Deterring Rebels: Political Persuasion and Manipulation in the *Divergent* Trilogy Films

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Abstract. The aim of this paper is to analyze the persuasive and manipulative strategies and devices used in the political propaganda in the films of the *Divergent Series*. Special attention is paid to *Insurgent*, since the outbreak of a war between different ideological and political factions and the government is a breeding ground for manipulative, political strategies to persuade the population to side with the former or the latter, which they use to try to win. In this scenario, political discourse also serves both deterring rebellious Divergents threatening the established system and controlling the masses from the different factions. To this end, I follow the parameters of different theoretical frameworks, such as critical-political discourse analysis, Appraisal Theory −focusing on *attitude* or *attitudinal positioning*− and the phenomena of polarization and legitimation. The results will allow us to see how the political agents of the film managed to influence their audiences with their speeches by using rhetorical means, subjectivity to present situations, objects or people positively or negatively at the speaker's convenience or interests, and different types of power.

Key Words: *Divergent* Series; political discourse; persuasion; manipulation; totalitarianism; attitudinal positioning

[es] Disuadiendo a los rebeldes: persuasión política y manipulación en las películas de la trilogía *Divergente*

Resumen. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar las estrategias y recursos de persuasión y manipulación que se emplean en la propaganda política de las películas de la trilogía *Divergente*. Mención especial recibe la segunda, *Insurgente*, pues el estallido de la guerra entre las diversas facciones políticas e ideológicas es caldo de cultivo de estrategias políticas manipulativas para persuadir a la población y atraerla hacia un lado u otro con el propósito de ganar. Con estas premisas, el discurso político sirve tanto para disuadir a los Divergentes rebeldes que amenazan el sistema establecido como para controlar a las masas de las diferentes facciones. Para el estudio sigo los parámetros de diferentes marcos teóricos, como el análisis crítico del discurso político, la Teoría de la Valoración −centrándome en la *actitud*− y los fenómenos de polarización y legitimación. Los resultados permiten observar cómo los agentes políticos de la película consiguen influir en la población que escucha sus discursos repletos de medios retóricos, subjetividad para presentar situaciones, objetos o personas de manera positiva o negativa según los intereses y conveniencia del emisor, y diferentes tipos de poder.

Palabras clave: Trilogía *Divergente*; discurso político; persuasión; manipulación; totalitarismo; actitud

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Contents. 1. Introduction. 2. Theoretical Framework. 3. Corpus and Methodology. 4. Analysis. 4.1. Divergent. 4.1.1. Appreciation. 4.1.2. Judgment. 4.1.3. Affect. 4.2. Insurgent. 4.2.1. Appreciation. 4.2.2. Judgment. 4.2.3. Affect. 4.3. Allegiant. 4.3.1. Appreciation. 4.3.2. Judgment. 4.3.3. Affect. 5. Conclusions. References.

1. Introduction

Language has a "tremendous potential for mass persuasion and a profound impact on how social and political phenomena are perceived", since orators' lexical choices become weapons to "exert ideological control and make an audience believe something in an ostensive way" (Crespo-Fernández, 2013: 311, 328). In fact, discourse is primarily considered a form of civic action and, thus, a cornerstone in the political process (van Dijk, 1997: 20).

In the realm of politics, discourse and persuasion are connected, considering lexical items "effectively emphasize or de-emphasize political attitudes and opinions, garner support, manipulate public opinion, manufacture political consent, or legitimate political power" (van Dijk, 1997: 25). And, within discourse, the spoken language is a powerful tool for persuasion as it shows "shared social beliefs about what is right and wrong" to create alliances around these beliefs (Charteris-Black, 2011: 2). According to this same author (2011: 15), politicians employ four different rhetorical means to persuade an audience: *thinking right*, through the inherently persuasive use of sensible reasoning; *sounding right*, by means of empathy and other resources for emotional impact, such as humor or arousing feelings; *telling the right story*, which implies creating a familiar frame for the intended message; and *looking right*, regarding appearance and manners.

Considering the above, this paper aims to reveal the persuasive strategies and linguistic devices employed in the political propaganda of the films *Divergent* (Burgen, 2014), *Insurgent* (Schwentke, 2015), and *The Divergent Series: Allegiant* (Schwentke, 2016), the first part of the two corresponding to the last novel of the trilogy. However, I focus on *Insurgent*, the climax of the plot with the outbreak of a war among the different ideological and political factions as well as the government. In this scenario, political discourse serves both deterring rebellious Divergents threatening the established system and controlling the masses from the different factions. To this end, I followed critical-political discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1997), Taboada and Grieve's (2004) approach of Appraisal Theory (Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; White, 2015) –namely *attitude* or *attitudinal positioning*– together with the phenomena of polarization (van Dijk, 1993) and legitimation (Chilton, 2004).

Basu, Broad, and Hintz (2013) define dystopia as the portrait of fictional regimes disconnected with ours and considerably worse, as a perversion of utopia

by taking its rules to an unhuman dimension by negative prescription. These same authors (2013: 3) affirm this usually involves a warning in canonical literature, but a call for hope in modern YA fictions, which may induce young readers to their first political reflections. The expected rhetorical figures in such an environment are not so much persuasion through debate but those of totalitarian regimes: coercion and the manipulation of information (Partington and Taylor, 2010: 13).

2. Theoretical Framework

Critical-political discourse analysis "deals especially with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance" (van Dijk, 1997: 25). In short, it is the study of the strategic use of linguistic patterns or keywords to achieve a specific political aim (Crespo-Fernández, 2013: 316). Under these premises, I examine how the political agents of the film managed to influence their audiences through a systematic and critical analysis of the linguistic, persuasive, and manipulative units employed in their speeches.

Raven (2008: 1-3) categorizes six bases of power: *informational*, which means accepting the supervisor's persuasive reasons to change an attitude towards "a better and more effective procedure" (or *socially independent change*); *reward*, or "the ability of the agent to offer a positive incentive" in exchange of the target person's compliance; *coercive*, which, contrarily, occurs when the agent threatens "with negative undesirable consequences […] if the target does not comply". In both cases, "the influence is clearly socially dependent" and the "surveillance by the influencing agent" is key for their effectiveness. Though it is guaranteed by fear, it is the least effective form of all as it generates resentment and resistance. *Legitimate power* "stems from the target's accepting the right of the agent to require the changed behavior, and the target's obligation to comply". *Expert power* relies on the agent's "superior insight or knowledge about what behavior is best under the circumstances" and so the target understands the agent's reason, which would differ this kind of power from informational power. Finally, *referent power* is when the target identifies with the agent and so the latter becomes a model to be emulated.

Appraisal is "a particular approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships" (White, 2015). It is a "major discourse semantic resource construing interpersonal meaning" and is regionalized as three interacting domains: attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin and White, 2005: 34-35). In this study, I focus on *attitude* or *attitudinal positioning*, which deals both with emotions and more comprehensively with feelings, including affect, judgment, and appreciation, traditionally referred to as *pathos*, *ethics*, and *aesthetics* (Martin and White, 2005: 40, 42). Attitudinal positioning analyzes the meaning of *praising* and *blaming* to indicate a positive or negative assessment of people, places, things, happenings, and states of affairs (White, 2015). In this way, a*ffect* registers positive and negative feelings; *judgment* examines behavior that is admired, criticized, praised, or condemned;

and *appreciation* evaluates semiotic and natural phenomena considering their value in a given field (Martin and White, 2005: 42-43). Taboada and Grieve (2004: 159) use appraisal to examine how subjective evaluation is reflected on linguistic items and so how authors or speakers express different opinions and use negative or positive comments to support a subjective, negative, or positive classification.

This twofold taxonomy is related to *polarization* and *legitimation/delegitimation*. The former is a phenomenon distinguishing two different social groups: ingroups and outgroups. The ingroup is the self-group, identified by *us* and associated with all good things (*positive self-presentation*), whereas the outgroup is formed by *them* and related to *negative other-presentation* or *derogation* (van Dijk, 1993: 150-151). According to Karr (2014: 140-141), even if being part of a similar-minded group can be "empowering and affirming", the danger is that people will differentiate according to being *in* or *out* of it. If they compete for resources, prejudice against the outgroup will be spread as a weapon and will be institutionalized if they eventually win (Karr, 2014: 197). This phenomenon is essential in the political process for the "descriptions and references to […] public figures, and organizations and their actions are […] a function of […] ideologically based opinions and attitudes" which people characteristically evaluate in positive or negative terms (van Dijk, 1997: 28). Additionally, this is related to Chilton's concept of legitimation as the promotion of representations by creating *discourse worlds* in a way that political speakers "imbue their utterances with evidence, authority and truth" (2004: 23). Moreover, their "activity does not exist without the use of language", because it plays a key role in the legitimation process since politics has a "linguistic, discursive and communicative dimension" (Chilton, 2004: 6, 4). And political argumentation aims fundamentally to publicly support this and "convince an audience that a certain course of action is right or a certain point of view is true" (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 18, 242). These two phenomena are related to the *Orwellian* concept of *doublespeak*, that is,

> language which pretends to communicate but really does not[,] […] which makes […] something negative appear positive […] or at least tolerable[,] […] which avoids or shifts responsibility[,] […] which is at variance with its real and its purported meaning[,] […] which conceals or presents thought[,] […] which does not extend thought but limits it (Lutz, 1989: 4).

3. Corpus and Methodology

The corpus of this paper consists of the scripts of the films of *The Divergent Series*, based upon the homonymous saga by Veronica Roth (2011, 2012, 2013). Due to the independent nature of the last book, *Four: A Divergent Series* (Roth, 2014), Summit Entertainment resolved not to adapt it, but to divide the plot of *Allegiant* into two different motion pictures: *Allegiant* and *Ascendant*.

The great impact on the world of young fiction of the saga has also drawn the attention of researchers to the phenomenon, and especially to the first part of both trilogies. *Divergent* is a *Bildungsroman* tale, concentrating on the coming of age

of the main character, Tris Prior, and her search for identity in a dystopian society segregated into factions through which people specialize on their major strength; whereas *Insurgent* deals with strategies for totalitarianism such as secrecy and repression. Thus, critics have concentrated in establishing the roots of the former into a long and branched literary tradition (Hintz and Ostry, 2003; Basu, 2013; Green-Barteet, 2014), the impact of genre identity (Blokker, 2014) and the concept of dystopia (Mathichiparampil, 2016). However, the circumstances of the second part turned it into an eligible sample for the aforementioned theories of appraisal, legitimation, and polarization to explore the underlying connections between language and power, through the repeated use of deception, double crosses, machinations, and counterplots to control the masses (Driza, 2014). The picture of a seemingly ideal world is soon confronted, as the mere concept of having a complex personality sustained by different qualities is labeled as *Divergent* and potentially dangerous. This is taken to the extreme that such an identity must be hidden, which is revealing of how the gift of critical thinking could risk a system based on the alienation of the human being and mutual prejudice among factions.

At this point of the story, Tris successfully completed her demanding army training into the brave Dauntless, and developed a strong personal and romantic bonding with Four, another secret Divergent. They will confront Jeanine Matthews in her fight to exterminate Abnegation and take over the factions with the help of Dauntless, whom she misleads with mind-control techniques and the declaration of martial law. She commands to capture every Divergent, to open a box that might solve the potential riot and thus provokes a crusade of lethal results.

Concerning this second aspect of freedom and power, Basu (2013) considers this is a story of resistance. Green-Barteet (2014) finds *Brontëan* reminiscences in the sense that being Divergent implies a kind of awareness the others lack, such as realizing the falsity implied in the situations they are living, which indeed enables them to manipulate. However, Tris and Four admire Abnegation instead (Basu, 2013: 257). Moreover, Wilson (2014) claims *Divergent* is about how freedom cannot be truly eradicated, as shown by exploring the fact that there is always a choice.

Regarding the methods for this observational, qualitative analysis, I followed the three steps of the top-down approach applied to *Critical-political discourse analysis* (Crespo-Fernández, 2013: 315; Kang and Landry, 2014: 39): first, I selected the best set of linguistic data, that is, those potentially persuasive and manipulative units in terms of political ideology; then, I made generalizations and found the matching antecedents and their output values; and, finally, I explained the meaning of the linguistic items together with their persuasive function in discourse.

For the systematic categorization of linguistic units, I employed this method: first, I excerpted potentially persuasive and manipulative units from the corpus one by one by watching each of the films with their subtitles in English; then, I classified words or expressions according to their positive or negative orientation; and finally, I determined the degree to which those linguistic items

expressed affect, judgment, or appreciation considering their evaluative potential (Taboada and Grieve, 2004). These same authors understand *affect* as emotional opinions or comments on one's self; *judgment* or moral opinions as expressions referred to a person; and *appreciation* or aesthetic opinions as the subjective evaluation of objects or concepts. Moreover, for the systematic collection of data, and since I utilized both attitudinal positioning and polarization in the categorization of linguistic units, I created two tables: one for *us*/Divergents and one for *them/*Jeanine Matthews, the authorities, and the totalitarian government reminding Orwell's (1982) *Nineteen eighty-four* dystopia. Then, I classified expressions in each table following the phases mentioned above.

4. Analysis

I will present the results first according to the film they belong to in chronological order. I decided to classify the linguistic units regarding each film to see the progression of persuasion in relation to the development of events. After this division, I will expound the cases corresponding to *us* and later *them*. The linguistic markers that reflect the analysed parameters have been marked in bold in the examples.

4.1. Divergent

4.1.1. Appreciation

Whereas there is no direct positive appreciation from Divergents' perspective, negative appreciation is found. Particularly Four, who teaches Christina, a sassy Dauntless initiate, the first lesson to survive in this faction: not to be so outspoken, since raising voices does not fit the system. Note the use of *metaphtonymy*, as figurative language and, particularly, "metaphors are powerful vehicles of evaluation and persuasion" (Crespo-Fernández, 2015: 61), in which 'voices' stand for people who exercise critical thinking within a strict system.

From the perspective of the government, Erudite, or Jeanine Matthews, it is relevant to note that no negative appreciation exists so as not to delegitimize the own group. Contrariwise, two cases of positive appreciation represent the system. At the beginning of the film, a public servant gives 16-year-old test candidates a talk where she explains:

  (1) The founders created a system they believed would **prevent** future conflict and create **lasting peace**.

She starts self-presenting the government positively, as they care about their people, to introduce the aptitude test based on their personality assigning them to one of the factions. She states they can choose any of the five ones regardless of their test results, although they recommend choosing the faction indicated by the test as that would ensure success within the system. Thus, even though this system –compared to a person able to make decisions for the common good– is rigid, strict, and controlling, they show an image of freedom where people are offered the opportunity to choose. At the end of the film, Jeanine claims:

(2) The brilliance of the faction system is that conformity to the faction **removes** the **threat** of anyone exercising their **independent will**.

Thus, the aforementioned freedom does not exist and so its personification in Divergents threatens the system. And even though Jeanine admires their resistance and defiance of categorization, she upholds their elimination as a beauty they cannot afford.

4.1.2. Judgment

There are several examples of both positive and negative judgment inside the ingroup. Concerning positive judgment, the very beginning of the film shows how much citizens have been instilled in the importance of being part of a system that saved them from the terrible war outside their walls destroying the rest of the world:

(3) We're **lucky** to be in The City.

It is generally accepted they owe their lives to the founders of the city, who indeed built the wall to keep them safe, into Canovan's (2002: 26) populist two-step process of *bringing* simplified *politics to the people* so that they can be *brought to politics*. As Driza (2014: 167) considers, the story focuses on duplicity as the ally for the corruption of power. Even though the citizens assume the division into factions as a positive thing, by not questioning the intelligence of their saviors, it is the presentation of the first form of manipulation from the system. This responds to Foucault's (1995) conception of power not as an asset that is possessed, but rather as the strategy of exerting influence through the dissemination of a suitable set of principles to make citizens voluntarily act conveniently, also based on Raven's *expert power* (2008). Cultural persuasion proved to be more effective than wealth, power, or technology (Miller, 2010). This suppression of critical thinking and personal initiative also resembles other fictional dystopias, such as *Brave new world* (Huxley, 2013).

By classifying citizens into five groups –Erudite, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, and Abnegation plus the Factionless, yet another resemblance with Huxley's five castes– they are indoctrinating them with the values they should have, and this is validated by the system in the name of peace (Charteris-Black, 2011: 15). In fact, the fear of not fitting anywhere (the Factionless) somehow forces citizens to make a great effort to be a part of a group not to be marginalized. This idea of belonging is reinforced by the system along the whole film so that repetition leaves a mark on the population. This relevance is pervasive, especially for teenagers who have to decide their faction, as seen in example (4), uttered by Tris:

(4) a. Everyone knows where they **belong**. Except for me.
   b. The test will tell me who I am, where I **belong**.

This is also acknowledged by Tris's mother, who wishes her daughter would choose who she truly is and where she truly belongs. This is persuasive *per se* as the system appeals to individuals to stay in and make people regret quitting their factions, which are supposed to create stronger bonds than even family, represented in a *metaphtonymy* through 'blood':

(5) Faction **before blood**.

Jeanine Matthews *sounds right* by heightening the audience's emotional impact to engage with them through their emotions and empathy (*pathos*) and by persuasively arousing feelings (Charteris-Black, 2011: 14). This is why she employs *metaphtonymy*, at the same time combined with personification, to stand out each individual's relevance in the entire system, and so explains:

(6) The faction system is a **living being composed of cells**, all of you. And the only way it can survive and thrive is for each of you to claim your rightful place.

Again, she shows she is *thinking right*, and *telling the right story* by appealing to the abovementioned sort of patriotism, and therefore inclusion, when she continues:

(7) The future **belongs** to those who know where they **belong**. When we leave this room, you will no longer be dependents but full-fledged members of **our society**.

The first case of negative judgment revolves around being Divergent, when Tory – another Dauntless member– gives Tris the test. This is why she adds in her file Tris belongs in Abnegation and sends her home with an excuse. Later, when Tris is an initiate, the word *Divergent* becomes a taboo, so Tory avoids it when she explains that if *they* –the people Tris is a threat to, that is, the government– find out about Tris, she will be in trouble. She considers those who do not fit into a category become dangerous, because they cannot be controlled.

Initiates in Dauntless compete for the best scores, for failure implies being forced to live factionless. This makes some initiates apply less honorable techniques (including polarization) to undermine other "weaker" competitors and to delegitimize them, with the intention of affecting their performance through negative emotional impact, and so improve their ranking. Thus, Peter provokes Tris by attacking her faction of origin and uses her depart from Abnegation to second Jeanine's lie about the corruption of an entire faction and accuses them of having stolen resources and of abusing their children, and criticizes their general incompetence. His message is more persuasive as he appeals to her emotions to hurt her and delegitimizes her by relating a real action –the fact that she left– which cannot be denied to his own opinion. This actually happened, so it seems he tells the truth, and, through polarization, she is depicted as a liar. Peter, thus, makes use of *doublespeak* to shape reality to communicate his perception as he wishes and so distorts that perception as a weapon to influence behavior (Lutz, 1989: 2).

Divergents are metaphorically conceptualized as animals along the three films. Comparing humans to despicable animals justifies their elimination, since they are presented as a danger to the community or the whole humanity to the extent that their eradication becomes then a social and vital necessity (Crespo-Fernández, 2013: 318). In fact, this use of the animal metaphor is very powerful "in the attack on political opponents, the presentation of policies or the legitimation of political power" (van Dijk, 1997: 24). This is why Erudite are "**hunting** Divergents", because they "have always been so **threatened**" by them. And Erudite manipulate

their faction from inside to believe that. This is clearly shown when Tris visits her brother to warn him about their lies, that they know how to manipulate people like him, and that he needs to understand that (*informational power*).

Regarding the outgroup, whereas there is no positive judgment, negative cases abound. First, Jeanine depicts human nature as a weakness; as the enemy indeed, because it is what makes people keep secrets, lie, or steal. She does so to vindicate its eradication to "**maintain** a **stable**, **peaceful** society". She also accuses Abnegation of "**undermining** the faction system and breaking laws by harboring Divergents". So, she employs polarization both to show sufficient grounds for her actions and to delegitimize both Abnegation and Divergents. She resorts to their *metaphtonymical* motto "Faction before blood" to explain to Tris the importance of being loyal above all, even if it means stripping humans from their own essence. She insists on making Tris know the system counts on the latter to enforce the law even if it is broken by someone she is close to or she cares about. Jeanine convinces herself Abnegation will destroy the system if they are left unchecked to rationalize their elimination. In fact, when she realizes Tris and Four are Divergents, she tells them this same idea can be applied to both of them, so Erudite and herself have to stop them so that peace is not lost. Moreover, when Four tells her peace has already been lost because she destroyed it, she refutes and evades her responsibility by blaming human nature for their destruction; and claims she will restore a lasting peace by killing those who she thinks threaten the system.

4.1.3. Affect

There are just two cases of positive affect regarding *us*, maybe influenced by her education as a selfless girl, and they both appear at the end of the film. First, Tris complains they have neither faction nor home anymore, so she does not know who she is, but Four reassures her by telling he knows who she is. Then, she says they are like the Factionless, as they left everything behind but to find themselves and each other. And, suddenly, remaining out of the system is positive, for it implies freedom.

Likewise, there are two cases of negative affect. First, Tris's father believes she does not understand the level of scrutiny they are under, as Erudite is doing their best to discredit them, because they want to be the governing group instead. Therefore, they are delegitimizing them by attacking the faction and their leaders, even personally. Thus, Abnegation should be deposed, as they are guilty of many crimes, including child mistreatment. And by means of polarization, Erudite is presented as the rightful and most appropriate leading faction. Second, Four describes Dauntless as soldiers following Erudite's orders even if they do not agree with them; so the system prepares them to be an army supporting the ruling faction and executing their orders blindly.

Finally, there is no negative affect from the point of view of *them*, as the governing system would not ever damage their image. That would delegitimize them and, through polarization, it would present the enemy (Divergents) positively. However, there is a significant case of positive affect indicating Erudite are manipulated from within as a former one, Will, affirms only:

(8) **Erudite** [and not Candor] can tell the truth because [they] **have facts**.

4.2. Insurgent

4.2.1. Appreciation

I followed the same order for expounding the cases in all films. So, from Divergents' –now Insurgents– point of view, there are cases neither of positive nor negative appreciation, which shows they do not use this resource as a weapon to legitimate or delegitimize the system. Yet, by means of polarization, this depicts them as noble opponents, because they fight the enemy honorably and through fair play; thus, they are indirectly portrayed as the good side at war. While the government or Jeanine Matthews do not use appreciation either, their strategy to self-legitimate themselves and delegitimate the opponent/Insurgents is based on judgment.

4.2.2. Judgment

While there are no cases of positive judgment, negative one is frequent, which is expected at war. First, Jeanine announces:

>   (9) The **attack** on Abnegation was organized by a group of **renegade** Divergents and their sympathizers.

So, she blames the whole action on them and advocates her declaration of martial law. In view of this situation, Tris says killing Jeanine is necessary and she is not going to stop until she is dead. Jeanine spread this message across factions and it is imprinted unconsciously even in Divergents, as the own Tris, in the last simulation to open the box with the message from the founders, says to herself:

>   (10) One less Divergent ruining things.

Later, when they meet Evelyn, Four's mother and the leader of the Factionless, they soon realize both Evelyn and Jeanine will struggle for power. Therefore, her own son recognizes his mother wants an army to get revenge. Evelyn tries to explain her actions by stating she simply wants an alliance, not for her, but for:

>   (11) putting an **end** to a system that says one group is **more deserving** than another.

She clearly grounds what she is about to do in doublespeak, polarization, and delegitimation. When the war emerges, Four ironically congratulates his mother as she got her war, to what she answers it was the only way and she portrays herself, through a religious metaphor, as "the **lesser** of two **evils**", so other-presenting Jeanine negatively.

The importance of doublespeak is seen on several occasions. For example, when Four and Tris try to be harbored in Candor, its leader, Jack Kang, makes explicit what they say might be their truth, but not necessarily his, especially when rumors about "**criminal insurgency** and **conspiring** in the **attack** on Abnegation"

have been spread. However, these rumors vanish when Four, under the influence of the truth serum, confesses Jeanine corrupted Dauntless.

Jeanine also uses terror to persuade the masses. According to Karr (2014: 190), she reminds of Hitler's strategy in the way that anyone trying to deviate from her plans will be annihilated. When some Factionless are injected a "very sophisticated sim serum" nullifying people's control on themselves and some of them are killed because of that, some Factionless create a debate to hand Tris over to protect the advantage of Dauntless and the Factionless' alliance. In fact, they justify this choice by stating this is the logical thing to do. This point of view of conformity regarding tyranny is not far from that of Eichmann's (Arendt, 1963) about his responsibility regarding the deaths of the Jews in World War II, as in his trial he reported he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to do.

Charteris-Black's *thinking right* (2011: 15) appears when Caleb admits he was planning on going back to Abnegation to do what he thought was right. Jeanine persuaded Erudite so much that Caleb is even willing to sacrifice Tris, the only family he has left and the only person he loves, to preserve what he thinks is best for everyone else. He defends his decision by means of a selfless action which would eradicate the Divergent problem grown beyond control. He is so convinced what he is doing is right that he even understands Jeanine's murdering an entire faction –understood as the people living there through metonymy– because "that faction could **not** be **longer trusted**". He also thinks their parents brought their deaths on themselves by hiding the box that belonged to the ruling faction and would solve the mentioned problem. Moreover, he blames them on sparing all those people in Abnegation's lives. The system has, thus, worked: he chose his faction before blood or family and he is clearly stripped from his human nature. Nevertheless, once opened, the box from the founders reveals a message, which is subsequently replicated in *Allegiant*. This explains factions were created to ensure peace in a city designed as an experiment to recover the humanity that had been lost. Thus, people transcending the factions –Divergents– would be the true purpose of the experiment and proof of its success. Citizens are eventually encouraged to emerge from their isolation and rejoin mankind beyond the wall.

This message delegitimizes the government and Jeanine Matthews *per se*, as their polarization turns against themselves. While they pose Divergents as a problem, they are indeed the solution. And, at the same time Divergents are seen as the right band, hope from beyond the wall is instilled in the population. However, Jeanine does not accept this and clings to her lie, so she warns Evelyn the other factions will not stand for this, and so they must destroy the message before it gets out, otherwise, it will be the end.

In the government's faction there are no cases of positive judgment, but there is a great number of negative ones. It is clearly shown how Jeanine –self-portrayed as a just and consistent ruler– is trying to deter rebellious Divergents and control the masses by appealing to patriotism through unity and defending the greatness of the system by highlighting its role in keeping peace. Besides, she also delegitimizes the

opponent considering they are against the community. In fact, Jeanine explicitly uses words such as *attack*, *dangerous*, *worst*, or *rogue* for these purposes. She is well aware of the persuasive effect of political propaganda by explicitly acknowledging its potential. Polarization is not only employed for the aforementioned but also to defend the persecution of Divergents and even their eradication. In short, she employs doublespeak both to legitimize her procedures and to distort reality to the extent that lies become truth and those telling the truth become liars. Divergents are also presented as a minority to undermine their power before the population.

She continues justifying her persecution of Divergents by affirming they will destroy their society and that is why they have to destroy them first. In fact, her soldiers directly accuse his rival –Four– of the deaths of hundreds of people in Abnegation. In a subsequent message to the city, Jeanine appeals to people's fear to control them. She warns the population the wall was built for their safety, but it cannot protect them anymore, because it is every one of them who has to

(12)   remain **vigilant** and **isolate** any **threats against them**.

Thus, Jeanine is building her path to vindicate her contention of Divergents for the common good. To be more persuasive, she recognizes her own mistakes, which she euphemistically calls *concerns*, like

(13)   the **unavoidable** raid on Candor.

These assumed imperfections present her as a truthful leader. She continues her speech by stating harboring Divergents cannot be tolerated, as it is something the founders themselves mandated. She uses the founders' legacy as an excuse to take any measures to keep the peace and, through *thinking right* for it is not a selfish action:

(14)   eradicate the **Divergence crisis**. **Once** and **for all**.

Later, when some Dauntless are injected the sophisticated serum, Jeanine makes them repeatedly say:

(15)   **Traitor** Tris Prior must be **surrendered** to Erudite. Or every day more **death** will follow.

She uses this as an effective persuasive strategy, since Peter –a former Dauntless member of her age– recommends her to use her "weak spot", that is, through *metaphtonymy*, being "a walking **bleeding heart**" from Abnegation against her. Thus, emotions prove to be a very powerful means of persuasion and manipulation.

4.2.3. Affect

The only positive case of affect from Divergents reinforces they "were **never** the **problem**[, but] the **solution**" in Tris's words, when she tells Jeanine they were wrong about them. Regarding negative affect, Evelyn describes why the Factionless and Divergents are dangerous: while the former do not fit any faction,

the latter belong to too many and that is why they are a threat to Jeanine. Evelyn employs this as a persuasive strategy to convince Tris and Four they are on the same side and to combine their forces to depose Erudite. She legitimates obtaining peace through war, which is a reformulation of the Latin adage "Si vis pacem, para bellum" [If you want peace, prepare for war]. However, Four uncovers her strategy by stating she conveniently omits the part when she explains who is in power after killing Jeanine. And, thus, this strategy delegitimizes her, since she does not want to do that for the common good but only for her. Due to all this inconvenience and the war, Tris confesses to her mother in the final simulation she does not want to be a Divergent anymore, because she wants to feel safe again. Therefore, Jeanine achieved to persuade even Divergents they must disappear as their presence seriously damages the rest of the population.

Finally, in the outgroup, there is only one case of positive and none of negative affect. In example (16), Peter exonerates his swinging nature, as he sides with different factions at his own convenience:

(16)   a. Dark times call for **extreme measures**
       b. I'm **serving** the **greater good**.

With this, he is trying to convince Jeanine he will help her look for Tris, as she is now a danger. For him, this is positive since it acknowledges the well-known principle that equals intelligence with the ability to adapt to change.

4.3. Allegiant

4.3.1. Appreciation

Like in the first two preceding films, there is no positive appreciation from Divergents/Insurgents' perspective. However, as in the first film, there is one example of negative appreciation. In it, Tris criticizes the system of dividing people into groups, especially into the categories of pure and damaged, an idea compared by Karr (2014: 198-199) to Nazi propaganda. She also condemns both how the authorities experiment with people who are real and how governments create problems, in this case the war, because of the divisions they established, and then they do nothing to help to solve it.

To remark this parallelism with the Nazi regime, together with the linguistic resources, there is a generalized use of mind-controlling devices such as serums, microchips, genetic modification, and experiments with feared situations, so the futuristic Chicago, in which most of the action is set, is depicted as a laboratory for brutal human experimentation, another recurrent circumstance in dystopian societies. Foucault (1978) coined the term *biopower* to express the concept of dominating citizens by means of controlling their bodies and even their genetics.

After Jeanine's demise, there is no positive appreciation from the government's perspective; maybe because this film focuses more on Tris and Four's adventures beyond the wall. However, there are two examples of negative appreciation. On the one hand, Tris openly criticizes the government for not intervening in Chicago while it is being destroyed by the war. David tries to soothe her concerns by praising her uprising against Jeanine and to persuade her they are doing the right thing:

(17) The council's always **careful** how they introduced any new element to the experiment.

On the other hand, Four demands Evelyn not to wipe the memories of every citizen of Chicago; and not only does she make herself not responsible for having to, but also she blames the Allegiant and rationalizes her actions as a duty to save the city.

4.3.2. Judgment

Again, there is no positive judgment from the ingroup, but some negative cases. Four disapproves of his mother's behavior harshly by comparing her to her predecessor, Jeanine Matthews, to delegitimize her. He is even straightforward with her, but she tries to justify her behavior and restore her positive image in the name of common good:

(18) Leaders have to **make tough decisions** to **protect** their people. You'll understand that when you **take over** from me. I'm doing this **for you**.

She uses Charteris-Black's (2011: 15) three main stages of persuasion in political discourse: she *thinks right* by alluding to the benefit of the whole community and rationality (e.g. "you'll understand"); she *sounds right* by trying to persuade her son through his emotions and their family bond; and she *tells the right story* as she frames her logical ideas in the context of the traditional and natural transfer of power from parents to children. The whole process is presented as a selfless action since all she does is for her people and especially her family.

When a group of Insurgents, including Four and Tris, go beyond the wall, they are welcomed warmly. However, Four distrusts the system and the council as he does

(19) actually know about what they do in the fringe.

Moreover, he adds they only know what they tell them. His suspicions are confirmed later when he observes they do not save children in humanitarian missions but *steal* them to wipe their memories and raise them in the Bureau as workforce. And David, the ruler of the Bureau of Genetic Welfare, leads this plan. The council tries to explain to Four they have a better life with them and the murder he witnessed was one terrible accident. The use doublespeak to present reality at their convenience is clear.

Governments usually try to relinquish responsibility for problems they even created, as observed in David's words to Tris:

(20) The Allegiant will take care of the problem.

He even convinces himself he does so for them, because the factions work. Tris then delegitimizes him by withholding her trust in him and by criticizing he wants:

(21) peace with **no struggle**. [And] the world **doesn't work like that**.

Regarding judgment from the outgroup, there is one positive and six negative cases. In the positive one, David praises Tris's courage, her ability of making choices, and how she defied Jeanine to save Chicago. He is trying to earn her trust

by praising her and making sure she understands he is by her side no matter what other people think, which positions him as a friend through polarization:

> (22) To **your people**, you are a Divergent. To the **council**, you're a freak. To **me**, you are a miracle.

On the contrary, Evelyn makes use of negative judgment to delegitimize the founders for dividing them into factions and uses the fear of the unknown beyond the walls to control the masses. She also reminds the people of Chicago Jeanine is dead and prosecutes her conspirators. She accuses them of being traitors and, again by means of polarization, is self-presented as a good leader fighting for justice and her people's rights. Evelyn soon becomes as totalitarian as Jeanine, for she orders to close the walls and forbids anyone to leave. Therefore, she uses Raven's coercive power (2008) to warn those who escape will become traitors and so must be persecuted and arrested.

In the other four cases of negative judgment, either David or the council are involved. David recognizes Erudite made a huge mistake by triggering a war; this brings Tris closer to him since they share the same feelings (persuasion through pathos). Once she is interested in him, he tries to convince her by saying she is the only way to restore order in Chicago and to save the damaged. He uses polarization (through the metaphor of pure vs. damaged) to distance her from Four, who clearly distrusts their system, David, and the council. In another example, he appeals to Tris's personal experience, particularly her mother, to convince her to trust them as she is in the right place, because even her mother was born in the fringe and rescued by the Bureau. Moreover, he never denies there is a ruling authority, but he is just part of the society as she is:

> (23) **I answer to the council**. They're the ones who ultimately determine **our** fate. **Yours and mine**.

He keeps resorting to Tris's mother to bring her in saving the damaged and states her mother left the safety of the Bureau

> (24) because **she knew** the damaged were worth saving.

He also uses a veiled threaten since, if Tris does not help them, the city and the world will not be saved.

David self-portrays himself as a good citizen willing to save a whole city, but his soldiers indirectly uncover his personality:

> (25) David **never** wanted you to see what you saw on the fringe. He keeps **tight control**. **Nothing** happens without his **approval**.

Example (25) delegitimizes him by describing him as an authoritarian leader who leaves nothing to chance; in fact, even members of the council present David as a proven liar. He is, thus, likened to Hitler, since Nazis lied to avoid uprisings. This is observed when he told Caleb he would return to Chicago, when they were going to actually kill him without the rest noticing.

4.3.3. Affect

Even though there was no positive attitude from Divergents in the previous two categories, there are two positive examples of affect. On the contrary, there is no negative one. Tris self-presents herself as someone "to **reveal** the **truth**"; therefore, through explicit polarization, those who called themselves the *pure* and called them the *damaged* are other-presented negatively and implicitly assumed as liars. After presenting herself as the truthful person, she continues using polarization to persuade the population by engaging emotionally with them by appealing to unity:

> (26) **They tried** to make us forget who **we are** and where **we're** from, but **they** did not succeed. So, here **we stand together**, not as five factions, but as **one** city.

In relation to the government, there is a positive example in which Evelyn self-presents herself as truthful:

> (27) I dedicated my life to **seeking the truth**, but under Jeanine, it passed me by.

She recognizes her mistakes to engage emotionally with the audience and make them believe her. She is not perfect, because she is like any other human. However, this personal failure, through doublespeak, turns positive by alluding to *thinking right*:

> (28) It has only strengthened [her] resolve to **make things right**.

She also starts by mentioning her seeming flaws to finish reinforcing her positive features as she will pursue honesty to rebuild their city, even though Candor may no longer exist. The choice for this precise faction is not random either, since she focuses on honesty and truth so that it pervades in the audience and to legitimate herself as a truthful leader indirectly.

Evelyn uses language to justify her actions and her position by affirming:

> (29) **Great** leaders **don't seek power**, they're called by **necessity**.

By *thinking right* and *telling the right story*, she positions herself as the leader the city needs. However, in the Trials, the Factionless cheer on Evelyn to kill Max, a former soldier of Dauntless supporting Jeanine. And even though Johanna –former Amity's leader– opposes by saying this would be repeating Jeanine's actions and controlling the masses through punishment, Evelyn condones the murder through doublespeak and with the pretext of exercising justice. Not only does she sentence him to prison for what he did, but also controls the masses through catharsis and setting an example of what would happen to them if they disobey.

Finally, Evelyn's real intentions are confirmed when she confesses to Johanna she will lie and fight if needed, although she excuses herself by saying she will only fight for what she believes and tries to persuade her by offering "some sort of agreement" and to do it for everyone's benefit. The use of the future tense is not casual, since references to the future tend to be positive for they mark the beginning of "policies that make life better, or at least prevent (further) deterioration or catastrophe" (van Dijk, 1997: 27).

5. Conclusions

Propaganda is essential in shaping people's minds, as the rulers in the films acknowledge its persuasive power for their political interests explicitly. Furthermore, persuasion through pathos proves to be a very effective, manipulative technique, since emotional impact, feelings, and empathy play a key role in humans' assessing of situations, people, things, or state of affairs in subjectively positive or negative terms at the speaker's convenience or interests.

Regarding appraisal, the analysis reveals not so many cases of positive *attitude*, in all the three categories (appreciation, judgment, and affect), which is not casual, since "the image of the leader in non-democratic societies is constructed by prohibition more than positive representation" (Arkhipova, 2016). Particularly, the fact that there is no positive appreciation from Divergents clearly indicates they are against the system from the beginning, as they do not see any advantages in it. From the outgroup's perspective, there is no negative appreciation, which indicates the system is perfectly created and flawless. On the contrary, Divergents seem to have no positive features and so there is no positive judgment.

At war, polarization and delegitimation are crucial to convince people of which the right side is, mainly by linking facts to the most convenient part of the truth; that is, the phenomenon known as *doublespeak*. This is especially relevant in positive self-presentation, since a legitimation technique can soon turn into a [self-]delegitimation strategy. This is why, in the films, positive appreciation seems to be the most effective option, as it helps the speaker to self-present their ingroup positively and legitimate their system or opinion.

Contrary to negative appreciation, which usually delegitimizes the speaker by means of polarization.

The use of Raven's (2008) abovementioned bases of power evolves along the films. At first, populism and a mixture between *informational* and *legitimate powers* are employed, since leaders are defined as knowing best and so citizens must comply with politicians' rules even for their own good and safety. Besides, all the leaders in the films use Charteris-Black's (2011) *thinking right* to support their actions in the name of peace. The repetitive feeling of belonging or patriotism is a subtle, illusory technique –framed within *informational power*– so that the ruling faction makes the population accept their supervisors' persuasive reasons. They also use this power to make citizens believe they have some sort of freedom to choose. Ultimately, Tris uses this kind of power with her brother when she appeals to rationale (*thinking right*) to make him aware of manipulation from within his own faction, Erudite. Finally, all the outgroup leaders use *coercive power* to prevent potential rebellious citizens from following the example of Divergents; thus, as an exemplary measure. However, coercion is not only a dissuasive action, but also an eradication fashion, as the outgroup employs elimination techniques which can be liken to Hitler's and the Nazis' methods.

The outgroup's aggressive manners differ from the ingroup, who do not even employ language as a weapon to delegitimize the enemy, but base their

actions on rationale or Charteris-Black's *thinking right* and consensus or Raven's *informational power* if they have to exert it. And according to the results, this seems to be the most effective and socially accepted kind of power in the films composing the trilogy.

The language together with other coercive resources, such as the use of mind-control techniques, support stereotypically totalitarian policies. These invariably fight human nature, characterized by complexity of character and the use of critical thinking and free will to make individualized decisions. This is a hallmark of dystopian fiction that reflects the fear to people's potential to transform the political system from within. Only the eventual release of *Ascendant*, the last film of the saga, which may differ from the contents of the novels, will reveal the trilogy's position about hope for humankind.

This study has limited to the speeches of the films. Therefore, further lines of research may include its comparison to the novels. It would also be interesting to examine if the same persuasion techniques and manipulation, linguistic devices are employed in other YA novels' or films' dystopias or totalitarian regimes and how effective they are to exert control. Likewise, other studies could delve into the conceptualization of thought in dystopias through metaphor, metonymy and *metaphtonymy* as a manipulative and persuasive device as well as conveyors of underlying messages.

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