will be China and not Russia, while the dynamic will be different because instead of warfare or a weapons race, the competition will be seen in economics, trade, and technology. As for the rest of the world, the countries of Europe will have formed into one union, where Britain is part of it but tend to side with the United States of America, while the other European countries are critical of American actions; also that Africa is behind the rest of the world, while Israel’s existence is still a source of tension in the Middle East. Marriage is still in existence, but young people prefer to have short-term relationships instead of committing to someone long-term. Society is predicted to be much more liberal, homosexuality and bisexuality is accepted, Afro-Americans are in a better position in society, but racial tension is still prevalent. Also the prediction of technological advancement is fairly accurate. For example Bruner predicted that cars will run on electric fuel cells, that TV channels will be played all over the world thanks to satellites, and that people can phone each other on video screens, but instead of using a picture of themselves, they use avatars, which can look like the caller or someone completely different. There are also laser printers and pharmaceuticals which help sexual performance. Finally, the president of the United States of America is President

¹¹ “anti-.” *Online Etymology Dictionary*. www.etymonline.com/word/anti-. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

¹² Reed, Stephen. “One hundred years of price change: the Consumer Price Index and the American inflation experience.” *Monthly Labor Review*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2014/article/one-hundred-years-of-price-change-the-consumer-price-index-and-the-american-inflation-experience.htm. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

Obomi, which is actually an amazing coincidence. *Stand on Zanzibar* is a remarkable vision of the future, which if read today without the knowledge of the publication date, it does not even seem to be a dystopian future, as imagined in 1960s. However the translation as “every place” is neither probable, nor used today, and so the author does not feel the need to articulate and support this idea.

From the development of the words and their usage it seems that *dystopia* and *cacotopia* are synonyms, yet not everyone thinks so. For example Matthew Beaumont, Anthony Burgess or Eric D. Smith have distinguished those terms. They claim that *cacotopia* deals more with the moral decline of a society, while *dystopia* deals with the increased intrusion of government into the lives of ordinary citizens.¹³ Anthony Burgess wrote:

Dystopia has been opposed to eutopia, but both terms come under the Utopian heading. I prefer to call Orwell’s imaginary society a cacotopia – on the lines of cacophony or cacodemon. It sounds worse than dystopia. Needless to say, none of these terms are to be found in Newspeak. Most visions of the future are cacotopian. George Orwell was an aficionado of cacotopian fiction, and we may regard his Nineteen Eighty-Four as competing in the Worst of All Imaginary Worlds stakes. (Burgess)

In this case the author of this thesis does not feel the need to distinguish between those two terms, mainly because the definition of the dystopian genre is fairly complicated as it is, and adding another level of typology might just create unnecessary confusion. Also the author wants to focus on typology which follows or can follow today’s genres and labels used in publishing, which - even though mostly are in need of some changes and alterations - fit the current understanding of the terms. However there are two terms which seem to be convenient, and those were introduced by Tom Moylan.

¹³ Vieira, Fátima., et al. *Dystopia(n) Matters: On the Page, on Screen, on Stage*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.

In his works Moylan uses two terms: anti-utopian dystopia and utopian dystopia. Moylan does not use the term “dystopia” to signify a genre, but a concept. In the preface of his book *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* (2000)¹⁴ he explains:

In the anti-utopian dystopia, the best that can happen is a recognition of the integrity of the individual even when the hegemonic power coercively and ideologically closes in; whereas in the utopian dystopia, a collective resistance is at least acknowledged, and sometimes a full-fledged opposition and even victory is achieved against the apparently impervious, tightly sutured system. (Moylan)

His theory works with the fact that the genres of utopia and dystopia, as are both understood by the reading public, are commonly (yet incorrectly) used interchangeably and so the differences between those two genres are blurred. However this subdivision of the dystopian concept does not suffice to describe the genre as it developed in the 21st century, since the major literary works are a combination of both, often beginning as anti-utopian dystopia (one member of a society realises the society and its functioning is wrong) and ending as utopian dystopia (a bigger group of people fights against the society). Thus even though Moylan’s approach helps to explain and to create a framework for the dystopian genre, the author of this thesis believes that it is more valid for the literary works written during the 20th century, when the dystopian works had been more focused on a single problem which had often been left unresolved. The dystopian literary works of the 21st century seem to be more complex and focused on wide variety of issues, which makes it difficult to provide an adequate subdivision for each. It is not possible for the typology to be based on the plot development, so it probably would have needed to be done according to the prevalent issue of the society which is being dealt with in the particular work. However, as mentioned before, the author does not find it necessary to create any other subdivision for the dystopian genre.

¹⁴ Moylan, Tom. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Oxford: Westview Press, 2000.

1.2 Dystopia in fiction

Dystopian fiction has been perceived in many different ways throughout the 20th century, and various definitions of the literary genre were offered. According to *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*¹⁵ the word denotes “that class of hypothetical societies containing images of worlds worse than our own”. Brian M. Stableford further claims:

Dystopian images are almost invariably images of future society, pointing fearfully at the way the world is supposedly going in order to provide urgent propaganda for a change in direction. As hope for a better future grows, the fear of disappointment inevitably grows with it, and when any vision of a future utopia incorporates a manifesto for political action or belief, opponents of that action or belief will inevitably attempt to show that its consequences are not utopian but horrible. (Stableford)

Simpler definition is offered by *The Oxford Dictionary*, which says that a dystopia is “an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.”¹⁶ Probably the best definition, which mostly summarizes how dystopian literature has been understood throughout the history, is given by Lyman Tower Sargent who defines dystopia 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 considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived.”¹⁷ Dystopia, as the author of this thesis believes, portrays a social establishment which is considered by the readers far worse than their own reality. Even though it is fictional, it is still terrifying, no matter what kind of society is being depicted. However, the kind of societies, extend, depth and level of cruelty and/or oppression of the establishments varies from author to author, novel to novel.

¹⁵ Stableford, Brian M. "Dystopias." *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. 7 Feb. 2018. www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/dystopias. Accessed 17 Mar. 2018.

¹⁶ “Dystopia.” English Oxford Living Dictionaries. *Oxford University Press*. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dystopia>. Accessed 7 Feb. 2018.

¹⁷ Sargent, Lyman Tower. ""In defense of utopia"". *Diogenes* 53. 17 Nov. 2006. philpapers.org/rec/SARIDO-2. Accessed 02 Mar. 2018.

One more definition is worth mentioning for the purposes of this thesis, and that is the definition of “the Western model of dystopia”¹⁸ by Erika Gottlieb. She claims that “[t]he writer offers militant criticism of specific aberrations in our own, present social-political system by pointing out their potentially monstrous consequences in the future,”¹⁹ which contradicts the idea that dystopia is a mere opposite of utopia. To support this theory we need to understand that More’s utopia was not meant to be realized, it was perceived as an ideal state of society, and therefore being prophetic should not be part of the general definition of dystopia.

Most of the western dystopias of the 20th century are read and understood as predictions, or even prophecies, that is why dystopias are usually classified as a subgenre of speculative fiction, as it is preferred by the Canadian author Margaret Atwood.²⁰ These present and elaborate on various topics, situations and reasons behind all the changes which might lead to the dystopian society. Many works have been written on the topic of how have some of the most disturbing elements of those societies (not only taken from the society created by George Orwell, but also by Aldous Huxley, Margaret Atwood or P. D. James) entered our world and how these have been implemented into our lives without us being disturbed by them, or even without them being noticed by the general public. Not that many works, however, have been focused on the fact that some novels were more than accurate in those predictions - as John Brunner managed to do in his *Stand on Zanzibar*, as mentioned before, or J. G. Ballard’s *Crash* (1973) and *Super-Cannes* (2000). On the other hand, there are dystopian works – worlds and societies, which are not focused on the burdensome elements of the dystopian society. One of the “non-prophetic” example can be, for instance, Gotham city – the world from the popular comic book published by DC Comics, where the hero Batman fights the crime in the city governed by villains and “protected” by the corrupt police. This work, however, is not perceived as predominantly dystopian, even though from the presented definitions the setting of *Batman* dystopian

¹⁸ Gottlieb, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2001.

¹⁹ Gottlieb, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2001.

²⁰ “Margaret Atwood on the Science Behind ‘Oryx and Crake’.” *Science Friday*. Apr. 2004. www.sciencefriday.com/segments/margaret-atwood-on-the-science-behind-oryx-and-crake/. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

undoubtedly is. The major reason for that is that this work has been created for pure joy, thrill and entertainment, rather than to emphasize or satirize the social and political issues of our time. Another example is *The Matrix* trilogy (1999-2003). Even though the story is probably based on or at least influenced by the fear of artificial intelligence and virtual reality, it is too implausible to be understood as a prophecy of sorts.

One last adjustment then needs to be made to define a dystopia, and that is that the work needs to have some level of relevance to the reader, to the present state of the world, so that the reader can have a chance to relate to the setting and situations presented, but also to internalize and understand the dangers of some of the methods used to change the state of the world from the “present” to the future dystopian one. The reader needs to understand the dystopian work as a warning, even though this does not need to be the author’s intention.

1.3 From utopia to dystopia – the influences on dystopia until the 21st century

The first idea of utopia in the meaning of a good place was presented by Plato in *The Republic* (381 BC), where he describes an enlightened republic ruled by philosopher kings. Just as Plato did in his dialogue, throughout the history many groups of people, usually covered by the label of a religion, were trying to imagine a heaven on Earth. Previously mentioned Thomas More gave this concept a name – utopia. Though the name suggested impossibility, modern scientific and political progress started to change the impossible to becoming a reality. However the technological advancement was not always used to directly benefit humanity, but to create more elaborate means of killing and destruction. As in any other genre, the development of dystopias (and utopias) has been reacting to and following the current state of things, social arrangement, and political situation. Artists started to question the utopian thinking, and the genre of the “not good place”, dystopia, was born.

As the earliest dystopian work can be perceived Jonathan Swift's *The Gulliver's Travels* (1726), since it is the first book with so wide scope of dystopian elements. Throughout his travels Gulliver encounters variety of fictional societies, some of which at first seemed to be good, some even impressive, but turned out to be seriously flawed. For example on the flying island of Laputa scientists pursue extravagant and useless schemes, while neglecting the practical needs of the people below. In his satire on travellers' tales Swift establishes a blueprint for dystopia, imagining a world where certain trends in the society are taken to extremes, exposing the underlying flaws.

Probably the main turning point of the change from utopia to dystopia was the beginning of the industrial era, where the genre of social satire, which the author believes is the connecting link between the two by definition contradictory genres, grew in popularity. The technology of industrialism promised to free labour workers, however it imprisoned them in factories instead, while factory owners grew richer. By the late 1800's, many feared where such conditions might lead.

In utopias traceable pessimism caused by the industrial and scientific advancements, wars and conflicts, is visible in the books written at the end of 19th century. In his *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Gregory Claeys writes that during the second half of the 19th century utopian visions started to fall out of fashion. "From the 1890s onwards the appearance of an increasing number of dystopian texts thus seemingly indicates a negative trend in the wider utopian genre as a whole."²¹ Also by that time certain scholars (Talmon, Popper,...) reasoned that it would take dystopian methods to create utopia. "The desire to create a much improved society in which human behaviour was dramatically superior to the norm implies an intrinsic drift towards punitive methods of controlling behaviour which inexorably results in some form of police state."²² This can be seen in Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1907) where the author portrayed a tyrannical oligarchy ruling over impoverished masses.

²¹ Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 111.

²² Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 108.

Mockery and satire in the satirical utopias and anti-utopias slowly turned into dystopias carrying fearsome images of the possible future, presenting warnings, and calling for changes in the society. The shift was most probably influenced and shaped by eugenics and rise of socialism, sometimes interwoven with Darwinism; hence the common subject of dystopian works is based on socialist revolution. Other dystopian themes were Prussian invasion, German annexation of Britain, or - even by that time - ecological catastrophe.²³

The very end of the 19th century is characterized by the works of the first famous dystopian author, even though not all his works were (and are) considered dystopia, H.G. Wells. The increasing material, financial and social gap between different social strata was eventually depicted in *The Time Machine* (1885) where he imagined upper classes and workers evolving into separate species. In his books he also explores the themes of time travel, human evolution, and raises the question whether we should trust the technology or not. These early works of distress, concern and anxiety presented a lot of inspiring topics for the dystopian successors.

As Europe endured unprecedented warfare of the First World War, new political movements appeared and took power. Some pledged to eliminate all social differences, while others wanted to unite people around a fictitious heritage. Those resulted into real-world dystopias, where the citizens were living under the omnipresent gaze of the State. Whoever did not belong was, with ruthless efficiency, stripped of his/her rights, imprisoned, put in concentration camps, tortured or killed. Many literary authors of the time actually lived through the horrors. In his novel *We* (1924), Soviet writer Yevgeny Zamyatin described a future where free will and individuality were eliminated. Banned in the Soviet Union, the book inspired authors like George Orwell in the Great Britain, or in the USA Sinclair Lewis. His semi-satirical novel *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) describes “what would happen if the USA had a dictator” – as the subtitle reads. Needless to say that, according to the book, the democratic USA would give way to fascism really easily.

Not only the social and political context influenced dystopias, but also medical advances, which made it possible to transcend biological limits of humans, specifically in

²³ Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. 111-112.

the terms of various drugs and medicaments, but also thanks to the research (both the real and fictional one) of the DNA. Mass media allowed instant communication and therefore accelerated not only the communication between the leaders and the citizens, but also accelerated the scientific advancement. Influences of both, medicine and communication were depicted in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), a satire on mass production, consumption, and popular culture, where citizens are genetically engineered and conditioned to perform their social roles, while propaganda and drugs keep the society happy.

The biggest conflict in the human history, the Second World War, and the post-war era produced the greatest and most famous dystopian novel ever – *1984* (1949). Orwell's world is vivid and plausible, in contrast to some of the preceding dystopian works. Claeys explains how it is possible: "Unlike *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written after much of the scale and enormity of totalitarian brutality had been revealed."²⁴ Orwell's hindsight and experience with both Stalinism and fascism greatly helped create the totalitarian world reflecting both regimes, which feels real and complete, as the omnipresent entity of Big Brother follows the role of leaders of the totalitarian arrangements – godlike in the terms of his followers almost worshipping him as one, as the role of religious dogmas in people's lives was replaced by political ideals.

After the Second World War the changes of the political situation in the world, and especially in Europe, were the most significant. The fear created by the world wars and of their aftermaths, the totalitarian regimes spawning all around the world, and the intense feeling of presence of some invisible conflict during The Cold War propelled many writers of different backgrounds and periods to create the work of fiction we know today as dystopian. Tom Moylan comments on the development of dystopian literature in his book *Scraps of the Untainted Sky*²⁵, where he writes:

Dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease,

²⁴ Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 118.

²⁵ Moylan, Tom. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Oxford: Westview Press, 2000.

famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination. From the classical works by E. M. Forster, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and Margaret Atwood, through the new maps of hell in post war science fiction, and most recently in the dystopian turn of the 1980s and 1990s, this narrative machine has produced challenging cognitive maps of the given historical situation by way of imaginary societies which are even worse than those that lie outside their authors' and readers' doors. (Moylan)

After WWII people were thinking how new technologies, such as atomic energy, artificial intelligence, and space travel, would change the future of the world. Dystopian fiction spread to other media – to films, comic books and graphic novels, and games. In the fashion of postmodernism, writers of science fiction started to explore the genre of dystopia and began mixing the two. Robots either found their own will, or realised that humanity is humanity's biggest enemy, and turned against their creators, as can be seen in *I, Robot* (1950) by Isaac Asimov, or later on in the franchise *The Terminator* (1984-2009) by James Cameron and Gale Anne Hurd.

Machines started to substitute people in their jobs and the society started to be divided into the rich, who were still needed for the functioning of the world, such as engineers and managers, and the poor, the former labourers, whose skill and purpose has been replaced by the machines. All this can be found in the novel *Player Piano* (1952) by Kurt Vonnegut, who describes the new machine age and the paradox of progress with irony, but with the heaviness of the loss of humanist values replaced with a machine ethic lingering above the satire. The new holy trinity: “Efficiency, Economy, and Quality” is something worth thinking about even today, since the various questions arising from materialism, capitalism and consumerism were not yet been sufficiently answered. *Player Piano* contains a society going through its own Industrial Revolution that evokes Karl Marx, who saw the contradictions of the new society being formed, that it is impossible to make life easier and more comfortable without simultaneously generating discontented population. Both Marx and Vonnegut understood that dissatisfied population will be

quickly created and, when it realises its numbers and power, will find it has nothing to lose but its chains.²⁶

The fear of the totalitarian regimes, ignorance and loss of critical thinking were tangible everywhere. And when the invention of television, the first form of entertainment with strong potential and ability to influence people's opinions and behaviour through large-scale advertisement was added to the equation, people started to fear the simplicity of possibly fascist concepts flowing into the society thought the new, popular, and in the 1950s primary medium for influencing public opinion. To control what people read, see, what they think and to control the narrative are the basic ideas of fascism, which are present for example in the novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury. Probably the most terrifying thing about the society in the novel is that its state was self-incurred. People begged for ignorance and control so as to avoid critical thinking and self-analysis. Burning books does not represent only the destruction of the books physically, but with it comes destruction of historical knowledge, ideas, concepts, teachings and philosophies. Censorship has always been terrifying modern society, and so this element can be seen in almost all dystopian works since the creation of the genre. The main character, a fireman Beatty, loves his job - burning books (at least at the beginning of the novel) because they represent contradictory meanings, which he does not like. The basic idea of a good life is simplicity, and everyone who does not agree is a rebel. Set in the 24th century, the world has seen two atomic wars since 1990, and the robotics has been greatly developed. The world of *Fahrenheit 451* is full of machines; however by this point those are under the command of humans.

Nuclear war has been one of the biggest shadows over the society since two fission bombs 1945 were dropped on Japan and the world saw the true force of atomic weapons for the first time. In the 1920s and 1930s the United States of America were optimistic about the growing role of technology in the making of a better world, especially during the years after the Great Depression, however with the decision to use the atom bomb against civilian targets in Japan, literature and science fiction especially lost much of its optimism

²⁶ Gannon, Matthew. "Player Piano, the One-Dimensional Society, and the Emergency Brake of History." *The Vonnegut Review*. Jun. 2013. www.vonnegutreview.com/2013/06/player-piano-one-dimensional-society.html. Accessed 20 Jun. 2018.

as the greatest invention of the twentieth century was not used to improve the world but to almost instantly kill over two hundred thousand people.²⁷ This dystopian mood and the sense of near future being threatened can be seen in the titles of the studies of science fiction, which began to grow in popularity and importance in 1960s, beginning with Kingsley Amis's *New Maps of Hell* (first given as a series of lectures at Princeton University in 1960). The study of science fiction began to interest the academia; also there was a strong focus on its dystopian characteristics. The attitude towards it is described by H. Bruce Franklin in 1966:

Today the capitalist world's literary visions of the future are almost all nightmares. Anti-utopia seems to have triumphed... The most widely-read survey of the science fiction of the 'free world' bears an apt title: *New Maps of Hell*. In this slough of despondency the dominant nineteenth-century American views of the future may seem laughably quaint and naive. (Franklin)²⁸

The threat of nuclear war was inescapable, which was explored by the film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) by Stanley Kubrick, or in an American comic book series written by Alan Moore and published by DC Comics, *Watchmen* (1986-1987). The western world feared especially that there could be a war between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, which got reflected within various literary works, for example in *The Child in Time* (1987), even though it was written much later, and the war with Russia was just a background setting for the plot in which, however, the most significant dystopian element lies within the political dimension reflecting Thatcherism, in its focus on the child development and education, as reflected for example in "An Authorized Child-Care Handbook" written by the main protagonist for the government; or *London Fields* (1989) where we get to know the story of a failed writer against the backdrop of environmental, social and moral degradation of the society, the world instability and the nuclear war referred to as "The Crisis".

²⁷ Claeys, Gregory. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 140.

²⁸ Franklin, H. Bruce. *Future Perfect: American Science Fiction of the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966. p 391.

Nevertheless the violence of wars, anger and aggression of the young against the system and the previous generations, and the disillusionment of the generations after the world wars and eventually because of the Vietnam War, that all has had its place in art and literature. The best example of portrayal of violence, or even “ultra violence”, is the dystopian satirical black comedy by Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Set in a near future England, it is an account of juvenile violent delinquents who disrupt the order of the State. The protagonist Alex is eventually apprehended by the police and sent to jail, where he undergoes behavioural conditioning that destroys his power to make free choices and his capacity for violence. Not only that the novel is full of violence, it is also full of drugs and hallucinations caused by vellocet, drencrom and music. Duality is also the reality of the world of *A Clockwork Orange*, not only because of the symbols of night/darkness and light, but also the dualism and the question of morality, as Alex who even though is a violent criminal, should not be tortured and brainwashed to fit the society. Burgess asks a lot of questions about how the society should protect its citizens but also asks where the line between protection and oppression is.

The era of mid 1940s to 1960s is the generation of Baby Boomers, which is associated with rejection or redefinition of traditional values, but also as the name suggests, with the increase of birth rate, which was up to 5.72% (in 1946).²⁹ The increase of successful pregnancies and births was celebrated and praised, but together with the advancements in medicine, better medical facilities and so the lower mortality rates, the idea of overpopulation has started to appear among the general public. New concepts, solutions and ideas were being created, in literature and art not only astronauts but also ordinary workers inhabited space colonies while the Earth was being quickly depleted of its resources. Cities on the Earth were overpopulated and full of crime and diseases. James Graham Ballard expresses his fear in his novel *High-Rise* (1975), where he describes the 40-story apartment tower in the London Docklands and its inhabitants, isolated from the outside world since they have no need to leave as the building is self-contained with its school, shopping floor, swimming pools, and simply everything the inhabitants may need.

²⁹ National Center for Health Statistics. “Table 1-1. Live Births, Birth Rates, and Fertility Rates, by Race: United States, 1909-2003”. *Centers for disease Control and Prevention*. 6 Nov. 2015. www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/statab/natfinal2003.annvol1_01.pdf. Accessed 10 Jun. 2018.

However the world of the building turns catastrophically deadly, as rudeness and class friction lead to social disorder, gang violence, warfare between floors and eventually a war of all against all.

Today, when skyscrapers and high-rise living is one component of “smart growth”³⁰ it is difficult to understand the fears of the 1970s connected to architecture, which inspired Ballard’s novel. However the topic of overpopulation and rising population density is now more current than ever.

The already experienced fear of disappearing of human rights during a time of crisis was expressed and debated in the novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood, where the totalitarian state resembles theonomy, and where women are in subjugation in a patriarchal society. It explores the various means by which these women try to regain their identity and independence. The issue of human rights, extremist political parties appearing after the nuclear war which has devastated the most of the rest of the world, concentration camps and the terrors of the fascist state is being dealt with in another Alan Moore’s work, a graphic novel *V for Vendetta* (1988-1989).

Today’s major influences are not considerably different from the ones shaping this genre over hundred years ago, even though the socio-political context has changed. Dystopian fiction of the 21st century continues to reflect human anxieties, such as violence and terrorism, inequality, government and corporation power, climate change, and global epidemics. They still serve as cautionary tales, some with very specific topic or message in mind, but they all communicate the fact that humanity can be rather easily moulded into various shapes.

The following chapters present the selected dystopian works of the 21st century, and comment on the influences and illustrate them on the selected works.

³⁰ Tirado, Jessica. “Smart Growth”. *New Urbanism*. 2016. urbansmartgrowthllc.com/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4vXm2sCc3AIVWkkZCh2YUgPDEAAYASAAEgL4XfD_BwE. Accessed 10 Jun. 2018.

2 Selected works

To exemplify the influences which helped to shape the dystopian literature written in the 21st century in English it was necessary to choose examples of the genre which cover the wider variety of topics, which appear in the contemporary dystopian literature, as possible. The selected books are: dystopian and post apocalyptic speculative novel shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and for the 2004 Orange Prize for Fiction³¹, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) by the Canadian author Margaret Atwood; *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Nobel Prize winning British author Kazuo Ishiguro; awards winning³², including the 2011 California Young Reader Medal³³, novel *The Hunger Games* (2008) by the American writer Suzanne Collins; another California Young Reader Medal winner *Matched* (2010) by the American novelist Ally Condie; and supernatural dystopian novel *The Bone Season* (2013) by the British author Samantha Shannon.

In this chapter the selected books are presented and their plot is described, for the reader's better understanding of the analysis and exemplification in the practical part of the thesis.

2.1 Margaret Atwood – *Oryx and Crake*

The novel is split into two storylines. The first follows Snowman's endeavors after the human population of Earth has been wiped out by a massive deadly plague, only him and the Crakers surviving. The second storyline follows Jimmy, which was Snowman's name before the plague hit, and describes how the Crakers, the plague, and Snowman's lonely existence came to be.

³¹ "Oryx and Crake, Margaret Atwood." *Fiction Award Winners*. www.fictionawardwinners.com/reviews.cfm?id=286. Accessed 01 Jul. 2018.

³² "The Hunger Games". *Rhode Island Teen Book Award*. Awards and Reviews. riteenbookaward.org/ritba/hunger-games. Accessed 20 Dec. 2017.

³³ "Winners". California Young Reader Medal.org. Nominees and Winners – Complete List. docs.google.com/document/d/1V-a7zTELCp3xeV2EdwqwyY_2jNNcBoQX1Wo2BjmnUBs/edit. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

Through flashbacks we learn of Jimmy's childhood. He grew up inside a "Compound", a community built around a corporation where rich scientists and their families live. The compounds are cordoned off from an outer world called the "pleeblands," where everyone who is not employed by a corporation must live. Jimmy's only childhood friend is Glenn whose nickname is Crake, a scientifically gifted boy who finds Jimmy's aversion to science fascinating.

Jimmy and Crake go to separate colleges, Crake to a prestigious school for the sciences, and Jimmy to a dilapidated humanities school, where he studies rhetoric and advertising strategies. When Jimmy graduates he obtains a job writing pamphlets for a corporation called AnooYoo - he is bored and depressed by this work and begins drinking heavily and develops a sex addiction. One day Crake appears and invites him to go bar crawling in the pleeblands. Before they go Crake gives Jimmy an injection to protect him from diseases that exist there. While they are out Crake tells Jimmy about a job at the prestigious RejoovenEsense compound, where Crake is a higher-up. Jimmy agrees to take the job.

The reader now learns that Snowman must now make his way back to this RejoovenEsense compound, because he knows there will be weapons, food, and other supplies there as he is starving and has no protection from predators. He tells the Crakers he must leave to go see Crake. He is increasingly troubled by voices from his past and visions of Oryx, whom he loved dearly. On his journey he is hunted by pigoons, he cuts his foot on a shard of glass and must treat a growing infection. He eventually makes it to the RejoovenEsense compound and goes to a dome at the center of it called Paradise.

Via more flashbacks the reader learns that Paradise is Crake's project, and the project to which Jimmy is assigned when he arrives at RejoovenEsense. Crake is working on a two-part initiative to eliminate human suffering. The first is a pill called BlyssPluss, which increases libido and energy to eliminate sexual frustration. The pill also contains an undisclosed contraceptive - everyone who takes it becomes unknowingly sterilized, in order to reduce overpopulation, which Crake believes is the foremost cause of human suffering. The second part is a project involving the manipulation of human embryos. Crake shows Jimmy the results of this effort, a group of genetically modified humans

called the Crakers. They are perfect, beautiful creatures with bright green eyes. They have plant and animal traits bred into them to make them sturdy and to ensure that they reproduce infrequently and experience no lust, attachment, or sexual frustration.

One of Crake's employees is a beautiful woman named Oryx. She is a caretaker for the Crakers, and teaches them how to make fire and eat. One day Oryx goes out but doesn't come back. Jimmy hears that a terrible plague is raging across every continent. He receives a phone call from Oryx, who is crying and apologizing: the plague had been in the BlyssPlus pills, but she did not know about it. Jimmy begins to realize what has happened. He is safe in the air-locked Paradise dome, but must kill the other employees because he believes they will panic and put him in danger. Crake appears outside the dome and demands Jimmy let him in. Jimmy hesitatingly unlocks the door, and Crake explains that Jimmy has been immunized by the injection he received to go into the pleeblands. Crake has Oryx, unconscious, draped over his arm. He tells Jimmy he must take care of the Crakers, and slits Oryx's throat. In shock and horror, Jimmy shoots Crake. Jimmy waits in the dome for weeks, and watches the plague wipe out most of humanity. When the time comes, he leads the Crakers out of Paradise to the seashore where they now live. He hates Crake, and resents fulfilling his diabolical plan, but cannot stand to abandon the Crakers.

Snowman gathers the supplies he need and goes back to the Crakers. They tell him that they have seen other men who look like Snowman, who is shocked and elated to hear this, and the next morning travels along the shore to find these people. He sees two men and one woman sitting around a fire on the beach. He wonders what will happen if he goes to talk to them, will they be friendly or not? Will they kill him? Will he kill them? The book ends here, remaining ambiguous about what he decides to do.

2.2 Kazuo Ishiguro – Never Let Me Go

Never Let Me Go takes place in a dystopian version of late 1990s England, where the lives of ordinary citizens are prolonged through a state-sanctioned programme of human cloning. The clones, referred to as students, grow up in special institutions away from the

outside world. As young adults, they begin to donate their vital organs. The clones continue to donate organs until they “complete,” which is a euphemism for death after the donation of three or four organs. However, this premise is not immediately apparent to the reader.

The novel follows the life story of Kathy who is now thirty-one and about to start her first donations. For the past eleven years, she has worked as a “carer,” a nurse and companion to clones who are in between donations. Kathy reminisces about her time at Hailsham, the boarding school. Her two most important friends were Ruth, a charismatic but manipulative and dishonest “queen bee,” and Tommy, a kind boy with a bad temper who is disliked by the other students. Kathy relates a number of anecdotes about how her relationships with Ruth and Tommy change over time.

Hailsham places a great emphasis on art, writing, and other forms of “creativity.” A mysterious woman named Madame comes periodically to take the students’ best artwork away to an off-campus “Gallery.” Tommy is not particularly good at these things and never gets pieces into the Gallery, which is part of why he is ostracized. One day when he is thirteen, Miss Lucy, a teacher and guardian, informs Tommy that it is all right if he has trouble being creative because it does not matter anyway. Kathy is shocked by this. Kathy becomes good friends with Ruth, and when she loses her favourite cassette tape—which features a song called “Never Let Me Go,”—Ruth tries to help her find it.

One day, Miss Lucy tries to explain to the students about how tragic and difficult their lives will be once they become donors. However, the students are unable to process the information. A few months after the students graduate from Hailsham and go to live at the Cottage, a more relaxed holding facility where the students are free to drive and otherwise act as they wish. At the Cottages, Ruth becomes fixated on impressing the older students, or ‘veterans.’ Two of these veterans, Chrissie and Rodney, take Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy on a trip to Norfolk because Rodney believes he has found Ruth’s “original,” the person from whom she was cloned. On the trip, Chrissie and Rodney confront the younger students about a rumour that if two Hailsham students are truly in love, they can get their donations deferred so they might have a few years together. However Tommy and Kathy split from the rest of the group and have an emotional moment together. Ruth begins to

notice the growing affection between them, and does what she can to sabotage the budding relationship.

Kathy is saddened by the situation, so she voluntarily leaves the Cottages to begin her career training. Several years later, rumours begin to circulate that Hailsham has closed. One day, Kathy encounters an old friend from Hailsham who informs her that Ruth has begun her donations and is doing poorly. Despite their tumultuous relationship when they were young, Kathy volunteers to become Ruth's carer.

Ruth asks Kathy to take her to see an abandoned boat several hours away. Kathy agrees, and they stop to visit Tommy, who has also begun his donations. Tommy's "recovery centre" is near the boat, and Kathy suspects this is why Ruth wanted to make the trip. When the trio is back together, Ruth apologizes for keeping Kathy and Tommy apart. She encourages them to apply for a deferral so they can have a few years together, and gives them the address of Madame, whom she believes will be able to help.

Shortly after this, Ruth dies. Kathy becomes Tommy's carer. By this point, Tommy has made three organ donations and is approaching his fourth, which clones generally do not survive. Kathy and Tommy go to visit Madame, who kindly tells them that the deferral programme never existed. She explains that Hailsham was a "progressive" school, and that she and the other guardians were actually activists for the humane treatment of clones. The emphasis on artwork was to show the public that the clones had souls. However, the humane-treatment movement has petered out and Hailsham has lost its funding.

Because Tommy is suffering from increasingly gruesome medical problems, he asks Kathy to stop being his carer. Kathy reluctantly agrees, and she bids farewell to Tommy as he gets ready to make his fourth donation.

Back in present day, Kathy is about to make her first donation herself. She is calm and even happy about this, because it will give her a chance to reflect on her life. She has only permitted herself one "indulgence": a few weeks after Tommy dies, she goes to mourn him in a field in Norfolk. There, she imagines that all the things she has lost—most importantly, Tommy—will return to her.

2.3 Suzanne Collins - The Hunger Games

The Hunger Games trilogy takes place in an unspecified future time in a dystopian post-apocalyptic nation of Panem, in the ruins of North America. The country consists of the wealthy Capitol located in the Rocky Mountains and twelve (formerly thirteen) poorer districts ruled by the Capitol. The Capitol is lavishly rich and technologically advanced but the twelve districts are in varying states of poverty – the trilogy's narrator and protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, lives in District 12, the poorest region of Panem, formerly known as Appalachia, where people regularly die of starvation. As punishment for a past rebellion (called "The Dark Days") against the Capitol wherein twelve of the districts were defeated and the thirteenth supposedly destroyed, one boy and one girl from each of the twelve districts, between the ages of twelve and eighteen, are selected by lottery to participate in the "Hunger Games" on an annual basis. The Games are a televised event with the participants, called "tributes", being forced to fight to the death in a dangerous public arena. The winning tribute and his/her home district are then rewarded with food, supplies, and riches. The purpose of the Hunger Games is to provide entertainment for the Capitol and to serve as a reminder to the Districts of the Capitol's power and lack of remorse.

The Hunger Games follows 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a girl from District 12 who volunteers for the 74th Hunger Games in place of her younger sister. Also participating from District 12 is Peeta Mellark, a boy who is secretly in love with Katniss. They are mentored by District 12's only living victor, Haymitch Abernathy, who won the Games 24 years earlier and has since assumed a solitary life of alcoholism. Peeta confesses his love for Katniss in a television interview prior to the Games, leading the Capitol to portray Katniss and Peeta as "star-crossed lovers." This revelation surprises Katniss, who harbours feelings for Gale Hawthorne, her friend and hunting partner. Haymitch advises Katniss to play along and feign feelings for Peeta, in order to gain wealthy sponsors who can gift them supplies during the Games – highly overpriced supplies delivered into the arena, which only a few from the Capitol can afford. In the arena, Katniss develops an alliance with Rue, a young tribute from District 11, and is emotionally scarred when Rue is killed

because she reminds Katniss of her sister. Katniss devises a memorial for Rue by placing flowers over her body as an act of defiance toward the Capitol. More than halfway through the Games, the remaining tributes are alerted to a rule change that allows both tributes from the same district to be declared victors if they are the final two standing. After learning of the change, Katniss and Peeta begin to work as a team. When all of the other tributes are dead and they appear to win the Games together, the rule change is revoked. Katniss leads Peeta in a double suicide attempt to eat poisonous berries known as nightlock, hoping that the change will be reinstated and that they will both be victorious. Their ruse is successful, and both tributes return home victorious. During and after the Games, Katniss develops genuine feelings for Peeta and struggles to balance them with the connection she feels with Gale. When it becomes clear that the Capitol is upset with her defiance, Haymitch encourages Katniss to maintain the "star-crossed lovers" act, without telling Peeta.

2.4 Ally Condie - Matched

Matched is the first novel in the *Matched* trilogy. The novel is a dystopian young adult novel about a tightly-controlled, futuristic, seemingly utopian society. The government decides where the citizens live, where they work, who they care about and even when they die (all citizens die at the age of 80 - in order to make this happen, the Society slowly starts to poison the seniors' food when they are reaching the end of their 79th year). At the age of seventeen, citizens undergo the process of being "matched"-becoming paired up with another boy/girl selected by the authorities. Matched couples are given a period of courtship, and are then married when they turn twenty-one. The system was devised to give couples their best chance at having healthy children. In return, citizens of the Society "live longer and better than any other citizens in the history of the world."

As the novel progresses, the Society is increasingly portrayed as dystopian. Families are provided with tasteless rationed food, controlled for calories and nutrition; there is strict population control, and every family has a "port" in their household - a two-

way television that allows the government to monitor their behaviour, as well as for them to respond to government questions. The Society has also decided that their former culture was too "cluttered" and thus eliminated most traces of culture, saving only one hundred of everything - the Hundred Poems, Hundred Paintings, Hundred Stories, Hundred Songs, etc. At night, citizens take turn with their family members wearing "data tags", which collect information on their dreams to help predict their behaviour. Every citizen must also carry three pills on them - one blue, one green, and one red - although initially it is not revealed what the tablets do, it is gradually explained: the green is a sort of sedative that calms people when they have anxiety, the blue tablet is described as providing nourishment for people who may be separated from food for a long time, and the red tablet causes people to forget anything that has happened in the last 12 hours, though it is revealed that it has no effect on some people. People's actions are predicted using sophisticated psychological and statistical techniques, referred to as "sorting", which is the main character's assigned adult job.

The main character is seventeen-year-old Cassia Reyes, who is Matched with her best friend, Xander Carrow. However, when viewing the information for her Match, the picture of another young man - Ky Markham, an acquaintance outcast at her school - flashes across the screen, so Cassia attempts to figure out the source of the mishap.

Ky is an aberration, a person who has been revoked of citizen status. He was adopted by his aunt and uncle, after their own son was killed by a dangerous Anomaly, an outcast member of society. The Official confides in Cassia that Ky is not meant to be Matched with anyone, as he is an Aberration: a semi-outcast member of society, because his father committed a serious "Infraction". Cassia tells this only to her beloved grandfather, a man nearing his 80th birthday. Her grandfather encourages her to find the words within her and gives her a piece of paper – two forbidden poems, a dangerous infraction. Coincidentally, Ky spots Cassia in the woods reading the paper. He promises to keep her secret and help her destroy the poems after she memorizes them. As he helps her first destroy the poems, then preserve the memory of them, and teaches her how to write words in the dirt, Cassia slowly falls in love with Ky, and he with her. Because of her growing feelings for Ky she finds herself conflicted about whether her Match is

appropriate for her, and whether the Society is all that it seems to be. Over time, she grows more and more frustrated with the Society's control over her relationship and her ability to express herself through poetry and writing, which is forbidden.

2.5 Samantha Shannon - The Bone Season

The Bone Season is a supernatural dystopian novel about which Shannon stated that she wondered what would happen if "dystopia dealt with the supernatural" and if there were a second Salem Witch Trials.

The story is set in year 2059 and follows a nineteen-year-old Paige Mahoney, a member of the criminal underground in Scion-London. The city had been taken over by the Scion, a corrupt government that has deemed clairvoyants to be enemies of the state and clairvoyant acts to be criminal. Paige works for the clairvoyant syndicate that exploits the gifts of its members. The Scion fears that the powerful syndicate could eventually take back the city for the people. Paige is a clairvoyant called a dreamwalker, capable of moving in and out of the minds of other people. She is considered a mollisher, a protégée of the mime-lord Jaxon Hall, her employer.

The corrupt administration is in league with a powerful race, Rephaim, which has overtaken an abandoned area that once was Oxford. The Rephaim race entered earth through a schism created between earth and the Netherworld. They established a prison camp known as Sheol I in what used to be Oxford. When Scion captures clairvoyant criminals, they are either sent to the Tower to wait their ultimate transport to Sheol I or, if it is Bone Season, they are sent directly there. A Bone Season only occurs every ten years. The name is derived from the French word, "bonne" which means "good". However, the prisoners at Sheol I would all agree that their incarceration is anything but "good."

One day Paige is attacked, kidnapped and drugged, and is transported to a voyant prison in Oxford. Here she realizes there is power more sinister than Scion government, and that Scion is only a puppet of the Rephaim. The Rephaim value the voyants highly, as they use them as soldiers in their army, though the conditions in the colony are harsh, food

supplies are limited and torturing as a punishment for disobedience is a common practice here. The prisoners are trained to fight against the Emim, dangerous creatures that crave human flesh, because of which the Sheol government made a contract with the Rephaim – to be protected. The leader of the Rephaim race, Nashira, has the ability to steal someone else's powers, and so Paige is trained even harder by her keeper, the Warden, not to become a soldier, but to reach the ultimate capacity of her powers, so those are ready to be stolen by Nashira.

Paige is possessed with escaping and returning to her friends. As time passes, she finds the Warden to be kind and caring – almost human, quite the opposite of the others. The Warden has a lot of secrets, one of which is that he detests Nashira and had been part of a group of Rephaim who had rebelled against her many years before. Another secret is that he is falling in love with his little prisoner.

Paige faces many battles and dangers on her quest to escape Sheol I and return home. She faces the wrath of Nashira, vicious red-jacket soldiers – the best of the trained kidnapped clairvoyants, and the Emim. Eventually, with the help of the Warden, she is finally able to flee but she finds her parting to be bittersweet, as many of her friends and other people, who helped her with the revolt in the prison colony, died during the escape. Also the Warden was left behind, while he was trying to stop or slow their pursuers.

PRACTICAL PART

3 Influences on the dystopian literature in the 21st century

This part of the thesis deals with the selected influences on the dystopian literature written in the 21st century, their analysis and reasons behind them in the selected books. Theoretical background for those influences is provided as well as examples from the books which provide additional information and explanations of the presented influences. For the sake of the length of the thesis the author chose not to demonstrate each influencing aspect on all the selected books, but to focus on the books which manifest it the best. Since the influences selected for the analysis in this thesis are omnipresent within the dystopian literature of the 21st century, in some more prominently than in others, the author does not feel it necessary to comment on every single one in all the books.

3.1 Social control

Social control is a concept within the disciplines of the social and political sciences, which refers to the mechanisms used to regulate people's behaviour. Two basic forms of social control are identified. First, informal means of control, which focus on internalisation of norms and values by socialization, and the second form – formal, which includes external sanctions enforced by government to prevent undesired behaviour.³⁴ Today we live in a society which is obsessed with control. Motivated by various fears, especially of being a victim of a crime, the society invents and applies new methods how to regulate people, places and behaviours that makes the society anxious, that threaten people's sense of security. Public interactions increasingly take place under the CCTV surveillance system, our governments are thinking about legalizing and installing cameras in places where

³⁴Innes, Martin. *Understanding Social Control: Deviance, Crime and Social Order*. Berkshire: Open University Press, 2003. pp.3-10.

nobody has imagined it would be needed, such as schools, elevators, hospital rooms and in public transportation. This situation has been predicted by George Orwell's *1984*, and even though we are not there yet, our society is getting closer to the "Big Brother's" level of surveillance every day.

However surveillance and physical control are not the only types of control, there are other methods which are more subtle and because of that also more dangerous, since they are more difficult to detect. Such ways of control, which the author wants to focus on in this thesis, are control through the use of conformity and the longing to belong, which is a desire which has been present in the human society since its creation, and control through the use of mass media, which is a fairly new method of control.

3.1.1 Mass media

The previous chapters commented on various influences on the dystopian literature written before the year 2000, with the focus on the works written in the 20th century. The influences were directly connected to the socio-cultural background of the English speaking countries as well as the whole world, to the new scientific ideas and inventions and to the imagination widened and deepened by the development of science and its observations. To the end of the last Millennium the information revolution reached its peak, especially thanks to the invention of the Internet, which was released to commercial use in 1995. With the development of the media communication became faster than ever, and with it the distribution of information reached unimaginable speed.

The Internet had a task: "To assure the open development, evolution and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world."³⁵ Today the world coverage with the Internet is at 42%³⁶, which means that over 42% of the world's population have access to the Internet. With the amount of content created and uploaded, which can be

³⁵ Internet Society. *About the IETF*. The Internet Society. www.internetsociety.org/about-the-ietf/ Accessed 25 May. 2018.

³⁶ "The World Factbook." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Internet users. www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html. Accessed 25 May. 2018.

shared in the matter of seconds, people can know what is happening on the other side of the planet at the very moment. Information is instantly widespread, so the whole media is filled with information about everything, unfortunately with this occurrence the phenomenon of fake information and hoaxes appeared. The society has not yet fully realized that the need of reliable resources is vital, and so the “fake news” is a bigger problem every day. Exaggerated, scandal-mongering and sensational yellow journalism, a journalism that treats news in an unprofessional or unethical fashion³⁷, replaced propaganda articles. Eye-catching and often misleading headlines get people’s attention and thanks to that it increases sales and revenues from advertisement, which is the reason behind the number of tabloid newspapers and online magazines. Drama is the key in the 21st century mass media, just as it is in the society in Panem in *The Hunger Games*.

3.1.1.1 Mass media in *The Hunger Games*

Suzanne Collins in her young adult novel explored various methods of social control that prevent discontent in many societies, and the threats to social change. In *The Hunger Games* the mass media is both a source of entertainment for the citizens of the governing district the Capitol, as well as a source of brainwashing propaganda and fear for the other districts. Television is a massive part of life for the people living in Panem, as it is the main way of control of the Capitol over the other districts. Through broadcasts of propaganda the Capitol, which has the monopoly over the media output, shows its power over the 12 districts. Clips from 74 years of Hunger Games and propaganda are what is typically on TV. Once a year however the mandatory programme takes place – the reaping and then the whole event of the Hunger Games. Taking children from the districts and presenting them as brave heroes who volunteered to fight for the glory of their district, is one aspect of the Capitol’s presentation of dominance. Even from the most gruesome event the government is able to make a celebration and all the figures and characters representing the Capitol are doing their best to twist situations to fit the frame, such as during the reaping when Katniss

³⁷ Biagi, Shirley. *Media impact: An Introduction to Mass Media*. Sacramento: Cengage Learning, 2015. p 55.

volunteers instead of her sister. The District's 12 escort for the tributes and the commentator of the reaping, comments on the situation in this manner: "I bet my buttons that was your sister. Don't want her to steal all the glory, do we? Come on, everybody! Let's give a big round of applause to our newest tribute!"³⁸ When the tributes are presented in the most positive light possible, the next task is training them a little and then forcing them to kill one another as they are being watched live by everyone in Panem, is the Capitol's way of showing and reminding how powerful it is and how the districts are at its mercy, as commented on by the main character:

To make it humiliating as well as torturous, the Capitol requires us to treat the Hunger Games as a festivity, a sporting event pitting every district against the others. The last tribute alive receives a life of ease back home, and their district will be showered with prizes, largely consisting of food. All year, the Capitol will show the winning district gifts of grain and oil and even delicacies like sugar while the rest of us battle starvation.

"It is both a time for repentance and a time for thanks," intones the mayor. (Collins)

Humiliation is one of the keys to control. The whole process of the Games treats the children more as beauty pageant contestants, or more precisely animals going to an exhibition, than children who were taken from their families and who are going to be killed. The main competence they are being taught is not survival or fighting tactics, but the media competence. The more fans a tribute has, the bigger chance of winning he has. The whole image of a tribute is changed, not only his way of clothing but also his behaviour, all his moves are planned in advance, and his life story is dramatised and made more interesting, so the tribute is more memorable. Katniss' media literacy develops from the initial elementary understanding of how the media in her society works to a high level of media literacy, which allows her to manipulate media moments for her advantage while being in the spotlight of the oppressive media.

³⁸ Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. London: Scholastic, 2009. p.27.

The whole Games are being broadcast in the whole Panem, and it is mandatory to watch. While in the majority of the districts it is made by force – when someone does not want to go and watch the Games, “peacekeepers” will force them to, or send them to jail – in the Capitol it is the most anticipated and exciting event of the year. The over-dramatic, partly scripted and visually stunning reality television show is a diversion to the capitol citizens from more important things, they are kept distracted and content with the system by being given a spectacular show in which they are accomplices in the killing, therefore they are less likely to question the system, because if they did, they would have to acknowledge that they are committing something horrible and criminal. Collins recognised the extent to which reality television would capture politics of our time, and become the means which people would make their most important choices as a society.

The strong influence of media in the plot of the whole trilogy *The Hunger Games* may be awarded to the game changing phenomenon of mass media of the 21st century and its importance and impact on today’s society. Media provide invaluable resources of both knowledge and entertainment and completely changed the ways of communication. Variety of media methods has been used in the media since its creation; however the peak of the social and psychological theory behind the methods was reached with the spread of television and the Internet. Probably the most considerable change of communication can be seen during the elections. Wide array of methods has been used during the political mass media campaigns. The information is changed, primed and framed to fit the image of the political party or the candidate to match the public opinion of what the best politician or the political party should be.

Social control through media used in *The Hunger Games* is assured by media methods priming, framing, spiral of silence, propaganda and panopticon, which are used in media communications in the novel, with priming and framing as the major ones in the setting of media communications in the novel. Priming is defined by Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder as the way media portray certain aspects of life while ignoring others.³⁹ The media basically tells the audiences what to think about, encourages them to accept that certain issues are more important than others, all that by emphasis on particular images. In

³⁹ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *Public Communication and Behavior*. Vol. 2. Ed. George Comstock. Orlando: Academic Press, 1986. pp.135-171.

The Hunger Games primed images are those that visually demonstrate the Capitol's power and control over the districts. Later it primes images of the two tributes, Katniss and Peeta, being so madly in love that they cannot be held responsible for almost ruining the Games and twisting the rules for their advantage by their plan to eat poisonous berries and killing themselves rather than fighting and killing each other. Since the suicide would rob the Games of a victor⁴⁰ the government changes the rules as the two protagonists expect, and the Capitol covers the rebellion (the evidence that resistance against the Capitol is possible) by focusing on the romance and by steady stream of propaganda.

The method of priming is closely related to the concept of framing. Shanto and Kinder explain that to frame is to select some aspects of reality and to promote particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or recommendation of treatment for the described item.⁴¹ The goal of framing is to show the viewer what he/she should feel about the particular piece of information. The most significant example of this method is that the Capitol primes displays of its strength and so creating a frame that makes the viewers adopt emotions and attitudes such as fear, submission and obedience.

Another media method used in *The Hunger Games* is the spiral of silence. This method is focused on how a certain opinion becomes dominant in a society.⁴² Public opinion puts pressure on members of a society; according to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, they experience a "largely subconscious fear of isolation"⁴³ which makes them more susceptible to either accept a popular opinion or to conceal a minority opinion. A member of a society is pressured by interpersonal support for the prevailing opinion as well as by the media which expresses an opinion as dominant. The result is that a public opinion is shifted, and the opinion of an individual is either changed as well or silenced. The following behaviour follows the tactics "speak up or stay silent", and since one's need to fit in and to belong is really strong, conformity is a common outcome. A spiral of silence is a practical tool for totalitarian governments because once created it allows for the dominant

⁴⁰ Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. London: Scholastic, 2009. p.135.

⁴¹ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *Public Communication and Behavior*. Vol. 2. Ed. George Comstock. Orlando: Academic Press, 1986.

⁴² Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. p 76.

⁴³ Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. p 78.

opinion to be perpetuated and the minority opinion to be silenced, which benefits such societal arrangements. Since the governing district of Panem has complete control over the media, it is able to present such images which presents and shifts the public opinion in ways that benefits the regime the most. Even though the majority of today's western society is not yet afraid of totalitarian regimes, the fear of being manipulated for some other than only political reasons still applies.

The creation of dominant opinions is closely connected to propaganda. Victoria O'Donnell and Garth Jowett define propaganda as "the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist"⁴⁴. In *The Hunger Games* the Capitol focuses on maintaining its position as the ruling power and creates propaganda throughout the whole trilogy to do so. Panem has all the components that make up the propaganda process: the institution, in this case the Capitol, the propaganda agents, who are people responsible for carrying out the propaganda, the media method, which was demonstrated in the previous paragraphs focused on the power of the possession of media, and the social network which consists of opinion leaders, a small group of people who deliberately but innocently facilitate the rumours, and the final component: the public. The public may form communities based on the propaganda it receives and may respond favourably or unfavourably to it.⁴⁵

The previously mentioned methods may be used to understand how the government's media construct panopticons. Kelly Wezner describes a panopticon as a type of a prison in which an unseen, centrally located guard may or may not be watching a prisoner at each particular time.⁴⁶ Prisoners will usually act as if they are always being surveyed because they fear the punishment. In this type of system, punishment often becomes a staged spectacle for the viewers, rather than a rehabilitation of the prisoner.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Jowett, Garth. O'Donnell, Victoria. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Newbury Park: Sage, 1992. p 4.

⁴⁵ ---. p 216.

⁴⁶ Wezner, Kelly. *Perhaps I am Watching You Now: Panem's Panopticons. Of Bread, Blood and the Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy*. Eds. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A. Clark. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012. pp. 98-107.

⁴⁷ Nettles, Jordan E. *Constructing Reality: The Role of Mas Media in The Hunger Games Series*. Honor Theses. Paper 2384. 2016. aquila.usm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1397&context=honors_theses. May. 2016. Accessed 10 June. 2018.

After witnessing the punishment for the misconduct the other prisoners, or in the setting of *The Hunger Games* other citizens, will behave as if they are under constant surveillance and thus avoiding the punishment themselves. The Capitol uses theatrical punishments as reminders of its power. As Kelly Wezner explains, “The Capitol’s punishments have a physical and psychological impact on the immediate victim, but are constructed to affect the wider audience through the idea of punishment.”⁴⁸ While some public punishments are intended to affect the district in which they are carried out, such as in the second book of the trilogy, Gale’s whipping on the main square⁴⁹ as a punishment for hunting outside the district, which is illegal. Other punishments are enforced via the media to reach a much wider audience. The Hunger Games are the biggest and the most terrifying punishment created by the Capitol, since nobody can escape it – it is mandatory to watch, and even if a person has not committed a single crime or an offence it does not provide a certainty that the particular person would not directly participate as a tribute.

3.1.2 Censorship

Censorship is a part of media since its creation, and even though the term is connected to totalitarian regimes, we can see examples of censorship even today.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, to “censor” means “to examine in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable.”⁵⁰ The word “censor” originated in ancient Rome, where officials were appointed by the government to take census and to supervise public morals. Traditionally, a censor is an official who examines literature, films and other forms of creative expression, and who removes or bans anything considered unsuitable.⁵¹ From this tradition, censorship is something done by the

⁴⁸ Wezner, Kelly. *Perhaps I am Watching You Now: Panem’s Panopticons. Of Bread, Blood and the Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy*. Eds. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A. Clark. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012. pp.98-107.

⁴⁹ Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. London: Scholastic, 2009. p 119.

⁵⁰ “censor.” Merriam-Webster’s Learners Dictionary, *Merriam-Webster*. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/censor. Accessed 1 Jul. 2018.

⁵¹ Heins, Marjorie. *Sex, Sin and Blasphemy: A Guide to America’s Censorship Wars*. New Press, 1993. pp.3-4.

government, however it can be done also by private groups. It is also important to note that not all forms of censorship are illegal.

To understand censorship in its whole scale, it is important to note that there are many types. Common division is into five types, however there are authors who tend to use more, such as Julian Petley, according to the nature of the censored material. The most common types are moral censorship, military, political, religious, and corporate. However to complete the list there is also book, film, and self-censorship. All those types can be also categorized based on the level of legality into three groups – legal, illegal, and on the borderline with illegality, or according to the level of formality into formal, or institutional, and informal, also known as social.⁵²

Moral censorship, as the best example of legal censorship, is focused on the removal of obscene or otherwise morally questionable materials, such as child pornography; this type of censorship is legal in the majority of world's countries. Military censorship keeps military tactics and intelligence confidential, so it does not reach the enemy. Corporate censorship is the process of portraying the business in positive light by disrupting negative information from being published.⁵³ As long as no lie is involved, this practice is legal. Another legal type is religious censorship, which focuses on removing or not publishing any material which might be found questionable by the particular religion. Common practise is limiting minor religions in a country, or banning works of another religion.⁵⁴ This type is essentially legal, however the ethics is questionable.

Special type of legal censorship is self-censorship – a person censors his or her own discourse. This can be done out of respect to other's preferences and sensibilities in order to avoid upsetting the audience, be it a group of friends or a target group of a movie. However it can be performed also out of fear of punishment or sanctions, such as in countries with totalitarian regimes, and so the person himself censors the material which might be found controversial by the government.

⁵² Jansen, Sue Curry. *Censorship: The Knot that Binds Power and Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

⁵³ Shaw, Robert. "Forms of Censorship." *Hollywood Quarterly*. vol.1, no.2, pp.199-210. Jan 1946. Web. www.jstor.org/stable/1209561?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

⁵⁴ Maryniak, Irena. *Offence. The Christian Case*, London: Seagull, 2009. pp. 14-15.

Types which borderline with illegal practice are book and film censorships. Books can be censored by some authority, usually a government, to prevent access to a book or to its part. Governments and religions can issue a list of banned books, however religion's list are not legally enforceable. Film censorship is similar to the previous type, with one specific – films are often forbidden by lobbying organizations. Whether those two types are legal or illegal depends on the scale of censoring, since it may overlap with moral censorship.⁵⁵

Illegal type of censorship is political censorship, which means that a government holds back or changes information from its citizens in order to control the people and to prevent them from rebelling. Together with this type of censorship appear violations of the freedom of speech.

Amnesty International defines freedom of speech as “the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, by any means.”⁵⁶ It means that everyone has the right to express his or her opinions and ideas without fear of being prosecuted. Even though this does not apply in all the cases, as there are few exceptions, this right is guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 19.⁵⁷ However in literature there is usually no Declaration, and if, it is much easier to violate the elementary human rights, than in reality.

Even though it is possible to find in our society some examples of moral censorship taken to such extremes that it becomes illegal, those may not be seen as serious violations of the freedom of speech, but it is probably the experience from the era of totalitarian regimes in Europe that creates this fear of a possible widening and expansion of censorship. Since the creation of the Internet the western society has witnessed tendencies towards various types of censorship, and so it is no surprise that this affects not only the way people think about possible future of media, but it is also reflected in literature.

⁵⁵ Petley, Julian. *Censorship: A Beginners' Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009.

⁵⁶ “What is freedom of speech?” *Amnesty International*. 01 Dec. 2017. www.amnesty.org.uk/free-speech-freedom-expression-human-right. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

⁵⁷ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” *United Nations*. www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

3.1.2.1 Censorship in *The Hunger Games*

In the book *The Hunger Games* the political censorship performed by the government is really strong and rooted in the society. It is impossible to get any oppositional or other minor ideas and opinions into the media, at least impossible to do so in any legal manner. But not only the media is censored, also the freedom of speech is violated, since everything uttered against the government or the state of things, even by a child, leads to punishment or imprisonment, and so eventually everyone adapts the practice of self-censorship. As Katniss narrates in the novel:

“District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety,” I mutter. Then I glance quickly over my shoulder. Even here, even in the middle of nowhere, you worry someone might overhear you. When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts. Do my work quietly in school. Make only polite small talk in the public market. Discuss little more than trades in the Hob.... Even at home, where I am less pleasant, I avoid discussing tricky topics. Like the reaping, or food shortages, or the Hunger Games. Prim might begin to repeat my words and then where would we be? (Collins, p.7)

The unmotivated Peacekeepers, members of the police, and the fact that cameras are placed only on the busiest public places in District 12 are the only reasons Katniss has not been punished for her comments towards the government. However, as soon as she revolted against the Capitol in the Games, this situation changed together with the Peacekeepers, who were replaced for motivated and truly loyal to the government.

3.1.2.2 Censorship in *The Bone Season*

In the novel *The Bone Season* by Samantha Shannon censorship is on an even higher level, compared to the world of *The Hunger Games*, not only because of the level of it, but also because of the context of the society, which is much closer to our society than the situation in Panem, and so it is much easier to compare. The censorship in *The Hunger Games* is visible mostly only in the content of the television, which is purely propaganda, and in the denial of the freedom of speech, since the reader does not know anything about any censorship of books or other media, which might exist in the governing district – the Capitol. But in *The Bone Season* the whole picture of the society and its functioning is given.

The beginning of the story is set in London in the year 2056, but the geography of the city remains mostly unchanged. However the political situation has changed completely in a historically alternative event when King Edward VII supposedly “opened a door that could never be shut, and that he’d brought the plague of clairvoyance upon the world, and that his followers were everywhere, breeding and killing, drawing their power from a source of great evil.”⁵⁸ With this event a new government emerged with a new agenda – to focus on finding and eliminating all clairvoyants, people with supernatural powers allowing them to connect in various ways with “dreamscape”, a spirit world. Any contact with dreamscape was illegal, punishable by imprisonment or death. However, as the main protagonist Paige says, “I committed high treason just by breathing,”⁵⁹ as being a “voyant”, short for clairvoyant, is an act of high treason, and so punishable by death.

With the change of the government and the ruling regime many laws have changed and many have been created. And with the new common enemy not only the laws about being a voyant appeared. The official position of a censor has gained new duties, and that is to censor all written texts, since any references to an afterlife are forbidden.⁶⁰ A list of legal books is created and the illegal ones are destroyed, legal books and legal media is almost exclusively available on data pads for the easy control over who is reading what. In

⁵⁸ Shannon, Samantha. *The Bone Season*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. pp.14.

⁵⁹ --- . pp. 4.

⁶⁰ --- . pp. 9

this society there is only one mass-produced broadsheet, because “paper is too easy to misuse”⁶¹. The book censorship in this world almost reached the level of *Fahrenheit 451*.

3.1.2.3 Censorship in *Matched*

Similarly to the approach to information and literature as in *The Bone Season*, in this novel books are banned and destroyed. Only one hundred of the “best” poems, paintings, songs and stories are preserved, to give everyone just enough information of the culture and not be overwhelmed. Creativity is undesirable, even illegal, and to make sure that nobody has any tendency towards it, nobody is taught to write, nothing new is being created. Clothes worn by the citizens are very simple and plain, even the language is being stripped of “inaccurate, archaic words”⁶², which are usually abstract words. This can be demonstrated on the highest greeting in the Society, “I wish you optimal results,”⁶³, on a hostess on the Match Banquet who corrects herself after commenting on Cassia’s situation as “unusual” to “uncommon”,⁶⁴ or on Cassia being corrected, when she notes that she is lucky, that “there is no luck in the Society”⁶⁵. Everything is strictly planned and scheduled, food and nutrition, leisure time, bed time, one’s job, partnership and even death. There is purpose behind every detail in this dystopia. No one can possess anything, only one “artefact” – an object from the old times, before the Society, usually it is a possession of one’s ancestor, such as a watch.

Since nobody can write, only type, it does not seem as anything strange not to be allowed to possess paper of any kind, everything is distributed only for specific purposes of work or special occasions. Everything is sorted and counted, so as the main character Cassia starts to question the Society and its truths, it is difficult for her to keep a handkerchief with illegal poems her grandfather gave her. But not only supplies and citizens’ time is being monitored and controlled, but also dreams. As soon as a person has

⁶¹ Shannon, Samantha. *The Bone Season*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 14.

⁶² Condie, Ally. *Matched*. London: Penguin Group, 2010. pp. 18.

⁶³ --- . pp. 8.

⁶⁴ --- . pp. 17.

⁶⁵ --- . pp. 18.

questionable dreams, he or she is encouraged to take a green pill which is carried by everyone at all times, which causes sudden relief and calmness from anxiety for the user,⁶⁶ which forces the person to try and self-censor even his or her dreams.

Everything in *Matched* is censored in the name of moral censorship, there is no space for creativity, and so the Society can be labelled as creatively sterile. Whoever has any creative ideas is quickly silenced by calming drugs or by transfer outside the city. Without any interference from the outside world it seems impossible for the members of the Society to ever realise their position.

3.1.3 Conformity and One's Identity

Conformity is changing one's behaviours in order to be classified as a member of a society. Psychologists have proposed various definitions of the term, but it is accepted that conformity involves giving in to group pressure. Stephen J. Becker, James Olson and Elizabeth Wiggins agree on the following definition:

Conformity is the most general concept and refers to any change in behavior caused by another person or group; the individual acted in some way because of influence from others. Note that conformity is limited to changes in behavior caused by other people; it does not refer to effects of other people on internal concepts like attitudes or beliefs... Conformity encompasses compliance and obedience because it refers to any behavior that occurs as a result of others' influence - no matter what the nature of the influence. (Breckler)

This definition is about yielding to group pressures, which is something people tend to do, no matter their gender, age, or received education. There is one particular group of people, however, which struggles with conformity the most, and those are young adults. Gaining peer acceptance is a primary objective of youth in the high school context and, for many young adults and adolescents, maybe be even more important than academic

⁶⁶ Condie, Ally. *Matched*. London: Penguin Group, 2010. pp. 51.

performance.⁶⁷ Since schools have dominant role in one's secondary socialization the importance of one's feeling of "fitting in" as created in schools has risen significantly in the last 40 years. Students stay at school longer than ever, in the United States of America it was 32,5 hours per week in 2004, excluding homework time, which is 7,5 hours more than in 1980s.⁶⁸ Even though today the average number is the same, some high school students report that their school schedule can reach 70 hours per week.⁶⁹ This definitely is a major influence on students' psyche and his or her relation to a society, as the majority of their time is spent as school or doing school related endeavours.

Mental illness, disorder or issue is a strong influence on one's identity, and people experiencing it say that sometimes they have a feeling that they lost their identity to their mental disorder.⁷⁰ The search for one's identity is not limited to adolescents and their search for their place in the social groups they are in, and in the society as a whole. Every person can struggle with their identity, redefine themselves, or may need to re-build the identity from the core as a result of various life events, and with the society changing with the velocity of today and with the continuous mixing and blending of societies it is more common and more needed than ever to do so, which brings also the struggles of defining and redefining one's identity.

Since recently our society has been experiencing the focus on mental health and wellbeing programmes, not only in the context of war veterans and victims of various forms of abuse, but also in the context of mental issues and disorders, such as the burnout syndrome or anxiety and depression. With the realization of the importance of soft skills⁷¹ mental health gained much higher importance that it had had ever before, as the market

⁶⁷ Schall, Jacqueline. et al. "Fitting in" in high school: how adolescents belonging is influenced by locus of control beliefs. *Interantional Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. 2016. Vol. 21. Issue 4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2013.866148> Accessed 04.Jul. 2018.

⁶⁸ Swanbrow, Diane. "U.S. children and teens spend more time on academics". *University of Michigan: The University Record Online*. 2004. www.ur.umich.edu/0405/Dec06_04/20.shtml. Accessed 01 Jul. 2018.

⁶⁹ Aditya Sharma. Comment on "How many hours fo Americans spend in high school per week." *Quora*, 09 Jan 2018. www.quora.com/How-many-hours-do-Americans-spend-in-high-school-per-week. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

⁷⁰ Karen. "It felt like I lost my identity to depression". *Time to Change.org*. 05 Jul. 2018. www.time-to-change.org.uk/blog/it-felt-i-lost-my-identity-depression. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

⁷¹ Lippman, H. Laura. Ryberg, Renee. *Workforce Connctions: Key "soft skills" that foster youth workforce success: Toward a consensus across fields.* Child Trends. Issue 24. Jun 2015. www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2015-24WFCSOftSkills1.pdf. Accessed 06 Jul. 2018.

needed to maintain a perfect condition for the employees so they were able to perform and provide the best results possible. The issue of mental health has finally been addressed in more professional, medical way, and with the increasing appearances in the media the taboo of mental health problems has slowly been torn down. Not only that a dialogue is being led and the awareness of the public is being raised, but mental illness is being portrayed in the media as well, with the emphasis on realistic depiction in the last two decades.⁷² This tradition of realistic capture of mental disorder in film was started in by Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), which was later, in 1972, adapted by Miloš Forman into the movie of the same name, however the next movie about which it is possible to say to be realistically depicting a mental illness was released no sooner than in 1991, a drama directed by Terry Gilliam, *The Fisher King* (1991), focusing on PTSD and schizophrenia. Since 1991 to 2008 there have been only a handful of films depicting mental illness in realistic and humanizing way, not being weighted by stigma and stereotypes, but fortunately the tendency to show mental health on screen accurately has been increasing, as showed in a report from 2015 commissioned by the anti-stigma campaign Time to Change.⁷³ To support the fact that the situation is improving it is possible to mention that even computer games, which is still underestimated and belittled medium, are focusing on the issue of mental health, with its highlight of depicting various psychosis of the main character in the game *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice* (2017), by the developing studio Ninja Theory.

In this chapter the use and exploitation of one's search for identity and desire of conformity for the purpose of controlling individuals is discussed.

⁷² Ewens, Hannah. "Meeting the People Who Make Mental Health Storyline On TV Look Realistic". *Vice – Mental Health Channel*. 07 Feb. 2017. www.vice.com/en_uk/article/8qmvpx/i-make-mental-health-storylines-on-tv-look-realistic. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

⁷³ "Making a drama out of a crisis". *Time to Change – let's end mental health discrimination*. 2015. www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/Making_a_drama_out_of_a_crisis.pdf. Accessed 07 Jul. 2018.

3.1.3.1 Conformity and One's Identity in *Matched*

As presented before, the life in *Matched* is not about options and choosing, the society presents them with the most optimal and statistically best options. Conformity is forced on everyone since birth; nobody should stand out except for their abilities and skills, which determine their future occupation. However, the adolescents are not stripped of the mental processes of a teenager, the desire to “find themselves”, to be liked, and to be popular. Every child and young adult in the world of *Matched* has a best friend, there is antipathy between some students, but there is no visible rivalry. Even though they doubt themselves, they always know that no matter what they do, the Society will choose the best for them and for the Society. There is this peculiar line between being conforming and being above average in something, as it is needed for one being given an occupation that will the person find fulfilling. But as soon as somebody is too extraordinary, the Society interferes and the person is put up back in line. This leads to a virtual race between the young adults, since the best and most interesting jobs are available only to the most talented but the most compliant at the same time, so during the school time and the “free-rec” hours, short for free recreation, when the students are watched and evaluated the most, they are trying to prove themselves in the skills required for their dream job.

The reality of the world is choiceless, the individualism of a person is limited to absolute minimum and one is defined only by his or her occupation, life partner and thoughts, which are controlled and restricted by the change of language and by using only “precise vocabulary”.⁷⁴ Overall there is not much room to finding one's identity, except for the one defined by the Society, at least not at the official level, since nobody is lead to independence, creativity or individualism. The protagonist Cassia is, however, unintentionally presented with the option and space to define her by being given a choice – by a mistake two boys were introduced to her as her perfect match for her life partner. One of them is the perfect one from the point of view of the Society – comforting, naturally smart and healthy boy with whom Cassia gets along well, so the expectation of them being a good couple is really high. The other boy, even though he seems to be a good fit to

⁷⁴ Condie, Ally. *Matched*. London: Penguin Group, 2010. p. 18.

Cassia from the point of view of their matching characters, he is an Aberration⁷⁵, which means he or his family has committed an Infraction, something highly illegal. Those people do not have a full citizenship, they cannot be Matched, possess an artefact, and they work in disposal departments where the life expectancy is low due to chemicals and poisons there. Cassia not being given a real, official choice to choose her partner out of the two, she is trying to understand her feelings towards the boys. The “better one” from the point of view of the Society is her neighbour, friend from early childhood and they have been best friends since the first year of school. The by society undesired one has been in the City since Cassia can remember, however he was moved there when he was little, and nobody knows why, so there is the attraction of his eeriness as he is covered in mystery. Cassia was more than satisfied with her first Match, but as she saw the second match, the mistake, she started to question the pansophical Society and its decisions as well her own feelings, which she started to develop towards both of them. She is afraid that if she accepts the “correct” option, it would not be her decision but the Society’s, but if she accepts the “error”, she would stand against the Society and the consequences would be severe, but she would be sure that it was her choice, which is right now the only thing she feels that can define her.

Ky Markham, the mysterious Aberration, is not a full citizen because his parents did something illegal. Because of that he was moved to another City to be allowed a fairly fresh start. Knowing no one and living with his relatives he is struggling to get comfortable and to find his place in already working, living and conform society of this particular City, and as a result he closes up and becomes introverted loner. He really wants to share his experience with his peers, however he is not allowed to talk about the details and what is left without the details is the fact that he actually is an Aberration, an outcast. He lets everyone else think that an accident happened to his parents and so he must have been moved to live with his aunt whom adopted him, which allows him to evade questions about his origins. He also possesses a rare ability - he can write, which he hides from everyone as it is another illegal thing in his life. He eventually teaches Cassia to write, however no sooner than he is absolutely certain that she is not fully satisfied with her life in the Society

⁷⁵ Condie, Ally. *Matched*. London: Penguin Group, 2010. p. 46.

as it is, which is also a rare quality. There are simply too many things he needs to hide if he wants to comply and conform to fit the Society and not be Relocated to Outer Provinces, areas away from the Cities, where war against unnamed enemy rages. However in his attempts to blend in he draws attention to himself which work in his disadvantage in the Society, and so he is under stronger scrutiny than others.

3.1.3.2 Conformity and One's Identity in *The Bone Season*

While the process of searching one's self in *Matched* goes from limited individuality to its exploration and eventually also its discovery, in *The Bone Season* the reader follows its loss and regaining. The characters, especially the main protagonist Paige, are presented and described in detail, their personalities, attributes, strengths and weaknesses, and their motivations are sooner or later introduced. However as the plot continues and Paige is with other "voyants" taken to the Tower and then to the prison camp of Sheol I, where she and all the other prisoners are stripped of their identity by being given a number instead of a name. Without any connection to her friends and family in London she quickly becomes broken and without any hope of escaping she starts to lose her identity. Conformity is required and obedience is being enforced by violence and torture, not only physical but especially mental, as the captors feed on the voyants' auras, because the captors, of an alien race called Rephaim, need to consume voyants' aura to sustain themselves. Only thing that stays and helps to keep a prisoner's identity is one's clairvoyant power, and if a person is lucky and his or her voyant powers are strong or rare, he or she is being trained to be used not only as food, but also as a weapon in a war against flesh eating creatures which came from a different world called the Netherworld, the same dimension from which the captors, Rephaim, came over two hundred years ago⁷⁶ – just about the same time when the system of government changed completely in the United Kingdom, and the hunt for the clairvoyants started.

⁷⁶ Shannon, Samantha. *The Bone Season*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. p. 49.

With the reappearance of hope that escape is in fact possible, Paige is trying to restore her identity and to understand her position in the new environment, since even though she is a prisoner and a slave, her living conditions are far above expectations, which is explained by her unique voyant abilities, which need to be trained and improved to be used in the war. This situation of hers is made even more complicated and confusing for the character as she is slowly falling in love with her guard who is training her. Paige is trying to analyze her feelings, whether those are real, since the guard is not abusive and as the book progresses actually he starts being nice to her, or whether she is experiencing a Stockholm syndrome, a condition that causes hostages to develop a psychological alliance with their captors as a survival strategy during captivity.⁷⁷

The process of finding oneself is enforced but also made more difficult at the same time by various moral choices Paige needs to face, during which sometimes she almost loses herself, for example when she is forced to decide whose lives are going to be sacrificed in the name of revolution in the penal colony and escape of the prisoners.⁷⁸

One of the Rephaim, Arcturus Mesarthim also known as Warden, who is Paige's guard and keeper, has a high position in the Rephaim's society; however during his life he needed to regain his status as he was one of the masterminds behind an uprising which took place twenty years ago in Sheol I, as he does not agree with the abuse and exploitation of humans for their own preservation. The uprising was unsuccessful as just before the uprising one of the humans whom Warden trusted betrayed the rebels and told about it to the leader of Rephaim. Since then Warden has been trying to fit the Rephaim society again, to gain trust of the leader so maybe once he could try to lead the revolution again, but this time successfully. As he is pretending his conformity he is keeping his distance from humans, however the true reason the reader does not know, probably because he wants to show that he does not care about humans anymore, or maybe because he despises them since one of them was so self-centered that he betrayed the uprising and traded his freedom for the lives of everyone else. After twenty years, however, he chooses to train a human again, probably because he can feel Paige's power and her potential which could be used to

⁷⁷ Nugent, Pam M.S., "STOCKHOLM SYNDROME," in *PsychologyDictionary.org*, April 13, 2013. psychologydictionary.org/stockholm-syndrome/. Accessed 07 July. 2018.

⁷⁸ Shannon, Samantha. *The Bone Season*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. p. 385.

plan another uprising, this time successful one. Even though he can see in her and read her memories, he is unsure whether he can trust her or not, so he tests her and pushes her to her limits of physical and mental endurance, breaks her and then helps her to regain her strength to make sure, that she can be trusted in this fight. During the development of his character his believes are constantly being challenged, he is trying to find a way to understand humans and their motivations, why are they able to betray everything they believe in for the sake of their self-preservation. He is trying to define his own identity in the military society which he does not agree with, but he is trying to blend in to have the time and space to create his own web of contacts and to create and perfect a new plan to overthrow this society and to help humans escape the inhumane conditions of the penal colony. In the meantime he is struggling to regain trust towards humankind, he is unable to create a close relationship and bond with another individual even though he wants to.

Warden's situation and development of his character, working on his ability to trust, is clearly following the process of one's reconvalescence after a traumatic event, an assault or abuse, or of sufferers of post traumatic stress disorder,⁷⁹ when the belief in the society and people is destroyed and challenged, and during the reconvalescence it is being slowly built.

3.2 Science and technology

The 21st century is considered an innovative and knowledge era, and an era of technology. Technology is inherent within today's society, and being without it is unimaginable. E. M. Forster's story *The Machine Stops* (1909) warns us against the rise of modern technologies, which he expresses in the satirical totalitarian administration which mechanizes every dimension of daily life. Everyone lives underground in his or her room in isolation, with all needs met by the omnipotent, global Machine. Communication is allowed only via instant messaging or video conferencing machine, doing their only activity: sharing and endlessly discussing second hand ideas. Everything and everyone is dependent on the Machine,

⁷⁹ "Treatment and Help". *PTSD UK*. www.ptsduk.org/what-is-ptsd/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIxtzovjv6M3AIVCM-yCh3idgJWEAAYASAAEgJHAvD_BwE. Accessed 06 Jul. 2018.

which is being worshipped as a god, however the knowledge as how to repair the Machine has been lost, since a god does not need repairing. Eventually the Machine breaks down and the society collapses into an apocalypse. This is an image created at the very beginning of the 20th century, when the dependency on technology was not as high as it is today, and the technological era was at its beginning. To put it in perspective, in 1909 the term “gene” was introduced by Wilhelm Johannsen⁸⁰, Sigmund Freud gained public recognition to psychoanalysis⁸¹, a short-wave radio transmitter was used⁸², Kinemacolor changed the movie industry by being the first commercial natural colour invented for movies⁸³, Louis Bleriot was the first man to fly across the English Channel in a heavier-than-air craft⁸⁴, and Ford Model T was the most popular car⁸⁵. Even though expansion of technology was in progress, the reliance on it was minimal, compared to the over-reliance in the 21st century. If people lost electricity at the beginning of the 20th century, it would not be so paralyzing, as majority of the technology used was to make life easier (such as the first vacuum cleaners or electric toasters⁸⁶), but it was not vital for the society. But still the fear of being replaced by machines in all dimensions of life, and the fear of apocalypse in case of malfunction was rooted in people’s minds.

The inventions of the 20th century had been one of the major influences on science fiction and dystopian literature of the century, and the situation has not changed. The technological and scientific advancement influences all aspects of our lives, how we work, how we spend our leisure time, how we communicate and develop our relationships, but also how we think. With the rise of instant messaging via the Internet or via cell phones, the language has started to change, new vocabulary items has appeared not only in need of

⁸⁰ Holdrege, Craig. “The Gene: A Needed Revolution”. *In Context. The Nature Institute*. Vol. 14. 2005. pp. 14-17.

⁸¹ Brenner, Charles. *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*. Madison: International Universities Press, 1999. p. 18.

⁸² Bray, John. *Innovation and the Communications Revolution: From the Victorian Pioneers to Broadband Internet*. London: The Institution of Engineering and Technology, 2002. p. 83.

⁸³ Gray, Frank. “George Albert Smith, British Filmmaker, Inventor”. *Who’s Who of Victorian Cinema*. www.victorian-cinema.net/gasmith. Accessed 27 May. 2018.

⁸⁴ Clark, Nicola. “100 Years Later, Celebrating a Historic Flight in Europe.” *New York Times*. 24 July 2009. www.nytimes.com/2009/07/25/world/europe/25crossing.html. Accessed 07 July. 2018.

⁸⁵ “1900 to 1909 Important New, Significant Events, Key Technology”. *The People history*. www.thepeoplehistory.com/1900to1909.html. Accessed 13 Jun. 2018.

⁸⁶ “The Decades That Invented the Future, Part 1: 1900-1910”. *Wired.com*. 18 Oct. 2012. www.wired.com/2012/10/12-decades-of-geek-part-1/. Accessed 13 Jun. 2018.

naming the new inventions, but also as a reaction to the faster lifestyle, and to fit more the larger amount of typed communication - sentences became shorter in everyday communication, abbreviations and acronyms have been increasingly used⁸⁷.

However the technology used in everyday life is not the only influential technology. The advancements and inventions in the sphere of space exploration, military and medicine are not every-day in nature, nevertheless its results and outcomes are now vital in our society and for its survival.

Many scientific discoveries and technical advancements have been indirectly influencing art, but there are dozens which have been influencing art directly, by being explicitly mentioned, worked on, or being the central motif of a piece of art. Even though science fiction is more focused on the use of technology, dystopias do not distance themselves from it. The most prominent use and influences of the pieces of technology are going to be elaborated on and exemplified in the next chapters of this thesis.

3.2.1 Tablets and Touch screens

While sleek, light e-readers, displays and tablets are a fairly recent products of technological advancement, less sophisticated, heavier and clunky variations has been around for decades, for example the first tablet which drew interest came from Jeff Hawkins, the entrepreneur behind the PalmPilot in the late 1990s. He built the GRiDPad from Tandy, which was released in 1989.⁸⁸ But the products involved too much compromise; the computing capacity has not even remotely reached the performance of a personal computer, not even a laptop, portable option of PC. Also eBooks as we know them today have undergone a lot of changes in the design and technology, and the electronic reading devices did not come into spotlight until e-book formats were

⁸⁷ "History of English." *YouTube*. Uploaded by OpenLearn from The Open University. 08 Nov. 2011. www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3r9bOkYW9s&index=11&list=PLA03075BAD88B909E

⁸⁸ Buchanan, Matt. "How Steve jobs Made the iPad Succeed When All Other Tablets Failed". *Wired.com*. 11 Feb. 2013. www.wired.com/2013/11/one-ipad-to-rule-them-all-all-those-who-dream-big-are-not-lost/. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017.

standardized, which corresponded with the development of electronic paper displays.⁸⁹ And so even though the technology origins in the 1990s, its boom came no sooner than in 2001 with the release of the first Apple's portable music player, iPod⁹⁰. Even though iPod does not have any direct correlation with touch screens, its small but sturdy screen and the physical littleness of the processor, hard drive and battery made it one of the most important products of the first decade of the 21st century.

Scientists and researchers have been working on touchscreen based interfaces since the 1960's, developing systems for flight crew navigation, air traffic control, and for high-end cars. But work on multi-touch technology began in the 1980s, and it was not until the 2000s that attempts to integrate touch screens into commercial systems have finally started to be successful.⁹¹ The revolution in touch screen technology was presented by Apple Company in 2007⁹², when their innovated technology was released, which was topped by the release of the first iPad in 2010⁹³, finally without any compromises made to the performance of the device, which started the era of LCD displays, dashboards, smartphones, tablets, and even smartwatches and various wearables.

Even though the major breakthrough of touchscreens and flat screens came towards the end of the 2000s, the influences of the development of such technology began to be apparent since the beginning of the research, and even before. Huge flat screens able to transfer video but also audio, which are possible to be controlled remotely or by touching the screen itself, were in the minds and imaginations of people since the inventions of the first electronic televisions in the late 19th century. In dystopian literature we could see the flat screens for the first time probably in E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1909), and the most memorable and menacing screens were to be seen in *1984* (1949). However, the

⁸⁹ Nguyen, C. Tuan. "The Most Important Invention of the 21st Century". *Thought Co.com*. 06 Mar. 2018. www.thoughtco.com/the-most-important-inventions-of-the-21st-century-4159887. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

⁹⁰ Lanxon, Nate. "The Complete History of Apple's iPod." *Cnet.com*. 25 Oct. 2011. www.cnet.com/pictures/the-complete-history-of-apples-ipod/. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017.

⁹¹ Nguyen, C. Tuan. "The Most Important Invention of the 21st Century". *Thought Co.com*. 06 Mar. 2018. [.thoughtco.com/the-most-important-inventions-of-the-21st-century-4159887](http://www.thoughtco.com/the-most-important-inventions-of-the-21st-century-4159887). Accessed 08 Jul. 2018. www

⁹² Erickson, Christine. "Touchscreen History." *Mashable.com*. 09 Nov. 2012. mashable.com/2012/11/09/touchscreen-history/?europe=true. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017.

⁹³ Fingas, Roger. "A brief history of the iPad, Apple's once and future tablet." *Apple Insider*. 03 Apr. 2018. appleinsider.com/articles/18/04/03/a-brief-history-of-the-ipad-apples-once-and-future-tablet. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

influence does not end there, as various versions of this technology have been used in literary dystopias until today, even though for today's readers the technology might not seem to be anyhow extraordinary or noteworthy, as it is so widespread all over the world. Actually it is estimated by The Statistics Portal that 1,28 billion people have a tablet, which is approximately every sixth person worldwide.⁹⁴

3.2.1.1 Tablets and Touch screens in the selected works

In all the books selected for this thesis the reader can see tablets, touch screens and e-readers being used by the characters and inhabitants of the societies, but in each with different level of importance. For examples, as commented in previous chapters, in *The Bone Season* tablets and e-readers are used almost exclusively, as printed press can be misused, and data pads are easy to control and so the government knows who has read what. Thanks to the technology of tablets getting to read anything else, than the approved literature, is almost impossible.

In the worlds of *The Hunger Games* and *Matched* the use of tablets is about the same. As the societies are on more advanced level than in our reality, it is very common for the citizens own at least one. However the distribution follows the distribution of wealth in reality, only minority of people can afford having such technology, while majority of people – in the industrial and agricultural districts in *The Hunger Games* and in the Outer Provinces in *Matched*, which are marginal areas are where tablets are still perceived as new and revolutionary technology. People in those poor areas cannot afford even enough food for their families, let alone a tablet. The situation is fairly similar to reality, as in the developing countries and countries of the third world tablets are just slowly making their ground, usually thanks to donations and charities which are trying to bring technology to schools in secluded areas, so the children have better chances of receiving higher education and applying on the labour market.

⁹⁴ “Number of tablet users worldwide from 2013 to 2021 (in billions).” *Statista – The Statistics Portal*. 2018. www.statista.com/statistics/377977/tablet-users-worldwide-forecast/. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

In *Matched* tablets are an integral part of one's life. Those are not for communication, but to search for information, to read, and it can work as a diary. Each person in the City has one, and his or her dependence on this device is really high, as there are no other means of how or where to write anything down. Also there is the almost emotive bond to it coming from the experienced excitement and expectations, as the highlight of one's adolescence is the Match Banquet, where a person receives a memory card with information about his or her partner.

However there is also the respect towards this technology, as the hosts, the police officers, have a tablet in their hands all the time, checking on everyone's schedules, controlling the surroundings and finding all the information about a person in just a few clicks.

The dependency on technology is enormous in *Matched*, and even though a tablet does not seem like having too many possible uses, it is vital in the society – for the members as well as for the control.

Tablets in *The Bone Season* have their place only in London, the human part of the world. Almost everyone has one, however it is not obligatory. But because it is so difficult to buy a book, while downloading something legal into a tablet is easy and cheap, vast majority of London citizens have one. In the book there are also train stations described as having huge displays in them, so the passengers cannot really miss any important news or information, so the propaganda programs or the police broadcast of wanted people cannot be missed.

Even though tablets and touch screens are such a technological breakthrough in our reality, in dystopias the focus is not on them, because from the point of view of the narrative it is nothing new and exciting anymore. The perception of tablets changed from the 20th century. In the books written last century we can see that screens and tablets were something groundbreaking, something not yet invented and so even more exotic, suitable for variety of uses, while today, when tablets and touchscreens actually exist, people got used to them so quickly and easily, that it does not seem so special anymore, and the author of the thesis believes that that is the reason behind the more casual approach towards this technology.

3.2.2 Medicine

Since the beginning of humanity, people have been trying to find remedies and cures for every health issue. This has not changed over the centuries; just the approach to it has been changing. With various discoveries and inventions in the field of medicine our society has been able to cure diseases which were incurable in the past, and with the use of vaccines our society managed to nearly eradicate a number of diseases, which used to be deadly, and to wipe out entirely smallpox and rinderpest⁹⁵, also known as cattle plague or murrain.

Though medical experts and researchers prove over and over that there is no connection between vaccines and autism⁹⁶, this idea is widely spread among people. The fear of causing someone health issues instead of helping and protecting them is really strong, so many people question the medical authorities whether vaccines are really helpful and needed, or whether those are just a construct created by pharmaceutical companies. The author believes that this fear, and also the feeling of “overtaking” various medicaments simply because we have the option to take them, is reflected in dystopian literature, and it is reflected upon by all the medicaments and drugs people in dystopian societies are forced to take. However not all instances of drug use in dystopias are harmful or inherently bad.

In this chapter the focus is going to be on examples of inventions and advancements in medicine and how those are reflected in the selected works.

3.2.2.1 Medicine in *Oryx and Crate*

In the world of *Oryx and Crate* medicine is on more advanced level than in our reality. From the point of view of technology generally the reader does not get enough information to judge how advanced it is, however science is much more advanced. Engineering and

⁹⁵ Roser, Max. “Eradication of Diseases.” *Our World Data.org*. ourworldindata.org/eradication-of-diseases. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

⁹⁶ “Do Vaccines Cause Autism?” *The History of Vaccines - An Educational Resource by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*. www.historyofvaccines.org/content/articles/do-vaccines-cause-autism. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

sciences such as biology and chemistry are highly valued skills, and the society is led in this direction, which can be seen in the focus of education - one of high school subjects is nanotech biochemistry⁹⁷.

From the information provided by Jimmy's retrospect it is known that all medical treatment is paid by the patient, so not everyone is able to receive the treatment needed. In the poor areas of the world, the cities called "the pleeblands"⁹⁸ the situation is the worst. When a person wants to enter the pleeblands, he or she is in a risk of being infected with various diseases which are still there, so one might need an injection, which Crate created for himself and his friends, with a short-term vaccine which prevents infections which are common in there⁹⁹.

Generally, health and disease is the source of profit for the health corporations. Crate even explains that diseases are actually being created by one of the corporations called HelthWyzer so people need to pay for a cure: "[t]he best diseases, from a business point of view would be those that cause lingering illnesses. Ideally – that is, for maximum profit – the patient should either get well or die just before all of his or her money runs out. It's a fine calculation."¹⁰⁰ This is one of the things which people in our reality fear, that with vaccines or other drugs there are bacteria and viruses injected into our bodies so the pharmaceutical companies have customers to make money from. There is visible parallel of fear in our society with the fear and anger in the book, where the emotions are depicted in a group of people called God's Gardeners, a radical anti-establishment of individuals who disagree with the dominance of the pharmaceutical industry in the society, and they protest and fight against it and against the influence and power the corporations have over people, however with no results, as they are often imprisoned during protests, or mercilessly massacred by the corporal police.

In *Oryx and Crate* the world is divided into sections, compounds, where people live according to a corporation they work in, so the reader gets to know only four compounds throughout the book, as the main characters moved. The first three corporations are

⁹⁷ Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. Toronto: Doubleday, 2003. *Ivy Mind Academy*. docs.ivymindacademy.com/EBooks/oryx_crake.pdf. p. 44.

⁹⁸ ---. p. 17.

⁹⁹ ---. p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ ---. p.126.

focused on prolonging life, the first, OrganInc, from the inside though growing new organs to its customers, the second by focusing on skin-related technologies, creating beauty products and for the most wealthy inhabitants by offering the option to replace their aged skin with a new one. The main character explains the goal of the corporation called NooSkins as follows:

The main idea was to find a method of replacing the older epidermis with a fresh one, not a laser-thinned or dermabraded short-term resurfacing but a genuine start-over skin that would be wrinkle and blemish-free. For that, it would be useful to grow a young, plump skin cell that would eat up the worn cells in the skins of those on whom it was planted and replace them with replicas of itself, like algae growing on a pond. (Atwood)¹⁰¹

The focus of our society on beauty is visible every day – in advertisement for beauty products, beauty hacks and beauty salons, but also with the increasing number of cosmetic surgery clinics. With the tools available to be closer to the beauty ideal it is possible to get a surgery and change one’s appearance. However, as in the novel, the procedures are not available for everyone, but only for the wealthy.

In the fourth corporation, for which the main protagonist works, is a research unit called Paradise, which is focused on two main projects. The first involves the creation of a pill which eliminates “external causes of death”, which is explained as “[w]ar, which is to say misplaced sexual energy, which we consider to be a larger factor than the economic, racial, and religious causes often cited. Contagious diseases, especially sexually transmitted ones. Overpopulation, leading – as we’ve seen in spades – to environmental degradation and poor nutrition.”¹⁰² The pill is supposed to protect its users from diseases, provide an unlimited libido, and extend youth. It would also serve as a permanent form of birth control, but the inventor does not want this to be known, as he wants to use this drug to fight overpopulation, which also leads to wars.

The science behind all those inventions from the book is not explained; however the ideas presented in it follow the ideas and fears emerging from our society. The fear of

¹⁰¹ Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. Toronto. Doubleday. 2003. *Ivy Mind Academy*. docs.ivymindacademy.com/EBooks/oryx_crake.pdf. p. 33.

¹⁰² ---, p. 173

overusing medicaments, the fear of pharmaceutical corporations having too much power over the citizens and too much power in general, and the fear of diseases and of overpopulation, which are topics to be discussed in following chapters.

3.2.3 Overpopulation

Biology dictionary defines overpopulation as “a population which exceeds its sustainable size within a particular environment or habitat”¹⁰³. It results from an increased birth rate, decreased death rate, or sudden decline in available resources needed for survival. With the social and economic progress together with advances on the fields of hygiene and medicine, the survival rates of people with various conditions are much higher than hundred years ago, which can be seen in the statistics about the world population throughout the history. Giles Pison says, following the statistics by United Nations, that in the 1800 the world’s population was around 1 billion people, and in 1920s it reached two billion.¹⁰⁴ Today the world population reaches 7.6 billion¹⁰⁵ and it is estimated that it will reach 10 billion by 2050. It is often discussed that the population growth is higher than ever, but that is incorrect, as the peak was reached in 1965-1970, when the annual growth was over 2%, today it is 1,1%¹⁰⁶. However that does not change the fact that the human population has risen in the last two hundred years sevenfold, which leads to questions about overpopulation.

One of the options of how to slow down the population growth is through contraception, however in the areas with the highest number of children delivered by a woman, which is predominantly Sub-Saharan Africa, the National birth-control programmes are ineffective. The biggest problem lies in their organizers and the personnel

¹⁰³ “overpopulation.” Biology Dictionary. *Biology Dictionary*. biologydictionary.net/overpopulation/. Accessed 9 Jul. 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Pison, Gilles. “Is the Earth over-populated?” *The Conversation – Academic rigour, journalistic flair*. 30 Oct. 2017. <https://theconversation.com/is-the-earth-over-populated-86555>. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹⁰⁵ “Current World Population.” *Worldometers*. www.worldometers.info/world-population/?. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Pison, Gilles. “Is the Earth over-populated?” *The Conversation – Academic rigour, journalistic flair*. 30 Oct. 2017. <https://theconversation.com/is-the-earth-over-populated-86555>. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

responsible for the implementation, as “many are not convinced of the advantages of birth control, even at government level,” Pison writes.

However the problem does not lie only in the fertility of African women, but in the fertility in general. If the world was able to reach and maintain the fertility below the replacement fertility level, humanity would face, after reaching 10 billion, opposite problem – extinction. Replacement fertility level is an average number of children born per one woman, at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, which is now 2.1.¹⁰⁷ In Europe and China the fertility level is below two and in majority of the rest of the world it is around 2, so if people in those areas stopped the two-child family model, humanity would be extinct because of overpopulation. However it is impossible to answer the question of how to stop the growth, as nobody hopes for increased mortality rates.

The only ones who dare to publicly present an idea of how to control fertility level are authors of dystopian and (post)apocalyptic literature, and extremists. Even though the connection may seem to be at least strange, it is actually not surprising, as the options presented in literature are extreme at least.

One of the first publicly presented ideas of how to solve overpopulation, even though it was a satire, was *A Modest Proposal* (1729) by Jonathan Swift. The solution was extreme and the book was misunderstood by the public, but when we compare the idea of using abundant children to feed the population, it is not so far from the modern ideas of the 21st century, which are meant to be taken more seriously, as the picture of overpopulation is ubiquitous.

¹⁰⁷ Searchinger, Tim. Hanson, Craig. Waite, Richard. “Achieving Replacement Level Fertility.” *World Resources Institute*. Aug. 2013. www.wri.org/publication/achieving-replacement-level-fertility. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

3.2.3.1 Overpopulation in *Oryx and Crate*

The most visible example of dealing with overpopulation out of the selected books is in the cautionary novel *Oryx and Crate*. The society is divided into classes, which are separated into living areas according to their job, with “the cities” where the poorest people live in horrible conditions, often in slum-like buildings. From the fragments of information the reader gets from Sharon, Jimmy’s mother, the world is, for unknown reason, unable to sustain its population, and the food consists of soya beans in various forms and of various tastes, and meat from genetically modified animals, as normal, “natural” animals are all extinct. Only the richest are able to afford real food such as fruit or vegetables.

As mentioned before, the genius scientist Crake created a pill which protects its users from diseases, increases one’s libido, but also it causes sterility. Crake wants this pill to be heavily advertised, he even sends his associate to the poor areas to distribute it directly among people, and to offer it for free to brothel employees. All this in the name of his vision to solve humanity’s biggest problems – crime and wars emerging from hunger and jealousy. To achieve this he uses an inhumane and unethical form of population control - involuntary infertility, to lower population’s fertility level and so to fight the overpopulation which he fears, and blames it for causing the global problems.

Crate does not know how thorough and successful his fight against overpopulation will be, or maybe he does know but the realisation of what he has done makes him lose his mind. One day an outbreak of strange new plague starts to spread across the whole world, emerging in cities where the new sterilisation pill has been sold. The plague progresses quickly, and even though there are efforts to contain the virus and quarantine areas are established, the humanity is slowly dying out. Jimmy stays as the only human alive, isolated from the world in the research centre with the Crakers, physically safe, but mentally broken and eventually crazy.

The attempt to “clear” the planet was successful, only few people survived the pandemic, which definitely helped with the issue of overpopulation, however the logic behind the reasoning of the mad scientist Crake is debatable, and the ethics and morality of the process is more than controversial. But the ethics of various solutions to global

problems in our reality is being questioned every day, though morality is still on high level of the value scale.

3.2.4 Genetic engineering, Cloning

Over the last two hundred years researchers have been thinking of the idea of cloning, and over the last fifty years they have been conducting cloning experiments using wide variety of animals and various techniques. Cloning in biology is the process of producing genetically identical individuals, which means that clones have been occurring in nature since life was created on Earth, with identical twins. By those standards, the first cloned animal was created in 1885, when scientist Adolf Edward Driesch performed an experiment with four-celled embryo of a sea urchin, when he managed to shake apart the blastomere, which resulted in two sea urchins instead of one from the fertilised egg. This process has been improved and more thoroughly described by Hans Spemann, now called the father of cloning, on salamanders.¹⁰⁸ This breakthrough did not stop scientists from exploring the possibilities of cloning, however there were no major advances until 1952, when Philadelphia scientists managed to clone a frog by implanting a nucleus from a fertilized cell into an unfertilized one. This technique is now called a nuclear transplantation, and it has been used to this day.¹⁰⁹

Fascination by this discovery has led to the most groundbreaking instance of cloning, Dolly the Sheep, born in 1996 in the United Kingdom as the first ever mammal cloned from an adult somatic cell. This achievement influenced the society the most out of all cloning experiments. Not only literature has been influenced, but the whole thinking about clones, which resulted in many questions about morality, ethics, and value of human life, which have not yet been sufficiently answered, as many essays and university papers are still being produced on this topic. The ethical questions resulted into moral arguments about rights of the human embryo, which escalated this year in the United States of

¹⁰⁸ Brice, Makini. "A History of Cloning Before Dolly the Sheep." *Medical Daily*. 12 Jul. 2012. www.medicaldaily.com/history-cloning-dolly-sheep-241287. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Cohner, Sean. "Nuclear Transplantation." *The Embryo Project Encyclopedia*. 14 Jun. 2011. embryo.asu.edu/pages/nuclear-transplantation. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

America, where the anti-abortionist movements reached the government and a new legislation concerning abortions is being discussed.¹¹⁰ Even though the experiment was conducted on a “mere sheep”, the idea of human cloning was at hand, and now we can see that it is not impossible, which questions the moral boundaries of advances in science. Since Dolly the sheep various other experiments were successfully conducted, such as achievements of the year 2007: the cloning of a cat, which entered the American market under the name of “Viagen Pets” as an option to preserve cat’s genes to be cloned later and by that to “extend the unique happiness and companionship that a beloved cat brings”¹¹¹; or the creation of “enviropig”, genetically modified pigs which digest plant phosphorus more efficiently and so less phosphorus is being released into the environment.¹¹²

This type of cloning, where a whole new individual is created, is just one type of cloning, called reproductive cloning. The other types used today are gene cloning, which is the most common type of cloning and has close connection to genetically modified organisms used the most in agriculture, and therapeutic cloning, which focuses on production of stem cells for creating tissues to replace injured or diseased tissues.¹¹³ Gene cloning, a part of the process in genetic modification was widely recognised in 2002, when transgenic goats were created.¹¹⁴ Those goats have a part of spider genome in their DNA, which makes them produce artificial spider silk in their milk, which is much easier to gather and process than the traditional spider silk.

Even though the most well-known type of cloning is the reproductive one, there are many examples of experiments and common uses of therapeutic cloning, which do not alarm the public, most probably as its nature is not visibly connected to the general idea of cloning.

¹¹⁰ Bogen, Julie. “The New Abortion Wars.” *Vox.com*. 28 Mar. 2018. www.vox.com/2018/3/28/17173872/abortion-pro-life-anti-groups-today-explained-podcast. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹¹ “Cat Cloning Presents A Unique Opportunity.” Viagen Pets. viagenpets.com/cat-cloning/. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹² “What Is Enviropig?” *Canadian Biotechnology Action Network*. cban.ca/gmos/products/ge-animals/enviropig/what-is-enviropig/. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹³ “Cloning.” *National Human Genome Research Institute*. 21 Mar. 2017. www.genome.gov/25020028/cloning-fact-sheet/#al-3. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹⁴ Service, Robert F. “Mammalian Cells Spin a Spidery New Yarn.” *American Association for the Advancement of Science*. Vol. 295, n. 5554, pp. 419-421. 18 Jan. 2002. science.sciencemag.org/content/295/5554/419.2/tab-article-info. Accessed 08 Jul. 2018.

The first success in the area of stem cells, cells with unique regenerative and readjusting abilities, came in 1981, when ways to derive embryonic stem cells from mouse embryos were discovered, which led to the 1998 discovery of a method allowing deriving stem cells from human embryos and grow the cells in a laboratory, which were used for reproductive purposes through fertilization processes. And finally, in 2006 researchers identified the conditions that would allow some specialized adult cells to be genetically reprogrammed to act as stem cells.¹¹⁵

The stem cells research eventually led to the idea of repairing and creating whole new organs, both internal and external. However as the research of the stem cells after the 1998 discovery seemed to stagnate, another approach was adopted by a group of scientists, and that was to create completely synthetic artificial organs. This idea was not new, the first artificial organ transplants were attempted in the 1943 by using blood contained in commercial sausage-skin which allowed minerals to diffuse through it, which was used as a vital part of a kidney machine. The experiments were not particularly successful, as 14 out of 15 patients died, however this idea led to the development of a heart-lung machine in 1955, which substitutes the patient's breathing and blood-pumping during a cardiac surgery. Also ideas of how to make an artificial heart appeared in the 1950s, however those were regarded as taboo. However as a successful transplant of an air-driven pump, the first artificial heart, was performed on a dog, it became a respectable research area.¹¹⁶ Also private companies started to research technologies of artificial organs, and in 2001 a company AbioMed created "AbioCor", a total artificial heart based on a combination of biosensors, plastics and energy transfer; liver and pancreas soon followed.¹¹⁷

Eventually the two approaches to transplantation, the stem cells focused and the synthetic, merged together, and after years of research a variety of inventions were created,

¹¹⁵ "Stem Cells Basics I." *National Institutes of Health*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2016. stemcells.nih.gov/info/basics/1.htm. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹⁶ Richmond, Caroline. "Doctor Willem Kolff: Physician who invented artificial hearts and kidneys." *Independent*. 29 Apr. 2009. www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/doctor-willem-kolff-physician-who-invented-artificial-hearts-and-kidneys-1675714.html. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

¹¹⁷ "World's First AbioCor Implantable Replacement Heart Procedure Performed At Jewish Hospital By University Of Louisville Surgeons." *ScienceDaily*. 06 Jul. 2001. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2001/07/010706080839.htm. Accessed 09 Jul. 2018.

which are used today. The first groundbreaking invention was in 2006, when the first publication of experimental transplantation of bioengineered bladders appeared in *The Lancet*.¹¹⁸ Next huge advancements came in 2011, when the fully synthetic trachea was successfully transplanted¹¹⁹, and then 2013, when an ear-shaped scaffold was implanted into the back of a nude rat, using cow and sheep tissues,¹²⁰ which ensured the growth and strengthening of the artificial outer ear. During this experiment the use of human stem cells seemed plausible, and testing on humans was planned to be possible in five years, however until now the next phase of the research has not started, or at least nothing has been published about it. Since 2016 new biomaterials have been discussed, with the focus on the role of immune system in regeneration, as the scientists have been trying to create pro-regenerative scaffolds.¹²¹ So far the biggest achievement in the field of tissue engineering is the development of growth-accommodating implants designed for use in cardiac surgeries, which eliminates the need of children to undergo so many surgeries during their growth,¹²² announced in October 2017.

Concerning common transplantation methods, such as from a human donor to human recipients, the mayor issue is the scarcity of organs for the donation. Scientists have been trying to solve this issue by looking for donors elsewhere. They were inspired by the use of pig skin grafts for temporal coverage of large wounds, a method which has been improved in 2014 by genetically modifying pigs to lack a molecule, which is responsible for the rejection of the pig tissue by the human body.¹²³ As this method has been found functional, another step towards the use of genetically modified pigs for animal – to –

¹¹⁸ Atala, Anthony. "Tissue-engineered autologous bladders for patients needing cystoplasty." *The Lancet*. Vol. 367. No. 9518. P. 1241 – 1246. 15 Apr. 2006. [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(06\)68438-9/fulltext?code=lancet-site#](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(06)68438-9/fulltext?code=lancet-site#). Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹¹⁹ Vezina, Kenrick. "First Fully Synthetic Organ Transplant Saves Cancer Patient." *MIT Technology Review*. 08 Jul. 2011. www.technologyreview.com/s/424621/first-fully-synthetic-organ-transplant-saves-cancer-patient/. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹²⁰ Ghose, Tia. "Artificial Ear Grown on Rat's Back". *Live Science*. 31 Jul. 2013. www.livescience.com/38577-artificial-ear-created.html. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹²¹ Sadtler, Kaitly. "Design, clinical translation and immunological response of biomaterials in regenerative medicine." *Nature Reviews Materials*. 07 June 2016. www.nature.com/articles/natrevmats201640. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹²² Feins, Eric N. et al., "A growth-accomodating implant for paediatric applications." *Nature Biometrical Engineering*. 10 October. 2017. www.nature.com/articles/s41551-017-0142-5. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹²³ Morrison, Mike. Skin grafts from genetically modified pigs may offer alternative for treatment of serious burns. *Massachusetts General Hospital*. 27 May. 2014. www.massgeneral.org/News/pressrelease.aspx?id=1709. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

human transplantation were taken, as pig anatomy is really similar to human anatomy. In 2017 viruses, called PERV, were removed from pigs' DNA, which was the biggest technical obstacle for the transplantation of pigs' organs into a human recipient. A professor of genetics at the University of Kent says: "By comprehensively demonstrating that PERV is the problem that we suspected that it may be, then providing a solution, the authors present a very elegant study. However, there are so many variables including ethical issues to resolve before xenotransplantation can take place."¹²⁴ Those ethical issues are not only concerns about the sole fact that an animal organ would be placed into a human, but also about the safety of such procedure.

3.2.4.1 Genetic engineering and Cloning in *Oryx and Crake*

Genetic modifications, cloning, and transhumanistic tendencies are the major themes of the dystopian technocracy of *Oryx and Crake*. They are intertwined into the plotline so skilfully that the reader at first does not realise that the level of science and technology is much more advanced than ours. That is until the moment when the pigoon project is presented to the reader.

Pigoons are a genetically modified species, resulting from the processes of cell cloning and edition and redesign of pig's DNA. They are huge pigs with human organs and brain tissue, created to produce several individual organs so the animal could be harvested more than just once. All the organs, including brain, are individualized for each recipient, by using the person's stem cells. Those are implanted into the animal, so everything that grows inside the pigoon is that particular human's tissue, which eliminates the moral concerns of inserting pig's organ into a human, as the organs are essentially human. Because of that the price of the organs is really high, as so the organs are perceived as luxury, which no one from the communities questions.

¹²⁴ Griffin, Andrew. "Pig organs could soon be transplanted into humans after major xenotransplantation breakthrough." *Independent*. 10 August. 2017. www.independent.co.uk/news/science/pig-human-transplant-organs-xenotransplantation-crispr-cas9-pervs-porcine-retrovirus-a7887071.html. Accessed 10. Jul. 2018.

Growing human organs is just one of the reasons for creating genetically modified pigs. A reader soon learns that the world is strongly affected by the consequences of global warming; floods and droughts, famine and disease are everyday problems outside the compounds. Farms have been destroyed in devastating drought years ago¹²⁵, and eventually growing food has started to be too difficult and ineffective. So not only for organs, but also for meat pigoons have been created. It is said that the source of meat in the compounds are steaks artificially grown in laboratories, however there is a common joke among the citizens that the meat is not actually pork, but human, as the meat comes from harvested pigoons – a fact used as a joke, but nobody ever laughs. The idea of eating human meat, even though it was created by changes in the DNA of different species, is one of the few things people in this society still think about critically, and question the morality of it.

Generally the food grown and created by the corporations is synthetic, full of plastic, soy and other various substitutes, manufactured in laboratories. Every food grown in laboratories or corporal greenhouses is genetically modified, and some of it causes sickness and various illnesses. “Real food” is a scarce, really expensive commodity.

Not only global warming is the huge problem that is addressed by the governing parties, but also the outcomes of various genetic experiments. Feral cats, whose population grew rapidly, killed most of the song-bird population, so Bobkittens were bred and introduced to eliminate the feral cats. Bobkitten is a smaller, less aggressive bobcat, as it was crossed with a kitten. However they became out of control, and started to attack small dogs and children. To control bobkittens, and to secure corporate premises, wolvogs were created; deceptively tame dogs which are particularly vicious, and in the post apocalyptic setting of the end of the narrative they are a constant threat. Other genetically modified animals are rakunks, cross species of a raccoon and a skunk, and snats, a combination of snakes and rats.

Cloning and genetic modification on the scale as achieved by Crake depicts the relentless pursuit of scientific and technical advance, which pushes ethical and humanistic concerns aside. “The Crakers” are genetically engineered humans, who are similar to us,

¹²⁵ Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. Toronto. Doubleday. 2003. *Ivy Mind Academy*. docs.ivymindacademy.com/EBooks/oryx_crake.pdf. p. 15.

but are made to be better. They are more beautiful, immune to diseases and UV damage, and really curious. Their constitution is much better, as they are stronger, they survive easily in harsh environment, and they a digestive system similar to that of a rabbit, so they can sustain themselves by consuming simple vegetation, such as grass or leaves, so food is not scarce for them. Romantic love has been bred out of them, so jealousy or sexual frustration is completely absent. Crake also tried to breed religion, history and art out of them, but it appears to be unsuccessful. Crackers were meant to be always happy and satisfied; however the creator could not stop them from aging and so to protect them from the confusion, sadness and pain of getting old. He eventually decided that to avoid any effects of aging, they will be programmed to die at the age of thirty.

Crakers were originally created as examples of all possible genetic modifications that could be sold separately to parents who wanted more perfect children. However they were soon perceived by the creator as a solution to the imperfect humanity, and decided to eradicate humanity as it was known, and replace it by the Crakers.

The influences of science on the novel are confirmed by Margaret Atwood herself, from her own comments on the science and technology in her book. In an interview for Science Friday she says, that: “[t]he things in the book that people may think are very weird – and they may think that I just made them up – some of them already existed when I was writing the book.”¹²⁶ The book was published in 2003 when some of the most innovative inventions were yet to be discovered, however the concepts and ideas in each particular branch of science has been with the scientists since the first signs of something being possible. She mentions that one of the biggest inspirations and influences was the creation of spider goats, and glowing rabbits,¹²⁷ which are inventions of the very beginning of the 21st century.

¹²⁶ “Margaret Atwood on the Science Behind ‘Oryx and Crake’.” *Science Friday*. Apr. 2004. www.sciencefriday.com/segments/margaret-atwood-on-the-science-behind-oryx-and-crake/. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

¹²⁷ “Margaret Atwood on the Science Behind ‘Oryx and Crake’.” *Science Friday*. Apr. 2004. www.sciencefriday.com/segments/margaret-atwood-on-the-science-behind-oryx-and-crake/. Accessed 10 Jul. 2018.

3.2.4.2 Genetic engineering and Cloning in *Never Let Me Go*

Cloning in *Never Let Me Go* is one of the most essential parts of the book, but the science behind it is not the primary concern. However many questions about the ethics of human cloning have been raised.

Never Let Me Go works with cloning in a unique way, as in this book two types were merged – reproductive and therapeutic. The clones created are living, thinking individuals, copies of their originals, however their use is therapeutic, as parts of them, vital organs, are harvested in order to cure the original person. Technically speaking, tissues created by reproductive cloning of cells are used to replace damaged tissues. The reader then needs to ask, where is it possible to draw the line and differentiate between the fact that a medicine was created, and the fact that a human being was created.

At the end of the book the main characters Kathy and Tommy meet Madame who used to periodically visit Hailsham to take students' best art and take it to "the Gallery", and Miss Emily, the head guardian and the leader of Hailsham. It is revealed that they are one of the activists for progressive, humane treatment of clones, and that the art Madame had been collecting was used as a proof that the clones have souls just as the original people. Miss Emily explains that there are many places, schools and holding centres, where clones are raised, but in the majority the clones are held in deplorable conditions.¹²⁸ Miss Emily tries to explain the whole situation:

As you say, why would anyone doubt you had a soul? ... It wasn't something commonly held when we first set out all those years ago. And though we've come a long way since then, it's still not a notion universally held, even today... Together we became small but very vocal movement, and challenged the entire way the donations programme was being run... Before that, all clones – or *students*, as we preferred to call you – existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that's largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes... (Ishiguro)

¹²⁸ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005. p 255.

The novel *Never Let Me Go* is set in the late 1990s most probably in the United Kingdom, however it is actually not mentioned in the book. But even though the Second World War took place in the book's history, the rest is an alternative to our, real history. From the hints we get from the book the country is led by authoritative government. The clones are allowed no freedom of choice, no deviance from expectations, and no individuality – except in the few exceptions – schools such as Hailsham. In our reality, reproductive cloning was successfully performed for the first time in 1996 with the forming of the sheep Dolly, but in the reality of the novel cloning became a traditional medical practise in the late 1950s. Generally it may be presumed that the technology of the 1990s in the book is on much higher level compared to today's in reality, since even today, in 2018, reproductive cloning is not a practise done on everyday basis – the greatest achievement so far has been the first successful cloning of a primate species, macaque monkey, by nuclear transfer (birth of two clones), conducted in China.¹²⁹

It is fairly easy to imagine that the media in the world of *Never Let Me Go* present the possibility to donate your own organs for a transplant, if needed, as the most revolutionary, safe and convenient treatment, understandably without the additional information about the processes behind it. As mentioned by the character Miss Emily in the book, “And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in some kind of vacuum.”¹³⁰ It is possible that at the beginning the people of the society did not even know that the organs suitable for their transplantation were actually theirs; maybe they were just guaranteed a healthy organ which their body will accept, or maybe nobody was asking any questions and the patients waiting for matching donor just thought they were lucky. However, as mentioned in the book, as soon as people started to ask about the morality of the practise, there was no going back. Miss Emily comments on the development of the opinions about clones:

However uncomfortable people were about [clone's] existence, their overwhelming concern was about their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time they

¹²⁹ Liu, Zhen. Et al. *Cloning of Macaque Monkeys by Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer*. Cell. 20 Jan. 2018. [www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674\(18\)30057-6](http://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674(18)30057-6). Accessed 21 Jan. 2018.

¹³⁰ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005. p 257.

were kept in the shadows and people did their best not to think about [clones]. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you [clones] weren't really like us. (Ishiguro, 258)

At the beginning of the cloning practice, information about clones were most probably primed to present just the positives of the medical procedure and the fact that another human being, though a clone, was continually being killed in inhumane conditions were ignored, comparing the clones to coughing pills. Since cloning was invented after a war, it is probable that the understanding of life, morals and values changed and shifted, and so citizens thought that their life is the most valuable, and that the value of other lives is non-existent or unimportant. The moral issue was then reduced by claiming that clones are actually not people, and to take advantage of them is on about the same level of moral concern as of breeding animals.

The characters such as Madame and Miss Emily were trying to change the public opinion by de-priming the information about clones, to present them as humans with souls, dreams, emotions and relationships. A group of people understood and accepted this and started to support the idea that the clones should be raised and educated, so they experience a living standard, not a torture, and their existence actually can make sense to them. Even though those supporters were of high social status the group was just a minority unable to change the dominant opinion. The movement for the humane treatment of clones was struck hard by the "Morningdale Scandal"¹³¹, an attempt of a single doctor to create clones of superior intelligence, but when the information leaked the public became distressed and uncomfortable with the idea that clones might be somehow superhuman, due to which Hailsham and other schools for clones lost their funding and were forced to close.

Even though Kazuo Ishiguro does not focus on the technical side of cloning in *Never Let Me Go*, he raises questions about how human clones should be perceived, whether as a medicament which just happens to have consciousness, or as a human being whose creation denies them the ability and law to decide their future, and their life is just lent from the creators or their originals. Another question is whether clones even should have the chance to experience life, other than a mere survival in a laboratory cage.

¹³¹ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005. pp 258-259.

However the most fundamental question is whether human clones should be created in the first place, which is tightly connected to more general question, and that is what are the costs of scientific advancement, and what is the price the humanity is willing to pay.

3.3 Apocalyptic ideas

Since the emergence of religious behaviour and later since the establishment of the first religions and religious institutions, people have been imagining a world's end. The ends vary, from the Last Judgment in Christian eschatology, thought Harihara dissolving and regenerating the universe in Hindu eschatology, to Ragnarök in Norse mythology, and alien invasion or zombie apocalypse in the pop culture of the 21st century. No matter how the world is seen to end, the idea of an apocalypse belongs to the human culture just as tightly as the ideas of what is going to happen after one's death.

An apocalypse, from Ancient Greek “apokálypsis” meaning “an uncovering” or “revelation”¹³², has a heavy religious connotation as it is commonly seen in the prophetic revelations of eschatology. However the term is not used only in the religious context, and today's understanding is more of a widespread destruction or disaster, which affects the whole humanity, ruins the civilization, and changes the world as we know it. In the culture of the 20th and the 21st century the ways of how humanity could end have been imagined in similar manner, however changes in each particular motifs are visible throughout generations, for example as Devon Maloney explains in his article “Want To Understand a Generation? Look No Further Than Its Zombie Movies”, the social anxieties of each generation are reflected in the imagining and depiction of zombies, because they function as metaphors of the society and its fears and problems.¹³³ Even though the motifs of the humanity's destruction have not really changed, the fears and anxieties behind them have.

¹³² “apocalypse.” English Oxford Living Dictionaries. *Oxford*.
en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/apocalypse. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

¹³³ Maloney, Devon. “Want To Understand a Generation? Look No Further Than Its Zombie Movies.” *Wired Culture*. 28 Jun. 2013. www.wired.com/2013/06/world-war-z-zombie-messages/. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

This final chapter is focused on the visions of apocalypse in the literature of the 21st century, and their influences and reasons behind them.

3.3.1 War, Terrorism

By some scholars war is seen as a universal and ancestral aspect of human nature, such as by Daniel Šmihula, who in his book *The Use of Force in International Relations* (2013; in Slovak original *Použitie silových prostriedkov v medzinárodných vzťahoch*) elaborates on an idea that violence is integral to the nature of humans as a biological species, as they tend to exercise collective violence, which is often glorified by culture.¹³⁴

War, especially global war has feared the societies since the end of WWII. As the Cold War was ongoing, the fear shifted from a fear of global conflict to a fear of nuclear war. This anxiety was reflected in culture, lifestyle and politics. As soon as the Cold War ended, another war appeared – the Gulf War, a conflict originally between Iraq and Kuwait, which grew into huge size and length. Against Iraq stood a coalition of forces from 35 nations led by the United States of America. After the war, which officially ended in 1991, one year after its beginning, a number of smaller conflicts followed in the area. However the biggest conflict, which is still ongoing today, is the War on Terror, also known as the Global War on Terrorism.¹³⁵ It is an international military campaign launched by the United States of America after the September 11 attacks in the USA in 2001. War on Terror is not a traditional conflict where two or more states fight against each other, but the enemy is “a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them,”¹³⁶ as said by the former US president George Bush jr. Originally the term

¹³⁴ Šmihula, David. *The Use of Force in International Relations*. Translated by John Minahane. Bratislava: Veda, 2013. pp. 31-34.

¹³⁵ Schmitt, Eric. and Thom Shanker. “U.S. Officials Retool Slogan for Terror War.” *New York Times*. 26 July. 2005. www.nytimes.com/2005/07/26/politics/us-officials-retool-slogan-for-terror-war.html. Accessed 02 Jul. 2018.

¹³⁶ “Text: President Bush Addresses the Nation.” *The Washington Post*. 20 Sept. 2001. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

was used with focus on countries associated with Al-Qaeda. The War on Terror continuously changed into a different conflict, called Operation Inherent Resolve¹³⁷.

The events of the September 11, 2001 changed the approach to the foreign and security policy not only if the USA, but of the world. The security procedures during travelling have been enhanced and made much more sophisticated, the surveillance has been upgraded and extended, and general paranoia has spread. As the number of terrorist attacks has been increased after the World Trade Center tragedy, many people were paralyzed by the idea of being killed by a completely random instance of violence.

The topics of war and terrorism have been explored in many literary works, as well as movies, TV series and other media; in some it is a key topic whereas in others it is just a background for the plot. In the majority of the dystopian books read and studied by the author of the thesis, those topics are on the background of the story, often mentioned just a few times, as the societies are detached from the war zones and from the information about the progress of the war, which is actually the same as in the case of vast majority of the world's population. The ongoing wars do not directly influence anyone except the residents of the war zones, such as Syria, Afghanistan, or the Ukraine. The media convey information about the areas, updates about the conflict, however because the wars take place in distant countries, people living in peace do not feel to need or obligation to focus on it more.

3.3.1.1 War, Terrorism in the selected works

In the works selected for this thesis the topics of war and terrorism are marginal issues, however the author believes that the influence of the recent and current military conflicts is visible.

¹³⁷ "Iraq and Syria Operations Against ISIL Designated as Operation Inherent Resolve." *U.S. Central Command News Release*. 15 Oct. 2014. www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/News-Article-View/Article/884877/iraq-and-syria-operations-against-isil-designated-as-operation-inherent-resolve/. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

In *Oryx and Crake* we can see the references to ongoing war the most out of all the works selected for this thesis. It is not mentioned whom the war is against or what is the reason for it, the only known specific is that one of the fronts is in a mountain range. On the TV people can watch shots and scenes from battlefields, which usually show dead mercenaries. However from the context we may understand that the war is between the corporal government and the anti-Compound movements.

Throughout the book the characters mention many terrorist attacks, one of them being a suicide car-bomber, usually done by the members of the anti-Compound group God's Gardeners. Because of the violence the security measures are strict; to go to a different compound is impossible, only with an allowance provided in special cases such as a doctor visit. Every time a person goes to a different compound or from the city, he or she is searched thoroughly, scanned and often also questioned about the visit, which are the exact same procedures as in airports or sport arenas after the September 11.

Another marginal war takes place in *Matched*, where it is not discussed, however during viewings people are often made to watch TV broadcasts from the Outer Provinces, where the war rages. Again the reader does not know the enemy or the reason for the war, only the fact that it has been on for a very long time.

The Bone Season includes three types of warfare. The first a reader encounters is a war which resembles the War on Terror, as all the clairvoyants are labelled and treated as terrorists. They are being hunted and immediately killed or imprisoned for life, which is the same as the US treats terrorists - no negotiations. The second war which appears in the book is between the Sheol government and the rebels who live outside the Sheol domain. At this point the war is mostly in the media using TV broadcasts, however in the past uprisings which were violently suppressed were common.

The third war is behind the reach of both Scion and the rebels, and that is the secretly ran warfare of the Rephaim against the Emim. This war is the origin of the whole change in the society in Europe; as the human government made a contract with the Rephaim, who agreed to protect the citizens from the flash-eating aliens, but in exchange the government would provide the voyants.

Wars and acts of terrorism in those books are constantly present, but they are usually not the focus of interest of the characters, however the anxiety is always present even though it is scarcely truly addressed.

3.3.2 Natural disasters, Diseases

With the climate changes which are visible throughout the last century, the questions about their causes are raised. The current warming trend is particularly significant, as it is extremely likely that it is the result of human activity since the mid-20th century, and proceeding at a rate that is unprecedented. The data collected by scientists about our planet and its climate reveal that our climate is changing due to the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, which causes global warming, which by itself would not be a problem. Throughout the history of our planet its climate has changed several times during sever cycles of glacial advance and retreat, as known from ice cores drawn from Greenland and Antarctica, from tree rings, or ocean sediments. However from the same sources it is also known that current warming is occurring approximately ten times faster than it was in the past.¹³⁸

Frequency and strength of tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters makes many people wonder, whether those are caused by the climate change.¹³⁹ Though this theory has not yet been proven, people often adapted it and draw conclusions that our civilisation is doomed that that our demise will be our planet. And so in pop culture various natural disasters eradicating the humanity are depicted. Giant tsunamis, earthquakes, erupting super volcanoes, sudden ice age or the opposite, droughts, and cyclones are just a fragment of all the things imagined.

However, natural disasters are not the only forms in which apocalypse is often expected to come, but also diseases and plaques are presented to be able to kill the whole

¹³⁸ "How is Today's Warming Different from the Past?" *Nasa: Earth Observatory*. 03 Jun. 2010. earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/GlobalWarming/page3.php. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

¹³⁹ Mohsenin, Ava. "Are We Seeing An Unusual Number of Natural Disasters in 2017?" *Forbes*. 03 Oct. 2017. www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2017/10/03/are-we-seeing-an-unusual-number-of-natural-disasters-in-2017/#250b22e0227e. Accessed 11 Jul. 2018.

humanity, no matter how advanced the medicine is. Outbreaks of various contagious diseases inspired this idea, such as various flu pandemics during the 20th century, huge SARS outbreak in Asia in 2002, avian influenza which broke out in 2007 and 2015, 2009 flu pandemic caused by mutated influenza virus H1N1, nicknamed “swine flu”¹⁴⁰, or Ebola and Zika virus epidemics in 2013 and 2016.

3.3.2.1 Natural disasters, Diseases in the selected works

As already commented on, in *Oryx and Crake* one of the biggest topics is the pill containing a virus of an artificially created plague, which eventually eradicated the population. Also the effects and consequences of global warming, which led to inability to grow natural food, were discussed, however because of its significance in the book it is important to point out that the influences on those were direct, as the issue of climate change has started to be discussed at the beginning of the century.

The impact of flu pandemics, which took place all around the world during the 20th century, drew the attention to the fact that a disease as common as a flu can mutate and fairly easily adapt to be immune to various treatments and vaccines, and so even though the medical advances allowed to treat variety of much more serious and complicated diseases, it was not enough in the case of mutated viruses; which was reflected in the book, where even though the medical science is incomparably more advanced than in our reality, it was not enough to contain and treat the mutated disease.

In *The Hunger Games* there are not many references towards the time before the society of Panem was established. However there are a few remarks about the effects of global changes – such as that before there were many hurricanes and floods with catastrophic aftermaths, and that landscape was changed by rising sea level, which made the American continent smaller. It is unknown, however, what caused the changes, or whether those caused the destruction of the previous civilization.

¹⁴⁰ Hellerman, Caleb. “Swine Flu ‘Not Stoppable,’ World Health Organization Says.” *CNN*. 07 Mar. 2010. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/06/11/swine.flu.who/>. Accessed 12 Jul. 2018.

Conclusion

Dystopian literature has been really popular among both writers and readers, especially since the 1930s when the first globally known dystopian novel *Brave New World* was published. However, even though the reputation of dystopia has been rising, it is still difficult to sufficiently define the term as well as the literary genre, since its existence is built on the term “utopia”, which was found to be also complicated to define. From the point of view of etymology utopia means “not in your life”, or more commonly accepted “no place”, but its connotation is “good place”.

Throughout the history dystopia has adopted many names, such as *cacotopia*, *cacao-topia*, *dustopia*, *anti-utopia*, and finally *dystopia*, however the meaning and understanding of those terms have been changing with the terminology. Today’s understanding, as provided by the author, is that dystopia portrays a social establishment which is considered by the readers far worse than their own reality. The genre of dystopia is believed to fall under the genre of speculative fiction, as suggested by Margaret Atwood.

Some of the most influential literary works of the 20th century, which helped to shape and define the genre, are *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, probably the most famous dystopian work *1984* by George Orwell, Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, and nowadays really popular *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood, however this list could be expanded by many other works, not only literary ones. The pop culture of the second half of the 20th century reflected the social and other issues just as literature did, for example in movies, TV series, comic books or later in video games, as the major influences run through all media. Those influences, to name the major ones, were the world wars, totalitarian regimes and unconventional political arrangements, consumerism, mass production, and popular culture.

The influences on the 21st century dystopia discussed in this thesis and illustrated on the selected works are divided into aspects of social control, science and technology, and apocalyptic ideas. Social control is focused on in the terms of mass media and its

power to shape and change one's opinions and its possibility to be used as a means of distribution of propaganda; censorship coming from totalitarian governments and its direct connection to violation of freedom of speech; conformity and the processes of forcing it upon a population, and the possibilities and development of one's identity in such extreme conditions. Also the issue of mental health is covered within this topic.

Other major influences come from the scientific and technological advancements and inventions of the end of the 20th century and of the beginning of the 21st century, as the major scientific breakthroughs follow the researches originating in the previous millennium. Inventions and successful experiments described are tablets and touchscreens, even though in the dystopias of the 21st century the excitement about this technology has already decreased; medicine and its direct effects on lower mortality rate and eventual overpopulation. Genetic engineering and cloning are other major influences on the society and literature in general, as those subjects motivate the society not only to ask questions about the scientific subject-matter, but also to open the discussion about the ethical and moral aspects of the procedures, and what are the costs humanity is willing to pay for scientific advancement.

The final influences discussed in this thesis are apocalyptic ideas. This topic is on the border of two different genres, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction, and so many other visions and ideas of possible Apocalypse are to be found in novels of those genres, though some of them are visible in dystopias. Those found in the selected works are, however, the most common ones. They reflect the fears and anxieties of the society, which are the subconscious concerns about the possibility of another global war, or a local conflict which would influence one's life directly. Also terrorist attacks, which cannot be predicted, concern the societies to such extent that paranoia is being developed. Not only violence, however, terrifies people. Natural disasters are a current topic, especially in the connection to the issue of climate change and global warming. This particular theme has been explored since the first religions were established. Last topic of the thesis is the influence of various diseases. Even though humanity managed to find cure on vast majority of diseases and also to eradicate some dangerous ones, scientists need to work on developing cure for completely new types of viruses and bacteria, as those gained the

ability to mutate to be able to be immune to all kinds of treatments, which makes it easy to imagine that humanity could be eradicated by some of those mutated viruses.

It was impossible to cover all the topics and events influencing dystopian literature, but the author finds it important to at least mention them. Directly connected to the topic of diseases are ideas of highly contagious, air-borne illnesses causing aggression, or other viruses manifesting themselves as a zombie plague. The idea of zombie apocalypse is widely spread throughout the whole world, and each generation reflects its concerns into the figure of a specific kind of zombie. Another entity appearing in various media in the context of an end of the world is an extraterrestrial form of life. Aliens are usually perceived as bringers of demise to humankind.

To comment on some more influences of the more realistic nature, it is important to mention social media. Rising popularity and the number of users increases the awareness of possible dangers it can entail. Fake identities and cyber bullying are the most common. However this technology has its positives, such as giving a person another way how to make new acquaintances, and share one's opinions and experiences. Also dating sites and applications influence literature, the influence is visible for example in one of the selected books *Matched*, where the Society functions as an ultimate dating application.

There are events which influenced the development of literature as a whole, however the author has not found specific examples of the effects in dystopian literature. Those are the attacks of September 11, 2001, the devastating earthquake and tsunami which hit Thailand in 2004, and the development of artificial intelligence and androids, where the major breakthrough was in 2011, when the supercomputer named Watson won a game of Jeopardy against human greatest champions.

From the analysis of the influences presented in the thesis it is clear that some of the influences have not changed from the ones of the 20th century, but the understanding of some has shifted over time. Our society is still influenced by the horrors of the wars, fears of being controlled by the governments or corporations, and by our imagination reflecting science of the time, just the background of the themes is changing.

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