

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Each culture has its own way of seeing life which has an impact on the quality of life of the people. According to Richard Wike in *5 ways Americans and Europeans are different*, America is a country that prioritizes individual liberty. They believe that allowing everyone to pursue their personal ambitions without intervention from the state is more essential (2016). The concept of utopia refers to the image of a society that has the freedom to pursue happiness through individual liberty. This concept is in line with the phenomenon occurring in America. The term utopia was first used by Sir Thomas More in his work *Utopia* in 1516, described a society on an imaginary island. Utopia is an imaginative community or imaginative place with a highly coveted and perfect quality of life aspect. Utopia related with happiness. Utopian society is concerned with the equality of economic, government, and law aspect, so there is no discriminatory action which experienced by a certain class. The structure of utopian society is very complex. According to Lyman Tower Sargent in his book *Utopianism : a very Short Introduction*, there are socialist, capitalist, monarchist, democratic, anarchist, environmentalist, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racist, left-wing, right-wing, reformist, free love, primary family, extended family, and many others. (21:2010).

Dystopia is an imaginative community with an undesirable and frightening social structure. This antonym of utopia is an unwanted place. Based on the

Cambridge dictionary, dystopia can be defined as “a very bad or unfair society in which there is a lot of suffering, especially an imaginary society in the future, after something terrible has happened; a description of such a society.” (“Dystopia,” def. 1). Dystopia is concerned with discrimination, authoritarian government, natural disasters, and the decline of values in society. The word *dystopia* was first coined by J.S. Mill in his Parliamentary speech in 1868.

The American film industry often uses this concept of life as part of film plots. *The Giver* (2014) is an American science fiction film directed by Phillip Noyce and produced by Neil Koenigsberg and Nikki Silver. The film is based on a novel by Lois Lowry entitled *The Giver*. This film was released in 2014 and premiered in New York on August 11, with the theme of a utopian society named The Communities which full of joy and perfection. Human life is governed by the Elders. All pain and strife are removed and turned to “sameness”, by erasing all bad memories in humans. In this film, humans get their respective roles in their life. This is also determined by the Elders. There is a profession called "The Receiver of Memories" whose job is to receive all the good and bad memories of humans in the past before they are erased. This job plays important role for The Elders to make decisions and policies according to the advice of the receiver of memories. There are two important terms in this work, namely, the receiver and the giver of memories. Being The Receiver of Memories is not an easy thing. Jonas, the receiver of the memories, had to feel immense pain and sorrow when he received the memories from The Giver.

Utopia and dystopia are contradictory phenomena. In a utopian society life gives its people peace, happiness, and peace, while the life of a dystopia society is

the opposite. This movie contains both of these concepts of life. At the beginning of the film, it depicted that life is very beautiful without feeling sad, but in the same time so human emotions are also erased from their memories. After Jonas learns the secret of erasing these memories, he realizes that this life is not a utopia but a dystopia. Life is not beautiful without pain, if human can not feel pain, humans never understand what happiness is. With all the courage he had, he tried to restore the memories of all mankind.

This research focuses on how the utopian life that humans desire turns into a dystopian life. This research also reveals the role of The Giver and The Receiver in changing the perspective of utopia life into dystopia. Based on the phenomenon that happened in the film, the writer suspects that there is a change the life of a utopian society become dystopian, seen from the perspective of the main character. The writer choose *The Giver* (2014) as objects of study to examine these two phenomena which happened in the plot of film.

1.2. Research Problems

- 1.2.1. How are the intrinsic aspects elaborated in *The Giver*?
- 1.2.2. How is the depiction of utopian society presented in *The Giver*?
- 1.2.3. What causes the change in perspective from a utopian society to a dystopian society in *The Giver*?

1.3. Research Objectives

- 1.3.1. To elaborate the intrinsic aspects in *The Giver*.
- 1.3.2. To find out the depiction of society in *The Giver*.
- 1.3.3. To find out the reason of the change in perspective from a utopian society to a dystopian society in *The Giver*.

1.4. The Scope of Study

The limitation of this research is the concept of utopia turning into dystopia contained in *The Giver*. Thus, the scope of this thesis will examine whether the situation of The Communities in the *The Giver* is in accordance with the characteristics of utopia and dystopia. Other perspectives such as the concept of hegemony are also added to analyze the life changes of the characters in *The Giver*. The writer also examines the role of the receiver of memories in changing society's perspective regarding utopian life.

1.5. Previous Studies

Some writers have conducted the research about *The Giver* movie and also Utopian Dystopian concept. These previous studies are used to expand theories and research concepts that have been carried out by other writers. Therefore, this research could be a new concept that has never been researched before.

There are some research that studied about the characteristic and the concept of *The Giver*. There is research that discusses dystopia in *The Giver* novel. The research written by Kunduz Mambetzhupova (2016) is entitled "The Characteristics of Dystopian Society in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*". As the title suggests, this study discusses the characteristics of the dystopian society in *The Giver*. This research was conducted by applying Abrams' Objective Approach. The writer found that *The Giver* is a dystopian fictional story where all the characters fit with Gottlieb's fiction. The study entitled "*The Giver*" *Film: a Concept of Environmental and Cultural Equality in Society* by Al Farouq Lazuardo and M. Suryadi (2021) discusses the film version. *The Giver* is a film that tells about war, discrimination and racism.

There are some researches that studies from psychological perspective. This material object was studied by Rendry Hanifa Ak Mallyta and Hat Pujiati (2018), students of English literature in Jember University with the title "Violence Beyond The Utopian Society In Lois Lowry's The Giver". The purpose of the paper is to analyze the 'sameness' as a system of government in the society in the novel as the source of the violence. Another study written by Kezang Nima (2020) entitled "Contextualizing Freewill in Lois Lowry's Novel The Giver" focuses on his study of the will to be free in the novel *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. This research focuses on the desire of a community to be free from government influence. Journal of literature entitled *Jonas' Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in The Giver* written by Silfia Afni (2023) focused on the psychological of the main character named Jonas. The purpose of the study is analyze the main character's stress disorder in Lois Lowry's novel, *The Giver*, using Gerald Davison's Theory of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Other writers, Khairulsyah S, Ni Made Widisanti S, Tetty Yukesti (2021), found the effect of changes in the main characters personality towards social setting in the *The Giver* novel. This research focuses on the psychological aspects of the main character and their impact on social life in the story.

In addition, there is research discussing the sign system in *The Giver's* novel entitled "Semiotika Colors Of Red In *The Giver* Film" by Emy Sudarwati and Nur Amalina Zatalini (2018). Semiotics is a science that studies sign systems in a film. This research focuses on color as a sign in the *Giver*. Color carries the meaning behind its presence so that it gives a sign so that it can be interpreted as it should.

Research reveals that the red color on several objects in the film has its own meaning. Red was the first color Jonas saw after black and white.

After finding and analyzing these seven previous studies, the writer found out the gap of this research. The seven studies above discuss the personality side of the characters in the film, the concept of society and culture, psychological conditions, and the symbols contained in the film *The Giver* (2014). Most research reveals about the change in the main character's personality after seeing the fact that the place he lives in is not a utopia. Most research also studied about the novel version. In this research, the writer uses the concepts of utopia and dystopia in analyzing the life of place called The Communities. Other perspectives will also be added such as the concept of hegemony practiced by The Elders.

1.6. Methods

The writer uses a qualitative research method to analyze the data. Qualitative research method is research that analyzes data without using numbers to examine an experience, opinion, or concept. According to Denzin and Lincoln in *Hand Book of Qualitative Research*, qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings (1994:35). The primary data taken from *The Giver* (2014). The secondary data taken from electronic books, journals and articles that are related to the topic.

1.6.1. Method of Collecting Data

Collecting data is a methodological process of collecting information related to the topic. The writer uses library research method. There are several steps of

collecting data. First, the writer watches the film that being studied intensively. Second, the writer re-watches the film and examines the sounds (dialog, backsound, music) contained in the storyline, then makes the transcription. Third, the writer examines cinematography contained in the film. Fourth, the writer collects supporting data in the form of journals and articles on the topic under study. Fifth, the writer analyzes the primary data using supporting data.

1.6.2. Methods of Approach

Based on Christina Degli-Esposti in her book *Postmodernism in the Cinema*, Postmodern cinema is made up of and derived from a mass of material that, via recollections and quotations, offers a rewriting and rereading of things in such a way that the communication act itself often takes importance over the communication's content (1998 : 5). Postmodern cinema emphasizes intertextuality by fusing together many genres, civilizations, and styles. The theorization of postmodern and contemporary philosophy has evolved into the narrative style of postmodernist storytelling. It functions similarly to a postmodern text in that it examines the several parts of reality, each with its own narrative element, with the objective to examine any postmodern text viewed as an interpretation of a sequence of narratives, recollections, and inventions (1998 : 13). This approach is used to examine post-modern films with genres such as utopia and dystopia which are representations of reality.

To analyze social change, the writer uses the sociology of literature method. According to Lucien Goldmann in the book *Essays on Method in the Sociology of Literature*, "the sociology of literature in general lies in its recognition of the need to develop synoptic categories that can link two heterogeneous levels - society and literature or history and aesthetics." (1980 : 7-8). Literary sociology sees literary

works as a reflection of the conditions of society. Literary sociology also links historical conditions (changes, events, economic conditions) with aesthetics (narrative structure). "The problem is, then, not that of knowing what a group is thinking, but of knowing what changes are capable of being produced in its consciousness without there being a change in the essential nature of the group" (1980: 28). This approach is used to study changes because of consciousness that impact social change in a group. This approach is used to analyze changes in perspective due to hegemony.

1.7. Organization of Writing

The organization of this thesis will be divided into four chapters.

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of seven sub-chapters. Introduction part consist of background of the study, research problems, research objectives, scope of the study, previous study, methods, and organization of writing.

Chapter 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter consists of 2 sub-chapters. They are intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects.

Chapter 3 DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of an analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of *The Giver* (2014) film using theory from chapter 2.

Chapter 4 CONCLUSION

This last chapter consists of the summary of the whole discussion and analysis through the previous chapters.

REFERENCES