



A Choice that Transforms Human -A Study of the Protagonist in Veronica Roth's Divergent.

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *This paper explores the protagonist's quest for identity and her inner conflict towards choosing her own faction. She is caught between the desire to choose Dauntless (the brave) and Abnegation (the selfless). Initially the protagonist does not understand what Divergent means or why it is dangerous for others including her. She eventually comes to realize that things are not clear as she expected and also she really might be in danger being Divergent. In Chicago where the protagonist lives, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue they are Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). Children are brought up in their own factions until their 16th year where they chose which faction they will spend the rest of their life, never going back. Beatrice the protagonist makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself. Beatrice choose the one which her parents never expected thereby she was at conflict and this paper focuses more on her conflicts and eventually it projects how she works hard and successfully finishes all her trining to sustain her own faction.*

In the contemporary period there is a remarkable shift from stories which showed realistic events and situations in order to portray the inner experiences and sometimes irrational psychology of human beings. It is important to know that, there are two major qualities which mark this shift: 1.The Quest for Self Identity, and 2. Expressionism.

There is a fact which we need to know about Contemporary American Literature is unlike classical dramas where the heroes goes on a quest for some object or symbol out in the world where as, characters or protagonist in the contemporary literature is always on a quest for Self Identity and it has been present in the Novels, Short Stories and Dramas since 18th century. The problem of identity is one of the most critical factors in most of the American fictions.

Young Adult Fiction is an increasingly important genre of children's literature. The novels are written directly to children and young adults for the purpose of both reading and learning. Some of the most important themes found in young adult fiction are about: Coming of age, Self discovery, Science-Fiction, Quest for Identity, First Love and numerous others. Some issues discussed in Young Adult Literature include: Friendship, Love, Race, Money, Divorce, Relationships within families. The culture that surrounds and absorbs young adults plays a huge role in their lives. Young Adult Literature explores themes which are important and critical to adolescence such as relationships to authority figures, peer pressure and ensuing experimentations, issues of diversity as it relates to gender, socio-cultural, and or socioeconomic status. Primarily, the focus is centered on a young lead character and the reader experiences emotions, situations, and the like through this character and is able to see how these problems/situations are resolved. Young Adult Fiction shares present day societies some of the most painful anxieties and contradictions.

Young Adult Fiction puts young readers in the most important position of the literary movement by acknowledging and celebrating the real life problems and issues of young people. Divergent is the debut novel of American Novelist Veronica Roth set in post-apocalyptic Chicago. Today's Chi-

cago, too, is a segmented city, but it does not have separate addresses for its identities for the way New York does. It places huge importance on coming to terms with one's own identity.

Veronica Roth is graduated from North Western University with a degree in creative writing. While she was a student she often chose to work on the story that would become Divergent, instead of doing her home work. It is indeed a transforming choice. Now she is a full time writer. Divergent is the first novel in Veronica Roth's debut trilogy of the same name, followed by Insurgent and Allegiant. Since its publication in April 2011, it has won numerous awards, including Favorite Book of 2011 in the 2011 Good reads Choice Awards, the Sakura Medal Contest, and was voted number one in the Teens' Top Ten sponsored by YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association). It spent a number of weeks on the New York Times' Children and Young Adult Best Seller lists, and has been widely well-received by critics.

"One choice can transform you" is the most defining statement for the book Divergent. In a future Chicago society is broken into five Factions: Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Erudite (the intelligent), Candor (the honest) and Amity (the peace).

These are the five factions which carry out the daily duties of civilized living. Abnegation which is in control of the government, Dauntless which is in charge of security both inside the city and at the city walls, Amity which grows most of the food and fills the role of caregivers, Erudite which is in charge of education and research and Candor which is in control of law and justice.

The faction system is introduced to us as a way in which groups of people dedicate themselves to different virtues. Each faction told in Divergent, was found on the belief that a specific vice was to blame for the world's evils. Those who blamed dishonesty formed Candor, those who blamed cowardice became the Dauntless, those who wanted to avoid selfishness became Abnegation, those who

don't want to be ignorant became Erudite; and those who hate aggression became Amity. In this sense the choosing ceremony, teenagers are asked to decide which virtue they want to live in their future. Children are brought up in their parent's faction until their 16 years. Once they turn sixteen years they have to choose which faction going to have for the rest of their life.

Divergent has been praised for its original, fast-paced plot, its readability, and its powerful message of discovering one's identity in the midst of conformity. Divergent tells the story of a society in which citizens live in factions and devote their lives to cultivating one of five virtues: Honesty, Intelligence, Peacemaking, Selflessness, or Bravery. Though she does not comfortably fit into any one category, Tris leaves her family behind to join a faction different than the one she grew up in, relaying themes about belonging, personal choices, and values.

In Divergent, choice of faction defines more than anything else does. Every one of her fellow sixteen-year olds has the option to choose as well, not according to social pressure and not according to their test results, but according to their own values. They chose according to what they want to be rather than who their family and history has made them. Beatrice, sixteen-year old protagonist of the novel was born and raised in Abnegation (the selfless) faction who is conflicted about which faction to choose for the future. She says to herself looking at the mirror,

I stare into my own eyes for a moment. Today is the day of the aptitude test that will show me which of the five factions I belong in. And tomorrow, at the Choosing Ceremony, I will decide on a faction; I will decide the rest of my life; I will decide to stay with my family or abandon them (DIV 2).

In Divergent the protagonist's parents are not allowed to discuss the test or the results which means there is no pressure for their children to comfort them so that they can look deep within themselves and discover what their true desires are. She is conflicted about either to stay in the faction who she is raised or to choose some other faction. She feels that she never truly belonged to Abnegation faction. In the beginning of the novel Beatrice takes an aptitude test which will help her to choose her own Faction. Though her aptitude test is inconclusive she could be a match to Abnegation (the selfless), Erudite (the intelligent) and Dauntless (the brave).

The thing is, though everyone in her city has a choice to choose their own factions he/ she is not able to choose right one which fits them for the rest of their life. Sometimes over decisions have more to do with emotions than logic. There is lot of factors which happens in the protagonist's decision such as aptitude, skill, desire, passion and family values. That's why it is called a choosing ceremony. In chapter three of the novel the author gives a clear meaning for being Divergent.

People who get this kind of result are...' She looks over her shoulder like she expects someone to appear behind her. '...are called...Divergent.' She says the last word so quietly that I almost don't hear it, and her tense, worried look returns (DIV 22).

The Divergent displays aptitude for multiple factions. At this moment, Beatrice is faced with the first major choice out of many she will have to make: which faction should

she choose? She also learns how dangerous it is to be Divergent.

She is caught between the desire to choose Dauntless and the expectation she will choose Abnegation. On the day of choosing ceremony, Beatrice chose Dauntless because she feels it will allow her to discover her true self. She feels that she does not feel at home in Abnegation she longs to feel free and Dauntless seemed to be free thereby so chose Dauntless. She decides to join Dauntless—partly because she doesn't feel selfless enough to be a good Abnegation; and partly because her test result showed that she was Divergent, meaning she doesn't really fit in with any one faction.

Joining dauntless faction alone isn't enough all the initiates have to train and compete to get into the faction they choose for the rest of their life. Those who do not complete initiation into their new faction become "Faction less", and are forced to live in poverty on the streets of the city. Their Dauntless instructor, Four, explains that not all the dauntless initiates will enter the Dauntless faction, only the top ten will stay while the rest will be dismissed and become faction less.

Once in Dauntless she adopts a new name called Tris. Tris is a Strong Willed Courageous and Reluctant to show weakness especially during her initiation into Dauntless. She has been warned that it would bring danger to herself and everyone she knows. She says herself; a new place, a new name. I can be remade here. 'Tris,' I say firmly (DIV 60).

In this moment, not only does Tris adopt her new name, but she adopts a new self. By rejecting her plain Abnegation name, Tris shows her desire to move on and fully immerse herself in the new world she has chosen. If she had not taken a first step towards giving up her old life, she undoubtedly would have had a much harder time fitting in with the Dauntless. In order to fully prepare herself, she has to completely differentiate herself from the person she was once told to be - and from the family that named her. This is yet another of her life-altering choices, a choice that changes her identity entirely.

Initiation is broken into three stages. The first involves learning how to handle guns and knives as well as engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the other initiates. Despite being physically weaker than most of her fellow initiates, Tris finishes the stage in sixth place. Stage two involves simulations, similar to the aptitude tests, being a Divergent, Tris recognizes that she is under a simulation while others do not and she was ranked first. The final stage of their initiation is a fear landscape. The final stage was very difficult for Tris because of her divergent. Tris eventually overcomes all the six fears in her fear landscape. At the end of initiation the final rankings are posted, and Tris discovers she has been ranked first.

Tris develops her identity through her relationships with her friends and family. While she was doing well in her new Faction she still feels strong ties to the family she left behind. Tris spends the entire novel struggling to come to terms with the fact that because of her divergence none of the faction will ever truly define her the way they do for others. This thought clearly revealed in the book. Tris says,

I feel like someone breathed new air into my lungs. I am

not Abnegation. I am not dauntless. I am Divergent (DIV 442).

At this moment, while all her fellow mates are under the simulation that she is not affected to, destroying the entire infrastructure of the factions, Tris finally accepts that she will never belong solely to one faction no matter how hard she tries. In Tris's world there is no trial period no chance for her to see what each faction really does before she chooses where to spend the rest of her life. Since her Choosing Day, she dedicated so much of her time to becoming pure Dauntless, but she was never able to shake away the Abnegation that was inborn within her.