

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides general description of the research. It covers the background of the research, the research questions, the aims of the research, the scope of the research, the research methodology, the significance of the research, the clarification of terms, and the organization of the research.

### 1.1. Background of the Research

Dystopian literature first came into the frame around the late nineteenth century, and blossomed drastically in the twentieth century. Lyman Tom Sargent (1994) defines dystopian literature as a product of author's imagination of a society which is worse than the society the readers live in. The word "dystopia" itself means "bad place" in Greek language. The literal meaning suggests an idea which is a contrast to its opposite twin, utopia. While utopia generally portrays a society where "all conflicts of conscience and conflicts of interest are abolished," (Kateb, 1963, p. 17) or what Claeys (2010, p. 107) calls "heaven on earth," dystopia portrays an undesirable nightmarish society controlled by a totalitarian government. Huntington (1982) adds that even though each of these genres projects different principles, either happiness or unhappiness, to the imaginary societies, both explore social and political structures.

One of the definitions of dystopia which embodies several core characteristics of dystopian literature is proposed by Gottlieb (2001) who defines dystopian society as:

A hell on earth, an absurd, death-bound social-political system where the elite deliberately conspires against its own people, against the most universal principle of justice, with emphasis on nightmarish rigged trials, with make believe accusations followed by all-to-real sentences to hard labor or death. (18)

From Gottlieb's definition, it can be assumed that a dystopian fiction features an undesirable society controlled and oppressed by a totalitarian government which employs a hegemonic or coercive system upon the subjects. This kind of society can be found in many dystopian classics, such as George Orwell's *1984* (1949), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (1938). Aside from sharing the same genre, these novels share the same target reader which is adult. However, in 1993, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry was published, and it starts a floodgate of dystopian fictions for young adults. Since the early of the twenty first century, many young adult dystopian novels have been published, such as Nancy Farmer's *The House of Scorpion* (2002), Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008), Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2011), and Marie Lu's *Legend* (2011). As the number of dystopian novels grows rapidly, the attention they receive from researchers grows as well.

There has been quite a large amount of research about dystopian novel. Tyner (2004), for instance, analyzes the aspect of space, discipline and resistance in Orwell's *1984*. In 2012, Gerhard conducted a comparative research of six dystopian novels, *We* (1924), *1984* (1949), *Brave New World* (1932), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Anthem* (1938) and *Kallocain* (1940), concerning the depiction of discipline and liberation. Both Tyner and Gerhard study classic dystopian novels that target adult reader. As for young adult dystopian novel, Tiina Virtanen (2012) had conducted a research about individual and societal control in *The Giver*.

One thing that Tyner, Gerhard and Virtanen's studies share in common is the main theoretical framework applied in their research. Their research applies discipline techniques by Michel Foucault written in *Discipline and Punish* (1977). In *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault offers a concept of surveillance and docile bodies which plays a big role in a dystopian society. Foucault proposes four discipline techniques that aim to construct docile bodies and disciplinary society. These techniques are potentially convenient to locate control over subjects that is performed by a totalitarian government. Following Foucault's notion "where there is power, there is resistance" (1978, p. 95), the

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presence of totalitarian government is usually followed by the act of resistance from some of the subjects. In some of his previous work, Foucault has also provided basic guideline concerning resistance: how it compiles to the existence of power dynamics, what marks an act of resistance and its classification.

Both disciplinary control and resistance are some of the most prominent trademarks of dystopian literature. Dystopian literature always features totalitarian control by the government, whether it is very explicit like in *The Hunger Games* (2008) or apparent like in the early part of *The Giver* (1993). Then, the protagonist's role in the society is marked by their awareness and resistance towards the totalitarian control. Especially in young adult dystopian, there is a bigger gap in the surveillance that allows the young adult protagonists to resist.

As a young adult dystopian fiction, Marie Lu's *Legend* (2011) also features both totalitarian control and acts of resistance. *Legend* (2011) is the first book of a trilogy, followed by *Prodigy* (2013) and *Champion* (2014). *Legend* is a story set in a post-apocalyptic version of the America. The state is split into two countries, the Republic of America and the Colonies of America. The story is set in the Republic which conducts a Trial for every ten-year-old. The Trial will determine what kind of life they belong to, whether it is to be recruited by country's military or to be a low-paid worker, for instance. The story is told from the perspectives of two main characters, Day and June. The story explores the contrast of Day's life as that era's Robin Hood and June's life as the country's proud prodigy. Day and June get involved with each other when June's brother, Matias, is reported to be murdered by Day. Their encounter, however, led June to the dark truth of the Republic: that the country's government is responsible for the plague that strikes their county brutally, and that Matias is actually killed for knowing this fact.

Unlike its fellow contemporary young adult dystopian fiction like *The Hunger Games*, *Legend* has not gained much attention from researchers. *Legend* being relatively new released book is probably one of the reasons. However, up to this date, research on *Legend*—or any of Lu's work—is hardly found, especially ones in English. Considering the rarity of the research on *Legend*, then analysis

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on the novel is still considered very organic and broad. Thus, *Legend* becomes a potential field for researcher to study. Also, another thing that makes *Legend* an intriguing subject of analysis is the dual narrator it offers. Unlike most dystopian novels, which tend to use one narrator only, *Legend* offers two sets of perspectives of seeing a dystopian world.

Therefore, a decision was made that this research investigated the first book of Marie Lu's Legendtrilogy, *Legend* (2011) as a young adult dystopian novel. The analysis was focused on the way the Republic controls the subject, and how the young adult main characters react to the power dynamics in the dystopian society they live in, specifically, how they resist to the control that is bonding them as an adolescent as well as a member of a disciplinary society.

## 1.2. Research Questions

The research is intended to answer the following questions:

- 1) How does *Legend* depict the way a totalitarian government controls the subjects in a dystopian world?
- 2) How do the young adult main characters manifest acts of resistance within a dystopian society?

## 1.3. Aims of the Research

Following the research question, this research aims to discover the ways the novel portrays how control is employed by the totalitarian government in a dystopian society. It includes the manifestation of resistance toward the control in the novel, which is done by the young adult main characters.

## 1.4. Scope of the Research

This research was conducted only on the first book of the Legend trilogy, *Legend* (2011). The analysis was focused only on the aspects of control by the totalitarian government and resistance by the young adult protagonists. The research

isconducted mainly with the aid of Michael Foucault's conception of discipline techniques which are discussed in his book *Discipline and Punish*(1977) and from the categorizations of resistance which are proposed in "Subject and Power" (1982).

### **1.5. Significance of the Research**

This research is expected to make a contribution to the literary criticism field as a demonstration of how a contemporary novel reacts towards a specific framework. Specifically, this research is expected to inform readers of the way contemporary young-adult dystopian novel illustrates control and resistance in a dystopian society though an analysis which is drawn upon power relation theory.

### **1.6. Methodology**

In order to fulfill the aims of the study and to answer the research questions, this research applied a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is aimed to study things in their natural settings in order to make meaning, or to interpret phenomena trough definitions and elaborations(Denin & Lincoln, 2011). The design of qualitative research with its descriptive nature was chosen because it is considered suitable for the research which employs a text analysis towards a literary work.

This research design was used to examine the narrations and dialogues from *Legend* which show the symptoms of totalitarian control, by drawing upon Foucault's discipline techniques. Also, the research will examine the narrations and dialogues that imply the way the main characters resist to a totalitarian control. When the act of resistance is located, itis categorized under Foucault's classifications of resistance.

The data that is collected after examining the narrations and dialogues will then be analyzed descriptively in order to make meaning of them. The closure of the data analysis is the conclusion pulling from the interpretation made towards the findings.

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## 1.7. Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the following is the clarification of terms that is used in the study:

### 1) **Dystopian literature**

Dystopian literature is defined by Booker (1994) as a type of literary works which portray a fictitious society constructed by errors and catastrophe. Sargent (1994) adds that dystopian literature locks its setting in a certain time and space following the author's purpose to give a catastrophic effect in presenting a dreadful society, which is considerable worse than the society the reader lives in.

### 2) **Control**

Control, according to Amodio and Devine (2010) refers to employment of a response which directed toward a certain intentional goal. Focusing more on a societal context, control is defined as a situation where people are expected to follow society's guidelines of values and beliefs, and punishment will be engaged for those who do not fulfill society's expectation (Moore, 2001).

### 3) **Discipline**

Hindess (1996) attempts to define Foucault's concept of discipline as employment of power over people to provide them with particular skills and attribute, to have them become self-controlled subject, to expand their privileges, to exercise surveillance over them, or rearrange their characteristics.

### 4) **Resistance**

An effort made as an attempt to defy acts of domination, exploitation, or subjection. This manifestation could happen to an individual at the level of material, symbolic or psychological (Keith & Pile, 1997).

## 1.8. Organization Paper

This study is organized into the following chapters:

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## **CHAPTER I: Introduction**

Chapter I provides the general information about the study such as the background of the study, research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, brief explanation of the methodology used in the study, the clarification of the terms in the study, and the organization of the study.

## **CHAPTER II: Theoretical Framework**

Chapter II presents the elaboration of the theoretical framework which is used as the tool in conducting the research.

## **CHAPTER III: Research Methodology**

Chapter III covers detailed explanation of the research methodology and procedure applied in the research. The chapter consists of the procedure conducted in the study, data collection, data analysis, and data presentation in the study.

## **CHAPTER IV: Findings and Discussion**

Chapter IV provides the description, the critical analysis towards the main subject, extracts findings from the analysis and highlights the textual evidence in the subject of study.

## **CHAPTER V: Conclusion and Suggestion**

Chapter V presents a conclusion and suggestion towards the case study as well making an interpretation of the findings of the study.