

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

In this modern era, dystopian themes are prevalent in popular culture, portraying societies that deviate from idealistic expectations and are characterized by harshness, authoritarianism, and widespread unhappiness. Elements such as "authoritarian rule, mass surveillance, loss of individual freedom, and environmental destruction are often characteristic" (Baccolini & Moylan, 2016:231). These themes are central to American studies as they provide a lens to examine contemporary social and political dynamics within the United States. By analyzing dystopian narratives, we can gain insights into societal anxieties, government power, individual rights, and environmental concerns, all of which are crucial topics in American studies.

The first *Purge* (2018) movie provides a message that illustrates how government power can be abused to maintain an unjust status. Through the concept of "purge", where every year all crimes are allowed to go unpunished, the movie depicts a society divided and governed by violence and injustice. The movie shows how the main character is an individual who is initially passive and perhaps even apathetic towards the social and political circumstances around him. Perhaps he is someone who is

marginalized by the system, perhaps a minority or someone from a marginalized lower class.

However, as the story progresses, this main character may begin to realize the atrocities happening around him during the Purge. Perhaps he loses a loved one or becomes a victim of the violence of the Purge itself. This realization triggers a transformation in him, from a passive individual to a rebel who is determined to fight against the injustice.

Authoritarian power is a central factor in the formation of a dark and unjust dystopian world. Authoritarian governments tend to suppress individual freedoms, control the flow of information, and suppress opposition as a way to maintain their power (Linstaed, 2023:01). The use of propaganda and control of the media were the main tools used to ensure support for the regime by manipulating public opinion. In addition, growing economic and social inequality also strengthens government dominance, while high levels of corruption in all levels of society only deepen distrust and social instability.

Similar to the classic dystopia, the critical dystopia is frequently set in a future society where an oppressive government enforces harsh rules and penalties on its people (Dilman, 2020:27). Authoritarian governments introduced the concept of the Purge, in which for a certain period of time, all crimes, including murder, were legal. This authoritarian regime

implemented strict rules on the eve of the Purge and imposed severe punishments on those who resisted or refused to participate. Citizens were subjected to oppressive government policies, and their basic freedoms were taken away during the Purge. These issues depict oppressive surveillance carried out by the ruling regime, reflecting themes of dystopia and authoritarianism.

The First Purge (2018) serves as a prequel to the other movies in The Purge series, offering insight into the events leading up to the implementation of "The Purge". Set in Staten Island, New York, the United States government conducts a social experiment where all criminal activities, including murder, are legalized for a 12 hour period. The objective of this experiment is to study the effects on crime rates and population control, particularly in impoverished neighborhoods.

At the center of the story is Dmitri, a young man who leads a local gang. As the events of "The Purge" unfold, Dmitri finds himself confronting unexpected challenges and consequences. The film delves into the social and psychological impacts of this government experiment on both individuals and society as a whole, with Dmitri's experiences serving as a focal point for exploring these effects. Through Dmitri's journey, viewers witness the turmoil and struggles faced by ordinary people during this extreme and dystopian societal experiment.

Studying the dystopian perspective through the social experiment

depicted in *The First Purge* (2018) holds significant importance. The film provides an opportunity to understand how people react to extreme situations created by the government and how social interactions are influenced by this context. Through this research, deeper insights can be gained into the social and psychological impacts of extreme social experiments on societies facing dystopian situations.

The aim of this study is to analyze the main character, Dmitri, focusing on the social, emotional, and value changes he undergoes during the "Purge" social experiment, which unveils a dystopian narrative steeped in societal manipulation and ethical ambiguity. By examining Dmitri in this context, we can explore how these dystopian elements reflect and critique real-life societal issues such as the impact of governmental policies on personal freedoms, the role of surveillance in modern life, and the ethical implications of social engineering. Additionally, this research aims to address broader social issues raised in the film, such as social inequality, violence, and authoritarian government control, thereby offering a critical perspective on American society today.

Through the analysis of this film, it is hoped that this research will contribute to our understanding of how dystopian situations and social experiments can affect individuals and communities. The findings of this research can provide broader insights into social dynamics in societies facing extreme conditions and potentially have implications for social

planning and policies in the real world

1.2. Research Problems

The problems of this study are going to be one primary analysis, analysis of dystopian shown in the movie and the intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements to prove about the dystopian in *The First Purge*.

The followings are the formulation of research problems:

1. How are the intrinsic aspects of the dystopian perspective depicted and echoed in the film 'The First Purge' (2018)?
2. How does main character development and actions reflect societal transformation and resistance within the dystopian world depicted in 'The First Purge'?

1.3. Aims of Study

The purpose of this study are:

1. To examine how the experiment was conducted through the lens of dystopian in film *The First Purge* (2018).
2. To analyze the character development and social transformation of the main character, Dmitri, in *The First Purge* (2018) within the context of the dystopian.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is to analyze the dystopian aspects depicted in the film *The First Purge* (2018). To perfect this analysis, the

author will also examine both sides, namely intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements include characters, conflict and setting, while extrinsic elements relate to factors that support the dystopian concept shown through the main character in the film *The First Purge*.

1.5. Previous Study

As a reference for the study, the author of this thesis lists four previous studies related to the topic.

The first is a journal *Violence, crime dystopia and the dialectics of (dis)order in The Purge films* by Liviu Alexandrescu (2021). Previous research on the movie "The Purge" has explored various aspects, mainly focusing on the annual ritual of allowing violence without consequences. This aspect highlights themes of violence, social inequality and resistance to oppressive authority. It reveals the injustices inherent in a brutal capitalist society and how the government maintains control. Additionally, research has emphasized the depiction of the night of the Purge as a grand ritual, creating an unsettling festival-like atmosphere where lawlessness occurs. This presents a dystopian vision of a future where violence is normalized.

In addition, these films metaphorically address systemic violence, reflecting the economic and political conditions affected by the ruthless system of capitalism. Through these depictions, these films explore dystopian ideologies in popular culture, offering insights into present-day

realities and social issues. Previous research highlights themes of violence, identity crisis, and resistance in *The Purge*, providing a foundation for a deeper analysis of dystopian theory and its relevance to contemporary society.

Second, *A Stylistic Analysis of Dystopia: Hopelessness and Disturbance in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four* by Kulsum-Binder, R., & Crompton, P. (2017). This research aims to explore the characteristics of the dystopian society depicted in the film adaptation of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. When viewers watch a film, they often sense a particular effect it has on them. Some may attempt to describe the atmosphere of the film, but they are rarely able to pinpoint how the visual and auditory elements construct this sensation. Cinema, like literature, is a craft that, when approached with the right tools, can reveal the underlying causes of viewers' perceptions. Fowler notes that linguistic analysis can also be applied to film dialogue and narration, providing a structured way of explaining the verbal constructs present in a screenplay. By using specific technical terms, such analysis gives a clearer account of what viewers intuitively understand when they engage with a film. This research paper aims to demonstrate this by providing a stylistic analysis of the crafting of hopelessness and disturbance in the film adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Directed by Michael Radford, the 1984 film adaptation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains one of the most prominent portrayals of Orwell's dystopian vision. Set in a futuristic totalitarian society ruled by Big Brother and the Party, it follows the life of protagonist Winston Smith as he navigates the bleak world of Oceania and ultimately makes a failed attempt at revolt. This paper aims to apply stylistic tools to explore how Radford's direction and the film's production design craft an atmosphere of hopelessness and disturbance. By examining the cinematic techniques used, the paper hopes to uncover the specific visual and auditory elements that create this sense of dystopia.

The world Winston inhabits in the film is devoid of purpose or hope, skewed by its dystopian nature towards pointlessness. Fortunati points out that "Oceania is the world of no-difference, of the interchangeability of terms where war is peace and peace is war." This confusion is visually represented in the film through its stark and oppressive set design, the use of monochromatic color schemes, and the bleak, repetitive imagery. The Party maintains power by constantly rewriting history to appear infallible, a practice that instills uncertainty in Winston. This paper will examine the visual composition, lighting, and sound design of the film to expose how these elements generate an atmosphere of uncertainty and despair.

Additionally, the film's use of Newspeak, a warped language for Oceania, contributes to the feeling of hopelessness and disturbance, illustrating Orwell's deep concern for language as a tool of control and manipulation.

Third, *The Characteristics of Dystopian Society in Lois Lowry's "The Giver"* by Mambetjusun Kunduz, Dr. Nur Saktiningrum, M.Hum. (2016). This research paper is dedicated to analyzing Lois Lowry's novel, *The Giver*. The study employs Abrams' Objective Approach to uncover the characteristics of the dystopian society depicted in the novel. The primary aim is to understand why *The Giver* is classified as dystopian fiction by examining the concepts of utopia and dystopia. Data for this research is drawn from *The Giver*, focusing on specific words, clauses, and sentences that illustrate settings, plot development, and character interactions. This detailed analysis aims to identify the defining features of the dystopian society portrayed in Lowry's narrative.

The research findings reveal that *The Giver* fits the mold of dystopian fiction as proposed by theorists like Gottlieb. The novel presents a society under strict control, where individuality and freedom are suppressed to maintain order and uniformity. The analysis highlights several dystopian characteristics, including rigid societal regulations, the illusion of a perfect society, and the repression of personal emotions and memories. These elements are meticulously examined through the novel's plot and character development, particularly focusing on the protagonist,

Jonas, and his awakening to the realities of his society.

In conclusion, this study elucidates the key features that classify *The Giver* as a work of dystopian fiction. By scrutinizing the settings, plot intricacies, and character dynamics, the research demonstrates how Lowry's novel conforms to the dystopian genre. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how dystopian societies are constructed in literature, shedding light on the novel's relevance in exploring themes of control, freedom, and societal ideals. This research offers valuable insights for scholars and readers interested in dystopian literature and its implications for our understanding of society and governance.

Last, *The Study of the Dystopian Genre in American Popular Literature: The "Hunger Games" Trilogy* by Ari Setyorini, Dr. Nur Saktiningrum, M.Hum. (2016). This research aimed to trace the dystopian genre within the "Hunger Games" trilogy. Furthermore, the study sought to uncover the reasons behind the phenomenon of "The Hunger Games" as a catalyst for the recent emergence of dystopian fiction trends in America. Positioned within the realm of popular culture studies, the research focused on two primary questions: first, the identification of dystopian archetypes present in the trilogy. To delineate these archetypes, the study utilized Balaka Basu's identification of dystopian literature and Cawelti's perspective on genre studies. Second, the research aimed to explore the influences of Suzanne Collins' background on the production of "The Hunger Games" as dystopian

literature, tracing the author's familial, societal, cultural, and political backgrounds.

Employing qualitative methods, the research analyzed data to reveal several key findings regarding the dystopian genre in the novels. Firstly, dystopian elements were depicted through the futuristic setting of post-apocalyptic North America, with Katniss emerging as a young female protagonist who rebels against conformity and governmental control from the Capitol. Technology also played a pivotal role in the narrative. Secondly, the study unearthed insights into the author's ideological stance, demonstrating anti-war sentiments and social critiques relevant to contemporary American society.

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of how "The Hunger Games" not only exemplifies the dystopian genre but also investigates its broader cultural impact on contemporary American literature and societal trends. It is pertinent for scholars and enthusiasts interested in popular literature, dystopia, and the influence of authorial ideology in literary works.

1.6. Methods of the study

This thesis uses two aspects of method. They are Method of Research and Method of Approach.

1.6.1 Method of Research

To gather complete information and make this study easier to

understand, the writer uses the library research method. According to Mary W. George, library research involves "identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; a necessary component of every other research method at some point" (George, 2011). In this method, the writer analyzes the topic by reading supporting books in the library and searching the internet for articles and journals to support the analysis.

1.6.2. Method of Approach

The writer employs two approaches to analyze this thesis, focusing on both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the film. The intrinsic aspect is divided into narrative elements, which include the story structure, characters, setting, and themes, and cinematographic elements, which encompass techniques such as cinematography, editing, color usage, and visual effects. To analyze the intrinsic elements, the writer uses the objective approach. As Abrams explains in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

"Objective criticism treats a work of literature as an entity that stands independently from 'extrinsic' relationships to the poet, audience, or the surrounding world. Instead, it describes the literary work as a self-sufficient and autonomous object, or as a world unto itself, to be contemplated for its own sake and analyzed and judged based solely on 'intrinsic' criteria such as its complexity, coherence, balance, integrity, and the interrelations of its components." (2008:52).

Extrinsic approaches involve analyzing external factors such as social, political, or psychological context. Based on Isomaa, Korpua, and Teittinen

(2020:14), the extrinsic analysis in this thesis examines the dystopian perspective depicted through the character Dmitri Cimber in the film *The First Purge*.

1.7. Organization of the writing

The paper consists of the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the content, including the research background, research problems, objective of the study, previous research, and writing organization.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter contains the theoretical framework and research method used as a basis and guide for conducting research.

CHAPTER 3: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the result of the study based on the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the summary of the study result based on the data analysis.

REFERENCE