

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Dystopian fiction explores the potential of certain ideological aspects in a present society to devolve into a state that is political, socially, and economically detrimental to its citizens-either overtly or covertly. Dystopian fiction provides an imaginary space where the future can be planned, where possible trajectories deriving from the uncertainties of the present can be followed to their hypothetical outcome.¹ The protagonists of most of young adult dystopian fictions suggest a hopeful conception of the subject's beneficial potential.

Dystopian fiction for young adult has a hopeful, optimistic quality. Impressionable adolescents contain the potential for change as they mature and inherit the world, dystopian novels written by the possibility of a better future. Lowry's *The Giver* quartet opens up paths for resisting the insidious cultural dogma and for developing individual in midst of the pressures of ideology.

The Giver quartet mostly talk about the individual resistance toward the ideology or society that has power to dominate the hegemony. The characters of *The Giver* quartet show their resistance toward the hegemony based on their ability in understanding the society condition, where they can resist during their life process of maturity. The adolescents will gain the process of self-maturity

¹Roozeboom, Alison Nicole (2017) "Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and Political Consciousness in Youth," *Articulate*: Vol. 16 , Article 3. Retrieved on January 20th, 2018, at 02.22 AM. Available at:<http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/articulate/vol16/iss1/3>

by finding the identity during their adolescence time. This research has aim to find the individual resistance during their life of adolescence to gain the identity.

The word resistance is noun form of resist. There are some definition of *resist* from Merriam Webster Dictionary. One of them is “to remain strong against the force or effect of something, it is not affected or harmed by something”.² However, *resistance* is an effort to stop or to fight against someone or something. It deals with persons stuck in a struggle between individual needs and the moral demands of society, a struggle which the individual generally loses.

Lois Lowry is one of the dystopian author, her books are mostly about nationalist propaganda, using oversimplification, emotional appeals, and dualistic morality to influence her readers' minds. The books are mostly for children, who don't yet have the critical faculties to defend themselves from such underhanded methods, so people said that her books are trouble some. Unsurprisingly, Lowry adopts the structure of the monomythic, equating a spiritual journey with a moral one. Her Christ-figure uses literal magic powers to rebel against his society. Lowry believes young adults need and deserve honesty, as demonstrated by her dystopian novels, *The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger* and *Son*. (Keely, J.G, 2007)

In each novel, Lowry constructs futuristic communities that are secluded from the rest of the world, and reveal in their self-professed

² See on <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resistance>

perfection. The fate of each world, however, lies not in the hands of the adult authorities, but in the hands of adolescents, whose new-found responsibilities to each of their communities come with a price. The adolescent protagonists discover the limitations of their secluded worlds, and as a result, must decide whether to perpetuate the established way of life, or to defy the conventions of their society in an effort toward improvement.³

Lois Lowry chose to write *The Giver* quartet as dystopian novels because novels are the most effective means to communicate her dissatisfaction with the lack of awareness that human beings have about the interdependence with each other, their environment, and their world. She uses the irony of utopian appearances but dystopian realities to provoke her readers to question and value their own freedoms and identities.⁴

In *The Giver*, Lowry described a young man, Jonas, who lives in a repressed society in which he has no freedom. The story set in the near future, in a seemingly utopian city, where there is no conflict, no inequality, and no stress. The streets are symmetrical grid, the domiciles and public buildings are clean, even antiseptic, and the people dress in matching outfits and ride bicycles so as not to pollute the environment. The “Elders,” the leadership of

³Guzman, Rachel. LOIS LOWRY'S DYSTOPIAN NOVELS: Empowering the youth of today to face the challenges of tomorrow.

http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/mary.warner/StudentLinks/2004_Fall/rguzman.htm, downloaded on May 19th, 2016, at 22.51.

⁴ See at Critical Essays Major Themes on *The Giver's* Lois Lowry retrieved from <http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/bruce.brogdon/engl-1.130.1/the-research-paper/critical-essays-on-lowrys-the-giver> on April, 10th, 2018

the community, artificially arrange families and carefully assign vocations, all for the sake of the common good.

In *Gathering Blue*, Lowry described a girl named Kira. She has a broken leg and is an orphan. Her father died before she was born but she was not sure and her mother died because of her illness. The people in the village say that her father was eaten by a beast. She is poor and homeless and called by council of guardians. She gets assignment to repair the rope of gathering day. She is the only one who is able to do the tread in the whole village. She meets Thomas with her best friend Mat and Branchi (his dog). Matt gets trashed by her mother and wants to find blue for Kira. At the day of gathering, he returns with blue and her father, who is still alive and lives in the other village. His father wants Kira to leave the village and go with him, but Kira refuses and decides to work for council of guardians with her friends Thomas and Jo.

In *Messenger*, Lois Lowry described young Matty as a youth who is struggling to understand his strange and mysterious gift of healing powers just as the altruistic society. He begins his life to experience disharmony. Then, he leaves his society and finds the one which is full of peace and the people are sharing their life. A growing group of citizens demands to close its borders. At the same time, he must take Kira to the Village but the Forest that once welcomed Matty now darkens and thickens to prevent passage.

Son is the conclusion of the novel *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. In this novel, Claire is a twelve year-old girl. She lives in an isolated village that is strictly controlled by those in power. When she turns twelve, Claire receives

her work assignment, as birth mother. In Claire's society, a birth mother has to give birth to up to three children. These children are then nurtured and cared for until they are turned over to the parents that will raise the children. During childbirth, however, something goes medically wrong and they have to deliver the child by cesarean section, instead of naturally. This causes Claire to lose her certification as a birthmother and she gets new assignment as Fish Hatchery by fourteen. She has to work in the Fish Hatchery of the village. Before leaving, however, she finds out that she gave birth to a boy and he is Number Thirty-six in the Nurturing Center, where he is cared for before being assigned to a family.

Lois Lowry's novel *The Giver*, in 1993, has gained a very wide audience over the past two decades, since it 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.⁵

Many scientists and experts in literature and other fields have done several studies toward the novels. They got many things related to the themes

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

of the story, which have relations to the real world. They also found many symbols used by Lowry to reveal what she wants to tell from this novel.

Throughout *The Giver* quartet, Lowry wants to reveal some themes, firstly, it concerns about society and humanity. For example, she concentrates on the tradeoffs involved when the community chooses sameness rather than valuing personal expression. She also attempts to awaken the readers to the dangers that exist when people opt for conformity over individuality and for unexamined security over freedom. People must not be blindly obedient to the rules of society. They must be aware of their live. Secondly, it is the value of the individual. Lowry points out that when people are unable to experience pain, they will lose their individual value. Memories are so vital because they often times include pain, and pain is an individual reaction.⁶

The characters on *The Giver* quartet are uncomplicated and complacent. They are static, simple, one-dimensional characters. Most of the citizens in the community passively follow the rules of the community. They were not accustomed to thinking for themselves. On the other hand, the major characters of *The Giver* quartet are dynamic. They learn the truth about their community, that it is hypocrisy and that the people have voluntarily given up their individuality and freedom to live as robots. Most of the major characters in *The Giver* quartet want to fight against the rule, but they have to survive first, they stand to life with their resistance in the society.

⁶ See at Critical Essays Major Themes on *The Giver's* Lois Lowry retrieved from <http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/bruce.brogdon/engl-1.130.1/the-research-paper/critical-essays-on-lowrys-the-giver> on April, 10th, 2018

Characters in dystopian literature, especially in *The Giver* quartet, act out in form of resistance against the oppressive system in place. A new member of society has to seek ways of resisting society. Most often the protagonist will act out of resistance in small ways and it is usually meaningless too few of their society.

On *The Giver* quartet, especially on *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue*, there is no recurring characters between each novel, but we can see that there have similar themes. There's a child with a remarkable power and an authoritarian regime that controlling those abilities. However, *Messenger* and *Son*, have relation of the characters toward *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue*. The characters mostly have their own resistance toward the condition of society.

B. Limitation of the Study

The study uses close textual analysis of the Lois Lowry's *The Giver* quartet novels to identify resistance of the characters in gaining identity from psychosocial perspective.

C. Problem Statements

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are as follows:

1. What are the the indicators of resistance in *The Giver* quartet?
2. How is resistance depicted in *The Giver* quartet?
3. Why did Lois Lowry address resistance in *The Giver* quartet?

D. Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to reveal resistance toward the characters of Lois Lowry's quartet *The Giver*. The aims of the study are :

1. To explain the indicators of resistance in *The Giver* quartet.
2. To describe the resistance depicted in *The Giver* quartet.
3. To explain the reason of Lois Lowry's addressing resistance in *The Giver* quartet.

E. Benefits of the Study

1. Theoretical Benefits

Theoretically, the aim of this study is to give contribution to the larger knowledge, especially in literary studies. The study on Lois Lowry's quartet *The Giver* has goal to improve the library research in literature, especially in novel's analysis

2. Practical Benefits

Practically, the study on Lois Lowry's quartet *The Giver* has aim to give benefit the reader by the value of her work in every aspect that the reader can afford. The reader usually are defining the book in very personal and exciting ways.

F. Thesis Paper Organization

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is introduction, it deals with background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statement, the objective of the study, benefit of the study, and thesis paper organization. Chapter II is literary review that consists of the underlying theory, working

definition and previous study. Chapter III is research method that consists of type of the study, object of the study, type of the data and data sources, technique of collecting data and technique of analyzing data. Chapter IV is the finding and discussion. Chapter V is conclusion that consists of conclusion, pedagogical empirical and suggestion.