



ANALYSING THE DYSTOPIAN ELEMENTS IN, LOIS LOWRY'S "THE GIVER".

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper engages in the analysis of dystopian elements, within the Lois Lowry's seminal work, "The Giver". The novel belongs to the part of dystopian literature that serves as a reflective lens on societal structures and the control mechanisms in the novel by juxtaposing it with the idea of dystopian society. The analysis explores the key elements such as sameness, emotional suppression, symbolism, governance structures, sense of freedom and the tension between individuality and societal conformity. The Giver introduces the readers to the society that are regulated by the elders.

The analysis begins by examining how the suppression of memory in The Giver contributes to societal control, with a broader exploration of memory manipulation in literature. It also gives an insight to the symbolic elements that plays a part in the role of conveying emotions and contributing to the portrayal of societal control. The governance structure reveals the leadership in the novel, where the elders guide the community with an authoritarian regime. The conflict between individuality and societal conformity is explored by comparing the internal struggle of Jonas in the novel.

KEYWORDS: Dystopian literature, Lois Lowry, The Giver, societal structures, sameness, emotional suppression, symbolism, individuality.

INTRODUCTION

Dystopian is a genre of literature and other artistic expressions that depicts an imagined society which is oppressive with dehumanizing conditions. The term dystopian often explores the dark and undesirable aspects of human nature and societal structures. In these imagined worlds, there is often a pervasive of fear, loss of individuality and freedom, control and suppression of emotions. Dystopian literature serves as a powerful tool for critiquing existing social, political and cultural structures as well as reflecting on the potential consequences of certain paths of development for humanity. Dystopian literature contains the characteristics of authoritarianism that exercise extensive control over citizens. Individuals in dystopian settings often face limitations on personal freedoms and autonomy that their lives are tightly regulated under a structured under to societal norms. Resistance is often one of the main elements in this literature, that the protagonists or groups who resist the oppressive forces, seeking to restore individual freedoms and challenge the established order. This literature often explores the consequences of extreme ideologies or political systems taken to their logical extremes and provides a lens through which readers can reflect on the complexities of human nature, the consequences of unchecked power and the fragility of societal structures.

“The Giver” is a prominent example of dystopian literature, it presents a thought-provoking vision of a society that, while seemingly utopian on the surface, harbors dark and troubling aspects beneath. The society mentioned in the novel, is meticulously controlled by a set of rules and regulations enforced by the elders. The manipulation, suppression of emotions and the sameness results in the loss of individuality.

LITERARY CONTEXT OF DYSTOPIAN ELEMENTS

Lois Lowry’s “The Giver” stand as an influential work within the tapestry of dystopian literature. It contributes unique insights and a new perspective to the genre. As the research delves into the plot, it becomes evident that “The Giver” aligns with and diverges from traditional conventions, as a thought-provoking and influential narrative. Dystopian literature is a genre that emerges prominently during the 20th century that has its roots in cautionary tales that explores the consequences of extreme social structure. In this genre, authors often sought to reflect the social, political and technological changes of the time.

“The Giver” offers an exploration of a seemingly utopian society with unsettling truths. One of its distinguishing features of “The Giver” is its portrayal of a society seemingly devoid of conflict, pain and hardship. The novel presents a world where control is maintained through subtler means. The eradication of memories and the suppression of emotions challenge the traditional notions of dystopian oppression. Also the absence of color, which is a symbolism is used in the novel, offers a unique contribution to the dystopian genre. Lack of colors represents the lack of emotions which connects to the point that it is essential to appreciate the little things in life. The authoritarianism, a regime by the elders showed here marks the structures of society shaped by a selected group, a window to show the over development of rules and technology.

SOCIETAL STRUCTURES

In the novel “The Giver” the societal structure plays a pivotal role in shaping the lives in the community, starting from creating a family with a mother, father, a boy child and a girl child, all these was regulated by a group of elders. The family created is not based on the birth mother married to her husband, all of them are like programmed computer codes, that they were given name, sent to school and then assigned an assignment. Then a male is assigned to a female which they considered to be husband and wife. Then they are supposed to adopt a male child and a female which was assigned them in a ceremony. And this is considered to be a family. The society is likely to be functioned according to the code and conduct of the elders, who controls their emotions and their needs like, family and a life of their own.

Every individual in the community would attend two ceremonies in their life, apart from their adoption ceremony. It is ceremony of the eights and ceremony for twelve. In the ceremony for twelve, every twelve year attained children would given a specific assignment which they are special in. it was decided by the group of elders, who would pay attention, observe and ranks children in their school recreational hour.

During the past year he had been aware of the increasing level of observation. In school, at recreation time and during volunteer hours, he had noticed the elders watching him and the other elevens. He had seen those taking notes.²⁹

The rules and roles that are made in the community have their ranks. The role of birth mother is considered to be the very little honor of the assignment. The women are used to give only three births and they were forced to be laborers for the rest of their life. And even more, the mothers are not allowed to see their children. The society is structured in a way that no individual should feel any emotions, or to live their life according to their will. Even the death of an individual is also controlled by the elders in the community. After a certain period, the older people who had lived enough life, is said to be released, means Death. This is how a dystopian society has been functioning, with unsettling dark truths.

SAMENESS AND SYMBOLISM

The concept of “sameness” and the use of colors as symbolism is one of the characteristics that portrays the functions of dystopian society and contains a deeper meaning. The society given in the novel “The Giver” strives for the sameness in physical appearance to eliminate any form of prejudice or differentiation based on looks. It involves suppression of individuality and uniqueness to create a society where everyone conforms to a predetermined set of characteristics. The lack of uniqueness and the concept sameness extends to the restriction of choices, ensuring everyone adheres to a predetermined set of rules and guidelines.

"The community was so meticulously ordered, the choices so carefully made. What if she made a wrong one?"

The community doesn't consider the ideas and dreams of an individual, because they have none. Every roles and responsibilities for them has been assigned to them by someone who observes and thinks it suits them. There isn't any reconsideration to the tastes and likes of an individual. This loss of individuality and the sameness at surface seems to be perfect functioning environment but this is where the human began losing their identity and forgotten their emotions and to live the little moments in their lives.

Also “colors” are used as a symbolism in the novel that is compared to the emotions and individual identity. The color, Red is a significant symbol in the novel since it represents a string emotions and moments of intensity in an otherwise colorless world. The society sets in the novel “The Giver” is said to be a colorless like a monochromatic world. The people in the community is viewed same and treated same in their appearances.

"But there was something about the memory that disturbed him. Now, thinking about the feel of his own flesh, he remembered that incident of the apple, the first and only time he had ever really felt separate, different."

The apple is a symbolic object that is showed in the book that relates to the individuality and the breaking of societal norms. The red apple and the memory of the giver transmitting the concept of color through a red apple symbolize the introduction of true, unfettered emotions and experiences. Apple represents a break from the rigid sameness enforced in the community and the act of choosing the apple symbolizes Jonas's growing awareness of his individuality and the realization that he can make choices outside the prescribed norms of his community.

THE JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

In Lois Lowry's “The Giver” the concept of freedom is explored within the context of a highly controlled and regulated society. The novel delves into the idea of freedom as a both a physical and emotional state, examining how the absence of true freedom impacts individuals. The lack of freedom is illustrated in the book in various ways. Like, the people in the community do not have the freedom to make significant choices in their lives. Their occupations, family arrangements and even the color of their clothing are predetermined. Also the personal expression and uniqueness of a person is restricted in the society.

"He felt such love for the new child. But it was an imperfect world.
The language they all spoke was imprecise, as were the instructions
that governed their lives."

The concept of family in the novel too is controlled and lacks the genuine emotional connections typically associated with familial relationships. All these restrictions and suppression is felt by Jonas and he despised to be in such environment when he was selected to be “The Receiver”, the receiver of the memory, the one holds all the emotions, hunger, pain and all the everything that a person should go through in his life. Being the receiver, Jonas experiences all these emotions at once and started discovering the dark truths of the community and seeks freedom from all that. Jonas decides to leave the place to give people their freedom by leaving the place. It is said that the

receiver who holds all the emotions leaves the community it would affect the people by scattering all the feelings that belongs to the people.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of dystopian elements in Lois Lowry's "The Giver" reveals a society that seemingly utopian, conceals dark and troubling aspects beneath its structured façade. This research engages in a comprehensive analysis of key elements such as sameness, emotional suppression, symbolism, and governance structures, the sense of freedom and the tension between individuality and societal conformity within the novel. The unsettling truth is that the society functions under the authoritarian rule of the elders, who meticulously control every aspect of the residents' lives. The absence of true family bonds, limited by the lack of human emotions, The societal structures, meticulously designed by the elders, dictate every aspects of life, the control in language all these are characteristics of a dystopian environment in the novel is unveiled in this article.

In conclusion, "The Giver" presents a nuanced exploration of dystopian elements, challenging traditional notions of societal control and the importance of individual freedom. Lois Lowry's seminal work contributes a unique perspective to the dystopian genre, prompting readers to reflect on the fragility of societal structures and the importance of preserving genuine human experiences.

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