

**RESISTANCE ON LOIS LOWRY'S *THE GIVER* QUARTET:
PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE**



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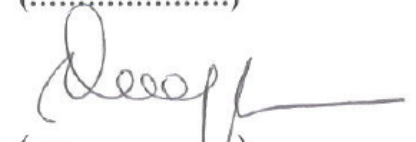
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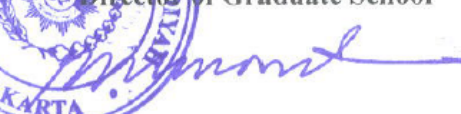

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Abstrak

Cerita fiksi distopia sangat populer akhir - akhir ini, karena menyajikan sesuatu yang berbeda. Sebagian besar cerita fiksi distopia menceritakan tentang ketidakpuasan terhadap penguasa/ pemerintah. Cerita kuartet *The Giver* (Sang Pemberi) dari Lois Lowry adalah salah satu contoh cerita serial yang menceritakan tentang ketidakpuasan terhadap pemerintah. Lowry ingin menunjukkan bahwa setiap orang mempunyai kebebasan dan hak untuk memikirkan dirinya sendiri. Individu mempunyai hak untuk memilih identitasnya sendiri. Dari cerita kuartet *The Giver*, kita dapat mengetahuibahwa dalam meraih identitas diri, individu harus mampu bertahan dalam kondisi apapun. Ketahanan diri adalah salah satu perilaku, tindakan dan juga pemahaman dalam bentuk terang-terangan atau tersembunyi melawan kekuasaan. Hal ini juga merupakan hasil dari suatu kreasi atau perluasan ruang dalam memilih, membuka peluang dengan menyusun kembali atau menggali hubungan kekuasaan yang membatasi dan menghasilkan identitas, tindakan fisik atau pemikiran. Ketahanan diri individu itu sangat penting untuk meraih identitas diri. Dari perspektif psikososial, pada masa remaja, individu akan melalui tahapan memperoleh identitas diri. Kesuksesan individu dalam memperoleh identitas diri akan mempengaruhi kehidupan mereka selanjutnya.

Kata kunci : ketahanan diri, memperoleh identitas diri, psikososial

Abstract

Dystopian fiction is very popular recently, because it present something different. Mostly of the dystopian story tell about the dissatisfaction toward the authorities. Lois Lowry's *The Giver* quartet is one of the example of sequel that talk about the dissatisfaction toward the authority. Lowry wants to show that everyone has a freedom and right to think about himself. Individual has right to choose his own identity. From *The Giver* quartet we can know that in gaining the identity, the individual has to resist in the such condition. Resistance is a kind of attitude, activity and also understanding that can be in the form of overt or covert against the power. It is also a result of creation or expansion of space for making choices, the open up possibilities by undermining or restructuring such power relations which limits and produces possible identities, action space or bodies. The resistance of the individual in the society is very important toward gaining the identity. From the psychosocial perspective, during the adolescence period, individual will pass the stage of gaining the identity. The succesfull of individual in gaining the identity will influence the next future.

Keyword : resistance, gaining identity, psychosocial

1. INTRODUCTION

The Giver is one of Lois Lowry's popular novels which got many critical reviews and also gained a very wide audience responses over the past two decades. This

novel has become a standard text in middle schools and high schools across the English-speaking world. In 1994, *The Giver* won the 1994 Newbery Medal and has sold more than 10 million copies. In Australia, Canada, and the United States, it is a part of many middle school reading lists, but it is also on many challenged book lists and appeared on the American Library Association's list of most challenged books of the 1990s.¹ *The Giver*, which then develop into quartet, that consist of four sequels: *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger* and *Son* include in the dystopian novel that mostly talk about nationalist propaganda, using oversimplification, emotional appeals, dualistic morality to influence the readers' minds that opens up paths for resisting the insidious cultural dogma and for developing individual in midst of the pressures of ideology.

Many scientists and experts in literature and other fields have done several studies toward the novels, especially *The Giver*. Some of them discussed the themes and goals of the novels (Lord, 2017; Keely, 2014; Tucker, 2012; Torrisi, 2015). Some experts also give their critical response toward the content (Levy, 1997; Guzman, 2000; Hintz, 2002; Virtanen, 2012; Fentin, 2012; Baron, 2014). Some also discuss the content of the novel from linguistic element (Pramitasari, 2015; Utami, 2017), and the other discuss the content from the psychological view (Boozeboom, 2017; Andrasova, 2017). Several of them told that the novels mostly talk about the life of Lois Lowry. She illustrated the condition of the society where she lived in a such interesting one, in order to let the people realize about the freedom and interdependence among them. Beside that, the lossing memory in Jonas community (*The Giver*) depicted clearly about her father's suffered. Her father was suffered of lossing memory, so he could not remember anything, even his own name.² The last sequel of *The Giver* quartet, *Son*, tells about the struggle and resistance of young woman, Claire, in the effort of finding her son. Lowry depicted her losing son with the story. She wants to reveal that mother always loves her children, whenever and wherever. The novel

¹ See at *Biography of Lois Lowry*. <https://www.gradesaver.com/author/lois-lowry/>
Retrieved on Wednesday : Sept, 5th 2018; 14.18 WIB

² Ibid

also depicted the condition of people in America at that time. *The Giver* quartet was written in 1993-2012, the condition of America at that time was in poverty, and the authority has the most important role. The authority is the only one who has the choice (McNeese, 2010)

The Giver quartet was included in the young adult novel, because the story mostly told about the life of young people, adolescents. Constant surveillance, oppressive ruling regimes, lack of freedom, and forced conformity are all aspects of adolescent life that teenagers deal with on a daily basis (Ryan, 2014). So that, young adult novel mostly focuses on heroism and the power to survive. *The Giver* quartet, that consist of four sequels, also told the story of adolescents in gaining the identity. Although they have different society background, but they have the same themes. The characters have to struggle and resist in order to achieve their goals. Although the sequels have been separated long time, but they correlated each other.

The goal of the research is to find the kind of resistance depicted by Lois Lowry on *The Giver* quartet in correlation with gaining identity from the psychosocial perspective. Fernandes (1988:174) defines resistance as pedagogical that can be understood as the counter-hegemonic social attitudes, behaviours and actions which aim at weakening the classification among social categories and which are directed against the dominant power and against those who exercise it, having as a purpose its redistribution in a more equitable way. In a dystopian universe, the identity becomes a concept that no longer finds its subject. The connection between the individual and his own representation to be revealed in his mind is lost (Dominte, 2018). According to Erikson (1968), the development of individual from the previous stages up until adolescent stage depends on what is done to an individual; and from this stage forward, development depends on what the individual does. During these complicated years, the individual faces challenges in discovering his own identity, struggles with social interactions, and forms his sense of morality.

2. METHOD

The formal object of the study is Lois Lowry's *The Giver* quartet novels. The material objects are consist of: *The Giver* published in 1993, *Gathering Blue* published in 2000, *Messenger* published in 2004, and *Son* published in 2012, all are printed by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. The analysis will use theory of resistance. The type of the data for the research is from the text, there are words, phrases, sentences, narrations, dialogues used in the Lois Lowry's *The Giver* Quartet novels. The primary data are from words, phrases, sentences, narrations, dialogue used in the novels. The secondary data is the supporting data, come from other sources such as essay, journal, articles about the study of *The Giver* quartet, Lois Lowry's biography, related book and publication and virtual references on *The Giver* quartet.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Finding

The finding of resistance of the characters on *The Giver* quartet consists of the indicators of the resistance, depiction of resistance and the reason of addressing resistance.

3.1.1 Indicators of resistance

There are three indicators of resistance: cognitive point of view, attitude point of view, and action point of view.

It is the individual resistance that mostly in the form of understanding as a result of creation or expansion for making choice which derived from the consciousness that there is strangeness happen in relation to the power. Jonas is conscious that something wrong with his life, his life is full of sameness, no feeling, no color, and no individual freedom (*The Giver*, pp: 90). The consciousness of resist began when Kira realized the mysteries and secret surround her (*Gathering Blue*, pp:88-89). She also realizes that although they have everything in the Council, and they stay unlocked in their room, they are not really free. They are asked to do what the authority need. They do not have freedom (*Gathering Blue*, pp:130). Although she realizes what kind of life that she had, she keeps still with all the condition, even when she knew that his father still

alive. She had to finish her job and refused to go with her father (*Gathering Blue*, pp:181). Matt has high curiosity, and always makes himself in trouble, to show his resistance in his very rude society. He knows almost everything in the villages (*Gathering Blue*, pp:33). Claire realized that she got the feeling of loss after having the product several weeks before. She really missed her product and tried to find out her product (*Son*, pp:14,20).

It is a resistance that emphasized on the individual behaviour or attitude in order to keep resist in her/ his such condition. The individual will show good or bad attitude against the rule. In Jonas community, lie is against the rule. But Jonas often lie to his family, after the training, because he cannot tell anyone about his experience (*The Giver*, pp:66). When someone had Stirring during his/her teenagers, they had to take the pill everyday, so as to Jonas, after getting the memories and know that stirring is a natural one, he broke that rule by didn't take the pills (*The Giver*, pp:124). Kira know that she has the value that no one could not comprehend. She keep still obeying the rule of the Council and did her job well (*Gathering Blue*, pp:130). And she also keep resist when during the Gathering, she was seeing a horror while hearing the muted clanking sound that comes from the Singer's ankles that were thickly scarred, caked and scabbled with dried blood that happen because of the chain. So, then she knew that the former Singer was really under pressured (*Gathering Blue*, pp:180). Claire, because of the feeling of loss always comes to her, she tried hard to find her son. She had the courage of telling lie which against the rule in order to go inside to the Nurturing Center to meet her son (*Son*: 29).

It is a resistance by directing people to do something or doing action to rebel against the power. In rebelling against the power individual can move to the other place. Jonas really has willing to go Elsewhere to find the real life. He and Giver have planned everything to escape during the Ceremony (*The Giver*, pp:151). Jonas, with the knowledge of the fact of the release, didn't want it happen to Gabriel. So, he decided to take Gabriel to go with him, to find the Elsewhere (*The Giver*, pp:159). Jonas, with his big hope and believe during his escape, tried hard to struggle on his long journey with Gabriel and his strong believe makes him has

a strong resistance on every condition (*The Giver*, pp:161). Kira, has the same action as Jonas. She has to move to another place to meet her father; she has to leave everything she got in the Council. So, she decides to go with Matty to where his father live (*Messenger*, pp:104). Matt, with his curiosity made him know everything, so he wants to get the better and go to the forest to find out the secret. He makes his journey to the forest and finds a good place for living (*Gathering Blue*, pp:139). Claire, has realized that the little boy is her son. She broke the rule that a birthmother is not permittable to know their product. She had a courage to go to the Nurturer Center to give a help there in order to close with her son (*Son*, pp:37). When Jonas escaped, he brought Gabriel, with him. Claire is very despair and like a crazy one running away to the harbor and the people in the harbor took her on the boat and going Elsewhere (*Son*, pp:99). While living in village, Claire was told that she can find her son in Elsewhere. She can reach the place only by climbing the dangerous cliff. Claire make sure herself and train hard to go there (*Son*, pp:187)

There are three kinds of characters depicted resistance from the novel, namely: imposing character, a person who can make a strong impression because of size or strength (Chief Elder, Jamison, Trademaster); permissive character, the character who has a wisdom, he/she accepting tolerant of something as social behavior that others might disapprove or forbid (*Giver*, Jonas, Seer); and resisting character, character who has understanding, attitude or action to resist or rebel toward the rule in the society (Jonas, Kira, Claire).

The event is everything that happen, especially something important or unusual in the story that have relation with resistance. There are three events from *The Giver* quartet; Ceremony, it is an event that happen on the community where Jonas and Claire live every year on December when everyone will get turn/assignment as the age (*The Giver*); Gathering, it is a yearly event that happen on the Kira and Matt's community when all the people in the community are gathering in the Council Edifice to listen The Ruin Song in order to commemorate the Ruin that happen in the past that only left a few things, included The Council Edifice (*Gathering Blue*); and Feast, it is a kind of party for people in the Village

after they have Harvest, Midsummer, or a marriage, sometimes there is no reason was necessary, when people just wanted a time of merriment, laughter, dressing up, eating---and overeating (*Son*).

There are also some symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Here are the examples of symbols from *The Giver* quartet.

No	Symbol	Meaning
1	Red Color	Symbolized Jonas separation from the Community, because he can see the color
2	Light eyes	Symbolized a person's ability to see and think more clearly and deeply.
3	River	Represent a block between the community and free thought and action.
4	Blue	Symbolizes an emotion that is particularly lacking among the guardians and the villagers. Blue symbolizes love and compassion.
5	Forest	Symbolized dangerous effect of the villagers' growing selfishness
6	Trade Mart	Symbolized people's greed and selfishness
7	Yellow wing	Symbolize Claire new knowledge
8	Top of the cliff	Symbolize our hopes and goals and the cliff itself is all things standing in the way

There are three reasons that Lois Lowry addressing resistance on *The Giver* quartet. *First*, Lowry wants to show her dissatisfaction of the society, she wants people to understand about the value of freedom and individual identities in the community. The society based on false ideals of goodness and conformity. She must resist in the condition, and take the reality that when we love someone we have to let them go. *Second*, *The Giver* tells about the struggle and resistance of young adult, Jonas, who lives in the community where people forced to live under

oppressive regime, which made them unaware of the interdependence with each other and meaningful relationship between people are threatened. It is depicted the condition of the society in US at that time. The government had the biggest power to manage the people (Mc Neese, 2010). *Gathering Blue* and *Messenger* have different setting with *The Giver*, the setting of the both novel also depicted the condition of the society at that time, where the people tried to get the power in society by doing anything. They were ignoring the condition of people.

Third, the resistance depicted on *The Giver* quartet not only has relationship with the condition of the society when the novels mostly written, but also based on the writer's experience. Lois Lowry's father suffered from losing of his long term memory that influenced his life.³ She depicted the losing memory in *The Giver* where people live in the community without any memory and pain. The other novel, *Son*, also depicted herself. She left by his son, Gray, who got accident with his plane. She must resist in the condition, and take the reality that when we love someone we have to let them go.

3.1 Discussion

The findings of data analysis on *The Giver* quartet shows that the resistances of the characters' are in the form of thought, behaviour and action that influenced by the society in order to gain certain identity especially for adolescence. The resistance has been shown up by Jonas, Kira and Claire in order to gain their identity. They have to keep resisting in their social condition because of the authority's doctrine that make them accept anything that has been assigned for them. The condition of the society that has been dominated by the power caused people loss their value of freedom and individual identity. People do not have awareness of their interdependence with each other and with the environment. Therefore, the development of the identity of the characters mostly influence by the resistance of them in their society. The kind of resistance in gaining their identity mostly on the covert resistance, means that their resistance isn't a kind of rebellion but a kind of

³See Lois Lowry's Biography. <https://www.gradesaver.com/author/lois-lowry/> Wednesday : Sept, 5th 2018; 14.18 WIB

defense in the such condition to reach the goal, in here, is to escape from the unsafe society to the comfort one.

Social condition and interaction shape the psychosocial development of individual. The individual's psychosocial development influence the gaining identity, especially on the adolescence stage. According to Erikson, identity is as unfathomable as it is all pervasive. It deals with a process that is located both in the core of the individual and in the core of the communal culture Erikson, 1968). The dystopian literature mainly discussed about lack of privacy and freedom of movement. Nothing is personal not even thought. Individual cannot gain their identity succesfully. This oppose with the Erikson theory that in gaining identity, individual should have good relationship with the society.

From the psychosocial perspective, identity as the major personality achievement of adolescence and as a crucial step toward becoming a productive, a happy adult. Teenagers experience an identity crisis, a temporary period of distress as they experiment with alternatives before settling on values and goals (Santrock, 2007). They go through a process of inner soul-searching and combining with emerging trait, capacities and also commitment. A healthy identity is experienced as a sense of physical, psychological and social well-being. In *The Giver* quartet, the characters, who are mostly in the adolescence period, do not experience the alternative before settling the values and goals, so most of them experience the role confusion. The gaining identity do not in line with what the person should be, they get their assignment in early age of adolescence, so they do not have experience to explore themselves in their environment and society. Most of the teenagers just accept what the authority asked them to do without any right to choose or reject. This case make them confuse to their role in the society.

As common adolescents, they have high curiosity to explore everything around them. They begin to rebell against the rule but in the overt form, they choose just to resist in the such condition, because they do not have courage yet. To be successfull in gaining the identity, they have to make a changing. Being aware of their condition, and to improve their courage to rebell against the authority, they keep resist in order to find the right time to do the right thing to

gain the identity. They choose to move to the other place in order to gain the successful identity, as the basic to reach the maturity in adult stage.

The psychosocial perspective is one of the branch of psychology of literature. Literary critics R. Wellek and A. Warren characterized psychological analysis in a literary works as “analyzing the author’s personality, the way certain literary work was made, the psychological types which are present in the literary works and the characteristics of their behavior and finally the effect of literature on its readers” (Wellek and Warren, 1948). So, the aims more at studying the influence of social conditions on the emotions, thoughts and behavior of the characters in the story or novel, the analysis of the character’s personalities, the process of a literary work formation and the psychology of creativity.

From the analysis of the characters’ personality of *The Giver* quartet, it shows that the writer want to share her views about the freedom and right of individual in society that have important role to gain successful identity. Lois Lowry depicted the real condition of her society by comparing the different condition of society that have the same kind of authority. The authority with the right of having power take the main role in controlling the people, and people do not have any freedom to have their own life.

4 CONCLUSION

The major purposes of this analysis is to know about how resistance can influence individual’s life in gaining identity. From analysing *The Giver* Quartet , it shows that resistance here relates with the individual effort in opposing the condition that oppressing individual freedom in daily life. Every individual has a right to know the value of freedom and individual identities which can lead them to gain the identity.

Secondly, it relates with the gaining identity. Gaining clear identity is very important toward the individual, because it can lead to the individual’s better future. Gaining identity begins during the adolescence period, where the individuals in this periode usually explore more about their role in the society and also knowing how the society admit their existence.

The last, there are three kinds of pedagogical implications that we could gain from this study. The novels as the materials in some schools in America, especially on Literature subject. There are also many websites that discuss about *The Giver* quartet, they discuss about the elements, the critical essays, reviews and some also provide questions to discuss the novels further as the subject material at school. *The Giver*, itself has been translated to many languages and get good readers responses. Several students of colleagues also have been analyzed it as their final report. There are also some moral values from analyzing the novels. The moral values from the story are: to gain success we must work hard, keep resist in the bad condition, have courage to do the right thing, believe to the own ability, and sometimes do the white lie in order to keep everything well. Resistance doesn't mean just keep silent and take everything, but it means a kind of effort of the individual to keep resist in a such condition in order to find the right way to reach the goal.

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