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**Making the World a Better Place: A Post-
modern Dialectical Analysis of Sameness in
The Giver (1993) by Lois Lowry and the
Philosophy of Humanity's Future in
Dystopian Literature**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother and father, to my siblings, who always asked for updates even when I had nothing to show for. It helped me more than they will ever know.

To the Love of my Life, Nour El-Islam, who always believed in me and told me I could do it even when I was persuaded I couldn't. Thank you.

And to all the bookworms who know Literature is the only reason why we all didn't lose our minds yet. Here's to us.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Declaration	v
Abstract	vi
General Introduction:	1
Chapter One: Theoretical Framework.....	11
Chapter Two: Thesis, A Case for Sameness	25
1. Sameness vs. Over population.....	29
2. Sameness vs. Climate Change.....	33
3. Sameness vs. Racism	36
Chapter Three: Anti-thesis, A Case against Sameness	40
1. Sameness vs. Freewill and Choice	42
2. Sameness vs. The Right to Life.....	46
3. Sameness vs. Individuality and Emotion	53
General Conclusion/Synthesis	58
Works Cited.....	63
Résumé	66

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research paper is my own work; based on my personal study and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that this work has not previously been submitted in any other university. I am fully aware that if this work contains plagiarized content, this will involve serious consequences.

Hylda Djermoune. June 8th, 2019

Signature:

ABSTRACT

This dissertation identifies and investigates the concept of Sameness in the novel *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry, part of *The Giver Quartet*. *The Giver* presents a society in which order and conformity are favored over individualism and choice eliminating all individual differences and emotions. As an example of dystopia, the author imagines a strictly systematic and organized social order where people abide by the rules naturally and do not question the order under which they are forced to live. This is perceived as a majorly authoritarian characteristic that prompts the questioning of the validity of the Concept of Sameness introduced by Lois Lowry. The main purpose of this study is to draw attention to the significant contributions that dystopic works can make through the novel *The Giver* and the truths they reveal about humans and what they are willing to sacrifice. Hence, this novel will be examined using a postmodern philosophical approach and more specifically Dialectic Reasoning by Hegel with which we weigh the pros and cons of sameness and its applicability in our modern world.

Key Words: Dystopia, Sameness, Dialectic Reasoning, Sacrifice.

General Introduction

Dystopias are a literary genre in which authors share their concerns about society and humanity. They also serve to warn members of a society to pay attention to the society in which they live and to be aware of how things can go from bad to worse without anyone realizing what has happened.

Lois Lowry chose to write *The Giver*(1993)¹ as a dystopian novel because it was the most effective means to communicate her dissatisfaction with the lack of awareness that human beings have about their interdependence with each other, their environment, and their world. She used the irony of utopian appearances but dystopian realities to provoke her readers to question and value their own freedoms and individual identities. She also played with the concept of memory and its importance for the preservation of human civilization. In Lowry's words in an interview with *The Atlantic* (2012), memory “was the concept [she] started out with. What if there were a group of people who could control and manipulate human memory? [She] realized it had to be set in some future time because that doesn't exist yet—it will before long”

The novel starts off with a scene where, after dinner, Jonas and his family tell each other about their feelings. Jonas shares that he is apprehensive about the Ceremony of Twelve, because he is unsure what his assignment will be. Father reassures Jonas that the Elders make good assignments because they have been observing the children throughout their childhoods, especially during their Eleventh year. Father is worried about a new child, Gabriel, who is not

¹Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. New York, New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co, 1993. All further quotations from the novel will be taken from this edition and references will be given in the text.

developing as quickly as the other children. Having convinced the other Nurturers that Gabriel might catch up if he is raised in the environment of a family unit, Father brings Gabriel home.

The Ceremony of Twelve takes two days. Father requests that Gabriel be labeled Uncertain and given an additional year at the Nurturing Center, along with spending nights with Jonas's family unit. At the Ceremony of Twelve, the children receive their assignments in their birth order, but Jonas gets skipped. When the Chief Elder calls Jonas to the stage, his assignment is Receiver, an honorable assignment requiring intelligence, integrity, courage, wisdom, and the "capacity to see beyond." A few years earlier the Elders had selected a Receiver who failed. In Jonas's folder detailing his assignment, he receives very few instructions but is told that he may now lie. He wonders if the other Twelves received the same instructions and if all adults are able to lie.

At his first day of training, the current Receiver tells Jonas that he is going to receive all the memories of the world. He transmits the memories to Jonas by placing his hands on Jonas's bare back. Jonas's first memory is of sledding downhill in the snow. Jonas learns that when the community opted for Sameness, things like snow and hills were eliminated. When Jonas asks what he should call the old man, he says to call him the Giver.

Jonas is not allowed to talk about his training with others. When he tells the Giver that Fiona's hair changed, the Giver explains that Jonas is starting to see colors. Jonas asks about the previous Receiver. When she applied for Elsewhere, all the memories she had received entered the consciousness of the community, who did not know how to handle the influx of memories, some of which were painful. After this, each day of Jonas's training involves new revelations of pain, such as starvation and warfare. At home, Jonas offers to watch Gabriel.

When Gabriel starts to fret, Jonas transmits a soothing memory to him, and Gabriel sleeps peacefully.

The Giver and Jonas watch a recording of Jonas's father releasing one of a pair of twins. Jonas sees that the baby is euthanized, and he realizes that Release is death. Jonas gets very upset and stays the night with the Giver. They plan Jonas's escape from the community, who will have to deal with a large number of difficult memories once Jonas leaves. The Giver intends to stay behind to help them cope. They plan for Jonas's departure to coincide with the December Ceremony in a couple of weeks.

That night, Jonas flees because he learns that Gabriel is going to be Released for not developing properly. Jonas takes Gabriel, steals his father's bike, and grabs leftover food from the trash collection. He rides out of the community, hiding during the day from search planes and traveling at night. When the planes stop searching, Jonas switches to riding in the daylight. The landscape becomes more difficult and Jonas encounters wildlife for the first time. Jonas begins running out of food. As the days go on and food becomes scarcer, it begins to snow, and Jonas leaves the bike behind. Most of his memories have faded. Holding Gabriel, Jonas climbs a hill and finds a sled at the top. He and Gabriel sled downhill, and they reach a place with buildings and Christmas-like lights. He hears singing for the first time and thinks he hears music from his own community.

Her main character's, Jonas', community appears to be a utopia, but, in reality, it is a dystopia. The people seem perfectly content to live in an oligarchy — a government run by a select few — in which a Community of Elders enforces the rules. In Jonas' community, there is no poverty, starvation, unemployment, lack of housing, or prejudice; everything is perfectly planned to eliminate any problems. However, as the novel progresses and Jonas

gains insight into what the people have willingly given up — their freedoms and individualities — for the so-called common good of the community, it becomes more and more evident that the community is a bad place in which to live. Readers can relate to the disbelief and horror that Jonas feels when he realizes that his community is deceitful; a society based on false ideals of goodness and conformity. As Jonas comes to understand the importance of memory, freedom, individuality, and even color, he can no longer stand by and watch the people in his community continue to live under such fraudulent pretenses.

Not many of the stimuli for dystopian literature have changed today although some new ones have emerged with the current social landscape of western society and the world in general. Topics that recently attract vast amount of attention are race, religion and sexuality, stemming from the 1960s liberation and civil rights movements and the political atmosphere in the world. Due to this and several other reasons, the humankind has become more and more self-critical. Themes of the sort are vastly discussed in Lowry's novel, and in the dystopian narrative not only does a well written dystopian novel entertain its readers, it often also has the ability to educate them and make them think about the society in which they live.

Many scholars and critics have had a great deal to say about *The Giver* and consider it a rich source of analysis and interpretation. *The Giver*, as a novel has been analyzed via many perspectives as the story and world it offers vastly intrigues researchers and prompted many works to be published analyzing its effects on readers, and what it could mean for our society.

On the whole, scholars who offer analytical approaches to the text emphasize its possible effect on the psyche of young readers. Carrie Hintz, in her article "Monica Hughes, Lois Lowry, and Young Adult Dystopias" (2002) for the journal *The Lion and The Unicorn*, proclaims that *The Giver* "has sensitized readers to the important subgenre of utopian and dystopian writing for children and young adults" (254). She observes that *The Giver* and

other utopian or dystopian novels have the potential to “seriously portray dissent for younger audiences and make it clear that young people must be integrated into political life” (263). She further believes that because “these utopias are read comparatively early in a child’s political development,” the text “gives young people the impression that they have the capacity to remake or revision society anew” (ibid). Hintz speculates that Lowry and others who write adolescent dystopian literature do not “flinch at portraying the costs of utopian commitment, or of political action against dystopian coercion” (ibid). Thus, in Hintz’s estimation, a novel such as *The Giver* has the potential to affect young readers in profound ways.

Dystopian novels serve as cultural critiques and models as to what might happen if we pursue some of our present courses. As such, they are often openly didactic. We can assume that Lowry attempts to bring to our attention the issues that arise regarding race. However, in regard to race, multiculturalism, or diversity, *The Giver* does not open any type of space for us to re-examine how we might talk about those issues. There is no basis for argumentation because, with the exception of Jonas and The Giver, everyone seems relatively content with the circumstances.

In " Inhuman Human Nature: Lois Lowry's *The Giver*" (2017) Oznur Cengiz explained that the relation between Jonas and The Giver is the only left representation of a real or humane connection because the rest of the community is unable to think, remember, or love and so on, with "sameness" humans had preferred to pass on their individual liberties and lead lives determined for them and so from a post humanist point of view the characters in the novel are inhumane in sameness, deprived of individualism and the right to make decisions and choices. He alleged about the cost of sameness in the community that "Technological enhancements ameliorating conditions of the community is the cost of

members' humane characteristics. With "sameness", they have to compromise on human nature" (22) and so according to him sameness is a total loss of humanity itself.

With the establishment of a society which thrives on Sameness, sexes and gender related differences had to be abolished. Males and females are no longer predisposed to roles which are dictated by their gender. Nevertheless, the Giver's portrayal of a post-gender society did not completely erase certain gender traits as they are deeply rooted in the traditional gender norms of society. The Giver's take on gender in the context of sameness can be deemed progressive and ahead of its time in the sense that it dissolves the differences between males and females and allows for a more fair chance to be an active member of society, in other words, the Giver treats people as individuals rather than genders. In summary, masculinity and femininity are not clearly distinct, in fact almost non-existent, within this society. As Yami Arega states in "*Post-gender Society and Gender Roles in The Giver by Lois Lowry*":

I believe Lowry's idea of a post-gender dystopia was influenced greatly by the second-wave feminist movement. The second-wave feminist movement, which lasted from the 1960's-1980's, focused on equality involving sexuality, family, and the workplace. I think this second-wave, leading into the third-wave in the 1990's, impacted Lowry's depiction of a post-gender society. (2016)

From a more societal perspective, Adam Georgandis in his work "*Children's Classics Through The Lenses of Literary Theory*" (2014) explored the importance of applying a Marxist theory on *The Giver* which he considered "a deeply disturbing and powerfully uplifting novel" (6) as it reveals many truths about utopian/dystopian literature and the onslaught of readers who do not perceive the connection some of Children's Literature works

can have to much more complex theories such as that of Marx. In the case of *The Giver*, Georgandis states: "It is certainly possible to compare Lowry's world to the totalitarian states which brutally forced "communism" upon their citizens during the second half the 20th Century, but it is very difficult to compare Lowry's world to the ideal communist state Marx describes." (6) According to him "Marx's world is classless, perfectly balanced, and voluntarily communist. Lowry's world is classless, perfectly balanced, and scrupulously controlled by a powerful, external authority" (6) which he deems to portray a much more dystopian tone than Marx ever intended.

Kenneth Kidd explores the psychological aspects of the story, pertaining to the nature of *The Giver* as a children's book. Kidd argues that *The Giver* plays a central role in exploring How Memory is a crucial aspect of the human experience in his work " 'A' is for Auschwitz: Psychoanalysis, Trauma Theory, and the 'Children's Literature of Atrocity'" (2005) specifically in the subsection "*Trauma and Memory in The Giver*"

Against its own custodial investments, we might read *The Giver* as a cautionary tale about contemporary US culture, and about the need for a thoughtful literature of atrocity. *The Giver* offers an allegorical, abstract solution to the problem of narrating trauma and, by being less "historical" than other trauma texts, is less easily made into a keepsake. (144)

Kidd argues that *The Giver* can serve a greater goal in preserving the world's memory by specifically warning against the dangers of its loss. He focalizes on the importance these novels can have on not only the psychology of readers but the psychology of a whole society.

The Giver indeed coerced the production of many works which tackled many of the details that makes the Community such a peculiar place, as a genderless society it triggered many feminist readings, it questioned the psychology of its readers and of the actors of the

story and sought to find a truth in its exploration of a classless society. Nevertheless, many have failed to really connect all these elements, and realize that all these elements are simply manifestations of one specific concept that stretches its influence on the whole of the community, which is Sameness. Exploring the full scope of the philosophy itself of the concept of "Sameness" and the ambiguous question it raises is the first step one would take to finally define the concept and what we as readers can draw from it that is why I believe that philosophical criticism and dialectic reasoning are needed to uncover its truths.

My motivation in conducting this research is to discuss, analyze, and dissect the concept of Sameness, put forth by Lois Lowry as a foreshadowing to humanity's future and the impact such revolutionary, trailblazing ideas can have on the moral consciousness of its readers.

Societal norms nowadays speculate about equality for a greater good. A system that is equal has to be better for everyone. And so, in some ways, the removal of racial biases and institutionalized prejudices on minorities has a great potential in achieving such goals. In *The Giver*, Lois Lowry used the concept of the new social system of sameness as a critique to the racially divided society of today. And so we ask ourselves: Would the application of such reforms solve the afflictions of our society? What are humans ready to sacrifice for a better world?

In this research, I will use Philosophical Criticism and dialectical reasoning to take a deeper look into the philosophical weight and impact the concept of Sameness carries over onto the novel's readers. The first chapter of this research will be fully devoted to the theoretical background of my theme, explaining the impact Utopian/Dystopian literature has as a genre and as a political and societal element. Then we will also explore the definition sameness has in many different fields, and connect said definitions to what Lois Lowry

intended the concept to mean in her novel. Finally, we will connect literature to philosophy and determine the relevance of analyzing literature from a philosophical scope using dialectic reasoning as a guideline.

In the second chapter, posing as our thesis, we will analyze the advantages of sameness, what solutions it brings to our modern world. How it uses systematic control as a preventive structure against many of the issues we face today, namely its fight against over population, climate change and racial and religious prejudice, focusing on specific parts of the novel where said issues are explicitly discussed and how Jonas' community solves them.

In the third chapter, our anti-thesis, the disadvantages of sameness will be thoroughly discussed, specifically in regards to its cancellation of free will, emotions and individual differences and the very right to life. These disadvantages can be deduced from the novel throughout many conversations Jonas has with the Giver. Based upon these discussions we will evaluate how sameness can be the issue.

And last, our conclusion will be devoted to the connection between the thesis and anti-thesis. The discussion and dissection of Sameness in Chapters Two and Three, and the answers we hope to find will give us a greater understanding of the possible future of human society, how to prevent it or how to encourage it, so as to find a greater truth about how human nature views its own past and future.

Chapter One:

Theoretical and Conceptual
Framework

The present chapter introduces and attempts to define the key terms and concepts that constitute the essential theoretical background to this research work. This theoretical framework offers an all-encompassing context to the novel and the literary genre to which it belongs, along with the concept of Sameness which will be discussed in a more comprehensive manner further in the work. In the remainder of the chapter, we give a detailed review of the theory. This is an essential and key section to approaching the central subject of the research work and it shall assist the reader to a fuller understanding of the theoretical concepts that will be dissected throughout the investigative chapters.

When speaking of Utopian and Dystopian Literature, one must go as far as the Ancient Greeks both in etymology and conceptual definitions. The term *utopia*, according to The British Library, comes from the Greek words *ou*, meaning "no" or "not," and *topos*, meaning "place". The term was only coined by the English writer, historian, and theologian Sir Thomas More in 1516 in his classic and eponymous book *Utopia*; however, writers and philosophers have long before written and discussed perfect utopian societies, most notably Plato, in his *Republic* which was written in 380 BC. In broad terms, Plato's *Republic* refers to a perfect society described through fictional dialogues between Socrates and other interlocutors. According to Antonis Coumoundouros from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: "In the *Republic* [...], we encounter Socrates developing a position on justice and its relation to *eudaimonia* (happiness). He provides a long and complicated, but unified

argument, in defense of the just life and its necessary connection to the happy life"(Coumoundouros).

A more modern definition of the term Utopia comes from Thomas More's book (1551) of the same name. Since its original conception, *utopia* has come to mean a place that we can only dream about, a true paradise and a happy place, where a person has nothing to worry about because his/her government provides everything they need. More's *Utopia* protested contemporary English life by describing an ideal political state in a land called Utopia, or Nowhere Land. Utopian fiction of 16th and 17th centuries, however, was marked by an optimistic attitude towards technological progress and the benefits of industrialization.¹

Utopian literary works would go on to wane overtime as the stories told generally did not convince readers. The make-believe scenarios drew criticism from audiences for the reason that they simply seemed impossible to achieve and had fundamental weaknesses. The creation of such worlds that were so different and almost unimaginable stripped them of their credibility. Essentially the idea that humans can ever be perfect creations is not only improbable, but to go on and expect societies built by flawed beings to be of absolute flawlessness was simply wrong. As Richard Yu shares in *Noteworthy's* blog post on January 3rd, 2018: "to expect an absolutely perfect arrangement from imperfection without some sort of catch seems analogous to expecting something to come out of nothing". In fact, some prominent works of utopian literature managed to thrive over the next century such as *Looking Backwards: 2000-1887* by Edward Bellamy published in 1888, in which Bellamy tells the story of a utopian future set in Boston 113 years later, where a socialist government eliminates all evils of society by controlling the economy. *Looking Backwards* was written as a commentary against the industrial society of the time which Bellamy felt disillusioned by.

¹Two outstanding examples of utopian literature of this period are *New Atlantis* (1672) by Sir Francis Bacon and *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) by Gerrard Winstanley. For more details, see *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* (2010).

Some recent utopian literary works carry more advocatory messages about modern issues of gender and race as well as climate change. *Herland*(1915) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, for instance, is a perfect example of feminist utopia for it describes a futuristic perfect society that is exclusively female, free of war and discrimination. The most recent example is Alan Marshall's *Ecotopia 2121: A Vision of Our Future Green Utopia* (2016); a novel which illustrates the utopian transformation of 100 cities around the world that manage to create a perfect ecological and green future over the century.

After the two world wars, humanity lost all hope in the so-called scientific progress and advancement supported in early works of utopian literature because of its massive destructibility showcased in the two wars. A major shift in literature as a whole was felt worldwide. People could no longer accept and felt increasingly disinterested in beautifully crafted phony worlds that no longer reflected the viciousness of the real world as a result of the many wars around the globe and this pessimistic outlook gave way to the postmodern obsession with Dystopias.

Postmodern Literature, as many critics and thinkers like Frederic Jameson and Michel Foucault theorize, is concerned with a destruction of existing knowledge and social constructs and argues that truth is relative. It is part of socio-cultural and historical development and can be seen as a specific way of a depiction of the postmodern life and culture. The literary genre's main concern was for an avid advocacy for the singular identities of human beings whether it is ethnic, sexual, social or religious, as well as a distinct struggle for the validation and legalization of the rights of these differences in what was seen as a deceitful society. Postmodern writers thus question time-honored dogmas and show a sense of insecurity, unreliability, and anti-authoritarian inclinations. Writers like George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, and Ray Bradbury, predominantly used several techniques that can be said to define

postmodernist writing i.e. the rejection of grand narratives, use of playful irony, humor and temporal distortion. Included in the postmodernist philosophy and literature is the Dystopian narrative.

The word dystopia is derived with the negative suffix “dus”-“δυσ” (dys) in Ancient Greek referring to “bad” or “wrong” and *againtopos*, meaning “place”. The first recorded use of the term dystopia was during a political speech by John Stuart Mills in 1868 about the Irish situation where he criticized the British government's policies on Ireland. Mills harshly criticized the government declaring “what is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable, but what they [the government] appear to favor is too bad to be practicable” (Trahair 110). Within the speech he used the term dystopia as an immediate antonym to utopia. From this political usage, dystopia will cross over to the literary arena; according to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, it is defined as “an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives”.

The postwar era coerced the creation of dystopian and anti-utopian literature. *Dystopia*, which is the contrary of utopia, is a term used to describe a society in which things have gone wrong usually in the form of a society being controlled by a tyrannical state, in both individual and collective ways, an apocalyptic future world in which humanity is taken over by technology and totalitarian regimes takes center stage, and becomes the prime imagery of the literary creations of the time.

In the so-called postmodernist era, dystopian literature continues in the Orwellian tradition i.e. creating realistic and plausible realms stemming from inhibitions about the development in the coming decades. M. Keith Booker in his book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature* (1994) aptly explains that “[i]f dystopian fiction is centrally informed by skepticism toward utopian ideals, one might say that postmodernist dystopian fiction is

informed by the same skepticism, but also by an additional doubt that this skepticism can be truly effective” (141). It also becomes vastly sci-fi oriented and tends to breach the boundaries between thus far established genres. Both utopias and dystopias share characteristics of science fiction and fantasy, and both are usually set in a future in which technology has been used to create perfect living conditions. However, once the setting of a utopian or dystopian novel has been established, the focus of the novel is usually not on the technology itself but rather on the psychology and emotions of the characters who live under such conditions.

Through dystopian literature, authors share their concerns about society and humanity. They also serve to warn members of a society to pay attention to the society in which they live and to be aware of how things can go from bad to worse without anyone realizing what has happened.

Dystopian fiction has grown as a genre and continues to evolve today. After reaching its golden era in the first half of the 20th century with works such as Jack London's *Iron Heel* (1908) and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921) which provided extensive inspiration for future, authors such as George Orwell and Aldous Huxley would go on to shape the genre with their respective works *1984* published in 1949 and *Brave New World* published in 1932. These authors set the tone for dystopian literature which would be known for exposing the dangers of oligarchic totalitarianism, strong censorship, and most importantly a strong fear and concern about abuse of power, a motif that continues to be the central focus of many dystopian works of today.

Young Adult Literature (YAL from hereon) has adopted the dystopian genre as its signature category. Most books written in the YAL category is dystopian and that is emphasized by the prolific production of such novels. Dystopias seem to appeal to the anti-authoritarian youth, and writers themselves target this demographic. Young adult fiction is

written mostly from an adolescent's perspective. For example, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, published in 1993, was one of the very first dystopian novels written from an adolescent's point of view. This point of view would later catch on to most dystopian novels of the 21st century which are now written almost exclusively in this manner, most notable examples are *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins, *The Maze Runner* (2009) by James Dashner, and most recently *Red Queen* (2015) by Victoria Aveyard.

A more ambiguous category in Utopia/Dystopian Literature is combination works. Combination works encompass both genres; these works hence cannot fit into either one genre –dystopian or utopian. In this category, authors create scenarios in which the story progresses gradually into a dystopia or reveals itself as dystopia; in fact, rarely ever do works of dystopian literature progress into utopia. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is sometimes linked with utopian (and dystopian) literature because it shares the general concern with ideas of the good (and bad) society. Of the countries Lemuel Gulliver visits, Brobdingnag and Country of the Houyhnhnms approach a utopia while the others have significant dystopian aspects.

Many works combine elements of both utopias and dystopias. Typically, an observer from our world will journey to another place or time; the point is usually that the choices we make now may lead to a better or worse potential future world. Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) fulfills this model as does Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976). The subject of Le Guin's work is the Kesh — a people who inhabit a valley in a far-future California and who are clearly based on Native American models. The book contains additional information about the Kesh in more traditional ethnographic form. There are a few passages of reflexive commentary in *Always Coming Home* and some of these make direct comments on contemporary issues. In another literary model, the imagined society journeys

between elements of utopia and dystopia over the course of the novel or film. At the beginning of *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry, the world is described as a utopia, but as the book progresses, the world's dystopian aspects are revealed.

This latter example can be seen in other works such as "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (1973) in Ursula LeGuin's collection of short stories titled *The Wind's Twelve Quarters* (1975). In her story the depiction of the utopian society takes on three out of the four pages of the story; and only at the very end does the reader come to realize the atrocity of the reality of Omelas, but throughout the novel discomfort and disbelief can still be felt regarding the utopic atmosphere. That is how *The Giver* introduces itself; as a dubious, implausible utopia that reveals itself as a dystopia rather than transforms into a dystopia. Although we see it as more of a fictitious image of a society; it depends on what the reader's own point of view is regarding his approach on reading the story, it has, indeed, multiple characteristics of utopia at the very beginning of the novel that slowly shifts into a full-blown dystopia. Most utopian/dystopian novels demand a sacrifice of individuality and that the characters that bring the downfall of such societies in the case of dystopias or the characteristic that makes you question utopias usually revolve around the idea of individuality and how uneasy humans feel when it comes to sacrificing it.

The lack of individuality aforementioned is a crucial idea in this research. This absence of individuality is what Lois Lowry called "Sameness" in her novel. She used Sameness (capitalization intended) as the story's main motif, as it is applied a system that rules over Jonas' community to extreme lengths. The term "sameness" itself is associated with multiple, often, very different fields. We will try to restrict the different definitions available and only focus on ones that are closest to what Lowry was most likely influenced by.

Consequently, the definitions shall be narrowed down to the basic elements that constitute the concept, as they can be in fact quite complex.

This section of the chapter will take a general-to-specific approach to the concept of sameness and offer a set of encompassing definitions in the fields of Philosophy, Biology, Mathematics, and Philosophy, to end on the definition found exclusively in *The Giver*. This will enable readers to grasp the concept in its basics without delving too far into unnecessary intricacies.

Before we proceed into the conceptual definitions of Sameness, the etymology of the word shall be given, to provide the history and general meaning of the word in and of itself. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the first ever recorded use of the term "sameness" was in 1581. The term was used to mean "the quality of being the same, identity or similarity"; later on words such as monotony and uniformity came to reinforce the definition of the word.

According to Stanley B. Klein in his work *Sameness and the Self: Philosophical and Psychological Considerations*: "[in] its most analytically rigid form "sameness" entails a quantitative equivalence between X and Y. [...] Formally it is expressed as "X" is the same as "Y" is and only if every property or characteristic true of X is true of Y as well" (2). This strict version is found primarily in philosophical treatment and mathematical analysis. In this sense, therefore, x and y have to exhibit perfect quantitative identity for them to be considered similar or the same.

The philosophical and mathematical perception of "sameness" is formally termed "identity". The philosophical concept of identity is distinct from the more recognized notion of identity used in psychology as it is stripped of the qualifying contexts that change its definition entirely. While the philosophical concept is concerned with an idea that x and y are

identical to each other, if, and only if $x = y$ for them to be same, the sociological notion of identity is concerned with a person's self-conception, social presentation, and what makes a person unique, different from others (e.g. cultural identity, gender identity, national identity, and online identity), which generally speaks of very distinct and individual identities.

This mathematical exactness concerning Sameness is further explained by Paul Ricoeur in his book *Oneself as Another*(1992), in which he states that:

Sameness is a concept of relation and a relation of relations. First comes numerical identity: thus, we say of two occurrences of a thing, designated by an invariablenoun in ordinary language, that they do not form two different things but 'one and the same' thing. Here, identity denotes oneness. (251)

This first kind or degree of sameness refers to the same object recurring twice in the same form $x=x$, we say then that they exhibit sameness. Ricoeur does not only stop at the rigid definition but widens the horizon by propositioning a degree that would loosen the terminology. He goes on to state in his definition that:

In second place we find qualitative identity, in other words, extreme resemblance: we say that x and y are wearing the same suit — that is, clothes that are so similar that they are interchangeable with no noticeable difference, to this second component corresponds the operation of substitution without semantic loss. (252)

In this second degree, the identity is not fundamental but the quality of both X and y is so similar that they can be perceived as the same; consequently, they also exhibit sameness.

This same concept is known as homology in biology which is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as "the state of having the same or similar relation, relative position or structure". Homology is mainly used in reference to the theory of evolution and how different species are categorized into families or are said to share ancestry if multiple components of their skeleton, muscle structure or even DNA are similar².

As stated earlier, the rigid philosophical definition of sameness/identity differs extremely from what is perceived or termed identity in Psychology. In fact, where in philosophy the two terms can be used interchangeably in every regard, in psychology the exact opposite stand point can be observed i.e. sameness is the immediate opposite of identity. In psychology, identity refers to individuality; a sense of self that is unique to the individual and a celebration of difference. Sameness, in contrast, refers to the total lack and absence thereof, anything which can be considered different and unique is non-existent.

This perception of sameness, as it will be shown in detail in the following chapters, is what defines the system in Lowry's *The Giver*, where –apart from physically features and the different roles in society- everyone is virtually the same. Roughly, in *The Giver*, “Sameness” is illustrated by the elimination of differences so that each individual in society is equal – pain, loneliness, vanity, jealousy, are emotions that citizens have no experience with. Thus, citizens do not know what color is, cannot choose life partners, do not engage in sexual activity, have no idea what love is, etc. Their identities are created for them and follow a step-by-step process so that maturity/growth is standard for all citizens. This system is created to protect the citizens of the Community at the expense of what makes them human.

²For further information, see *Homology and the Hierarchy of Biological Systems*(2008) by Ralf J. Sommer.

The ambiguity of the problem of sameness brings about a deeply rooted question regarding human nature. If "utopias" are based upon the elimination of a core value of humanity, that is individuality, and its existence represents such a threat for the prosperity of a system as well-organized and seemingly utopic such as sameness, then are humans better off living in worlds devoid of individuality, or would we sacrifice an idyllic lifestyle to celebrate differences in individuals? This question prompts a thorough analysis in the philosophical trenches it has put itself in.

For this research, we have chosen philosophical criticism to answer the fundamental question the novel under investigation poses. We see it as the appropriate to analyze sameness in the definition drawn by Lois Lowry herself in the novel. We will give a precise and concise definition of this style of criticism.

The Stanford University of Literature and Philosophy Program website expressed the connection between Literature and Philosophy posing the following question: "Can philosophy and Literature achieve more than the sum of the two parts? Can philosophical approaches account for the specific power of literary works, even those that are not overtly philosophical? And can literary devices contribute to philosophical goals – in a way, perhaps, that nothing else could?" In other words, Literature and Philosophy are simply different forms of thinking about how to gain the same goal of human flourishing.

At the core of many literary works, ancient to modern, are philosophical questions, from the philosophy of Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex* (430 B.C) to more recently Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603). A factor that may actually define Literature with a capital L, as opposed to *junk* reading, is that it deals with essential philosophical inquiries and dilemmas. Texts that aspire to be Literature unsettle and provoke readers, offer deeper

questions and understandings alongside their pleasures, and force us to examine life's most poignant problems.

Many philosophers have used literary forms to convey their philosophies, starting with Plato and his myriad of dialogues, Friedrich Nietzsche, a modern philosopher, presented many of his ideas in his classic *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883). Existentialists were among the most prolific philosophers who transcribed their philosophies in literary form, from Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) and *The Hunger Artist* (1922), his French counterparts Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus who put much of their philosophic thinking into their novels and plays, such as, *No Exit* (1944) and *The Stranger* (1942). In fact, many of these philosophers alongside some postmodernists such as Foucault and Derrida considered literary criticism and philosophy part of the same endeavor.

In all these ways, philosophy, literature, and literary criticism interlock and make up a great deal of the philosophical approach to literature; perhaps an approach that thrives in asking all possible questions and try to find all infinite possible answers.

Included in philosophical criticism, we find one common approach that is used to analyze texts from a philosophical point of view, that of dialectical reasoning. Dialectics is a discourse with two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned arguments. The term was popularized by Plato's Socratic dialogues but the act itself has been central to European and Indian philosophy since ancient history.

Dialectics is a means used in philosophical criticism to sort a paradox; it seeks to find a middle ground between two seemingly contradicting ideas. In our research, the two contradicting ideas are the two opposing positions many have on the concept of sameness in *The Giver* (1993). Dialectical reasoning is a method of reasoning in which one starts with a

thesis and develops a contradictory antithesis, both with rationales, and then combines and resolves them into a coherent synthesis, with the ultimate goal being the search for truth. This type of reasoning is used to address the social, ethical, and philosophical issues of a topic using the thesis, antithesis, synthesis framework of dialectical reasoning.

A dialectic method of reasoning for philosophical reflection and analysis hypothesizes that "A", being a beginning proposition called a thesis, is a statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proven. "B" serves as a negation of that thesis, called an anti-thesis, a contradiction or counter argument to "A" which creates the impression of dialogue between two clashing ideas.

Dialectic method of reasoning dates back to Plato and his dialogues in which he uses Socrates as the main argument provider and throughout the dialogue the purpose was to refute or contradict said arguments. However, Hegel expanded on this approach to reasoning and created a threefold system that allows a third variable to conclude debates into a more productive discussion. Although this method is commonly referred to as the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel actually attributed the terminology to Immanuel Kant. For the purpose of our investigation we narrowed down the theory to the specific connection it has with philosophical criticism. The third variable is the synthesis; it serves as the resolution of conflict between "A" and "B" and creates an argument whereby the two conflicting ideas are reconciled to form a new proposition.

This theory and reasoning process will be used in our research to answer the following question: Is sameness inherently good or evil? Following the thesis-antithesis-synthesis method, we have defined in search for a plausible and rational aftermath to its potential application in our modern day society.

Chapter Two: Thesis

A Case for Sameness

Although "Sameness" is never clearly defined by the author, it can be clearly observed through many instances in the novel that it is a recurrent motif which rules over all aspects of community life. Going beyond its major role in how and why events unfold in the plot progression, sameness exists in many more concrete ways which reflect how intertwined it is with humanity's future, and in what manner it is considered the sole solution to many of modern world's afflictions.

In the concrete sense, "Sameness" is intended in the novel to be a political and social system that is more commonly referred to as an oligarchic gerontocracy; a community led by a group of elders who rule, regulate, and oversee life in a given community. "Sameness" is the name given to the ideology practiced by said elder leaders of Jonas's community in its desire to create a utopian society. The principle essentially involves a system of concealed authoritarianism in which citizens are indoctrinated into believing that they are all the same and, therefore, equal. The purpose is to establish, through conformity and uniformity, a perfect civilization that is free from human error. As we have exposed in the first Chapter, Ricoeur believed that sameness could only truly be achieved through absolute likeness between X and Y; the example he has given, of x and y being described as "same" if the suits they wear exhibit absolute sameness. The same can be said about what The Elders believe is best for the Community, as strict regulation system that makes all citizens the same both in thought and in physicality, can ensure sameness, as all attributes of X and Y are the same.

The elders have very strict rules about everything relating to the community. They are the supervisors in this society and are responsible for ensuring that every member of society

maintains the principles adopted when Sameness was introduced. The ideology has been instilled into society's consciousness through a system of genetic propaganda, manipulation, and brainwashing. To guarantee "Sameness", the Elders control every aspect of each citizen's entire existence, from Education and "Precision of Language", strict medication, birth control and family planning, retirement and release. These taken-for-granted milestones of every human life are very tightly regulated in Jonas's community.

It should be reminded at this stage that dystopian novels for the past decades have explored the question of anarchy and strict regimes exhaustively, amongst them *1984*(1949) by George Orwell, who explores the potential threat totalitarian regimes pose and the chokehold it imposes on its people's lives. On the other end of the spectrum, novels such as *A Modern Utopia* (1905) by H. G. Wells, theorizes a progressive utopia on a planetary scale in which the social and technological environment are in continuous improvement and freedom is assured. *The Giver* never states this explicitly, but it is implied that the ancestors of the current society changed everything at once in an attempt to reverse the wrongdoings of humanity. We will give brief expositions of the modern day issues "Sameness" seeks to solve, which we will delve into more thoroughly further in the present chapter.

To start with, many scientists believe that one of the reasons for the deterioration of the planet's ecosystem is overpopulation. Dr. Charles A. Hall, a systems ecologist of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, affirms that: "Overpopulation is the only problem. . . if we had 100 million people on earth – or better, 10 million – no others would be a problem". It is largely agreed upon among experts that planet Earth has finite resources that will not suffice the ever growing human population, which is estimated to hit an astounding 9.7 billion by 2050. This number, although an estimate, already greatly impacts the whole environment, as Dr. Allan P. Drew states "Over population means that we are putting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than we should" this statement pins the

responsibility on humanity - and its quite literal invasion of the planet - regarding the current ecological crisis.

One logical outcome of this overpopulation that *The Giver* also shines a light upon is climate change. This is the 21st century's biggest issue, which Lowry foresaw in 1993 as the plausible fate of humanity. It is undeniably a pressing issue, for scientists estimate that humanity has till 2030 to scale back on carbon dioxide emissions and the greenhouse effect before a process of almost auto-annihilation is triggered. Scientists believe that global temperatures will continue to rise, largely due to human activities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts an irreversible rise that will affect the Globe in ways we are only starting to fathom, amongst these; we can cite more droughts and heat waves, changes in precipitation rates and floods, stronger and more frequent hurricanes and storms, and rising sea levels. These issues and symptoms of climate change are discussed in the novel with regard to why Sameness had to be prescribed as the only solution and cure.

"Sameness" is introduced as a solution to these aforementioned concrete issues, but it also seeks to solve more morally and ethically ambiguous ones. If we were to consider one of the greatest dents in human history, we would find racism and religious prejudice as the common motives behind humanity's darkest periods. For centuries and even millennia, humanity has been plagued with deeply disturbing events that are entirely based upon forms of prejudice, slavery and the ongoing discrimination against African-Americans, WWII and anti-Semitism, and more recently the 9/11 Terror Attack and islamophobia.

In the case of racism, it is intrinsically a systematic rejection of a certain community sporting a certain skin tone, by another community with a more "acceptable" skin tone. However, it also extends to a community's language and customs. These differences are at the head of the many ills of modern society and affect members of minority communities in more

ways than simple slurs, but have, in fact, far-reaching damages on said community members' livelihoods and basic human rights. The same concern is to be applicable to the disturbing preconceptions attached to certain religious minorities with a renewed rise in anti-Semitism and islamophobia and a rebirth of a global nationalist, borderline neo-Nazi, ideology.

Sameness is introduced in the first part of the novel as a truly idyllic system that solves everything and does not leave any place for human error, from creating a perfect environment to ensure a stable and perfect life to the most basic human choices such as spouses and careers. We shall discuss in greater detail how sameness is applied in the community and throughout the story, to uncover its validity as a plausible solution.

1. Sameness vs. Overpopulation:

In concrete and simple terms, overpopulation is an undesirable condition where the number of existing human population exceeds the carrying capacity of Earth. Overpopulation is caused by number of factors. Reduced mortality rate, better medical facilities and widespread religious belief are at the heart of massive population growth. However, it is believed to be the pushing force behind many environmental, health, and economic issues the world faces today. The effect of overpopulation on the world's wildlife and the ecosystem are staggering. With a growth in demand for land to accommodate the growing population, natural habitats and protected species deplete. Some scientists warn that if present trends continue, as many as 50% of the world's wildlife species will be at risk of extinction. The UN reports that due to human pressures, one million species may be pushed to extinction in the next few years, with serious consequences for human beings as well as the rest of life on Earth.

Overpopulation does not only refer to the increased number of humans on earth, but all the effects humans have on the ecosystems around them. In modern times, the two major countries who are suffering the most from over population are China and India, In fact according to the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, these two countries make up 36.28% of the total world population (2018). These two countries, and most significantly China, have dealt with a great number of environmental issues, such as smog and water pollution, droughts, desertification, and many health issues resulting from these environmental catastrophes.

Awareness that this overpopulation could no longer sustain a decent level of life, the two governments issued key policies to control the population. In China, a "One Child Policy" has been set in place since 1979, after a decade of two child policy which failed to control the population at great lengths; it was deemed the most extreme population control method in history. In India mass compulsory sterilizations were conducted on Indian women and men. In 1976, for example, about 6 million men received vasectomies and 4.6 million women received tubal ligations. Although the populations of China and India have continued to grow since then, the birth rates experienced a steady decline, and reports from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs show that their population will officially start decreasing at the turn of 2030 for China and 2062 for India. (2018)

The issue of overpopulation is addressed quite explicitly by Lois Lowry in *The Giver*. Inspired by the strict systems that India and China have used to control their own population, sameness also imposes a strict system of "Family Units" and "Birthmothers"; which limits the number of births, family unit members and deaths in a way that keeps the population of the community at a manageable number. In the following passage overpopulation is mentioned when The Elders approached The Giver to ask if it is possible to increase the number of births,

accordingly the community can have more laborers, when The Giver searches in the world's memories he is entrusted, he advises them not to:

The Giver said yes. 'And the strongest memory that came was hunger. It came from many generations back. Centuries back. The population had gotten so big that hunger was everywhere. Excruciating hunger and starvation. It was followed by warfare.' (140)

Consequently, the community continues to only allow 50 births a year and 2 children per parent couple, per fear of repeating History's mistakes.

According to Planned Parenthood, family planning supports people's rights to determine the number and spacing of their children. It also helps future parents choose when to get pregnant, offering many different alternatives, and of course preventing unintended pregnancy. Family planning /contraception prevents deaths of mothers and children and helps control the population of certain areas, and perhaps the world.

The family planning incentive in *The Giver* is encouraged by a need to control the population which has grown beyond salvation in the centuries before the creation of the community. Seeing as overpopulation had been the cause of global famine and warfare, the precursors and ancestors of the community thought it better to limit the number of children to be born every year and to make every family unit a strict nuclear family, meaning one father, one mother, and two assigned children of each gender i.e. a boy and a girl.

There are no relatives outside the nuclear family, since the Elders determine spousal relationships and family assignments. Children are not biologically related to their parents or their siblings and never discover who their biological birthmother is. The Elders have developed a system in which birthmothers are appointed in their roles as artificially

inseminated young women, who provide the children to be assigned to different parent couples throughout the community.

In the narrative, the role of the birthmother is seen as necessary but not the most honorable assignment of the community. In fact, in Chapter Two, Jonas's sister, Lily, envies the Birthmothers' quite "lazy" life, but her mother scolds her about wanting such assignment. She sharply says: "Lily! Don't say that. There's very little honor in that Assignment . . . Three years, Three births, and that's all. After that they are Laborers for the rest of their adult lives, until the day that they enter the House of the Old. Is that what you want, Lily? Three lazy years and then hard physical labor until you are old?"(27). The Elders seem to have a supply of genetically engineered sperm cells (and most likely ova as well) that are used for conception. After birth, the infants are removed and taken care of in nurturing centers. The newborns are kept there until they are allocated to parents who qualify. This system of strict planned parenthood, addresses the direct issue of overpopulation as a way to limit the need or want for more children, as they are not produced by the parent couple but provided by the elders that decided who is fit and when someone can be assigned said child.

On a more mathematical note, natural birth rate in the community is at zero. To calculate natural birth rates, we subtract the known number of crude deaths (specifically releases of the Old) from the number of crude births of children created in birthing centers. Both numbers equaling 50, a subtraction leaves us with a natural birth rate of zero, meaning that the number of inhabitants in the community never increases, and can only decrease in the exceptional cases of releases from other age groups as punishments, such as the release of a recidivist in the community by Jonas' mother or in the rare case of loss, as it had been for a four year old child named Caleb. This allows the community leaders to exert better control

and regulation in unchangeable ways and have stable access to resources and distribution of assignments every year.

These two systems of family planning and birthmothers providing the community with a strict number of children, truly illustrate how overpopulation can be defeated. Demographic control allows the community members to be entitled to a fair share in all community life has to offer, such as job access, as joblessness is indeed non-existent in the community. Access to food, as it was aforementioned, is one of the main causes that prompted the Giver to reject the idea of increasing birth numbers, taking the precedent of the famines and warfare cause by overpopulation. Instead, with this planning, no famine was ever felt in the community; for instance, when Jonas exaggeratedly exclaimed he had been starving for his school lunch, the instructors harshly scolded him stating that "He was not starving . . . He was *hungry*. No one in the community was starving, had ever been starving, would ever starve" (89) This creates a stark contrast with the modern day situation of childhood starvation in underdeveloped countries, which by default are also among the most populated.

Lowry pinpoints the ensemble of issues facing humanity's future onto one source problem, and it is intended through the novel, to enforce a complete opposite of the generally reproduction-friendly ideologies that plague the modern world. This standpoint makes the reader wonder whether it is necessary to go as far as implementing drastic measure to strictly limit human nature, for the sake of survival.

2. Sameness vs. Climate Change:

Climate Change is a change in the pattern of weather, and related changes in oceans, land surfaces, and ice sheets, occurring over time scales of decades or longer. Climate Change is an issue that is briefly touched upon by the author. Although it seems for the common

citizen of today that Climate Change is a fact, in 1993, at the time of writing the novel, it was only a point brought about as a possibility. The genius of Lowry is that she has come forward with a story that directly hits upon the subject. Of course at the time, not much was known about the devastating effects it would have, but through *The Giver*, Lowry intended to shed light upon a still up-and-coming issue in a way that she hoped would help her young audience realize that it is their responsibility to act.

Climate Control is the name given to what the elders consider the best solution to climate change. In the novel, the revelation dawns on the reader as he realizes throughout the story that the author never uses terms related to the weather or a possible topography of the community land. This climate control is based on a need to take hold and regulate weather in a way that is constant and stable.

In the novel, the very first memory The Giver transmits to Jonas is that of a sled that glides through snow. Jonas then asks the Giver, where all snow went; the Giver replies that the elders "back and back and back" saw that it was better to get rid of uncertain weather, as it makes it easier for transportation and crop production (105). He says that centuries prior to their time, weather had become so unpredictable that the elders decided to make one constant weather that would be the same at all times and would make it easier for everything. This is why Jonas is amazed by something as mundane as snow, and that all his community dwellers have never experienced anything like rain, storms or even direct sun shine (99).

When Jonas asks why the different types of weather do not exist anymore, The Giver answers that it is "Climate Control. Snow made growing food difficult, limited the agricultural periods. And unpredictable weather made transportation almost impossible at times. It wasn't a practical thing, so it became obsolete when we went to sameness" (106).

Climate Control was used in the novel as an ultimate tool to solve issues concerning all possible collateral damages to climate change. The weather had become too unpredictable for the completion of vital tasks in the world before sameness, and it had become, more than just a necessity, but the obvious answer to fix those concerns. Not only did Climate Control ease the task of production of goods and crops for the community, it also made the transportation of such goods more practical.

Climate Control also meant a significant alteration of the terrain and topography of the community, as *The Giver* explains that they had to get rid of the hills too seeing as "[They] made conveyance of goods unwieldy. Trucks; buses. Slowed them down. So . . . Sameness"(106). These elements being crucial for the sustainability of life on the community they created, it had become essential to find a way to cancel all uncertain, unstable and cumbersome variables, thus Climate Control.

Smaller initiatives had been implemented in the community to combat climate change and limit carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. For instance, the scarcity of vehicles in *The Giver* testifies for the ecological turn the community has taken. All residents of the community starting the age of 9 are assigned their own bicycles, although in the novel it is seen as a sign of independence, it, in fact, plays a far more ecological role. Access to vehicles is very tightly controlled in the community, only produce is referred to as being "trucked in from the agricultural fields beyond the community boundary" (122), and for the very brief mention of a "needle-nose single-pilot jet" used in the air defense of the community and a "fat-bellied cargo plane"(2) that seems to be transporting goods and produce from other communities.

There are other instances where actual vehicles are used to transport people to neighboring communities, in the very special occasion where *The Giver* himself orders a

driver to visit other communities whom he advises. Since they have instituted sameness, there are no hills and there is no weather, so there is no real need for a vehicle. The concept of Sameness made challenging landscapes and unpredictable weather obsolete so that life could be more uniform, safe, and efficient in the utopian community.

Climate Change is a global issue that has been dissected in summits, and agreements around the world, all trying to find a solution to what appears to be a ticking time bomb for planet earth. Solutions on an international scale have been suggested, such as raising taxes on pollution and limiting factory and private citizen productions of waste of all kinds. However, the most effective approach to building a more sustainable and renewable future exists in smaller individual acts all citizens of all ages can participate in, such as, recycling, avoiding transportation which uses fossil fuels, and even boycotting companies known to have greater carbon footprints. This awareness is also being instilled in the younger generations who grew up far more knowledgeable in renewable, clean energies and ecological issues than the ones before them which have been proven to generate positive results.

The community, in *The Giver*, and the elders have managed through the implementation of Sameness, to turn these individual acts of ecology into unyielding rules and laws that would prevent any mishap. It, indeed, instructs the dwellers into seeing ecology and sustainability as their duty rather than a random act of consciousness.

3. Sameness vs. Racism:

In the novel, getting rid of differences also meant going above and beyond. Where it could have sufficed to establish equality by giving equal opportunity to the different ethnic groups making up the community, with the implementation of sameness a much more radical approach was undertaken.

Genetic engineering, broadly speaking, involves manipulation of cellular material to create changes in the structure of living organisms. Altering the DNA of a cell changes the attributes of cells created by later reproduction, ideally in a useful and beneficial way. The process is used to create plant or animal hybrids, to correct genetic flaws in an animal or human, or to utilize biological organisms to produce valuable chemicals (such as insulin). Genetic modification refers to the modification of genes for the purpose of reducing or completely getting rid of negative aspects of a given thing to optimize it. Such modifications have already been widely used in cattle and crop enhancements to produce as much as possible of a greater and more useful crop. When that is applied to humans, it can be tricky; so far it has only been used concerning some genetically passed down diseases such as hemophilia, in which the parents can decide which gender to have that will ensure that this disease will not be passed down to further generations. Even more recently great breakthrough have been achieved in the genetic science of CRISPR (Clusters of Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) which is essentially a tool that allows genetic scientists to cut and correct faulty parts of the human DNA, mainly sections related to genetic mutation that can be the cause of cancers or genetically transmitted diseases. CRISPR allows them to correct entire sections of DNA from unwanted features and replace them with optimal substitutes to ensure a perfect specimen.

This technology is used in *The Giver* for far greater goals. Where modern day medicine focuses solely on the medical aspects of gene modification, in the novel it is used to ensure ultimate sameness amongst all members of the community.

In Chapter Twelve of the novel, Jonas and the Giver share a conversation about seeing color, and Jonas shares that he could only distinguish the color red and that he had managed to see it on the faces of the community members during the ceremony of the twelve. The giver

specifies that flesh is not red but rather has red undertones of the blood: "There was a time . . . when flesh was many different colors. That was before we went to sameness. Today flesh is all the same" (119). He goes on to explain that the elders had not completely achieved sameness and that their genetic scientists are still working on getting rid of some tougher genetic mutations for which he gives the example of Fiona's hair, which is a living example of sameness' failure at canceling out individual traits such as red hair, and the pale eyes of Jonas, The Giver and Gabriel. This passage of course hides a greater truth. In fact, the giver says that before sameness there were different skin tones; with sameness and more specifically with genetic engineering, they simply got rid of them and now there is an undefined universal skin tone all the community members sport.

As for the religious differences, the answer that sameness has gone with is almost too simple, but it is indeed quite obvious. To get rid of the negative repercussions of religion, do away with it, and that is how atheism became the principle of the community. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines Atheism as a philosophical or religious position characterized by disbelief in the existence of a god or any gods. In *The Giver*, there has never been a concept of religion to renounce, the community dwellers have never been exposed to a belief system that could imply a divinity or deity. This allows the elders to neutralize all previous atrocities committed in the name of religion. According to Peter Halabu (2007) in his thesis *Christianity in Dystopia*, "dystopian authors use the structure, theology, mythology, and language of Christianity to show that humanity's greatest danger lies in sociopolitical idolatry, in creating a dystopian substitute for Christianity." (47), Lois Lowry differs from dystopian authors in the likes of Huxley and Atwood, by setting aside religion as a whole, and does not replace it with anything. She negates the existence of religion, and chooses an Atheistic path, to uncover how a society would function without religion, and she replaces it with Sameness, a system which

is ensures total equality and no discrimination, to counter balance the atrocities which occur when religion is acted upon.

The only mention of religion comes when The Giver shares with Jonas the memory of Christmas, and even then it is the celebration of Christmas that leaves Jonas in awe and not the religious aspect itself (154). At the surprise and unfamiliarity Jonas expresses regarding this very religious celebration in the Christian faith, we can deduce that there are no religious teaching or any sort of belief system that presides in Jonas's community. Religion is simply obsolete, unheard of.

It is obvious in the novel that sameness serves to solve these deeply engrained attributes of human nature; a need for a creator and prejudice based upon cultural difference and skin color. This complete abnegation allows the community to disregard elements that are nowadays dividing our society. Consequently, by getting rid of them, the community manages to get rid of irrational fears and prejudices that affect humanity as a whole in often times atrocious ways.

Chapter Three: Anti-Thesis

A Case against Sameness

As we have explained in the previous chapter, Sameness is a system of oligarchic gerontocracy; the eldest in the community rule over every aspect of the community. While it has greatly benefitted the community by ensuring its sustainability with radical actions such as the control of the population, the climate, and even the genetic make-up pertaining to every member of the society, this systematic control has far greater effects on the community, and they are much more disturbing than what meets the eye.

The elders of the community perpetuate a system that had been introduced centuries before without any question. This system of sameness seeks to create a perfect, uniform, equal, and utopian society where differences are done away with for the benefit of the overall mindset and survival of the whole community.

Sameness does appear to solve many issues throughout the novel that afflict our modern world, this we have thoroughly explained in the second chapter of this research. However, starting Jonas's training in the story, we as readers, notice that things are not as perfect as they seem. In fact, the very first uneasiness we feel towards some of the events during the course of the novel, is experienced in Chapter One, where a student pilot commits a mistake and flies over the community vicinity, a speaker announces with an ironic voice that "Needless to say he will be released" (Lowry 3). The term "Release" only acquires a meaning later, but even in its lack of familiarity, the context provides enough of a damning tone to understand the potential gravity of what had happened.

Later, during the ceremony of the twelve, Jonas' friend Asher is given his assignment. Before every assignment, the Chief Elder speaks about the select teenager's childhood. The narrator skipped over most of the other teenager's lives and assignments but extensively talked about Asher's own. Asher is a character that constantly makes small mistakes that have deemed him the unusual and "funny" one. His failures at the "precision of language" imposed in the community; his distractedness and dreamy nature have been a major trait of his childhood. These traits familiarized him with the discipline wand.

In Jonas' community, a discipline wand is described as "a thin, flexible weapon that stung painfully when it was wielded" (39). The wand is introduced to punish kids of misbehavior as soon as they are able to walk. In Asher's case, the Chief Elder explains that Asher had so much trouble with language, as in the case of not differentiating between the words "snack" and "smack", that as a three year old he was punished so repeatedly with the wand that she says : "For a while . . . we had a silent Asher! But he learned" (40). This very striking example appeals to the reader and confirms his suspicions about the hidden dystopian nature this society appears to conceal behind organization and conformity.

1. Sameness vs. Free will, and Choice:

Free will is defined by Encyclopedia Britannica as "[t]he power or capacity to choose among alternatives to act in certain situations independently of natural, social or divine restraints". It is a defining concept for human nature, the capacity to decide one's own fate, change their future, and rewrite their story has been the drive behind many revolutions and uprisings. This need for self-determination is at the core of human principles. The elders and creators of sameness, in the novel, premeditated the implementation of radical rules that would seriously hinder access to basic decision making situations. They wanted the citizens

of the community to be obedient and subservient, and so the only way that would guarantee optimal conformity and compliance was to take away free will and choice.

Amnesia plays a big role in how the system came to fruition. The citizens of the community have no idea that a concept such as choice even exists, and because they do not see the need to, they have never been exposed to a world, where one can decide the color, or motif of his clothes that day, or even decide who they marry, how many kids they could have. Consequently, they do not complain about having no choice; they see it as the wisdom of the elders, that it makes life so much easier, and more manageable.

One example of an element that people are unable to choose is color. Citizens in Jonas' community are color blind; therefore, they see life around them in what Lowry calls a "nondescript shade" (30). No one has the ability to recognize colors because they are stored in the memories held by the Giver. Jonas develops his gift of "seeing beyond", and this differentiates him from the other community members, which he first notices during a play time with his friend Asher where the apple they were tossing around appears to change. This "change", in fact, is when Jonas perceives the color pigments in the apple's skin. As Lowry illustrates in Jonas' recollection "the apple had *changed*. Just for an instant. It had changed mid-air" (ibid), but that instant of seeing beyond is quickly overtaken by the norm in the community which is color blindness, an instant after he caught in his hands all he could see was that the apple was "unchanged. The same size and shape: a perfect sphere. The same nondescript shade, about the same shade as his tunic" (ibid).

This memory, which Lowry shares about a very important instant in Jonas' life, serves to show that the community is under very strict conform and uniform rules. The apple is a perfect sphere; while in nature no apple is a perfect sphere; all have different curves and shades. The fact that he describes the apple to be the same exact shade as his tunic, tells us

more about how everything needs to be the same and all uniform to guarantee perfect sameness in the community. To all community members, the option to make choices based on preference in colors is not even available to them. When Jonas finally understands colors through the memories the Giver transmits him, his reaction is as follows in chapter 13: "It isn't fair that nothing has color! . . . If everything's the same, then there aren't any choices! I want to wake up in the morning and *decide* things! A blue tunic, or a red one? . . . but it's all the same, always". (123)

This reaction tells more about the need for choice than it is about if Jonas wants a red or blue piece of cloth. The emphasis in his statement falls on the word "Decide". Jonas perceives this colorless world as wrong, not just in the lack of color itself but the lack of choice they have when it comes to the simplest choices humans can make, as the Giver confirms for him that "it's the choosing that's important" (ibid).

Further than the issue of clothing color, the citizens are not able to choose their own path in life. They cannot decide who to have as their mate and build a biological family; they cannot live with their families throughout life, as the children once done with their training for their assignment are given their own dwelling and so the parents become "Childless Adults" (128); and they are not allowed contact or even create an emotional bond with their own surrogate children, that would survive the separation. The tradeoff for these sacrifices is that they live in a very structured culture that runs on following rules rather than basic free will.

The discussion the young twelve years old Jonas has with the much older Giver about choice is of a greater depth than we might assume. Actually, both go on discussing what choices really entail, Jonas mentions that he wishes Gabriel, the new child his father introduced to the family, could one day chose among his toys which could be a favorite. This

raised the question of whether or not choices are that easy to make. For a child and his toy, it seems quite superficial, simple in fact. However, lifelong choices such as the choice of a mate, or job are commitments. At the beginning of the novel, during the Ceremony of the Twelve, Lowry exposes a major part of sameness and its pervasive effects on many aspect of the community life.

The narrator states: "Like the Matching of Spouses and the Naming and Placement of new children, the Assignments were scrupulously thought through by the Committee of Elders." (55). There is a certain innocence and faith in Jonas's blind trust in the Elders to make the right decision for him. This is because before he began training, and consequently knowing of a time where things were otherwise, he had no notion that things could ever be different. These are the choices humans make and try to uphold for the longest periods of their life. Lowry explains this dilemma quite amazingly in the tone that Jonas seems to use when he wonders if people should be *allowed* to choose mates and assignments. Describing him as almost laughing at the absurdity of the question itself; consequently, Jonas judges it safer "to protect people from wrong choices" and not allow such big decisions to be made by them, and leave it all to the wisdom of the Elders (124).

Jonas objects to sameness in part because it limits his ability to make choices. He and the Giver talk about how choice does not matter with small things, like tunic color or toys, but it does with bigger things, like spouses and jobs. They agree that sameness is safer, but that answer doesn't satisfy either of them. To maintain this environment of total security and equality, a council of Elders regiments people's lifestyles down to the last detail to prevent them from making the "wrong choices." Everything from a person's permanent profession to one's intimate spouse is planned and assigned by the State. As the giver finally explains:

Our people made that choice, the choice to go to sameness.
 Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back.
 We relinquished colors when we relinquished sunshine and did away
 with differences"... we gained control of many things. But we had
 to let go of others. (120)

As the training continues, Jonas grows more adamant that he needs to leave the community. His knowledge of the past makes it impossible for him to lead a life with no choice and no say in the most essential elements of private life. And so Jonas chooses to leave, but then Lowry puts him in a situation where she tests his convictions and at the same time makes the reader question the judgment he or she might have formed about sameness. Jonas regrets his choice as we read in the novel: "Once he had yearned for choice. Then, when he had had a choice, he had made the wrong one: the choice to leave. And now he was starving" (217).

2. Sameness vs. the Right to Life:

The right to life is defined by the Human Rights Commission as "[e]veryone's right to life shall be protected by Law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which his penalty is provided by law". This article entails that all human beings have an inherent right to life and for that life to be protected by law under all circumstances, unless justifiable by law. Nowadays, the question of life and the intrinsic right for such life to be provided has been met with much debate and controversy. With the advancement of technology and human

consciousness, life has taken a controllable parameter; with the existence of elements such as life-support and assisted suicide, the question of death and life has become more complex and one's right to either cause for much debate.

This debate is addressed in *The Giver*, through a concept called "Release". This term only acquires a clear meaning much later in the story, but readers instantly feel suspicious about it upon first contact. Lowry introduces this notion early in the story, As it has been mentioned previously, some events at the beginning of the novel, which serve as an introduction to the world of sameness, create an atmosphere of constant unease which leaves the reader perplexed about the turn of events the novel might take. Among them is the mistaken pilot which the speaker announces will be "released". Although the speaker uses a sarcastic tone, we quickly learn that such announcements are to be taken very seriously and that release is not a concept to be made fun of. The narrator further explains that: "For a contributing citizen to be released from the community was a final decision, a terrible punishment, and an overwhelming statement of failure" (3). From this specific instance, the reader understands the ambiguity of the term and what it could entail. This goes back to the fundamental debate of whether or not death can be deliberate. This debate usually comes in two forms and two major concepts that are also discussed in the Human Rights Convention, which address how Article 2 of the right to life applies on someone's rights, concerning the life or death debate.

The Death Penalty, also referred to as the Capital Punishment, dates back to the Code of Hammurabi, which legalized the use of the penalty for a total of 25 crimes. It went on to become the primed punishment for almost all crimes in ancient and medieval times, most notably in the Draconian Code of Athens, it was carried out via crucifixions, drowning, impalement, and many other ways. More recently during Henry VIII's reign, 72,000 death

penalty cases were recorded, for crimes such as marrying a person of Jewish faith, treason, and heresy. Nowadays, the case for the capital punishment is met with much more reticence than the preceding centuries. The popular opinion in favor of the death penalty declines every year, as its usefulness appeared to be hard to attest. Eventually, in 2002 it was abolished by the Human Rights Commission. Although Article 2 of the right to life left the case for rulings provided by law following convictions, Protocol 13, Article 1 was ratified in 2002 and quite clearly states that the death penalty "shall be abolished. No one shall be condemned to such penalty or executed".

Many Dystopian societies use the death penalty as a deterrent for any protest or uprising against the established system or dogma. For instance, George Orwell's *1984* makes the account of a crime called "thought crime" which is essentially having negative thoughts and perception of the totalitarian regime of Big Brother, the punishment for thought crime is death, no jail or labor. What is called Democide i.e. the systematic murder of any citizen or people by a government, is brought forth as a right by the new government in place. Another example, more recently in Suzann Collins' *The Hunger Games*, in the third installment *Mockingjay*(2010), President Snow, the ruler of "Panem" a future dystopian United States, announces that anyone who associates themselves with the mockingjay symbol will be executed on the account of treason. In *The Giver*, however, this explicit threat of execution if a person poses a threat to the system does not exist; instead the death penalty is so implicit that people do not feel frightened by it. Most simply see it as being sent somewhere, banished from the community because they could not conform. They do not fit in; they are a failure and so they *naturally* need to be sent away so as not to corrupt the perfect society under sameness.

Sameness forces perfection on its people, and any oversight or mistake, any citizen who repeatedly breaks the rules, oversteps the boundaries, or does not fit in is "released." Later on during the ritual of "The telling of feelings" (6), Jonas' mother tells them that she feels as though she has failed to steer a community member back in the right way, as he had broken a rule for a second time, she dejectedly states that the rules are strict in the community and "if there's a third transgression, he simply has to be released" (11). Jonas's mother simply shows us that in their judicial system, people are given three chances to break rules before they are "simply released". The reader realizes that there are no jails; consequently they just get rid of a problem citizen when they feel it is necessary. Release has become the easy solution to anyone which the elders deem imperfect. This matter-of-fact statement illustrates the harshness of rules imposed by the Elders, and the length the community would reach to keep the society as perfect and utopian as possible.

Lowry provides a commentary on what the death penalty could mean in a world where the very concept of death does not exist. People in Jonas' community perceive release for making mistakes an understandable punishment because they naively believe that the people who have failed will be sent "elsewhere", and that is because references to death are embedded in euphemisms such as "going Elsewhere." As the narrator explains: "Those who were released—even as new children—were sent Elsewhere and never returned to the community" (54). In reality, this brainwashing technique that allows the elders and the whole concept of sameness to ensure that the citizens of the community conform and are perfect components that contribute to the maintaining of a flawless system.

Release thus far within the novel looks to be a penalty and the simplest way to correct the community's mistakes; however, we learn later that it applies to newborn children and senior citizens of the community. At the House of the Old, an old woman of the name Larissa

speaks of celebrating the release of one of the residents at the House. Release takes on a hopeful tone; old people are released after a long and fulfilled life, they tell their lives achievements and then they "raised [their] glasses and cheered. [they] chanted the anthem" (41). When Jonas asks where exactly do the released old go, she simply replies: "I don't know. I don't think anybody does, except the committee. He just bowed to all of us and then walked, like they all do, through the special door in the Releasing Room. But you should have seen his look. Pure happiness, I'd call it" (ibid).

The release of the Old is considered a celebration that all the old are released, and they are all purely happy about it. Yet, when Larissa answers Jonas' question saying she does not know, we understand that there is a darker side to it. Release of contributing community members is a devastating event in the community simply because they have controlled numbers of people, and the elders cannot afford losing a newly assigned community member to a mere mistake. But for the old who have completed their lives, Release means disposal of the unneeded members. The old do not contribute to the society; they mean nothing to the elders, so naturally they are released. In this specific case, Release takes on the form of Euthanasia, this is also a very controversial point of discussion.

Euthanasia comes from the Greek words, Eu (good) and Thanatosis (death) and it means "Gentle and Easy Death." This word has come to be used for "mercy killing." Euthanasia is, like capital punishment, a highly controversial topic. There are several good reasons why most countries of the Western world have abolished capital punishment, one being to prevent the execution of innocent people who were wrongly convicted. If euthanasia is legalized, people who are wrongly diagnosed as having a terminal illness may seek the option to die. There are also fears that euthanasia, like capital punishment, will brutalize the society that legalizes it. Those in favor of euthanasia argue that a civilized

society should allow people to die in dignity and without pain, and should allow others to help them do so if they cannot manage it on their own. Euthanasia, however, is outlawed as what the right to die is not part of the Human Rights convention on the right to life. The right to life specifically states that everyone's life must be protected by the government, which entails that even if the person asks to die, this request shall not be granted. A poignant example of said refusal comes from the case of *Pretty vs. United Kingdom*. A request from a terminally ill woman to grant her husband the right to assist her suicide upon her request was refused by the court, and it was ruled that "no right to die whether at the hands of a third person or with the assistance of a public authority can be derived from Article 2 of the convention."

Euthanasia under Sameness serves a much darker utilitarian purpose. The community commits terrible atrocities in the name of sameness. They get rid of elders once their role in the community is complete, and anyone who does not fit in is killed. An example of this is the systematic release of twins. The community deems the existence of two identical people too "confusing" for everyone, which in its own sense is quite ironic for a society that seeks sameness to delete one identical twin. Since they are children and the elders cannot make a judgment on which to keep, for they have not committed a mistake or they have not exhibited any personality trait that would deem them unfit to be a member of the society, the judgment is based upon a parameter as arbitrary as weight. When Jonas witnesses his father "releasing" a twin, he realizes that their society is intrinsically flawed, for the reason that any society that kills innocent newborns is wrong. He exclaims: "He killed it! My father killed it! Jonas said to himself, stunned at what he was realizing. He continued to stare at the screen numbly (188). Jonas knows that the infant is dead. His father must too, since he throws the child down the garbage chute. Yet in this society, there is nothing wrong with what he did. He feels no remorse.

Babies who are deemed inferior and elderly people who are unable to carry out tasks are merely 'released'. It is only towards the end of the novel that Jonas realizes being 'released'. In one scene, he witnesses his father lethally inject a baby that according to elders had no place in the community. Melissa Gross, who writes about childhood abandonment and violence in literature, says of *The Giver*:

Throughout, citizens who cannot comply with the rules are simply released. This process is a highly formalized part of this carefully ordered society that sanctifies murder at any point in the human life cycle for individuals who do not fit in or who express a desire to be sent 'Elsewhere.' Release is performed as a perfunctory part of an assigned duty, without pain, guilt, or remorse. (109)

There is, however, a difference between release and loss, but even in cases of loss the attachment felt by these people for each other is ephemeral. When four-year-old Caleb wanders away and drowns in the river, the whole community is able to release their memory of him by performing a "Ceremony of Loss." Everyone speaks his name throughout the day, at longer and longer intervals and in softer and softer tones, until it seems that the child has just faded away (44). The simplicity with which this concept is tackled is really unsettling for most readers. This concept made *The Giver* one of the most contested books of American literature; people saw its message and simplification of something as abstract and complex as death to be an oversight, and almost blasphemy to the meaning of life.

3. Sameness vs. Individuality, and Emotion:

In *The Giver*, Sameness means that all aspects of life should conform to a universal example, a mold that befits all the citizens and shapes them all into one entity. Anything that makes humans unique, feeling beings is not only suppressed but absolutely non-existent. Where sameness seemed to serve a greater good at doing away with what divides the human race, it also let go of what brings us together. The emotions we feel towards our parents and siblings, the love and basic instincts we feel towards our life-long mate, and the basic purity of deeply rooted friendship. These emotions are what life and humanity all about. Our individuality, our differences, colors the world and the life around us, from music, to paintings, to the basic expression of our personal taste in the way we express ourselves. All these enriching experiences are shunned by the Elders and the concept of sameness.

Jonas is selected to be a receiver of every memory of the past, so the rest of the community does not have to. The society in the novel does not want to experience fear and anxiety because that leads to other emotions, which have no place in the community. Although some memories are wonderful to accept, Jonas is also given memories of war, genocide, and starvation. He does not only receive memories from these events, but also the emotions and feelings associated with it. Jonas comes to realize that with the memories come emotions he has never felt before.

Two major memories which the old Giver transmits to Jonas encompass what life really is like in the community when individuality and emotions are not part of the equation. The first of the two is the memory of a birthday party. This memory is transmitted to Jonas by the Giver in attempt to quell Jonas' reticence at receiving anymore memories after a deeply horrifying memory, that of war. Illustrated in Chapter Fifteen, Jonas is transmitted

excruciating memories of fighting, genocide, and hunger. He does not only receive memories and images from the war, but also the emotions and feelings connected to warfare. Jonas finds himself experiencing the pain of a wounded soldier as he immerses himself in the memory as the narrator explains:

One of Jonas' arms was immobilized with pain, and he could see through his own torn sleeve something that looked like ragged flesh and splintery bone... Overwhelmed by pain he lay there in the fearsome stench for hours, listened to the men and animals die, and learned what warfare meant. (150-1)

The Chief Elder told Jonas that being the new Receiver of Memories would expose him to pain, that the experience would be far more painful than anyone has ever experienced and that he would need courage for it. The Chief elder says that it won't be of the same nature as the physical pain he experienced when his hand was caught in a door the year before, she explains that he "will be faced ... with pain of a magnitude that none of us here can comprehend because it is beyond our experience" (79). The community cannot deal with these emotions, and so they select a member of the community that will absorb all of the painful memories of the past, and so they cannot prepare him for what being a receiver really entails. Jonas only really understands how unknowing his classmates are when he finds himself playing a game that, to him, all of a sudden takes on a much darker connotation as the narrator informs us: "It was a game he had often played with other children, a game of good guys and bad guys... he had never recognized it before as a game of war" (167). He

vehemently objects them playing said game, but he is confronted by Asher who reminds him that as a Recreation director only Asher has the authority to decide. It is then that Jonas realizes that they will not understand the magnitude of emotional pain.

However, apart from being transmitted sadness and pain, he also receives love and joy. The memory of the birthday party was shared after the memory of pain, when the Giver convinces Jonas that "[t]here are so many good memories" that can make up for the horrifying memory he received prior. He recalls the memory of a time when "a child was singled out and celebrated on his birthday, so that now he understood the joy of being an individual, special, unique and proud" he recalls visits to museums and paintings filled with colors he had never seen before (152). He had seen animals which he thought were mere imagination and the bond humans and animals can have.

The second memory is that of Christmas, which the Giver admits is his favorite memory; it is in that memory that Jonas perceives the concepts of love and family. The Giver asks Jonas if he perceived anything from the memory he replies saying "Warmth, and happiness. And – let me think. *Family* ... I couldn't get the word for the whole feeling of it, the feeling that was so strong in the room" to which the Giver answers "Love" (155-157). And Jonas admits that he liked the feeling and that he wishes that the community has something akin to what the people in the memory had, it felt more complete. However, no one else is able to reciprocate his feelings. Later on, out of curiosity Jonas asks his parents if they love him, they respond by chastising him saying: "You have used a very generalized word, so meaningless that it's become almost obsolete... You could ask, 'Do you enjoy me? The answer is yes', his mother said" (127). When Jonas's parents ask him if he understands, he tells them his first lie. He realizes that they are the ones who don't understand, and never will.

Sameness means that there simply is no love. People feel mild affection for one another, simple satisfaction, and fleeting friendships. Couples are joined solely for parenting purposes and do not love one another. There is no closeness, or concept of family, thus no emotional bond or feelings felt towards each other. Even in the family unit, and this emotionless relationship translated to the greater community.

Emotions are suppressed through the compulsory use of drugs. Advanced medical technology has enabled the Elders to suppress almost all of the citizens' natural and instinctual abilities. When Jonas, for example, develops "stirrings," he is compelled to take pills regularly to quell what he feels. This makes it harder for them to have empathy. Jonas's Mother makes clear of the immediacy for him to take pills for stirrings when she says: "it was your first stirrings ... you're ready for the pills" (48). This quote is evidence that there are no feelings in this society, Lowry gives us a commentary not only about hormonal control but also about humanity. The fact that the stirrings were quelled by the pill and had gone so easily and that Jonas had guiltily wanted to hold on to them, Lowry warns us about what it could mean if we let go of our basic humanity and instincts. The Elders make more emotional citizens (teenagers and adults) take pills to subdue their feelings and natural instincts, as the Narrator explains the foreignness of a concept vital to human life " 'Love' it was a word and concept new to him." (157) When Jonas is transmitted the memory of love, he perceives the feeling and repeats the word to himself because he has never used that word before let alone know what it meant.

The education system propagates and encourages Sameness, and citizens of every age are carefully monitored and publicly admonished if they should break a rule or disobey an instruction. Sameness requires that language is used as a tool to manipulate and suppress. Citizens are encouraged to use language that does not convey deep feelings and "precision of

language" is consistently taught starting the age of three and mistakes are assimilated as shameful. Language must always be used in neutral terms and should not be offensive or cynical. An example of this strict regulation of language happens when Jonas expected his father to chastise his sister for describing his eyes as "funny" he considered it "insensitive chatter» that was punishable offense under the system of precision of language (26).

Individuality is a set of characteristics and dispositions that distinguishes an individual from any other individual. In Jonas' society, one is expected to conform to the masses, where maintaining an individuality becomes a shame for the community and a transgression punishable by death. There is no room for individuality; Sameness in its literal form means that everything is the same. Every single aspect of life need to be the same, from the clothes they wear to the way they cut their hair. In the community every house is built the same, with the same design, and the same furniture as every other unit. Perfectly organized and immaculate, this takes away this sense of ownership and self that individuality gives humans. Children hit milestones like bicycle riding, schoolwork, and physical development at the same time, and older citizens are released as soon as they are not needed. The Elders have succeeded in suppressing all memory to ensure that citizens are not reminded of the past and cannot, therefore, make any comparisons to their current situation.

General Conclusion:

Synthesis

Throughout this research, we have undertaken a pro and con approach using dialectical reasoning to what Sameness as a philosophical concept entails. From Paul Ricoeur's mathematical definition of Sameness, we managed to understand what Lowry meant to achieve by making this concept such a central motif to all which unfolds in the novel.

As we have explained in the first chapter, Dystopian Literature and its authors take on semi-prophetic roles in their writings, They warn the future generations about what potential threats and plausible futures humanity will have to face sooner or later, as Keith Booker states in his book *The Dystopian Impulse In Modern Literature* (1994): "it may be that dystopian warnings of impending nightmares are ultimately necessary to preserve any possible dream of a better future" (177). The relevance if said warnings is such that novels such as *1984* and *The Giver* by George Orwell and Lois Lowry respectively although written and published half a century apart still resonate today and many approach these books in hopes of greater truths to what is in store for humanity and what it should do in the face of such threats.

Lowry very distinctly and explicitly dedicates her novel to send a message. She writes

"For all the children

To whom we entrust the future"

Lowry believes that it is the author's responsibility to speak up and warn against some of the afflictions of our modern-day world. She draw an image of what could go wrong and solutions to said problems so that future generations may know what to do. However, we are

left with a much more difficult choice, a philosophical question which leaves the door open to much debate, is the solution really worth it?

In the second chapter of this research work, we have established the benefits humanity could reap from the implementation of Sameness. We have seen that two of the most immediate threats to humanity, overpopulation and Climate Change, are tackled in a very effective manner. By controlling the number of citizens, consequently allowing for every citizen to benefit from a fair share of what the community has to offer, overpopulation have become an issue of the past. Climate Change is a heated subject of discussion nowadays more than it ever was when the novel was first published, and Lowry's idea of Climate Control proved to be quite the solution, it allows for crops to grow constantly, for land to be much easier to transport said crops, and to avoid problems related to the weather's unreliability altogether. And finally, we have seen that with the deletion of factors such as race and religion via genetic engineering, Lowry establishes a society where arbitrary judgments based upon superficial factors are non-existent, therefore doing away with what our society deems one of its greatest evils.

In the third chapter, however, we have seen the reverse of the medal. Sameness has proven to mean a cancelation of all that makes us human. It takes away the will of the people, from small choices like what they wish to wear to greater life defining choices such as their job and their spouse. It took hold of the very right of the citizen's lives, releases the young for not fitting in and the old for having no use to the community anymore. And more importantly, Sameness suppresses their very feelings, emotions and human nature. Sameness shows what the mindless pursuit of perfection can result in. a world where humanity is set aside in favor of a perfect system that dictates every single aspect of life without the possibility of retaliation for it is inherently a human attribute, the power of standing up to authority and questioning set dogmas.

This conclusion will serve as a synthesis to chapters two and three. We shall try and bring forth a solution to the debate and answer the very question this research is based upon: Is Sameness inherently good or evil?

And the answer unfortunately is that it all depends. Human nature is much more complex than a simple black or white answer. On one hand, many would sacrifice free will if it means they get to live in an orderly safe community, and on the other hand many would rather die than live in a community where they do not get to choose their own path. What sameness reveals goes beyond its utility in sustaining life, or its controlling power. *The Giver's* purpose and influence take over the simple question of what is right or wrong.

The Giver is one of the most challenging novels in American literature because of the ethical line it crosses. Even though Lois Lowry's purpose was to warn and advise the future generations, it was perceived as a morally corrupt novel because it put its readers out of their comfort zone and forced them to question their very humanity, would they be comfortable euthanizing a new born if it meant securing a job and having a perfect life? Would anyone cancel out what makes them human, the color of their skin, the love they feel towards their children, if it meant that they would never face discrimination again? Would they forget all about the past if it makes the future better?

In this research, we approached sameness from a strictly objective point of view, having presented positives and negatives to sameness. We are leaving the question open to the reader and what they believe is the right answer. It is an inquiry into the deepest parts of humanity, the constant struggle for happiness, and if to some the end justifies the means, and some others disagree, it only serves to explore the deep complexities of human consciousness.

The scarcity of sources which explain the meaning of sameness was a hurdle in our theoretical exploration of the themes that were later discussed in the analytical chapters,

consequently finding a definition to sameness that would remotely match that of what Lois Lowry intends it to be in her novel, was a tough task. Lowry simply took the idea of sameness as "being the same" and explored what it could mean in her novel, and it proved to be complicated to find theories that would back up that view of sameness.

The most difficult part in my research was staying impartial, working with Dialectic reasoning as a theory meant that we had to set aside our presumptions concerning the whole concept of sameness and try to find benefits along with the disadvantages, which most sources seem to solely focus on. Using dialectic reasoning as part of the Philosophical Criticism approach was a hard find. In fact, not many sources were available, and many of those sources could not connect it to literary criticism; however, while reading on dialectic reasoning, we realized it has so much potential in literary analysis classes. In the current thematic analyses we apply on the novels we analyze in class, we tend to simply give out opinions on certain themes. If not asked to use a certain theory such as Feminist criticism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, most students presume that the professor is asking for an opinion, and so instead of a thorough analysis, we find that most are simply opinionated pieces. However, with the implementation of Dialectical Reasoning in thematic analyses of novels, we can perhaps have much more thorough, rational and truly argumentative pieces.

In conclusion, this research work is meant to ask a philosophical question. In the endless pursuit of humanity to make the world a better place, what are we ready to sacrifice? Perhaps we will never know.

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Résumé

Cette thèse identifie et étudie le concept de la similitude dans le roman de jeunesse de Lois Lowry intitulé *Le Passeur* (titre original *The Giver*) paru en 1993, qui fait partie du *The Giver Quartet*. *The Giver* présente une société dans laquelle l'ordre et la conformité sont privilégiés par rapport à l'individualisme et au choix, en éliminant toutes les différences et les émotions individuelles. À titre d'exemple de dystopie, l'auteur imagine un ordre social strictement systématique et organisé dans lequel les gens respectent les règles de façon naturelle et ne remettent pas en question l'ordre dans lequel ils sont forcés de vivre. Ceci est perçu comme une caractéristique principalement autoritaire qui incite à s'interroger sur la validité du concept de similitude introduit par Lois Lowry. Le but principal de cette étude est d'attirer l'attention sur les contributions importantes que les œuvres de dystopie peuvent apporter à travers le roman *The Giver* et sur les vérités qu'elles révèlent sur les humains et sur ce qu'ils sont prêts à sacrifier. Par conséquent, ce roman sera examiné selon une approche philosophique postmoderne et plus particulièrement le raisonnement dialectique de Hegel avec lequel nous pesons les avantages et les inconvénients de la similitude et de son applicabilité dans notre monde moderne.

Mots-clés: Dystopie, Similitude, Raisonnement Dialectique, Sacrifice.