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The Loss of Freedom in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*

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ABSTRACT

This novel represents there is a world with no pain or suffering, all people are living in a protective environment. The novel is portrayed as creative, astonishing, elegant and perfect surroundings. Ordinary people may fantasize their life how to live a perfect life, but the reality is the people's intention depends upon making life satisfying. In this novel, Jonas lives in a world where everything is destined and under the control. Everything is predicted and pre-planned for everyone. If the people break the rules, they are immediately released from the community. The word 'release' is making someone forcibly die without any mercy. Everything is the same in this community and with the people who live in its surroundings. There is no usage of a word in this community named 'differences'.

Keywords: Environment, rules, people, life.

Science fiction is the future life of the universe. It consists of imaginative things that fascinate the whole universe like time travel, space travel, advanced technologies, scientific research so on. It is often denoted as 'Sci-fi' which means imagination within scientific studies. Science

fiction is absolutely creative and mesmerized the world in fiction. The reader fantasizes about a new world while reading science fiction novels like *Frankenstein (1818)* by Mary Shelley, *Nineteen Eighty-Four(1949)* by George Orwell, *The Time Machine (1895)* by H. G. Wells,

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The Martian (2015) by Andy Weir, and so on (English 2002). Likewise in movies, the Science fiction bewildered the people in *Avatar*, *24*, *2.0*, *Enthiran*, *Tik TikTik*, *IndruNetruNalai*, and so on. These experiences fascinated us to live in another world with thoughts beyond our nature. This includes inventions, discoveries, and scientific developments in the future.

Science fiction gives the taste of fantasy, magic, and supernatural which creatively lied to satisfy our impression of illusion. *The Oxford English Dictionary* cites the reference to "Science-Fiction" from 1851, the term credited to the American editor Hugo Gernsback, who first used "scientification" in the magazine, *Amazing Stories* (1926)(Hastings, 44). Science fiction is admired by both adults and children. It is most welcomed by the children to their creative world. This genre was very much popular in the 1950s, with the development of the scientific field, technologies like nuclear energy and space research, and atomic bombs in World War times. This incident gives the idea of space, science, dystopia, weapons, military forces, and so on. Science fiction writers intend to develop technical aspects to predict future development and technological changes. These technological developments intrigue the readers to smell future world developments. The major theme in science fiction lies in space travel, time travel, and Utopia/Dystopia. Utopia means an imaginative world with a happy ending. On the other hand, Dystopia is also an imaginative world but ends in unhappiness. Both Utopia and Dystopia explore social and political structures. Dystopian fiction has dealt with larger issues such as environmental and technological inventions for years. The growth of literature has increased in several works honored with Newbery Award, the highest honor for American Children's literature, among them Madeleine L' Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*(1962), Robert C. O' Brien's *Mrs. Frisby*

and the Rats of NIMH(1971), and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993).

Lois Lowry is an American writer very popular in the genre of Children's and Young Adult Literature. She is well known for writing about highly difficult subject matters, dystopian communities, and complex themes for young readers. Her notable works are *The Giver Quartet* (*The Giver*, *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger*, and *Son*), *Number the Stars*, and *Rabble Starkey*. She won Newbery Medal and National Jewish Book Award in 1990 for *Number the Stars* and again Newbery Medal in 1994 for *The Giver*. Then she received the Margaret Edwards Award from the American Library Association for her contributions to writing for young adults in 2007. She got numerous awards which stimulated her to write many Children's book series, memoirs, Novels, etc. Though *The Giver* (1993) is considered one of the most challenging books in America, the book has held a unique position in Young Adult Literature. In 2014, *The Giver* named film was directed by Phillip Noyce, and *The Willoughbys* (2020) an animated film adapted by the same name from the book released on Netflix and narrated by Ricky Gervais. Young Adult Literature emerged in the 20th century and was adopted by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). It upgrades the young minds' knowledge of societal changes.

Lois Lowry captures every young reader with a fantabulous writing style. She strongly insists the world the price of individuality and advised young readers that there is no perfect world only adjustment and convenience give asatisfactory life to people. Lowry tried to show the perfect life to readerslike Utopia. Later, she accepts that nothingis perfect in this universe; there is a flaw in it. Gottlieb says that "each dystopian society contains within it seeds of a utopian dream". The dystopian society is intended to create happy

memories and a better society but the suppression struggle the people from reality.

The novel *The Givers* says an important message to people that in this world, people's first priority is independent choices in their life. If freedom of choice fails, even a perfect and unique world can't give a satisfactory life to people. This novel represents there is a world with no pain or suffering, all people are living in a protective environment. The novel is portrayed as creative, astonishing, elegant and perfect surroundings. Ordinary people may fantasize their life how to live a perfect life, but the reality is the people's intention depends upon making life satisfying. In this novel, Jonas lives in a world where everything is destined and under the control. Everything is predicted and pre-planned for everyone. If the people break the rules, they are immediately released from the community. The word 'release' is making someone forcibly die without any mercy. Everything is the same in this community and with the people who live in its surroundings. There is no usage of a word in this community named 'differences'. The dresses, housing units, food, and children (one girl, one boy), all are the same for every family in this community. Here, the author is strongly against 'Sameness' which blows the people to systematic life, and their hope of learning new things is left in vain. There is no war or collaboration, neither happiness nor sadness, all are considered as same. Jonas is hired as the "Receiver of Memories" who receives all the past memories of people. He receives all the past memories from the elder receiver named The Giver. He is an old man who had a lot of books on his bookshelf. In this community, except the receivers others don't have the right to read books. Both the receivers faced an unbearable burden, tragic pain, sorrow, and also happiness. Jonas realizes that this community is trying to be happy, but it is not at all. Through his task of

becoming a Receiver, he discovers the meaning of love, pain, frustration, a lot of colors other than black and white, climate changes, adventures, the beauty of nature etc.

Jonas didn't like the lifestyle in this community and he felt isn't worth living and entirely useless. When he breaks the rules and takes up the adventurous journey, his experiences give an uncountable pleasure and satisfaction. He didn't like the predicted and systematic life for everything. He feels exhaustion, appetite, love for the first time. While he travels, he like climate changes like snow, rainbow, etc. This book presents in the confusion stage; there won't be any perfect ending. The author left the ending to readers to imagine the perfect solution to this novel. When Jonas realizes that there must be a change, the dark secrets of the system should reveal and the action must reunite in the right path. He thought at the beginning this community gives pleasure and the people are living in a utopian universe but he found later, it resembles a dystopian society full of unsatisfied life. Jonas notes that

"[t]here were only two occasions of release which were not punishment. Release of the elderly... and release of a new child" (Lowry).

Though the decision may be reasonable to this fiction it is against nature. In this world, old people dead after they have lived their life fully and well but in this novel, they are forcibly released (dead) from this community. The elders who are planning to get released from this community; still they are mentally healthy and eager to be active in this society. There is no reason to release them, other than the committee's desire that they deemed no benefit for the useless unproductive members if they cannot continue to fulfill the task they were assigned to. New children are released if they do not develop according to the expectations and standards of the Nurturers. Gabriel, a small child

saved from death, is considered a problematic case because he needs more care and time than the other babies. The Chief Elder created all the people without feelings and emotions which makes them do sinful doings without any hesitations. Lowry insists the major issue is that all people have the right to live in this world. This society is not only destined for healthy people, but it is also a compatible zone for all living beings.

This novel brought out the difficult subject of infanticide, mercy killing, and child suicide. This book is absolutely not meant for children because the children who get depressed can't overcome this pain. The theme of this novel clearly represents freedom, the right to make their own choice, individuality, free precision of language, and living a colorful life that is worth to be live. People should live with their own choices without any restrictions. It will lead the society remains as Utopia. The research suggest that the sacrifice comes from self-interest not forced.

Sacrifice refers to behaviour (i.e., behaviour that departs from direct self-interest), cost refers to psychological experience (i.e., feeling that an event is unpleasant). (Van Lange et al., 1997; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999)

CONCLUSION

This novel examines the conflicts of no freedom of choice and self-identity, all the people should lead and live with the assignment allotted by The

Chief Elder. If people violated the rules, they are forcibly released from the community. Jonas is the only person who has feelings and is permitted to disobey the rules. He guides the people on the right path with the help of the elder receiver named The Giver. This world is destined to live for all. There are no prejudices to living for certain community people. No one is considered superior or inferior to others. In this society, all of them can live their life without any restrictions. Science fiction is for raising technological development to unite society and absolutely not for departing between technology and humanity. That is how the novel depicts the theme of loss of freedom in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*.

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