

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Department of English and American Studies

Government Systems in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*

Marek Karlovský

Bachelor Thesis

2023

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2021/2022

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Marek Karlovský**
Osobní číslo: **H20269**
Studijní program: **B0231A090018 Anglický jazyk**
Specializace: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**
Téma práce: **Government systems in The Handmaid's Tale and The Hunger Games**
Téma práce anglicky: **Government systems in The Handmaid's Tale and The Hunger Games**
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Zásady pro vypracování

Bakalářská práce zaměří na dystopické prvky, především pak fungování vlád, v románech Příběh služebnice autorky Margaret Atwood a The Hunger Games autorky Suzanne Collins. V teoretické části student nadefinuje žánr dystopie (vč. kontextu literatury pro mládež) a s ním spojené prvky, které bude používat v praktické části. Student také zmíní okolnosti popularizace tohoto žánru. Student také poukáže na historické či nedávné události, které jsou terčem kritiky ve vybraných románech (např. vládní systémy 20. a 21. století, třídní problémy atd.). V praktické části pak bude autor sledovat výše zmíněné dystopické prvky (především se zaměří na fungování vlád) a porovnávat je v románech ženských autorek. Svě závěry bude autor konfrontovat s vhodnou sekundární literaturou, také je bude ilustrovat vhodnými úryvky z primárních textů.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Rozsah grafických prací:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Arwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's tale*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1985.

Bacci, Francesco. "The Originality of THE HANDMAID'S TALE and THE CHILDREN OF MEN: Religion, Justice, and Feminism in Dystopian Fiction." *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 3, no. 2 (March 2017): 154-172.

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Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Petra Kohlová

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

2. dubna 2022

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

30. března 2023

doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D. v.r.
děkan

Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D. v.r.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2022

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Marek Karlovský

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to my supervisor, Mgr. Petra Kohlová, for all her help, support and insightful advice.

Also, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support during my studies.

Annotation

This thesis deals with the government systems that are portrayed in the dystopian novels *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*. The first part discusses the difference between utopia and dystopia and, afterwards, focuses on common features of the dystopia genre. Also, the first part offers a historical overview of feminism and the development of the position of women in literature. The second part analyses the selected novels and explores the aspects of government systems depicted in the selected books.

Keywords

Dystopia, government, totalitarianism, feminism, oppression, society, fear

Název

The Government Systems in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*

Anotoce

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vládními systémy, kterou jsou popsány v dystopických románech *The Handmaid's Tale* a *The Hunger Games*. První část pojednává o rozdílu mezi utopií a dystopií a poté se zaměřuje na společné znaky dystopického žánru. První část také nastiňuje historický vývoj feminismu a pozici ženy v literatuře. Druhá část analyzuje vybrané romány a zkoumá aspekty vládního systému popsaného v knihách.

Klíčová slova

Dystopie, vláda, totalita, feminismus, útlak, společnost, strach

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Introduction

Well-known dystopian novels were primarily written by male authors who dominated the genre in the twentieth century. Such stories often focus on oppressed societies, wars or world crises. During the development of dystopia, many female authors set their novels in the same framework as their male counterparts. The differentiation between their books is that women have a more significant impact and a stronger position than other characters. Some of the most famous novels written by female writers are *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*. Even though the books are written in different periods, the position of the women struggling against an oppressive government within the story is solid and independent. Dystopian governments wielding a controlling leadership significant enough to negatively affect society is the common critical feature that distinguishes dystopia from other genres. The primary purpose of this thesis is to elaborate and analyse the government system in the already named novels. The last chapter will focus on defining the type of leadership. As the story of *The Hunger Games* is complex, during the analysis there will be several quotes from the other two books from the trilogy, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*.

The first chapter aims to examine dystopia as a genre. It starts with the definition of utopia and how utopia differs from dystopia. In order to describe dystopia in detail, historical backgrounds are provided. Two primary turns toward dystopia were described before famous novels such as George Orwell's *1984* were published. The chapter will also describe young adult literature as the *The Hunger Games* novel was written with the intention to entertain children. The chapter will finish by elaborating the main features of dystopia and provide quotes from both named books to support the definition of dystopia.

The second chapter will analyse the position of women in the literature. Initially, this part will focus on the development of feminism to understand women's role within novels. Feminism had significant impact on the portrayal of women in literature. Women were depicted as passive characters at the end of the nineteenth century. Thanks to feminism, the position of female characters has changed and evolved. Women were described as active, strong and independent during the twentieth century. The explanation of historical background is crucial for better understanding women in the novels *The Handmaid's Tale* and

The Hunger Games, where the female protagonist struggles with a patriarchal society as it was during the progression of feminism in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

The last chapter will analyse the type of government system within the books. Initially, it will define a totalitarian regime and its depiction in the books. Evidence will be provided to support the claim entirely. The totalitarian regimes in both novels will be further analysed and, based on the examined story, the type of leadership within each fictional state will be explored. The oppressive governments have an enormous impact on society, which will finally be analysed according to the individual states' agenda using quotes from the books. The main reason for this thesis is to explain and more closely define the government oppression within in the books. The *Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games* are considered well-known dystopian fiction, and their structure and complex story lines have influenced many other authors. In the theoretical part of the report we precisely define the types of totalitarian government at their core in depth.

1 Dystopia as a Literary Genre

Literature has been developing over centuries. Many influences have impacted the progression of writing, for example, wars, immigration, or perhaps political regimes. In 1516, Thomas More published a book that in the future defined a new genre called Utopia. As Gordin, Tilley, and Prakash note, the word is coined and derived from Greek, which means nowhere or no place.¹ According to Caudle, the author of Utopia, Sir Thomas More describes a society living on an island in a state of balance and harmony within an utterly perfect system. *Utopia* was written to suggest what the community and government should look like and how the citizens should behave.² Thomas More portrayed Utopia as follows:

There is no reason to deny any person since there is plenty of everything among them. There is no danger of man's asking for more than he needs [...] there is in man a pride that makes him fancy it a particular glory to excel others in pomp and excess; but by the law of the Utopians, there is no room for this.³

Logan stated that based on his perception of utopia in his book, this isolated island has no crime and no violence, and all citizens live in harmony next to each other. The society does not seek disturbance. Instead, they are searching for a balance of prosperity on the island. The book describes various segments, such as religion, government, and economics, focusing on how different the United Kingdom should have been.⁴ As Claeys mentioned in the book *A Natural History*, utopia can be seen as something ambiguous. Even though a utopia may seem perfect, it can frustrate some readers. Factors such as having no privacy, living a routine life, and sharing the same values as your neighbours can be seen as drawbacks. In fictional literature, many divisions and systems often would not necessarily succeed in real life, such as the utopistic legal system – fear of punishment.⁵ In fact, it said that dystopia evolved from utopia. Still, almost every single dystopia begins as a utopistic concept, for example, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, or *Divergent* by Veronica Roth. All these stories are based on initially planned utopistic ideology. Therefore, the utopia was summarised, from now on, there will be

¹ Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash, *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1.

² Mildred Witt Claudle, "Sir Thomas More's 'Utopia': Origins and Purposes," in *Social Science* 45, no. 3 (June 1970), 163-164.

³ Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), 84.

⁴ Thomas More, *Utopia* 3, edited by George M. Logan, translated by Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 24-26.

⁵ Gregory Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 6-8.

only focus on dystopia as a literary genre. The focus of this thesis is to elaborate on dystopian literature as a genre and then compare the two government systems used in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*.

According to Claeys, the word dystopia refers to unhappy, desperate images. The name was delivered from Greek. It was a compound of two words, dus- and -topos. These words connote negative meaning and describe diseases in bad, faulty, or unfavourable places.⁶ Parrinder pointed out that the word *dystopia* was first used in 1868 by John Stuart Mill during a parliamentary debate.⁷ Even though the term *dystopia* was first used in 1868, this type of literature was produced even before. As Claeys stated, the French Revolution, which began in the late eighteenth century, was the starting point of the first turn towards the dystopia genre. The progression of the second turn lasted until the last decade of the nineteenth century. During the Enlightenment, people tended to think about a nation that would be led by rationality and evolved principles. The works were not purely dystopian as we know the contemporary apocalyptic dystopia, but they focused on satirical utopia, mainly on society and how it can be improved.⁸ Parrinder and Claeys agreed that one of the first dystopian novels was written in 1726. Fitzgerald noted that the publication of this novel later contributed to shaping the entire dystopia as a literary genre. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travel* only focuses on society's behaviour, hierarchical structure, and repulsions. The protagonist is experiencing completely different cultures from his own and exploring their flaws.⁹ As Claeys stated, the first turn ended with the publishing of Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818. The work gives critical features for future science fiction and current dystopia. Claeys said there was a second turn towards dystopia at the end of the nineteenth century. People tend to focus primarily on socialism, which has affected many works. The utopistic narratives with satirical dystopia focus on social issues and individual improvement. As Claeys said, "In some utopias, black peoples have been entirely eliminated [...] but for non-whites [,] this would be a dystopia." Some of the negative features of temporary works were portrayed positively by most authors. The fear and the doubts of the future world influenced the literature, so they provided solid ground for the creation of *dystopia*.¹⁰ According to Parrinder, almost a century

⁶ Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, 4.

⁷ Patrick Parrinder, "Entering Dystopia, Entering 'Erewhon,'" in *Critical Survey* 17, no. 1, (March 2005): 6-7.

⁸ Gregory Claeys, "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell," in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. by Gregory Claeys, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 109-110.

⁹ Robert P. Fitzgerald, "The Structure of "Gulliver's Travels," in *Studies in Philology* 71, no. 2 (April 1974): 249-253.

¹⁰ Claeys, "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell," 10

later, dystopia's fictional literary genre emerged during the crises of the twentieth century. Its popularity increased as it began to reflect specific social or temporal issues. For example, it is often focused on political regimes, as it is well portrayed in works such as *1984* or *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.¹¹ Regarding Claeys, the popularity of political dystopian novels increased due to the rise of totalitarianism during the Second World War. The authors like Orwell and Bradbury tried to illustrate and criticise the political system such as Communism or Nazism. Being feared by reality, people are trying to seek answers about the future in this specific genre.¹²

Dystopia has developed over the years. As was already mentioned, during the twentieth century, dystopia mainly reflected the issues and crises, such as wars, poverty, or political regimes, and tried to predict the future if the control remains. According to Owen, since 1951, when J.D. Salinger published his novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, new type of literature has been rising. The book primarily dealt with adolescent problems with which teenagers could identify. The book became popular among young adults, and thanks to its success, it laid the solid foundation for young adult literature. Young adult literature (YA) is primarily published for teenagers between 12 and 18. This genre describes life's challenges through the lens of an adolescent protagonist. In young adult literature, the main characters experience common issues specific to their age group, and the pressures of their surroundings motivate them to personal growth. Additionally, young adult literature has significantly influenced the dystopian genre, particularly in the early years of the twenty-first century.¹³ In the first decade of the twenty-first century, there was an enormous wave of publishing YA dystopian novels. As the twentieth-century dystopian novels more closely mirrored the treacherous political situation of that time, contemporary dystopian novels focus on the post-apocalyptic world. As dystopian novels were mainly created for teenagers, they mostly included freedom, self-liberation, environmental catastrophise, identity crises, authorities, and political systems. These aspects are typical for the popular YA dystopian novels, such as *The Hunger Games*.¹⁴ The focus on female protagonists in the genre is significant. Thanks to strong female characters, many young adolescents find comfort and assistance in resolving the life problems they must contend with. According to Jacob Lewis, the CEO and co-founder

¹¹ Parrinder, "Entering Dystopia, Entering 'Erewhon'," 6-7

¹² Claeys, "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell," 107

¹³ Mary Owen, "Developing a love of reading: why young adult literature is important," in *Orana* 39, no. 1 (March 2007): 11.

¹⁴ Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, Carrie Hintz, *Contemporary dystopian fiction for young adults*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1

of Figment (a social platform where teenagers can publish their own stories), dystopian literature is not harmful; quite the opposite. Young adult literature and movie adaptations that address taboo issues serve as a device to explain arising problems to those who may not fully understand them. These tools provide young readers with answers and an understanding of handling difficult situations, offering them more perspective on overcoming such obstacles.¹⁵

This thesis focuses on two novels, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*. These novels were written in different periods, reflecting the dystopia distinctively. On the other hand, these books are very similar in some basic dystopian features, for example, oppressive government, environmental crises and others. To demonstrate and explain dystopia in more detail, the next part will focus on the elements of dystopia as a genre, and then it will be supported by the evidence in both mentioned novels. Apart from a few symbols already mentioned, such as the initial structure of the fictional world appearing more utopian than dystopian or the presence of a critical, oppressive government system, and many other standard features connect already existing dystopian novels. As Alessa Johns notes, the narrative's setting is essential in dystopian novels. Most fictional stories in this genre revolve around the issue of an environmental crisis. The report typically conveys that, after wars or climate changes, society was compelled to take action and rebuild the government and the country to create a better place. After the technological innovations in the twentieth century, people started to become more aware of the environment. Unfortunately, pollution and exploitation have been degrading nature. Also, the war and many threads pointed out that there are far more dangerous weapons that can cause the extinction of humanity.¹⁶ The progression also gives solid ground for dystopia, as it is portrayed in *The Hunger Games*:

The country rose from the ashes of a place once called North America. He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so much of the land, and the brutal war for what little sustenance remained. The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens.¹⁷

According to the *Unofficial Guide* by V. Arrow, in *The Hunger Games*, Panem was created after a great war in modern civilisation. It became an autonomous state, independent from the rest of the world. The battle was disastrous but ultimately helped the society rebuild

¹⁵ Owen, Developing a love of reading: why young adult literature is important,“ 10-11

¹⁶ Alessa Johns, “Feminism and Utopianism“ in *The Cambridge Companion To Utopian Literature* edited by Gregory Claeys, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 190-191

¹⁷ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (Prague: FRAGMENT s.r.o., 2010), 18-19

what remained.¹⁸ Regarding the phrase “rose out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America,” the causes of destruction before Panem left the country in environmental crises, and the society had to create its state. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, a political crisis led to the establishment of Gilead. This crisis was essentially a *war* between a group known as the Sons of Jacob and the regular government. After a massacre occurred, the United States declared a state of emergency, and the assassination of the president was attributed to Islamic fanatics. Subsequently, the theocratic state of Gilead was established. The actions are explained like this:

It was after the catastrophe when they shot the President and machine-gunned the Congress. And the army declared a state of emergency. They blamed it on the Islamic fanatics at the time. [...] The entire government is gone like that. [...] That was when they suspended the Constitution. They said it would be temporary. [...] There wasn't even an enemy you could put your finger on.¹⁹

According to the citation, Gilead was initially promised to people as a temporary solution as a consequence of the crises, exploiting their fear of the unknown. Amy Atchison and Shauna Shames describe the fear presented in dystopia. Fear is a common element in dystopian fiction, serving as a tool employed by those in power to control society and instil discipline and obedience. In many dystopian stories, fear is utilised to underscore the dominance of the government or leaders of the territory over the lives of individuals. Fear is a powerful tool for the government to avoid and stop the rebellion in the novels.²⁰ In both books, *The Hunger Games* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, fear as a tool is used differently, and its power is strong. The totalitarian government uses fear as a tool to limit and control society. For example, handmaids have almost no free will, or they will be sent to the colonies. On the other hand, in *The Hunger Games*, there is an event to create fear and express the superiority of the Capitol over the society. In the book, it is explained like this:

The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as your yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gives us the Hunger Games. [...] [T]he competitors must fight to the death for several weeks. [...] Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch — this is the

¹⁸ V. Arrow, *The Panem Companion: An Unofficial Guide to Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games, From Mellark Bakery to Mockingjays* (Dallas: Smart Pop, 2012) 4-5

¹⁹ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, (London: Random House UK, 2010), 184-185

²⁰ Amy L. Atchison, Shauna L., *Shames, Survive and Resist: The Definitive Guide to Dystopian Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019): 37-45

Capitol's way of reminding us how we are at their mercy. How little chance we would stand of surviving another rebellion.²¹

Fear is a powerful weapon that can make people obedient. In *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol has not only the power over the military but also the authority over the faith of young people. The usage of fear helps the Capitol secure its goals and avoid unnecessary brawls with unsatisfied society. The brutality is expressed further in the story, but the arena serves as a medium for spreading fear among the citizens. Regarding *The Handmaid's Tale*, the fear is pursued by handmaids in the form of being sent to so-called "colonies." In the book, it is depicted like this:

In the Colonies, they spend their time cleaning up. They're very clean-minded these days. Sometimes, it's just bodies after a battle. The ones in city ghettos are the worst; they're left around longer, and they get more rotten. This bunch doesn't like dead bodies lying around; they're afraid of a plague or something. So the women in the Colonies there do the burning. [...] Anyway, they're mostly people they want to get rid of.²²

Into those dreadful places, women are sent when they are no longer fertile, old, disobedient, or rebellious. The book hints that the colonies are where people are sent to die.²³ Unfortunately, this pressure compels people to become obedient and transforms them into a flock of sheep. As members of such a society, individuals lose their identities. A common theme in dystopian fiction is that the system significantly influences individuals, resulting in characters altering their identities or completely losing their privacy. In many dystopian novels, the characters are constantly pursued by the government. Conversely, the events influence and develop the characters. Their identities undergo a complete transformation from the book's beginning to the closing part.²⁴

In *the Hunger Games* series, the characters endure a lack of privacy. Not only are they injected with locators before entering the arena, but they are also constantly monitored outside the arena. Additional examples of the government's supremacy can be found in the second and

²² Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 262.

²³ Zahra Sadeghi, Narges Mirzapour, "Women of Gilead as colonized subjects in Margaret Atwood's novel: A Study of Postcolonial and feminist aspects of *The Handmaid's Tale*," in *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (June 2020): 3.

²⁴ Anna Sriastiti, "National Identity as the Arena of Constellations of Nationalism and De-Nationalism in American Dystopian Novels" in *AWEJ for Translation and Literary Studies* 4, no. 3 (August 2020): 161.

third books, such as Katniss convincing President Snow about her love for Peeta or the theocratic propaganda of the rebellion in the third book. The example of the loss of privacy is described like this:

[...] feeling the sharp stab of pain as the needle inserts the metal tracking device deep under the skin of my forearm. Now, the Gamemakers can trace my whereabouts in the arena.²⁵

On the other hand, the loss of identity is vividly portrayed in *The Handmaid's Tale*. While becoming a handmaid, women lose their names and rights and become subjects of fertility. Handmaids are also limited in their behaviour and thinking. After involuntarily becoming handmaids, they must obey the commander's family and do what they are told. Handmaids must forget their past life before Gilead and focus on their goal of delivering a baby to the commander's family. They cannot express themselves freely, as strict norms dictate their behaviour in different situations. Handmaids must control themselves and behave only as the patriarchal state wants them to act.²⁶ It is depicted like this:

As a handmaid deprived of her name and identity, she has no rights as an individual. Instead, she is conscripted into sexual service to the State, reduced by its doctrine of biological essentialism to her female role as a child breeder, a "two-legged womb," and the ghost of a person, "a wraith of red smoke."²⁷

As described in the book, the Handmaids have almost no rights except for their fertility. This is also associated with the social hierarchy and gaps among the social classes. Society is often divided into groups with significant social disparities in dystopian fiction. Typically, the government is at the top of the pyramid and holds power over the lower classes. In *The Hunger Games*, the distinctions and social classes are substantial. Society is divided into twelve districts, each specialising in a different resource. For example, there is mining in District Twelve and agriculture in District Eleven. The distance from the Capitol also influences the wealth and status of the districts, making District Twelve one of the poorest.²⁸ "Our part of District 12, nicknamed the Seam, usually crawls with coal miners heading out to the morning shift at this hour."²⁹ The Capitol does not express any concerns about the

²⁵ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 144

²⁶ Sayyed Rahim Moosavinia, Tayyebbeh Behvand Yousefi, "New Norms of Gender and Emergence of Identity Crisis," in *Language, Linguistics, Literature* 24, no 1 (March 2018): 170-171

²⁷ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 144

²⁸ Stefanie Fricke, "It's all a big show": Constructing Identity in Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* Trilogy," in *Politics in Fantasy Media: Essays on Ideology and Gender in Fiction, Film, Television, and Games*, ed. by Gerold Sedlmayr and Nicole Waller, (Fall 2014), 21-22.

²⁹ Collins, *Hunger Games*, 8

environment in District Twelve. The Capitol must be considered as the richest and most wealthy place in Panem. The book describes the Capitol:

If anything, they have not entirely captured the magnificence of the glistening buildings in a rainbow of hues that tower into the air, the shiny cars that roll down the wide paved streets, the oddly dressed people with bizarre hair and painted faces who have never missed a meal. All the colours seem artificial, the pinks too deep, the greens too bright, the yellows painful to the eyes, like the flat round disks of hard candy, we can never afford to buy at the tiny sweet shop in District 12.³⁰

Even the story explains the differences between the lower and higher classes and expresses the disparity in poverty. According to Fricke, The Capitol is superior and serves as the state's leader, and life there is markedly different. While in District Twelve, people struggle for food, in the Capitol, they have beverages that induce vomiting to empty their stomachs, allowing them to eat even more. The protagonist comes from a lower social class. Thanks to her charisma and her team, she climbed the social ladder to challenge the Capitol's supremacy.³¹ In *The Handmaid's Tale*, there is a social gap between the higher and lower classes, and the rules and privileges differ significantly based on an individual's class. For example, Marthas, who assists with household tasks like cooking, is depicted as never getting sick or retiring because that could mean the end of their lives. In contrast, the higher class, such as the commanders' families, do not have to worry about these concerns. They are privileged because they believe God has chosen them to heal the world. Social differences can be seen in this part of the book:

They get sick a lot, these Wives of the Commanders. It adds interest to their lives. As for us, the Handmaids and even the Marthas, we avoid illness. The Marthas don't want to be forced to retire because who knows where they go? You don't see that many older women around anymore. And as for us, any real illness, anything lingering, weakening, a loss of flesh or appetite, a fall of hair, a failure of the glands, would be terminal. [...] A slight cold, she said when Serena asked her. Serena herself sometimes takes a few days off, tucked up in bed.³²

In this part of the book, the reader can experience one of the many differences between the social classes. The commander's wife is the second highest social position that can be reached. The handmaids or Marthas cannot be sick because of the oppressive government. If they were treated as ill, they would be considered not prospective for the community and immediately punished. The social gap is broad in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and it is almost

³⁰ Collins, *Hunger Games*, 41

³¹ Fricke, "It's all a big show": Constructing Identity in Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, 21-22

³² Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 164-165

impossible to be treated differently because the government has been controlling the individual's faith. Many similarities connect dystopian novels, such as separation from the outside world, information control, dehumanisation, etc. Still, the themes mentioned above are fundamental, common issues portrayed in dystopian books.

2 Position of Women in Dystopian Literature

Notwithstanding, the dystopia features were described with the female dystopian novels, but most likely, this type of genre was mainly dominated by men during the development of dystopia. As Sarah Lefanu mentioned in her book, dystopian novels are mostly written with male bias outlined by the political domination of the male point of view.³³ On the other hand, women did not produce utopian or dystopian literature after male authors became famous for their dystopian novels. Still, women had been publishing dystopian novels even before. According to Jim Miller, from 1890 to 1919, American female authors produced female utopia literature to describe their hope for a better World based on their life situations. Throughout the development of female utopian or dystopian writing, the message of such fiction is not only portraying the apocalyptic World getting to a better situation, but it is also pointing out the position of a female within the society, the difference between identity and gender and depicting the difference between individuality and society.³⁴ In the early twentieth century, female authors tended to write about the utopian world in connection to dystopia. As it is described in the journal article *Feminism and Utopia* by Catharine R. Simpson, utopia and feminism are far more connected than one might think; both are seeking equality and a better place.³⁵ At the beginning of the twentieth century, feminist utopistic literature was focused on a better World from the perspective of a woman, and according to Lefanu, the literature and the genre itself have developed that contemporary feminist utopian and dystopian novels are dealing with the identity issue, position of women in the society and on the woman voice in the crowd.³⁶

Even if both analysed novels are considered feminist literature, it does not necessarily mean they convey the meaning as we understand feminism now. Stephanie Hudson-Wright noted that feminism has developed throughout the years. In the first wave of feminism, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, feminism was mainly about getting equal rights as men and having solid ground for women to be similar to men in social matters. Between the 1960s and 1970s, feminists were struggling with sexuality

³³ Sarah Lefanu, "In the Chinks of the World Machine: Feminism and Science Fiction," in *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. Mary Eagleton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1986), 187-188.

³⁴ Jim Miller, "Post-Apocalyptic Hoping: Octavia Butler's Dystopian/Utopian Vision," *Science Fiction Studies* 25, no. 2 (July 1998): 336-337

³⁵ Catharine R. Stimpson, "Feminisms and Utopia," in *Utopian Studies*, no.3, (1991): 1

³⁶ Lefanu, "In the Chinks of the World Machine: Feminism and Science Fiction," 187-188

or gender roles in the family or workplace and trying to receive new equality rights.³⁷ Some feminists, such as Sarah Lefanu, believe that the second wave of feminism is far more than receiving a better position in society; it is also about challenging the sexuality and gender social construct that limits the normal female behaviour which defines a woman.³⁸ The second wave also let women question their identity. Women during this period had to fight for fundamental rights that depended on each female, for example, staying married, being single, devoting life to the household or a husband, and not focusing on their career. To conclude, the second wave of feminism fought for the independence of women and not to be dependent on men.³⁹

The explanation is essential for both novels that will be further analysed – *The Hunger Games* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. The feminist critical dystopia is considered to be a subgenre of utopianism. Even though dystopia is called feminism, it has nothing to do with feminism as we know it now. As Ildney Cavalcanti mentioned in *Dark Horizons*, fundamentally, feminist literature is only to link female authors together. Not all dystopian novels written by women are entirely the same and discuss the dominance of the female gender over the male gender. Still, many of them question the social imbalance between males and females and depict the superiority of men over females.⁴⁰ For instance, when we consider the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, the position of the handmaids is at the bottom of society, and a man rules the whole community. Cavalcanti discusses in detail the features of feminist critical dystopia in novels such as *Walk to End of the World* by Suzy Mckee Charnas. However, the components used in those stories are very similar to the issues of *Handmaid's Tale*. As Cavalcanti said, one of the significant symbols of critical dystopia is the position of a man, woman, and the whole patriarchal society. As we look closely at feminist critical dystopia, the story is usually set in a pandemic, warzone, or apocalyptic setting where the men lead the society.⁴¹ The purpose of the second wave of feminism has to be taken into consideration. It has hugely impacted these works because, in feminist critical dystopia, women are usually not equal to men or even superior to them. For example, the situation in *The Handmaid's Tale*:

³⁷ Stephanie Hudson-Wright, "Early Feminism," in *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, ed Sarah Gamble, (London: Routledge, 2001), 3

³⁸ Lefanu, "In the Chinks of the World Machine: Feminism and Science Fiction," 187

³⁹ Hudson-Wright, "Early Feminism," 3

⁴⁰ Ildney Cavalcanti, "The Writing of Utopia and the Feminist Critical Dystopia: Suzy McKee's Charnas's Holdfast Series," in *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan (New York: Routledge, 2003), 47-48

⁴¹ Cavalcanti, "The Writing of Utopia and the Feminist Critical Dystopia: Suzy McKee's Charnas's Holdfast Series," 54

I wait for the household to assemble. Household: that is what we are. The Commander is the head of the family. The house is what he holds. To have and to keep, till death do us part.⁴²

As *The Handmaid's Tale* described, their fundamental rights and identity were taken away. As Peter G Stillman and S. Anne Johnson explained in Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead took over their independence and began to decide about women's fates. Women were rightless. They have no right to be employed or have a bank account; in other words, they became just objects who must listen to men. After much pressure, Offred (protagonist of the novel) starts instead of using the pronoun ours – household or even her skin.⁴³ “Hand lotion, I said—or face lotion. Our skin gets very dry. For some reason, I said our instead of my.”⁴⁴ Unfortunately, based on the constant pressure on Offred, she perceives her body as ours, meaning hers and Gilead's. Also, the fact that the state of Gilead renames all handmaids is, in other words, the elimination of their old identity before the assassination and taking over the government. According to Stillman and Johnson, another feature of the superiority of a male character is the so-called *ceremony*.⁴⁵ The ceremony is portrayed like this:

My red skirt is hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it, the Commander is fucking. What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love because this is not what he's doing. Copulating, too, would be inaccurate because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it: nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't much choice, but there was some, and this is what I chose.⁴⁶

The ceremony is about getting the handmaid pregnant so she can deliver a child to the commander's family and then be moved to another household for the same purpose. Regarding the Stillman and Johnson chapter, Offred's basic needs and identity vanished during the novel. In the end, Offred sadly accepts the Gilead policy, and her life slowly diminishes from her current situation. Later, Stillman and Johnson discuss the book's conclusion, where Professor Piexioto of Cambridge University discusses the situation in Gilead. He has been comparing Gilead to a Nazi camp and evaluating and discussing the dictatorship over the objectivized woman. On the other hand, she also judges Offred for humanising the system and

42 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 93

43 Peter G Stillman, Anne S. Johnson, “Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*,” in *Utopian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1994):72-73

44 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 203

45 Stillman, Johnson, Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*,” 76

46 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 106

not fighting for her rights.⁴⁷ According to Arthur O. Lewis, the handmaids were once again considered objects even though it is clear documents illustrates their pain. Also, the epilogue is a patriarchal point of view, so the women are judged once again and not taken seriously.⁴⁸ The reason why I described the history of feminism earlier in this chapter is simple: the wave of feminism was fighting for the equality of women in the modern world, which cannot be found in the feminist critical novel *Handmaid's Tale*.

The depiction of women in the literature has changed over the years, and so has the preference of an imaginary woman. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, women were primarily indecisive characters and mainly stood by a man's side as support. In many stories, the female characters were supposed to keep their innocence and behave according to their virtue. On the other hand, adolescent females were more obedient and dedicated to the male. In fiction and reality, young women should have been silent during the discussion of two or more adults.⁴⁹ According to Libby Falk Jones, who discussed the illustration of women in the novel, the handmaids were silenced and objectified by Gilead's society. During the novel's progression, the handmaids must behave according to standards and norms; depicted females are voiceless and get renamed. With the voice and their name, they can be only considered as a submissive tool for reproduction.⁵⁰ The depiction of handmaids resembles the female characters in the literature with patriarchal society before the twentieth century. However, the handmaids, such as Moira or Offred, were also rebellious and fought against the system, and so for that reason, the characters also depicted a *New Woman*.

New Woman is a term that Henry James established. In the book *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopia Fiction*, the term new woman represents an independent woman who is equal to a man and controls her life's economic or social layers. The new women were drinking, smoking, or being utterly different from the stereotype of women of the end of the eighteenth century that was described before. Authors such as Kate Chopin, Willa Carther, and Edith Wharton described these modern females in their novels. The term stands for

⁴⁷ Stillman, Johnson, Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*," 82

⁴⁸ Libby Falk Jones, "Breaking Silences in Feminist Dystopias," in *Utopian Studies*, no. 3 (1991), 7-8

⁴⁹ Sara K Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, Amy L. Montz, "Introduction: From "New Woman" to "Future Girl": The Roots and the Rise of the Female Protagonist in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopias," *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 3-4

⁵⁰ Jones, "Breaking Silences in Feminist Dystopias," 9

female protagonists who prefer themselves before marriage or motherhood.⁵¹ As June West suggested in his article *The “New Woman,”* society did not entirely accept the change. For example, the writer James Branch Cabell criticised the development of women and their position. He was against the women of the twentieth century, and his strong antifeminist, medieval opinion suggested that women are evil and tempted men to do sins.⁵² Since the beginning of the twentieth century, readers have been surrounded by characters and protagonists who are rebellious, independent, and robust, and the term new woman has given solid ground to the female protagonist in young adult literature. The female protagonists of young adult dystopia are almost identical to their predecessors. The women are strong, independent, and have the power to fight the system. On the other hand, they are fully capable of being free; they know their position in society and their limits; for example, Katniss Everdeen and her role as a symbol of rebellion, which was initially a struggle to accomplish such a huge goal. The significant feature of such women is that they are aware of their identity and social position even at young age. In young adult dystopia, the female protagonist can resist a higher power, such as the government or leaders in that order; they are entirely stepping out of line, unlike the women depicted before the twentieth century.⁵³

Previously, this chapter already introduced what young adult literature is. Young adult literature is supposed to embrace adolescents for reading. The novels are written so that teenagers can find the problems they can associate with, learn from them, or understand the struggles in the reader’s real life.⁵⁴ Katniss Everdeen is an excellent example of a protagonist from dystopian literature who can influence readers in real life. According to Sonya Sawyer Fritz, Collins has written a female protagonist who is fearless, independent, and strongly argumentative against the system. The protagonist was constructed on the basis of the definition of girl power, a phenomenon that was fighting with the identity and gender roles in real life. The meaning of *girl power* was taken from the slogan of the Riot Grrrl movement in the 1990s. As Fritz said, the campaign “refers to the resistance of patriarchy and passive consumerism.”⁵⁵ As already mentioned, Katniss Everdeen is depicted as a solid female

⁵¹ Day, Green-Bartee, Montz, “Introduction: From “New Woman” to “Future Girl”: The Roots and the Rise of the Female Protagonist in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopias,” 3-4

⁵² June B. West, “The “New Woman,” in *Twentieth Century Literature* 1, no. 2 (1995): 56

⁵³ Day, Green-Bartee, Montz, “Introduction: From “New Woman” to “Future Girl”: The Roots and the Rise of the Female Protagonist in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopias,” 4

⁵⁴ Owen, *Developing a Love of Reading: Why Young Adult Literature Is Important*, 11

⁵⁵ Sonya Sawyer Fritz, “Girl Power and Girl Activism in the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young,” in *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, ed. Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Bartee, Amy L. Montz (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 18

character who must fight the system through her winning in the deadly arena, and there are many more obstacles she must overcome along the way. Regarding Miranda A. Green Barteet, the story is not about inspiring young readers to be brave and rebellious. The first point she mentioned is the development of the protagonist. The created pressure and conferences make Katniss aware of her society, identity, position, and limits, which helps her grow from a kid to an adult. Another point Barteet raises is that the presence of authorities makes young people think about their place and limits in reality.⁵⁶ So, the result of the creation of Katniss Everdeen is that it serves as a tool for young readers to understand the world and their presence in society. The masculine stereotype occupies the position of Katniss Everdeen in the novel. As a new woman, she is not interested in marriage, finding love, and being a devoted housewife; she is put in the position of a male character. The first feature is her characteristic. Her rational behaviour, individualistic attitude, and temper represent a masculine character over a feminine type.⁵⁷ The conscience of living in the mining district, having a mentally unstable mother, and the death of her father created pressure to become more responsible for her family. So, she must become an independent and strong female protagonist. It is described:

Everything would be perfect if this were a holiday, if all the day off meant we were roaming the mountains with Gale, hunting for tonight's supper.⁵⁸

This quote from the book portrays that she became the masculine type of the family and went into the forest hunting to have food for dinner and that her family would not starve to death after her father's passing.

To conclude this chapter, the representation of female characters has changed over the years. Initially, women were seen as something submissive and obedient. Thanks to feminism and the progression of society's thinking, we can experience strong female characters and have solid ground for future generations. Female dystopian novels combine the female stereotype before the twentieth century and the modern women of the twentieth century who must deal with the patriarchal society. In both books, female protagonists are objectified and

⁵⁶ Miranda A Green-Barteet, "I'm beginning to know who I am": The Rebellious Subjectivities of Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior" in *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, ed. Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, Amy L. Montz (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 36

⁵⁷ Jessica Miller, "She has no idea. The effect she can have.": Katniss and the politics of gender," in *The Hunger Games and Philosophy: A Critique of Pure Treason*, ed. William Irwin, George A. Dunn, Nicolas Michaud (Hoboken: N. J.: Wiley, 2012), 146

⁵⁸ Collins, *The Hunger Games* 10

considered as a tools for the evil intention of the state. Thanks to such stories, we can speak about female dystopian literature as a vital genre.

3 Government system in *The Hunger Games* and *The Handmaid's Tale*

The dystopian novels can be defined by many features that connect many books out of this literary genre. As discussed in the first chapter, the government system in dystopian novels is one of them. In many cases, dystopian fiction with the government surprising society with its control over its faith and life. So, in that order, the government is an integral part of the dystopian novel. According to the book *Survive and Resist*, dystopian novels influence and reflect the actual political system. Not all political systems can suit everybody, but dystopia fiction takes the worst, satirically criticising the worst and hyperbolically exaggerating some regular behaviour of the leaders. Some of the resistance and depiction of the government system are more realistic than others. Stories, such as Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale* or Orwell's *1984*, depict the reality of communism with exaggerated features, such as the Big Brother concept in *1984* or the slavery of women in *The Handmaid's Tale*.⁵⁹ Readers can explore different political leadership in dystopian novels, such as dictatorship, totalitarianism, patriarchal society, and many more. According to Atchison and Shames, the twentieth century gave many insights into the rise of dystopia. Events such as World War I or World War II, industrialisation and mechanisation, and communism in Europe introduce the base for dystopia and its bloom.⁶⁰ The reason for explaining this is that some terms must be first understood to analyse the government system in the dystopian novels *The Hunger Games* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Both books are filled with the suppression of individuality and declining fundamental human rights that are natural in reality. As is explained in *Survive and Resist*, such an act of the government is authoritarian.⁶¹ According to Oliver Schlumberger, the authoritarian regime is when the society is limited, silenced, direct, and culture without freedom. A community must obey, and the leader tells the society how to behave and reduces the margin to a minimum.⁶² As Atchison and Shames describe in their book on dystopia fiction, the characters do not have almost any freedom or ability of free speech. They are categorised and unable to communicate with each other, which can cause rebellion and

⁵⁹ Amy L. Atchison, Shauna L. Shames, *Survive and Resist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 1-2.

⁶⁰ Amy L. Atchison, Shauna L. Shames, "Malice in Wonderland," in *Survive and Resist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 8-9.

⁶¹ Atchison, Shames, "Malice in Wonderland," 9.

⁶² Oliver Schlumberger, "Authoritarian Regimes," in *Oxford Handbook topics in Politics*, (December 2017), 2

limitations for the government so the leadership would be able to control them fully. As described, the novels may appear authoritarian, but there is also totalitarianism, which is far more similar to the political situation depicted in both books. Authoritarianism and totalitarianism are on a thin line of differentiation. Regarding history expert Robert Longley's article, authoritarianism wants people to be submissive to the leadership. Still, the decision power does not reach an institution like economics. Controversially, totalitarianism is about complete control over the state and its management in every institution. This regime type has unlimited power and seeks influence over society, financial matters, or decision-making. It is also important to mention that totalitarianism implies the state ideology to the whole community and demands it to be used by individuals.⁶³ To summarise, the basic features of totalitarianism are complete control of the government, no freedom of individuals, complete control over religion and ideology, unquestioning obedience to the leaders, restricted behaviour, and many others. According to Atwood's portrayal of totalitarianism in *The Handmaid's Tale* novel, there is a frequent depiction of the suppression of individuals. Gilead is heavily religious, and everything has to be done according to the Bible or God. The term for a regime of this kind is Theocratic or Religious totalitarianism. According to Daniel Mark, religious totalitarianism happens when citizens do not have the opportunity to believe in a religion of their choosing; it means that they do not have religious freedom. Apart from *The Handmaid's Tale*, such a regime exists in South Arabia.⁶⁴

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead is depicted as a theocratic totalitarian. Many parts of the book describe the pressure laid in every aspect. In describing totalitarianism, I will use quotes from a book that symbolise the features and limitations of the society of the regime. Initially, it is well portrayed during the establishment of Gilead. The women were slowly losing their rights and becoming more and more silenced than they experienced before the assassination, which was described in the first chapter of this thesis. It goes:

Sorry, he said. This number's not valid. That's ridiculous, I said. It must be, I've got thousands in my account. I just got the statement two days ago. Try it again. It's not valid, he repeated obstinately. See that red light? [This] Means it's not good.⁶⁵

⁶³ Robert Longley, "Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism, and Fascism," *ThoughtCo*, (March 02, 2022). <https://www.thoughtco.com/totalitarianism-authoritarianism-fascism-4147699>

⁶⁴ Daniel Mark, „Religious Totalitarianism, Secular Totalitarianism, and Other Threats to International Religious Freedom,“ *Public Discourse: The Journal of the Witherspoon Institute*, April 01, 2018, <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2018/04/21172/>

⁶⁵ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 186-187

After the attack, women gradually started losing their rights and were becoming silenced by the government. In this quote from the book, readers may first experience establishing the totalitarian state of Gilead. According to the story, the protagonist goes to the shop, and her bank card is declined. The reason is that the government reduced women's rights overnight. As a result of such acting, generally, women became less important than men and were placed at the bottom of society's hierarchy. As Moira said in the book, "They've frozen them, [...] Any account with F on it instead of M."⁶⁶ Limiting women's society was the plan of the leaders of Gilead from the beginning. One of the reasons for establishing the Gilead was the diminishing capability of reproduction in the World, so in that order, women needed to be objectified and the fertile women used for reproduction.⁶⁷ It was not a mass decision, and only the fanatic group called the Sons of Jacob created a terrorist attack on Congress and assassinated the politicians. From this point, the totalitarian state under the rules of the Sons of Jacob changed the lives of millions in the United States. As was described earlier, a totalitarian state restricts and controls citizens. In the novel, the government has created fear that leads people to obey and listen to them. The book portrays it like this:

There were marches, of course, a lot of women and some men. But they were smaller than you might have thought. I guess people were scared. And when it was known that the police, or the army, or whoever they were, would open fire almost as soon as any of the marches even started, the marches stopped.⁶⁸

Such fear was seeded into society. Individuals were told what to do, and they had to obey, or they were killed or sent to a colony. Fear is an excellent tool for people to follow and listen to the government in every decision. According to Ana Martinjak, fear makes people more aware of their surroundings, and human beings want to be safe, so they avoid unnecessary danger. If the fear is constant, it is losing its power of control over the society. On the contrary, if the fear is intense initially and only remains for warning purposes, its capacity will not decrease. The uncertainty in stability leaves people in constant fear and terror. Totalitarian will split the society into only two groups: the victim of the regime and the predator, who is creating and seeding the fear and terror into the victim. The fear must be often remembered and displayed for the people. The punishment for not obeying the system is death or exile, degradation of the person's honour, or complete embarrassment. In some cases, there is no reason for being punished, but there is a racial, religious, or xenophobic reason that is not in

⁶⁶ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 189

⁶⁷ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 125

⁶⁸ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 191

the correspondence of totalitarian policy. Totalitarian regime that used fear as a tool was, for example, Nazism and the concentration camp.⁶⁹ This is extensively depicted in the colonies in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Colonies were already described in the chapter 1, but they are very similar to the concentration camps during the Nazi regime. If the intruder was not obeying the system, the woman was not fertile, or you were against the religious church, the individual was sent to the colony for a slow death. Not only did the army and police create a strong illusion of violence in the book, but the colonies were a great tool to make society obey and act according to the new legislation.

The government system in *The Hunger Games* is as totalitarian as in *The Handmaid's Tale*. Readers may experience different types of fear, pressure, or lack of freedom throughout the story, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*. According to the trilogy, we cannot say who Panem's first president was. Still, the state was created after the war and incidents that made the totalitarian state, as we know from the novel. Every year, the government creates an event called the Hunger Games, when tributes must fight for their lives, and the last standing is a winner. As it is described in the book:

The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games. The rules of the Hunger Games are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins.⁷⁰

After the establishment of Panem as a state, this event should be a memorial of unfortunate actions in the past. The power of a totalitarian government is to make the crowds obedient and completely submissive. The annual Hunger Games is supposed to be the tool for controlling and expressing the government's power over individuals' lives. Also, children's fear of being picked into the arena is huge. There can also be a higher chance of being chosen. As we learn in the book, Katniss is from a low-income family and district, so to have food and other life supplies, you can exchange by multiplying your name in the lottery for the necessary goods. The book describes:

⁶⁹ Ratej Ana Martinjak, "Apocalyptic Elements and Fear in Totalitarian Regimes," in *Disputatio Philosophica* 14, no. 1, (December 2012): 53-55

⁷⁰ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 16

Say you are poor and starving as we were. You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for tesserae. Each tessera is worth a meagre year's supply of grain and oil for one person. You may do this for each of your family members as well.⁷¹

In some districts, there are no conditions for agriculture, such as District 12, and Capitol does not express any concern or support for such communities. The only way to gain extra food or other goods is to win the Hunger Games or put more entries into the lottery. According to Steven Lukes, the definition of power is when person A manipulate or makes person B do something without the willingness of person B to do it.⁷² This is precisely what Capitol has done with society. Struggling for food supplies, the citizens unwillingly put more entries into the lottery, while the totalitarian government did not provide any support or charities for the rest of the year. As already mentioned, totalitarianism is dividing society into two groups: victims and predators. The government is usually depicted as a predator.⁷³ In this matter, the Capitol expresses its superiority over the rest of the districts. In many cases in the book, it is suggested that the government manipulate society and says that people would survive without the control of the Capitol over them. Gregory Claeys defined totalitarianism as the common core of both dictatorships in terms of a militantly anti-liberal, anti-bourgeois philosophy hostile to most ideas of individualism and individual rights in particular.⁷⁴ In that matter, it is evident that the society must admire the government of Panem even when it is against their mind. As it is portrayed in the book:

Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch — this is the Capitol's way of reminding us how totally we are at their mercy. How little chance we would stand of surviving another rebellion.⁷⁵

This is the perfect example of the Capitol ideology. The government in the novel depicts itself as a saviour and wants people to have this belief as well—this corresponds with the definition of Claeys. In other words, the government limits freedom, and the one-party political system has influenced the nation. The citizens are not able to express their independence and fears because the ideology of the leadership is to be grateful to the Capitol for excellent support and behaviour towards their own people. It is also connected with the inability of free movement and the limitation of personal space. Common restrictions can be,

⁷¹ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 13

⁷² Brian Longhurst, "Culture, power, globalisation and inequality," in *Introducing Cultural Studies 2nd Edition*, ed. by Greg Smith, Gaynor Bagnall, Garry Crawford, Miles Ogborn, (2008): 64

⁷³ Martinjak "Apocalyptic Elements and Fear in Totalitarian Regimes," 53-55

⁷⁴ Claeys, Gregory, "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell," 119

⁷⁵ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 16

for example, found in the regime of communism or Nazism. According to Claeys, a one-party state, which controls all the monopolies and segments of the state, can define the state as it would like to. The government focuses on the spirituality and perspectives of the state, stating that the nation is usually superior to others. In most of the known cases of similar regimes, there is a restriction on communication with surrounding countries, so they are able to make propaganda about how beneficial the state actually is. The purpose of such actions is simple. The government gains control over the community, while society does not know what is happening. Such information can be changed and manipulated to be in order with the state's ideology.⁷⁶ A similar situation is illustrated in the novel *The Hunger Games*. The citizens of one district are not familiar with the current situation in another. For example, District 12 is surrounded by an electrical fence, which does not work because of the lack of resources. The fence should depict a barrier which separates the two districts from each other. The basic knowledge about the district is taught in schools, but the current situation, for example, rebellion, is kept secret by the government from the community. The government explained the fence's purpose as protection from the wild animals living in the nearby forest. The quote from the book that discusses the issue:

We have so little communication with anyone outside our district. In fact, I wonder if the Gamemakers are blocking out our conversation, because even though the information seems harmless, they don't want people in different districts to know about one another.⁷⁷

During the fight in the arena, Katniss learns new information about her districts from Rue. In that matter, they exchange further details on their districts' living situations and conditions. In schools, they do not learn much about the surrounding world, mainly the industries produced within different Districts. The second thing they must know is the critical information about the industry itself. For example, while living in a coal-mining district, Katniss learns only deeper details about coal mining. The Capitol wants to keep education low. The reason is that they are not well educated and do not have as much information as they can have; the risk of fighting or arguing with the government is low. Concludingly, the Capitol can say that the leadership has all the knowledge, and in that matter, it is primarily qualified for leading and ruling the country. Teaching only the necessary information about the industry helps Capitol reach its goals, creating the specific district's labour force and keeping people occupied from reality. It goes:

⁷⁶ Claeys, "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell," 119-121

⁷⁷ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 125

Somehow, it all comes back to coal at school. Besides essential reading and math, most of our instruction is coal-related. Except for the weekly lecture on the history of Panem. It's mostly a lot of blather about what we owe the Capitol.⁷⁸

As in *The Handmaid's Tale*, the punishment as a source of fear and obedience of society was elaborated, so the punishment must also be examined in *The Hunger Games*. During the story's progression, the reader can experience how the punishment gets severe with the connection of the growing power of rebellion and it reduce the ability of the Capitol to rule over the districts. In the first book of the trilogy saga, we learn that public whipping exists in another section. Rue shares this information with Katniss during their bonding in the arena. As we might elaborate on public whipping further, according to Lisa Durnian, public whipping significantly influences society. In history, there were two main reasons for being whipped publicly. The first reason is that it increases the work ethic. Usually, people started to work faster after the whipping. Secondly, the whipping serves as a tool for creating respect and fear among people and humiliating the person being whipped.⁷⁹ For the same reason, the whipping is demonstrated in *The Hunger Games*. Even though this thesis is focused on the first book, the whipping has a much more significant meaning in the second. In *Catching Fire*, the whipping is depicted as everybody can be punished, even celebrities, and so, in that matter, it spreads fear even more rapidly. Whipping is not the only punishment that the Capitol does. More critical and more permanent is when an individual commits a crime such as theft, the government cuts off the individual's tongue. Criminal is permanently humiliated by the inability to speak, and the Capitol will create a more obedient society. It is illustrated in the book like this:

“What's an Avox?” I ask stupidly. “Someone who committed a crime. They cut her tongue so she can't speak, ” says Haymitch. “She's probably a traitor of some sort. Not likely you'd know her.”⁸⁰

The totalitarian state does not want to know the citizens' ideas or arguments, so it acts according to the country's ideology. Usually, the individuals do not interfere with the state and limit themselves to a minimum to avoid danger. According to Martinjak, people do not want to initiate any necessary danger to themselves, so they behave according to the government and its ideology.⁸¹ The fear of being punished is displayed in *The Hunger Games*; to stay out

⁷⁸ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 30

⁷⁹ Lisa Durnian, “Whipping as a criminal punishment, ” in The Prosecution Project for Research Brief 21 (March 2016) <https://prosecutionproject.griffith.edu.au/whipping-as-a-criminal-punishment>.

⁸⁰ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 51

⁸¹ Martinjak, “Apocalyptic Elements and Fear in Totalitarian Regimes,” 54

of any unnecessary trouble, people do not express their opinions towards the Capitol or the regime they live in. Katniss also mentioned, “I learned to hold my tongue and to turn features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts.”⁸² She explains that she learned this because of her anger towards the Capitol. She realises that if she rebels, she will be punished and will not change anything. So, instead of being rebellious, she tried to become invisible and interact with the surrounding World at a minimum. This is evidence of complete power over the districts, which makes Panem, thanks to its leadership, totalitarian.

At this point, both novels describe the totalitarian government and its influence on society. However, totalitarian leadership can also be elaborated more closely than just saying it is a totalitarian state. Each state needs to have a leader like totalitarian Germany had Adolf Hitler. In the book *The Handmaid's Tale*, during the story's climax, the reader realises that the government is created out of more than one person. In such structures, we are talking about oligarchy. According to Jeffrey Winters, oligarchy is one of the most widespread but poorly theorised government systems. The oligarchy is undemocratic. Leadership and power is divided among several oligarchs who are society's elite. Usually, each oligarch controls different state segment, such as economics, society, etc. Oligarchs are prominent citizens, mostly often with possession of enormous wealth, who are deciding about the state's future or current situation. To become an oligarch, people must be born into a wealthy family or become rich, so the government permits you to become one of the leadership members. The minority power over the masses is essential. In some cases, the oligarch has business and organisation next to the commitment of being politicians and making calls to be prosperous for them, not for the whole state. The power is divided among the oligarchs, and sometimes, it could be a hazard because such elite and prominent people do not understand the living conditions of people who are not so lucky.⁸³ In *The Handmaid's Tale*, there is usually describe someone with power as a commander. Commanders are prominent men at the top of the society. As described in the book, commanders are the only ones who can have a child in order to create a new community that will be dominant and superior to the world. In the previous part of the thesis, the fanatics called Son of Jacobs were already mentioned. Leaders of the movement were led by the Bible in order to reach the state as they wanted to have it. Commanders are elite in the society of Gilead; in that power, they own everything and control everything in the state. Totalitarian leadership has authority over the most crucial segments of

⁸² Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 9

⁸³ Winters, Jeffrey A., *Oligarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 2-4

the state, for example, police and others. In the novel, the narrator mentions, “Waterford would, of course, have been aware of this, but as all high-level Commanders were automatically directors of the Eyes[.]”⁸⁴ The organisation *Eyes* is considered a military or police force in Gilead. It is evident that multiple commanders had power over the nation's police force. “Ordinary guys do not become Commanders. "You must be good at something,”⁸⁵ this is the evidence. To become Commander (oligarch), the Commander must be in a higher social position. As described earlier, an oligarch must be wealthy or successful to dominate the crowd. Also, the leader of this type of government must have an influence within the society and over the state. To conclude, regarding the provided lines from the book, we can consider Gilead a form of theocratical totalitarian oligarchy.

However, the regimes of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games* look very similar; *The Hunger Games's* government system could be considered a totalitarian dictatorship. As the book progresses, readers cannot experience the complete political structure of the state of Panem. Still, President Snow could be considered a dictator because of his power of decision. According to Carl Schmitt, dictatorship has its roots in the Roman Empire. At that time, a dictator was a man who had unlimited control over the state. He had a group of consultants who were professionals in their field, but the decision-making was on the dictator. As Schmitt defines in his book: “The Dictator was defined as a man who, being independent of the influence of any other institution, was able to issue orders and to execute them immediately, that is without having to obey other legal remedies.”⁸⁶ In other words, a dictatorship is a one-person government system. Unlike the oligarchy regime, where each oligarch has power over different institutions, the dictator has unlimited decision-making power over all state institutions. Leaders can be consulted, but how they decide depends on the dictator. Ronald Wintrobe mentioned in his book that the dictator's power usually cannot be shifted to someone else in any other institution. The dictator's decision has to be obeyed, or the disloyalty is often punished. This kind of political regime still exists and can be found in places such as states of Africa or North Korea.⁸⁷ In the first book of the trilogy *Hunger Games*, readers cannot experience the dictatorship presented in the story., but as the story progresses, the evidence of Panem being a dictatorship is obvious. The rebellion started with Katniss and Peeta's actions in the arena when they wanted to take the poisonous berries

⁸⁴ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 324

⁸⁵ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 196

⁸⁶ Carl Schmitt, *Dictatorship* (Berlin: Ducker and Humblot, 2014): 4

⁸⁷ Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 4-6

voluntarily. President Snow came to visit Katniss in her new house, and he wanted to make a deal with her in order to calm the raging crowds. “I have a problem, Miss Everdeen, ” says President Snow. “A problem that began the moment you pulled out those poisonous berries in the arena.”⁸⁸ As it is in the dictatorship, President Snow, as a leader and dictator of Panem considered the problem with the society as his own. He could have mentioned the country, the Capitol, or even the government, but he only felt the problem alone. Also, President Snow said:

How many people would die? What conditions those left would have to face? Whatever problems anyone may have with the Capitol, believe me when I say that the entire system would collapse if it released its grip on the districts for even a short time.⁸⁹

This quote is from the same situation as before. The rebellion can be considered a national crisis, so readers might expect that professionals and leadership will solve it. However, the problem is being solved only by President Snow. He came to Katniss alone and told her she must convince him about her love to Peeta during the upcoming event. To give the ultimate evidence of dictatorship, I must elaborate on actions that will happen further in the story. After the battle with the Capitol is over, there is an execution of President Snow. Only one person is being killed, and it's the dictator. It is supposed to symbolise the end of the era of suffering and terror and bring up the new and better times.⁹⁰ This thesis is not about the trilogy's second and third books, so I will not elaborate on other quotes to support the evidence of dictatorship. However, the evidence shows that the Panem can be considered a totalitarian dictatorship.

The importance of ideology and propaganda is crucial in a totalitarian regime. The ideology is usually reflected in the society of the state. According to Atchison and Shmaes, the totalitarian ideology led by one party is usually very extreme. Also, they use a description of ideology by James Scott, which says the ideology must be solid and bulletproof. Such ideologies describe the state's progress in industry, social matters or economics. Ideology is often claimed that will be prosperous for all. ⁹¹ Such extreme measures are depicted in both of the novels. Not only did it influence the Gilead and Panem regime, but also it affected society. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the primary purpose of Gilead is to create a religious state to raise the birth rate, which has decreased over the years. To achieve such goals, the government

⁸⁸ Collins, Suzanne, *Catching Fire* (Prague: FRAGMENT s.r.o., 2010), 235

⁸⁹ Collins, *Catching Fire*, 236

⁹⁰ Collins, *Mockingjay*, (Prague: FRAGMENT s.r.o., 2010), 662-664

⁹¹ Amy L. Atchison, Shauna L. Shames, “Defining Dystopia,” in *Survive and Resist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 8-9

created a social structure. It split it into 10 parts: commanders and their families, military and police force, servants such as aunts, marthas, handmaids and econwives, and unwomen. The social ladder cannot be climbed to keep such a hierarchy in work. I already described who the commander is. Commanders are usually the oligarchs, and they are leading the state of Gilead. Their wives are also at the top of the hierarchy. Their purpose within the society is only to create a family with the Commander. Similarly to handmaids, they do not have the right to work, so they usually take care of the household at home. To keep them occupied, the government requests them to knit. The knit scarves are then sent to the military. The commander's family is incapable of a baby on their own, but after they are blessed with it, the wife becomes a full-time mother and cares for the baby. The division of society begins with the military and police force. There are three types. – eyes (secret spies), angles and guardians. These forces are very high in society, and they ensure the safety of the commander's family. Guardians are the biggest group; they aim to stay with the family and protect them. The explanation of Guardians in the book:

The Guardians aren't real soldiers. They're used for routine policing and other menial functions, digging up the Commander's Wife's garden, for instance, and they're either stupid or older or disabled or very young, apart from the ones that are Eyes incognito.⁹²

Surprisingly, the military and workforce are all men. They do not need any special military training. On some occasions in the book, they are depicted as not bright. They usually have the passive, and they have only one job. Thanks to their societal position, they do not seek violence or rebellion. Like everyone in the community, they have a special uniform that distinguishes them from others. They have special orders on how to treat a handmaid. There cannot be any physical touch or any other sort of interaction. The only connection they might have is when the handmaids are taken to the gynaecologist's check; in that case, they can sit close to each other. The uniform is described as green with “the crests on their shoulders and berets: two swords, crossed, above a white triangle.”⁹³ Being a male in Gilead has its perks. On the other hand, being a woman is very complicated and stressful. Only one female position who has power in society are Aunts. Aunts are depicted as mentors of the handmaids. They are teaching them how to behave to fulfil the state's ideology. Aunts are highly religious, and they are confident in accomplishing the goals of the totalitarian government. The religious doctrine makes them believe Gilead will prosper and be as God wants after fulfilling

⁹² Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 32

⁹³ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 32

the targets. In the book, there are many situations in which they show their superiority over the handmaids. After the handmaids do something that aunts consider inappropriate, they use the "electric cattle prods slung on thongs from their leather belts"⁹⁴ They have the trust to raise the handmaids, but they are not allowed to carry a gun because "even they could not be trusted with guns. Guns were for the guards, specially picked from the Angels."⁹⁵ The techniques of the aunts are sometimes violent, but they must brainwash the women and prepare them for the ceremony; sometimes, in the book, it is called rape, where the handmaids have sexual intercourse with the commander. The teaching is only to get away from the identity of women before the Gilead. They are taught not to speak or listen and to behave according to norms. Marthas are women without rights. According to Atwood, the label martha has a biblical reference. As she said in an interview on CBS Sunday Morning, Marthas are named after the Martha and Marry episode in the Bible. Martha is doing the housework and abuses Mary for not helping.⁹⁶ They are the servants of commanders and take care of the household. They are doing all the stereotypical duties of women before feminism – cooking and cleaning. Those women are not able to have children, so their position is in the kitchen. Marthas has a dress code that must be in correspondence with the government. As described in the book, Martha's uniform "is dull green, like a surgeon's gown of the time before. The dress is much like mine in shape, long and concealing, but with a bib apron over it and without the white wings and the veil."⁹⁷ They have almost no rights as the handmaids, but they are mostly satisfied with their work position. They were not sent to colonies for death, but they accepted the obedient position within the society. The last category that needs to be mentioned is about the handmaids. The handmaids are supposed to be well-treated and respected. In many cases of the book, the reader might experience that it is not so much true. The purpose of handmaids is to deliver a child to the commander's family. After the labour, she lives with the family in their household; the family owns them. Traditionally, each month, there is a ceremony where handmaids have unwilling sexual intercourse with the commander in the presence of his wife, and together, they try to impregnate the handmaid. They must have the uniform that the government orders. The description goes like this:

Everything except the wings around my face is red, the blood colour that defines us. The skirt is ankle-length, full, gathered to a flat yoke that extends over the breasts, and the

⁹⁴ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 16

⁹⁵ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 16

⁹⁶ CBS Sunday Morning, Why the "Marthas" in the "Handmaid's Tale?" interview by Martha Teichner, posted on September 9, 2019. YouTube video, 1:01 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbZQz6EDiNM>

⁹⁷ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 21

sleeves are full. The white wings are also a prescribed issue; they are to keep us from seeing and being seen. I never looked good in red[.]⁹⁸

One of the differences between marthas and handmaids is that the handmaids must have a hat that covers their faces. The reason is that they cannot be seen. There is a small portion of fertile women. As was already described, firstly, they are being brainwashed by aunts in order to fill the holy virtue. During the training to become a handmaid, they are taught to forget the past and so, with it, their name. Throughout the story, the narrator never mentions the main protagonist's name, only the name given by the government of Gilead, Offred. According to Jones, the handmaids are basically an object. The Gilead's patriarchy reduced the identity of women before Gilead happened.⁹⁹ As Stillman and Johnson claim, the names are created on a regular pattern, with the prefix *Of* plus the commander's first name they are currently with.¹⁰⁰

Panem is not as organised as in the novel *Handmaid's Tale*. There are no necessary uniforms or society positions. How Panem was formed was already described after the war and after the rebellion of 12 districts. The ideology of the Capitol was having superior control over the whole area and obedience to society. The distinction is different from *The Handmaid's Tale*. As we know from a book, Panem is similarly significant as the Gilead. The difference between the ideology of governments in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games* is that in *The Handmaid's Tale*, there is a particular structure of the society that cannot be changed. On the other hand, in *The Hunger Games*, the areas are separated from districts. As the Gilead had higher power – to create a fertilised population, there is no such thing in *The Hunger Games*. The conditions of the establishment of the state were different, so in that order, Panem was only fighting for survival and did not seek any extra goals. The Capitol, on the other hand, seek dominance and superiority over the territory. As described in the book, the Capitol is the main area (city) where all the required institutions must be placed. The Capitol is the centre of everything that happens in Panem. The Capitol is depicted as a rich, glorious city only for privileged people. The depiction in the book goes:

Both Peeta and I ran to the window to see what we'd only seen on television: the Capitol, the ruling city of Panem. The cameras haven't lied about its grandeur. If anything, they have not entirely captured the magnificence of the glistening buildings in a rainbow of

⁹⁸ Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 20.

⁹⁹ Jones, "Breaking Silences in Feminist Dystopias," 7-8.

¹⁰⁰ Stillman, Johnson, Identity, Complicity, and Resistance in *The Handmaid's Tale*, 71.

hues that tower into the air, the shiny cars that roll down the wide paved streets, the oddly dressed people with bizarre hair and painted faces who have never missed a meal. ¹⁰¹

Thanks to the superiority over the rest of Panem, in some cases, the Capitol expresses an arrogant position towards the rest of the country. It is well-portrayed during *The Hunger Games*. While there is no one to be picked as tribute, the citizens of Capitol take the Hunger Games as a fun event, contradictory for the rest of the Panem; it is a period when children are scared of being picked. “Look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there’s nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen.”¹⁰² In the book, the Hunger Games are viewed as terror. The quote from the book expresses the negative attitude towards the event because it is a hazardous event where people die every year. On the other hand, people in the Capitol are thrilled and wish people “Happy Hunger Games”¹⁰³.

The rest of the Panem is divided into twelve districts, each specialising in a different industry. District 1 is one of the richest in the country; its specialisation is that it “makes luxury items for the Capitol. You can hear the roar of the crowd. They are always favorites.”¹⁰⁴ The reason is that District 1 is the closest towards the Capitol. The Capitol is the centre of fashion and luxury, so that is the reason why District 1 is the favourite district. Regarding the first book, with no certainty, you can claim the industry of District 2. According to Tom Henthorne, District 2 mainly focuses on military force and training combats. Thanks to the history described further in the story, we learn more about the district, but in the first book, there is almost no additional information. ¹⁰⁵ The report only tells us that Districts 1 and 2 are favoured mainly by the Capitol because they stood up with the Capitol during the rebellion. Also, these two districts are the wealthiest of all. On the other hand, District 3 is focused on factories and manufacturing. Thanks to the sources of other districts, District 3 is provided with the raw materials, turning them into processed goods. “For the opening ceremonies, you’re supposed to wear something that suggests your district’s principal industry. [...] District 3, factories.”¹⁰⁶ Thanks to the location of District 4, the industry is

¹⁰¹ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 38

¹⁰² Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 16

¹⁰³ Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 17

¹⁰⁴ Collins, *The Hunger Games* 46

¹⁰⁵ Tom Henthorne, *Approaching the Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis*, Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc. Publishers, 2012), 130

¹⁰⁶ Collins, *Hunger Games*, 134

finishing and being located near water provides them with an excellent opportunity to trade food with the Capitol. For the first book, District 4 is not as crucial as others, so the reader can learn much more during the second and third books. District 5 is mainly focused on electricity and power. Thanks to this district, the Capitol can stalk and see other districts. District 6 has created the transportation infrastructure of the Panem; its goal is to transport the goods into different districts and keep the trains in order. “[...] boxcar full of fabric on a train headed to District 6. They fled the train at a fuel stop along the way and travelled on foot.”¹⁰⁷ District 7 is mainly for the lumber and paper production. “From District 7. Lumber and paper, thus the tree.”¹⁰⁸ In the whole story, we do not learn much about District 8. It is suggested that its primary industry is fabric processing and creating new clothes. In other words, this district is not essential for the whole story. The other two districts are not as important either. There is very little information about those Districts 9 and 10. According to hints in the book, District 9 should focus on grain and District 10 on livestock. On the other hand, we learned many things about District 11. Thanks to Rue, who was Katniss's ally in the arena. District 11 is focused on agriculture. After Katniss is stung by mutated bees in the arena, Rue takes care of her and heals her wounds. Thanks to Rue's knowledge of plants, Katniss could survive and win the competition. As it is described in the book:

Rue tentatively steps out into the open. “I can fix your stings.” “Can you?” I ask. “How?” She digs in the pack and pulls out a handful of leaves. I'm almost sure they're the ones my mother uses.¹⁰⁹

The last District is number 12. Readers can learn about the district because it is vividly portrayed in the book. District 12 is mainly focused on coal mining, but because coal has not been used as much, the district is poor and left in abundance by the Capitol. In District 12, there are not enough supplies for all the people, so as Katniss said, “District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety.” To feed her family, the protagonist goes hunting in the forest nearby and then sells some of it on the black market. The black market is the essential place where people can trade their goods; in that order, it keeps the people alive.

To conclude this chapter, I analyse both books and show evidence for elaborating the government system and reflecting on society in both novels. Both Government systems are

¹⁰⁷ Collins, *Catching Fire*, 307

¹⁰⁸ Collins, *Catching Fire*, 347

¹⁰⁹ Collins, *Hunger Games*, 124

purely totalitarian and create enormous pressure on the community living in the state. Both states have no freedom of speech or any other kind of freedom. The government controls the area and punishes the citizens if they are disobedient.

Conclusion

This thesis explores the depiction of government system in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*. Both novels are set in a patriarchal society with government control over the whole state – Gilead in *The Handmaid's Tale* and Panem in *The Hunger Games*. The authorities express their domination over the protagonists. Both books elaborate women's position within society and the oppression of female characters by the male political system. As a result of the development of feminism, the novels were written from the perspective of strong women trying to fight the system to secure a stable position within society. The stories no longer describe women as uninvolved characters in the main plot as they did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Still, thanks to the progression of feminism in the twentieth century, readers are able to experience female characters as independent and courageous.

The analysis of the thesis will focus on the government system from three different points of view. First, the thesis will focus on the power of government over the state. *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games* are set in totalitarian environments. In both stories the portrayed political systems have control over all the levels of the state, such as military and police forces or finance aspects. Comparable elements of leadership behaviour can, for example, be recognised in the Nazi regime that existed in the twentieth century. A totalitarian government creates constant fear within society to keep them under control. The punishments displayed after breaking the law portray another aspect of totalitarian behaviour. In the novels, punishments serve as a form of humiliation in front of others and as a role model for the conscience if not obedient. Second, the analysis will define the specific type of government presented in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Hunger Games*. The totalitarian government system can be divided into more exact types of political systems. *The Handmaid's Tale* demonstrates the oligarchical kind of government. The role of commanders is significant, and society must listen to the orders of wealthy men. Commanders are involved in the decision-making of military force or the faith of citizens. On the other hand, *The Hunger Games* portrays President Snow's power over society. The story progression provides a comprehensive picture of the dictatorship line in the book. The power that the antagonist has is compelling. The protagonist is being manipulated in order to keep Capitol happy, and the dictator has no regard for rebellion. The evidence of this dictatorship is presented in all of the

parts of the story, so quotes from the trilogy are used in this section. The thesis will lastly focus on the ideology and purpose of the government and the social hierarchy. The government's primary goal is closely connected with the oppression of society and its divisions. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the primary purpose of Gilead is to create an independent state that serves God and the reproductive community. In that matter, society has been divided into classes, and each type is uniquely profitable to the state. The social gaps are broad, and climbing the social ladder is impossible. On the contrary, *The Hunger Games's* Panem is a state created after an apocalyptic war. The government created an event that threatens those who want to rebel and fight the system. The society is divided into districts that, based on their environmental and geographical settings, each serves the Capitol differently.

Dystopian novels are frequently based on actual events. Neither of these analysed novels reflect such examples, however, the authors took inspiration from different periods, wars and regimes to create complex novels that are popular among readers. *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Hunger Games's* significant feature is the position of women and the evolution of their behaviour to fight the political system.

Resumé

Dystopické romány jsou velmi populární od druhé poloviny dvacátého století. Díky neblahým událostem, jako jsou například světové války, vznik totalitních režimů, finanční otroctví, popírání svobody slova a další, autoři těchto knih nasbírali inspiraci a vytvořili tak světoznámé romány, které satiricky kritizují skutečnost a reflektují potencionální rizika do budoucna. Mezi tyto autory patří například George Orwell a jeho román *1984* nebo autorka Margaret Atwoodová a její *Příběh služebnice*. Celkové pojetí dystopie vždy vzniklo na základě utopistické myšlenky, která se posléze za pomoci totalitních režimů přetransformuje na utlačovací vládu veškeré společnosti. Teoretická část této práce je soustředěna zejména na vysvětlení a shrnutí potřebných informací ke komplexnímu pochopení dystopických románů *Příběh služebnice* od Margaret Atwoodové a *Hunger Games* od Suzanne Collinsové. Podle Sarah Lefanové dystopickému žánru v minulém století dominovali zejména muži. Na přelomu dvacátého prvního století vznikaly dystopické příběhy, které byly zejména určené pro mladé čtenáře, ale ovlivnily celý vývoj tohoto žánru. Díky autorkám, jako je Suzanne Collinsová, vznikly proslulé romány, které vyzdvihují postavení ženy ve společnosti, a tak ovlivňují mladé dospívající ženy k tomu, aby byly silné a bojovaly tak za rovnoprávnost.

První kapitola této práce pojednává o vzniku a vývoji dystopie jako literárního žánru. I přesto, že pojem dystopie byl teprve použit v roce 1868 Johnem Stuartem Millem během vládní debaty, se tento literární žánr začal formovat již dávno předtím. První velký obrat k dystopii začal během Velké francouzské revoluce v osmnáctém století. Autoři v této době satiricky kritizovali tehdejší vládu a soustředili se na aspekty, které jim nevyhovovaly. Druhý obrat k dystopii se pak soustředil na sociální problémy, které se během osvícenství objevovaly. Poukazovaly na nerovnosti napříč společnostmi a dystopie byla vnímaná více subjektivně. Dystopie dvacátého století je nejvíce známá a populární mezi čtenáři. Romány typu *Fahrenheit 451*, *Farma Zvířat* nebo *1984* ostře kritizovaly tehdejší politický režim. V těchto románech je reflektován strach a vize do budoucna, pokud se režim, který je v dané době diktátorský, nezastaví a bude se vyvíjet dál. Poslední část této kapitoly analyzuje romány *Příběh služebnice* a *Hunger Games* z pohledu, proč jsou považovány za dystopické. Analýza se soustředí zejména na typické aspekty dystopie jako žánru a za pomoci úryvků z knih vysvětluje uvedené symboly definující tento směr. Jedná se o totalitní vládu, která má

moc nad veškerým bytím v daném státě, strach z trestu, stres, manipulativnost, naprostá oddanost státu a další roviny, kterou jsou typické pro romány stejného žánru.

Druhá kapitola popisuje vývoj a pozici ženy v literatuře. Na přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století, byly ženy zobrazovány v knihách jako neaktivní postavy, které stály ve stínu mužů. V té době patriarchální společnost nedovolovala ženám rovnost s muži, ba ani žádnou samostatnost, a tak byly taky zobrazovány. Díky feministickým hnutím se vše ale změnilo. Celá kapitola začíná shrnutím prvních dvou vln feminismu, jakožto klíčové události pro rovnoprávnost žen v literatuře. Během dvacátého století se tak začal vyvíjet pojem *New Woman*, který popisuje ženu jako nezávislou, silnou a emancipovanou. I přesto, že tento termín byl kritizován některými tehdejšími muži, pozice ženy v literatuře se i nadále vyvíjela a dospěla tak do bodu, jak je známe v současnosti. V této části práce je věnovaná pozornost i ženám, které jsou zobrazovány ve vybraných románech. V knize *Příběh služebnice* je žena představená jako objekt společnosti, který je umlčován a slouží tak vyššímu principu státu – reprodukci. Veškerá lidská práva jsou ženám odebrána a ženy jsou vykreslovány jako spodina společnosti, sexuální otrokyně, služebnice k čemukoliv a komukoliv. Naopak v trilogii *Hunger Games* je pozice ženy naprosto jiná. Katniss Everdeen je silnou emancipovanou dospívající ženou, která díky událostem získá svou sílu a hlas změnit celou politickou situaci. Rozdíly ve zobrazení ženy má svůj důvod. Atwoodová se snažila poukázat na rozdíly mezi mužem a ženou a poukázat na fakt, že ve světě není rovnoprávnost. Naopak Suzanne Collinsová se snažila vytvořit postavu Katniss Everdenovou takový způsobem, aby dokázala inspirovat mladé ženy k tomu, aby byly více samy sebou.

V poslední kapitole se práce soustředí na politický systém ve vybraných románech. Jsou zde analyzovány tři perspektivy politického režimu. První perspektiva je definování vládního systému. V obou knihách je vláda zobrazena jako velice totalitní. V obou případech vláda má kontrolu nad veškerou legislativní i výkonnou mocí státu. O chodu státu rozhoduje hrstka vyvolených nebo jedinec a občané nemohou projevit svůj vlastní postoj proti danému režimu či vládě, jinak budou potrestáni. Podobné jednání vladařů bylo během všech světových válek. Strach hraje obrovskou roli v totalitních režimech. Je to nástroj, který udrží lidi poslušné, oddané, manipulativní a tresty za porušení zákonů, vyhlášek, předpisů a všech nařízení mají velký vliv zastrašit celou společnost. Následující perspektiva přímo specifikuje daný typ vlády. Díky evidencím v knihách je možno určit fakt, že v knize *Příběh služebnice* je popsán oligarchický typ vlády a v knize *Hunger Games* se jedná o čistou diktaturu. Poslední

část této práce je věnovaná ideologii samotné vlády a celkové dopady jednání vlády na společnost. Gilead je teologický stát s cílem zajistit reprodukcí společnost, která nadále bude ctít boha. Celá společnost je cíli přizpůsobena a rozdělaná do několik tříd. Ženy jsou zde rozděleny na několik tříd, jako například služebnice nebo Marty. Všechny tyto skupiny se považují za spodinu společnosti a mají vždy pouze jen jedno poslání, a to sloužení svým oligarchickým bohatým pánům. Jak již bylo zmíněno, ženy zde nemají absolutně žádná práva a musejí sloužit státní ideologii nebo budou poslání na smrt. Co se týče knihy *Hunger Games*, tak stát byl vytvořen na základě války, tudíž zde není vyšší důvod, jen přežít. Společnost zde není tak komplexně rozdělena, a právě naopak je rozdělený celý stát do dvanácti krajů. Každý kraj slouží různými způsoby hlavnímu centru – Kapitolu. Průmysly a manufaktura každého z kraje zaleží na geografickém umístění státu, takže například dvanáctý kraj se soustředí na těžbu černého uhlí. Naopak první kraj díky bohatství vyrábí drahé šperky pro Kapitol.

Práce pojednává o dvou významných a celosvětově známých dystopických románech. I navzdory tomu, že obě knihy jsou napsány ženou, pozice a zobrazení ženské protagonistky je zcela odlišné. V obou dvou případech může ale čtenář pocítit patriarchální společnost, která je závislá na své vládě, i když místy nedobrovolně. Co se týče vládních systému, oba příběhy popisují totalitní státy, jejichž vláda pouze slouží sobě, ale ne ve prospěch všech.

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