

# The Shaping of Identity in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels and Veronica Roth's Divergent trilogy

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Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij Engleskog jezika i književnosti i  
Njemačkog jezika i književnosti

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Rowling te trilogiji *Različita* Veronice Roth**

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Mentorica: doc. dr. sc. Ljubica Matek

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Bachelor's Thesis

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## **Abstract**

In addition to being interesting and educational, Children's and Young Adult literature frequently also has a psychological and emotional role for their readers. When having problems or doubts in life, (young) people tend to escape their world by reading books and imagining themselves in another universe. In their novels, J. K. Rowling and Veronica Roth made up two fantasy worlds for the readers to escape to: the Harry Potter universe and the imaginary, dystopian post-war Chicago respectively. In both, the characters are divided into several groups according to their ambitions and personality traits. In the center of J. K. Rowling's work, is a young orphan wizard, Harry Potter, who enters the magical world thanks to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and makes lifelong friendships within his House. On the other hand, Veronica Roth depicts Tris (Beatrice), who has trouble fitting in in an imposed faction system. Having been assigned into specific circles or schools, the protagonists are set to behave and mature in a certain way. This paper will explore how the categorization of the characters influences the molding of their identities in order to show that being assigned to a specific group largely determines the path by which one's identity will be formed.

Keywords: J. K. Rowling, Veronica Roth, Harry Potter, Divergent, identity

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## Introduction

J. K. Rowling published her first *Harry Potter* novel (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*) on 26 June 1997. Over the next ten years she published six more novels, making it a series of seven. The series tells a story of a young wizard who finds out about his magical origin and attempts to defeat a dark wizard once and for all.

Veronica Roth's trilogy, *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012), and *Allegiant* (2013) tells the story of a young Tris Prior who lives in postwar Chicago and tries to fight the faction system while also trying to find her path in life. What links these two authors, more specifically, these two series of novels, is the fact that both series divide their characters into groups. They are divided according to their preexisting abilities and characteristics, and also according to their own choosing. This paper will show that such a social organization, that is a division of people into groups, influences the protagonists of the series in the same way: their identities being affected and shaped according to the personality traits of their House or faction.

The first chapter will give insight into what identity means and what types of identity there are. The second chapter will explain the means and methods the two authors use to divide their characters into certain groups. It will also emphasize the importance of division as a way of shaping the identity. The following chapter will analyze the existing Houses and factions, and the traits that their members have. The final two chapters will interpret the traits and characteristics of the Houses and factions through characters that are sorted into them. The conclusion is the last part of the paper that will explain how identities are greatly influenced by the division of people into various groups.

## 1. Social Identity in Selected Novels

Identity can be defined in many ways. The *Cambridge Dictionary* says that identity is “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others” (“Identity”). On the other hand, *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines it as: “the distinguishing character or personality of an individual” (“Identity”). According to C. H. Thompson, there are five different types of identity: individual, social, collective, multiple, and stigmatized identity (“Different Types of Identity”). The type of identity this paper is exploring is social identity:

Social identity is a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s). Tajfel (1979) proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world. . . . Henri Tajfel proposed that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together. (McLeod)

It follows that social identity is at the center of *Harry Potter* novels and *Divergent* trilogy, where people are divided into groups according to their preexisting characteristics, and who, then, are further shaped by their peers. This is not surprising, as the target audience are children, teenagers, and young adults, all of whom are actively trying to establish their social identity in the process of growing up and maturation. Consequently, to appeal to the readers, the protagonists are shown as children and young people in coming-of-age stories on their way to find and develop their identity.

## 2. Division Ceremonies

According to Gustavo Razzetti, “There are two ways to lead people and drive impact. One way is by dividing people. . . . Another way to lead is by uniting people” (“There Are Two Ways to Lead People”). Rowling and Roth chose to divide their characters into groups according to their personal traits so that they could, in a way, fit in with the rest of the citizens or wizards. In other words, the idea is to find the most suitable position and purpose for an individual so that they can find fulfillment and contribute to the society in a meaningful way. Although it is not as formalized as in the selected novels, the entire real-life process of education and socialization has the same purpose: to enable a person to realize their potential and create a place for themselves in the society in which they live. It is the act of the division itself that decides on the future of character, the direction in which his or her identity would develop, and because of the importance of this act, it takes place in the form of a ceremony: Rowling describes the Sorting Ceremony, whereas Roth depicts the Choosing Ceremony.

### 2.1 Sorting Ceremony

The Sorting Ceremony at Hogwarts is an event that happens every year at the beginning of the term to determine into which House the student will be sorted: “‘Welcome to Hogwarts,’ said Professor McGonagall. ‘The start-of-term banquet will begin shortly, but before you take your seats in the Great Hall, you will be sorted into your Houses. The Sorting is a very important ceremony because, while you are here, your House will be something like your family within Hogwarts’” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 114). The importance of the House is highlighted by the fact that it is referred to as the student’s family. This way, the House functions as the setting in which a child or a young person develops under the influence of their peers and the adults in charge of them. This greatly influences the development of their identities because every member of the House owns a spectrum of special features characteristic for that House.

The sorting in Hogwarts is done by the Sorting Hat, “one of the cleverest enchanted objects most witches and wizards will ever meet” (Rowling “The Sorting Hat”). It originally belonged to one of the four founders of Hogwarts, Godric Gryffindor. Rowling states that “it was jointly enchanted by all four founders to ensure that students would be sorted into their eponymous houses, which would be selected according to each founder’s particular preferences in students” (“The Sorting Hat”). Also, the Sorting Hat is able to talk and that is how it expresses

whether the student will be sorted into one of the four Houses as Hogwarts: Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, or Slytherin, which will be discussed later on.

## 2.2 Choosing Ceremony

Like J. K. Rowling, Veronica Roth also resorted to dividing her characters into groups which she calls factions: “Welcome to the Choosing Ceremony. Welcome to the day we honor the democratic philosophy of our ancestors, which tells us that every man has the right to choose his own way in this world.’ Or, it occurs to me, one of five predetermined ways” (Roth, *Divergent* 29). However, unlike Rowling, Roth decided to let her characters choose their factions for themselves; even though there is a test that indicates where they would fit best, the characters can still make the final decision on their own: “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” (*Divergent* 10). This enables the characters in the *Divergent* trilogy to develop their character, that is their identity, more freely because they are able to reject the suggestion and choose differently, according to their wishes and preferences, rather than their innate abilities.

Also, the very act of selection is completely different than that described in Rowling’s novels. While Rowling uses a completely noninvasive way through the Sorting Hat, which is a magical object, Roth favors a more objective approach; the protagonists first take an aptitude test, and later confirm their choice with blood: they must cut their palm and drip a drop of blood over the logo of the faction they choose. In that way, they “seal the deal” and are no longer able to change their mind: “The consequences are twofold: spilling one’s blood marks the high stakes implicit in this decision and underscores the commitment pledges made to the new factions; at the same time, it signals the rejection of the notion of blood family. As the popular mantra printed in the Faction History textbook taught at Tris’s school reiterates: “Faction before blood” (43)” (Lee and Alexander 391). In other words, the characters exchange their biological family for their faction, a chosen family, which, to a certain extent, mirrors the process of growing up and becoming an adult who chooses their friends and, later on, a partner. Their development and shaping begins at that moment because it is only now that they start to live their lives on their own and develop their attitudes and thoughts under the influence of the faction they live in.

### 3. Features of Houses and Factions

#### 3.1 Hogwarts Houses

As mentioned earlier in the paper, Hogwarts is divided into four Houses: Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and Slytherin. Each House fosters different values and joins students of different temperament and features, and although the children are formally divided, ultimately the novels show their young readers that everyone is valuable and that everyone has qualities that make them worthy members of the wizarding community.

##### 3.1.1 Gryffindor

Bravery, helping others, and chivalry – those are the three main traits of the Gryffindor House in Hogwarts. It was founded by Godric Gryffindor who was proud that his House was the one that had the students with these traits (Tran). The Sorting Hat describes the Gryffindor House with the following verses: “You might belong in Gryffindor,/ Where dwell the brave at heart,/ Their daring, nerve, and chivalry/ Set Gryffindors apart” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 118). Standing up for their friends, defending the innocent, practicing kindness, and care are the qualities that describe the students who belong to Gryffindor. According to Tran “[t]hey would put the people they love ahead of themselves first and would do anything to ensure their safety. . . . Gryffindors are very pure of heart, meaning that while they’re not constantly all-around perfect and good . . . they have high moral standards and instinctively want to do the right thing.” Gryffindor is the most mentioned House in the series, but that is to be expected considering the fact that the three main characters, Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ronald Weasley, all belong to the Gryffindor House. Alongside to them are Neville Longbottom, Fred and George Weasley, Ginny Weasley, and the most famous professors from the Gryffindor House, Minerva McGonagall and Albus Dumbledore. To quote Tran once more:

Overall, while Gryffindors may not often think before they speak sometimes, their intentions are not often to truly hurt another person—they’re simply the kind of people who get caught up in the moment and this may cause them to do things they don’t really intend. The regret they feel afterward would hurt strongly because once they have the time or chance to think about their words or actions, their emotions take hold and their guilt is nearly unbearable.

All in all, a Gryffindor's life mission is simply this: To make a difference, to make history, and to have plenty of fun in the process. ("An In-Depth Analysis")

### 3.1.2 Ravenclaw

The next House in Hogwarts is Ravenclaw which the Sorting Hat describes as possessing knowledge, intelligence and wisdom: "Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,/ If you've a ready mind,/ Where those of wit and learning,/ Will always find their kind" (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* 118). The founder of this House is Rowena Ravenclaw and members of her House "have a strong sense of house identity and fellowship" (Lane). Tran describes them in the following way:

Ravenclaws are well-known for their wit, wisdom, cleverness, intellectual ability and creativity. Rowena Ravenclaw housed the wizarding world's greatest inventors, artists, and innovators. However, their strong academic intellect does not necessarily define the Ravenclaw house—it is their desire to gain knowledge at every opportunity. Their thirst for knowledge is not just to fulfill their ambitions and achieve greatness but rather to gain knowledge for knowledge's sake. ("An In-Depth Analysis")

They acquire knowledge to understand the world and everything around them. Their ambition is just a path towards understanding the magical realm they live in. Ravenclaws are also well-read, reasonable, a little bit eccentric at times, and sometimes even arrogant: "While Ravenclaws are very intelligent people, some of them can succumb to arrogance and use their intellect as a justification to view themselves as being better than others" (Tran). Among the few Ravenclaws mentioned are Cho Chang, Luna Lovegood, and professor Filius Flitwick.

### 3.1.3 Hufflepuff

Helga Hufflepuff founded a House characterized by fair play, patience, and loyalty. The Sorting Hat describes it with the following verses: "You might belong in Hufflepuff,/ Where they are just and loyal,/ Those patient Hufflepuffs are true/ And unafraid of toil" (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* 118). Lane says that "Hufflepuffs are sometimes seen as the underdogs of the Harry Potter world," whereas Tran explains that their lack of ambition is a result of their focus on the actual well-being of students, and not on academic or sporting success: "Helga Hufflepuff was the only one who was willing to look past the competitive nonsense the other

three Houses created and valued Hogwarts as a home for the students, not just as a school of magic” (“An In-Depth Analysis”). Because of their lack of competitive drive, they may not be the most desired House to get sorted into, but many of the great wizards and witches came from that House. For instance, Cedric Diggory was an excellent student, selected by the Goblet of Fire to participate at the Triwizard Tournament. To describe the nature of Hufflepuffs, Tran says:

Hufflepuffs are nurturing people, and you can see this clearly when they’re tending their plants, looking after animals, or cooking homemade food. They’re the embodiment of comfort and all that’s associated with the feelings of home. Just because they don’t outwardly exhibit typical “strong” traits like bravery, sharp intellect, or cunningness, their goodness and kindness are still very powerful weapons. (“An In-Depth Analysis”)

Another great wizard from the House of Hufflepuff is Newt Scamander, who is not mentioned in the *Harry Potter* series but in Rowling’s 2001 guide book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, which she wrote under Scamander’s name. Thus, it is implied that Newt wrote a book about magical creatures. This guide book is used as a textbook at Hogwarts as a part of “Care of Magical Creatures” class.

### 3.1.4 Slytherin

The most notorious House in Hogwarts is Slytherin, founded by Salazar Slytherin. Even the Sorting Hat has some harsh words to describe this House: “Or perhaps in Slytherin/ You’ll make your real friends,/ Those cunning folk use any means/ To achieve their ends” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 118). The traits that adorn the Slytherins are ambition, resourcefulness, heritage, and cunningness. Not many students look forward to being sorted into Slytherin: “‘I don’t suppose Ravenclaw would be too bad, but imagine if they put me in Slytherin.’ ‘That’s the House Vol-, I mean, You-Know-Who was in?’ ‘Yeah,’ said Ron. He flopped back into his seat, looking depressed” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 106-107). The House is infamous because most of the dark wizards and witches originate from this House. They use every possession they have to achieve their means and do not hesitate to do it, which makes them susceptible to evil. Lord Voldemort, born as Tom Marvolo Riddle, and also known as The Dark Lord or You-Know-Who, is the most famous dark wizard from this House and he is also Salazar Slytherin’s descendant.



Nonetheless, being sorted into Slytherin does not mean one will become evil: “However, Slytherins as a whole are not evil by nature and to assume that they are based on several individuals would be incorrect. . . . Slytherins are primarily defined by their strong ambition, self-confidence, and drive. . . . They do not truly mean to hurt people—they may just be incredibly blunt and see no need to mince or sugarcoat words” (Tran). The saying that “you can’t judge a book by its cover” really fits well with the Slytherins. They can be mean, selfish, and evil at times, but they are also good friends. Ultimately, it is clear that the Houses of Hogwarts promote acceptance – both of oneself and of others – which is a very valuable lesson for any young reader.

### 3.2 Divergent Factions

The fictional post-war Chicago of Roth’s dystopian universe is divided into more groups than the magical world of Hogwarts. The factions do not have individual founders but are established by a group of people, in the novels referenced as the Founders, who divided Chicago for the sake of maintaining peace after the war. The five factions are: Abnegation, Erudite, Candor, Amity, and Dauntless. Alongside people who completely fit into one of the factions, there are also the Divergents, who possess qualities compatible with multiple factions, can think independently and cannot be controlled, and Factionless, who lack any status in this fictional society. They are not legitimate factions that can be chosen at the Choosing Ceremony, or something that any of them would choose, but they have their circle of people and can therefore be considered a group of their own.

#### 3.2.1 Abnegation

“Those who blamed selfishness made Abnegation” (*Divergent* 30). The Abnegation faction is a selfless faction and their selflessness results in members of other factions sometimes calling them “Stiffs.” In the first novel of the trilogy, they are the ruling faction, led by Marcus Eaton: “Abnegation has fulfilled our need for selfless leaders in government” (*Divergent* 30). Members of this faction are patient, have a high sense of morality and fell love for other people. Woodward says that: “[t]he Abnegation always put others before themselves. This group of people will always be found giving up their seats on the bus so someone else can sit, dressing in very simple clothes, never looking into mirrors and will always be there when you need a hand”. Borges points out that: “[t]he dystopian society of Chicago is ruled by a council of fifty

people, composed entirely of representatives from Abnegation because their faction is incorruptible, due to their commitment to selflessness”. Their color is grey and “[t]hey must wear all grey loose fitting clothes to not attract attention to themselves” (Borges).

### 3.2.2 Erudite

The second faction are the Erudites. In the post-war world, “[t]hose who blamed ignorance became the Erudite” (*Divergent* 30). They are the intelligent ones, the ones with knowledge, and the ones who consider the human nature to be a weakness: “Erudite has supplied us with intelligent teachers and researchers” (*Divergent* 30). Led by Jeanine Matthews, the Erudite must dedicate themselves to seeking knowledge their entire life: “The Erudite believe that life should be a constant search for knowledge and that wars are fought due to lack of understanding and intelligence. You can find them at the library, making convincing speeches at town hall and always asking questions” (Woodward). Their color is blue: “According to the norms of the faction, it is dictated that a faction member must wear at least one blue article of clothing at a time, because blue causes the body to release calming chemicals which attest to their saying, a calm mind is a clear mind” (Borges).

### 3.2.3 Candor

If one is keen on telling the truth, then one belongs in Candor: “Those who blamed duplicity created Candor” (*Divergent* 30). Candor believes that dishonesty is the main fault and problem in human nature and that everything bad comes from telling lies. That is why their initiates must take the truth serum as a part of their initiation. Their colors are black and white: “The Candor man wears a black suit with a white tie—Candor standard uniform. Their faction values honesty and sees the truth as black and white, so that is what they wear” (*Divergent* 11). Their need for the truth has value in legislation: “Candor has provided us with trustworthy and sound leaders in law” (*Divergent* 30), and their current leader is Jack Kang. All in all, the Candor faction lives the truth: “The Candor consider honesty the best quality a person can have. They absolutely will not lie to you. To them, everything is black or white – honest or a lie. They are known for their ability to lead and are able to read body language to detect lies” (Woodward).

### 3.2.4 Amity

The fourth faction in the Divergent world is Amity: “Those who blamed aggression formed Amity” (*Divergent* 29). The Amity are a peaceful faction. There is nothing more that they hate than the war. The members of their faction want a peaceful society with no rivalry and sorrow, but with love and happiness. They are a democratic and happy faction: “The Amity exchange smiles. They are dressed comfortably, in red or yellow. Every time I see them, they seem kind, loving, free” (*Divergent* 29). They have no leader, but their representative is Johanna Reyes. Although they are all about peace and harmony, they do not get on well with Candor who say: “Those who seek peace above all else, they say, will always deceive to keep the water calm” (*Divergent* 49). They are quite laid back, setting up festivals, singing, and mediating in conflicts (Woodward). They provided Chicago with valuable members of their society: “Amity has given us understanding counselors and caretakers” (*Divergent* 30). And Woodward also points out that they do not take sides in war and give their best to avoid any conflict. (“Divergent: Jobs That Belong with Each Faction”)

### 3.2.5 Dauntless

The faction that secures the peace within the walls of Chicago is the Dauntless: “and Dauntless provides us with protection from threats both within and without” (*Divergent* 30). The Dauntless are a fearless faction who do not stand cowardice: “And those who blamed cowardice were the Dauntless” (*Divergent* 30). They are of the opinion that one should face one's fears and become brave. Therefore, they can be seen jumping from a moving train and, as a part of their initiation, they are exposed to their greatest fears so that they would overcome them: “The Dauntless in the cars ahead of us are jumping out as the train passes a rooftop. The tracks are seven stories up. The idea of leaping out of a moving train onto a rooftop, knowing there is a gap between the edge of the roof and the edge of the track, makes me want to throw up” (*Divergent* 35). They test their courage at the very beginning of their life in Dauntless: “Several stories below us is the members' entrance to our compound. If you can't muster the will to jump off, you don't belong here. Our initiates have the privilege of going first” (*Divergent* 37). All in all, “The Dauntless strive to become fearless and consider bravery the most desirable aspect a person can possess” (Woodward).

### 3.2.6 Divergent

The Divergent are not a faction per se, but a group of persons who have the ability for and tendency toward more than one faction, making their aptitude test results inconclusive: “‘My conclusion,’ she explains, ‘is that you display equal aptitude for Abnegation, Dauntless, and Erudite. People who get this kind of result are...’ She looks over her shoulder like she expects someone to appear behind her. ‘...are called ...Divergent’” (*Divergent* 20). Being Divergent in the faction system is seen as extremely dangerous, and the ones who get that result on their aptitude test are either killed instantly or warned not to tell it to anyone: “‘This is different. I don’t mean you shouldn’t share them now; I mean you should never share them with anyone, ever, no matter what happens. Divergence is extremely dangerous’” (*Divergent* 20). The Divergent do not conform to a certain way of thinking promoted and accepted by the leaders of their society, and that is why they represent danger to them: “‘Among other things, you...you are someone who is aware, when they are in a simulation, that what they are experiencing is not real,’ she says. ‘Someone who can then manipulate the simulation or even shut it down’” (*Divergent* 135). Most of the Divergent originate from the Abnegation.

### 3.2.7 Factionless

The Factionless are all the people in Chicago who do not belong in any of the five factions. They are Factionless because they failed to complete their initiation into the chosen faction, and so they effectively remain outsiders:

Just past the Abnegation sector of the city is the stretch of building skeletons and broken sidewalks that I now walk through. There are places where the road has completely collapsed, revealing sewer systems and empty subways that I have to be careful to avoid, and places that stink so powerfully of sewage and trash that I have to plug my nose. This is where the factionless live. (*Divergent* 21)

They live a poor life, with jobs no one else wants: “‘They are janitors and construction workers and garbage collectors; they make fabric and operate trains and drive buses. In return for their work they get food and clothing, but, as my mother says, not enough of either’” (*Divergent* 21). Naturally, none of the initiates wants to or chooses to be factionless. They give their best to achieve their goal and enter the desired faction. To be Factionless means to have a life filled with misery and sorrow: “‘To live factionless is not just to live in poverty and discomfort; it is to live divorced from society, separated from the most important thing in life: community’”

(*Divergent* 19). In this way, the young readers are reminded that everyone needs to find their place in the society and work hard for what they want.

## 4. Characteristics of Individual Houses Through Characters

### 4.1 Harry Potter

Harry Potter is a character that the Sorting Hat had troubles sorting into a House: “‘Hmm,’ said a small voice in his ear. ‘Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There’s talent, oh my goodness, yes — and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that’s interesting. . . . So where shall I put you’” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 121). He was then sorted into Gryffindor. He had traits of both Gryffindor and Slytherin but what prevailed was the existing courage and the desire to make a difference, to help others:

It sensed Voldemort’s presence in Harry. That coupled with his sharp wits would have made him a perfect Slytherin. Harry instinctively knew where he belonged. The courage in his heart and his family legacy made him a perfect Gryffindor. Harry begged the sorting hat to place him anywhere but Slytherin. The hat could feel that bravery and came up with its second choice. (Marshall)

Other traits are visible in the character of Harry Potter, for instance ambition, but they are not as prominent as those of the Gryffindor. Further, Harry, who was maltreated by his uncle, aunt, and cousin from a young age, already had the courage, kindness, and the desire to help others, but those characteristics amplified themselves once he became a member of the Gryffindor house. In his first year he defeated professor Quirrell; in his second he defeated the Basilisk and thus saved a lot of muggleborn students, and in what would have been his seventh year, he defeated Voldemort himself:

Harry heard the high voice shriek as he too yelled his best hope to the heavens, pointing Draco’s wand: “Avada Kedavra!” “Expelliarmus!” . . . And Harry, with the unerring skill of the Seeker, caught the wand in his free hand as Voldemort fell backward, arms splayed, the slit pupils of the scarlet eyes rolling upward. Tom Riddle hit the floor with a mundane finality, his body feeble and shrunken, the white hands empty, the snakelike face vacant and unknowing. Voldemort was dead, killed by his own rebounding curse, and Harry stood with two wands in his hand, staring down at his enemy’s shell. (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 743-744)

## 4.2 Hermione Granger

Hermione was called the brightest witch of her age, but the Sorting Hat placed her in Gryffindor. Because of her intellect and love of learning, she would seem an obvious choice for Ravenclaw: “On the surface, she seems like the perfect Ravenclaw. She cherishes academics and the power of the mind above all else” (Marshall). She also has a major aversion towards rule breaking, which is not so typical for Gryffindor students who have a history of being mischievous: “Hermione was the last person to do anything against the rules” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 178). But deep inside, Hermione is a brave girl with a great sense of what others around her need. By hanging out with the boys, she learned to relax and sometimes break some rules. She showed great courage in all seven of the novels, but her most underappreciated act of bravery is that she deleted herself from her parents’ memory in the final book, so that they would be safe from Voldemort. It took a lot of courage and love to enable her to do that: “‘I’ve also modified my parents’ memories so that they’re convinced they’re really called Wendell and Monica Wilkins, and that their life’s ambition is to move to Australia, which they have now done. That’s to make it more difficult for Voldemort to track them down and interrogate them about me — or you, because unfortunately, I’ve told them quite a bit about you’” (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 96-97).

## 4.3 Neville Longbottom

Maybe not an obvious Gryffindor, but Neville is the best example of how courage lies even in the most withdrawn and quietest students. He was an average, inconspicuous boy searching for himself and his purpose in life. He stood up to Harry, Hermione, and Ron when they snuck out again. He wanted to stop them so that they would not hurt the Gryffindor reputation again: “‘You can’t go out,’ said Neville, ‘you’ll be caught again. Gryffindor will be in even more trouble.’ ‘You don’t understand,’ said Harry, ‘this is important.’ But Neville was clearly steeling himself to do something desperate. ‘I won’t let you do it,’ he said, hurrying to stand in front of the portrait hole. ‘I’ll — I’ll fight you’” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 272). To quote Professor Dumbledore: “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 306). Neville is an example of how: “[c]ourage is not the absence of fear. Courage is the will to carry on no matter how scared you are. Neville had the guts to stand up to his friends for what he thought was right. That’s no easy task for a young guy” (Marshall).

But the true development of his identity comes to prominence at the end of the series. From being a small, scared boy, Neville grew up to be a hero. During his final year at Hogwarts, Neville stood up for his fellow students more than once. For instance, he refused to do the Cruciatus Curse on the students who earned detentions and was hence tortured with the same one: “‘We’re supposed to practice the Cruciatus Curse on people who’ve earned detentions — ’ ‘What?’ Harry, Ron, and Hermione’s united voices echoed up and down the passage. ‘Yeah,’ said Neville. ‘That’s how I got this one,’ he pointed at a particularly deep gash in his cheek, ‘I refused to do it’” (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 573-574). The biggest and truest act of bravery was killing Nagini during the battle of Hogwarts so that Voldemort could be stopped once and for all. That was the moment when Neville became a hero and a moment in which it was obvious that the Sorting Hat was not wrong, and that Neville truly is a real Gryffindor.

#### 4.4 Draco Malfoy

Draco was a Slytherin even before the Sorting Hat had touched his head: “Malfoy swaggered forward when his name was called and got his wish at once: the hat had barely touched his head when it screamed, ‘SLYTHERIN’” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* 120). He is ambitious, resourceful, comes from a wealthy family, and that last fact enables him to feel important. For instance, in the *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Draco’s father buys his way in the Quidditch team by bribing the team with new brooms. Draco did not get in only for his talent like others, but for the family money as well. Moreover, his father and mother were also in the Slytherin House, so one can say that Slytherin is his heritage, which he ultimately proves with his behavior.

#### 4.5 Luna Lovegood

Referred to as “Loony Lovegood” by her classmates, one may think that Luna is not a Ravenclaw material. But Luna shows knowledge and intelligence where no one else does. She can see creatures that no one else does, not because she is crazy, but because she went through things in life that not many students have, which made her more mature. For instance, the death of her mother enabled her to see thestrals, magical creatures that are visible only to those who have seen death. She is a teenager with a mind of an adult:

In spite of all this eccentricity, she sometimes displays the depth in thinking that would stun a philosopher. An excerpt from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, where



she comforts a grieving Harry after Sirius' death, by telling him of her Mom's death: "I still feel very sad about it sometimes. But I've still got Dad. And anyway, it's not as though I'll never see Mum again, is it?" "Er-isn't it?" said Harry uncertainly. She shook her head in disbelief. "Oh, come on. You heard them, just behind the veil, didn't you?" "You mean..." "In that room with the archway. They were just lurking out of sight, that's all. You heard them." (Sruthi)

With time, Luna evolves into an even smarter young woman. She is the one who deduced that the Horcrux related to Ravenclaw was Rowena Ravenclaw's diadem: "'There's something we need to find,' Harry said. 'Something — something that'll help us overthrow You-Know-Who. It's here at Hogwarts, but we don't know where. It might have belonged to Ravenclaw. Has anyone heard of an object like that? . . . 'Well, there's her lost diadem. I told you about it, remember, Harry? The lost diadem of Ravenclaw'" (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 583-584). In spite all her quirks, Luna truly shows that her House helped her to grow up to be an intelligent woman and earn the respect of others.

## 5. Characteristics of Individual Factions Through Characters

### 5.1 Beatrice (Tris) Prior

Born Abnegation, but with the aptitude to be Erudite and Dauntless, Tris is one of the most complex characters in the trilogy. She is a true Divergent. She shows she is Abnegation by being selfless and wanting to help others:

“You’re going to stand there as he throws those knives,” Eric says to Al, “until you learn not to flinch. . . . I look from Al’s wide, dark eyes to his shaking hands to the determined set of Four’s jaw. Anger bubbles in my chest, and bursts from my mouth: “Stop it.” . . . “Any idiot can stand in front of a target,” I say. “It doesn’t prove anything except that you’re bullying us. Which, as I recall, is a sign of cowardice.” “Then it should be easy for you,” Eric says. “If you’re willing to take his place.” The last thing I want to do is stand in front of that target, but I can’t back down now. (Roth, *Divergent* 89).

The second aptitude that Tris has is Erudite. She shows this in the aptitude test when she kneels before the dog coming at her. Throughout the book, Tris shows that she is intelligent like, for example, when she deduces that a higher ground is needed for her team to win the “capture the flag” game:

We can’t act until we know where the other team is. They could be anywhere within a two-mile radius, although I can rule out the empty marsh as an option. The best way to find them is not to argue about how to search for them, or how many to send out in a search party. It’s to climb as high as possible. I look over my shoulder to make sure no one is watching. None of them look at me, so I walk toward the Ferris wheel with light, quiet footsteps, pressing my gun to my back with one hand to keep it from making noise. (*Divergent* 79)

Her third aptitude is Dauntless, and that is the faction that Tris chooses because she gathers that she is both brave and selfish (*Divergent* 32). Although she has trouble fitting in at first, Tris ends up ranked first at the end of their training and initiation. She is ranked best among both transfers and Dauntless born initiates, and shows she belongs to Dauntless. Her first act of bravery is at the very beginning of the novel when she decides she will be the first to jump to enter the Dauntless compound: “I look at the hole again. Goose bumps rise on my pale arms, and my stomach lurches. If I don’t do it now, I won’t be able to do it at all. I swallow hard. I don’t think. I just bend my knees and jump” (*Divergent* 37).

It is clear that both Tris and Harry Potter, the protagonists of the novels, are similar; what they have in common is that they have the characteristics of several Houses, that is factions, and they want to do everything to help their colleagues. They try to solve the obstacles that come their way in the best possible way and thus find their true path, that is identity.

## 5.2 Caleb Prior

People who are born in the post-war Chicago are considered to have predispositions for a certain faction at their birth, and this seems to be the case with Caleb Prior. Helping others, and putting himself and his needs last, he displays the features of a true Abnegation man: “He also inherited my mother’s talent for selflessness. He gave his seat to a surly Candor man on the bus without a second thought” (*Divergent* 11). However, even though he has every predisposition to be a perfect member of Abnegation, at the Choosing Ceremony he chooses Erudite because he was always fond of reading and gathering knowledge (*Divergent* 35). Prior to his decision, no one knows that he wants to change factions even though he hints at it to Beatrice before the Ceremony begins: “‘Beatrice,’ he says, looking sternly into my eyes. ‘We should think of our family.’ There is an edge to his voice. ‘But. But we must also think of ourselves’” (*Divergent* 27).

It looks like Caleb chose well because he excels with the Erudite. He fits in and learns a lot. When Tris comes to visit him, he appears to be cold and emotionless because Erudite consider human nature and emotions to be a weakness. Yet, he still does the smart thing and investigates the serum Tris tells him about: “I did what you said—what Mom said. I researched the simulation serum and found out that Jeanine was working to develop long-range transmitters for the serum so its signal could stretch farther” (*Divergent* 228).

Later on, as he finds out that the serum the Erudite were manufacturing was supposed to be used in order to start a war, he leaves the Erudite compound to be Factionless. Still, he presents himself to be loyal to Erudite in *Insurgent* when Jeanine reveals that he had been assisting her all along:

“So I feel it’s only fair that you know exactly who has been assisting me in my endeavors. . . . Who told me what three factions you had an aptitude for, and what our best chance was to get you to come here” . . . She looks toward the doorway as the sedative sets in, making everything blur at the edges. I look over my shoulder, and through the haze of drugs I see him. Caleb. (*Insurgent* 117)

The change of faction influenced his identity greatly, which can be seen through his betrayal of his family and friends. He no longer thinks of what the others need, but only what is best for his faction.

### 5.3 Christina

Christina is a character who transfers to Dauntless from Candor. Since Candor members are extremely honest, at first it seems that Christina may have some problems at her new faction because she “has no filter,” and says the first thing that comes to her mind:

Christina asks, “Four? Like the number?” . . . Christina snickers. “The Pit? Clever name.” Four walks up to Christina and leans his face close to hers. His eyes narrow, and for a second he just stares at her. “What’s your name?” he asks quietly. “Christina,” she squeaks. “Well, Christina, if I wanted to put up with Candor smart-mouths, I would have joined their faction,” he hisses. “The first lesson you will learn from me is to keep your mouth shut. Got that?” (*Divergent* 39)

But with time, and as the training goes on, Christina learns to be quiet when she needs to and becomes a brave soldier and a loyal friend. She exhibits the Dauntless traits – bravery and loyalty: “She is tall enough to swing her leg over the railing. Her foot shakes. She puts her toe on the ledge as she lifts her other leg over. Facing us, she wipes her hands on her pants and holds on to the railing so hard her knuckles turn white. Then she takes one foot off the ledge. And the other. I see her face between the bars of the barrier, determined, her lips pressed together” (*Divergent* 59).

## Conclusion

The selected children's and young adult novels by Rowling and Roth depict the process of growing up and maturing, a process during which their protagonists create their own identity. The paper has shown that social identity plays a great role in the construction of one's identity. Everyone wishes to belong to a certain group, even if it is not the group that their parents would choose for them.

The characters in these novels are sorted into groups and with time they start to display the virtues that their group cherishes. Even though they might not look like they belong to their group, they end up proving that they are exactly where they are meant to be. Social interaction greatly influences their development and, in combination with certain innate characteristics, they grow up to be rounded individuals.

To sum up, being a member of a group will greatly affect the shaping of one's identity in a way that the individual will accept the mentality of the group and shape his/her life accordingly.

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