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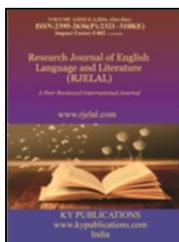
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SELF DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY OF CHARACTERS AS
PORTRAYED IN VERONICA ROTH'S DIVERGENT

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ABSTRACT

Veronica Roth's Divergent is a science fiction, set in post apocalyptic version of Chicago. The novel starts with the legend 'One Choice Can Transform You'. Life of Beatrice 'Tris' Prior, is unveiled slowly. The society of the time is said to have divided into five factions: Amity ,whose members work in farms, Candor, the faction that values honesty, Dauntless ,who are in charge of guarding the city from enemies, Abnegation, who practice selfless sacrifice, and Erudite, who make up a group of excellent scholars. At the age of sixteen every youngster of a family is given an opportunity to choose a new faction. Beatrice's decision to quit the faction she was born into, to embrace a more challenging one changes, her destiny forever. This analysis seeks to focus on her trials and tribulations in her new faction, and tries to understand the change brought about in her personality, as she is exposed to the same. Similar attention is given to the fate of other minor characters like Tris's brother, Caleb and her fellow faction transfers as well as other dauntless born initiates. Each of the tests devised increases her resilience and mettle. She makes a lot of shocking discoveries, including details about the previous faction of her mother and father. Tris Prior also becomes romantically involved with 'Four', her stern instructor. She delves into his past and comes upon several astounding revelations. Her metamorphosis from a person constantly guided and admonished by her parents to be a selfless personality, to an assertive person is focused on and analysed in this research paper. Similar choices of some minor characters too is analysed. The novel is part of a trilogy, which has been successfully transformed into a film. Its structure is all the more complex than other novels with similar themes because of the instance of choice being given to the member of that post apocalyptic society to choose their faction which is not seen in other works.

Keywords: post apocalyptic, science fiction, self discovery.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Veronica Roth's novel Divergent begins by introducing the central character Beatrice and her mother Beatrice and her brother Caleb is about to choose their new factions in a choosing ceremony. Beatrice fears that she will have to change faction,as

she finds it difficult to cope with the extreme norms of her current one .members of the faction Abnegation are advised to be selfless in all they do. And view the faction less with greater compassion than the other factions. Beatrice realises , that she is too inquisitive, and assertive for her own good



unlike her, modest brother and in the simulation test before the choosing ceremony, she becomes aware to her shock that she is a divergent, that is her results remain inconclusive, and that she has aptitude for three different factions. She is forced to make her choice, and face the consequences that follows.

2. An assertion of personality

Beatrice and Caleb Prior chooses a different life from that of their parents. And that rips apart that little family for ever, placing Abnegation faction and the values they seek to perpetrate under severe criticism. From the time she is asked to jump on to a running train to reach the Dauntless headquarters, Beatrice is forced to prove herself again and again. She realizes that each and every choice of her's matter, and she has to be very careful ,as one small flaw can cost her a lot in her new faction. She'd either have to pay with her life or risk being factionless. Unlike the other factions, one's choice of faction is only a preliminary stage among the Dauntless, and after the completion of all the tests ,one's value will be determined, if found unfit, the candidates will become factionless.

Beatrice is taunted constantly and called a 'stiff', a slang used for referring to members of her previous faction. She becomes more daring, yet starts enjoying her newfound freedom, all the while realizing that both of them had disappointed her parents.Caleb prior had chosen the faction which constantly used to berate, members of Abnegation faction .He had chosen to be an Erudite.

Beatrice is forced to jump off the train on to a roof, and sees the dreadful fate of two unlucky members. One is killed ,while a faction transfer from Amity, refuses to jump, there by becoming faction less. A fate considered worse than death. She braves all the teasing, and become the legendary 'first jumper'. She dares jump down a big hole from a great height in order to reach the headquarters, while all others stood cold footed.She chooses a new name, to suit her new surroundings and new demeanor. She rechristens herself 'Tris'.

Being from an extra conservative family, she is shown feeling a longing for her family,and her room in her house, as she is forced to share a dormitory now with the male members of the

faction. She is found deliberating, "Maybe my problem isn't that I can't go home. I will miss my mother and father and Caleb..., but that is not the only reason for this hollow feeling in my stomach. My problem might be that even if I did go home, I wouldn't belong there, among people who give without thinking and care without trying"(34). She encounters a lot of difficulty in changing herself to suit the lifestyle of the members of her new faction. Used to simple food she is shocked when she first sees unfamiliar stuff like burgers, and is wary, when she is asked to put on figure hugging cloths unlike the loose unassuming gray ones she was accustomed to wear back home. She evens succumbs to macho tastes like tattooing her body, and gets used to being surrounded by boisterous friends ,loud conversation and laughter . She becomes more daring and pointed in her speech.

In her first assignment she fails to shoot at the target even once. Tris succeeds in overcoming her fear,and when one of the initiates taunts her by saying, "Statistically speaking, you should have hit the target at least *once* by now, even by accident.... I think you're actually defying nature"(36).She responds by showing resolve, and steadying her mind. She manages to hit the target.

Her stint with boxing too is equally pathetic at first, till she realizes her strong point, her plus factor, which is her small size and speed and wins a crucial match. This match was also an opportunity to avenge one previous humiliating molestation attempt she faces, when a gang of callous initiates headed by Peter and Molly strips her of her clothes and laughs at her child like body.She was always pitied and cared for by her other faction transfer friends because of her small size and child like bearing , but when she comes first after a particularly difficult test, they accuses her of hoodwinking them by showing bodily weakness.

These are all important learning platforms offered to her at her new home. Her feathers are ruffled, and she is forced to come out of her safe zone, and to get a grip on reality. Now there is no family to protect her, nor can she turn to them, as the dictate of the society is 'faction before blood'. She has to find her own path, make her own choices. When, in a desperate moment she tries to seek the

help of her brother by going to Erudite headquarters, she realizes the uselessness of it all, when captured by the authorities and an explanation for abandoning her faction is sought from her.

She dares expose herself to danger by taking the place of her friend Albert, who was punished by a callous leader called, Eric. She stands instead of him in front of the target, and lets knives be thrown at her. Once she also climbs a giant Ferris wheel to find a hidden object, and thereby gives her group an opportunity to win another trial.

Tris is devastated, when her friend for whom she was ready to risk her life, cheats her by siding with the enemy block, and hatches a plot to kill her by throwing her into the deep chasm. She is sexually assaulted too, and is rescued, through the timely intervention of her lover and instructor, Four.

She realizes from her refusal to forgive Albert that she has changed a lot. She muses "Somewhere inside me is a merciful, forgiving person. Somewhere there is a girl who tries to understand what people are going through, who accepts that people do evil things and that desperation leads them to darker places than they ever imagined. I swear she exists, and she hurts for the repentant boy I see in front of me. But if I saw her, I wouldn't recognize her" (124).

She successfully fights all the illusions during further simulation tests she undergoes. And helps her lover and instructor Four, in fighting and conquering his four fears and discovers to her surprise that he was in fact, the son of an Abnegation leader called Marcus. Moreover, Tris is forced to disguise the fact that she is a divergent to protect herself. She undergoes severe mental trauma, when both her parents, including her mother (who is revealed to be another divergent), gets killed in a war that follows the Initiation ceremony.

Her courage and belief in their mutual love helps Tris stay calm even when attacked by her Four her lover, who fails to recognize her, due to the effect of the serum he is injected with. Her sincerity helps him overcome the control of the serum, and facilitates their escape. In each and every instance of the novel we see the central character, Tris

transforming into an assertive personality, reacting boldly to every thing and encountering all the tasks courageously and with her head held high. The metamorphosis and the thirst for self discovery of the character is evident to the very end of the novel.

3. Personality development of the minor characters

Caleb Prior and other minor characters like Albert, Christina, William, Edward, Myra and Uriah changes and develops their own unique personalities, when they face trials in their new faction. Some retain their goodness and integrity, while some others succumb to the pressure of the situation and become downright callous. Some of them like Peter and Drew are evil and selfish from the beginning and remain so till the end. Albert, whom formerly used to be friendly with Tris primarily because of the need he feels to protect her, as she was the smallest and unlikeliest to succeed in the entire group, becomes downright antagonistic, when she outsmarts him in the tests. When he faces the threat of expulsion, he decides to frighten her, by joining hands with Peter. He commits suicide when she refuses to forgive him. Edward's and Myra's is a different case altogether. Peter pushes a butter knife down Edward's eye, as a revenge for usurping the first position. Edward is ruined for ever and decides to embrace the fate of the faction less. His lover Myra leaves with him. His is a good example of what would happen, if competition goes out of hand and becomes unhealthy. Christina and Will, refuses to accept Tris when she tops the chart. Though they were ready to sympathize when she reveals she was molested. They found it unable to tolerate, when they felt she was better than them in one way or the other. Will is, eventually killed by Tris herself, when he aims to shoot her under the influence of simulation.

4. Conclusion

The novel shows the development of the personality of Tris Prior. It shows her quest for self discovery. It underscores how the choice a person makes can change them for ever, for better or for worse. The novel also indirectly opines the necessity for every competition to remain healthy.

5. Reference

Roth, V. (2014). *Divergent*. London: HarperCollins.