

## **National Identity as the Arena of Constellations of Nationalism and De-Nationalism in American Dystopian Novels**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to dismantle how national identity becomes the arena of a constellation of Nationalism and de-nationalism in some dystopian fiction. The national identity described as a factor forming Nationalism is one of the fields of Nationalism and de-nationalism that always appears in American dystopian novels. A mutually beneficial two-way relationship between the state and the people is essential to build state nationalism. The fading of Nationalism as a result from government's oppressions was revealed by Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Westerfeld's *Uglies*, Collins's *The Hunger Games*, and Roth's *Divergent*. The main problem of this article is to find out how the national identity becomes the arena of constellations between Nationalism and de-nationalism. The significance of this study is to reveal the Nationalism and de-nationalism through the constellations of national identity through American dystopian novels. Using Derrida's deconstruction theory, the constellations appear in binary opposition as follows: country versus people; ruler versus society; regulation or oppression versus freedom; power versus weakness; independence versus dependence; intelligence versus stupidity; manipulative party versus receptive party; and global versus local. The main finding of this analysis is that the oppression and totalitarianism of the Government have eroded people's identity, which turns the sense of Nationalism to de-Nationalism.

*Keywords:* deconstruction, American dystopian novel, national identity, Nationalism, de-nationalism

**Cite as:** Sriastuti, A. (2020). National Identity as the Arena of Constellations of Nationalism and De-Nationalism in American Dystopian Novels. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies* 4 (3) 159-172. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol4no3.13>

## Introduction

National identity, as one of the elements forming Nationalism, should accommodate the sovereignty of the people as the most essential thing (Finlayson, 2014). As a critical element in the formation of patriotism, national identity should accommodate people's freedom and sovereignty. By using power relations between the Government and the people, where the Government is the authorizer, and the people are the recipients of the power that must obey the authorities, the identity used by the Government to its people is free, but an identity governed by the Government. In dystopian novels, the totalitarianism of the authorities makes aware of the character of Nationalism, who demand the obedience of the people or society to the Government or the authorities. The basis of dictatorship signifies the power relations between the state and people, which can indicate the power relations between police and the community, or the strong and the weak. This forced obedience gives birth to the rebellion of its citizens and it causes the fading of Nationalism of citizens to the Government or the state, as revealed in *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Uglies*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent*.

In the novel *Fahrenheit 451*, the identity of the community is built by a totalitarian government based on the doctrine of obedience. It means that if there are citizens who violate the rules and regulations, that person will not only lose his identity in society and be forced to live outside the community but he or she will also risk losing his life. The totalitarian state desires to create a culture that is fully submissive and uncritical because of absolute repression. The system carries out strict penalties through *Mechanical Hound* and firefighters. In that case, if someone reads a book or hides a book, firefighters will burn the books. Therefore, most citizens avoid reading books or do not believe that books are useful.

Similar to what is narrated by Bradbury, Atwood in *The Handmaid Tale* also reveals the totalitarianism of the authorities as a tool to shape the identity of the people. What distinguishes *The Handmaid's Tale* from *Fahrenheit 451* is that in *Fahrenheit 451* the Government manipulates the freedom and sovereignty of the people to maintain the obedience of its citizens, whereas in *The Handmaid's Tale*, religious dogmas regulate people's compliance. The Government uses Bible as a justification in every policy, and the basis for carrying out a sentence.

*Uglies*, in line with *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, also shares the Government's empowerment as a ruler against the powerlessness of the people or society. The Government, "Special Circumstances," oversee every member of its community and ensure their compliance with regulations. Like the two previous dystopian novels, *Uglies* also emphasizes the eliminating of an individual's identity into a collective or collective identity following with the provisions of the Government or ruler who demands the obedience of his people.

In the novel *The Hunger Games*, Collins shows an identity which demanding the adherence of its citizens to the rules of the Government or the authorities. This novel narrates sketch of the dominance and obedience of the police or the Government to all residents of the district. The relationship between the people and the Government is not harmonious because of the oppression or intense domination of the Government, which demands the obedience of its citizens. Panem, a

place in the future used to be called North America, is a place that rose from the ashes. The name Panem referred to “*Panem et Circenses*,” which translates to “Bread and Circus” has been used in Satires by the Roman poet, Juvenal, to refer to political tactics to buy the consent of the citizens, in return for bread and entertainment. Collins describes that the Capitol as a central city located in the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by 13 districts in Panem. The people in the Capitol live a prosperous life with a luxurious lifestyle, which is inversely proportional to life in all regions, where citizens are only able to survive on a little food every day.

Although at the beginning of the novel of *Divergent*, freedom is as if given by the Government, but the authorities regulate and determine the identity of the people in the *Divergent* book. Society is divided into characters into certain factions so that they will only master one area of expertise. This group identity regulation is carried out by the leader for the collective interest governed by the Government.

The research problem is the Government’s oppressions shown in the American dystopian novels have faded the national identity, as the citizens feels to live under intense controls and rules of totalitarian Government. Therefore, the research problem of this study is “How does national identity become the arena of a constellation of Nationalism and de-nationalism in American dystopian novels?” The aim of this study is to analyze how national identity becomes the arena of a constellation of Nationalism and de-nationalism in American dystopian novels of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Uglies*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent*. The analysis of national identity as the arena of the constellation of Nationalism and de-nationalism in American dystopian novels would use the Deconstruction theory. The analysis would consist of two sections: national identity based on the ruler’s totalitarianism and national identity based on limitation of knowledge and information.

## Literature Review

American dystopian novels become popular again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the world becomes more problematic. Researchers have made reviews, studies, or analysis about the novels. Ingimundardóttir (1990) wrote a thesis on “*You Are What You Cannot Eat: The Novel The Hunger Games as Social Criticism on the Issue of Hunger*.” She mentioned that the novel, *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, can be read as social criticism on the issue of hunger. The novel draws on a wide range of sources, both contemporary and historical, for inspiration, and utilizes the possibilities of the genre of dystopian fiction in order to shed light on the issue. Blokker in his thesis came up with a realisation that recently in America, there has been a surge in dystopian literature aimed at young adults (YA). One notable author following in Collins’s footsteps is Veronica Roth, who wrote the first novel of a trilogy, *Divergent*. With the “Divergent” trilogy the young Roth amassed popularity almost equal to that of Collins. Part of their great popularity is that both Roth and Collins use their dystopias to comment subtly on contemporary issues and problems.

Dystopia, in general, is also a criticism of existing social or political systems, either through critical examinations or utopian premises where conditions and policies relied on the imaginative expansion of such terms and policies into different contexts that reveal errors and contradictions:

Briefly, dystopian literature is specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. (Keith, 1994, p. 3)

After the First World War, dystopian themes become popular in literature as the people's confidence in the advancement of science and technology decline. The tyranny of governments bring misery to humanity. The literary genre of dystopia, exemplified by the works of Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, H. G. Wells, and Yevgeny Zamyatin, become popular reading for decades. *1984* by Orwell, *Fahrenheit 451* by Bradbury, *Brave New World* by Huxley, and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Atwood focus on cultural and social problems such as governmental surveillance, totalitarianism, and oppressive power structures and their potential effects on which the society turned a blind eye to them. Dystopian texts then attempt to rebel against the system, whether from a personal rejection of the power structure or in a way that directly stands up against the fabric and creates a new society (Fietto, 2016).

### **Nationalism and National Identity**

Nationalism is as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' (Smith, 1991:73). As an ideology, Nationalism promotes the interests of a particular nation, especially to gain and maintain the nation's sovereignty (self-governance) over its homeland. Nationalism holds that each country should govern itself, free from outside interference (self-determination), and that a country is a natural and ideal basis for a polity and that the land is the only legitimate source of political power or popular sovereignty (Naqvi, 1998). It further aims to build and maintain a single national identity. National identity is as a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a standard economy, and universal legal rights and duties for all members, the nation is a multidimensional concept. This ideal type that provides a standard or touchstone which concrete examples imitate in varying degrees (Smith, 1991). De-Nationalism is the term the writer used to express the eroding of Nationalism.

### **Method of Analysis**

The method of analysis in this article uses the deconstruction theory. A deconstruction is a form of criticism based on careful reading. A deconstruction suggests impossibility and unwillingness reproduce the meaning of the text (objective meaning) as desired and intended by the author. Derrida (1997) states that deconstruction is something that occurs from "in the text," looking for inconsistencies, contradictions, and inaccuracies in logic and the use of terms to deconstruct text. Derrida adds that the deconstructive reading method intends to express the signs

and meanings behind the book and emphasize the heterogeneity of the book. If a version refers out of itself, it must be another text, by creating a network of cross-cutting and extending to infinity, called intertextuality. With the expansion of the interface between these texts, the interpretation of the book also develops, so that no argument can claim itself as a ultimate interpretation or final meaning (Sarup, 2008). In analyzing the data, Derrida takes three steps of deconstruction; first using undecidability to find biased meaning or hierarchy metaphysics using the binary oppositions, second is postponing the definition (difference), and third finding new meaning. The implicit and explicit oppression of the authority in the totalitarian governments narrated in the dystopia novels aim to build strong Nationalism among the people. The Nationalism will be argued through deconstruction.

### **National Identity as the Ruler's Totalitarianism**

National identity, as one of the elements forming Nationalism, should accommodate the sovereignty of the people as the most essential thing (Finlayson, 2014). However, in dystopian novels, the authorities, who demand the obedience of the people or society to the Government or the authorities, clarify that dictatorship is part of the identity of Nationalism. The basis of totalitarianism signifies the power relations between the state and the people, between the police and the community, or between the strong and the weak. In *Fahrenheit 451*, doctrine of obedience built the identity of the population in a totalitarian Government. Confronting against the authority can cause an identity loss in society and be out of the group or system and forced to live outside the community. The totalitarian Government desires to create a culture that is fully submissive and uncritical because of absolute repression.

In the world of Montag, a firefighter, Bradbury built a blurred identity for Montag. The firefighter ignites fire to burn the books, rather than put out the fire. "It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed (Bradbury, 1983, p. 1)." The authorities have the power to regulate or control society, and the people must obey the rules and control of the Government or the police. Guy Montag, a firefighter, dedicates his life to burn books owned by the people in their house because of the Government regulations, which state that the act of reading is considered illegal and dangerous. Because of his submissiveness, Montag never questioned why a firefighter did not extinguish but instead ignited the fire. However, since his appearance and interaction with Clarisse, a 17-year-old teenager who thinks critically and questions things that have been considered reasonable by the community, Montag has finally become aware that something is happening in his society. When Clarisse asked Montag, "Is it true that long ago the firemen put fires out instead of going to start them?" (Bradbury, 1983, p. 6). Montag reflects on what he has done as a firefighter. "I've tried to imagine, said Montag, just how it would feel. I mean to have firemen burn our houses and our books." (Bradbury, 1983, p. 31). This awareness appears to be stronger when he sees how someone is trying to protect his books even though he was burned to death along with the books. Burning alive is a punishment imposed by the Government for the citizens who disobey the law by keeping books in their homes (Bradbury, 1983).

Montag, who witnessed how disobedience ended in death, began to think there was something hidden behind the system that had been considered the most correct. "There must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing" (Bradbury, 1983, p. 48). Montag realized that it would be impossible for someone to sacrifice his life if it were not for something he was worth fighting to. It was at this time that Montag realized that the identity he had believed was his identity, was an identity built by the ruler for him. The Government attaches the identity of books burners to Montag and the other firefighters as their responsibility for the work. The paper burning action is illegal, even if in response, the bookkeeper must also kill the book owners who do not obediently submit their papers. Montag's starts to doubt his identity as a book burner as his true identity, especially after he had witnessed for himself how he and his group had burned an older woman who was trying to protect her books. "We burned an old woman with her books." (Bradbury, 1983, p. 32). Montag's distrust in government control made Montag realize that he had never had a choice in life. Montag only lived what was revealed by his predecessors as obedience, without ever questioning anything previous (Bradbury, 1983).

Same like Bradbury, Atwood in *The Handmaid Tale* also used the dictatorship of the authorities as a tool to shape the people's identity. What distinguishes *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Fahrenheit 451* is the Government manipulates the freedom and sovereignty of the people to maintain the willingness of its citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*. Whereas in *Handmaid's Tale*, religious dogma controls people's obedience. The obedient identity follows the rules of extremist Christian theology, where the order of life relies on a literal fundamentalist interpretation of the Old Testament. The Bible is used as a justification in every policy, as well as the basis for carrying out a sentence. "They can hit us, there's a Scriptural precedent." (Atwood, 1985, p. 19).

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, women are separated from their families and given new identities as *Handmaid*. Women used their wombs as tools to produce offspring for their wives and commanders in Gilead.

And I for him. To him I am no longer merely a usable body. To him, I am not just a boat with no cargo, a chalice with no wine in it, an oven - to be crude - minus the bun. To him, I am not merely empty. (Atwood, 1985, p. 127)

Thus, despite the pressure, the coercion of these women as instruments of birth seems to be the right thing because giving birth is a natural obligation of women. These deprived women lose their rights because they were forced to get pregnant through intercourse with men in exchange for birth and gave delivery to babies, who later belong to the infertile wives of male officials, no longer considered necessary.

It's the usual story, the usual story. God to Adam, God to Noah. Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. Then comes the moldy old Rachel and Leah stuff we had drummed into us at the Center. Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God's stead, who hath

withheld from the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And so on and so forth. (Atwood, 1985, p. 73)

The Bible is used by authorities to shape the identity of their people. The Commander always reads some chapters from the Bible at the beginning of 'ceremony' to legitimize his actions of having sex with the women in front of his wife. Rules in favor of men show the strong identity of patriarchy in *The Handmaid's Tale's* society. Women are not allowed to read, write, have opinions or private agencies (Atwood, 1985). The Government divide women according to the colors of their dress, not by names, as the women do not own their own names anymore. They become the commander's property by adopting their first name after "Offred" or "Offglen". The identity of handmaids is blurred because they don't wear their own identity.

My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden. I tell myself it doesn't matter, your name is like your telephone number, useful only to others; but what I tell myself is wrong, it does matter. (Atwood, 1985, p. 94)

In Gilead society, compliance with regulations applies to everyone, under the strict supervision of The Eyes. If someone does something wrong in Gilead, he will be punished or killed brutally. The Government uses the violence to frighten residents into obedience; for example, the person will be hung publicly for others to see (Atwood, 1985).

Westerfeld in *Uglies* also shows that obedience to the Government is essential in forming the national identity. In *Uglies* society, the status determined by this obedience depends on the social norms; that is, how a person can enter the group or remain outside the group. Therefore, all citizens must comply with undergoing plastic surgery procedures, which will change one's physical appearance to be ideal. Somebody will leave his old identity as an Ugly who lives in Ugly Ville, becomes a Pretty who lives in New Pretty Town. Plastic surgery is mandatory when a teenager has a sixteenth birthday. Although the purpose of the ruler looks good, namely that everyone will have a perfect physical appearance. "There was a certain kind of beauty, a prettiness that everyone could see. Big eyes and full lips like a kid's; smooth, clear skin; symmetrical features; and a thousand other little clues" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 16). However, in the process of plastic surgery, people get lesions or defects in brain cells. "I found that there were complications from the anesthetic used in the operation. Tiny lesions in the brain. Barely visible, even with the best machines" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 265). With this lesion, citizens no longer have any desire but to have fun. The Government has absolute sovereignty to govern the Government, without any intervention from the citizens. "Maybe the reason war and all that other stuff went away is that there are no more controversies, no disagreements, no people demanding change" (Westerfeld, 2005, p. 267).

By requiring someone to undergo plastic surgery and turn off their desires, every citizen in the *Uglies* community loses his or her identity because the Government regulates a dictated shared identity or collective identity. In other words, the Government eliminates individual character, but it forces the collective characters. Because of this attached new identity, a person who has

undergone surgery and turned into a 'beauty' no longer recognizes himself, his desires, dreams, and even breaks with his past. He moved from one world to another, from Ugly-Ville to New Pretty Town. This transfer does not only mean women mobility from one place to another, but it also means a change in a person's identity; from a free person to a person who complies with government decisions. *"I'm sick of the rules and boundaries. The last thing I want is to be some empty-headed new pretty, having one big party all day.* (Westerfeld, 2005: 83)"

Same with *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Uglies* also shares the Government's empowerment against the people's powerlessness. The Government, who calls themselves Special Circumstances, oversees every member of its community to ensure their compliance with regulations. However, there is a group of people who are critical and brave. They try to maintain their identities by fleeing to the mountains. Through the character of Shay and other teenagers who did not want to lose their status because of plastic surgery, they had to go through, so they fled to an area in the mountains, The Smoke. Shay hates the disintegration of her identity; she did not consider herself strange. She also understood that during the operation, the doctors did what they wanted without questioning each person's wishes of beauty. Unlike Tally, who at the beginning of the story seems to idolizing plastic surgery to turn her ugly self into a beauty, Shay rejects the ideology of her community and claims that the whole game is only designed to make us hate ourselves. *"We're ugly. This whole game is just designed to make us hate ourselves* (Westerfeld, 2005: 82)." By living independently outside the reach of the government, they can live freely and use nature according to their needs. *"Our minds are fine,"* "Maddy answered, *"But we want to start a community of people who didn't have the lesions , people who were free of pretty thinking* (Westerfeld, 2005: 92)." The Government considers these people as the rebels because of their rebellion. Therefore, these rebels deserve to get the punishment by the Government.

Thus, like the two previous dystopian novels, *Uglies* also emphasized the eliminating of an individual's identity into a collective or collective identity following the provisions of the Government or ruler who demanded the obedience of his people. Collins also shows in her novel, *The Hunger Games*, that an identity formed by demanding the adherence of its citizens to the rules of the Government or the authorities. This novel shows the dominance and obedience of the authorities or the Government to all residents of the district. The relationship between the people and the government is not harmonious because of the oppression or intense domination of the Government, which demands the obedience of its citizens. Panem, which is a place in the future that used to be called North America, is a place that: rose from the ashes, Panem. The people in the Capitol live a prosperous life with a luxurious lifestyle.

If anything, they have not quite captured the magnificence of the glistening buildings in a rainbow of hues that tower into the water, the shiny cars that roll down the wide paved streets, the oddly dressed people with bizarre hair and painted faces who have never missed a meal. All the colors seem artificial. (Collins, 2008: 59)

Life in the Capitol is inversely proportional to life in all districts, where citizens are only able to survive on a little food every day. *"District Twelve. Where you can star to death in safety"* (Collins,

2008, p. 7). The irony is that all the luxuries of living in the Capitol are the result of draining all the resources, industry, and agriculture of the entire districts. Giving a small ration for the survival of its citizens, the Government wants to make sure that the citizens can work to continue depositing the Capitol. The Capitol demands compliance of citizens in all districts on every policy and regulation made by the Capitol. The Government takes control over compliance in various ways, ranging from placing peacemakers in each region to monitoring district residents. The control also includes giving penalties for violations of district residents, putting surveillance cameras and electric fences around the region, and requiring two teenagers from each district to participate in matches “The Hunger Games” are held every year.

The Government in Panem banishes the freedom of the people of the district and demands their obedience by binding in an authoritarian way. Under the pretext that there will be no more rebellions like in the past and as a punishment that the Government can never tolerate, the district people are not only physically abused by providing necessities in a minimalist manner, but are also bound psychologically, by watching their children fight and die in ‘The Hunger Games’ match (Collins, 2008). ‘The Hunger Games’ has been lasting for seventy-four years, which means that during this time, the people of the district live in difficult and threatening situations. By taking teenagers to fight in the competition, the Panem Government showed two things: the government had full power over its people and the Government requires total obedience from the people. If a region dares to oppose the Government because of dissatisfaction with this decision, the Government will destroy it as it destroys District 13 (Collins, 2008).

President Snow's totalitarian Government paid substantial attention to the philosophy of power to consolidate its grip on the development of various events. The annual competition provides the best platform to polarize people's attention with a clear message that there is no such thing as freedom and justice. The Government applies the power mechanism, that believe in enforced discipline policies. That is why “The Hunger Games” serves politics. Panem State is run by an iron fist, so the Government demands the extract obedience from people not to rebel against the regime. Thus, the identity in the novel *The Hunger Games* is governed by the government based on people's willingness to the Government. There is no personal identity. There is a collective identity that is the ruler who has power over the people and all the wealth in the Panem state, and the people who are oppressed and must obey all government decisions and policies.

As in other dystopian novels, in *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Uglies*, the consequence of disobedience is punishment. What distinguishes it from previous books, at *The Hunger Games*, Collins emphasizes that the authority of the absolute power. Whereas in previous books, the Government only applies the punishment to the lower classes of society, Collins demonstrates the Government's absoluteness by imposing penalties on all the people, both those who lived in the districts and those who lived in the Capitol. People who live in the Capitol have the opportunities to live a better and more luxurious life than people who live in the district, but if there are violations of the rules will still be subject to sanctions.

Different from the other four dystopia novels, Roth in *Divergent* opened her book by explaining about the strength of identity and the freedom to express personality through 'The Choosing Ceremony,' which is a ceremony in which teenagers have the right to determine their own status by choosing a faction that suits their wishes. The *faction* will be their home, residence, and lifetime (Roth, 2008). By giving freedom to choose their faculties, every member of the community in *Divergent* seems to have the freedom to live according to the desired identity. However, by only giving room to its citizens to submit to the choice of one faction that is following its characteristics, the Government in *Divergent* shows that every citizen must obey the rules made. *Divergent* itself in the novel refers to people who have more than one personality that stands out, so there is no faction that suits them. However, to be accepted by the community, the *Divergent* are forced to obey the applicable regulations, this, hiding their multi-character identity and abilities, and mingling in one faction.

The identity imposed by the Government on its citizens undermines Nationalism of citizens to the Government or the state. In American dystopian novels, such as *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid Tale*, *Uglies*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent*, the identity of the people or people are regulated and determined by the Government. Citizens who do not have freedom and are required to comply with the character imposed on them, fail to maintain Nationalism in an authoritarian state or Government. Their nationalist attitude turned de-nationalist. In the novel, narrated resistance and rebellion by the main characters and other characters in the book to maintain their identity, as well as to look for opportunities to fight or escape from the system to build a new government, as told by Bradbury in *Fahrenheit 451*, Westerfeld in *Uglies*, and Collins in *The Hunger Games*.

### **National Identity on the Limitation of Knowledge and Information**

National identity as a factor forming Nationalism, places the people's sovereignty, as an essential element. A sovereign people are free and independent people. However, in dystopian novels in America, national identity narratives are based on restrictions imposed by the state or authorities on the people or society by blocking knowledge, space, and information. As a result of this restriction, the state or ruler is a intelligent, independent, empowered, global, and manipulative party. At the same time, the people are stupid, dependent, helpless, local, and receptive.

Ray Bradbury, in *Fahrenheit 451* depicts an imaginary world that depicts a future that curbs the development of knowledge and imagination by burning books. Community identity is identic with ignorance and ignorance, so people are receptive, and do not realize that they are under government manipulation. In this dystopian novel society, firefighters are tasked with burning books to curb the imagination, curiosity, and creativity of their people. Therefore, the Government can maintain absolute power and exercise total control over citizens. Thus, the totalitarian state hinders the blossoming of knowledge and imagination because it is harmful to the culture of conformity. After all, individuals can imagine a different world and rebel against the system or state. In this case, any book that upsets an individual, the primary solution is to destroy it by burning. If oppressed people don't like books like Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899), the authority burns it down. If white people don't feel comfortable with *Uncle Tom's*

*Cabin*, it destroys them (Bradbury, 1983). The burning of these books is because the state does not want people to get information about such books. Thus, the Government intends that people do not complicate their minds with these unnecessary books because the Government convinces the people that these books bring nothing but confusion to the society (Bradbury, 1953).

In *Fahrenheit 451* the education system was criticized by Clarisse because it functions only for the benefit of the authorities or the system. After all, the School did not educate children to get a critical perspective. By giving happiness as Captain Beatty meant, the order or the police take the opportunity to imagine other systems outside the existing system, and to expand the knowledge that can open the imagination to critical thinking. Instead, the Government trains the students to be passive so that they are not aware of the miserable condition that surrounds them. Moreover, children are collected and not allowed to express their thoughts and opinions. Instead, they were given one hour of TV class, one hour of baseball, basketball, running, and one hour painting pictures (Bradbury, 1983).

School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts? (Bradbury, 1983, p. 53)

These sayings show his growing dissatisfaction with the whole system as he seeks intellectual sophistication in such a repressive atmosphere. In this dystopian atmosphere, citizens are guarded in mind control through censorship and conditioned not to approach books when they internalize their hatred. The authorities fear that imagination and knowledge will influence the community to describe all books as dangerous and vicious as a sharp weapon (Bradbury, 1983). Knowledge obtained through books is considered a threat to the totalitarian state and its stability. Therefore, the Government manipulates and deems the books to have no significance other than just fiction or things that cause chaos (Bradbury, 1983).

Apart from censoring educational material, the education system does not allow children to ask their blunt, critical attitude. If children are not critical to ask questions, the potential for the overall progress of the community does not exist, leading to a society with submissive and uncritical individuals. School's intention is to tire children so that they are tame, but the frustration felt by young children is expressed in their "pleasure" outside of School, which always turns into violence.

Sometimes I'm ancient. I'm afraid of my children. They kill each other. My uncle says his grandfather remembered when children don't kill each other. But that was a long time ago when they had different things. They believed in responsibility, my uncle says. (Bradbury, 1983, p. 27-8)

Asking questions is a prerequisite for development, social, cultural, and intellectual. Still in this dystopian novel by Bradbury, the critical attitude is removed so that knowledge and truth can be

manipulated for the benefits of the state and the identity of individuals or society is fully regulated by the state. Community does not have the freedom to know or express their thoughts, opinions, or personalities.

The book-burning seen by Offred, the main character in this novel, hints at the censorship of knowledge that took place in the community told by Atwood in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. What distinguishes the story *Fahrenheit 451*, in *The Handmaid's Tale* even though censorship of books occurs, people can still access knowledge, before finally this is prohibited by the authorities. The authorities regulate books, magazines, films, and television broadcasts. They only allow access to knowledge for the benefits of the authorities. Despite the situation in Gilead, where the story unfolded, it became worse for everyone, but women experienced oppression under the dominance of the patriarchal system. As a *Handmaid*, Offred does not have access to books or magazines, because books or magazines are considered able to provide nostalgia for their past, and knowledge of other lives outside their world, which is feared to be able to fade their obedience to the authorities. Furthermore, the authorities only expose knowledge or information that benefits the authorities and legalizes the oppression of the police over women. The authorities always emphasize the main role and identity of *The Handmaid* is as a baby container (Atwood, 1985). To legitimate the Government's intention, the police keeps reminding *the Handmaid* the story in the Bible about the slave girls who give birth to babies for their master's family.

By blocking access to knowledge and directing knowledge according to the interests of the authorities the authorities control the identity of *the Handmaids*. In the absence of access to the outside world, *the Handmaid* depend totally on the policies of the authorities. These women were silenced, oppressed, and manipulated. Referring to the story of the first woman who committed a sin of eating the forbidden fruit, the authorities force these women to believe that women are sinners. The only way to purify themselves is by giving birth. "The Fall was a fall from innocence to knowledge" (Atwood, 1985, p. 152). Their identity is the producer of babies for rich men to give offspring to them (Atwood, 1985).

The limitation of knowledge displayed by Bradbury in *Fahrenheit 451* and Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, also raised by Westerfeld in *Uglies*. Lacking in public knowledge about what is happening around them lures the identity of community in the *Uglies*. The ruler, *Special Circumstance*, closes access to expertise by giving insight or wrong to education in schools, banning the production of print media and destroying books and magazines, and computerizing everything, so that the Government can track everything easily. In *Uglies*, the authorities educate the younger generation to discredit the old generation, which they call *Rusties*, because these *Rusties* have destroyed the earth by burning trees and exploiting the natural resources.

The three dystopian novels, *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Uglies*, represent the five primary data available, narrating the limitations imposed by the authorities, namely by blocking access to knowledge and information. With no access to education and information, the authorities can manipulate the society easily. They do not have their own status, because the status they wear is an identity that is regulated and controlled by the authorities. A society without access

to authorization is a society that is foolish, passive, submissive, and dependent on rulers who are manipulative, intelligent, and powerful.

### Conclusion

As one crucial element in the formation of Nationalism, national identity should refer to the people's freedom and sovereignty. As it is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a strong Nationalism gives people space to maintain the nation's sovereignty over their homeland, freedom of identity, and will encourage every citizen to be nationalistic to the Government or the state. The Nationalism grows strongly because there is a mutually beneficial two-way relationship between the country and the people. Namely, the people are free and sovereign of their choices, and this freedom and sovereignty are essential to build state Nationalism. Coercion of people's freedom and sovereignty affect people's obedience to the Government. However, this obedience does not guarantee a sense of patriotism from the people. The aim of this study is to answer the research question on how national identity becomes the arena of constellations between Nationalism and de-nationalism through American dystopian novels.

Bradbury in *Fahrenheit 451*, Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Westerfeld in *Uglies*, Collins in *The Hunger Games*, and Roth in *Divergent* reveal the matters of obedience and Nationalism. By using power relations between the Government and the people, where the Government is the authorizer, and the people are the recipients of the power that must obey the authorities, the identity used by the Government to its people is free, but an identity governed by the Government. The blocking of knowledge and information also contributes to uneasiness in society. This forced obedience gave birth to the rebellion of its citizens. It caused the fading of Nationalism of citizens to the Government or the state, as revealed in *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Uglies*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent*. The oppression and totalitarianism of the Government have eroded people's identity, which turns the sense of Nationalism to de-Nationalism.

### Acknowledgment

This article is funded by BUDI-DN LPDP. This article contains partial issues from the dissertation with tentative title "Deconstruction of America Ideology through American Dystopia Novels". Sincere gratitude is addressed to Prof. Dr. Ida Rochani Adi as Promotor and Muh. Arif Rokhman, M.Hum., PhD as Co-Promotor.

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