

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT**  
**BA THESIS**

Dystopia in Two 1950s American Science Fiction Novels  
Adéla Chvátalová

Following two introductory chapters—one focused on definitions of science fiction, the other on dystopia—the thesis aims to identify major dystopian features in *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury and *The Space Merchants* by Frederik Pohl and Cyril M. Kornbluth.

Critical studies utilized in the first two chapters include David Seed's *American Science Fiction and the Cold War*, Tom Moylan's *Scraps of the Untainted Sky*, Darko Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* and *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, among others. These are complex, major works of science fiction criticism, which together introduce the definition of science fiction as an "ongoing discussion" (to use Farah Mendlesohn's expression) rather than define the genre in a specific manner. Unfortunately, multiple differences among these various critical studies are not always considered, here and throughout the thesis, where contradictory points are sometimes presented with little commentary. This concerns for example the distinction between dystopia and science fiction, which are presented as two separate genres. Could Ms. Chvátalová perhaps comment on this? What, in her view, makes a dystopia into a work of science fiction; can she give examples of dystopian texts that in her opinion are (and that are not) science fiction? Another question that I have repeatedly tried to draw the student's attention to was the understanding of utopia as an "ideal world" (24) and the idea that "[u]topias are widely criticized for their 'lack of dramatic conflict' and uneventful perfectionism" (24). How would some of the critics whose criticism is referenced throughout the thesis view utopia?

The picture of the 1950s dystopian writing presented in the second chapter, along with the subsequent reading of *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Space Merchants* in the third chapter, is focused around a set of specific issues such as technology, censorship and the media. The argument is clear and the analysis convincing but what about works such as Leigh Brackett's *The Long Tomorrow*?

The thesis has developed quite substantially from its inception, including stylistically, although some small errors and typos (such as "Hugo Gernsblak" on p. 10) were not corrected.

Proposed grade: Velmi dobře (2) or Dobře (3)

Pavla Veselá, PhD.  
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