

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans in their creation are given two main attributes, the mind and the body. The body as we know it is the physical entity, the form humans possess to walk this world. It is material, tangible, and can grow in size. The other attribute, the mind, is the mental entity that embodies the physical one. It is infinite and private, as long the individual did not reveal what on his/her mind and nobody attempts to decode it. Mind and body are two distinct entities embodied in one subject, human. Both naturally depend on each other. The mind needs the body to express the thought, feelings, or emotions. Meanwhile, to be instructed the body needs mind. Without a mind, a body means nothing, it is dead. Our mind controls the body—not to confuse with brain, since it belongs to physical entity—because it is the place of consciousness, feelings, and emotions which will affect the body to do actions and behaviors (Skirry, n.d.).

Mind and body become places to build characteristics of an individual. Both struggle to create one's identity. The mind determines one's way of thinking, while the body determines the appearance. For example, when seeing a new person, most people usually judge him/her first by looking at his/her appearance. Thus, the body is free to 'observe', making it 'public' (Robinson, 2016). On the other side, to reveal the hidden realm of thought an attempt must be done first or maybe persuade the

person to express it by him/herself. Therefore, mind and body is a site to construct identity possessed by each individual.

Humans with their uniqueness are essentially different to each other. It is natural for humans to have different characteristics either physically, mentally, emotionally, or cognitively. Everyone was born unique. Each has experiences either from the activities in society or building relationship with people around them. Those acts create subjectivity to each individual. When people move from one place to another, they adapt to the new environment which would probably affect their subjectivity. The same thing could also happen to their identity. As one advances to the next life stage—for instance, becoming a parent—he or she must leave his or her old life for the child and could view the world differently (King, 2009).

Identity is constructed through interaction between individual and the environment. Each individual experiences different events which will make human to have different identity. When identity is forced, human's mind is created equal, and human is set to view things only from one perspective, the question of whether the modified individual is still called as a human arises. This phenomenon could possibly happen in the future where the world is technological-based, where humans depend very much on technology. Society would possibly out of control, therefore the government find a way to reach stability and tranquility. The advancement of technology is chosen to achieve it, by constructing the same identity to the people. The phenomenon occurs in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy and therefore became the reason why the writer chooses the series as the corpus of this research.

This research will analyze the role of body and mind as a site of identity construction in posthuman space in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy—*Uglies*, *Pretties*, and *Specials*—dystopian young adult novels. The trilogy set in the world where every 16-year-old must undergo an extreme surgery in order to be Pretties. Before the operation, the people were called Uglies, even though they were not literally ugly. Tally, our main character, was an Ugly who wanted to transform to a Pretty very much. Becoming a Pretty was an essential dream for all Uglies. Pretties can have whatever they want since the city provided it all. Young Pretties did not attend school nor have a job, only party and having fun all day and all night. In the authorities, they have Specials, the more extreme modified superhuman who protect the city from the inside or outside threat. To be a Special, one must undergo a more extreme surgery to reach the standard of highest level of human ability to do their job.

The series use posthuman setting in delivering the story and plot, which is interesting as the world today is heading toward it. Many science fiction works contain the element of posthuman where human and technology are inseparable. Featuring futuristic invention, science fiction works present imaginary advanced world that starts with the question “what if?”. Science fiction is about the prediction of what human do today will impact the future (Purkar, 2013). This idea would probably tickle reader's mind to become aware of what is happening around them. Although not all science fiction works set in the future, the genre becomes an evidence of unsatisfied human. Humans are eager to keep improving their life in order to reach the fullest satisfaction and capability.

In the series, human's body was modified as perfect as possible, erasing the flaws that the ordinary human has. The surgery apparently changed the way they live, their perspective, and their view of the world. Moreover, Pretties lived in a different place from Ugliers, called New Pretty Town. It automatically made them have a new identity, leaving their old 'self' behind. Since the city was equipped by highly sophisticated technology, it was obviously affect the subjectivity of the Pretties who were once Ugliers.

Several previous studies are included to support this research and to guide the writer in completing the research. Hamdan (2011) in her article *Human Subjectivity and Technology in Richard Morgan's Altered Carbon* found that human's body and mind must cooperate to create subjectivity, so Cartesian dualism can not be applied here. In this research, body and mind are separately analyzed and not only affecting the subjectivity, but also determining the characters' identity. Flanagan (2011) in her article *Girl parts: The female body, subjectivity and technology in posthuman young adult fiction* examined three narratives—*Ugliers* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* by Mary E. Pearson, and 'Anda's Game' by Cory Doctorow—to analyze how technology affects subjectivity on female bodies. While her research focuses only on female characters, this research is not limited in gender. A previous study regarding the corpus is taken from Rodriguez's *Recurrent Dystopian Themes in Scott Westerfeld's Novel 'Ugliers'*, which identify the dystopian elements of Westerfeld's *Ugliers*. The study support the writer in identifying posthumanity in the trilogy as it developed from the dystopian elements.

1.2 Research Question

From the introduction above regarding the issue contained in Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy, the writer came to one question:

How do body and mind play roles as sites of identity construction in posthuman space in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy?

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This research focuses on several characters—Tally, Shay, David, Andrew, and Dr. Cable—especially their body and mind including the places which affect them in a posthuman world in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This research aims to explore and examine the role of body and mind in constructing identity in a posthuman space in Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* trilogy.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this research could contribute in making students and other people outside the university aware and enhance their knowledge of the struggle of body and mind in constructing identity and the possibility of posthuman phenomena and its implication that could happen in the future.