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Social Critique in Sci-Fi Novels *Dune* by Frank Herbert and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Závěrečná diplomová práce se bude věnovat populárnímu žánru sci-fi, který bývá často označován za žánr mimořádně vhodný pro různé formy kritiky soudobé společnosti. V úvodu práce student charakterizuje žánr sci-fi, stručně nastíní jeho historii a teoretické koncepty a zvolená díla do tohoto kontextu zařadí. Vysvětlí pojem společenská kritika a její podoby v literárním díle, případně další termíny, s nimiž bude pracovat (např. dystopie). Jádrem práce bude analýza zvolených děl, v níž se diplomant zaměří na prvky společensko-kritické, jejich prezentaci, případně použité literární prostředky. Svá tvrzení bude vhodně ilustrovat primárními texty a konzultovat se sekundárními zdroji. Závěrem své analýzy přehledně shrne, oba romány z tohoto pohledu porovná a vysloví obecnější závěry o možnostech, formách a prostředcích společenské kritiky ve sci-fi.

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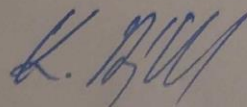
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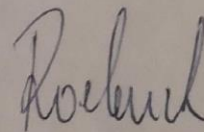
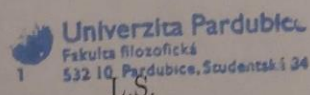
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ANNOTATION

This paper analyzes the elements of social critique in two works of science fiction: *Dune* by Frank Herbert and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin. The theoretical part focuses on the definition and the history of the genre. Briefly, it also introduces the definition and use of social criticism. The goal of the analytical part is to locate the elements of social criticism in the two novels and comment on their interpretation. In the practical part, the presented understanding of the critique might be supported by secondary literature.

KEYWORDS

social criticism, science fiction, dune, the left hand of darkness, frank herbert, ursula k. le guin

NÁZEV

Společenská kritika ve sci-fi románech Duna Franka Herberta a Levá ruka tmy Ursuly K. Le Guinové

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce analyzuje prvky společenské kritiky v dílech žánru science fiction: *Duna* od Franka Herberta a *Levá ruka tmy* od Ursuly K. Le Guin. Teoretická část se zabývá definicí žánru science fiction a jeho historií. Stručně také popisuje definici a užití společenské kritiky. Cílem analytické části práce je nalézt prvky této kritiky v těchto dvou románech a okomentovat jejich výskyty. Dále se praktické části můžou objevit citace a parafráze ze sekundárních zdrojů pro podložení daných vysvětlení společenské kritiky.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

společenská kritika, science fiction, duna, frank herbert, levá ruka tmy, ursula k. le guin

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Introduction

This paper aims to examine the methods employed by Ursula Le Guin in *The Left Hand of Darkness* and Frank Herbert in *Dune* to possibly express social critique. These authors belong to the New Wave of soft science fiction literature of the 1960s which is a movement focusing on psychology, sociology, ecology and other soft disciplines of science. The analysis investigates the used elements of social criticism and discusses them with respect to general themes of social criticism in literature. The elements of social critique that are found in the novels are also commented on with regards to the experts in the field, various critics, and other authors.

The theoretical part of this thesis consists of two main parts. The first one explores the genre of science fiction. At first, several viewpoints at the definitions of the genre are provided, to create a clear understanding of what is science fiction. After that, the history of the genre is summarized and categorized according to academically accepted periods, each of them is briefly examined and the lists of most known and influential authors are compiled and put into context. Also, this part of the paper provides a concise insight into the most common themes and motifs that appear in this genre, which are subsequently used as one of the bases for the analytical part of this thesis. However, what needs to be addressed in advance is the fact that by no means it is possible to examine the history of the genre completely and without the omission of some authors and, simultaneously, for the theory not to exceed the analytical part in its word count. For that reason, the overview of the history deals with only those who are considered the absolute key figures of the genre (and other similarly important people had to be skipped) and who significantly changed science fiction leading directly to the analyzed authors. Also, the historical overview is concluded by the two analyzed authors and does not regard any authors who wrote after them.

Both Le Guin and Herbert are shortly introduced, with regards to the genre and in a general manner. Then, the final part of the theoretical section of this paper deals with literary criticism, social criticism, to be specific. The methods mentioned in this part shall function as the second theoretical source for the upcoming analysis.

The analytical segment of this thesis contains the examination and discusses possible interpretations of the found aspects of social critique in both novels. This section shall present an overview and then a detailed analysis of the elements of social critique. The individual examples are divided into general groups and are further discussed in a more detailed manner.

The elaborate analysis also compares the usage of social critique by both authors and this comparison is explained in greater details and complemented with texts from secondary literature to support a point of view, for example.

1. Theoretical Part

1.1. Science Fiction

1.1.1. Definition of Science Fiction

The genre itself, as well as all the things that are derived from it, underwent an extensive process of evolution, especially during the 20th century, and transferred from being a niche interest of a modest amount of (mostly) science and technology enthusiasts into a worldwide phenomenon. Despite the general and, in a way, simplified understanding, works of science fiction offer much more than only off-world aliens and interstellar travel by spaceships. Throughout the history of the genre, authors placed emphasis on different topics, employed various tools and subjects, and shifted from focusing strictly on the content to the form and style as well. All these changes may be a part of the reason why academics struggle to provide a unanimously accepted definition of the genre. For the sake of clarity of this paper, some definitions need to be examined and considered at this point.

Roberts¹ in his historical overview of the genre analyses three definitions. The first one is by a major character of science fiction history and criticism, Darko Suvin. The key part says that science fiction is:

“a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment.”²

Suvin then, to make his definition more precise, adds, as he previously stated in another paper³ as well, one significant feature of science fiction: the dominant element known as the *fictional novelty*. This term includes things such as new technologies and devices, it might refer to a new concept of some sort (e.g. the androgynous society in *The Left Hand of Darkness*), in general a fictional novelty (or *novum*) represents everything new in the piece of literature as opposed to the real world of the writer and reader.

To summarize this definition, science fiction consists mainly of three factors: estrangement, cognition, and novum. While the explanation by Suvin might seem too general (as it could easily be just as valid for fantasy literature, for example), it is accepted among other science

¹ Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 1.

² Darko Suvin, *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1988) 37.

³ Darko Suvin. "On What Is and Is Not an SF Narration; With a List of 101 Victorian Books That Should Be Excluded from SF Bibliographies." *Science Fiction Studies* 5, no. 1 (1978): 45-57.

fiction critics and authors. Parrinder, to provide one such case, further explains Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement that science fiction serves us "by imagining strange worlds we come to see our own conditions of life."⁴ While this paper shall examine two other definitions, this statement by Parrinder will be vital when approaching the two novels in the analytical part below.

As a second definition, Roberts⁵ mentions a statement by Damien Broderick, a science fiction critic, editor, and novelist. Roberts notes that Broderick built his thesis on Suvin's and tried to reflect scientific, technological and cultural changes of the 19th and 20th centuries (*epistemic changes* as he put it).⁶ Broderick's definition says:

"SF is that species of storytelling native to a culture undergoing the epistemic changes implicated in the rise and supercession of technical-industrial modes of production, distribution, consumption and disposal. It is marked by (i) metaphoric strategies and metonymic tactics, (ii) the foregrounding of icons and interpretive schemata from a collectively constituted generic 'mega-text' [i.e. all previously published SF] and the concomitant de-emphasis of 'fine writing' and characterisation, and (iii) certain priorities more often found in scientific and postmodern texts than in literary models: specifically, attention to the object in preference to the subject. [Broderick, 155; my addition]"⁷

This definition approaches science fiction with the consideration of the context – both from the perspective of historical events (in this case the mentioned epistemic changes) and of the genre itself. Also, the definition suggests a certain de-emphasis on the style which is typical especially for one kind of science fiction (as will be explained below) – the *hard science fiction*. However, it does not necessarily apply to the following eras of science fiction and that is one of the reasons for this definition to not be perceived as precise and valid for the whole genre.

For the last definition that Roberts analyzes⁸, he decides to provide a completely different approach to the genre. Samuel Delany, once again not only a critic but also a science fiction writer, chooses to create a definition that focuses on something other than the content of the

⁴ Patrick Parrinder, "Introduction: Learning from Other Worlds," in *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 4.

⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 1.

⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 1.

⁷ Roberts, *History of SF*, 1-2.

⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 2.

texts. Delany, instead, suggests that the literature of science fiction is typically connected by certain conventions which offer a completely different understanding of a text. He explains this vague statement on an example, the interpretations of the phrase: “her world exploded.”⁹ When reading the majority of other literary genres, this sentence would be a metaphor meaning that some of the person’s ideas, plans, beliefs or anticipations were proven wrong and she was shaken by that. If readers of science fiction encounter this sentence, however, they need to ask whether there were weapons capable of planetary annihilation present in the book or it was merely a metaphor, as well.

Delany further treats science fiction more as a form of writing than just a genre. He explains that science fiction has certain specifics and common topics, themes and writing methods typical for it, in the same manner drama or poetry have their specifics.¹⁰ While this definition could be, again, seen a vague or, due to its simplicity, might be perceived as alibistic, it offers opposition to the previous wave of definitions.

Since these definitions might not be satisfactory, it is not difficult to find countless others, many created by writers of science fiction themselves. A list of all of them would be very long and it would be arduous, if even possible, to draw a single conclusion out of it (other than the one that it is not possible to simplify a genre into a single definition without being extremely vague or omitting something). However, a few shall appear in the next paragraphs, chosen carefully to represent the ideas that will be used in the analysis in the following parts of this paper.

This overview of definitions starts with one by Robert A. Heinlein. However, before the definition itself is revealed, a brief insight into Heinlein’s own comments on the writing of science fiction might be beneficial. In his paper called *On the writing of speculative fiction* (*speculative fiction*, a substitute term often used instead of science fiction) originally from 1947, Heinlein starts with a quotation by R. Kipling which could be in this context interpreted to say: there are many ways to create science fiction (and thus ways to define it) and all of them are correct.¹¹ He, then, proceeds to write about creating a story in general and, after that, provides a sort of an outline for a science fiction story. The list that he offers could be simplified to the following:

⁹ Samuel L. Delany, *Silent Interviews: On Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction, and Some Comics* (London: University Press of New England), 27.

¹⁰ Samuel L. Delany, *Silent Interviews*, 28-31.

¹¹ Robert A. Heinlein, “On the Writing of Speculative Fiction,” in *Of Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing*, ed. Lloyd Arthur Eshbach (Chicago: Advent: Publishers, 1964), 13.

1. Different conditions than here-and-now (could be an invention)
2. The new conditions are a vital part of the story
3. The problem (or plot) must be a human problem
4. The problem originates in or is affected by the new conditions
5. No established fact (e.g. a scientific theory and facts) should be violated, and if so, it must be plausible and explained¹²

While Heinlein's list seems to be quite precise when traditional works of science fiction are taken into consideration, the fact that many other authors and critics were articulating their own suggests that this definition was not, once again, globally accepted in the universe of this genre. Kingsley Amis, an author and a fan of science fiction, is among those who have attempted to create such definition, however, he approached this process more consciously by stating that any definition of this genre is bound to be cumbersome.¹³ What follows is his careful definition that says:

“Science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesized on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin.”¹⁴

It is possible to spot several repeating elements when comparing these definitions. The safest way to define science fiction, based on the descriptions of the genre above and their common features, is to say that it is a genre (or form of writing to comply with Delany's approach) which experiments with human nature, however, not necessarily always applied to humans, when exposed to some new conditions which should, ideally, originate from our scientific knowledge.

While the previous paragraph concludes this part of the paper, one last definition will be mentioned to represent how some authors felt about defining a genre as variable as science fiction is. Norman Spinrad, whose science fiction literature has been nominated to both Hugo and Nebula awards, has stated the following on the topic of defining the genre: “Science fiction is anything published as science fiction.”¹⁵ Even though this statement has not gained much

¹² Heinlein, *Writing*, 17.

¹³ Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 1.

¹⁴ Amis, *New Maps*, 1.

¹⁵ Spinrad Quoted in [1993] in: Stableford, Brian; Clute, John; Nicholls, Peter (1993). "Definitions of SF". In Clute, John; Nicholls, Peter. *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. London: Orbit/Little, Brown and Company. pp. 311–314. ISBN 1-85723-124-4.

academic appraisal, it symbolizes the frustration of the futile struggle to define (and thus create a crystal clear limits of) this genre.

1.1.2. History of Science Fiction – from Proto-Science Fiction to Wells

The previous chapter examines how difficult it is to define the genre of science fiction. Similarly, it is in no way easier to find the original work of science fiction, as it may vary based on the chosen definition of the genre. The next pages should, however, illustrate the unclear origins of the genre and its painful and complicated transformation throughout the years. The key periods and characters of science fiction will be mentioned and put into historical-political context if considered necessary.

There are sources that place Thomas Moore's *Utopia* at the beginning of the science fiction chronology.¹⁶ However, other studies argue that works of science fiction are much older. Some authors of these studies, which are discussed below, explore ancient writers and their literature in order to recognize elements that are vital and typical for the genre. As the criteria to meet the requirements to fit into the science fiction category are not clear, the title of the first work of science fiction is often attributed to various books.

However, there is a novel written in the 2nd century AD that is frequently perceived by many critics and science fiction enthusiasts as the agreed upon original work of the old science fiction, part of the so-called *proto-science fiction* genre.¹⁷ *A True Story*, written by Lucian of Samosata, sometimes even regarded as the *father of science fiction*¹⁸, a Syrian satirist who was born into the Roman empire, and wrote in ancient Greek, has enough qualities of this genre to be understood this way.^{19 20 21}

A True Story (occasionally also translated as *True History* or *True Histories*)²² was mainly a satire of Homer and other ancient authors but it, eventually, "inspired a long chain of literary descendants, including Kepler, Godwin, Cyrano de Bergerac, Swift, Voltaire, and Poe."²³ In Lucian's story, a vessel undergoes a sail (or flight) to the "flying island" which proves to be the Moon and back to Earth where the adventurers encounter various beasts and historical or literary characters.²⁴ The scientific basis of this book lays in its geographical, astronomical,

¹⁶ Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn, "Chronology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), xx.

¹⁷ Roberts, *History of SF*, 29.

¹⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 31.

¹⁹ James Gunn, *The Road to Science Fiction* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 1.

²⁰ Greg Grewell, "Colonizing the Universe: Science Fictions Then, Now, and in the (Imagined) Future," *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 55, no. 2 (2001): 30-31.

²¹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 29.

²² Roberts, *History of SF*, 31.

²³ Gunn, *The Road*, 2.

²⁴ Grewell, "Colonizing," 31.

zoological, and anthropological information that is presented to the reader constantly, as Georgiadou and Larmour explain in their study.²⁵

Lucian's literature, as there are other works of him that are often associated with science fiction (for example *Ikaromenippos*),²⁶ was most likely a part of a more complex literary movement rather than a one-man revolution in literature. However, countless texts were lost for many reasons (being literally lost or destroyed, to name a few) throughout time and, after the fall of the Roman culture into what is by historians called the Dark Ages, literature, in general, suffered greatly for many centuries, the development of proto-science fiction not excluded.²⁷

For that reason, the most common consensus on what the next phases of this genre are leads to the 16th century. In 1516, Thomas More, an English philosopher and writer, published a satirical book which subsequently named a whole genre, or a mode of literature, *Utopia*. A utopia, generally, contains a story that involves an ideal, perfect society and a government. It is this emphasis of the socio-political principle, as opposed to having this kind of society as a background of a story while focusing on, for example, biological, geological, and other principles, that, according to Suvin, differentiates a utopia from a science fiction utopia.²⁸

What made *Utopia* stand out from other thematically similar stories that provide an idealistic view on society, among other things, is how systematically More approached the worldbuilding of his creation. To emphasize one or two features of the ways the society functions would not be enough to create a believable and logically functioning society. Instead, More had to manufacture and then describe the whole structure of the socio-political world. This is, according to Roberts, what made *Utopia* such a pivotal story and what influenced a great number of authors to design their own utopias, both within and outside the genre of science fiction.²⁹

To name at least one quality that a typical utopia shares with a piece of science fiction, and thus simultaneously explain the importance of utopias (especially during the first decades after the publishing of *Utopia*), one might consider the “what if” (or “as if”) nature of both. Suvin argues that both utopias and science fiction provide an imaginative experiment.³⁰ In this experiment,

²⁵ Aristoula Georgiadou, and David H. Larmour, *Lucian's Science Fiction Novel True Histories: Interpretation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 45-46.

²⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 31.

²⁷ Roberts, *History of SF*, 34.

²⁸ Suvin, *Defined by a Hollow* 383

²⁹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 41-42.

³⁰ Suvin, *Positions*, 41-42.

the authors are able to criticize their current society or government, or they might be offering what is in their minds a better way to live. Since science fiction is often perceived as social fiction, the utopia and, later, the *anti-utopia* or *dystopia*, became a common mode or topic of science fiction. After More, a prominent work of utopia was written (but unfinished) by Francis Bacon. *New Atlantis* is part of the idealistic utopias, while, for example, *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift was very satirical, and, in fact, a dystopia (as the emphasis was put on the societies that were flawed).³¹ Suvin expressed his views on the importance of utopia in this statement: "All SF is, if not a daughter, then at least a niece of utopia."³²

While More helped to resurface the ideas carried in science fiction after the Dark Ages, another person helped to the rebirth (to the birth from the strictly modern viewpoint of science fiction) of the genre even more, in a similar way he managed to enforce a movement in the development of science or at least astronomy. When Nicolaus Copernicus wrote and cautiously published in 1543 his *On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres*, which revived the heliocentric model of the planetary movement as opposed to the Catholic Church-favored Ptolemaic model (which placed the Earth in the center), he unwillingly helped to create a significant piece of the scientific basis for science fiction. Copernicus' theory spread slowly, as it was seen as hostile against the Catholic Church and it eventually undermined the Church's scientific authority. Before Copernicus, any voyage into space, no matter how scarce they were in literature, was perceived as fantastical or divine. The new astronomical theory, however, helped to rationalize the space around the Earth and, most significantly, it helped it materialize and became part of science, rather than theology.³³

The Church wanted to stop the influence of the theory by placing the book on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* – a list of forbidden works of literature in 1616, however, the dispute climaxed in a trial after Galileo Galilei's publication of *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in 1632,³⁴ a book which compared the two models of planetary movement trajectories and that was banned, as well, until 1835. Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus, and, among others, Newton were key figures in the scientific revolution that was started by their discoveries.

To further examine the influence of the model of heliocentrism on the development of science fiction, one must not stop researching with Copernicus. The most significant era for this

³¹ Gunn, *The Road*, 2.

³² Suvin, *Positions*, 42.

³³ Roberts, *History of SF*, 46-47.

³⁴ Brian Stableford, *Science Fiction and Science Fact: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 100.

development is circa around the year 1600. By that time, Copernicus' ideas were successfully spread across European societies. In 1600, Italian philosopher and cosmological theorist Giordano Bruno executed by burning for spreading ideas about an infinite world without a God (in the strictly Catholic understanding). And, finally, in the same year, while staying near Prague when working for Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler wrote a narrative called *The Dream (Somnium)*.

First, an explanation of Bruno's significance is vital. Bruno, a speculative thinker, inspired by Copernicus, among others, and based on his theory wrote a book called *On the Infinite Universe and Worlds* in 1584. Bruno did not include God into his idea of cosmos which together with the infinity of his universe brought the attention of Church to him and he was imprisoned and in 1600 executed. The idea of the infinite universe, which is now a fact, was similarly to the Copernicus' theory a tremendous change in the way people understood space.³⁵

The last of the trio is Kepler. Similarly, as the previous pair, Kepler was a member of what one could call "scientific and astronomical innovators." Kepler's laws of planetary motion, which were published mostly in the second decade of the 17th century, are based on Copernicus' theory and are still valid today. While the authors of science fiction may be, either willingly or unwillingly, building their stories on scientific facts that were noted by Kepler, there is another reason for them to be thankful to him. Kepler wrote what is by some attributed "a key text in the development of science fiction."³⁶

Somnium, which was written around 1600 but was published after Kepler's death in 1634, was a calculated use of fiction in order to popularize Kepler's scientific work and spread it among people, as Stableford states and adds that Kepler and other astronomers, in fact, were the first scientists to start this tradition.³⁷ In this book, there is a journey to the Moon that is accompanied by thorough scientific and explanatory notes. Roberts states that while the first part of *Somnium* consists of 3800 words, the notes that accompany it amassed to 15000 which proves how scientifically focused the book was.³⁸ While some say *Somnium* was a vital text, others, for example, the famous American astronomer and science popularizer Carl Sagan,³⁹ do not hesitate to say that it is the first piece of science fiction. To provide one last proof of the

³⁵ Stableford, *Fiction and Fact*, 380.

³⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 57.

³⁷ Stableford, *Fiction and Fact*, 43.

³⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 59.

³⁹ Youtube, "Kepler's Dream Come True," posted September 28th, 2009, Youtube video, 3:48, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFCQCsS75BQ>.

importance of this book, one might look into a study on *Somnium* by Bozzetto. In it, he states that the book is the “missing link” between Lucian’s *True History* and the upcoming authors such as Jules Verne.⁴⁰

In the 18th century, the Enlightenment continued the workings of the scientific revolution, as people were focusing on the development of sciences and new discoveries and inventions were appearing constantly. This is the reason why science fiction had, for the first time in history, a real chance to flourish, as people were enchanted by, what would be in terms of science fiction, the real-life *novum*.

During this century, what became a typical kind of a story, at least when considering the viewpoint of science fiction, were the so-called *voyages extraordinaires* (*extraordinary voyages*). While people mostly associate this term with the French author Jules Verne (who will be discussed in the paragraphs regarding the 19th century), some critics approach it more generally so that it represents a whole point of interest of many authors, instead of only Verne.⁴¹

In this part of the paper, three important examples need to be mentioned in order to examine this phase of not only science fiction literature. Chronologically, the first book, that was published in 1726, is known as *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift but the full title that might suggest its partial exploratory focus is *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*. A piece of literature written mainly for its satirical value, its voyages into unknown lands with their various kinds of inhabitants and their examination have scientific relevance,⁴² although this is often contested and discussed. While Gunn⁴³ and Roberts⁴⁴ advocate its scientific value, Aldiss, among others, dismisses this novel as science fiction due to being satirical and moral.⁴⁵ The book is without a doubt a satirical piece of literature, however, as Roberts notes, this should not disqualify it as belonging to this genre.⁴⁶

Shifting from Ireland to Norway, the next significant author of this period of science fiction is Ludvig Holberg. His novel *Niels Klim’s Underground Travels*, published in 1741, introduces a

⁴⁰ Roger Bozzetto and Arthur B. Evans, "Kepler's 'Somnium': Or, Science Fiction's Missing Link," *Science Fiction Studies* 17, no. 3 (November 1990): 370.

⁴¹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 100.

⁴² Gunn, *The Road*, 5.

⁴³ Gunn, *The Road*, 5.

⁴⁴ Roberts, *History of SF*, 92-95.

⁴⁵ Brian W. Aldiss, and David Wingrove, *Trillion Year Spree* (Glasgow: Collins, 1988), 81.

⁴⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 92.

new sort of imaginary voyages. While previous stories focused mainly on the journey to the Moon (Lucian and a great number of others) or to new made-up lands similarly to Swift, Holberg's hero went underground. The narrative is as satirical as *Gulliver's Travels* and provides great details of the newly examined world below the ground with its population.⁴⁷

The third type of these *voyages extraordinaires* leads to the planet Earth. While the location is well known to the readers, the French author Voltaire managed to change their perception by adding a *novum* to their homeworld. The great novelty of the story of *Micromegas* (also known as *Littlebig*, published 1752) lays in the fact that Earth is visited by aliens, interstellar traveling giants. After describing the enormous statures of the aliens, Voltaire focused on the matters of physics, cosmology, but also philosophy.⁴⁸ In fact, Voltaire was making a point that became obvious from the latest discoveries of his era – that Earthly matters and problems are meaningless from the viewpoint of the giant universe and thus tried to confront the very common anthropocentrism.

The Enlightenment was substituted by the Industrial Revolution, which introduced yet another wave of new inventions and discoveries to people, which inadvertently inspired more authors, mainly starting in the 19th century, to either use these inventions or to build on them their own. Gunn suggests that it was because of these inventions and discoveries combined with the popularity of the gothic novel, mainly in Great Britain, that Mary Shelley was able to publish in 1818 the pivotal novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*⁴⁹ which is even by some scholars, such as Alkon, or authors, for example, Aldiss, considered the first modern science fiction novel.^{50 51} While the idea to create the narrative was arisen by the well-known literary challenge with Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley, and J. W. Polidori,⁵² the book is still important from several perspectives. The first and the most obvious one is in the act of resurrection itself. The premise is that Victor Frankenstein systematically applied his knowledge of sciences and this way created a life out of pieces of a dead body. Shelley built Victor's actions on the basis that

⁴⁷ Gunn, *The Road*, 5.

⁴⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 97-99.

⁴⁹ Gunn, *The Road*, 6.

⁵⁰ Paul K. Alkon, *Science Fiction Before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

⁵¹ Brian Aldiss, *The Detached Retina: Aspects of SF and Fantasy* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 78.

⁵² Gunn, *The Road*, 6.

she stated in the Preface of the book – that Darwin himself and other physiologists never excluded a reanimation of a dead body from the realm of possibilities.⁵³

In several ways, *Frankenstein* set an archetype. After the notion of the book spread, literature gained the archetype of a mad scientist, the topic of corpse reanimation, and, something which would be condemned by the Church, usurping the status of God (since only God can give life).⁵⁴

⁵⁵ Of course, one cannot omit the phenomenon of the Frankenstein monster, which survived even into today's culture.

The first major American author of science fiction is by some considered to be Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was always fascinated by science which is proved by one of his earliest published poems, *Sonnet – to Science*, which came out in the 1820s. As Gunn states, Poe sought inspiration in science in contrast to his contemporary Hawthorne who was prejudiced against it.⁵⁶ Gunn also cites Sam Moskowitz who says that the key to Poe's influence of the future of the genre of science fiction lays in the scientific explanation of any deviation from a norm.⁵⁷ This emphasis on the explanation was part of several definitions of science fiction that are noted in the previous chapter. This scientific approach is appraised by readers, as well as some scholars:

“By ‘scientifiction’ I mean the Jules Verne, H.G.Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story—a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision.... Not only do these amazing tales make tremendously interesting reading—they are always instructive. They supply knowledge... in a very palatable form.”⁵⁸

Roberts state *The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall* (published in 1835) as the acme of Poean science fiction.⁵⁹ Here, Poe seemingly rewrote Kepler's *Somnium* and sent his hero in a balloon to the Moon. In spite of the sarcastic and self-taunting character of the narrative, Poe's work later inspired Verne to write his own lunar voyage. Another significant work of literature by Poe is *Eureka* (1848). In it, Poe glorifies science, specifically new astronomical telescopes,

⁵³ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 2003), Preface.

⁵⁴ Roberts, *History of SF*, 128-129.

⁵⁵ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 145.

⁵⁶ Gunn, *The Road*, 7.

⁵⁷ Gunn, *The Road*, 7.

⁵⁸ John Clute, and Peter Nicholls, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 159.

⁵⁹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 140.

among other devices.⁶⁰ Even though *Eureka* is filled with scientific inaccuracies, as Roberts points out,⁶¹ Poe tried to describe and explain phenomena from the fields of astronomy, cosmology, origins and the future of the universe, and other things. This process of *scientification*, as mentioned above by Nichols et al., was what was of utmost importance from the viewpoint of science fiction, as it set this method of application of current scientific knowledge into the discourse of modern science fiction.

Before moving to another author, one more book by Poe needs to be mentioned. *Mellonta Tauta*, a story published in 1849, maybe the first science fiction story of the future.⁶² It takes place a thousand years in the future, as is used to comment on the United States of America of Poe's era. Despite this motif, the story includes descriptions of future technologies and the future world, with its ruler and ideology.⁶³

Europe was also moving forward in terms of the development of science fiction. Most likely, the most prominent French author of this period and this genre was Jules Verne. Verne paid a lot of attention and found inspiration in a great number of his predecessors. This can be seen in the scope of the journeys that he portrayed. As it is a case of many of his books, the title suggests where the narrative lead the heroes. First, there was *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (published in 1863), then, he explored the space surrounding the Earth in *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and in *Round the Moon* (1870), not to forget the depths of the oceans in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas* (also 1870).

As Gunn notes, Verne was probably the first author that made a living out of his science fiction writing.⁶⁴ Verne started amassing fans even in the early stages of his writing career and subsequently helped to make his *voyages extraordinaires*, at the same time science fiction in general, a full-grown genre. Some scholars attribute the success of the Frenchman to the moderation of his imagination.⁶⁵ By that, it is meant that he built his ideas, devices, and most frequently, means of transportation on already existing things, he merely improved them. Also, as was already mentioned above, Verne's literature contained great details of descriptive scientific information that truly educated the readers. Several experts on science fiction stated

⁶⁰ Brian Stableford, "Science Fiction before the Genre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18.

⁶¹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 139.

⁶² Gunn, *The Road*, 7.

⁶³ Roberts, *History of SF*, 140.

⁶⁴ Gunn, *The Road*, 9.

⁶⁵ Stableford, "SF before," 21.

that the genre would not be the same without Verne,⁶⁶ which was also said about Herbert George Wells.⁶⁷

H. G. Wells, as is his name most commonly abbreviated, not only saw this transformation of science fiction into the worldwide genre, in fact, he played a major part in it. A part of such greatness that later gave him the nickname *The Father of the Modern Science Fiction*⁶⁸ (although, admittedly, this title has been given also to Hugo Gernsback and was mentioned above, as well). The reason for Wells' success was partly in his innovation, and partly in his moderation technique when he would not overwhelm the reader with many *novums* but focused instead on one which he described in a very detailed manner and exposed common people to it⁶⁹.

As far as Wells' innovations are concerned, he predicted plenty of inventions. His stories contained time traveling machines, invasions of alien species on Earth, chemicals causing invisibility, battle tanks, and airplanes, the atomic bomb, matters of evolution or devolution, television, or something resembling the internet.^{70 71} These technical advancements portrayed in his novels caught the attention of a lot of technical and scientific enthusiasts or introduced these fields to people who had not emerged into them yet which also contributed to Wells popularity.

Wells' first full-length science fiction novel was *The Time Machine* (1895). As Roberts suggests, it is a novel filled with motifs and elements of critique. He notes, that the book is about class, biology – evolution (and Darwinism) and devolution, but also about the technical development and what it may offer.⁷² In the majority of previous cases of literature dealing with the future, the authors chose the means of dreams and visions. However, Wells wanted to show a theoretically plausible device which he based on the latest contemporary science development which introduced the idea of time as a fourth dimension.⁷³ Interestingly enough, Wells' phase

⁶⁶ Broderick, *Starlight*, 7

⁶⁷ Gunn, *The Road*, 9.

⁶⁸ Gunn, *The Road*, 13.

⁶⁹ Gunn, *The Road*, 13.

⁷⁰ Gunn, *The Road*, 13.

⁷¹ Simon John James, "HG Wells: A visionary who should be remembered for his social predictions, not just his scientific ones," *Independent*, September 22nd, 2016, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/hg-wells-a-visionary-who-should-be-remembered-for-his-social-predictions-not-just-his-scientific-a7320486.html>.

⁷² Roberts, *History of SF*, 202-203.

⁷³ Stableford, "SF before," 24.

of writing science fiction was rather short, spanning only from 1895 to 1901, as he then moved to write contemporary novels and even encyclopedic works.⁷⁴

Despite that, he managed to produce several well-known and widely appreciated works of science fiction. To name a few, there was *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (published in 1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901). What is probably most appreciated in Wells' literature of this genre is how he prepared the groundwork in his methods of narrative technique combined with melodrama, scientific elements and even touched or criticized some moral aspects of his era.⁷⁵

To conclude this overview of the history of science fiction before the 20th century, a great number of scholars, experts, and even authors argue what is the original piece of this genre. As the book might differ based on what definition of the genre is chosen, a unanimous verdict might never be heard. Nevertheless, it is still possible to trace the origins of science fiction to almost two thousand years ago and from then to watch the gradual development of the genre. By the end of the 19th century, the genre is well established and clearly distinguished, mainly thanks to the popularization by authors such as Verne and Wells.

⁷⁴ Gunn, *The Road*, 13.

⁷⁵ Stableford, "SF before," 25-26.

1.1.3. History of Science Fiction - the 20th Century

As the scientific development was becoming gradually (and almost exponentially) faster, similarly, the genre of science fiction saw more changes in one century than in the two millennia before. For that reason, a proper examination of this century's influence on the genre is vital for the analysis of the two authors chosen for this paper who operated during this era. There were several great movements within the genre and one must investigate them in order to be able to understand the changes of the genre.

The new genre offered until then unseen possibilities, that is the reason why some authors decided to try writing a piece of science fiction. Among those, the most notable, not for their work in this genre, are Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling.⁷⁶ Kipling's *With the Night Mail* (which was published in 1905) and *As Easy as A.B.C.* (1912) supposedly resembled the modern *hard science fiction* (its features will be described below) and significantly influenced, among others, the work of Robert A. Heinlein. Heinlein saw in Kipling the technique of *indirect exposition*, a type of worldbuilding based on a gradual exposition to background information.⁷⁷

Doyle's literature of science fiction was not, arguably, as influential as Kipling's. He created a series of adventures of Professor Challenger, including the books *The Lost World* (published in 1912) which dealt with the dinosaurs in the Amazonia and the poison cloud planetary danger in *The Poison Belt* (1913).⁷⁸ Similarly, countless of other writers interested in technology tried to mimic the success of Verne and Doyle to create a globally selling work of science fiction, in most cases significantly less well. However, the development of science fiction once again suffered from a drastic interruption, this time caused by the Great War. The fallout was most notable in the lands with the biggest tradition of this genre, in France and Great Britain.⁷⁹

Despite the troubles, the genre of science fiction found a way to regain and, after that, surpass the glory it had before the war. It was through inexpensively manufactured pulp magazines. Pulp magazines had due to their price the ability to quickly spread not only serialized books but also whole genres, as they were mostly niche-focused. In other words, these magazines were oriented strictly each to one genre or subject, e.g. western pulp magazines, detective pulp magazines, and, finally, science fiction pulp magazines.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Stableford, "SF before," 27.

⁷⁷ Eric Raymond, "Rudyard Kipling Invented SF!," *Ibiblio*, December 2nd, 2005, <http://esr.ibiblio.org/?p=234>.

⁷⁸ Stableford, "SF before," 27.

⁷⁹ Stableford, "SF before," 28.

⁸⁰ Brian Attebery, "The Magazine Era: 1926-1960," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 32.

For science fiction, the pulp magazine era started in 1926 in the United States of America. The United States did not suffer as badly as the European countries during the First World War which might be the reason why the first science fiction magazines sprouted there. The earliest one that was focused only on this genre was called *Amazing Stories*.⁸¹ Its first issue was published in April 1926. In the magazine, the genre was originally called *scientification*. The founder of the magazine, Hugo Gernsback, who was such an important figure in the development of the genre that the magazine era is sometimes called “*The Gernsback Era*” and the most famous and prestigious literary award of this genre is called after him the Hugo Award,⁸² explained the term *scientification* using these words:

“By ‘scientification’ I mean the Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe type of story – a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision.”⁸³

However, the term did not survive long, as by 1929 they also acquired the name science fiction.⁸⁴ Gernsback himself found several other magazines, but more importantly, he inspired others to found theirs. Some of the most notable created by his competitors were *Astounding Stories of Super-Science* (1930, later simply known as *Astounding Stories*) and *Wonder Stories*.⁸⁵ *Astounding Stories* are thought to be one of the most important Golden Age science fiction publication, as they focused also on adventure, excitement, and exoticism, in contrast to Gernsback whose main focus was the scientific and educational value of the genre.⁸⁶

The most prominent editor of *Astounding Stories* was John W. Campbell, Jr. The era when he took the editorship of the magazine at the end of the 1930s is known, as mentioned above, the Golden Age of science fiction. The reason for this name is that under his management, a great number of well-known authors first appeared in his magazines.⁸⁷ Campbell also managed to write several books on his own, the most successful was probably the one called *Who Goes There?* which was published in 1938 in *Astounding Stories*, although nowadays its movie adaptations most likely exceeded the success of the novella. The most famous adaptation of this book came to theaters in 1982 under the name *The Thing* and was directed by John Carpenter.

⁸¹ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 32.

⁸² Roberts, *History of SF*, 256.

⁸³ Gunn, *The Road*, 13.

⁸⁴ Attebery, “Magazine Era,” 33.

⁸⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 259, 283-284.

⁸⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 259.

⁸⁷ Attebery, “Magazine Era,” 37.

The first significantly successful authors who emerged from the magazines were Edgar Rice Burroughs and E. E. ‘Doc’ Smith.⁸⁸ Burroughs pioneered the subgenre of uninhabited extraterrestrial adventure stories. His novel later known as *A Princess of Mars*, which was published in 1912, started his famous *Barsoom* series.⁸⁹ Smith is known for his *ray-guns-and-rocket adventure stories* which he started writing in the 1920s.⁹⁰ The best-known series he created are *Skylark* and *Lensmen* which introduced the subgenre now known as *space opera*. A typical space opera contains futuristic weapons such as ray-guns or lightsabers, a clever and strong hero (in most cases an athletically well-built scientist), and the conflict between clearly established good and evil.⁹¹ Gradually, space operas grew more and more popular and some of the franchises (not necessarily literature) with the greatest fanbases fall into this category, for example, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*.

After that, roughly from the 1940s to 1960, as was briefly mentioned above, the era known as the Golden Age of science fiction occurred. While being mostly associated with Campbell’s magazine *Astounding Stories* (by this time once again re-named to *Astounding Science Fiction*),⁹² its typical examples are thought to be writings of *hard science fiction* with linear narratives in space-operatic or predominantly technological-adventure texture.⁹³ The beginning of the Golden Age is sometimes traced to the 1939 issues of *Astounding Science Fiction*, particularly to the July one which contained stories by Alfred Elton van Vogt (*Black Destroyer*) and Isaac Asimov (*Trends*) and the August issue that included, among other stories, *Life-Line* by Robert A. Heinlein. *The Big Three*, a nickname for the trio of the most prominent authors of the genre of that period, also included Arthur C. Clarke.⁹⁴

Asimov is, without a doubt, among the most famous science fiction authors in the history of the genre.⁹⁵ What might not be as known about him is that he had a Ph.D. in chemistry, taught at the university and was capable of writing readable, enjoyable, and, most importantly, understandable pieces of scientific non-fiction.⁹⁶ Probably the most well-known science fiction series Asimov created was the *Foundation series*, originally published in the *Astounding Science Fiction* as eight short stories, later published as full-length novels, starting in 1951 with

⁸⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 260.

⁸⁹ Stableford, “SF before,” 29.

⁹⁰ Attebery, “Magazine Era,” 33.

⁹¹ David Seed, *Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14-15.

⁹² Isaac Asimov, *I, Asimov: A Memoir* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), Life at War’s End.

⁹³ Roberts, *History of SF*, 287.

⁹⁴ Carl Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 71.

⁹⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 288.

⁹⁶ Stableford, *Fiction and Fact*, 37.

the titular book *Foundation*.⁹⁷ In this series, Asimov created a society which aimed to avoid a future Dark Age. Thus, as Asimov started to inspect greatly the issues of social dynamics, politics, religion, and so on, he shifted the genre from the super-science adventures that dominated in the previous decades to a richer form of fiction.⁹⁸ Another famous part of Asimov's portfolio was the *Robot series* which included the notorious collection *I, Robot* (1950). In it, he explored the new possibilities of artificial intelligence and moral and ethical questions connected to it, that had not been questioned before Asimov.⁹⁹

Similarly to Asimov, even Heinlein is known for raising the literary standard of science fiction, mostly by combining the *hard* scientific plausibility and the social awareness of *soft* science fiction.¹⁰⁰ Freedman, a critic of this genre, suggests that Heinlein did not really use science in general, but that his works involved mostly only engineering.¹⁰¹ The truth is that Heinlein focused also on the viewpoint of soldiers and his novel *Starship Troopers*, which was at first serialized in a magazine and after that published as a novel in 1959, is one of the classical examples of a *military science fiction* (although probably not much realistic and rather prettified view, as Aldiss notes)¹⁰². In 1961, another one of his most famous books was published, *Stranger in a Strange Land*. In this story, a human from Earth is brought up by Martians on Mars and then, when he comes back to Earth, is perceived as a threat to political stability.¹⁰³ This book is also seen as one of the works that connect the Golden Age with the next transformation of this genre, with the New Wave¹⁰⁴, which shall be discussed in the following chapter.

During this period, a great number of authors published works of science fiction, however, a mere overview of these writers and publications would span over many pages, this paper thus must concentrate its focus on the next stage of science fiction.

⁹⁷ Roberts, *History of SF*, 289.

⁹⁸ Attebery, "Magazine Era," 39.

⁹⁹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 290.

¹⁰⁰ Nick Hubble, and Aris Mousoutzanis, *The Science Fiction Handbook* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 78.

¹⁰¹ Freedman, *Critical Theory*, 19.

¹⁰² Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 333.

¹⁰³ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 362.

¹⁰⁴ Damian Broderick, "New Wave and Backwash: 1960-1980," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51.

1.1.4. History of Science Fiction - the New Wave

The evolution of science fiction did not stop in the Gold Age of this genre, in fact, it is thought that all the efforts of the authors even intensified.¹⁰⁵ The pace of technological development was unprecedented. What people had only imagined a few decades ago was then becoming the reality; people were, at first, sending satellites to the orbit and, after that, even other people. The reality struck science fiction from two angles. The first strike was the realization of what had been until then a dream, a vision, or pure product of one's imagination. The second hit, which was probably even harder, was that the realization of the spaceflights, for example, proved to be doable only in a very limited extent, such as sending people "only" to the Moon, not anywhere more distant.

As Roberts writes, "reality let SF down."¹⁰⁶ That is why science fiction authors started to look for methods to express their frustration, to look at humane things differently, or to address problems that had not been addressed before. That is why the *New Wave*, a movement adapted originally from French cinema's *nouvelle vague*, came to exist. Also, another thing that helped the new era of science fiction to happen was the exhaustion of the genre after the Golden Age, which is what Broderick suggests.¹⁰⁷

Once again, an editor played a major role in this phase of science fiction. Michael Moorcock who was in charge of the London *New Worlds* magazine from 1964 to 1971. Moorcock asked for a "more passionate, subtle, ironic and original form of SF" and picked four writers who, according to him, could meet his requirements. Those authors were J. G. Ballard, E. C. Tubb, Brian Aldiss, and John Brunner.¹⁰⁸ Other prominent authors of this movement were Ursula K. Le Guin, Phillip K. Dick,¹⁰⁹ and Herbert¹¹⁰, to name a few.

The New Wave is also often associated with the aforementioned *soft science fiction*, a subgenre that lays emphasis on psychology and sociology as opposed to physics and mathematics, for example, which was the case of the *hard science fiction*.¹¹¹ Roberts also adds in different words that the authors of the New Wave tried to emphasize the form, style, and, in general, the aesthetics of the writing of science fiction.¹¹² Since both of the authors of the books that this

¹⁰⁵ Broderick, "New Wave," 50.

¹⁰⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 333.

¹⁰⁷ Broderick, "New Wave," 49.

¹⁰⁸ Roberts, *History of SF*, 334.

¹⁰⁹ Hubble et al., *Handbook*, 129.

¹¹⁰ Roberts, *History of SF*, 336.

¹¹¹ Hubble et al., *Handbook*, 129.

¹¹² Roberts, *History of SF*, 335.

paper analyzes are from this era, the next paragraphs will describe briefly describe them and their works.

1.1.5. Frank Herbert

As Aldiss notes, Herbert started as a common American journalist who saw the potential that science fiction offered and tried his luck in the field.¹¹³ Herbert's first published serial was called *Under Pressure* and was printed in *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1955. A year later, the serial was rewritten into a novel known as *The Dragon in the Sea*. One of the things this novel was praised for was its prediction of a worldwide conflict due to increasing oil consumption, the first glimpse at Herbert ecological consciousness.¹¹⁴

Soon, Herbert started to research and eventually write his masterpiece, *Dune*. In 1963, it started to appear in the magazine *Analog Science Fiction and Fact* (renamed *Astounding Science Fiction*, the change happened in 1960 with Campbell still being the editor) and was published in 1965 as a lengthy novel. The book was a tremendous success and won both the most prestigious awards, the Hugo Award, and the Nebula Award. Some suggest that the huge success of *Dune*, similarly to *The Stranger in a Strange Land* and *Lord of the Rings*, lied in the interests of university students who read these books in enormous numbers, partly as a countercultural statement.¹¹⁵

To provide a brief summary of the story, one should first examine the setting of the book. It is set in a distant future in a different solar system than the Earth. There are several Houses that serve within a sort of a feudal system under the Emperor. Each House controls a number of planets as its fiefs but the focus of the novel is on one planet which is known under several names, the most common are Arrakis or Dune. The planet, while almost inhabitable due to being basically one gigantic desert with a huge deficiency of water, attracts the attention of all the Houses thanks to being the only planet with the precious *mélange*. This *mélange*, widely known as the spice, serves several purposes. It might be used as a drug inducing visions of, presumably, the future, enhancing physical and psychical attributed to the user, and even causing longevity. On the other hand, the drug is highly addictive and the withdrawal is fatal. The other, maybe even more important, use of this drug is in the motors of intergalactic spaceships. In other words, it is the most precious commodity in Herbert's universe.

¹¹³ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 397.

¹¹⁴ Gina Macdonald, "Herbert, Frank (Patrick)," in *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers*, ed. Curtis C. Smith (New York: St. James Press, 1986), 331-334.

¹¹⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 337.

At the beginning, the planet belongs to the House Harkonnen but they lose it and the House of the main protagonists called Atreides takes over and rule over it for some time. However, the intrigue of the House Harkonnen leads to the elimination of the Duke of the House Atreides and the Harkonnens get the planet back into their hands while the Duke's son and wife are chased into the desert.

In the desert, the survivors of the House Atreides assimilate into the culture of the native Fremen, find out that the son is presumed to be the prophet of their religion (and indeed has prophetic abilities which are enhanced by the use of the spice) and he becomes their leader. The son, Paul, then leads the attack on the Harkonnens and wins the planet back, taking the Emperor basically a hostage as well. This summary, simplified to the basic elements of the story, provides only a glimpse into the complexity of the novel. The book will be further analyzed in the practical part of this paper.

Dune was only the first novel of a whole saga which had new volumes being published from 1965 to 2017, although, what need to noted is that, after Herbert's death in February 1986, his son Brian continued to write it. In addition to that, there is a plethora of fanfiction that was being written since the publishing of the first book. Even more, there have been several movies, one is being currently shot and should be released in November 2020, and TV series, and even video games.¹¹⁶

In contrast to the *Dune* series, Herbert used claustrophobic settings, as Roberts notices.¹¹⁷ He states that in Herbert's *Void* series (started in 1965) and in his others works such as *The Dosadi Experiment* (1977) there are either people literally trapped or, as it is the case of the latter book, are set in millions into a few square kilometers. Other information on Herbert and mainly *Dune* are present in the analytical part of the thesis.

1.1.6. Ursula K. Le Guin

Broderick summarized Le Guin as a "thoughtful, elegant anthropologist of science fiction and fantasy"¹¹⁸ which describes only a part of her work, however, probably the famous one. Admittedly, she is also known for her fantasy books, mainly the *Earthsea* series. Jameson, for

¹¹⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 338.

¹¹⁷ Roberts, *History of SF*, 342.

¹¹⁸ Broderick, "New Wave," 54.

example, praises Le Guin's ability to demonstrate social criticism on a grand scale in the said series.¹¹⁹

In the same manner, as Herbert did, Le Guin started by publishing in various magazines. At first, she had to deal with the rejection letters from several publishers, however, later she succeeded. Her first published short story was *The Dowry of the Angyar* which came out in 1964 and introduced her Hainish universe.¹²⁰ This universe was the setting for several of her science fiction stories, including the most famous pieces, *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed* (1974).¹²¹

The Left Hand of Darkness won, just like Herbert's *Dune*, both the *Nebula* and *Hugo Awards* (and were the first two novels to do so). The story of this novel is based on a planet with extremely cold conditions resembling the ice age. A human, in the novel called Terran, Genli Ai is sent as an envoy to investigate the planet and its people and determine, whether it will be possible to integrate them into the *Ekumen*, to galactic interplanetary analogy to the United Nations. Probably, the most notable difference of the local people, called the Gethenians (as the planet is named Gethen), is that they are able to assume either male or female sex based on the conditions and may, as a result, be a father to one child and a mother to another one.

Apart from dealing with this anatomical difference, Genli Ai is thrown into a machinery of political conspiracies, both within a country and among several states. It is possible to notice many analogies in the story to the real world and see how Le Guin addresses some social and political issues. All of this is considered in the analysis below.

Some historians argue about what genre did Le Guin influenced more, there is no doubt, however, that she managed to do well in both fantasy and science fiction.

¹¹⁹ Frederick Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York: Verso, 2006), 67.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Cummins, *Understanding Ursula K. Le Guin: Understanding Contemporary American Literature* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), Chapter 3.

¹²¹ Hubble et al., *Handbook*, 51.

1.2.Social Criticism in Literature

“The future was increasingly regarded as a metaphor for the present.”¹²² This statement represents the tendency of science fiction at the ideal tool for social criticism which is a term that needs explanation. Unfortunately, similarly to the previous chapters, this one struggles with the definition of the key term, as well. Social criticism is, arguably, generally understood as a criticism of some elements of society. Many tendencies of social criticism that are typical for science fiction are already mentioned in the previous chapters. For that reason, this part only briefly describes the topic in general.

When seeking the definition, Isajiw, one of the experts on this type of criticism, stated: “social criticism deals with specific institutions in specific societies at specific period of time.”¹²³ To fully appreciate this definition, the key term “social” might need further explanation, however, the word itself is defined as “connected with the society and the way it is organized.”¹²⁴

This definition seems to be very broad, however, it seems to be correct. Glicksberg, another expert on this topic, says that every literature could be interpreted as a piece of social criticism because it either contains a society or its elements, or it does not contain a society which, if even possible, might be an indirect form of social criticism via the omission.¹²⁵

Science fiction, through the use of *extrapolation*, among other techniques, seems to be ideal for the analysis from the viewpoint of social criticism, as it often exaggerates a specific trait or problem of people. Probably with something similar in mind, Bloch stated: “SF became the vehicle for social criticism.”¹²⁶

As studied in *Morality and Social Criticism*, the examples of social criticism might concern religion and politics.¹²⁷ Also, there are critics who focus on the role of women or class oppression.¹²⁸ Another aspect that will be analyzed from the point of social criticism is the

¹²² Patrick Parrinder, "Science Fiction: Metaphor, Myth, or Prophecy?," in *Science Fiction, Critical Frontiers*, ed. Karen Sayer, and John Moore (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 27.

¹²³ Wsevolod W. Isajiw, *Iconic Ideas in the History of Social Thought* (Altona: FriesenPress, 2016), Normative section.

¹²⁴ Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, "Social," accessed on March 16th, 2019, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/social_1?q=social.

¹²⁵ Charles I. Glicksberg, *Literature and Society* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), 75-82.

¹²⁶ Robert Bloch, "Imagination and Modern Social Criticism," in *The Science Fiction Novel: Imagination and Social Criticism*, ed. Basil Davenport (Chicago: Advent 1969), 97-121.

¹²⁷ Richard Amesbury, *Morality and Social Criticism* (New York: Palgraven Macmillan, 2005), X.

¹²⁸ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-9.

attitude of society towards the environment and ecology in general. This approach is often called *ecocriticism*.¹²⁹

In the next part, this paper applies the knowledge gained from the whole theoretical part for the purposes of the analysis from the viewpoint of social criticism.

¹²⁹ Gerry Canavan, and Kim Stanley Robinson, *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), IX.

2. Analytical Part

In this section of the thesis, the elements of social criticism found in the novels are presented and some of their possible interpretation explained. For some specific cases, secondary literature needs to be used to support the explanations or to put them into the context of social criticism. The information learned in the Theoretical Part, both in the Historical and the Critical section, are employed and referred to during the analysis.

2.1. Ecology and Environment

The impact of a place or a climate on people inhabiting it is not usually among the first things that come into mind when one thinks about science fiction. Both Le Guin and Herbert, however, create within their respective universes planets with such extreme conditions that they are obliged to exert a significant effect on the population and push the people to their limits. The books examine, among other things, how the people adjust to these conditions, be that in terms of their habits, technology, physiology, or their attitude toward the place or nature in general. Also, it analyses how people treat nature and the environment.

Glotfelty, who is considered one of the founders of this critical approach¹³⁰ and is one of the co-editors of the *Ecocriticism Reader*, supports the notion that, judging by the content of the majority of significant literary production of science fiction of the Golden Age period (as summarized above in 1.1.3.), literature indeed omitted ecology from its focus which was mainly the issues of gender, race, and class. This fact is then contrasted with the frequent contemporary topics of newspapers – oil spills, nuclear waste issues and dangers, destruction of tropical rain forests, and many more,¹³¹ signaling that ecology and the impact of mankind on the environment is, in fact, an important matter and people care about it. Since ecology was becoming a widely discussed topic, even literary theory shifted its point of view towards this phenomenon and thus the study of *ecocriticism* was founded. Glotfelty summarizes that: “all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it”¹³² According to Barry, this critical approach began in the USA in the late 1980s¹³³ which is more than a decade later than the publication of

¹³⁰ Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 248.

¹³¹ Cheryll Glotfelty, "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis," in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty, and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), XVI.

¹³² Glotfelty, "Literary," XIX.

¹³³ Barry, *Beginning*, 264.

both analyzed novels. Nevertheless, both novels present a plethora of individual aspects of ecology and of people's approach to it.

Dune is said to be the first planetary ecology novel, at least the first one on such a grand scale,¹³⁴ therefore another common attribute of the novel is environmental.¹³⁵ Canavan and Stanley even state that it is more than likely that *Dune* did more than any other science fiction book to bring ecological awareness into the genre and, subsequently, to the wide audience.¹³⁶

The ecological significance of *Dune* has two layers and both might be examined as aspects of social critique. The first one concerns the description of the planet itself, how it looks and how its native inhabitants adapted to the harsh conditions. Arrakis, also self-explicatory known as Dune due to its sandy surface, is a desert planet without any natural precipitation. The planet is the only source of *mélange* (also called *the spice*), a very valuable commodity with several ways of use – from fuel for interstellar traveling to extending life, invoking psychic states and more.

The spice might be seen as a conscious advocacy of (some) drugs, as it is used widely in the novel and people gain some benefits from it, prolonged age being one of them. However, others view the use of the spice in the novel as the allegory for oil: “Spice, the commodity at the center of all the political intrigue, is allegorical for oil in the twentieth century.”¹³⁷ This point of view adds yet another layer to the ecocriticism in *Dune*.

Had it not been for the spice, the planet would be of no interest to anyone. However, thanks to its riches in *mélange*, there are Houses fighting for the rule over the planet. At the beginning of the novel, the planet gets new rulers, the House Atreides, whose main characters come to settle there. For them, the change of environment is tremendous, as they come from a planet which is almost the exact opposite – most of their home planet Caladan's surface is covered with water.

As the Atreides were used to having an unlimited amount of water ready for their disposal, the change of environment must have been a very difficult one to overcome. Especially, when they

¹³⁴ Joan Slonczewski and Michael Levy, “Science Fiction and the Life Sciences,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 183.

¹³⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 338.

¹³⁶ Rob Latham, “Biotic Invasions: Ecological Imperialism in New Wave Science Fiction,” in *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction*, ed. Gerry Canavan, and Kim Stanley Robinson (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 87.

¹³⁷ “Religion in Science Fiction (3): Dune,” published May 7th, 2009, https://onlyagame.typepad.com/only_a_game/2009/05/religion-in-science-fiction-3-dune.html.

are recognized immediately as foreigners coming from a different place. As is mentioned several times, the native people despise persons with more than enough water. This is illustrated in a meeting with Kynes, a planetologist on Arrakis, and Duke Leto: “Kynes stared at him, seeing the water-fat flesh”¹³⁸ The term *water-fat* seems to carry a negative connotation, in this case, similarly as people sometimes derogatory refer to a corpulent person simply as *fat*.

In one passage of the first part of the book, Lady Jessica wonders why people look enviously and enraged when passing by the palm trees that are in front of the Atreides palace. Later, it is explained to her that the people do not see the beauty of the palm trees, they see them as consumers of as much water as would be enough for a hundred people (which is, based on the following parts of the book, even an understatement).¹³⁹ As Jessica is gradually learning about the value of the scarce water, she discovers that the palace has a flower conservatory with lots of plants and even a water fountain. At that point, even Jessica is already struck by the wasteful character of the room.¹⁴⁰ The problem that the text tries to address is explicitly stated in the book, in the scene in the flower conservatory on a small note: “...the proximity of a desirable thing tempts one to overindulgence. On that path lies danger.”¹⁴¹

One possible meaning of this message is that people are wasteful with many resources without thinking about them. Using this example in the book to emphasize it, the problems with water are present even on Earth, the author used the very common technique in science fiction called the *extrapolation*, which is a method of writing based on focusing on one topic (in this case it would be the wasting of resources), applying that idea into the story in a very extreme form and then, to make a point, show the consequences. This is the case of showing how people do not care about the consequences of their actions on the environment and how they are wasteful.

Even Herbert would be probably unpleasantly surprised by the development of drinking water availability and its predictions. According to World Health Organization and UNICEF¹⁴² and as their data was explained by *The Guardian*, more than 663 million people still drink from an unprotected source of water and the majority of these people are from Africa.¹⁴³ Also, the text could make people who have as much water as they please for their needs and pleasures in the

¹³⁸ Frank Herbert, *Dune: 50th Anniversary Edition* (London: Hodder, 2015), 117.

¹³⁹ Herbert, *Dune*, 63-64.

¹⁴⁰ Herbert, *Dune*, 77.

¹⁴¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 78.

¹⁴² <https://washdata.org>, accessed on 5.2.2019.

¹⁴³ Tom Slaymaker, “Access to drinking water around the world – in five infographics,” *The Guardian*, March 17th, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/mar/17/access-to-drinking-water-world-six-infographics>

same manner the Atreides had, to think about it and the people who lack it the way Lady Jessica thought about it when seeing the angry (and probably thirsty) people and then finding the flower conservatory which made her question her wastefulness.¹⁴⁴

The first layer of the ecological importance of *Dune* is in focusing on picturing the lack of water and its consequences, the second layer seems to be in the way of dealing with it. Fremen, the native people of the planet Arrakis, adjusted accordingly. They are active during the night when the temperatures are mild and manageable. Also, they wear the stillsuits – a suit that covers a majority of one’s body surface in order to preserve moisture and sweat which is all sent back through filters to make it available for the person’s consumption. They value water above all physical. Jessica learns it along the way,¹⁴⁵ the Fremen have it in their mindset for generations – even a tear is a waste of valuable body’s water. That is why it was so surreal and divine for them to watch Paul shed tears for the man he had bested in a duel, they saw it as a gift for the dead.¹⁴⁶

Considering that even a single teardrop is a waste of water in the eyes of the Fremen, it is even more fascinating that Herbert assigned these people with a goal that is hardly achievable – the Fremen are determined to work exhaustingly hard and for a long time to collect an unthinkable amount of water. They do so not to quench their or their children’s thirst, as would be understandable, but to keep the water intact for many generations until they have enough water to shift the whole climate of the planet (or of some of its parts) permanently. Their dream is that there is enough water no man ever feels the lack of it anymore.¹⁴⁷

What is needed for this plan to succeed is that everyone cooperates. The Fremen need to keep the well with the water hidden from strangers and they are determined to die first than to drink the water that is promised for the future terraformation of the planet. This sort of cooperation and dedication across the whole ethnic is unimaginable in real life. Even with great dangers such as air pollution, water contamination, global warming and more, there are still too great numbers of people who ignore scientific predictions and do not care about anything but themselves, no time other than present in their minds. They are the polar opposite of the Fremen’s mindset.

¹⁴⁴ Herbert, *Dune*, 77-78.

¹⁴⁵ Herbert, *Dune*, 207.

¹⁴⁶ Herbert, *Dune*, 337-338.

¹⁴⁷ Herbert, *Dune*, 342-343.

To conclude the examination of social critique in *Dune* regarding ecology and environment, Herbert mainly criticized the wastefulness of vital resources and the ignorance towards hurting nature and not preserving it for the future. This understanding of the novel is supported by some critics who state that it serves as a warning of the dangers of neglecting the environment.¹⁴⁸ This is done mainly by contrasting two cultures, one native to the harsh environment of Arrakis and who value the water above everything and aims to do everything to improve the situation for their children, the other one coming there after living with no need for the water and, at the point of arriving there, realizing its real value.

For Herbert, the matter of ecology and the problems connected to it was a recurring theme. Most obviously this was extrapolated in *The Green Brain* (1966) which is set in a near future when intelligent nature revolts against “the ecological heresies of humankind.”¹⁴⁹ Also, Herbert added *The Ecology of Dune* as an appendix to the novel.

Similarly to Herbert’s *Dune*, Le Guin, too, created a planet with extreme climatic conditions. The planet Gethen, also called Winter (once again a self-explicatory name due to its temperature), suffers from a very cold and on many locations inhospitable weather conditions. Jameson suggests, and that might be yet another resemblance to *Dune* (in his explanation of the planet in *The Left Hand of Darkness* he uses the term *anti-Dune* based on the obvious planetary differences of their climates¹⁵⁰), that this is done in order to get a new insight into the real human nature through these extraordinary conditions.¹⁵¹ Gethians, a humanoid species which populate this planet, although not completely the same as humans (that will be discussed further in later parts of this thesis), are shaped, both physically and psychically, to withstand the harsh environment. At least one aspect of Gethians can be seen as unexpected:

“At least they apparently have never yet had what one could call a war. [...] The weather of Winter is so relentless, so near the limit of tolerability even to them with all their cold-adaptations, that perhaps they use up their fighting spirit fighting the cold. [...] And in the end, the dominant factor of Gethian life is not sex or any other human thing:

¹⁴⁸ Lorenzo DiTommaso, "History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's *Dune*," *Science Fiction Studies* 19, no. 3 (November 1992), 6.

¹⁴⁹ Stableford, *Fiction and Fact*, 142.

¹⁵⁰ Jameson, *Archaeologies*, 268.

¹⁵¹ Jameson, *Archaeologies*, 269.

it is their environment, their cold world. Here man has a crueller enemy even than himself.¹⁵²

This text suggests that the majority of a Gethian's strength goes into sheer survival, survival against the climate. It is thus believed that Gethians had no wars thanks to the orientation of their focus elsewhere. This fact itself seems to be a likable advantage in an otherwise very disadvantaging environment, an advantage, that even Le Guin explicitly stated through the character of Genly Ai. He thought: "If civilization has an opposite, it is war. Of those two things, you have either one or the other."¹⁵³ This seems like a logical train of thoughts, although, following it further, the civilization of Gethen should be really advanced, at least in terms of technology, if not culture, philosophy and other things unmeasurable by metrics.

For some reasons that need exploration, this is not the case in this book. Despite the fact that there has never been war and thus, the civilization should thrive, the Gethians have not advanced in technology, not only as fast as the Terrans in the novel, but not even as fast as humans in the reality (which are the same, but novel takes place in the future). The advance in research and development of seemingly simple things appears to be painstakingly slow on Winter. As is mentioned in the text,¹⁵⁴ the people are able to produce and store enough food so that they are not going to starve, and they are able to prevent their cities from becoming isolated by heavy snow. The development of such things might have been the only way to survive there. Furthermore, Genly Ai observed that some people lived in the same kind of abode their ancestors used to live in 4 000 years ago. During the same amount of time, the electric engine, the radio, power vehicles and machinery were invented. As the character itself points out, "...Machine age got going gradually, without any industrial revolution, without any revolution at all. Winter hasn't achieved in thirty centuries what Terra once achieved in thirty decades."¹⁵⁵ This passage only emphasizes how slow the development of technology is on Winter, especially compared to Earth. Genly Ai then adds an important note: "Neither has winter ever paid the price that Terra paid."¹⁵⁶

The last quotation hints at the victims of war. War can be understood, from a very specific point of view, as a catalysator of development of technology and medicine. To give an example, all

¹⁵² Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (London: Gollanz, 2017), 96.

¹⁵³ Le Guin, *Hand*, 101.

¹⁵⁴ Le Guin, *Hand*, 101-102.

¹⁵⁵ Le Guin, *Hand*, 97-98.

¹⁵⁶ Le Guin, *Hand*, 98.

sides want to have superior weapons, medicine, etc. in order to defeat their opponents and to survive. The products of this technological development are then, sooner or later, distributed even among the non-military population. As it is known, two World Wars took place in the 20th century and it is no coincidence that this is the century of the fastest technology development in the history of mankind. The price paid, mentioned by the main character, are the victims of war. While Le Guin clearly criticizes the war and this might have been one of the reasons why she decided to create a society that has never seen one due to fighting the climate instead, she does seem to understand that wars created modern technology. Thus, she provides the question whether a world without war and in consequence without modern technology is better than a world with wars and modern technology, however, this question needs to be answered by each reader individually.

To compare Herbert's and Le Guin's use of environment and ecology as a mean for social critique, both authors presented completely different methods. While both use an extreme environment, the way it shapes its inhabitants is different. The Fremen in *Dune* value water above all, despise wasting a single drop of it and are determined to work together to collect water for generations until they have enough to change the desert climate. On Winter, the conditions consumed much of the people's power which lead on the one hand to not having wars at all, on the other hand, to much slower technological development. While both novels exhibit strong points of connecting the ecosystem with their stories, *Dune* seems to be more focused on the problems of natural resources and ecology in general and the insufficient attention of people to it, *The Left Hand of Darkness* uses the climate to alter the mentality of the inhabitants of the planet.

2.2. Political Violence and Intrigue

In both stories, the main characters are interacting with the highest representatives of the governments. In *Dune*, the main hero Paul is the heir of the House Atreides but also, as we learn throughout the book, he is also related to the nemesis of their family the House Harkonnen.¹⁵⁷ Paul especially lives through many different roles in the book and his journey continues in the next issues of the *Dune* series. In this one, Paul starts as a son of a duke, then becomes a refugee and has to literally run for his life. After that, he becomes a member of the tribal Fremen, then turns out to be one of their leaders and a religious prophet. At the end of the novel, Paul bests

¹⁵⁷ Herbert, *Dune*, 213.

the head of the House Harkonnen, the evil Baron, and Feyd-Reutha, and holds the Emperor hostage and is in the position to ask his demands.

In contrast, Genli Ai in *The Left Hand of Darkness* does not have any political power at all. Instead, he only talks with the politicians and rulers and, mainly, observes them. That is the role from his perspective, however, he figures in the political machinery anyway, as his person is used for the purposes of all sides when possible. However, Genli Ai has the power to connect the world of Winter to the intergalactic alliance known as Ekumen. The roles and power of both main characters being described, the analysis now focuses on the political and personal intrigue that happens frequently in both books.

In *Dune*, the system of power is clear. The absolute sovereign head of the known universe is the Padishah Emperor. The Emperor controls over the noble Houses who form a political body called the Landsraad. There is also a class system invented by Herbert, *Faufreluches*. Its entry in the appendix terminology is: “FAUFRELUCHES; the rigid rule of class distinction enforced by the Imperium. "A place for every man and every man in his place.”¹⁵⁸ Another important organization in the universe is the Spacing Guild which has the monopoly on interstellar travel and banking. The Guild is perceived as a greedy party which sides with the profit.¹⁵⁹ The last important organization, although they do not officially possess any political or legal power, is the Bene Gesserit, a sisterhood with special, almost supernatural powers. Their representatives, called the Reverend Mothers, are spread around the universe, usually, one with the leader of every faction and they spread religious ideas.

With a system this complex, one might expect some political plotters, although the extent of intrigue in *Dune* is still surprisingly vast and especially bloody. All the Houses in *Dune* are the plotters with blood on their hands. That is why Aldiss states about the politics in *Dune*: “Life is a game of intrigue, played by the very powerful.”¹⁶⁰ The second part of this statement hints at the reality of *Dune* (which is in greater detail examined in 2.5.) that the people below the rulers do not matter to the majority of those who have power. The most obvious antagonists are the Harkonnens who are put in the role of the very distinguished evil, especially the old Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, whose first name might raise questions whether it was chosen due to the cold war rivalry between the USA and the USSR.

¹⁵⁸ Herbert, *Dune*, 561.

¹⁵⁹ Herbert, *Dune*, 254.

¹⁶⁰ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 505.

When Rabban Harkonnen is given the planet Arrakis again, he is instructed by the Baron to “squeeze” the people of the planet.¹⁶¹ Rabban, who used to rule the planet before the Atrides family took over, was even then known as a tyrant and is now, in fact, enjoying that he may return to his role. During the same conversation with the Baron, Rabban even mentions the *Sardaukar*, the elite soldiers of the Emperor. These soldiers who are supposed to be impartial similarly to the Emperor, who however sides with the Harkonnens to make his own plans go well, launch a pogrom to wipe out all Fremen.¹⁶² This is their reaction to losing some of their troops to the native fighters and it shows how little they thought of the Fremen.

However, to complicate things a bit more, the Harkonnens pose danger even to themselves. When having a conversation and planning a political trickery, not only that the Baron and his nephew Feyd-Rautha fear that they are being listened to, they also reveal (in their thoughts) that both employed a spy system to get information on other members of their own family to use them against each other.¹⁶³ In the final scene of the novel, Paul is in a duel against Feyd-Rautha. Typically for a Harkonnen, Feyd-Rautha uses a weapon illegally and unethically covered with poison and hid a poison needle in his armor. In what seems to be done by the hand of fate, the needle, while still being in the armor, gets stuck in a crack in the ground and Paul can conquer his opponent easily.¹⁶⁴

As ruthless as the Harkonnens are, the Atrides could never be perceived as innocent, too. As Broderick notes about Paul, he is an anti-hero disguised as a hero.¹⁶⁵ Herbert seemingly follows the same path as the authors before him, he creates a hero who inspires people to follow him, in this case fanatically, to fight against the supposed evil. However, since Paul starts having his visions about the future, he sees “a warrior religion there, a fire spreading across the universe with the Atrides green and black banner”¹⁶⁶ thus, suggesting, that even this “hero” who is supposed to free the oppressed Fremen and give them their land back and avenge his father might instead bring a chaos and violence to the universe. Herbert states his views on heroes explicitly:

“I had this theory that superheroes were disastrous for humans, that even if you postulated an infallible hero, the things this hero set in motion fell eventually into the

¹⁶¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 255.

¹⁶² Herbert, *Dune*, 255.

¹⁶³ Herbert, *Dune*, 395.

¹⁶⁴ Herbert, *Dune*, 525.

¹⁶⁵ Broderick, “New Wave,” 52.

¹⁶⁶ Herbert, *Dune*, 214.

hands of fallible mortals. What better way to destroy a civilization, society or a race than to set people into the wild oscillations which follow their turning over their judgment and decision-making faculties to a superhero?"¹⁶⁷

This suggests that one could not believe anyone could withstand a huge power on his own. In other words, people should not allocate a lot of power to one individual and then follow him or her blindly, as it leads only to violence and destruction. Paul tried many times to willingly divert from the path leading to the jihad in his name but was not capable of doing so, which might suggest that violence is indeed necessary and inevitable.

However, Paul was not the only Atreides to blame for the violence. Following the orders of his father Duke Leto, the Atreides soldiers killed 250 important officers and politicians of the Harkonnens. When the deed was done the Duke told his followers to hide the murdered behind the legal system of the Empire by the falsification of their certificates and was praised thanks to it for "his genius" by his staff.¹⁶⁸ The political system not only accepted but was even built around such violence and trickery and was probably the only way to survive in power.¹⁶⁹

Even the third main Atreides character, Paul's mother Jessica, a member of the Bene Gesserit sisterhood, showed acceptance of these violent methods. At one point, she said: "Where Tufir Hawat goes, death and deceit follow."¹⁷⁰ Jessica continued to clarify she meant her statement as a praise to the assassin: "Death and deceit are our only hopes now."¹⁷¹ In one study of the political situation and especially the violence in *Dune*, the conclusion of the author was that the book expresses that "violence is essential to any form of political control."¹⁷² The text seems to be suggesting the same thing, especially with the way the story seems to be progressing only by violence and the death of other people. This again raises the question of progress through violence; whether the gains are worth the price. In *Dune*, Paul gets to power and becomes the emperor, hence, from his viewpoint, he succeeded. However, even Paul realized that the path of war is not ideal.

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.oreilly.com/tim/herbert/ch01.html>

¹⁶⁸ Herbert, *Dune*, 97-98.

¹⁶⁹ DiTommaso, "History," 23.

¹⁷⁰ Herbert, *Dune*, 68.

¹⁷¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 68.

¹⁷² DiTommaso, "History," 21.

To show how is the plotting in *Dune* complex and frequent, one could notice notes similar to this one: “Plans within plans within plans within plans, Jessica thought. Have we become part of someone else’s plan now?”¹⁷³

Even the Emperor is not as impartial as one would assume him to be. He gives the planet Arrakis to the House Atreides as a trap for their destruction, as he starts to fear the Duke’s growth in popularity could endanger his position. However, the Atreides are aware of his trickery and the Duke thinks he has the advantage of knowing his enemy.¹⁷⁴ However, the Duke is eventually taken and killed by the Harkonnens through a plot with a treacherous doctor Yueh.

These paragraphs prove that honesty is not a typical vice for rulers and politicians in *Dune*. In fact, the opposite seems to be the truth, as if one does not watches their enemies and their won back constantly, their political career might be soon cut literally short.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, politics is not connected with violence as automatically as in *Dune*. Nevertheless, the description of the political situation on Gethen does not tell much in favor of the politicians, as well. Intrigue and trickery occur in the story, too, which could be perceived as a method of expressing criticism of politics and state.

Jameson attributes this novel, among other adjectives, as a political one.¹⁷⁵ To understand this assessment, a short description of the political and geographical situation on the planet is necessary.

In Robert’s words, there is a quasi-Western country of Karhide and a quasi-Communist totalitarian country of Orgoreyn which are divided by ideological differences that are, in reality, based on the Cold War period between the Western and the Eastern blocs.¹⁷⁶ Genli Ai, on his mission to examine the nations and to assess whether they would be able to join the Ekumen, gets to meet the leader of both countries. As Aldiss says: “*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a complex philosophical, political and personal statement, almost deceptively presented as a first contact story.”¹⁷⁷ To him, the political and other aspects of the novel even overcome the notorious gender viewpoint of the story. The politics, indeed, is complicated in Gethen.

¹⁷³ Herbert, *Dune*, 242.

¹⁷⁴ Herbert, *Dune*, 47.

¹⁷⁵ Jameson, *Archaeologies*, 267.

¹⁷⁶ Roberts, *History of SF*, 356.

¹⁷⁷ Aldiss et al., *Trillion*, 437.

At first, he is at a parade with the King of Karhide Argaven XV, a King's Ear (a position similar to the prime minister) Estrevan, and the King's cousin and councilor Tibe. One of the first things that Genly Ai notices is the animosity between Tibe and Estrevan.¹⁷⁸ Then, he comments on the power structure of the country. In his words, the power within the Ekumen is so subtle and complex that it is hardly noticeable which he contrasts with the "limited" and "visible" system in Karhide.¹⁷⁹ In other words, he is saying that the power structure of this country is from his viewpoint archaic (which he, in addition to this, explicitly mentions later)¹⁸⁰, and the fact that it is a kingdom might suggest the same thing (interestingly enough, *Dune* contains also an old state system, a feudal empire).

At the beginning of the novel, Genly Ai is supposed to meet with the king which is arranged by Estrevan. However, a day before the meeting Estrevan announces that he will not support Genly Ai, as he is in trouble. The problem is that Estrevan was helping people at and beyond the borders and thus, according to his own words, "impugned the *shifgrethor* of the king himself."¹⁸¹ Shifgrethor is a concept of social position or authority, a mixture of honor and respect tied to one individual. Therefore, in other words, Estrevan is out of favor and, later, exiled because he hurt the position and the public image of the king. The exile is connected to a death sentence that would be valid after the first three days which are given to Estrevan to leave the country.

What is possible to be seen in the first few chapters is that people, even the most prominent politicians in the country could not trust each other and that even the second most powerful man could be politically destroyed and in mortal danger literally overnight.

When Genly Ai finally meets the king, he offers the alliance with the Ekumen and with that "Material profit. Increase of knowledge." and other things.¹⁸² The king is not enchanted by this offer and refused it, saying they would go their own way. The king is paranoid toward the alien and does not want to lose power over his kingdom. What Genly Ai notices is that the king speaks as if someone else talks through him,¹⁸³ which is a good assessment, as it is later in the story possible to find out that it is Tibe who tries to rule through the king. Tibe, thanks to this,

¹⁷⁸ Le Guin, *Hand*, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Le Guin, *Hand*, 7.

¹⁸⁰ Le Guin, *Hand*, 143.

¹⁸¹ Le Guin, *Hand*, 15.

¹⁸² Le Guin, *Hand*, 35.

¹⁸³ Le Guin, *Hand*, 39.

could be seen as the biggest plotter in Karhide (and the one who is most likely behind Estrevan's exile).

Since Genly Ai is refused in Karhide, he decides to go to the other major country, Orgoreyn. Before he goes, however, he notices that people grew very nervous as higher numbers of armed policemen appeared in the streets and his landlady had, thanks to him, problems with people from the king's palace. In addition to that, Tibe is making speeches about violence and glorifying violence on foreigners from Orgoreyn at the borders. Tibe almost resembles a modern violence-provoking populist.

When Genly Ai enters Orgoreyn, the village where he stays at the border is raided. People are killed and taken for interrogations, including him. Soon, they find out who he is and send him to the capital of Orgoreyn. On the way there, the alien notices that the news in the radio does not mention the raid, only that order was maintained at the border.¹⁸⁴ This suggests that the country was not truthful to its citizens at all.

In Orgoreyn, Genly Ai is indeed treated like a special guest, staying in the house of one politician and is able to meet and sit with others, including Estrevan who finds asylum there, too. The alien learns from the politicians that they are ready to accept him whereas Karhide fears him, however, he notices that the politicians are exaggerating a lot and not telling the whole truth.¹⁸⁵ This alien's feeling hints on what could be learned later in the novel, that he is a mere pawn in a political game and is being used only for the purposes suiting the politicians. After meeting Estrevan again, he also realizes that it was Estrevan's plan all along to meet this way in Orgoreyn.

During the whole stay in Orgoreyn, there are signals that suggest the whole government is lying to people. At one occasion, Estrevan says "one can't believe everything one hears on the radio," meaning the official state radio and then states that Genly Ai is a "tool of a faction".¹⁸⁶ The radio, media, and, in general, the whole communication coming in and out of the country is under the control of Sarf, the local secret police. The story continues with an absurd scene, the alien sits with the politicians and Tibe's spy who is known to be a spy and with an agent of

¹⁸⁴ Le Guin, *Hand*, 112.

¹⁸⁵ Le Guin, *Hand*, 117.

¹⁸⁶ Le Guin, *Hand*, 130-131.

Sarf. Genly Ai is aware that some political games are being played and that he has a major role in it so he decides to play it that way so that it would help his cause.¹⁸⁷

Even though this acceptance of the political games and plotting is not as destructive as in *Dune*, it is in other terms very similar, mainly in its tremendous reach through the whole political scene, and it is clearly a criticism of the dishonest political environment (which is probably extrapolated from the governments involved and situations happening in the Cold War).

Despite the hospitality, Genly Ai's stay in Orgoreyn does not end well. His stay there is not really made public so when the politicians do not believe his cause or do not find it fitting for their own purposes, they send a police commando to arrest him one night and send him to a "voluntary farm," which is in the novel the analogy to Russian gulags. The alien has to do hard labor there, is often interrogated and drugged, and eventually, he finds himself dying in a bed. He is, however, rescued by Estrevan and, together, they travel through inhospitable land to avoid guards. After that, when Genly Ai and Estrevan finish their journey across the ice, Estrevan perfectly summarizes the situation and the political games:

"Argaven should be growing a little tired of Tibe by now, and may ignore his counsel. He will inquire. Where is the Envoy, the guest of Karhide? —Mishnory [the capital of Orgoreyn] will lie. He died of horm-fever this autumn, most lamentable. —Then how does it happen that we are informed by our own Embassy that he's in Pulefen Farm? —He's not there, look for yourselves. —No, no, of course not, we accept the word of the Commensals [ruling members of the government] of Orgoreyn... But a few weeks after these exchanges, the Envoy appears in North Karhide, having escaped from Pulefen Farm. Consternation in Mishnory, indignation in Erhenrang [the capital of Karhide]. Loss of face for the Commensals, caught lying. You will be a treasure, a long-lost hearth-brother, to King Argaven, Genry. For a while. You must send for your Star Ship at once, at the first chance you get. Bring your people to Karhide and accomplish your mission, at once, before Argaven has had time to see the possible enemy in you, before Tibe or some other councilor frightens him once more, playing on his madness. If he makes the bargain with you, he will keep it. To break it would be to break his own shifgrethor. The Harge kings keep their promises."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Le Guin, *Hand*, 145-146.

¹⁸⁸ Le Guin, *Hand*, 258.

There is hardly a paragraph more fitting to describe the political games and face-saving in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. It is possible to note here the influence of Tibe, or his possible substitution that would follow in his steps after his departure, on the mad king. Another apparent thing is the pretended good relationship of the two countries, when they play along even though they know the truth all the time, which, once again, draws inspiration in the Cold War relations of the East and the West. And, finally, there is Genly Ai's game that he needs to play according to this plan in order to achieve the successful negotiations for them to join the Ekumen. To conclude the content of this analysis, there are three layers of trickery and political games which are present throughout the whole book and which are the means of representing the criticism of such behavior of politicians in the real world. After all, even the author herself stated: "all fiction has ethical, political, and social weight".¹⁸⁹ The social critique, especially, is pointed out by other sources, too.¹⁹⁰

2.3. Religion

A significant element of the novels is their portrayal of religion. In *Dune*, religion is directly involved in the plot, in fact, on several levels, the main one being the presumption that Paul is the Fremens' messiah, as the prophecy had told them ages ago. Compared to Herbert's book, *The Left Hand of Darkness* may not put religion in the limelight, still, it is crucial for the people the novel describes.

One of the first notions about any religion or religious history in *Dune* is at the beginning when Paul cites from the *Orange Catholic Bible*: "Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a man's mind."¹⁹¹ This refers to the so-called *Butlerian Jihad*, an event, that is mentioned in the story several times and is explained in the Terminology appendix: "The crusade against computers, thinking machines, and conscious robots."¹⁹² This is what advocates, to some extent, the lack of future technologies in the novel which are limited, most importantly, to spaceships. As Roberts notes, *Dune* is in some respects anti-technological.¹⁹³ The *Orange Catholic Bible*, however, contains more than this rejection of computers and robots.

Herbert explains *The Orange Catholic Bible* as a mixture containing elements of most ancient religions, including Mahayana Christianity, Zensunni Catholicism, and Buddislaamic

¹⁸⁹ Warren G. Rochelle, *Communities of the Heart* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 1.

¹⁹⁰ Hubble et al., *Handbook*, 108.

¹⁹¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 12.

¹⁹² Herbert, *Dune*, 564.

¹⁹³ Roberts, *History of SF*, 339.

traditions.¹⁹⁴ A mixture of this sort might be interpreted, arguably, in a way that there is not one superior religion but all of them contain some good ideas.

However, when discussing the religion of *Dune*, it is not possible to omit the Bene Gesserit organization. This women-only cult seems to be built on Herbert's memories of the Jesuit order.¹⁹⁵ In the book, they represent two concepts: control through religion and human breeding. This organization is founded after the Butlerian Jihad under the premise of training females in mental abilities to substitute computers, similarly as there are also *mentats*, people capable of machine-like computations, in Herbert's universe.

Their ultimate goal is to produce the *Kwisatz Haderach*, a superhuman built through many generations long careful process of human breeding. The sisters of Bene Gesserit would pick their mate based on his physical or mental abilities, in many cases, these are the members of noble Houses. Lady Jessica was supposed to produce a daughter who was to breed with Feyd-Rautha to produce the promised superhuman. However, Lady Jessica gave birth to a son instead of a daughter thus Paul inherited the special abilities, and she did that deliberately. When Jessica has to withstand the anger of a Reverend Mother, she admits that she gave a son to Duke Leto because it had been his wish and it had meant much for her to make it possible for him.¹⁹⁶ In the same conversation, the Reverend Mother utters this: "No regrets. We shall see when you're a fugitive with a price on your head and every man's hand turned against you to seek your life and the life of your son."¹⁹⁷ This effort to produce a superhuman could be seen as a critical analogy to the Nazi Germany before and during World War II, as they sought to create the Arian clear race.

One of the great abilities of some Bene Gesserit is to see the future, among other almost supernatural powers, the statement of the Reverend Mother is the proof of it. In addition to that, all the heads of the noble Houses or other factions have their own Reverend Mothers or other Bene Gesserit sisters. Yet, they willingly decide to stay in the shadows, they do not marry the noble men they have children with, they, simply put, seemingly mind their own business while interfering with other people's lives secretly.

Regarding the concept of controlling people through religion, one introductory text at the beginning of a chapter foreshadows the later development of the story: "With the Lady Jessica

¹⁹⁴ Herbert, *Dune*, 568.

¹⁹⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 339.

¹⁹⁶ Herbert, *Dune*, 24.

¹⁹⁷ Herbert, *Dune*, 24.

and Arrakis, the Bene Gesserit system of sowing implant- legends through the Missionaria Protectiva came to its full fruition.”¹⁹⁸ To explain this, the Missionaria Protectiva is a branch of Bene Gesserit which implants religious myths and legends into “primitive worlds.” They do so to be able to control these societies and to use the legends for their own good, if necessary. Paul and Jessica use the product of this religious engineering, as they suggest that Paul is indeed the promised messiah who would lead the Fremen people out of their oppression. Paul, being the latest product of genetical engineering shows some unseen capabilities, that is why it is for the Fremen rather easy to believe this lie. Although, as the story proceeds, one might actually question whether it really was a lie, as Paul indeed lead the Fremen against the Harkonnens and won. However, as was mentioned above, Paul’s actions eventually lead to a bloody jihad in his name, hence it might not be valid to say that Paul’s liberation of the Fremen meant a happy ending for their society. However, it is clear that without the implanted religion, Paul would not be able to control them and to lead them against their common enemies.

To summarize what one may interpret from *Dune* about religion, it seems that the main message is that religions are extremely powerful. Whether they are fabricated or based on something real, people of faith are prone to be manipulated under certain circumstances. As Roberts says, “in *Dune*, messiah proves ‘disastrous for humans’ simply in terms of the political upheaval he causes – war.”¹⁹⁹ As Tyson notes, religion is an ideology and ideologies often promote repressive political agendas²⁰⁰ (or, in the specific example of Bene Gesserit, their agenda as well) which is definitely the case in this novel and a matter of criticism.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, there are two main religions in Gethen. It may seem that the function of religion in the novel is not that important, that it serves merely as a background to make the world more believable. However, if examined closely, it is possible to discover that the religion symbolizes the attitudes of the people and, more generally, the differences between the two nations, along with the analogy to the real-life religions.

The predominant religion of Karhide is known as *Handdara*. As it is possible to deduct from the story and as academicians such Moreira-Ramirez explicitly state, this religion is based on the ideas of Taoism.²⁰¹ Taoism and Buddhism, as Le Guin herself admitted, were a significant

¹⁹⁸ Herbert, *Dune*, 51.

¹⁹⁹ Roberts, *History of SF*, 340.

²⁰⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 56.

²⁰¹ Nathalie Moreira-Ramirez, *Taoism & The Left Hand of Darkness* (essay), accessed on 28th March 2019, https://www.academia.edu/33874900/Taoism_and_The_Left_Hand_of_Darkness

part of her mindset²⁰² and, therefore, often appear in her novels.²⁰³ In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, probably the most noticeable Taoist idea is the notion of harmony or balance. This is explained by Rochelle, who says: “what Le Guin uses as a dominant metaphor, duality in unity, the yin and the yang, the connection between the rational and the irrational.”²⁰⁴ The symbol of the yin and the yang, also known as *taijitu*, may be the most famous icon of Taoism. This duality is represented even in the title of the novel – the left hand of darkness is light, and light cannot exist without darkness.

The main goal of the Handdara religion thus is to find balance and live in harmony with everything: nature, other people, etc. Estrevan, who is a follower of this ideology, explains: “in the Handdara... you know, there’s no theory, no dogma.”²⁰⁵ This might be one of the vital notions of the attitude towards religion in the text: if there is no dogma, in other words, no exactly structured rules to adhere to, people are bound to be more tolerant to each other’s views. This idea is expressed by the strong contrast with the other religion in the novel.

Not only that *Yomesh* is the official religion in Orgoreyn, but it is also even promulgated by the government of Commensality.²⁰⁶ This is the first difference between the two religions, while Handdara is, in a way, organically spread through Karhide, the government of Orgoreyn enforces the one and only religion the chose, *Yomesh*.

Another contrast could be described in the Gethian traditional poem. The first two lines are:

“Light is the left hand of darkness,
and darkness the right hand of light”²⁰⁷

This is the viewpoint of the Handdara which accepts dualism. The light-dark binary is mostly associated with the book due to its name. In contrast to the Handdara, *Yomesh* does not accept light and darkness, if one stays with the metaphor, but the light is the way of *Yomesh* and everything else is wrong and should not be even a matter for discussion. That is why *Yomesh* glorifies singularity, as opposed to duality:

²⁰² <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6253/ursula-k-le-guin-the-art-of-fiction-no-221-ursula-k-le-guin>

²⁰³ Roberts, *History of SF*, 356-357.

²⁰⁴ Rochelle, *Communities*, 115.

²⁰⁵ Le Guin, *Hand*, 233.

²⁰⁶ Le Guin, *Hand*, 113.

²⁰⁷ Le Guin, *Hand*, 233-234.

"The Yomeshta would say that man's singularity is his divinity." "Lords of the Earth, yes. Other cults on other worlds have come to the same conclusion. They tend to be the cults of dynamic, aggressive, ecology-breaking cultures. Orgoreyn is in the pattern, in its way; at least they seem bent on pushing things around."²⁰⁸

In this excerpt, Genly Ai explicitly states his criticism of these cults and religions that operate via using dogmas and oppression of different mythology. This kind of religion (and religious organization, as was, in this case, the government of Orgoreyn) seems to have to be based on Christianity and the historical dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, as some critics, including Lake, suggest.²⁰⁹ Lake advocates his notion of Yomesh – Christian similarity on several aspects such as the light – dark relation, the concept of saints and angels, and some more.²¹⁰

One last analogy to Christianity comes to mind when reading the following train of thoughts by Genly Ai: "Mishnory was cleaner, larger, lighter than Erhenrang. [...] I felt as if I had come out of a dark age, and wished I had not wasted two years in Karhide. This, now, looked like a country ready to enter the Ekumenical Age."²¹¹ Christianity was often also seen as a way out of the dark ages of paganism and heathens, and for a long time, it was indeed a moving force to spread literacy, morals, even for some time science. However, there were dark ages associated with Christianity as well, including killing in the name of God, witch trials, greedy tithes, and many other examples. Similarly, what Genly Ai at first sees as a beautiful improvement later appears to be an oppressive force.

To conclude the part of this analysis on religion, both texts exhibit more or less explicit hints on the criticism of oppression through restrictive religion, or the use of religion as a way to manipulate people. What needs to be also mentioned is that both authors use religion as a way to understand the world (especially Handdara with its dualistic approach) and the hope of better future (mainly the Fremmen as they are looking to the salvation by their messiah).

²⁰⁸ Le Guin, *Hand*, 233.

²⁰⁹ David J. Lake, "Le Guin's Twofold Vision: Contrary Image-Sets in "The Left Hand of Darkness," *Science Fiction Studies* 8, no. 2 (July 1981): 160.

²¹⁰ Lake, "Le Guin," 160.

²¹¹ Le Guin, *Hand*, 113.

2.4. Gender

Both novels could be approached from the viewpoint of feminist criticism. While *Dune* offers a lot of material to be examined, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is obviously more prone to such evaluation of gender in general due to the different sexual nature of the Gethenians. Also, for the purposes of the analysis, one should also consider the fact that one novel was written by a woman and the other one by a man and its possible consequences in the text.

Le Guin's planet Gethen is populated by humanoids with one strikingly distinct anatomical difference to the humans of Earth – they are, for the majority of a month, androgynous. Once they are in heat, they call this period *kemmer*, they choose a partner and one of them will develop female genitals and the other one male. During one's life, a Gethenian might be a father and a mother to different children. To explain their gender (rather the lack of it) differently, they have no fixed gender.

China Miéville, British science fiction and fantasy author, writes in the introduction to *The Left Hand of Darkness*: “Le Guin reconfigures society”²¹² which is an utterly precise assessment of the situation in the novel. The society, more specifically its lack of gender variety, absolutely baffled Genly Ai, who is, along with the rest of the universe, of one gender. He, at the beginning of the story, has problems to stomach that one of the basic distinctions between people is missing. As Helen Merrick explains, the problem is between the socialized and biological differences.²¹³ To explain that, Genli Ai was used to seeing and connecting certain attributes with specific genders, and on Gethen, he is no longer able to that and feels lost.

Another layer to the problematic of this “genderless” society could be found in its origin. As the story proceeds, one chapter tells that the extraordinary anatomy would not occur naturally. Instead, the character explains that it was deliberately created as an experiment by an old Hainish civilization.²¹⁴ One could wonder about the ethics of such an experiment, whether it is morally fine to alter nature's creation and then abandon it on its own on an environmentally hostile planet. However, the same character offers the benefits of the new civilization: there is no rape, there is no division into physically strong and weak halves.²¹⁵ Le Guin explained her thought process: “I eliminated gender to see what was left.”²¹⁶

²¹² Le Guin, *Hand*, X.

²¹³ Helen Merrick, “Gender in Science Fiction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James, and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 247.

²¹⁴ Le Guin, *Hand*, 85.

²¹⁵ Le Guin, *Hand*, 94.

²¹⁶ Hubble et al., *Handbook*, 218.

What can be indeed seen in this experiment is that there cannot be a gender prejudice or injustice, as there are no gender roles. Eventually, even Genly Ai grows accustomed to the, for him, new concept of society. At the end of the story, when the starship descends from the orbit and other people could meet with the Gethenians, Genly Ai is baffled once again. He sees the people, his people that he knows, as strange creatures. Also, the following note might suggest that our society is too used to our gender roles, so much, in fact, that one could be easily offended in Gethen: "...his pride will suffer. A man wants his virility regarded, a woman wants her femininity appreciated."²¹⁷

What the novel might suggest is that our society leans too much on the concept of gender differences, at least it did during the time when Le Guin wrote her novel. Even though the majority of our society stayed probably the same, the questions of gender are now raised rather frequently and there are many people and movements trying to erase the gap between a man and a woman, which still unfortunately exists. Le Guin shows us a society that did that (although more drastically by a biological change instead of a sociological one) and suggests that this might be the right path to gender equality, or maybe better yet, to stop thinking about gender from a sociological viewpoint and keep only the biological one.

Dune might be studied more traditionally, as there are 'real' women with certain positions within the societies which are presented there. The position could be evaluated from several perspectives: what is the standing of women in their family and what is their standing in politics.

Interestingly enough, a high number of major female characters of the novel belong to the Bene Gesserit order. The sisters of Bene Gesserit exhibit physical and mental superiority over the common people, as they traditionally undergo a lengthy and demanding training of body and mind to achieve these powers. Thanks to that, they are able to defend themselves, manipulate people through the power of their voice, and even to change the chemical composition of a poison in their bodies so that it causes no harm to them, to name a few of their special abilities. To this extent, the organization might be inspirational to women, however, a different viewpoint might change things significantly.

As was mentioned above, Bene Gesserit manipulate people through religion and are involved in many generations long breeding scheme to produce an extremely powerful person. This is, without a doubt, a very unethical use of their energy, although, this process to achieve ultimate

²¹⁷ Le Guin, *Hand*, 95.

power could be perceived as something that is universal for all the main characters of *Dune*, it is by no means a specific of these females.

Even though these strong and clever women are both as individual characters and as an organization unofficially, in other words not legally, powerful, their depiction by Paul's sister Alia as written by Princess Irulan, the daughter of the emperor and the soon-to-be wife of Paul, might be seen as degrading:

“The Reverend Mother must combine the seductive wiles of a courtesan with the untouchable majesty of a virgin goddess, holding these attributes in tension so long as the powers of her youth endure. For when youth and beauty have gone, she will find that the place-between, once occupied by tension, has become a wellspring of cunning and resourcefulness.”²¹⁸

What, however, needs to be mentioned is the lack of women in official positions of power. There are no Houses, at least none are mentioned, that are led by a woman. Noel Gough argues that *Dune* is strongly patriarchal both in its structure of power and in the character of the hero, Paul, which, according to him, disables the text to resolve any social problems.²¹⁹ That is one point of view, the other might be that this novel uses the obsolete patriarchal structure of power to hint at a contemporary problem which is that women are in many aspects comparable to men, if not better (like the Bene Gesserit), but still, somehow, the old structures (of governments, companies, institutions, etc.) are meant to favor men and, in fact, do so.

The problem of the positions of the beloved women might be observed in a similar way. In *Dune*, both the main Atrides protagonist Leto and Paul exhibit strong affection for a woman, in Leto's case for Lady Jessica, in Paul's for the Fremen Chani, yet both of them are addressed merely as concubines.^{220 221} Even the character of Lady Jessica thinks this way: “Paul must be cautioned about their women. One of these desert women would not do as wife to a Duke. As concubine, yes, but not as wife.”²²² Both Leto and Paul wait with their marriages until a politically important potential bride appears. While Leto does not have the chance to arrange such marriage, as he is killed before that, Paul organizes the marriage with the emperor's

²¹⁸ Herbert, *Dune*, 23.

²¹⁹ Noel Gough, "Playing with Wor(l)ds: Science Fiction as Environmental Literature," in *Literature of Nature*, ed. Patrick D. Murphy (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998).

²²⁰ Herbert, *Dune*, 56.

²²¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 528-529.

²²² Herbert, *Dune*, 333.

daughter Princes Irrulan. Yet, in the very final sentence of the novel (excluding the appendixes) Lady Jessica says to Chani that history would remember them as the wives,²²³ as it is they who bear children to their men, or perhaps there is other, hidden meaning that will be obvious from the following books of the *Dune* saga.

While the position and the title of concubines seems degrading, the women are still portrayed as strong characters, even though, admittedly, men are portrayed, in most cases, as even stronger. As was mentioned above, it might be due to the obsolete patriarchal structures that might be there present as an analogy to the same problem in the real contemporary world of Herbert.

2.5. Attitude towards Other People and Cultures

Both novels allow for an analysis of the relationship between and attitudes towards other people, strange cultures, and aliens. In *Dune*, it is possible to examine the attitudes of the leaders of the noble Houses and the Emperor to their subjects. At the same time, it may be worth analyzing to consider the way the people of the advanced technological civilizations view the seemingly wild Fremen.

The Atreides are put into the position of the good side of the conflict, although, as was mentioned above, only a binary distinction between good and evil would be a simplistic evaluation of a complex problem. However, what might be more than apparent is the fact that the Atreides treat not only their own people better, in contrast to, for example, their rivals the Harkonnens who are only interested in power, money, and the spice.

A typical example of Duke Leto's value system occurs when he prefers to lose a mining and transporting vehicle for the spice called a spice crawler over losing the lives of the men who work in it. By this, he tremendously impresses the planetologist Kynes who thinks:

”This Duke was concerned more over the men that he was over the spice. He risked his own life and that of his son to save the men. He passed off the loss of a spice crawler with a gesture. The threat to men's lives had him in a rage.”²²⁴

This sort of behavior is typical for the Atreides, and it is the way Paul was brought up – to hold the same values as his ancestors did. However, as was mentioned before, Herbert was positive

²²³ Herbert, *Dune*, 529.

²²⁴ Herbert, *Dune*, 136.

that messiahs and similar “superhumans” are disastrous for people.²²⁵ The disaster in *Dune* is the inevitable, as it seems, Jihad that is to be done in Paul Atreides’ name, or rather in the name of Paul Muad’Dib as he is renamed by the Fremen to fit better into their society.

Nevertheless, a change in Paul’s behavior and personal values is noticeable even throughout the original novel of the saga. During the final battle when Paul and the Fremen attack the starship of the Padishah Emperor, Gurney Halleck, an experienced fighter and a faithful companion of the Atreides, reports extensive damage on their side. To that, Paul responds: “Nothing money won’t repair.”²²⁶ Gurney then notes: “Except for the lives” and starts wondering in his mind: “When did an Atreides worry first about things when people were at stake?”²²⁷

This comment without a doubt proves that Paul’s character starts to deteriorate in terms of his value for other people’s lives. The fundamental question now arises – what corrupts Paul this way? According to the previous statement by Herbert, it might be the pressure put on him or the unhealthy confidence that builds up in the person of the messiah. Other things must be considered, too, however. It could have easily been caused by the factor of vengeance. As his father is killed by the Harkonnens, Paul might have been blinded by the rage and the need to avenge his father that he stops caring about the lives of others. Nevertheless, the fall of Paul’s character definitely functions as criticism, be it of the cult of a messiah, power-hunger or being blindsided by the focus on vengeance, all of this might depend on the readers’ interpretations, as it is often the case with literary criticism.²²⁸

In addition to this, it is possible to analyze the attitude of the noble Houses towards the native people of Arrakis, and vice versa, the opinion the Fremen held about the, to them, alien civilizations. Some critics suggest that *Dune* criticizes the violent processes of colonization.²²⁹ That is a valid point, at Arrakis is indeed a constant target of various Houses since it is the only source of the spice. Nobody goes to the planet to get to know the Fremen or to help them to cultivate the planet in terms of water conservation. The aim of the Houses which want to have control over the planet is to control the spice and thus have tremendous power, as well as wealth.

²²⁵ Roberts, *History of SF*, 340.

²²⁶ Herbert, *Dune*, 504.

²²⁷ Herbert, *Dune*, 504.

²²⁸ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 5.

²²⁹ DiTommaso, “History,” 7.

The Harkonnens do not think about the Fremen people kindly, as they refer to them repeatedly as “scum” and “mongrel”²³⁰, hunt them for sport,²³¹ and later they are even involved in an attempted pogrom against the Fremen people, as was already mentioned above. The feelings are mutual, as the Fremen hate the Harkonnens, too, which is why they decide to go rather willingly with Paul against their common enemies. Rabban Harkonnen was especially known as a tyrant of the local people and enjoyed their suffering.

In contrast to that, the Atreides in general exhibit, to some extent, more open-minded attitude towards the natives. Soon after their arrival to Dune, they start to negotiate with them in order to join forces against the Harkonnens.²³² While they are approaching them in a practical manner, however, both the male Atreides protagonists show what could be seen as the ignorance of traditions. At first, Duke Leto decides to stop the custom of pouring water on the floor which is afterward dried with a towel which goes to the beggars in front of the Duke’s palace.²³³ Jeffery Nicholas sees this as a way to undermine local customs,²³⁴ though the intentions are in a way noble, as the Duke orders to get all of the remaining water after a feast to the locals in need.

Paul, similarly, changes some of the Fremen traditions, most importantly, the one involving a duel. The tradition says that whoever bests someone else in duel takes his social status and personal belongings (and also their women and children). Since Paul starts to gain his significance within the Fremen community, tension begins to appear and people, including the Fremen leader Stilgar, know that according to the traditions, Stilgar and Paul need to fight to the death, in order to resolve the possible power struggle in the tribe. However, Paul says that the ways should change as he does not want to kill his best man, just to act by an old tradition.²³⁵ Although reasonable and practical, this change probably starts a chain reaction of other changes that eventually transform a tribal society into people who would follow their messiah across the universe, wreaking havoc along the way. This sort of influence on traditions, and, subsequently, on the whole society might be considered negative from the viewpoint of persevering traditional values and similarly were criticized various nations for their colonial history.

²³⁰ Herbert, *Dune*, 22.

²³¹ Herbert, *Dune*, 48.

²³² Herbert, *Dune*, 48.

²³³ Herbert, *Dune*, 137-139.

²³⁴ Jeffery Nicholas, *Dune and Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 2011), Ethics of Muad’Dib.

²³⁵ Herbert, *Dune*, 456-457.

In the other analyzed novel, with some minor difficulties, Genly Ai manages to keep the objectivity that is vital for the occupation he has and approaches the nations without any prejudice. However, as it is strange for him to meet the people with the different anatomical sexual setting, it is just as strange for the people of Gethen in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Genly Ai, and with him the whole universe apart from the cold planet of Gethenians, is repeatedly called a pervert²³⁶ ²³⁷ because for the people of the cold planet it is unimaginable that there are people who are constantly in *kemmer*, all the time in danger of their own libido and the idea make people of Gethen almost sick. For that, he is sometimes mocked or degraded

What might be interesting that both the major countries and their governments suspect the alien of being a spy for the other country, which, in a way, degrades his purpose there, or makes it significantly more difficult.

One might understand the novel based on the previous paragraphs that it says that people are all different, and, on the one hand, many might find the idea of one's strangeness repulsive, hence xenophobia is, unfortunately, a real problem for many people, on the other hand, the story shows that the differences, no matter how significant they are, are possible to be overcome, as the people of Gethen eventually join the alliance of planets.

While *Dune* focuses mostly on the differences of people from different worlds and cultures, the main focus of *The Left Hand of Darkness* is in the gender experiment. Herbert's novel also provides a great number of examples of the attitude of people who rule to their subjects, and in most cases, the text criticizes their behavior, as, to put it simply, most rulers do not care about the people.

²³⁶ Le Guin, *Hand*, 35-36.

²³⁷ Le Guin, *Hand*, 159.

3. Conclusion

In the analysis, it is proven that the genre of science fiction seems to be fitting for the purposes of social critique, offering a lot of space for all kinds of focuses of this criticism. The authors of this genre often create a new world from scratch, usually based on a real society, either from the historical period of the authors or from the past. Either way, as the societies used in science fiction are inspired in the real world, they also frequently, some more directly than others, reflect a certain problem or extrapolate a specific trait or issue to the point when it is much more obvious than in the real life.

This way, as it is analyzed in the practical part, Herbert creates a society of people who live in the desert on an arid planet and who bravely fight against the numerous enemies over the control of their planet. Their motivation is that they want to stop the exploitation of their planet, mainly due to the commodity known as the spice, and their people and seek to improve the ecology, to terraform the planet so that the future generations do not need to struggle with water deficiency. The text was a counter-message to the contemporary global disinterest in the care for ecology and the environment. Also, it is pointed out that the inhabitants of the countries with demanded natural resources are often exploited and repressed.

The Left Hand of Darkness provides a study of the population which lives in conditions so harsh that they do not have any more energy to fight among each other. For that reason, presumably, they do not have advanced technologies. The premise that might be implicated here is that wars often tremendously increase the pace of the technological development. The society in the novel might suggest that it is not worth losing countless lives for an advanced technology, as the society on Gethen is, in terms of global happiness and satisfaction, not unlike to the one of Earth.

The next part of the analysis focuses on the aspects of social criticism of political subjects and their influence. In Herbert's novel, the reader might be overwhelmed by the amount of political intrigue present in the book. The text highly criticizes politics in general, as it seems to be unalterably connected to violence or injustice on people. The characters of the story, all the noble Houses and the Emperor, employ complex plans and trickeries to exterminate all threats to their position and power. What might be interesting is that there is, arguably, no politician or head of a family who is completely honest and kind. This may suggest, from the viewpoints of social criticism, that it is the nature of these positions to corrupt people to cause violence.

In her novel, Le Guin creates a country which highly resembles the Soviet Union with all its infamous aspects, including the censorship of public media, lying politicians, and sending uncomfortable people to gulags. Similarly to *Dune*, even here the politicians are not depicted nicely and thus the novel offers a lot of space for critical interpretations.

Another part of the analysis deals with social criticism and its approach to religion. In *Dune*, religion is depicted as a tool for convenient manipulation of people and thanks to that, Paul can survive with the Fremen and becomes their messiah. This, however, starts a holy war in Paul's name, killing a huge number of people. This creates a basis for a critical argument that points out the possible misuse of the power generated by religious people, and the misleading of these people.

The Left Hand of Darkness provides a basis for a different critical understanding. It describes two religions, one liberal based on the ideas of Taoism, the other one dogmatic and repressive, arguably inspired in Catholicism. However, the interpretation that is drawn in the analysis is that the text criticizes the dogmatic religions and their influence on people, as it creates hate and limits its followers via artificial and repressive morals.

Gender is the focus of the following subchapter of the analysis. Once again, a completely different approach to this topic is presented by the two novels. In *Dune*, it is possible to focus greatly on the questions raised the feminist offshoot of social critique. The text provides a set of female characters who are undoubtedly strong, yet they do not occupy any political position, hence do not have any direct political power. The patriarchal universe provides a great deal of material to build one's criticism on. In the analysis, it is suggested that this image of the all-male-leaders society might be created as a direct analogy to the same situation of Herbert's contemporary world.

A completely different approach to gender is contained in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Not only different to the one of *Dune* but probably to any other piece of literature before Le Guin (and possibly even after). To criticize the obsolete concepts of gender roles in our society, Gethen is inhabited by androgynous species. For them, gender exists only during their heat period when they mate, apart from that, they do not have it. Which means that there could be no gender bias, prejudice, and stereotype.

The last part of the analysis focuses on the questions of attitudes towards other people and cultures. Both novels feature alien civilizations and there is certainly a clash of cultures present.

In *Dune*, the crash is literal, as the Harkonnens fight with the Fremen and this could be used as a criticism of the colonizing countries hurting the colonized societies. Also, this part of the analysis examines how various noble Houses value people. The most interesting finding might be that Paul's value system changes over the course of his story. At the beginning, he, just like any other Atrides, values people over things, which is later, after he becomes the Fremen messiah, questioned by his actions. This, once again, corresponds with Herbert's explicitly stated attitude towards "superhumans." *The Left Hand of Darkness* might be analyzed from a more general point of view, as both the Gethenians and Genly Ai might be experiencing forms of xenophobia, which would be the subject of social criticism.

As all of these elements of social criticism are present in the novels, the above-mentioned statement of science fiction being ideal for this purpose is proven, which is also supported in the paper through the literature dealing with this topic. Especially fitting for these causes seems to be the era of the genre when the two authors wrote their most reputable pieces – the New Wave of the soft science fiction, focused on the psychological and social aspects, mainly.

As for the comparison of the use of social critique by the two authors, it is impossible to evaluate which author did generally better. However, in some cases, it is possible to tell which author focused on a specific aspect of social critique more than on others. For example, *Dune* is known as one of the pivotal works of ecocriticism and the elements of this attitude are appearing throughout the whole *Dune* saga. Similarly, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is an important view on the aspects of gender and its role in our society.

A great deal of a common ground of social criticism by these two authors is found under the topics of religion and attitude towards a different culture, but even more under the theme of political intrigue. Both novels were published in the 1960s, the era of the Cold War, and the politics is represented by both authors as a corrupted, or corrupting, part of our society which is dominated by lies, intrigue, a people seeking power. While the universe of *Dune* is headed into the bloody religious war, the Jihad in the name of Paul Muad'Dib, by which Herbert expressed his views of the characters of messiah and rulers with extensive power, Le Guin offered a solution to the political crisis – an alliance of countries and planets to unite them all.

Furthermore, these findings should by no means suggest that there are no other topics related to social criticism present in the novels and that the conclusion drawn from the located elements of social critique are the only possible ones or those that the authors held. As it is mentioned in the least chapter of the theoretical part, these analysis and interpretations of social criticism, as

well as all other types of criticism, are subjective to the person who created them. This means that other interpretations of the same texts and elements are possible.

4. Resume

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá přítomností prvků společenské kritiky v díle *Duna* od amerického autora Franka Herberta a díle jeho krajinky Ursuly K. Le Guin s názvem *Levá ruka tmy*. Obě tato díla patří do žánru vědecko-fantastické literatury, známého také pod anglickým výrazem *science fiction*, a konkrétně se řadí mezi díla takzvané *soft science fiction*. Tento podžánr se typicky soustředí na motivy takzvaných měkkých vědeckých disciplín, mezi které patří například psychologie, ekologie, antropologie, lingvistika a mnohé další. *Soft science fiction* tímto způsobem reaguje na obecné vyčerpání podžánru *hard science fiction*, který se zabíral naopak tvrdými vědami, mezi které se počítá matematika, fyzika a astrofyzika, astronomie a další. Dalším z možných podnětů pro vznik toho žánru mohlo být to, že se jeho autoři chtěli věnovat motivům, které patří do repertoáru výše zmíněných měkkých věd a které byly to té doby předešlymi autory *science fiction* přehlíženy.

Díla, která jsou zkoumána, byla vybrána pro účely této práce vzhledem k jejich nesmírné popularitě, která překročila hranice tohoto žánru. Jejich úspěšnost v rámci *science fiction* byla také zohledněna, jelikož to jsou první díla, která vyhrála jak Cenu Hugo, tak i Cenu Nebula, dvě nejprestižnější ocenění tohoto žánru. V neposlední řadě byl kladen důraz na to, aby obě knihy patřily do stejného období, což tyto romány splňují, patří totiž do takzvané Nové vlny *science fiction*.

Nejprve se tato diplomová práce věnuje definici žánru *science fiction*. Ta se jeví jako problematická, jelikož různí experti na tento žánr, jeho kritici, nebo dokonce někteří autoři vytvořili své vlastní definice. Problémem tedy je, že definicí je mnoho a že se některé zásadně liší. Pro účely této práce jsou některé definice vybrány a okomentovány. S použitím těchto definicí je vyhledáno několik prvků, které jsou pro definice společné a které tudíž patří mezi ty nejdůležitější pro určení tohoto žánru. Z těchto prvků vyniká experimentování s lidskou povahou při vystavení neobyčejným podmínkám. Mezi tyto neobyčejné podmínky (je užíván také termín *novum*) patří například nová planeta, zatím neexistující technologie, mimozemské civilizace, a mnohé další.

V následující části teorie se tato práce zabývá historií tohoto žánru. První podkapitola se věnuje prvopočátkům *science fiction*, přesněji řečeno dílům, ze kterých *science fiction* vznikala. Rozpoznání počátku tohoto žánru, respektive jeho prvního díla, se prokazuje být stejně problematické jako samotná definice žánru. Je to tím, že tyto dvě věci jsou spojeny. V závislosti na užití definice je možné najít různá díla, která jsou ta

první, které dané definici odpovídají. Tím, že není v této práci vybrána pouze jediná definice, ale spíše průnik několika, stejně je zacházeno s hledáním prvního díla tohoto žánru. Několik odborníků na tento žánr se shoduje na díle s názvem *Pravdivé příběhy*, která napsal starověký řečník Lúkianos ze Samasoty. Po velké pauze, která je delší než jedno tisíciletí pokračuje historie tohoto žánru díly Thomase More, zejména je kladen důraz na *Utopii*. Přehled pokračuje přes několik dalších děl a autorů, kteří jsou pro utváření tohoto žánru a vědy jako takové nesmírně důležití. Tato podkapitola je zakončena osobou H. G. Wellse.

Další podkapitola se věnuje tomuto žánru na počátku 20. století. Během tohoto století dochází k takové popularizace a evoluci science fiction, jejíž rozsah byl do té doby nevídaný. Z toho důvodu jsou období tohoto století věnovány podkapitoly dvě. Ta první se zabývá počátkem století, hlavně tedy přerodem žánru do média pulpových časopisů, kde se věnuje pozornost dvěma významným editorům Johnu W. Campellovi mladšímu a Hugu Gernsbackovi, kteří stojí za nejvýznamnějším obdobím těchto časopisů, známým jako Zlatý věk science fiction.

V těchto časopisech začínají i oba autoři, kterým je analýza věnována, byť již patří do jiného období tohoto žánru, tedy do éry již výše zmíněné Nové vlny. Po krátkém představení tendencí a zájmů tohoto literárního hnutí je věnována další pozornost představení děl přímo obou analyzovaných autorů.

V poslední části teoretické části je představena společenská kritika v literatuře. Nicméně, i zde je shledána vágní definice této kritiky a jsou zde představeny pouze hlavní směry a techniky užití této kritiky. Z důvodů toho, že jsou literární tendence žánru science fiction a jejich směřování ke společenské kritice rozebírány i v předešlých částech teorie, není jim již v této sekci věnován další prostor.

Další kapitolou začíná analytická část. Prvním tématem, na které je pohlíženo z hlediska společenské kritiky je ekologie a životní prostředí. Tomuto tématu se v literatuře věnuje i odnož společenské kritiky – ekokritika. K analýze je v rámci tohoto, ale i všech následujících témat přistupováno tímto způsobem: v knihách jsou vyhledány části textu, které poukazují na určitý problém, nebo které daný problém přímo představují. Na tyto

části textu je v analýze odkazováno a jsou následně doplněny o komentář a možné interpretace. V některých případech jsou komentáře doplněny o poznatky samotných autorů, odborníků na tento žánr, či specialistů na dané téma společenské kritiky. Poté se porovnává užití společenské kritiku u obou autorů. V případě společenské kritiky vztahu lidí k životnímu prostředí je zaznamenáno, že *Duna* poukazuje na problematiku plýtvání s přírodními zdroji, jejich zneužívání k vlastnímu obohacení, je ale také upozorňováno na utlačování místních obyvatel při získávání daného přírodního zdroje (v případě *Duny* jde o tzv. melanz – drogu užívanou lidmi, ale i jako pohon pro vesmírné lodě). *Levá ruka tmy* k tomuto tématu přistupuje jinak, de facto opačně. Hlavní prvek, který je analyzován, je vliv prostředí na lidi, kteří v něm žijí. Skrze klimaticky nepříznivé podmínky je tvořena civilizace, která vyčerpává veškeré své síly na boj s počasím, nezůstávají jí tedy síly na válku. Je zde ovšem poukazováno i na to, že je válka často hybnou silou technologického vývoje. Díky věčnému míru je tedy civilizace planety Gethen značně zaostalá oproti např. Zemi. Byť k stejnému tématu přistupují jinak, obě díla poukazují na vliv člověka na prostředí a prostředí na člověka.

Další podkapitola se věnuje společenské kritice, která je promítnuta do politického prostoru, v případě těchto děl jde především o politické intrikářství. V obou dílech se vyskytují vysoce postavené postavy a vládci, u kterých však převažují negativní vlastnosti. V *Duně* je toto ukázáno vysokou mírou intrikářství, kdy každý z vládnoucích rodů myslí na své přežití či obohacení a osnuje plány na zničení ostatních. Jak je v analýze dokázáno, ani rod Atreidů, který v knize zdánlivě zastupuje stranu dobra, nevybočuje z tohoto trendu a i jejich politika je potřísněna krví jejich soků. Složité politické hry a podlosti neznají meze, text je tedy analyzován jako velmi tvrdá kritika politické scény, která dle knihy není rozlučitelná s násilím, které ji doprovází. *Levá ruka tmy* je analyzována, mimo jiné, jako analogie Studené války. Jedna ze dvou hlavních zemí této knihy, Orgoreyn, totiž velmi věrně kopíruje praktiky Sovětského svazu z této éry, cenzuru médií, lži politiků a odeslání nepohodlných osob do gulagů nevyjímaje. Stejně jako u Herbertova díla, i zde je politická scéna nevybíravě kritizována.

V další části je nahlíženo na náboženství z pohledu společenské kritiky. Oba romány totiž, do určité míry, poukazují na manipulaci či represi lidí pomocí náboženství. V *Levé*

ruce tmy text vyzdvihuje fiktivní obraz liberálního taoismu a naopak kritizuje praktiky dogmatických náboženství, někteří kritici nalézají v tomto díle konkrétní kritiku křesťanství. V *Duně* se objevují kritické prvky náboženství převážně ze dvou úhlu pohledu. První je ten, že náboženství je používáno k vlastním účelům nějaké organizace (v *Duně* sesterstvo *Bene Gesserit*) skrz manipulaci věřících. V tomto případě došlo k umělé implementaci náboženství, které následně využili hlavní protagonisté Paul a Jessica Atreidi pro přežití a využití pouštních obyvatel pro zničení Harkonnenů. Na tomto příkladu je viděn u druhý prvek kritiky a tím je osoba mesiáše. Ten, když je následován totiž dle *Duny* neodvratitelně přinese zkázu a utrpení. Opět se tedy soustředění společenské kritiky u obou autorů liší, výsledek je ovšem velmi podobný.

Následující podkapitola se zabývá pohlavím. Na *Dunu* je pohlíženo převážně z pohledu feministické kritiky, tedy otázky rovnoprávnosti obou pohlaví. Vzhledem k tomu, že většina postav s vládnoucí mocí (alespoň tou oficiální) jsou mužského pohlaví, je zde tato kritika identifikována okamžitě. Dále je analyzováno postavení ženy v rodině, jelikož je zde značné množství žen, které jsou uváděny jako konkubíny, jelikož je manželství šetřeno pro politické účely. *Levá ruka tmy* přistupuje k problematice pohlaví zcela odlišně a je tím také známa. Celé obyvatelstvo planety Gethen je totiž androgynní. Většinu měsíce nemají žádné pohlaví, v období estrálního cyklu si na základě různých okolností vyberou jedno pohlaví tak, aby byla v páru zastoupena pohlaví obě. Postavy tak mohou děti plodit v roli otce a zároveň porodit další dítě. Pro účely společenské kritiky je zde tedy představena společnost, která je naprosto oproštěna od konceptů a předsudků pohlavních rolí.

Poslední část analýzy sleduje prvky společenské kritiky na mezilidských a mezikulturních vztazích. Je zde například zjištěno, že hlavní protagonista *Duny* Paul při změně z chlapce na lídra náboženství ztrácí hodnoty, které byly typické pro jeho rodinu a že upřednostňuje materiální věci před lidmi. Je zde také sledován vztah k jiným kulturám, zejména z hlediska oprese kolonizovaného národa. *Levá ruka tmy* přistupuje k této problematice obecněji a zde se sledují prvky xenofobie.

Kromě dílčích zjištění u konkrétních témat se dá obecně říci, že žánr science fiction nabízí prostor pro širokou škálu společenské kritiky a tato díla tento prostor maximálně využívají.

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