

A Review Paper on the Selected Research of *The Giver*

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Abstract: *The Giver* was first published in 1993 and was well-received by many global readers of all ages. The ruling party eliminates pain, war, and differences, so the society in *The Giver* appears to be perfect at first. Even in such an unrealistic world, flaws begin to emerge as the story progresses. *The Giver*, like many other dystopian novels, depicts a society in which people's lives are governed in every way by the community. This paper will look at current research work on how some scholars analyze *The Giver's* society, especially how manipulation and suppression occur in the community. This review paper is a compilation of existing work on *The Giver*, intending to synthesize some of the currently published works. The extension study on *The Giver* will be known by probing the currently applicable workshops on *The Giver*.

Key Words: *The Giver*, Manipulation, Suppression, Current Studies.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Giver was written from the point of view of Jonas who is an eleven-year-old boy living in a futuristic society where all pain, fear, war, and hatred have been eliminated. It is a world of black and white because colors are also relinquished. Only the *Giver* and the Receiver can see colors while all other citizens sacrificed experiencing colors to achieve the concept of sameness. No one in Jonas' community has a last name because each family unit is assigned by the controlling government. Furthermore, each family unit is restricted to having no more than two children: a boy and a girl.

Because jobs are chosen at the twelve Ceremonies, there is little competition in *The Giver's* society. The Elders oversee each child from the age of three to eleven and decide on their occupations. Each person is required to complete a certain number of volunteer hours at various jobs throughout the community. While observing the child completing their volunteer hours, the committee of Elders records their performance, skill level, aptitude, and behaviors. In contrast to other children's assignments, Jonas is chosen as the next Receiver of the memory because of his ability to see beyond.

In Jonas' community, language is also regulated, and each citizen is required to use "precise language." The instructor corrected Asher when he used the word "distracted" to describe salmon viewing. Language can never express exactly what people intend it to. Euphemism is prevalent in *The Giver*. The community uses the term "release" to refer to the execution of elderly people, lawbreakers, and weak infants. People in *The Giver's* community also respond in unison, which is another language feature. When Asher apologizes for being late, the class robotically responds, "we accept your apology, Asher." (Lowry, 1993, p. 10) People's lives are constantly monitored. Every location in the community has a loudspeaker in or near them at all times. As a result, if a citizen violates the rules, the speaker is immediately notified. In the story, Jonas is indirectly chastised over the announcements for taking an apple home from the recreation area, which is against the rule of the community.

The Giver has received so much acclaim since it was first released in 1993, selling millions of copies worldwide. In 1994, the book won the prestigious Newbery Prize and the Regina Medal from the Catholic Library Association, among

others. In 2014, a film adaptation was released and nominated for Favourite Dramatic Movie. Like many other dystopian fictions, *The Giver* cannot escape dealing with a problematic society that is designed to be perfect. Readers must look beyond the plot and find out what the book reveals.

This paper attempts to provide an overview of the current research that has been conducted on *The Giver* and to summarize the ideas that have been proposed by other researchers. This will add information to the existing pool of studies of *The Giver*. A few works are selected to be reviewed in this article.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Setyorini and Idris (2017) discuss the use of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) in *The Giver*. It demonstrates how ISA is used as a tool to maintain complete control over *The Giver's* community. Setyorin and Idris argue that the training system is one of the most effective tools for cultivating ideology because it teaches people how to perceive the world and acquire knowledge. Training is mandatory for all citizens in *The Giver*, beginning at a young age. The community has specific regulations and training for each age group that they must complete before moving on to the next stage of training. It is illustrated, "This year you get to start your volunteer hours. And remember last year, when you became happy to get your front-buttoned jacket? (Lowry, 1993, p.40)." Jonas, the protagonist of the story, is reminding his younger sister about the training that she is about to receive. In the preceding text, he also explains the community stages. Even if Jonas is selected to be the next Receiver of the memory, he is required to go through the training of receiving memories of the past. As the Giver's next successor, Jonas must follow certain rules, such as not disclosing the training to anyone else, including his family members. According to Setyorini and Idris (2017), the ruling committee established language rules as a tool for manipulation. All citizens must use "precise language" when describing things. As Jonas' mother in *The Giver* comments, "the community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language" (Lowry, 1993, p.12). At the beginning of the story, Jonas struggles to find the right word to describe his feeling when he thinks about the ceremony. It is known that people in the community are shielded away from many words. The community is also attempting to conceal the true nature of killing by using the term "release". Children who have not met the weight standard as well as the elders will be sent "elsewhere".

Similar to Setyorini and Idris's article, Roozeboom (2017) also suggests that The Giver's community uses language ideology as a tool for suppression. She mentions that the name-assigning ceremony shows that the Committee has the overall power to delegate the language. To cover the nature of death, the community uses the word "Release" as a deception that the victims are merely departing from the community. In addition, residents are misled to believe that it is their fault and not the social system for the cause of being released. It reinforces the misconception that the community is benevolent and benign even though the administration is totalitarian in reality. Residents lose their autonomy by conformity to language and behaviors. It is illustrated in the novel that it is "always better, less rude, to talk about things that are the same. (p. 38)" To preserve the social system, the community avoids the topic of "Release" which is considered to "cause discomfort "or "unsettling". Also, the community defines sexuality as "stirring" and requires people to take pills to suppress the feeling. Furthermore, the community instills the ideology of conformity through institutional education. It is scripted how students make apologies and respond.

According to Kezang (2020), people's free will is taken away in *The Giver's* society because each citizen is highly restricted and regulated in various aspects of their life. People face choices and make their own decisions all the time in their daily lives. Citizens in The Giver's community, on the other hand, are denied the to make their own decisions. Children must strictly follow all the rules and regulations. If any of them breaks the rule, they will get caught and warned immediately. Furthermore, people will be "released" if they break the law three times. To maintain total control, people are regulated to perform certain duties and forced to comply with different rules in each stage of their life. Lily, Jonas' sister, cannot choose to loosen her hair as the seven-year-olds are required to tie their hair up with ribbons even though Lily outspokenly expresses her dislike towards ribbons. It is also illustrated that children's jacket buttons are designed in the back to encourage them to help each other while children will have front-buttoned jackets when they turn seven to encourage independence (p.40). It is clearly shown that children are not allowed to have preferences starting from a very early age. As to newborn babies, they will not have the chance to live if they cannot meet the standard after the given period time of care. Also, children's names are given by a group of elders in the community in the naming ceremony. Kezang (2020) mentions in his paper that there is a control of information distribution in the Giver's

community as the ruling community control people's accessibility to resources. As is illustrated in the conversation between the Giver and Jonas during the training:

because books are forbidden to citizens. You and I are the only ones with access to the books. So, if I have a spouse, and maybe children, I will have to hide the books from them? I wasn't permitted to share the books with my spouse, that's correct. And there are other difficulties, too. You remember the rule that says the new Receiver can't talk about his training (p.113).

Furthermore, each family unit is guided and regulated in Jonas' community. Parents do not bear their children as there are assigned birthmothers for reproduction. Therefore, parents and children are not connected emotionally because parents are only responsible to take care of the physical needs of the assigned children. There is a time for the family to share their feelings during dinner. However, it is a daily ritual rather than a time to build connections among family members. It is represented that it will be against the rule even when Jonas wants to hide his feelings from his family.

Atasoy (2021) puts forward that the theme of oppression and control plays a highly significant role in utopian and dystopian fiction by studying the representative texts: *A Modern Utopia* by H.G. Wells, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. It is illustrated that dystopian fiction often portrays a society that sets in a time and space in the future. It is a society that readers would consider to be worse than the real world that they live in by abusing science and technology. On the contrary, utopian fictions usually depict a world that first appeared to be perfect while later is discovered to be imperfect. In Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), individuality is oppressed through depriving of the freedom of sexuality and the frequent use of soma. It is a similar scenario in the Giver people are required to take pills to suppress their sexual desires. It is illustrated through the conversation between Jonas and his mother:

"That's all," she replied, returning the bottle to the cupboard. "But you mustn't forget. I'll remind you for the first weeks, but then you must do it on your own. If you forget, the Stirrings will come back. The dreams of Stirrings will come back. Sometimes the dosage must be adjusted."

"Asher takes them," Jonas confided.

His mother nodded, unsurprised. "Many of your groupmates probably do. The males, at least. And they all will soon. Females too."

"How long will I have to take them?"

"Until you enter the House of the Old," she explained.

The preceding dialogue demonstrates that citizens in *The Giver's* community are regularly controlled by pill-taking. People in the community cannot freely experience the nature of human beings.

3. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the selected studies have demonstrated that manipulation occurs in all areas of people's lives in *The Giver*. In *The Giver's* community, people lose control over their freedom and right to make decisions. Instead, every citizen is governed through language regulation, educational training, and desire suppression. In the study of Setyorini and Idris (2017), they focus on the analysis of how ISA works in the society of *The Giver*. The dominant ideologies are shown to be implemented through early childhood education and language regulation. Kezang (2020) states that information distribution in *The Giver's* community is regulated to maintain total control. Citizens do not have the freedom to have access to different resources except the Giver and the Receiver. While in the study of Atasoy (2021), demonstrates that people are governed by the means of highly advanced technology and sexual suppression. People are under constant surveillance through CCTV and loudspeakers.

Nonetheless, all of the selected research display that the society of *The Giver* is controlled by a ruling committee. Rules and regulations are established to govern people's behaviors. For those who break the rules three times, severe punishment of "release" will be carried out to pressure humans to obey the rules that the Elder Committee has set. People

are deluded that they are dwelling in a perfect world as pain, memories, wars, and colors are eliminated from society. However, citizens in *The Giver* lose the nature of humanity and the ability to choose their way of living.

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