Individual and Societal Control in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*

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Pro gradu –tutkielmani tavoitteena on tutkia yksilön ja yhteisön kontrollointia ja sortamista Lois Lowryn nuortenromaanissa *The Giver* (1993). Romaanin päähenkilö on 12-vuotias poika Jonas, jolle tarinan edetessä selviää, että hänen päällisin puolin utopinen yhteisönsä on tiukasti kontrolloitu ja ylläpidetty. Tarinan edetessä ja päähenkilön tietomäärän lisääntyessä alun utopia paljastuu dystopiaksi, mistä päähenkilö lopuksi pakenee.

Tutkielman sisältö on jaettu kolmeen osaan: ensimmäinen osa rakentaa tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen, jossa *The Giver* aluksi sijoitetaan niin perinteisen aikuisten dystopiakirjallisuuden kuin nuorten dystopiakirjallisuuden perinteeseen. Teoreettista viitekehystä täydennetään keskustelulla neljästä kurinpitotekniikasta, jotka Michel Foucault esittelee kirjassaan *Tarkkailla ja Rangaista* (1977). Lisäksi pohditaan Foucault'n Panopticonin pohjalta kehittämiä ajatuksia kontrollin sisäistämisestä ja jatkuvan tarkkailun mahdollisuudesta luoda yksilöitä, jotka tarkkailevat ja kontrolloivat itse itseään.

Seuraavat kaksi osaa muodostavat tutkielman analyysiosion: ensimmäinen osa tarkastelee yksilön hallintaa ja yksilönvapauden riistoa keskittyen fyysisten ja henkisten yksityistilojen hävittämiseen ja ruumiillisen koskemattomuuden loukkaamiseen romaanin yhteisössä. Toinen analyysiosio laajentaa tarkastelun koko yhteisöön kohdistuviin kontrollointikeinoihin; yhteisön historiallisen muistin poistamiseen ja kielellisen monimuotoisuuden tukahduttamiseen.

Avainsanat: nuortenkirjallisuus, dystopia, Lois Lowry, kontrolli

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1. Introduction

The aim of my thesis is to investigate how the individuals and society are controlled in the dystopian society in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993). The vast systems of control infiltrate all aspects of human life in the young adult novel, from the institutional to the biological, and thus the novel clearly continues an established dystopian tradition of critiquing totalitarianism and emphasizing the importance of individual freedom and privacy. *The Giver* is the first part of a loose trilogy. The other novels in the series share some similarities in subject, but I have chosen to limit my research on the first novel on the series because of the extreme looseness of connections in the trilogy - characters from earlier novels appear in small roles or are mentioned only in passing in later novels, and every book on the trilogy can be read as a stand-alone novel without any loss of meaning. Also, *The Giver* itself offers a vast amount of material and issues for research.

The Giver follows the life of Jonas, a twelve-year-old boy, who at first seems to live a regular life in a peaceful society nearing utopia where people are taken care of and there are no societal problems. As the story progresses though, the society appears more and more dystopian as the main goal of the society is revealed: "Sameness". To achieve this state where nothing stands out, the society has erased all memories of the past and removed external sources of differences such as physical distinctions and colors through genetic and scientific engineering. To maintain this artificial state of "Sameness", the society has instituted a strict system of control, surveillance and punishments. The inhabitants of the community are constantly observed and controlled in every aspect of their lives: the Committee assigns jobs, housing, wives, husbands and children, sexual desires are suppressed with daily medication

and if found breaking any of the laws and regulations, people are "released", an euphemism for murdering. Jonas is assigned the position of "Receiver of Memory", the person who stores all memories of the time before "Sameness" in his mind in case the community needs advice based on past memories. During his training, Jonas gradually learns the truth of the controlling and observation, and shocked by the brutal fate of a small baby sentenced to release for not meeting the expectations and regulations of the society, escapes from the community and releases the memories back to the community.

There has not been much research on Lowry's *The Giver*, even though it has been awarded with the Newbery Medal for distinguished contribution to American literature for children. I would argue that the lack of research stems from the novel being science fiction for young adults. The popular science fiction genre was long underrated and ignored by the academia, though there are famous instances of dystopian writing such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1920, trans. 1924), being praised and researched. Literature for young adults is similarly on the fringes of academia and often deemed unworthy of proper research. As Sullivan (quoted in Sutliff Sanders 2009, 442) points out, it is "too risky to research a field whose residence in the academic gutter is guaranteed by its attention to fiction that is both juvenile (YA) and popular (sf)." YA stands there for young adult and sf for science fiction.

As a result of belonging to a field on the fringes of academia, *The Giver* has remained relatively un-researched. There are few academic studies on the novel, but though a major issue in *The Giver*, I have only been able to find one article (Latham, 2004) studying the aspect of control. Therefore, I see my research on the topic to be justified and needed. I see it crucial to produce more academic research on one of the most recognized young adult novels. In addition, more research must be produced on the field of dystopian fiction aimed towards

adolescents for it to receive a proper placement and respect in the academia. Besides, the outcast position in the academia has not obstructed the recent boom in popularity of the dystopian fiction for young adults.[1] Thus, dystopian writing for young adults is still an organic, expanding and evolving field of literature that should not be ignored by the academia.

The theoretical framework for the thesis is constructed through discussion on the tradition and features of both adult and adolescent dystopias together with Michel Foucault's writings on power and discipline. The first part of the theory section concentrates on situating *The Giver* within the tradition and characteristics of dystopian fiction, to showcase that the novel continues an established dystopian tradition. The tradition and features are constructed through discussions on classic dystopian novels and their characteristics such as totalitarian collectivism, the falsification of history and memory, the constant threat of punishment or death and the lack of awareness of the oppression, which effectively prevents people from revolting against or opposing the oppressing authority.

The Giver, as most dystopian texts written for young adults, follows the themes and traditions of dystopian literature, but I see it beneficial and necessary to include in the theory chapter a short discussion on the differences between dystopian literature for adults and young adults. I have decided to exclude some of the differences, such as shorter chapters and larger fonts, as they, though acknowledged by academia, do not add anything of relevance to this study. Instead, I will focus on the desire to resist hopelessness in dystopian literature for young adults. Whereas adult dystopias thrive on fear and misery, dystopian writing for young adults has happy or ambiguous endings to lighten the story. To achieve hopefulness in their

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[1] See Laura Miller. 2010. "Fresh Hell. What's Behind the Boom in Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults?" *The New Yorker.* Available at http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2010/06/14/100614crat_atlarge_miller.

texts, writers of dystopian literature for adolescents often give their young protagonists agency and power to change their surroundings.

The third subchapter of the theory section deals with Michel Foucault's writings on four techniques of discipline in *Discipline and Punish* (1977): the art of distribution, the control of activity, the organization of geneses and the composition of forces. The art of distribution states that "discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault, 141). This technique of discipline is used extensively in *The Giver* with its assigned housing and careers: people are distributed where they are needed. The organization of geneses is about training the individuals through tasks of increasing complexity to prepare them to be functioning members of society. In *The Giver*, this is achieved through the education system and its milestones. For example, children's formal training for their assigned roles begins at the age of twelve. The technique of controlling activity states that those activities and interests beneficial to society are encouraged, whereas counterproductive or unproductive activities are discouraged, such as sexual desire in *The Giver*. Similarly, the composition of forces means that interests and talents of the individuals are subjected to work for the community.

In addition, this subchapter will discuss Foucault's ideas on the internalization of control and Panopticon: how constant observation or the assumption of constant observation creates docile people and self-discipline. People begin to monitor themselves and according to Foucault (203), "become the principle of . . . [their] own subjection". As the following discussion on the characteristics of dystopian texts and societies shows, dystopian regimes aspire to modify and train docile people to further their own agendas. As Foucault describes discipline as a power to achieve this, the discussion on the four techniques and docility offers a functional approach for this thesis.

The analysis part is divided into two chapters. The first chapter and its subchapters concentrate on the aspects of control closer to the individual and their loss of individual freedom. The main issues here are the destruction of private spaces and the violation of individual bodily integrity. The individuals are stripped of their private spaces both psychically through nightly discussions of feelings and dream-tellings that force the inner thoughts to be shared with the planted microphones that, together with the loudspeakers, disturb and demolish the idea of a concrete, physical private space. As pointed out earlier, the individuals' bodies and relationships are regulated and controlled with daily medication and genetic engineering in *The Giver*. Their bodily integrity is destroyed from the cellular level onwards, and as no totalitarian system can uphold a comprehensive system of control like the one in the novel without a threat (and execution) of punishments, they are subjected to mental and bodily punishments that vary according to the severity of the infringement, from chastisement and public shame to physical violence and killing.

The second part of the analysis discusses the broader aspects of control that affect the community more as a whole. The section concentrates on memory and language, the main areas carrying collective identity and history, and their destruction. As the inhabitants only have memories of the immediate past and no recollection of the time before 'Sameness', collective identity, any form of historical memory and the understanding of the connectedness of people are prevented from forming. As Gottlieb (12) notes, "access to the records of the past is vital to the mental health of any society". Memories, history and identity are carried by language and as such, language is a crucial part in controlling the collective in *The Giver*. There is a demand for precise language that is taught and instilled in children very early on but, at the same time, dangerous words that might have the power to destruct the system are

replaced with vague expressions or euphemisms, resulting in a narrow vocabulary that lacks the ability to properly express the world the language is used in.

2. Theoretical Framework

As was pointed out in the introduction, the theory section is divided in three subchapters. The first subchapter concentrates on the tradition and characteristics of dystopian fiction. The discussion begins with a short description of the ambiguity between utopian and dystopian fiction and continues there to the main characteristics and themes of dystopian fiction. The second subchapter focuses on dystopian fiction aimed towards young adults, as the *The Giver* is aimed towards a younger audience and therefore needs to be situated within that tradition as well. The subchapter concentrates on two characteristics that separate the adolescent dystopias from the adult ones: the resistance to hopelessness and the existence of agency for the young protagonists in the novels. The theory section is completed by Michel Foucault's four techniques of discipline and his Panopticon-inspired concept of docile bodies. As the introduction depicted, the issues and concepts Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) are present in most dystopian texts. Thus, this thesis benefits from including and concentrating on those issues when developing its theoretical framework.

2.1 The Tradition and Characteristics of Dystopian Fiction

It is almost impossible to define dystopian fiction without mentioning utopia. Most of the critics refer back to Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), where the word utopia was first used, as their basis when discussing dystopian literature and its origins. Murphy (472) continues this tradition by noting that some "view the social collectivism of eutopias such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) . . . as dystopian". Utopian and dystopian fictions share certain similarities, as Huntington (124) points out:

> [b]oth [utopia and dystopia] are exercises in imaging coherent wholes, in making an idea work, either to lure the reader towards an ideal or to drive the reader back from a nightmare. Both are the expression of a synthetic imagination, a comprehension and expression of the deep principles of happiness or unhappiness.

Both utopia and dystopia explore social and political structures, but where utopian fiction is about the perfect society and the ideal social, political and legal system, dystopian fiction is about the nightmarish world. As McAlear (25) argues, the persuasive strategy governing utopias is hope, whereas fear governs dystopias. Huntington (124) continues that utopia offers "single, foolproof structures which solve social dilemmas, [whereas] the anti-utopian form discovers problems, [and] raises questions and doubts". Dystopian fiction has its roots so deeply in utopian fiction that it is often defined in relation to utopia. Many of the terms coined to describe the genre, such as negative utopia and anti-utopia, define it as something opposite to utopia, but the distinction between utopian and dystopian is not always apparent, as several works combine both utopian and dystopian elements, and many of the dystopian worlds and their failures emerge from utopian dreams. Murphy (473) argues that the "dystopian inversion did appear in the late nineteenth century" and mentions such publications as Walter Besant's *The Revolt of Man* (1882) and *The Inner House* (1888), H.C. Marriot-Watson's *Erchomenon* (1879) and H.G. Well's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) as leading this inversion.

According to Tower Sargent (9), dystopia is "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived". While Sargent's definition of dystopia is certainly functional and captures the essence of dystopian societies, I see it fit to expand it to properly capture and emphasize the importance of time which is highlighted by later critics. As Baccolini (114) notes, "[a]ll utopias and dystopias are dependent on their historical context for understanding". Dystopian fiction cannot be disconnected from its historical context and it must be seen as product of its

time. This might at first seem that dystopian fiction has a limited time of relevance, but the issues present in dystopian fictions are often larger issues that remain relevant for years and years, such as environmental issues or ever increasing technological inventions.

Stillman (35) writes that dystopias "warn the inhabitants of contemporary society about possible disastrous conclusions to certain important or powerful trends in their societies". In addition to current trends, dystopias tend to criticize societal norms and political systems that the writers see as threatening the wellbeing of society and its inhabitants. As Stillman (35) notes, the exaggerated dystopian vision is created as "the author selects, emphasizes, and magnifies undesirable, destructive, or dehumanizing aspect or tendencies of contemporary society". The question that rises here is evident: how can such a severely exaggerated vision succeed in warning people of the perils of certain political systems or norms? Though exaggerated, the vision is firmly rooted in reality, as dystopias "begin from real events, existing possibilities, and current dreams" (Stillman, 35). The readers recognize this connection to their realities and are therefore capable of accepting the exaggerated vision as a possible future for their world. The aim of dystopian criticism is to awaken people to notice the possible disastrous futures and conclusions, if people remain passive and inactive in societal issues. Thus, the readers must make the connection between their world and the imagined world of the dystopian text for the text to reach its goals.

In addition to identifying the connection between the dystopian text and their realities, the readers must feel that they are in a position to influence the situation. The fear-governed persuasive strategy combined with a bleak vision of the future can be a paralyzing combination, if the readers do not feel that they are, at least, in some way capable of preventing the disastrous vision. As Sisk (11) argues,

> the successful dystopia cannot propose problems that the reader will perceive as beyond their ability to change; their mission is to motivate the reader not merely horrify. . . For the fiction to succeed as a didactic warning readers must be able to both identify the contemporary source of the extrapolated horrors and feel capable of preventing them. Therefore, it behooves dystopian writers to base their hellish societies on concepts that will make the most readers simultaneously feel personally threatened and empowered to resist.

For example, the horrors of dystopian fiction concentrating on environmental issues, like Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* (1968) and *The Sheep Look Up* (1972), can guide the reader to search for empowerment from recycling or becoming a vegetarian. The act of resistance and the effort to prevent the horrors do not have to be major ones but rooted in the reality of the readers.

Gottlieb's (18) description of dystopian society embodies many of the main characteristics and themes of dystopian fiction:

> A hell on earth, an absurd, death-bound social-political system where the elite deliberately conspires against its own people, against the most universal principles of justice, with emphasis on nightmarish rigged trials, with make-believe accusations followed by all-too-real sentences to hard labour or death.

The most prominent feature evoked by Gottlieb's depiction is the violent and comprehensive societal oppression of the individual. As Malak (10) writes, dystopian fiction concentrates on "power as the prohibition or perversion of human potential; power in its absolute form that, to quote from *1984*, tolerates no flaws in the pattern it imposes on society". Societal control in classic dystopias is achieved and maintained through various modes of control and their combinations that invade all aspects of human life - religious, philosophical, technological, corporate and bureaucratic control. For example, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has the political ideology of Ingsoc, William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is about a world of virtual reality and powerful corporations overpowering nations, and Margaret Atwood's *The*

Handmaid's Tale (1985) takes place in a totalitarian theocracy. Malak remarks that "[d]ystopias thus show, in extreme terms, power functioning efficiently and mercilessly to its optimal totalitarian limit" (10).

It should be noted, as Gottlieb (8) points out, that "each dystopian society contains within it seeds of a utopian dream". That is to say, the dystopian society is born from a utopian desire to better the society or guide it through a crisis but the solution quickly becomes a permanent system "of a quasi-utopian ideology" (9), an outlook of totalitarian collectivism that emphasizes the significance of group goals over individual goals. As the reverse of individualism, totalitarian collectivism annihilates individual choice and freedom for the sake of the group goals set by the authorities, and cohesion within the society becomes an aspiration. As Aldridge (65) argues in relation to the discussion of the relatedness of utopia and dystopia in the beginning of the theory section, "[dystopia's] distinguishing feature lies in the dramatization of a utopic structure, the activization of utopic ideas that become dystopic when adumbrated through their effects on the individual." The power to control the society is distributed to the elite, like Big Brother and the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, The Benefactor in *We* by Zamyatin, and the Oligarchy in Jack London's *Iron Heel* (1908)*,* whereas the rest of the people become a faceless mass working for the betterment of society without individual identity, aspirations or means to influence their surroundings. Like the tireless worker ants, they are to be a unified entity, working together to support the society. The society in *The Give*r aims to achieve "Sameness", which in short is about transforming people into a unified entity; differences in physical appearances are removed through genetic engineering, people are handled as big groups rather than individuals, and even the environment is controlled and remains forever the same.

The utopian desire is often rooted in progress, innovative ideas and technological discoveries that are embraced in the pursuit of a perfect society, but as the utopian desires become the dystopian reality, the society "appear[s] constantly static: founded on coercion and rigid structures, the system resists change and become[s] arrested in paralysis" (Malak 11). New ideas and discoveries could disrupt the totalitarian system and its power structures and are therefore shunned by the ruling elite. Malak concludes that dystopian systems are afraid of the unknown future as it is uncontrollable, but I argue that they are afraid of the past as well. The past and memories are rigidly controlled in dystopian societies; to name a few examples, all memories are erased in *The Giver*, and history and records are falsified and rewritten in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by the Party. As the quote from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (117) depicts, the past and knowledge of it affects how the present is understood:

> And when memory failed and written records were falsified - when
> that happened, the claim of the Party to have improved the conditions
> of human life had got to be accepted, because there did not exist, and
> never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested.

Without proper knowledge of the past, the present cannot be challenged as it cannot be compared to anything that could reveal the abuse and oppression assigned by the ruling elite. Controlling the history and memories of the nation and denying the future ensures the static existence of the society. As both future and past are deemed dangerous, society "no longer differentiates between present and past [and future]" (Gottlieb, 12). The dystopian societies are left with the eternal present.

The falsification of history and memory relates to propaganda where the regime uses all medium of communications to further its lies and agenda. Propaganda presents facts selectively, omitting or changing those that do not support the regime's actions, and often wishes to produce an emotional response rather than a rational one. The aim of comprehensive propaganda is to impart and instill the wanted belief system, and with

censorship and the juridical system to prevent conflicting thoughts from surfacing. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the telescreens constantly bombard people with propaganda as the screens cannot be turned off, and in *The Giver* the loudspeakers, also permanently on, all around the community remind people of the laws and regulations and give directions when needed.

To maintain the societal oppression and power distribution, the oppressive regime creates a complex juridical system that dictates in extreme detail what one is not allowed to do and the harsh punishments for any offences. The juridical system constantly adapts and modifies the laws and regulations according to the current trends it sees as threats to the regime, making it almost impossible for the inhabitants to know what is demanded of them. The juridical system becomes a weapon against the people that justifies the regime's constant surveillance and censoring its subjects. From the complex juridical system emerges another prominent feature of dystopian fiction; the constant threat of punishment or death as a way to maintain the oppressive societal control. Violence is imposed on society and regulated by the ruling party through strict rules and legal system. The punishments vary according to the severity of the infringement, though the twisted legal system designed to maintain the societal power rather overdoes the punishment than neglects its opportunity to showcase the system's power and instill fear in people. *The Giver* has forced euthanasia, *The Handmaid's Tale* has labor camps where the non-persons are exposed to radioactive waste and die painful deaths as a result, and offenders are subjected to lobotomy in *We*.

In addition, dystopian fiction often positions violence as entertainment. In *Running Man* (1982) by Stephen King (under the pseudonym Richard Bachman), the protagonist takes part in a government-operated game show where contestants are chased by Hunters employed to kill them. *The Long Walk* (1979) by Bachman is about an annual walking contest where

walkers are shot, if they do not meet the requirements of the contest. In Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008), child representatives from districts surrounding the Capitol compete in televised battle to death as a punishment for a previous rebellion against the Capitol. Though presented as entertainment, these shows function as warnings as well. They are manifestations of the power the state or other ruling party has and the inhabitants are reminded that they could one day be contestants in such games, if they become a nuisance to the ruling party. The shows also make death and violence constant parts of their lives.

Dystopian fiction uses the protagonist's perspective to show the readers the negative aspects of the world the protagonist inhabits. As Mihailescu (215) says, "dystopias are stories that contrast the failure of the main character with the unstoppable advance of society towards totalitarianism". The protagonist begins to question the political system and power structures around him and may actively try to escape the distressing environment, when he "recognizes that instead of the rule of civilized law and justice, dystopian society functions as a primitive state religion that practices the ritual of human sacrifice" (Gottlieb, 10-11). The scale of the oppression is revealed to the readers simultaneously with the protagonist: the reader learns with the protagonist about the society, a learning curve that often ends with the protagonist's own trial where the true scope of control and oppression is revealed and "followed by inevitably harsh judgment" (Gottlieb, 10). As Gottlieb (10) continues, most of the classic dystopian novels, such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, *We*, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury, and *Player Piano* (1952) by Kurt Vonnegut, employ the protagonist's trial to "juxtapose the protagonist's belief in individualism with the elite's ideology [totalitarian collectivism], aimed at the elimination of the individual". Though *The Giver* lacks the protagonist's trial, the typical dystopian learning curve is present. At first the society appears almost utopian, but the dystopian elements become evident as Jonas learns more about the social system around him.

Though an extensive depiction of the characteristics, it is surprising that both Gottlieb and Malak have excluded one of the major characteristics often found in dystopian writing from their discussion: the inhabitants' lack of awareness of the oppression. As the reverse of the protagonist, the other characters in dystopian fiction never learn the proper scope of the social and political systems controlling them or the havoc the authorities have wreaked on individualism and identity. The characters' faith in the authorities is blind and even though the protagonist might try to expose the truth, the other characters refuse to believe it. They are led like lambs to the slaughter, never questioning or doubting the official orders or decisions. This, of course, is one of the aims of the totalitarian society, as the ignorance effectively prevents the subjects from revolting against or opposing the oppressing authority. This ignorance is achieved through the aforementioned control of the past – one cannot revolt if one does not know of anything better – and the strict use of power and control. From the writer's perspective, these characters warn against being a passive member of society and letting the disastrous future to take place.

2.2 "You May Lead a Child to Darkness, but You Can't Turn out the Lights" - Dystopian Writing for Young Adults

Dystopian writing for young adults has existed long before its current surge in popularity. Hintz and Ostry (2003a, 1) argue that one of the earliest novels connected to utopian and dystopian writing for young adults is Sarah Fielding's *The Governess or, Little Female Academy* (1749). The novel is admittedly a utopian novel aimed to teach children the proper way of behaving and "the ideal social organization" (Hintz and Ostry, 2003a, 1), but as dystopian and utopian writing are linked together, it can be seen as the first step towards the dystopian tradition for young adults. As the combination of science fiction and adolescent

literature has pushed dystopian writing for young adults to the fringes of academia, not much research has been done on its history and emergence. The earliest recognized dystopian novels for young adults are from the 19th century: *Paris in the Twentieth Century* (1863) by Jules Verne and *The Time Machine* (1895) by H. G. Wells, but they were not intentionally aimed towards younger audiences. Robert A. Heinlein, with publications such as *"If This Goes On—"* (1940), is often recognized as a pioneer in young adult science fiction (Sutliff Sanders, 444-445), but there are no in-depth studies on the dystopian themes on his work.

More research has been done on the general history of young adult literature, which often focuses on the 1950's as the basis of the early history of modern young adult literature with publications of *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D. Salinger and *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding (Owen, 11). Though these were written for older audiences as well, *Lord of the Flies* is nowadays recognised as dystopian young adult literature. The history of dystopian writing for young adults is continued by such publications as *The White Mountains* (1967) by John Christopher and *The Keeper of the Isis Light* (1980) by Monica Hughes. The history of dystopian young adult fiction in English therefore spans over 150 years and some of the publications even predate the classical, canonical dystopias, and some have gained proper recognition by the academia.

Young adult dystopias have adopted most of the themes and traditions of classic dystopian literature but they differ in their resistance to hopelessness. The protagonists in classic dystopias often fail to free themselves from the oppression; D-503 in Zamyatin's *We* is subjected to the Great Operation that removes the imagination, at the end of Huxley's *Brave New World* John hangs himself, and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Winston becomes a believer, one of Big Brother's faithfuls. On the other hand, Jonas in *The Giver* successfully escapes the oppressive community while simultaneously saving Gabriel from certain death and giving the memories back to the community. In *Little Brother* (2008) by Cory Doctorow, the

protagonist, Marcus, organizes resistance against the Department of Homeland Security which is turning the city into a police state after a terrorist attack. The novel ends with a happy note as the Department of Homeland Security is losing its power due to Marcus' actions and his life returns to normal.

Hope is "traditionally the animating force in children's books" (Harrison, quoted in Sambell, 165) and the existence of this optimistic outlook is often quoted as the key feature distinguishing children's and adolescent's literature from adults (Sambell, 165). As the young adult dystopias write about the same issues with the same ways as adult dystopias, the resistance to hopelessness is often criticized as "compromising the narrative strategies" (Hintz and Ostry 2003a, 16) and substituting the despair present in classic dystopian novels with clichéd happy endings or ambiguous endings that can be read in many different ways. *The Giver* itself has an open ending that can be read either so that Jonas and Gabriel survive and find a safe place for them or that they die in the snow storm.[2]

Sambell (172) criticizes the ambiguous endings and points out that "[c]hildren's writers tend to replace the unequivocally unhappy ending of the adult antecedents with more ambiguous, open structures. . . [and] authors ultimately suggest the future possibility, however slim, of a safe space that child protagonist may inhabit." In other words, Sambell argues that the young protagonists are saved regardless of the situation they are written into, even if surviving the situation seemed completely infeasible. One of the earliest and most praised examples of dystopian writing for young adults is the aforementioned *Lord of the Flies*, which has a somewhat miraculous ending as Ralph is saved from a manhunt by a British naval vessel that happens to see the fires set to the forest. It is remarkable that the novel was, with its happy and infeasible ending, aimed towards older audiences at first. This,

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[2] Lowry's *Gathering Blue* (2000) confirms the survival of Jonas, though Lowry has earlier refused to comment on the "true" interpretation of the ending but has embraced the different interpretations. See her Newbery Award acceptance speech, available at http://www.loislowry.com/.

as such, weakens Sambell's argument that the presumed flaw that is happy and almost miraculous endings is present only in young adult fictions. I would argue that Sambell's idea of the definite unhappy endings in adult dystopias is somewhat outdated and that the borders between adult and young adult dystopias are beginning to blur, though the division between these two has never been completely clear.

Furthermore, Baccolini and Moylan (2003a, 7) discuss the new critical dystopias that transformed the dystopian genre during the 1990s. These critical dystopias include "at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with eutopia" (Sargent, quoted in Baccolini and Moylan, 2003a, 7), and Baccolini and Moylan (2003a, 7) continue that these "new critical dystopias allow both readers and protagonists to hope by resisting closure: the ambiguous, open endings. . . maintain the utopian impulse within the work." The current trend in dystopian fiction for adults allows hope through ambiguous and open endings that are under scrutiny when used in adolescent fiction.

Young adult writers argue that writing happy or ambiguous endings to dystopian novels is not a lie or a lazy way out. As Crutcher comments, "there is always some sense of hope in the world" (quoted in Ritter, 9) that should be present in young adult literature. Kristen D. Randle (quoted in Ritter, 10) argues that the bleak endings of classical dystopian endings do not necessarily enhance the warning but can rather work as disincentive:

> 'Bleak' books allow only one focus, often claiming that they do so in order to offer comfort to the wounded and introduce compassion to the uninitiated. But the solution to drowning has never been, to my understanding, to push the face of the struggling swimmer deeper in to the water.

Young adult writers have reflected greatly upon their desire to write hope into their texts and have acknowledged the difficult position some children inhabit. Lowry (quoted in Hintz and Ostry 2003b, 199) herself points out that children and young adults inhabit a dystopian world to begin with:

> Young people handle dystopia every day: in their lives, their
> dysfunctional families, their violence-ridden schools. They watch
> dystopian television and movies about the real world where firearms
> bring about explosive conclusions to conflict.

One of the main reasons for the existence of hope in young adult dystopian fiction is the writers' heightened awareness of their audience. Writers of all genres must determine or at least acknowledge their audience in some point in their writing process. This awareness and acknowledgement of the audience is recognized and given high importance by the writers of young adult fiction as "the young reader's view of the world is still forming" (Catherine Ryan Hyde quoted in Ritter, 10). The ethical and moral duties of a writer are often an immense interest for writers of adolescent fiction, but Crutcher (quoted in Ritter, 9) argues that the writers have no obligation to be the moral guardians of adolescents: "[t]he obligation of any writer is to tell a good story, a thought provoking or funny or sad or tragic tale. We have exactly the same obligation to our readers that any writer of adult fiction has".

Another issue separating the dystopian fiction aimed for young adults from that aimed for adults is agency. Writing hope often means giving the protagonist agency. The explicitly unhappy endings of *We*, *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* strip the protagonists of any agency. They have no power to alter their surroundings. As was pointed out earlier, children and young adults are positioned at the bottom of the real life societal hierarchy and they have little to no power or means to influence the society they live in. As Hintz and Ostry (2003a, 9-10) argue,

> [i]n adolescence, authority appears oppressive, and perhaps no one
> feels more under surveillance than the average teenager. The teenager
> is on the brink of adulthood: close enough to see its privileges but
> unable to enjoy them. The adolescent craves more power and control,
> and feels the limits on his or her freedom intensely.

The helpless and passive children and young adults are transformed to active members of the society in children's utopias and dystopias, offering young readers an escape from their own

lives that they often consider oppressing. According to Hintz and Ostry (2003a, 15), "they emerge as powerful, understanding more than their elders, often taking control and doing their best to alter society's course." For example, Lina discovers a way out from a dying underground city in Jeanne DuPrau's *City of Ember* (2003) and throws the escape instructions down to the city in hope that the inhabitants will escape; Jonas escapes from his society and in doing so, releases the removed memories back to the community in *The Giver*; Meg Murry and her friends rescue Meg's father in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962); and three teenagers participate in a flight to the Moon and establish a base there in Robert A. Heinlein's *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947), all tremendous acts of agency and empowerment for children and young adults. The child protagonists of the stories are "in the center of the action or set of concerns, sometimes even bearing the major responsibility for the formation, survival, or reform of the society" (Hintz and Ostry 2003a, 1).

It must be noted here that dystopian fiction for young adults is separated from "the role of the typical adolescent novel" (Latham, 2004) in addition to the traditional dystopian fiction through this heightened agency given to the protagonists. Trites argues that the young adult fiction genre describes "how potentially out-of-control adolescents can learn to exist *within* institutional structures" (7, emphasis mine). In dystopian fiction, the protagonists do not adapt to the power structures around them but alter and demolish them, thus leading to the reformation of society. Jonas' escape from his society in *The Giver* releases the memories back to the people and forces the community to consider and modify its procedures. Thus, the function of the protagonists in young adult dystopias is not an integrative one but transformational.

To summarize, dystopian writing for young adults differs from adult dystopian fiction in its inclusion of hope and agency. By giving the adolescents agency and power to influence their surroundings, the stories resist the hopelessness and lack of individual power that are

such important themes in adult fiction. The hopeful tone of the stories is strengthened by the ambiguous and open endings often applied in adolescent fiction where it is up to the reader to decide whether or not the protagonist lives happily ever after.

2.3 Foucault's Techniques of Discipline

Michel Foucault's influential writings on power, power structures, knowledge and discourse have inspired many theorists in fields such as cultural studies, literature, history, sociology, criminology and ecology (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 3). Illustrating the influences on Foucault's own work is somewhat complicated as he rejected many of the labels assigned to his work or attempts to place him as a part of a movement (Åkerström Andersen, 2). However, three main influences are often discussed in conjunction with *Discipline and Punish* (1977), which is considered by some as his seminal publication. The most important intellectual contexts affecting the development of the theoretical issues in *Discipline and Punish* are Marxism, structuralism and the works and thoughts of Friedrich Nietzsche (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 11-12).

Discipline and Punish studies the development of discipline and penality from eighteenth-century torture and killing to the modern imprisoning that depicts a gentler approach. Through this discussion on the development of discipline, Foucault presents four basic techniques of discipline: the art of distribution, the control of activity, the organization of geneses and the composition of forces. Foucault follows the four techniques with the development of docile bodies through the discussion on Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. The reason for choosing to concentrate on these issues of discipline and docile bodies emerges from Foucault's description of discipline as

> a power exercised over one or more individuals in order to provide them with particular skills and attributes, to develop their capacity for self-control, to promote their ability to act in concert, to render them amenable to instruction, or to mould their characters in other ways. . . Discipline is a productive power *par excellence*: it aims not only to constrain those over whom it is exercised, but also to enhance and make use of their capacities. (Hindess, 113, emphasis original)

Discipline is about the power to control people and surroundings to reach the desired outcome which, together with the desire to create obedient, self-controlling, docile and beneficial subjects, is the basis of totalitarian collectivism and the aim of most dystopian regimes in fiction or reality. As such, Foucault's techniques and concepts of discipline echo the characteristics of dystopian fiction and form the basis of discussion on control and power in this thesis.[3]

The first technique, the art of distribution, states that "discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault, 141). This spatial arrangement of individuals employs firstly enclosure to achieve its goals. Enclosure creates a "place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself" (Foucault, 141). According to McNay (93), the heterogeneous place "is set apart to facilitate the operations of a 'disciplinary monotony'". Foucault (143) continues that, secondly, "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual." This act of partitioning, as Latham (2004) points out, is often twofold as is the case with *The Giver*; members of the society are "distributed spatially according to their stage of life. . .[and] their function in society". The distribution according to the stage of life indicates that the elderly live in the House of Old and the newborns inhabit the Nurturing Center before being given to families, whereas the distribution according to function means

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[3] Foucault's ideas of discipline have been utilized in other academic works concerning dystopias as well. See, for example, James A. Tyner. 2004. "Self and Space, Resistance and Discipline: A Foucauldian Reading of George Orwell's 1984". *Social & Cultural Geography* Vol 5, No 1.

that adults have specific positions and jobs that they fulfill, such as Nurturer, Birthmother and Speaker.

The partitioning aims to "eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation and their unusable and dangerous coagulation" (Foucault, 143). As Foucault (143) notes, it is a procedure against desertion and concentration, aiming to

> establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it [and] to calculate its qualities or merits.

This constant surveillance and establishing of presences and absences relates to the ideas of Panopticon which will be discussed after the rest of the techniques.

The distribution of individuals leads to an individual becoming an interchangeable element that is "defined by the place it occupies in a series, and by the gap that separates it from others" (Foucault, 145). The value of the member is defined by the position the individual has in society and by the "goods" the individual can produce through that position for the society, but no matter what the position, one can easily be replaced if one does not perform his or her tasks as required. Thus, as Foucault (148) argues, the art of distribution "transforms the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities". In *The Giver*, the interchangeability of individuals becomes evident in the Murmur-of-Replacement Ceremony during the Naming Ceremony, where children are given their names and family units. In the ceremony a family unit is given a male child to compensate for the child the unit had lost due to an accidental drowning. The child is acknowledged as "a replacement child" (Lowry, 44), and given the same name as the drowned one, Caleb. Jonas comments during the Replacement Ceremony that "[i]t was as if the first Caleb were returning" (Lowry, 44). The individual value of the original Caleb is denied as the gap left behind him is assigned and

filled with another child. Thus, there is no special or unique value in individuals, but they can be replaced as needed.

The control of activity, the second technique, states that activities and interests beneficial to society are encouraged by the ruling parties, whereas counterproductive or completely unproductive activities and interests are discouraged; as Foucault (152) notes, "nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required". As pointed out earlier, totalitarian collectivism is one of the main characteristics of oppressive regimes in dystopian fiction. Dystopian collectivism justifies its subjugation of individuals to a group, to collective action and thought, with the concept of the common good. According to McNay (93), this "ranking of hierarchization of different activities ensures the insertion of bodies and individuals within a specific network of disciplinary relations". Contributing to the common good is itself a distinguished act, as the contribution is beneficial to most members of society, which is why the concept is utilized greatly by the dystopian regimes in their propaganda. The common good is often the utopian seed that becomes dystopian as the regime annihilates individual freedom, choice and rights and the ruling elite becomes the only part of society that benefits from the contributions to the "common good".

Activities and interests deemed counterproductive or unproductive for the common good by dystopian regimes are those "crucial sites for the development of the individual identity and fulfillment of individual desire" (Booker and Thomas, 65-66). These banned activities in dystopian fiction and in *The Giver* include, for example, sexual desire "for such desire is difficult to subordinate to the larger concerns of the community" (Latham, 2004). In relation to sexual desire, procreation is often removed from everyday life and accomplished through surrogate mothers and in vitro fertilizations in dystopian literature and the results is, as Foucault (155) argues, "a body manipulated by authority". In addition to sexual desire and

procreation, art forms such as painting, writing and music that can affect the developing identity and self-actualization of a person are often frowned upon by the totalitarian regime in dystopian fiction. In addition to individual identity, art forms shape and sustain the cultural identity and memory of society which the dystopian regimes wish to control completely. Therefore, art forms are strictly regulated and their power assigned to further the totalitarian movement through propaganda, as pointed out earlier.

The third technique, the organization of geneses, states that "each individual is caught up in a temporal series which specifically defines his level or his rank" (Foucault, 159). In other words, the individuals are systematically trained through tasks of increasing complexity to prepare them to be a functioning part of society and to be able to effectively contribute to the common good. A fine example of this is the education system in *The Giver*. The system has several milestones set for each stage of the childhood development. As the importance of precise language is emphasized in the society, language skills and the correct usage are instilled in children very early on and the training for the appointed careers in the society begins at the age of twelve. Foucault (160) argues that this gives

> the possibility of detailed control and a regular intervention (of differentiation, correction, punishment, elimination) in each moment of time; the possibility of characterizing, and therefore of using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalized and usable in a final result.

Foucault (160) points out as well that in the temporal series "[p]ower is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use". This conception of detailed control, correction and punishment through a timetable, a predetermined schedule, is often utilized in totalitarian regimes in dystopian fiction.

This "[t]emporal dispersal is brought together to produce a profit" (Foucault, 160). The organization of geneses is "intended to produce individually characterized, but collectively

useful aptitudes" (Foucault, 162). This connects with the last technique, the composition of forces, which states that, "[t]he individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved,[and] articulated on others" and that "[t]he body is constituted as a part of a multi-segmentary machine" (Foucault, 164). In practice this would mean, as Latham (2004) notes, that "the interests [and talents] of the individual are subordinated to the good of the community". In *The Giver*, children are assigned to their formal training and positions according to their strengths. Individual skills are then refined to serve the community and the person is defined by the place and position assigned to him, as stated by the art of distribution. Once a position is assigned, the person occupies it for the rest of his or her active, productive life. It should be noted here that as a result, the position of the elderly is sometimes complicated in totalitarian dystopias, as their capabilities to be collectively useful diminish with the years. Because the persons fulfilling the positions are interchangeable elements, the elderly are disregarded by society, as is done in *The Giver*.

In addition to the four techniques of discipline presented here, Foucault (202) discusses at length Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, as it "is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power". Panopticon is a model prison where the cells form a circle around the central tower that houses the prison officer. The prison officer can observe every inmate in the prison, but a system of shutters and lights prevents the inmates from seeing the officer or each other. As a result, the inmates never know when the central tower is occupied and the prison officer observing the inmates nor do they know what the other inmates are doing. The inmates are constantly visible, whereas the anonymous power remains invisible.

Through this discussion, Foucault (203) develops the concept of docile bodies that states that the individual "becomes the principle of his own subjection", playing both the roles of the observer and the object of observation. Foucault (204) argues that those who are

constantly under observation and discipline develop a self-regulating mechanism and that "the constant pressure acts even before offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed". As Jay (410) points out, "the external look becomes an internalized" one and the objects of observation monitor themselves. Consequently, the identity of the one exercising power or observing the object loses importance as the individuals operate the machine of observation and discipline themselves. Furthermore, the actual existence of real surveillance becomes secondary. The system of power and control then becomes an internalized, automatic and natural part of society and "it can reduce the number of those who exercise it [power], while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised" (Foucault, 206). Self-discipline and regulation are evident in *The Giver*, as children are under constant observation by the people who decide their assigned positions as adults. Those who assign the positions are seldom seen, but everything the children do is visible and affects the decision of their assigned position. This has resulted in that the children, in a true Panopticon way, monitor themselves and their actions to avoid an unwanted career.

Though Foucault sees this as a way "to dispense with the more heavy-handed displays of sovereign power needed earlier to render the population docile" (Jay, 411), I would argue that a system of this kind cannot be properly maintained without a constant threat of punishments and demonstrations of power. For the Panopticon-like system to start functioning properly in the beginning, real surveillance and punishments must be present to instil the system and the constant pressure and fear to act according to the rules. Without proper punishments and observation, the objects of observation would never internally regulate themselves as there is no proper reason for it. Therefore, the observation and exercise of power must be made concrete. Once the observation has been internalized, the need for displays of power lessens, but the internalized machine can be corrupted or disregarded if it is not supported by the threat of punishments. The longer the Panopticon-like situation stands,

the greater is the need for actual demonstrations of power to strengthen and maintain the internalized control.

3. The Destruction of the Private Self

As Giddens (quoted in Lyon, 11) points out, "[t]otalitarianism is, first of all, an extreme focusing of surveillance." Personal spaces do not exist in totalitarian societies as surveillance systems infiltrate every aspect of human life to observe, control and gather information on their subjects for the totalitarian regime. The following subchapter discusses the constant surveillance in *The Giver,* in which loudspeakers and microphones penetrate both physical and psychical private spaces. The discussion continues then to another level of physical space: the body, which is a personal and private issue smothered and infiltrated by the totalitarian regime. While discussing the position and presentation of the body in utopian and dystopian fiction, Jacobs (3) comments that "[t]he body itself must be the locus of utopian *or* dystopian transformation, whether that transformation is to be brought about by liberating the body or by more effectively subduing it" (emphasis original). The body is subdued effectively in *The Giver* through genetic engineering, repressed sexuality and corporal punishments that, together with surveillance, demolish natural emotional attachments between the inhabitants.

The themes of surveillance and genetic modification were discussed extensively in the beginning of the 1990s when *The Giver* was published. Computer and internet technologies made historical advances, genetically modified food appeared and cloning technology was developing in such a speed that Dolly, the first cloned mammal, saw the day of light in 1996. There were concerns of mass surveillance and the effect of genetic engineering on the population. These concerns have clearly influenced *The Giver* as dystopian novels tend to be products and comments of the time they were written. The novel highlights the dangers of excessive use of surveillance methods and genetic manipulation, as the following discussion will show.

3.1 Invading the Physical and Psychical Private Spaces

Private space is created by individuals as a place of their own outside the public sphere. The accessibility of a private place is in normal circumstances determined by its creator. One of the main manifestations of a private place is the home of an individual. The resident decides who to let in, who to keep out and how to furnish his or her home in normal situations, but as Jonas says, "[n]o doors in the community were locked, ever" (Lowry, 73). The basic foundations needed to establish a private space are removed in *The Giver*. The inhabitants cannot decide or influence their neighborhood or living residence as the community has assigned housing. The committee positions the members in identical houses that come furnished. The furniture is "standard throughout the community: practical, sturdy, the function of each piece clearly defined. A bed for sleeping. A table for eating. A desk for studying" (Lowry, 73-74). Every piece of furniture in the houses is to be useful and assist the members in being productive members of the community. There are no ornamental or entertaining pieces of furniture that serve no proper purpose in the community. The community has therefore extended Foucault's technique of controlling the activity to cover the furniture as well. Everything, even the furniture present in the community, must not be useless but support the system. The inhabitants have no means to express their individuality through their dwellings and furnishings nor can they create their own, unique private spaces.

Additionally, public spaces are also controlled and modified. This is done through cultivation of the soil. The community has officiated Climate Control to control and maintain suitable surroundings and weather conditions. The Receiver notes that

> [s]now made growing food difficult, limited the agricultural periods.
> And unpredictable weather made transportation almost impossible at
> time. It wasn't a practical thing, so it became obsolete when we went
> to Sameness. "And hills, too," he added. "They made conveyance of

> goods unwieldy. Trucks; buses. Slowed them down. So – " He waved
> his hand, as if a gesture had caused hills to disappear. "Sameness," he
> concluded. (Lowry, 84)

Through climate control, nature has been shaped and reworked to adjust to the requirement of Sameness. This and the relinquishment of sunshine have had great negative effects on the nature. The biological diversity has diminished to a point where it seems that only humans are left. There are no animals, except in the form of comfort objects that everyone considers to represent imaginary creatures. Even the appearance of nature is predetermined by the committee to remove impracticalities and to ensure effective action. Nature does not offer an escape from the rules and norms governing the community but is similarly repressed by them to support the system.

The physical private space is also invaded by the loudspeakers positioned in every household. In addition to the households, the loudspeakers are spread all around the community, covering every inch of it. Thus, they invade the public sphere as well in their bid to reach each inhabitant whenever needed. Every broadcast is communitywide and the inhabitants cannot choose to be excluded from the audience by turning the loudspeakers off. When Jonas realizes during his training that the Receiver of Memory can turn the loudspeaker positioned in his dwelling off, he "almost gasped aloud. To have the power to turn the speaker *off*? It was an astonishing thing" (Lowry, 79, emphasis original). Only those belonging to the elite have the privilege, and knowledge, to turn them off. The rest of the community cannot decide when their private or public spaces are invaded by the announcements and even the thought of having any influence or control over these devices is inexplicable.

The loudspeakers are a visible part of the totalitarian propaganda machine. The community has no other source of information than the loudspeakers, as the community lacks newspapers, radio or TV broadcasts or any other form of technology capable of broadcasting

information. *The Giver* begins with Jonas' recollection of an incident where an unidentified aircraft had breached the airspace of the community. The community gets their supplies delivered by cargo planes, but the unidentified aircraft "was not a squat, fat-bellied cargo plane but a needle-nosed single-pilot jet" (Lowry, 1). The loudspeakers ordered the inhabitants to go inside immediately and wait for further instructions and pretext for the situation. The explanation followed within minutes: "a Pilot-in-Training had misread his navigational instructions and made a wrong turn" (Lowry, 2). Though a unique and frightening incident, the inhabitants are given no more information on the situation. Nor do they have any means to verify or question the information. Thus, the loudspeakers can be used to modify the truth to better fit the picture the ruling elite wishes to paint of themselves and their decisions.

Furthermore, the loudspeakers are used to maintain order and guide the inhabitants in the community to act accordingly. The speakers are used to remind people of proper behavior, the rules and regulations: "ATTENTION. THIS IS A REMINDER TO FEMALES UNDER NINE THAT HAIR RIBBONS ARE TO BE NEATLY TIED AT ALL TIMES (Lowry, 22, capitalization original), or, "ATTENTION. A REMINDER THAT STIRRINGS MUST BE REPORTED IN ORDER FOR TREATMENT TO TAKE PLACE" (Lowry, 37 capitalization original). The reminders of the rules are broadcasted several times a day. Sometimes they are a response to a current topic or rule, and at other times they function as general recaps of the rules.

Likewise, the speakers partake in enforcing the rules through public shaming. The minor violations are often handled with speaker announcements that single the perpetrator out without using names and, through this public humiliation, force the perpetrator to apologize and to reimburse his or her actions. Jonas recollects his own public humiliation when he had

taken an apple home from school. The loudspeakers had announced: "ATTENTION. THIS IS A REMINDER TO MALE ELEVENS THAT OBJECTS ARE NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE RECREATION AREA AND THAT SNACKS ARE TO BE EATEN, NOT HOARDED" (Lowry, 23 capitalization original). No names were necessary, "because the public announcement had been sufficient to produce the appropriate remorse" (Lowry, 23). These public humiliations work in two ways. Firstly, they function as reminders of the rules, and secondly, they function as deterrents. Everyone wants to save one's face and protect themselves from humiliation. These public displays of the speakers' power to publically shame violators encourage the inhabitants to follow the rules.

In addition to being a mouthpiece for the committee, the loudspeakers function as microphones as well. They record everything that is said around them, further disrupting the private spaces of the community. The speakers constantly gather information on the members while bombarding them with rules, reminders and acts of supervision. This information is then used to ensure that everyone acts accordingly and to root out dangerous ideas or members from the community. The surveillance and information gathering through the loudspeakers can be specified as part of the traditional "top-down process [of surveillance], conducted by the authorities" (Aas, Gundhus and Lomell, 9). In the top-down process, the surveillance is imposed by the top tier, the authorities and elite, on the down tier, on the mass to be controlled through surveillance. This is reminiscent of Foucault's Panopticon where the prisoners are subjected to constant surveillance, but the surveillance in the top-down process, through the loudspeakers in the community, is one-sided. As the individuals in the community do not understand or realize the full scope of the surveillance methods around them, their internalization of the surveillance is not as complete as that of the prisoners in Panoticon, but are mainly the subjects of the surveillance.

The individual's psychical private space is violated in the community through dream-telling in the morning and nightly discussion of feelings. The rituals are practically identical for only the subject of discussion changes between dreams and feelings. The rituals of dream-telling and discussion of feelings take place in every family unit in the community. The nightly discussion of feelings is part of the evening rituals, whereas dreams are the subject of morning discussions. The members of the family unit share in turns either their dreams or feelings of a particular issue that has come up during the day, depending on which ritual is taking place. The other members of the family unit then offer advice and comforting words to help with the dreams or feelings. In the first evening telling of feelings described in *The Giver*, Jonas' little sister Lily talks about her feelings of anger, as a child from a visiting group of Sevens did not follow the rules at the play area, Jonas' father describes a feeling of worry about a newchild who is not developing properly, Jonas' mother reports feelings of frustration and anger for having a repeat offender in her court, and Jonas himself confesses to feeling apprehensive about the Ceremony of Twelve where his future career is announced.

At first these rituals may seem beneficial and appropriate in sustaining the mental health of the community since the ability to express emotions and to discuss one's problems openly with relatives or friends is the foundation of emotional health. The situation becomes convoluted when one is reminded by Jonas that the sharing of dreams and feelings is not voluntary but imposed on the community: "[t]his evening he almost would have preferred to keep his feelings hidden. But it was, of course, against the rules" (Lowry, 9). As was pointed out earlier, the loudspeakers positioned in every household record everything. Thus, the rituals function as a way to collect information on the inhabitants, on their deepest thoughts and dreams. It is not enough that the members are forced to share their feelings and dreams with their family units even when they do not want to, but the delicate information is then

used to further the monitoring and controlling. One of the aims of Foucault's distribution of individuals is "to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual" (Foucault, 143). The rituals, rules and microphones ensure that the individual is constantly exposed and under surveillance.

In addition to being a way to gather information on the inhabitants, the sharing of dreams and feelings relates to the stunted emotional life of the inhabitants of the community. Whatever feeling or dream a person reports in the rituals of dream-telling and sharing of feelings, it must be resolved and disposed of during the ritual. Complex feelings and anxieties are thus resolved through superficial discussions as the rituals of dream-telling and sharing of dreams are both short in duration. Proper discussions on feelings and emotions are avoided by the whole community through ritualized speech patterns such as the standard apology phrase and response. The standard apology phrase, 'I apologize', is used in any situation where one must ask for forgiveness. For example, "I apologize for inconveniencing my learning community" (Lowry, 3); "I apologize to my classmates" (Lowry, 4); and "I apologize for not paying you the respect you deserve" (Lowry, 134). The standard and, in fact, the only acceptable response to the apology phrase is 'I accept you apology'. There is no reason for the discussion to continue if all is forgiven, and it always must be according to the standard phrases. The issue must then be dropped and it is as if it never existed, and the real reasons or feelings behind the situation are never discussed. When Jonas feels true emotions through his training in becoming the Receiver, he correctly realizes that "there was no quick comfort for emotions like those" (Lowry, 132). The empty gestures instituted in the community offer no proper relief or help to the inhabitants.

The committee rejects natural feelings such as anger, frustration and worry as, for example, the feeling of frustration of the repeat offender in her court reported by Jonas'

mother could easily convert to frustration of the whole juridical system. The committee controls the inhabitants' emotions to keep them docile and keep the voices of discord at bay. This destruction of free thought corrodes the individualism of the inhabitants in the community. In relation to individualism, I would also argue that this desire to reject natural feelings and impose a stunted emotional life on the citizens connects to the committee's desire to reach Sameness. Not only does the committee wish to reach Sameness in external aspects, like climate and colors, but in internal, psychical aspects as well. Removing the variables, such as feelings, the committee tries to create an easily steerable mass of people that think and feel the same way.

When Gabriel does not develop according to the expectations and requirements, he is allowed to spend his nights with Jonas' family to expedite his development. But, for that to be possible,

> [e]ach family member, including Lily, had been required to sign a pledge that they would not become attached to this little temporary quest, and that they would relinquish him without protest or appeal when he was assigned to his own family unit at next year's Ceremony. (Lowry, 42)

To further control the possible formation of feelings and emotional attachments, the committee forces the members of the family unit to sign a contract where they swear not to become emotionally attached to the child. This demonstrates how insignificant and underrated position emotions have in the community. They are something that can be demolished with a piece of paper.

The dream-tellings and nightly discussions of feelings add another, complex level of surveillance, as the inhabitants of the community "participate in the production of control" (Aas, Gundhus and Lomell, 9). The process of surveillance transforms from the top-down process of the aforementioned loudspeaker technology to a mixed process where the down

tier, the inhabitants themselves, produce parts of the control in the community. The inhabitants do not realize how their feelings and dreams are exploited, but they have internalized the requirement to share their dreams and feelings. Though not done on purpose or knowingly, by sharing their dreams and feelings the inhabitants produce information for the establishment controlling them, and thus enable their subjugation.

Furthermore, the dream-tellings and discussions of feelings position the enforcement of rules and modus operandi as a collective and communal activity. The family unit learns about the awakening of Jonas' sexuality through his dream-telling. The following subchapter will show in more detail how sexuality is forbidden and removed from the community, and Jonas must, per rules, medicate himself daily to suppress his sexual desires. The family imposes the medication on Jonas internally without any intervention or guidance from the committee in charge of the community. Likewise, the loudspeakers occasionally remind that taking the pills to suppress 'Stirrings' is of utmost importance but keeping up with the medication is mainly left to the inhabitants themselves. As Jonas' mother remarks, "I'll remind you for the first weeks, but then you must do it on your own" (Lowry, 38). The family units collectively maintain the controlling mechanism of suppressing sexual desires, imposing the medication on their children reaching puberty. The inhabitants in *The Giver* have developed, as Foucault argues, a self-regulating mechanism where the members of the community observe and discipline themselves.

Together, the surveillance through loudspeakers, dreams and feelings produces a vast amount of information on the inhabitants for the system to utilize. The surveillance is mostly invisible and unknown to the members of the community, but the committee of Elders exercises one form of public observation. One of the main responsibilities of the committee is assigning the future careers for the children reaching their twelfth year according to their

individual skills and interests, a task that resonates with Foucault's technique of composition of forces. To succeed in this task, the committee observes the children in increasing levels as they approach the Ceremony of Twelve. As Jonas notes,

> [d]uring 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 them taking notes. He knew, too, that the Elders were meeting for long hours with all of the instructors that he and the other Elevens had had during their years of school. (Lowry, 15)

This visible observation results in the children monitoring themselves to avoid an unwanted career. The children decide where to spend their volunteer hours extremely carefully, as the hours represent their fields of interests and aptitudes for the committee of Elders, and showcase them as future productive parts of society. They follow the rules more closely to prevent any possible offences from affecting their assignments negatively. Jonas' father talks about his friend Andrei who "spent all the recreation time he could with his construction set, and his volunteer hours were always on building sites" (Lowry, 16) to ensure the future assignment he wanted. By concentrating on such issues completely, Andrei ensured that the committee could see no other possible assignment for him. The children in the community form yet another expression of Foucault's docile bodies that internalize the external look. The committee's observation and power over their future is so intense that even children aged twelve become self-regulating.

In addition to the future assignments, the children are acutely aware of the juridical system around them. Jonas notes that there is an ascending order in the severity of the violations, saying that there are minor rules in the community that are "punishable only by gentle chastisement" (Lowry, 27). Nevertheless, Jonas comments that it is "[b]etter to steer clear of an occasion governed by rule which would be so easy to break" (Lowry, 27), even if he knows that the violation would not be severe. He rather distances himself of such

situations where he might be tempted to break even a minor rule. Though Jonas is self-regulating himself, he has not yet reached the same level of internalization as another male Eleven called Pierre. Jonas comments that "Pierre was very serious, not much fun, and a worrier and tattletale, too" (Lowry, 51). Pierre is ever worried about the rules, constantly asking others if they have checked the rules or wondering if something is within the rules. He has internalized the control to such an extent that everything in his life revolves around the rules and the importance of obeying them.

The corporal punishments present in the community will be discussed more in the following subchapter, but it is worth noting that the inhabitants are to some extent also aware of the absurdity of the juridical system and its decision making process. There are some rules in the community that are systematically broken. The children receive their bicycles at Nine and the rules forbid them from riding bicycles before that, "[b]ut almost always, the older brothers and sisters had secretly taught the younger ones" (Lowry, 13). Though it is a minor rule, the systematic violation of the rule illustrates some form of resistance and understanding that not all rules in the community are necessary or important. The committee does not intervene with the rule breaking, but I would argue that the violations are ignored as the rule is insignificant and by breaking the rule, the inhabitants hasten the development of children into productive members of the society. If the rule is broken, the children do not have to waste time in learning to ride them when they receive their bicycles, but can immediately use them to transport them to school or offices were they are doing their volunteer hours. On the other hand, it is significant that the rule is broken by everyone in the community. The members of the community act as a unified mass even while breaking the rule. The violation is not done just by specific individuals. Even when they are breaking a rule, the requirement for collectivism is so ingrained in them that they function as a collective.

The rules in the community can be amended and the inhabitants can suggest new rules or changes to the old ones. People have, for example, suggested changes to the number of children allowed per family to allow three children per family instead of the current two and to the bicycle rule so that bicycles would be given at an earlier age. The theory section noted that traditionally totalitarian systems in fiction are filled with stiff, static structures that resist change, and though the committee in *The Giver* accepts suggestions for changes, the structure remains unchanged. The process of changing a rule is so time-consuming and complicated that it has become a joke: "When something went to the committee for study, the people always joked about it. They said that the committee members would become Elders by the time the rule change was made" (Lowry, 13-14). The jokes are benevolent, but still a recognition of the problems the system has.

When Jonas expresses apprehensive feelings about the Ceremony, he is comforted by his parents' comments that "the Elders are so careful in their observations and selections. . . [and that] there are very rarely disappointments" (Lowry, 16). The surveillance is welcomed by the family to guarantee everyone a suitable and productive position in the community. Thus, the observation is not judged as the "achievements are viewed . . . as positive social benefits" (Lyon, 13). The visible surveillance is justified by the common good of society. The members of the community are not aware that the Elders actually have much more information on which to base their decision than just the results of the visible observation and discussions with the instructors. The Elders use the information acquired through the microphones listening in on the sharing of dreams and feelings, through completely invisible forms of surveillance. The result is, as praised by Jonas' family unit, that the decisions the Elders make are never incorrect or unsuitable. They seem omniscient, and this strengthens

their claim to power, their right to make decisions for the whole community as they are so good at it.

The committee's supervision of the inhabitants relates to Foucault's first technique, the distribution of individuals, which aims "to assess it [the conduct of each individual], to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits" (Foucault, 143). Matching of Spouses could take years "before a match was approved and announced. All of the factors – disposition, energy level, intelligence, and interests – had to correspond and to interact perfectly" (Lowry, 48). The qualities of individual members are judged and monitored in detail to ensure a suitable match, and similar judging is involved in all rituals: "Like The Matching of Spouses and the Naming and Placement of newchildren, the Assignments were scrupulously thought through by the Committee of Elders" (Lowry, 48). This is done to achieve pairings and assignments which support the totalitarian act and regime. This is reminiscent of the second Foucauldian technique, the control of activity discussed in the theory section. Nothing must be left uncontrolled or useless, everything should aim for the support and betterment "of the act required" (Foucault, 152).

The Elders' decisions can never be questioned or refused. After his first uncomfortable memory, Jonas

> [d]id not want to go back. He didn't' want the memories, didn't want the honor, didn't want the wisdom, didn't want the pain. He wanted his childhood again, his scraped knees and ball games . . . But the choice was not his. He returned each day to the Annex room. (Lowry, 121)

Jonas expresses a wish for fun, unproductive acts like games instead of the burdensome position assigned to him. He would not like to be an interchangeable element, a part in the Foucauldian machine, but to express himself in other ways and enjoy his childhood which is taken from him so early. Freedom of choice is banished from the community and its

inhabitants, leaving only one predetermined choice for Jonas: to follow the rulings and decisions of the committee. Jonas had earlier enjoyed his volunteer hours tremendously as "[t]he freedom to choose where to spend those hours had always seemed a wonderful luxury to Jonas; other hours of the day were so carefully regulated" (Lowry, 26). Through volunteer hours, Jonas is given a rare chance of freedom of choice and the opportunity to proclaim his individuality. When Jonas' knowledge of the past and what could be increases during his training, he becomes acutely aware of the monotony and lack of freedom in the community: "[i]f 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?" (Lowry, 97, emphasis original). Jonas expresses a strong desire for choices, the freedom to choose something for himself and not be controlled so tightly by to committee and the rules and norms in place in the community.

An interesting case where invasion on physical private space results in intrusion of psychical space as well is the shortage of mirrors in the community. Though they are not forbidden, "[m]irrors were rare in the community" (Lowry, 21). Gaining an understanding of the exterior appearances of oneself is, together with the internal understanding, an important part of the formation of identity and body image. Sameness, of course, aims at eventually making all mirrors useless with genetic manipulation and eugenics discussed at length in subchapter 3.2, but the existing lack of mirrors relates to the "narcissism of vision" (Jay, 319). The image reflected by a mirror is of the individual gazing into the mirror, and as such, offers a way to form a better understanding of the individual's appearances and how it relates to the appearances of others. Mirrors or other forms of technology that offer the individual a chance to concentrate on his or her features and strengths could enable the individual to gain a healthy amount of self-love and selfishness, which would enhance the sentiment that the members are individuals and undermine the aims of totalitarian collectivism. By removing

almost all mirrors from the community, the committee aims to ensure that the members of the community are not given a chance to concentrate on themselves as individuals or to compare themselves to others and notice differences.

3.2 Disrupting Bodily Integrity

As Mirzoeff (quoted in Jacobs, 6) comments, totalitarian states and regimes are "profoundly distrustful of the body as the individual expression and component of the body politic, fearing that it might harbor all manner of weakness and corruption." As was pointed out earlier, the community aims to achieve "Sameness", a state of affairs where differences in every aspect of the life are erased and "Sameness" prevails. The body of a person can manifest many differences and individual traits. Thus, it is under great scrutiny and oppression in *The Giver*.

Firstly, the bodies of the inhabitants are the result of a long period of genetic engineering which has removed any traces of diversity from the community. As the Receiver of Memory notes, "[t]here was a time, actually. . . when flesh was many different colors. That was before we went to Sameness. Today flesh is all the same" (Lowry, 94). The genetic scientists have eliminated every skin color except white making it the norm in the community, genetically engineered everyone to be color blind to remove colors from the community and to achieve the grayish Sameness, and given everyone dark eyes, except for few exceptions. Some of the members have pale, lighter eyes, but "[n]o one mentioned such things; . . . it was considered rude to call attention to things that were unsettling or different about individuals" (Lowry, 20). That is to say, even if differences exist between the individuals in the

community, those differences are ignored to protect the idea of Sameness. The societal homogeneity is achieved at the expense of individuality.

In addition, there is an obvious association between the capability to receive memories and the light eye color, as the Receiver of Memory, Jonas and the previous trainee for the position, Rosemary, all have light eyes. It seems that those with light eyes have the ability to see beyond, or through, the color blind vision given to them. The capability to receive memories is needed, for the community must always have someone in possession of the memories to protect the community from them and to use the knowledge carried in the memories to guide the committee in new situations. Therefore, light eyes are an accepted difference even though, as the Receiver of Memory comments, "the genetic scientists are still hard at work trying to work the kinks out" (Lowry, 95) to perfect their interference with the exterior of the bodies present in the community.

As Jonas notes, "[i]t was against the rules for children or adults to look at another's nakedness" (Lowry, 30). The physical body is made invisible and shameful, something that must be covered at all times. The body is not seen as something biological and natural. All physical contacts are frowned upon as well for "[i]t was extremely rude for one citizen to touch another outside of family units" (Lowry, 99). The attitude towards any physical issues is extremely negative among the adult and young adult population of the community. Neither of those rules applies to very young children or the elderly. Not only are the elderly treated as children, this is another example of how the elderly are separated from the rest of the community, an issue under further deliberation in subchapter 4.1.

As was pointed out earlier, the inhabitants of the community are medicated daily to suppress their sexual desires, known as 'Stirrings'. The natural human sexuality is repressed and controlled from the earliest signs till the day the individual enters the House of the Old.

Jonas' sexuality shows the first signs of awakening just before his Ceremony of Twelve. He is forced to share with his family unit his dream where he wanted his friend Fiona to take off her clothes and let him bathe her in a tub. This natural development towards adult sexuality is seen as something unwanted and an ailment that must be subjected to treatment, even though Jonas reports no discomfort of his dream: "[t]hough the feelings were confused, he thought that he had liked the feelings that his mother had called Stirrings. He remembered that upon waking, he had wanted to feel the Stirrings again" (Lowry, 39).

Connelly (quoted in Jacobs, 8) argues while discussing the instinctual nature of sexuality that "sex is the most uniquely individual instinct and, like the belief in the soul, a threat to the organization bent on destroying the self". Sexuality forms a threat to the totalitarian regime as it is unpredictable and, when it comes to the naturalness of sexuality, "sexual desire and consummation affirm nature over culture, human instinct over rational or technological control" (Mellor, quoted in Jacobs, 8). This fear of sexuality being a threat to the totalitarian rule resonates with Foucault's technique of discouraging or removing activities and interests that are either counterproductive or unproductive. As sexual desire and its consummation have the power to transcend the boundaries of totalitarian rule, sexuality in its all forms is repressed to deny its counterproductive power. In addition, sexuality is also unproductive. The consummation of sexual desire is a source of pleasure that cannot be capitalized to support or contribute to the common good dictated by the totalitarian rule.

Since humans are sexually reproducing species, the repression of sexuality in *The Giver* denies the natural and biological way of procreation. As the community would cease to exist without reproduction, procreation is conducted through artificial insemination. Artificial insemination reinforces the genetic engineering already conducted in the community as the committee of Elders selects the gestational surrogate mothers. Thus, they can select and

assign the position of a Birthmother to those individuals that possess the traits and qualities desired and valued by the committee. Though Sameness has forced the inhabitants to share most traits and qualities, the breeding maintains the status quo and continues to better the genetic composition of the community in order to create the ideal and perfect citizen. This breeding together with advanced genetic engineering signifies that the control of individuals begins from the genetic level, before the individual is even born.

The positions assigned by the committee are generally appreciated and honored as even the positions that seem insignificant and without honor, contribute to the common good. The position of a Birthmother, however, lacks appreciation. When Jonas' sister comments that she would like to be assigned the position of a Birthmother, their mother denies those hopes sharply and comments that "[t]here's very little honor in that Assignment" (Lowry, 21). The natural, biological imperative of reproduction is transformed into a despicable, dirty and distant position to which family units do not like to see their females assigned. I would argue that this is not a case of the parents having feelings and caring for their daughters, but a case of them wanting their daughters to perform tasks that are seen as more important to the totalitarian regime or more honorable. Everything must support the act required, as Foucault (152) notes, but there are still different ranks of honor and approval. These can, in fact, be ingrained in the community by the committee to ensure that unwanted but needed actions do not get too much exposure or support.

Unlike the rest of the assignments, Birthmother is a temporary position that is followed by the position of Laborer:

> "Three births and that's all. After that they are Laborers for the rest of
> their adult lives, until the day 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?" (Lowry, 22)

When one of Jonas' classmates is assigned the position of a Birthmother, Jonas muses that the years as a Laborer will "keep her healthy, and impose *selfdiscipline*" (Lowry, 55, emphasis mine). Even a child sees the Birthmothers as somewhat unruly and in need of a strict integration back to the community. It seems that the committee is afraid that even such a short, unnatural connection to procreation has the power to tarnish the Birthmothers. They must be assigned to hard labor to learn self-discipline, to transform them back to beneficial members of the community. The assignment to a Laborer functions like a corporal punishment for having been being involved in procreation. Unfortunately, the novel does not explain the process of birthing or the tasks of Birthmothers in more detail. Therefore, it is not clear what the Birthmother themselves think and feel about the babies they give birth to. If the Birthmothers develop feelings for the babies, the punishment-like nature of the assignment to Laborers would be more evident.

Lily's interest in the position is, however, revealing. A young child like Lily might not yet have realized or internalized the position of the Birthmother in the community, but for her it is an opportunity to claim and strengthen her specialness and individuality. Lily sees the assignment of Birthmother beneficial to herself. She would gain something enjoyably to herself, the three years of pampering, instead of being part of the mass that works for the benefit of the society. For those three years, she would be special and be treated as such. This is a unconscious resistance against the ideology of collectivism and a way to be an individual at least for three years. Perhaps one of the reasons for the aversion to Birthmothers comes from their special position, their chance to be individuals outside the collective requirements of the community for three years.

The punitive system in *The Giver* consists primarily of corporal punishments that continue the invasion and repression of bodily integrity. The two options of corporal

punishments present in the community are 'releasing' and striking with a wand. The wand is reserved for children going through the education system and old people inhabiting the House of the Old. The beatings take place when a child or elderly person does not follow the orders or guidelines. Jonas' friend Asher struggles with the acquisition of correct and precise language and is therefore subjected to wand strikes when he uses a wrong or unsuitable word. Release, on the other hand, is reserved for adults. Release is a euphemism for death penalty, which is executed immediately as the community does not have prisons. It is the harshest punishment available but used quite lightly. The Pilot-In-Training that supposedly misread his instructions and breached the community's airspace was 'released' for his minor mistake.

Jonas notes that "[t]there were only two occasions of release which were not punishment. Release of the elderly. . . and release of a newchild" (Lowry, 7). I would suggest, though, that neither of these are actually moral decisions and that they are affected greatly by the totalitarian regime. The elders are released when it is decided that they have lived their lives well and fully, but many of the elders released in *The Giver* are still mentally healthy and could continue to be active in the society. There is no reason to release them, other than the committee's desire to rid the society of those who they deem unproductive members if they cannot continue to fulfill the task they were assigned to. Newchildren are released if they do not develop according to the expectations and standards of the Nurturers. Gabriel, the newchild Jonas saves from certain death, is considered a problem case because he needs more care and time than the other babies. There are expectations and objectives for the development of babies and Gabriel had not "gained the weight appropriate to his days of life nor begun to sleep soundly enough at night to be placed with his family unit" (Lowry, 42). He is given supplementary nurturing to overcome the problems and for months passes "the tests of maturity . . . [H]e could sit alone, now, could reach for and grasp small play objects, and he

had six teeth . . . But he remained fretful at night, whimpering often, needing frequent attention" (Lowry, 113). Though Gabriel continues to develop and pass the majority of maturity tests, he is scheduled for release for the simple fact that he does not sleep well at nights. For not meeting one of the requirements set for babies and the broader mold of Sameness, Gabriel is labeled Inadequate. He fails the Foucauldian timetable set forth in the community for monitoring the development of children. The predetermined temporal series, the development of basic control over one's body and sleeping, takes too long to fulfill for Gabriel. As there are no exceptions to the timetable, the only solution is to release Gabriel.

The violence and assault on sexuality and procreation in *The Giver* violates the inhabitants' right to bodily integrity. Nussbaum (41) defines bodily integrity as the individual "being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; being able to be secure against violent assault . . . and having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction". Every one of these aspects of bodily integrity is violated or abolished in the community. All in all, the individual, his or her sexuality and emotions are controlled and surveyed to such an extent in *The Giver* that the result is

> total domination over the individual's private self, family feelings, sexuality, thoughts, and emotions. . .and actions and emotions that were previously associated with the individual's private world suddenly become public domain, fully under the punitive control of the state machine. (Gottlieb, 11-12)

Gottlieb (12) continues that the total destruction of the private self aims "to deny the bonds of private loyalty and thereby to enforce not only uncritical obedience to the state but also a quasi-religious worship of the state ideology". A chilling example of the lack of emotional attachments and private loyalty in *The Giver* is presented when Jonas, stimulated by the memories given to him during his training to become the Receiver of Memory, asks his parents if they love him. Jonas is chastised for his choice of word:

> "Your father means that you used a very generalized word, so meaningless that it's become almost obsolete," his mother explained carefully. . .

> "You could ask, 'Do you enjoy me?' The answer is 'Yes,' his mother said.
> "Or," his father suggested, "Do you take pride in my accomplishments?' And the answer is wholeheartedly 'Yes.'

> "Do you understand why it's inappropriate to use a word like 'love'?"
> Mother asked. (Lowry, 127)

There is no proper emotional attachment between the members of the family unit as this exchange and the habit of simply replacing a child with a new one if a family unit would lose their child due to an accident indicates. Also, the matter that seems to bring the most joy to Jonas' parents is his accomplishments. They value his success in the totalitarian education system, his accomplishments in his path to becoming a beneficial member of the community. Jonas' value is determined by his adaptation to the system. This shows the order of importance in his parents' thinking: the totalitarian system is given precedence.

By obstructing the formation of emotional attachments and private loyalty through excess surveillance and the desecration of bodily integrity, the committee aims to disrupt the natural connections between people and focus their capacity of loyalty to supporting the totalitarian system. The body of the inhabitant should serve "the state as a productive and reproductive entity rather than serving the individual as a source of pleasure and as a means of self-expression and connection to others" (Jacobs, 6). Without connections and emotional attachments, people truly become, as Foucault argues in his techniques of discipline, interchangeable elements, parts of a machine, as nothing connects the individuals together. The main reason for Jonas' escape from the community is his emotional attachment to Gabriel. While they are on the run, suffering from cold and hunger, Jonas weeps "because he was afraid now that he could not save Gabriel. He no longer cared about himself" (Lowry,

173). Jonas sets the wellbeing of Gabriel ahead of his own wellbeing, something that the emotionally stunted members of the community could never do.

To further disrupt the natural connections between people and events, the committee has greatly regulated the life of the community as a whole, as will be discussed in the following chapter that concentrates on the erased past and linguistic oppression of the community.

4. The Obliteration of Historical Memory

Connerton (14) argues in his discussion on transmitting social memories that all totalitarian regimes share "the mental enslavement of their subjects" in which "the state apparatus is used in systematic way to deprive its citizens of their memory" to solidify and maintain the totalitarian rule. As was noted in the theory section, this is true in dystopian fiction as well, for totalitarian societies seem to be afraid of both the unknown future and the past, preferring to exist in static eternal present. Foucault (160) notes in his discussion of the organization of geneses that "power is articulated directly onto time". The following chapter discusses this "method of organized forgetting" (Connerton, 14), present in *The Giver*. The discussion starts with description of the erasure of memory, bloodlines and the complicated position of the Receiver of Memory. I will conclude with discussion on the state of language, as it is another way of conveying and transmitting cultural knowledge and memories that is under strict rules and regulations in the community.

4.1 The Containment of Memories

To achieve Sameness, the committee decided to erase all memories of the past from the community in *The Giver*. For generations, the community has been separated from the logical passing of time and the connectedness of past events and individuals. The community exists in the present without any knowledge of the past or interest for the future as "[e]veryone in the community has one-generation memories" (Lowry, 93), but they cannot go back any farther than that. In the beginning of his training in becoming the next Receiver, Jonas is told that he will be bearing "the memories of the whole world. . . [b]efore you, before me, before

the previous Receiver, and generations before him" (Lowry, 77). The idea of memories and of an actual past is incomprehensible to Jonas: "I don't know what you mean when you say . . . 'generations before him'. . . I thought there was only now" (Lowry, 78).

As Baccolini (118) comments, "[m]emory is . . . necessary to an understanding of oneself and of the past, but also of the present and the future". In addition to an understanding, Connerton (3) notes that "our experiences of the present largely depend upon our knowledge of the past, and that our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order". Booth (xi) writes similarly that memory "protects (or seeks to protect) the identity of the person or community, the continuity of person or community across (dispersive) time". It is thus understandable that totalitarian regimes are interested in modifying the past to legitimate their current rule or to shape their subordinates. The erasure of historical memory is used to maintain the static and rigid structures of the totalitarian rule: hiding the less flattering acts of the authorities and stripping the members of their knowledge of their possibilities: what has been and what could be. The past and historical memory are seen as a threatening "mode of dissociation from the given facts, a mode of 'mediation' which breaks, for short moments, the omnipresent power of the given facts" (Marcuse, quoted in Baccolini, 118).

Connerton (38) posits a question on "how are these collective memories passed on within the same social group from one generation to the next?" According to Connerton (38-39), it comes down "to facts of communication between individuals" and that "to study the social formation of memory is to study those acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible". Connerton (40) emphasizes the incorporated practices of transmitting memories and argues that historical memories are "conveyed and sustained by (more or less ritual) performances". These commemorations and rites are "formalized acts, and tend to be

stylized, stereotyped and repetitive" (Connerton, 44) and "function to communicate shared values within group" (Connerton, 49).

The community in *The Giver* is rife with ritualized performances culminating in the two-day Ceremony that comprises of smaller ceremonies, such as the yearly ceremonies for children: for example, the Ceremony of Seven when they are given jackets "that fastened down the back so that they would have to help each other dress and would learn interdependence" (Lowry, 40); the Ceremony of Nine when they are given bicycles, and the Ceremony of Twelve where they are assigned their future careers. Likewise, the adults participate in their own ceremonies such as the Ceremony of Naming where the new children are given names and are presented to their families. Though the amount of ritualized performances is vast in the community, they do not convey or sustain historical or social memories. As Hanson (51) notes, "[a]t no point does the usual Ceremony invoke the community's past or the present community's continuity with it: no mythic or historical origins are ritually re-enacted, no founding Elders eulogized". Nothing in the rituals connects them or the community to a larger historical context. The ritualized performances are disconnected from the history of the community, and in their current form advance the totalitarian aim for Sameness, forcing people to develop according to the timetable set by the yearly ceremonies and to internalize the rules and accepted way of life.

In his discussion on transmitting memories, Connerton (38) emphasizes also the importance of transmitting social and cultural memory from one generation to another by pointing out that "[i]t is necessary also that the older members of the group should not neglect to transmit these representations [of the past] to the younger members of the group". In practice this would mean that grandparents would tell stories of their youth and lives to their grandchildren and they in turn would pass this information and information on their own lives

to their children and grandchildren, linking the generations together. This natural transmission of past events and memories is demolished in *The Giver*, as "each family unit's genealogy is systematically truncated" (Hanson, 49). As was pointed out earlier, the community uses gestational surrogate mothers for procreation, preventing biological bloodlines from forming. The family units are formed by the committee which decides who deserves a spouse and which family units are suitable for children. The forming of the family units follows the traditional heterosexual form of families but other than that, it seems that the family units are only in place to help foster useful members for the community.

Furthermore, the members of the family units are separated from each other. No family unit is given more than two children, and when the children grow up, the parents move to dwellings reserved for Childless Adults, followed by the House of the Old when they are no longer productive members of the community. As Hanson (49) notes, there is no contact between the children and parents after the children have reached adulthood. The children are given their own dwellings, careers, spouses and children that consume all their time. The parents play no part in their lives and the children will not even attend their own parents' release celebrations as they will not know about the celebration. In his discussion on memory and family, Booth (xi) acknowledges that group memory can be found in

> anniversary and birth dates, family trees, remembered stories, and in material repositories of memory, in archives or photo albums in which images of the family across years and generations, are tokens of both continuity and absence.

The family units in the community of *The Giver* lack all of these forms and sources of group memory. There are no familial ties in the community.

What ensues from the severed connection between children and parents is the nonexistence of grandparents. When Jonas is given a memory of a Christmas celebration, in

which he witnesses a family consisting of children, parents and grandparents opening presents by the fireplace, he is puzzled by the presence of the old people, the grandparents. He is confused by this concept, asking laughingly that "there could be parents-of-the-parents-of-the-parents-of-the-parents?" (Lowry, 124) Jonas has no perception of history or the connectedness of people. His life and world is strictly limited to the present, where connections between people are regulated according to the needs of the community: when a child has been properly trained by his or her parents, there is no need to maintain the connection between the child and parents. Lifelong connections are nonexistent in the community. As a continuation for the lack of familial ties, and as a result of it, there are no affectional ties in the community that would connect the community members together.

The old people, the parents and grandparents of the younger members, inhabit the House of the Old and "[t]he Old of the community did not ever leave their special place, the House of the Old, where they were so well cared for and respected" (Lowry, 123) until they are released. This separates the generations from each other even more and prevents the old from even transmitting stories and memories of their own lifetime. As they are isolated and removed from the community, so are their memories. This separation is camouflaged as a need to respect and nurture the old, when it is, in fact, about the isolation of the old and in doing so, preventing the sharing of even short-term memories. This is a result of the committee's wish to control the cultural memory in their gain and strengthen the community's existence in the eternal present. As was noted in chapter 3.2, the formation of emotional attachments and private loyalty is obstructed in the community, and this physical separation of family members supports this target, and further strengthens the Foucauldian thinking of people as interchangeable elements and parts of the community.

In addition, as chapter 3.2 noted, the old and very young children are excluded from following certain rules such as rules concerning nakedness and touching. The old are connected and handled in unison with small children, the other group of persons who are not productive members of society. This grouping separates the elderly from society further and undermines their possible prestige. Jonas' friend Fiona is assigned as Caretaker of the Old and she notes that the discipline wand is used "on the Old, the same as for small children" (Lowry, 90), yet again strengthening the connection between small children and the elderly. The use of corporal punishments on the elderly also weakens their assumed honored position. If they are honored and well taken care of, why is the discipline wand used on them? I would argue that the committee sees the elderly as dangerous and wishes to keep them under strict control.

As Hanson (49) notes, Jonas' knowledge of the past "is limited solely to a few apocryphal rumors" whispered among the children. The hearsay functions more as a warning for the consequences of violating the rules than actual knowledge of the past:

> Once, long ago, it was whispered among the children, an Eleven had arrived at the Ceremony of Twelve only to hear a public announcement that he had not completed the required number of volunteer hours and would not, therefore, be given his Assignment . . . a disgrace that had clouded his entire future. (Lowry, 28)

Another story circulating the community is about a man who "jumped into the river, swam across, and joined the next community he came to" (Lowry, 47). This story ends with a chilling line that "[n]obody ever saw him again" (Lowry, 47), which functions as a warning against leaving the community and depicts the world outside the community as unpredictable and possibly dangerous.

When Jonas is told that he will be storing the memories of the whole world, he is rightfully confused: "I don't know what you mean when you say 'the whole world. . . I

thought there was only us" (Lowry, 77-78). As the memories that would form the narrative for the community's identity and for the relations to the world outside are removed, the community cannot recognize its standing among the rest of the world. The world views of the members of the community are fragmented without any real relations or connections. Hanson (49-50) states correctly that Jonas' "myopic worldview" consists of only few similar communities and that "[e]verything else is simply Elsewhere". Without proper knowledge of the world around them, Elsewhere becomes the Other that is feared and unknown, whereas the community assumes the position of a safe haven. The instilled fear of the Other, the world outside the community, is another way to limit the members' exposure to foreign influences that might corrode the committee's authority or completely expose them for what they are.

The community is a part of a "larger political body" but the citizens of the community have no knowledge of this political body that drops supplies to them with cargo planes or sends search planes to locate Jonas when he escapes (Hanson, 49). From a control point of view, it is interesting that there exists a political body beyond the community, for it raises questions on the chain of command present in the novel. The chain of command in a way expands Foucault's thinking of Panopticon. The family units are the prisoners internalizing the surveillance and control; the members of the committee are the prison officers; and in addition to the regular Panopticon, the unknown larger political body is the prison governor in charge of the whole prison. It is unfortunate that the story does not expand on the notion of the political body governing the community so that the addition to the Panopticon could be properly discussed. The theory section noted that dystopian fiction aimed towards young adults has adapted most themes and traditions present in classic dystopian literature. Many of the classic dystopian fictions deal greatly with political issues and assembly, so it could be

debated that the conventions of young adult dystopian fiction are preventing the novel from expanding the presence of political bodies in the community.

According to Latham (2004), the society in *The Giver* is "the quintessential utilitarian society, in which even memories and pain can be compartmentalized and relegated to a specific person". This specific person, the Receiver of Memory, stores all the memories of the time before the committee chose to pursue "Sameness". It is a tremendous burden both physically and mentally. There are many days during the training when Jonas is sent away as the Receiver of Memory is in physical pain, "hunched over, rocking his body slightly back and forth, his face pale" (Lowry, 106). The position and the agony that comes from it have aged the Receiver considerably, as he comments himself that "I'm not, actually, as old as I look. . . This job has aged me. I know I look as if I should be scheduled for release very soon. But actually I have a good deal of time left" (Lowry, 76). The burdensome task of bearing the memories has affected him physically.

In addition to the pain, caused by bearing the painful memories of generations, inflicted upon the Receiver, the training to become the new Receiver is as well physically demanding. The first memories given to Jonas are of sunshine, sledding down a snowy hill and other pleasant topics. The transmission process operates so that Jonas actually feels the sunshine or wind on his skin. He lives through the memories to grasp their proper meaning and feeling. Unfortunately, this means that when Jonas is given the memory of a sunburn, fractured leg or war, he feels the pain:

> Then, the first wave of pain. He gasped. It was as if a hatchet lay lodged in his leg, slicing through each nerve with a hot blade. In his agony he perceived the word "fire" and felt flames licking at the torn bone and flesh. He tried to move, and could not. The pain grew. He screamed. There was no answer. Sobbing, he turned his head and vomited onto the frozen snow. Blood dripped from his face into the vomit. (Lowry, 109)

The pain often lingers after the memory is transmitted, making Jonas for example limp in the real life after receiving the memory of a fractured leg. Pain medication is always provided in the community "for the bruises and wounds, for a smashed finger, a stomach ache, a skinned knee from a fall from a bike" (Lowry, 109), resulting in lives that are absent of pain. Though medication is readily available, the rules of the training in becoming the Receiver specifically state that Jonas cannot apply for any medication for pain related to his training. The committee forces Jonas and the Receiver of Memory to suffer tremendous physical pain for the good of the community, so that the rest of the members can live uncomplicated and painless lives.

The position of Receiver of Memory is a lonely position. Though the Receiver of Memory is allowed a spouse and family, the Receiver is forbidden to discuss his work or knowledge of the past with anyone except the new Receiver in training. This, as the Receiver of Memory notes, is challenging as "[t]here will be a whole part of your life which you won't be able to share with a family. It's hard, Jonas. It was hard for me" (Lowry, 103). The Receiver notes also that "[t]he worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It's the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared" (Lowry, 154). The Receiver is an outcast in the society, only accepted as part of the society when his help and guidance are needed. It is remarkable that the Receiver is never given a name in the story. He is given no identity other than the Receiver. He is unnoticed or avoided by most of the members of the community because of the mysterious aura around the position. Jonas asks his friend Asher to ride back home with him after the Ceremony and though Asher agrees, Jonas "felt a moment of hesitation from his friend, an uncertainty" (Lowry, 65) and that "there was just a moment when things weren't quite the same, weren't quite as they had always been through the long

friendship" (Lowry, 66). The change in how people perceive Jonas is imminent, and strengthened by Jonas' orders not to talk about his training with anyone.

In addition, the Receiver is forced to train his successor, which is mentally challenging as he must shock an innocent child with the memories of pain, hunger and war. After transmitting a memory of war to Jonas, the Receiver "looked away, as if he could not bear to see what he had done to Jonas. 'Forgive me,' he said" (Lowry, 120). The Receiver struggles with his task of passing both physical and mental pain onto another individual. Jonas' training includes memories of physical pain, whereas with the earlier trainee, Rosemary, the Receiver concentrated on mental suffering as he "couldn't bring . . . [himself] to inflict physical pain on her" (Lowry, 142), giving her loneliness, loss, "a memory of a child taken from its parents" (Lowry, 142). He tries to balance the horrific memories with happy and cheerful memories, to end the session on a happy note, but it does not ease the procedure for either the trainee or the Receiver properly.

Though the committee asserts that the position is one of great honor, Latham (2004) comments that the Receiver is essentially a scapegoat, but I would argue that the sacrificial lamb is a more apt allegory. A sacrificial lamb is a person who is sacrificed in some way for the common good, which is exactly what is done with the Receiver in *The Giver*. His physical and mental wellbeing are sacrificed for the community, so that "others can live unburdened by the pain, knowledge and guilt of human history" (Hanson, 49). When Jonas learns that some of the memories will be painful, he questions "why can't *everyone* have the memories? I think it would seem a little easier if the memories were shared. You and I wouldn't have to bear so much by ourselves, if everybody took a part" (Lowry, 112, emphasis original). The Receiver acknowledges that Jonas is right "[b]ut then everyone would be burdened and pained. They don't want that. And that's the real reason The Receiver is so vital to them, and so honored.

They select me – and you – to lift that burden from themselves" (Lowry, 112-113). This also relates to the stunted emotional life discussed in the earlier chapter. The committee has denied the members from feeling pain by removing their memories of such incidents that would normally cause pain. For generations, the committee has stripped one person completely of his free will and individual desires, hopes and dreams to allow the majority of people to live unburdened by the past, condemning them to a dull, regulated emotional life. Furthermore, the Receiver's individuality and, to some extent, humanity is denied, as he or she is expected to function as a container for the memories of generations.

This results in the Receiver being a paradox. On one hand, he is experienced and wise beyond his years because he has carried and experienced all the memories of the society. He suffers physically and mentally because of the things he has had to experience through the memories, and this is exhibited by his external appearances as well. On the other hand, his life has been remarkably uneventful. He is a lonely outcast of the society which spends most of his time in his quarters, occasionally taking long walks. His days are all similar and full of routines. The Receiver, who has experienced the most in the community, has actually lived the least.

In addition, the wisdom of the Receivers is not often utilized in the community. The last time the advice of the current Receiver was asked for was when the unknown airplane breached the community's airspace. This happens when Jonas is just a few days from turning twelve, but the previous time the Receiver's wisdom was needed was before Jonas' birth. Thus, in the last twelve years the committee has asked for his advice twice. What follows is that the Receiver's position and assignment as an adviser is secondary to the position of the sacrificial lamb, to free others from the pain the memories carry. This also enhances the

loneliness of the position, as the community reaches towards the Receiver only a few times in a decade.

Furthermore, the reliability of the memories and the information the Receiver carries is questionable. Firstly, the Receiver does not always have enough knowledge to interpret the memories correctly. The committee had approached the current Receiver some years ago when

> a lot of citizens petitioned the Committee of Elders. They wanted to increase the rate of births. They wanted each Birthmother to be assigned four births instead of three, so that the population would increase and there would be more Laborers available. (Lowry, 111)

The suggestion to increase the amount of Laborers made sense to the committee, but they sought advice from the Receiver, who carefully examined his memories and found one that directed him to advice the committee against increasing the population:

> [T]he 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. (Lowry, 111, emphasis original)

As a basis of decision making, the memory is flawed by its one-sidedness. Overpopulation undoubtedly factors in food scarcity and starvation, but the memory does not include or carry information on other issues, such as environmental issues, social structures or food distribution, that have an impact on food supplies. To make an informed decision, the memories should give the Receiver a comprehensive understanding of the situation and the aspects which might affect the outcome.

Secondly, the transmission of memories has, and requires, an oral aspect. Because the pupil in training has no previous knowledge or understanding of the issues which he or she experiences while receiving the memories, the Receiver must verbally explain the memories and their connotations to the pupil. The oral tradition of the explanations on the memories

have been affected by many different Receivers and their attitudes, ideas and articulacy. Therefore, every Receiver has affected the information carried by the memories, perhaps changing it substantially in the process. Later Receivers have had to explain concepts such as family, color and climate only with the information the memories and their trainer have given to them, as the Receivers or the trainers of later generations have never themselves seen or experienced colors or climate changes. As the Receiver notes, "[t]he explanations are difficult. The whole thing is so beyond one's experience" (Lowry, 141). The Receiver also notes that pulling some memories is harder than others as they are generations old. Though the novel is not explicit with this reference, it is possible that the Receivers lose some memories because the memories are so old and hard to pull forward from the mass of memories stored in the Receiver's mind.

The Receiver, who is training Jonas, is critical of the current state of Sameness, noting bitterly, for example, that the others know nothing but the scientific facts they need to perform their tasks properly. The explanations the Receiver gives of the memories to Jonas are certainly affected by the Receiver's own ideas and attitudes. When the Receiver explains that colors were lost when the community had chosen to go to Sameness, Jonas exclaims fiercely and decidedly that "[w]e shouldn't have!" (Lowry, 95), for he is fond of colors. The Receiver is startled at first by this comment but then notes wryly that "[y]ou've come very quickly to that conclusion . . . It took me many years. Maybe your wisdom will come much more quickly than mine" (Lowry, 95). The use of the word wisdom here is telling of the Receiver's attitude. For the committee, the memories carry wisdom and information that can be used in difficult decisions and situations, but, for the Receiver, wisdom is gained when one starts to see past the rules and regulations of the community and begins to question the current state of affairs.

The Receiver guides Jonas' thinking towards a critical stance in many instances, the most prominent being the revelation of the true meaning of release. The Receiver is aware of Jonas' affection towards Gabriel and the fact that the baby is under constant threat of release. By showing Jonas what release is about, the Receiver forces Jonas to choose sides, either to accept the facts or try to save Gabriel. Though Jonas has been sad and at unease of the situation of the community for some time already, the knowledge of the true meaning and connotation of release is the final straw. The Receiver's actions might have not been a conscious one, but certainly a manifestation of his unconscious desire to change the situation.

4.2 Linguistic Oppression

In addition to the ritualistic and performative ways of maintaining and transmitting memories, language is an integral part of forming and conveying social memory. As Mayr (17) notes, "[l]anguage is used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world". Mayr (17) continues also to say that language is "used to enable us to communicate with other people . . . and to express and understand feelings, attitudes and judgments". As a result of these two functions, language is one of the central themes in dystopian fiction. Sisk (2) comments that

> twentieth-century dystopian novels in English universally reveal a central emphasis on language as the primary weapon with which to resist oppression, and the corresponding desire of repressive government structures to stifle dissent by controlling language.

Because language enables us to communicate, it can be used to resist and criticize the totalitarian system in that it offers the individuals a way to express their own ideas and contradict the oppressing structures. Those under oppressive totalitarian regimes can try to

produce and spread truthful information about the system they inhabit and thus try to shape the perception others have of the world and stimulate resistance. For the repressive government structures, as was pointed out in the theory section, it is of utmost importance to control the information. Language offers a way for the regime to produce their own propaganda to support their aims, to guide the thinking of the society and to discredit claims that are seen as hostile or critical against their rule and methods.

Language is controlled in *The Giver* through the acquisition of correct and precise language that commences when the children are Three. It is one of the main aims of the education system present in the community, as "[o]ur community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language" (Lowry, 127). As this is uttered by Jonas' mother, it is evident that the importance of correct language enforced by the committee to protect their position is internalized and accepted by the whole community. The demand for precise language has resulted in a very strict and factual usage of language. When Jonas is Four, he is reprimanded for saying 'I'm starving' before the midday meal:

> Immediately he had been taken aside for a brief private lesson in language precision. He was not starving, it was pointed out. He was *hungry*. No one in the community was starving, had ever been starving, would ever be starving, To say "starving" was to speak a lie.
> (Lowry, 70, emphasis original).

A factual observation on a bodily need of nutrition, 'hungry', is accepted, but a figure of speech, an emotional play, 'I'm starving', is forbidden. In relation to the stunted emotional life discussed in chapter 3.1, the community has removed emotions, feelings and sensations from their language as well. The stunted emotional life is supported by the restricted language. In a true Foucauldian way, everything unproductive, even certain types of words, are removed from the language.

By the time Jonas is eleven and only days from his Ceremony of Twelve, he has internalized the need for proper and precise language and makes great effort to find the right words for every situation. While trying to decide on a proper word to describe his feelings about the upcoming ceremony, Jonas contemplates and disregards such words as 'fear', 'frightened', 'eager' and 'excited' before settling with 'apprehensive'. He also takes pride in his ability to find the right word for the situation: "'I'm feeling apprehensive', he confessed, glad that the appropriate descriptive word had finally come to him" (Lowry, 9). The scope of his vocabulary and his enthusiasm for deciding on a right word are, I would argue, overdeveloped for an eleven-year-old. The strict schooling on the proper use of language has brought Jonas linguistically nearer to adults than a regular schooling and childhood could ever bring. Childhood is often described as carefree time, but in Jonas' community it is used to train and school proper members for the community.

As noted earlier, the correct and precise usage is enforced upon the children through violence, "a quick smack across the hands for a bit of minor misbehavior; three sharper smacks on the bare legs for a second offence" (Lowry, 54). Jonas' friend Asher struggles with language to a point of regular beatings that "left marks on Asher's legs" (Lowry, 55). This eventually results in silence. Asher refuses to speak "rather than risk the punishment that came with the incorrect use of language" (Latham, 2004). In the Ceremony of Twelve, Asher's silence is retold as a funny anecdote by the Chief Elder. The anecdote ends as the Chief Elder triumphantly notes: "But he learned" (Lowry, 55). At the age of three, the child is beaten into submission rather than given proper assistance to overcome his linguistic shortcomings. Acknowledging Asher's need for additional guidance in language matters would separate him from "Sameness", from the requirement that all children must develop according to the plan set forth by the committee.

Though the precision of language is one of the main aims of the education system, the actual usage of language and words concerning the issues of power and control are deceptive and inaccurate. The vocabulary is censored to exclude disruptive words or replace them with euphemisms. One of the words fully excluded from the vocabulary of the community is the name of the previous trainee for the position of Receiver of Memory. Though names are usually recycled in quite a prompt pace, Rosemary's name is forever removed from the vocabulary and "designated Not-to-Be-Spoken . . . [which indicates] the highest degree of disgrace" (Lowry, 67). This is because Rosemary failed to complete the training to become the Receiver of Memory and voluntarily released herself to avoid the pain that comes from carrying all the memories for the community. As a result, the committee amended the rules of the trainee to contain a rule that the trainee is not "permitted to apply for release" (Lowry, 68). Rosemary released herself in the beginning of the training, but the memories she had received were released to the community and chaos ensued for a moment. By practically denying Rosemary's existence and removing her from the vocabulary of the community, the committee tries to hide their mistake and ensure that the situation cannot raise questions or be used against them.

In relation to the following euphemism discussion, I feel it important to situate *The Giver* within its historical context. As the theory section noted, dystopias must be read and understood through their historical contexts and *The Giver* was published during a time when the somewhat obscure term of 'politically correct' and its variations entered the vocabulary properly. The term became widespread as the conservatives attacked the curriculum and teaching on colleges in the United States in the beginning of the 1990s (Hughes, 65-66). *The Giver* was published in 1993, situating it thus perfectly as a product influenced by those discussions. The theory section also noted that dystopias and their writers tend to criticize

important trends in their societies. One form of political correctness is the usage of euphemism and I would argue that the novel criticizes the usage of euphemism by showing what might be the result in the future if we are to embrace euphemisms into our vocabulary.

The committee replaces certain words with softer euphemisms which conceal the true nature of the acts and maintain the innocent image of the committee and community. These institutionalized euphemisms include the aforementioned 'release' to soften the act of murdering those who do not conform to the rules and Sameness or are not able to contribute to the common good of the community; 'Stirrings' to remove the knowledge of sexual desire and natural procreation; and 'Elsewhere' to separate the community from the influences of the rest of the world. The euphemisms are used with issues that the committee sees important in maintaining their control over the community and to cover the radical changes or choices made concerning those issues. It is also remarkable how broad the concepts hidden by the euphemisms are, covering such wide issues as the whole world outside the community. It is a testament on the intrusive totalitarian system and its ways of controlling people and language, when such broad issues can be passed with ambiguous euphemisms without anyone questioning them.

The euphemisms and forbidden words undermine the required level of precision but benefit the totalitarian agenda. In addition to excluded words and euphemisms, the community's vocabulary includes echoes of the past; words that are not recognized for what they once were and as such do not reach the required level of precision. As was already discussed, the word 'love' is almost obsolete and Jonas is chastised for using it. Likewise, the meaning of certain words have changed and deteriorated as the issue or thing they are referring to has been removed from the community. Lily and Jonas use the word 'animal' without truly knowing what it actually means, but it is "often used to describe someone

uneducated or clumsy, someone who didn't fit in" (Lowry, 6). As the real life equivalent has been removed – there are no animals in the community – and the memories of a time when animals still existed have been erased, the meaning of the word has changed and become obscured. Likewise, the comfort objects given to younger children bear the names of animals of past times such as hippo and elephant. The words are not recognized to signify something that once was part of the nature; they are just funny names for the different soft comfort objects.

The demand for precise and correct language results also in that, according to the official doctrine, no one lies in the community. Jonas is shocked when his instructions for the training in becoming the Receiver state that he may lie. Jonas "had been trained since earliest childhood, since his earliest learning of language, never to lie . . . He had never, within his memory, been tempted to lie" (Lowry, 70-71). Jonas is frightened when he realizes that others, children before him that are now adults, may have received the same exemption from telling the truth. Jonas' fears are shown true when he questions his father on the upcoming release of a child that his father must perform. Jonas' father asserts that he cleans the baby and performs a Ceremony of Release after which someone from Elsewhere comes to get the child. The Receiver later shows Jonas the recording of the release which shows Jonas' father injecting lethal clear liquid into the newchild's forehead and unceremoniously dropping the limp body into "the same sort of chute into which trash was deposited at school" (Lowry, 150). It is evident that others have been instructed to lie to prevent other members from learning the true nature of the acts that are executed in the community. They have been instructed to lie for the good of the community, to ensure that the peaceful situation remains undisturbed and hide the dark side required to maintain the situation.

As Jonas had been given the memory of war, of soldiers dying on the battlefield, he recognizes that his father kills the newchild. Through the memories, Jonas has the knowledge to understand the full meaning of the situation, but the question here is whether or not Jonas' father realizes his actions and their implications. Jonas is shocked when he witnesses his friends playing a game that, as Jonas now recognizes, imitates war. Before his training, Jonas would never have realized what the game was about, for he did not know that wars had once been fought or even what a war is. His friends play the game happily as they do not understand what their game mimics. Likewise, the father does not understand such concepts as killing someone nor does his vocabulary offer him words to describe the situation as anything else than 'release'. Jonas' father is a product of the community he grew up in and his conscience and values are affected by the surroundings, norms and conceptions of the society. For him, release belongs inextricably to the policies in place in the community, and because his stunted emotional life, he cannot relate to the child and feel sadness or sorrow for it. We might question whether or not an individual can form a functioning conscience, understanding of right and wrong, if the individual's surroundings and mental processes are intervened and prohibited to such extent as is in the community in *The Giver*.

It is also noteworthy that the committee controls the production and consumption of the written word. Though the inhabitants are taught to read and write, they lack the means to utilize their honed language and writing skills. There are no mentions of paper, pens or other technical devices that could be used to produce texts. The committee has stripped the members of the community of the possibility to write their thoughts down, to produce information that could contradict the official word or to transmit their memories through writing. The only way to pass information in the community is to speak it out loud, and, as was discussed earlier, this form of communication is under constant surveillance by the

microphones that record everything said both in private and public spaces. This, and the aforementioned control of language and words, relates back to Foucault's technique of distributing the individuals spatially which aims "to set up useful communications [and] to interrupt others" (Foucault, 143). Useful communications are the announcements on the microphones or the official books discussed next that support the totalitarian system, whereas the production of texts or information outside the government rule could be disruptive, and must, therefore, be interrupted, intervened or prevented completely.

When Jonas enters the dwelling of the Receiver of Memory for the first time, he is surprised that the "room's walls were completely covered by bookcases, filled, which reached to the ceiling" (Lowry, 74). Jonas had never seen so many books as

> [i]n his own dwelling, there were the necessary reference volumes that each household contained: a dictionary, and the thick community volume which contained descriptions of every office, factory, building, and committee. And the Book of Rules, of course. (Lowry, 74)

The production of writing is tightly controlled by the committee to produce only acceptable and useful materials. The members of the community have no other sources of written texts but those issued by the committee as there are no newspapers or libraries in the community. It is also telling that Jonas "couldn't imagine what the thousands of pages contained. Could there be rules beyond the rules that governed the community? Could there be more descriptions of offices and factories and committees?" (Lowry, 74). As the production and consumption of written texts is under such strict control by the committee, Jonas cannot fathom the possibility of having any other form of texts than those issued by the committee and describing the institutions and rules around the community. For Jonas, literature is extremely factual and structured with lists and descriptions and he cannot imagine even the

possibility for prose. Perhaps it is because of this that Jonas does not read a single book from the Receiver's library. He does not realize its potential to entertain and educate.

Language and its by-products are controlled or have deteriorated to such an extent in *The Giver* that, as Stillman (36-37) points out, even "[i]f someone were accidentally to have a memory, passion, or rich experience, there would be no language in which to conceive and express it". In other words, the individual having a memory or a unique experience, like Jonas, would not have the words to describe the situation either to him or herself or to the community. When Jonas' abilities to see beyond the color blind vision given to him manifest for the first time, while throwing an apple with Asher, he is perplexed precisely because he has no words for the situation: "the piece of fruit had – well, this was the part that he couldn't adequately understand – the apple had *changed*" (Lowry, 24, emphasis original). Jonas had seen a glimpse of red, the apple's true color, but the only word that he can think of to convey the monumental situation is 'change', which is far from a proper description of his vision. Furthermore, while trying to describe this and other similar visions to the Receiver of Memory, Jonas is "frustrated by his inability to grasp and describe exactly what *had* occurred" (Lowry, 91, emphasis original). Jonas cannot describe or define the situation and, as a result, struggles to put it into words and share his experiences.

During his training, Jonas is given many memories ranging from happy visions of Christmas to painful images of wars. The Receiver of Memory guides Jonas to understand what the visions stand for and what words were once used to describe and name them. Jonas quickly realizes that were he to break the rules and describe the memories to someone, he would fail miserably:

> How could you describe a sled without describing a hill and snow;
> and how could you describe a hill and snow to someone who had
> never felt height or wind or that feathery, magical cold? Even trained

> for years as they all had been in precision of language, what words
> could you use which would give another the experience of sunshine?
> (Lowry, 89)

Though the rules forbid Jonas from sharing with others anything Jonas learns during his training, he tries "to give his new awareness to his friends" (Lowry, 99). He tries to transmit the awareness of red to Asher, but only makes him uneasy by touching him, which is very rude in the community. When Jonas asks her little sister Lily if she knew "that once there really were elephants? Live ones?" (Lowry, 101), Lily responds sarcastically "[r]ight . . . Sure, Jonas" (Lowry, 101). Lily cannot fathom the possibility that her ragged comfort object could represent something that was once real.

As Shklar (10-11) notes, "language structures all our knowledge of the phenomenal world . . . [and as a result,] one who dominates the language we speak rules us utterly". The restricted and defective vocabulary guides the thinking of the members in the community and the colorblind vision further prevents them from understanding any of the memories Jonas is given. Jonas' vocabulary and knowledge of the way the community functions expands to include many concepts and themes forgotten by the majority of the inhabitants and ultimately separates him from the others. Jonas struggles with his new position and his incapability to change the situation:

> he was often angry, now: irrationally angry at his groupmates, that
> they were satisfied with their lives which had none of the vibrance his
> own was taking on. And he was angry at himself, that he could not
> change that for them. (Lowry, 99)

I argue that one of the main reasons Jonas forms such a strong emotional connection with Gabriel is the fact that Jonas can share the memories with him. Gabriel often sleeps in Jonas' room and to calm him down, Jonas transmits happy memories to Gabriel. Jonas has finally found someone beside the Receiver with whom he can share the memories. Gabriel is young enough to not understand and internalize the rules and customs governing the society which

allows him to receive, experience and enjoy the memories Jonas shares with him. Unlike Jonas' father, Gabriel is not yet a product of the surrounding society's expectations, norms, shortcomings and regulations.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the vast systems of control present in the dystopian society depicted in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* and with this analysis, brings forth the novel's critical stance towards totalitarianism and collectivism. By describing a society where every little detail of the world and the inhabitants' lives is predetermined and controlled, the novel speaks for the importance of the individual and individual freedom and choice.

As the analysis described, both physical and psychical private spaces are violated together with bodily integrity in the community. The members of the community are constantly under surveillance; their every word is listened to and recorded and rules are bombarded by the loudspeakers. As a result, the members have to great lengths internalized the surveillance and become docile and self-controlling. Thus, they are following and complying with Foucault's ideas of docility. In addition, their surroundings are controlled with assigned housing with predetermined furniture and with the demolishing of impracticalities from nature, such as hills and snow.

The inhabitants have never experienced proper feelings and suffer from stunted emotional life. The basic biological need of procreation is removed by pills and substituted with artificial insemination restricted for the Birthmothers in the community. This and the genetic engineering actualize eugenics in the community. Furthermore, bodily integrity is violated by the punitive system in the community which has the power to 'release', in other words murder, people that do not fit the vision of the committee.

The erasure of memories has lead the community to exist outside "historical time" in an "atemporal ever-present" (Hanson, 58). This fear of the past and present has lead the community to compartmentalize and delegate all memories to the Receiver who must,

ignoring the physical and mental suffering, bear the memories of centuries for the common good. This prevents any form of cultural or communal identity from forming, and, as ties between generations are severed to maintain the status quo of only one generation's memories, familial identity is nonexistent as well in the community. What little identity the inhabitants have, it is formed through the totalitarian regime: the assigned careers give the individual a position in the community that identify him or her and the members of the community can identify as a family unit when they are assigned spouses and children

The chosen cultural amnesia is supported by the rules governing the usage of language. As the analysis depicted, language in the community is extremely restricted and deficient to describe real emotions and experiences. Filled with euphemisms and concepts that are ultimately foreign to the inhabitants, language cannot be an instrument of liberation for the inhabitants but continues to further their domination. Language could be a powerful medium to express individual hopes and desires, but the insufficient language in the community deprives the members of the ability to communicate properly.

The totalitarian collectivism described in *The Giver* functions as a warning against collective thinking taken to extremes and emphasizes the importance of the individual and the power individuals can have. After all, it is an individual, a young boy, who sees beyond the current situation of the community and gives the community their memories back. He refuses to accept the current situation of the community and claim the position that was predetermined for him. He follows his own path and in doing so, gives the members of the community a chance to exist in the proper historical time and become individuals that are diverse in all aspects.

As the introduction noted, dystopian fiction for young adults suffers from a lack of research and respect. The identity and respect of an academic field is partly constructed by the

research the field itself produces and the research what is produced of the field. Like the introduction noted, it is therefore important to produce research on the issues and themes present in dystopian fiction for young adults. In general, the field could benefit from a more precise description of the history and emergence of dystopian fiction for young adults. Fortunately, Basu, Broad and Hintz are currently editing a collection that seems to offer a historical perspective on young adult dystopias and how they can be situated within literary history.[4] *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* is forthcoming from Routledge and will hopefully begin to fulfill the need for historical description on the emergence of dystopian fiction for young adults.

Lowry's *The Giver* is considered a landmark text in the history of (dystopian) young adult fiction and I see it therefore important to dedicate further research to it. For example, further research questions could elaborate and deepen the manifestations of resistance in the community. Also, the novel has a lot of symbolism – the recurring color red, the light eyes that only few in the community have – that could be researched. I intentionally excluded issues of form and structure from my thesis as irrelevant to my research question. However, the structural and narrative differences between young adult fiction and adult fiction are acknowledged (Sutliff Sanders, 443), so further studies on the novel could expand to that direction as well. For a lengthier study, it would be beneficial to perhaps consider studying the complete loose trilogy, formed by *The Giver, Gathering Blue* (2000) and *Messenger* (2004) on, for example, how historical memory is carried in the different communities.

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[4] See their seminar paper on the book at
http://centerforthehumanities.org/sites/default/files/media/Utopian%20Studies%20Seminar_Feb%2023%20readi
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