

**Dystopian: Resistance to Government Control in the Novel "Red Rising" by  
Pierce Brown**

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***Abstract***

*This study is entitled "Dystopian Resistance on Government Control in the Red Rising Novel by Pierce Brown". This study aims to discuss the main character's resistance to government control after all the discrimination and the inequality government regulation that Darrow experienced. Darrow is the main character from the Red class, which is the lowest class on this society. Darrow lost his wife because of the decision of the Government though Eo, Darrow's wife not being obedient to the ArchGovernor's Rules. Then, he realized the system that was created by the ArchGovernor is unfair treatment to the society and chose to resist by being the Gold the higher color classes. Darrow disguise as the Gold, observing their strength and weakness, stealing the gold's sympathy to be the leader and got the power to control the Gold to change the social class system. The essential passages were examined by using Dystopian Theory (Clayes, 2017) by using the qualitative method. The results show that the main character resists government control to fight for equality for the society and himself.*

**Keywords:** *dystopian, government control, resistance, equality*

**A. Introduction**

The novel entitled *Red Rising* (2014) is written by Pierce Brown. This novel represents social class that is divided into several colors with different social classes based on their work and expertise in certain fields. The story focused on a Miner in Mars named Darrow originated from lower classes that classify as Red. Darrow and the people in Red Class experience discrimination and unfair treatment in this novel. The Red is tricked, trapped and manipulated in a situation by the Gold. However, the Red unconsciously fulfill the Gold needs and other colors that have higher status to live a proper life up there. Darrow has lost lots of things because of the Gold, including his beloved wife, Eo. Ever since Eo passed away because the Gold sentenced her to

death, Darrow joined with a Son of Ares, a terrorist organization that has a desire to insurgence the caste system in Mars. Darrow has goals to destroy the social classes system that was created by the Gold, by disguising himself as the Gold. He tried to reach an important position in the Gold Governor, in order to create equality rules which do not harm anyone. This study focused on the unfair treatment that each class experienced that portray dystopian issues in this novel. The title of this study is “Dystopian Resistance to Government Control in *Red Rising* Novel by Pierce Brown”.

## **B. Method**

The approach used in this study is a qualitative method, which is based on information that has been obtained and collected. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008, p.4), it involves interacting with data (analysis) using techniques such as asking questions about the data, making comparisons between data, and so on, and in doing so, derives concepts to represent the data, then develops those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions. In interacting with data, analysts use thinking strategies. Each analyst has his or her own list of strategies—a useful technique for understanding data. This method focuses on descriptive data in written words or sayings of the actors being observed. Research This qualitative method is usually carried out in the midst of society to gain social understanding. Besides that, after getting the data, it will be continued by developing it through an explanation in an essay. This method usually aims to understand what is being observed and is generally used as scientific work. The data source of this study is a novel, *Red Rising* (2014) by Pierce Brown. The writer found a dystopian issue depicted in the novel. The writer chose the story because the issue of the story represents the dystopian world in a future

1. Reading the novel *Red Rising* by Pierce Brown and carefully getting data in the form of sentences or quotations containing character and conflict of the main character.
2. Identifying the object and underlining the important point which is classified to be data.
3. Taking a note on the data found.

The data that were collected are classified and analyzed using the Dystopian theory. After collecting the data, the writer accomplished the analysis by delivering the data through the problem of the study and concerning the data based on the findings. Thus, the writer finds out the data which identify Dystopia. After that, collecting data and matching with the theory that has been chosen. Finally, the writer analyze the conversation and connected with theory presented in an essay form.

## **C. Findings and Discussion**

### **1. The Portrayal of Dystopian Society in Red Rising**

Dystopian society in the story can be seen in the form of government control in terms of social media, misusing the social class and the discrimination by the higher class. The Government Control in this Red Rising novel depicts how the government's control treats Society unequally. The first form of government control is social media. The Red Classes are the one who are treated unfairly and also the poorest in the societies. It showed in the quotation below, "Not when the Society televised the arrest. Not when the Golds tried him. Not when the Grays hanged him." (Brown, 2014, p. 3) This quotation explains how the Government controls even Television. In this novel, the upper class is The Gold Class, and it shows how the Gold tried to control Society by giving them a threat, such as showing how much power they had to show the lower classes to be arrested and air it in the Television.

#### **1.1 Totalitarianism**

Totalitarianism is a form of government system to lead everything. Every individual or group that is under the auspices of the government, directly integrated by them, aims to centralize strength and power on one side. With repressive measures, this government forces everything under them and makes everyone depend on them as well as oppose others who have different goals and understanding. It makes them as totalitarian as an anti-opposition government system. With the sole power of the totalitarian, it is easier for them to achieve their goals. According to Claeys (2017), the term totalitarian revolutions were defined as little more than the 'power grab' of an ascendant new class. (p. 114). In this case, the government attempts to control every decision of the societies. Furthermore, it can be the media or communication monopoly and it causes the information for the society restricted or even worse the government can investigate any activities and it shows in the quotation below:

Even the youngest, even the best, are subject to Law. To Order! Without these we would be animals! Without obedience, without discipline, there would be no colonies! And those few colonies there are would be torn asunder by disorder! Man would be confined to Earth. Man would wallow forevermore on that planet until the end of days. But Order! Discipline! Law! These are things which empower our race. Cursed is the creature who breaks with these compacts. (Brown, 2014, p. 38)

The quotation above explains how the Gold wants the Society to live a life full of discipline and obey the rules or scenarios that the Golds made, without any refusal from any Colors. With the Gold's clout, the Gold wishes the control is in their hand on every rule, such as Law, Justice, and Rules. That shows how huge their influence and power are in Society. As well as, there are no other colors under the Gold who are brave enough to stop or change any decision they have made. Moreover, it tells in the following quotation: Government or someone privileged to be an upper class in this Society which in this novel is the Gold Classes, should have listened to any fidgetiness

that the other colors feel. The Gold could have solved the problem and lived together with Society without discrimination.

### **1.2 Abuse of Authority**

Abuse of authority is an action from the authority that is inconsistent and arbitrarily for the individual needs of a group and certain people. That causes the lower status people to be harmed due the power and control that the authority has is higher. In this novel, there is a lot of abuse of authority committed by the Gold against the lower color groups. Because the Gold has extensive and enormous power. It causes no color classes to stop the authority that the Gold has, including the Red. The Red has no power. Even the smallest amount of rules if the Red broke it, it causes a nightmare to them. And it can be seen in the quotation below:

They won't let us win the laurel ... it is just a demonstration of they're power. It is their power. They decided the winner. A game of merit won by birth. It keeps the hierarchy in place. It keeps us striving, but never conspiring.(Brown, 2014, p. 28)

The quotation above explains how Red's nightmare started with Laurel. The Laurel is the medal achievement from the Gold to one of the Red clans. As explained, the winner is already decided. It depicted how tremendous the Gold's power has, even the achievement itself only for the Red Class. Everything is already arranged by them, even the essential things.

## **2. The Main Character's Resistance towards Government Control in Red Rising**

Resistance is not just about war, carrying out rebellions, attacks, terror, and bloodshed on the battlefield. But there are still many things that can be the basis of resistance, The main character does the several actions to resist the government such as disguise to be the Gold, observe and learn their weaknesses and strength, stealing the gold's sympathy to be the leader and got the power and control from the Gold to change the social class system. The first actions that the main characters do is to be part of the thing that is the basis of where resistance occurs, "My body is becoming that of a Gold, one of the prime stock, not a Pixie, not a Bronze... My hands are freaks. They are smooth, tanned and dexterous, as any Gold's should be." (Brown, 2014, p. 92)

### **2.1. Resistance to Abuse of Authority**

After being at the Institute for so long, Darrow realized that it was not only students from other houses who were his opponents, but cheating and interference from the ArchGovernor who was the highest leader in the Gold clan. The Jackal is the son of the ArchGovernor who is also in the institute, he is given a lot of convenience in order to pass as a winner at the Institute because his father arranges all the games in this Institute. As contained in the quote below

A totalitarian will easily arrange everything under his command and get everything they want by all means. Not accepting by acting underhanded to arrange something dealing with them. From all layers of society led by a totalitarian, they can get every benefit from all of them based on what they do without exception. This makes Darrow's mission even more difficult, because all people in the Gold obey orders from their leaders, regardless of whether the orders are true or not, all they know is orders and orders must be obeyed. Proctor is a group formed by the Gold to become part of the supervisor for each student in their respective House. Darrow finds that the proctor also helped the Jackal to win the test at this institute. By using the politics of pitting one against the other, one can very easily divide allies without getting involved in the slightest, because after the opposing allies have been divided, it will be very easy to defeat him because his strength is reduced. Like what Proctor Apollo had done for Darrow and Cassius, Proctor Apollo gave Holo, a recording device that broadcast the events when Darrow killed Julian to divide the two of them:

His proctor gave it to him then. Guess that means the game is rigged. Suppose it doesn't matter to you that the Jackal is the ArchGovernor's son and that he's manipulating you into getting rid of me. (Brown, 2014, p. 260)

#### **D. Conclusion**

In this study, the author analyzed Dystopia Resistance on the main character. In the study of the novel of *Red Rising* by Pierce Brown. This study examined using dystopian theory (Claeys, 2017). This study reveals that Darrow's character explained the resistance caused by the unequal treatment by the Gold, the higher color classes as well known as the one who take in charge in society. From the analysis of the main character's, the dystopian first depicted because the Government Control. The power and status that the higher colour made the lower society in this case, the Gold become the leader between other colour classes, who known as Leader who promises the society for the better future. However, the Gold is being the exact opposite. They are manipulative and totalitarian. This action by the Gold causes the main character realizes on how discriminative the Gold. Since, Darrow's color classes, the Red sacrifices everything that they have, instead of a better future the Red got unpredictable future and forever slave for the higher color classes. Thus, it leads Darrow to resistance. Resistance is a form where the majority group oppressed and controlled the minority group, and it occurs when one of them incite a revolution. In this case, Darrow uses resistance to help the Red also the other color classes to live an equal life with a fair and no discrimination within one another by disguise being the Gold. Therefore, this leads to another answer to the problem statement, which is the main character resist the government control. The results explained that the main character experienced Dystopia Resistance because of the government control.

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