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When Fiction Affects Reality:

Tacit Religious and Political Dogmas in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*

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Requirements for the degree of Master in Language, Literature and Civilization

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “When Fiction Affects Reality: *Tacit Religious and Political Dogmas in Lois Lowry’s The Giver*”, is our own work and that all the sources we have quoted from have been acknowledged by means of proper references.

Signature:	Date:
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DEDICATION

To the Memory of my dear departed Mother

“My gift from above is your unconditional love”

Thameur

DEDICATION

To the Memory of my father Hocine

“A man like no other”

Hamza

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, we thank Allah Almighty for his continuous guidance and help, words cannot by any mean express our gratitude to him...

We would like to thank our supervisor *Mr Berbache Sami* for his insightful and valuable remarks as well as his patience and wisdom in dealing with us novice candidates. We also would like to thank the honorable jury, faculty and staff. Special thanks to the brilliant current and former teachers in our department, who without their wise advice, support, and encouragement throughout the five years of our university studies, this humble work would have never been completed. However, we alone are responsible for any errors or weaknesses that the reader may find in this research.

Our hearty thanks and appreciation go to our families for their patience and support throughout years of good and hard times.

Last but not least, we are particularly grateful to our fellow brothers and sisters of friends and classmates, to whom we would like to say sorry for any unintentional misconduct we might have shown, and thanks for being part of this journey.

Thameur Belaroui and Azzouz Hamza

ABSTRACT

Persuasive writing presents the writer's opinion explicitly and tries to convince the reader to agree with them. However, there is another kind of writing which tries to spread tacit information for the purpose of affecting the reader's thoughts and promoting a cause or point of view. This kind of writing is widespread in novels of fictional nature where novelists employ many psychological and linguistic techniques to make their novels amply meaningful and subject to many interpretations by their targeted readers. Fictional writings can, therefore, serve as a vehicle to convey positive or negative implications to the targeted readers for the purpose of persuading them, informing them, or entertaining and sharing experiences or feelings with them. This can be achieved only with the help of a set of appropriately employed linguistic and psychological tools. This work is an attempt to uncover and categorize those psychological and linguistic tools used in fiction through the qualitative analysis of a young adult fictional novel taken as a case study, namely Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993). By revealing those psychological and linguistic tools, we will be able to detect any possible dogmas behind the text. However, we are to put much emphasis on the religious and political dogmas due to their importance in forming the individual and collective ideologies. This thesis, therefore, might help founding a scientific basis for interpreting fiction and answering the question of how fiction can affect peoples' reality.

Résumé

La rédaction persuasive présente l'opinion de l'écrivain explicitement pour convaincre leurs lecteurs à agréer avec eux. Néanmoins, il y a un autre type d'écriture où l'auteur essaye de transmettre des informations tacites pour but d'affecter les pensées du lecteur ou d'inciter une cause ou un point de vue. Ce type d'écriture est répandu dans la fiction, notamment dans les romans où les auteurs emploient beaucoup de techniques linguistiques et psychologiques pour rendre leurs romans amples en matière de signification et objet pour différentes interprétations par les lecteurs cibles. Les romans de fiction, donc, servent comme véhicule pour transmettre des implications positives ou négatives aux lecteurs pour but de les persuader, les informer, ou les amuser et partager des expériences et des sentiments avec eux. Ça, ne peut être achevé qu'avec l'aide d'une série de techniques psychologiques et linguistiques bien employées. Cette recherche est une tentative pour dépouiller et catégoriser ces techniques psychologiques et linguistiques utilisés dans la fiction à travers l'analyse d'un roman de jeune adulte fiction prise comme étude de cas, c'est *Le Passeur* (1993) de Lois Lowry. Quand ces techniques sont révélées, on peut détecter toute les dogmes possibles derrière le texte. Mais, nous allons concentrer sur les dogmes religieux et politiques en raison de leur importance dans la construction d'idéologies individuelles et collectives. Cette thèse, donc, peut aider à

constituer une base scientifique pour l'interprétation de la fiction et a répondre la question de comment la fiction peut affecter la réalité des gens.

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The subject of persuasion is a double edged issue. For instance, convincing a child to do their homework is, conventionally, a good persuasion that can be called education. But the problem is when the tools of persuasion are used as weapons of negative influence; they usually lead to long-term losses, even when used for good reasons. Influencing others using language is an art that was glorified by ancient Greece *Sophists* (debaters) and philosophers three thousand years ago. Those Sophists acquired a reputation for being able to persuade people to any cause, whatever of its degree of righteousness.

Like the art of Sophists, persuasive writing presents the writer's opinion explicitly trying to convince the reader to agree with them; however many fictional writings, mainly novels, have two levels of meaning. The first is in the superficial literal plot, and the second in a symbolic layer in which literary elements represent abstract ideas and feelings. One of the remarkable characteristics of literary texts is their multitude of meanings and interpretations. The art of the author is seen in the ability to link many ideas, feelings and impressions that are not necessarily expressed in words, but conveyed implicitly.

Almost any work of fiction conveys some messages or “dogmas” which are carried by the text but are not obvious in it, shaped by the author’s personal values and beliefs. Fictional writings express authors’ beliefs and ideologies (whether deliberately or not). They may be personal to a single author, or may mirror the values of a particular group or culture “Not surprisingly, the ideas and values which literary works seek to promote are influenced by the history, culture and circumstances relevant to the individuals who produce them” (Acosta).

Being able to identify the underlying factors that may influence life decisions means, also, understanding how to use them to get more positive reactions. Many writers could identify, understand, and successfully use those techniques either to send positive or even negative messages, trying to set up models of thoughts and to manipulate their audience. This

can be seen when most people cannot explain why they have a particular opinion or tell why they made a particular decision, without realizing that they are unconsciously repeating a scenario described in a book or a newspaper they read, or even in a poem or a song they listened to. Almost all authors avoid stating their purpose from writing a given work; It is clear that all forms of art are expressive and products of their creators' thoughts.

While authors often claim no practical purpose for their works, all literature constitutes an attempt at persuasively conveying certain values and ideas. The entertaining and beautiful aspect of literary works acts in reality as part of the appeal and attractiveness which the work tries to attach to the ideas which it seeks to convey (Acosta).

Throughout the course of history, literary works proved effective in exhorting readers to think and act in ways originally adopted by their authors. The *Common Sense* (1776) pamphlet and the *Declaration of independence* (1776) are two major Enlightenment documents in the history of the United States, which can serve as examples of influential writings, since they could unify the North American colonists in revolting against their mother country to get their independence. All this happened without a clear call for the colonists to engage into war, but only with insisting on a series of natural rights and motivating arguments.

In documents like these, arguments are presented as a self-evident truth related to the readers' situation and prior knowledge, in order to make them adopt the message conveyed by the texts. As a result, almost behind every story there is a tendency to create another story in the mind of its reader or hearer, to remind of and/or replace a prior story (Clifford 100). Dr *Jukka Mikkonen* argues that there actually are genres of literature in which authors make assertions "in order to instruct, advice, or criticize", which, he claims, is "an essential part of a work's design function". He takes as examples "allegory (*Everyman*), parable (Steinbeck's

Pearl), satire (Orwell's *Animal Farm*), thesis novel (Golding's *Lord of the Flies*), and thesis play (Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*).” (Mikkonen 314)

At the end of the day, understanding the ideas or values behind any text and how they are conveyed is not an easy task especially in fictional works. Dr Fidel Fajardo-Acosta asserted that “Just as dreams often convey meaning and information to the dreamer in puzzling symbolic images, literature may be said to function in a similar way” But the difficulty lies in the fact that the messages of a manipulating nature in literary texts are largely conveyed implicitly or symbolically, to serve a certain ideology as asserted by Dr Fajardo earlier.

In order for readers to interpret and draw correct inferences of what they read, it seems necessary for them to ask questions such as the following:

- What are the different tools used by writers, mainly in fiction, to influence their readers?
- To what extent was the author of *The Giver* successful in applying those tools, and what religious and political dogmas might be conveyed tacitly through this novel?

The previous two questions constitute the main questions that this research attempts to answer.

Since this research is an attempt to describe any technique designed to manipulate human thought or action using literary texts, it is of a great importance to know about previous works done in the field. The theme of tacit dogmas and ideologies in fictional literature has been the focus for many literary and semiotic studies and examinations recently. This review, therefore, will discuss different studies in a variety of fields and contexts that might be linked to the field of this thesis, but it will put much emphasis on psychological and rhetorical influences.

First of all, in his essay, Jukka MikKonen (2010) discusses implication or suggestion in literature and their role, kinds and conception. He focuses on classic views and their contrasting points of view about the topic. Although this article serves as an important reference in the field of the present research, and is actually the closest study to it, but its emphasis on topics like the interpretive context of literary suggestion, which is an important point, made the essay overlook other interconnected points to the topic, such as the psychology of readers, and the linguistic techniques used by authors.

Secondly, a comparison study entitled “*From Shadow-Lands to Elsewhere and Beyond: Religious Imagery and Adult Attempts to Colonize Childhood*” (2008), in which *Fran Haley* makes a comparison between two fiction stories namely: C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and Lois Lowry’s novel *The Giver*, is a work where *Haley* sheds light on problems like the presence of authors’ beliefs, and religious bias in children’s literature. From the title it is obvious that *Haley*’s study is closely related to the subject matter of this research, however it didn’t cover other areas related to it like psychology, or the rhetoric art.

Besides, and in his essay “*Hidden Persuaders: Political Ideologies in Literature for Children*” (1985), *Robert D. Sutherland* shows how children’s books are filled with their authors’ ideologies. He also defines the word politics as any informing ideology which has the potential of persuasion, then he shows the three persuasive modes or politics which are: The politics of advocacy, when authors exaggerate in making their themes and characters attractive inviting and pushing the reader to share their view; The politics of attack, the opposite but similar in effect to advocacy, when authors use irony or assault against particular targets that opposes their ideology; And the politics of assent, or the author’s unconscious agreement and use of values and beliefs established in their society. Like the previous work, this essay focused only on the issue of ideologies conveyed through children’s literature and

ignored other techniques, like the psychological, or rhetoric ones, which are indispensable in shaping any kind of tacit dogma.

Additionally, in *Robert Cialdini's* three years experimental study presented in the book "*INFLUENCE: The Psychology of Persuasion*" (2009), the author identifies six psychological persuasive devices, also known as "weapons of influence", that compliance experts can use in convincing their audience to accept terms that are advantageous to them. The study concentrated on the psychological influence in the fields of social influence, consumerism and marketing, but it didn't give importance to the written word even though it is one of the basic forms of linguistic communication.

Furthermore, *Anders Pettersson's* book "*VERBAL ART a Philosophy of Literature and Literary Experience*" (2000) shows the effects and applications of the literary experience theory through a series of detailed, and more empirical, studies of literary works. He draws examples and discussions on the philosophy of literature such as the cognitive significance of literature, the unlimited nature of literary meaning, emotional reactions to fictional writings, and the distinctiveness of the literary use of language. This book is an important reference to the present research, but its author's emphasis on questions like: How does literature operate? What constitutes the difference between literature and non-literature? And what is literature for? makes the topic of tacit dogmas in literature a minor part in his long analytical description of the "Fundamental literary theory".

"*WHY FAIRY TALES STICK The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*" (2006), is another book, in which Jack Zipes raises the question of why some fairy tales stick in the readers' minds, and work in affecting and blending with their culture and staying there. *Why Fairy Tales Stick* presents new critical approaches to the study of classical fairy tales such as "Cinderella", "Snow White", "Beauty and the Beast", and "Hansel and Gretel" in order to

understand how and why fairy tales have evolved over the last three hundred years and continued to be related to our lives with their themes repeated in many modern stories. The same missing points of the first two works mentioned in this review can be noticed in this book.

As far as the previous literature is concerned, it seems that authors deal with partial ideas related to the subject of manipulation in literature, but their studies combine other subjects also related to literature, leaving the gap of a specialized work that mixes many aspects of the topic of tacit dogmas in fictional literature unfilled.

Those previous works pave the way for the present study which is entitled *When Fiction Affects Reality: Tacit Religious and Political Dogmas in Lois Lowry's The Giver*. It is an analytical study that attempts basically to reveal the techniques used by the author to convey, deliberately or not, any religious and political dogmas or ideologies. Our case study, Lois Lowry's dystopian novel *The Giver* (1993), gained a large popularity among middle school pupils in the United States, and won the Newbery Medal of 1994 awarded for the best American book written for children or young adults. Despite its importance, the novel has not been a subject for wide research.

Because the novel treats a number of important concerns and deals with some sensitive issues, only religious and political interpretations of the story are to be presented due to their importance in shaping people's ideologies.

This leads us to reflect on how to answer the main questions of this research. That, in turn, can be fulfilled only by knowing its main objectives which are to present the different psychological and rhetorical devices used by writers of fiction as tools of influence, to show the application of some of these devices by Lowry, along with the extraction of the possible tacit religious and political dogmas in *The Giver*. This also coincides with another objective,

namely attempting to create a basis for anyone wishing to conduct further research in this field.

What comes to mind at this point is the question of how different is the present thesis from other studies done in the field. So, since other works done on the subject of tacit dogmas in literature only tackled deeply one of the various areas of the subject, the present paper is an attempt to bring together those various aspects (psychological, rhetorical, types of tacit dogmas and messages) of the subject, to provide an overall representation within one piece of work.

In order to give the reader a clear understanding into the subject, this thesis was divided into two chapters. The first one, entitled "*Psychological and Rhetorical Tools of Influence in Literary Texts*" provides a theoretical definition with description of the different psychological techniques, the rhetorical devices, and the types of tacit dogmas used to influence the readers in fictional literary texts. The psychological techniques, on the one hand, are to be drawn from *Robert Cialdini's* book "*INFLUENCE*" and *Jay Heinrichs'* book "*Thank You for Arguing*" then interrelated to convenient forms of writing. Rhetorical devices, like figures of speech, on the other hand, are to be defined and clarified with some examples; and finally, a brief description of the types and purpose of tacit dogmas in fictional writings is to be presented.

The second chapter "*Religious and political Dogmas in Lois Lowry's The Giver*" spotlights, in the light of two literary theories (Reader Response and Marxist), the religious and political interpretations of Lois Lowry's dystopian novel "The Giver". It serves as a practical literary analysis for the first chapter as it consolidates the theoretical part with a practical example for a deeper insight into the subject matter of this research.

Because the thesis deals with theoretical and analytical study of the tacit aspects of meaning in fiction, data are basically collected as interpretations of Lois Lowry's novel "The Giver" in addition to the Cliffs Notes on Lowry's *The Giver* (1999) as primary sources. The use of secondary sources such as books, articles, dissertations and websites, even though scarce, is also needed in order to support the thesis with the outcome of various studies. So, due to the qualitative nature of the data gathered and the analytical assessment of *The Giver*, the present thesis follows a descriptive as well as an analytical approach in its development. It provides explanations of psychological and rhetorical techniques of influence used by authors, along with analytical interpretations of the religious and political dogmas drawn from the novel. The whole study, then, is based on two theoretical approaches, namely the Reader Response Theory and the Marxist Theory.

Chapter one

Addressing their readers using an appropriate form of language, along with the use of symbols, allegories, and metaphors allow authors to express their ideas indirectly, and to influence readers on different matters. The next quotation shows the importance of the meaning intended behind the use of language.

A given story for example may seek to promote a particular view of the world not by flatly stating it but instead by constructing a set of emotionally charged and seemingly "realistic" situations leading to the almost unavoidable, but always unstated, conclusion of the story's intended moral. Literary texts thus convey meaning to their readers in ways which go far beyond the mere literal or "surface" level of signification. (Acosta)

This unavoidable but always unstated moral is the second level of meaning, which constitutes the focus of this research, and it needs a deep evaluation of literary works to be wholly exposed. This evaluation is built upon a complete analysis of the different literary and non literary devices carried by the text, and on the relation between them.

In fact, literary texts are discerned from other texts by the delicacy of their multitude of meaning, and by the fact that their real meaning is hidden and implicit behind the devices that constitute the work. In literature, meaning is not merely limited to the superficial understanding of the wording in a given text, but through a complete analysis of the signifying intertwining set of rhetoric, figures of speech, images, symbols, allusions, connotations, suggestions, and implications of the whole text.(Acosta). The writer's overall purpose and their status quo, therefore, determine the techniques he or she uses.

As Noel Carroll notes, the political, philosophical, and moral points authors advance in their literary works are "often secured through oblique techniques," such as implication, allegory, presupposition, and illustration that is not accompanied with explicative commentary. In the literary culture, a traditional reason for authors to hide their views in implications has been to mislead the censors. As a classic example, one could mention the

'Aesopian language,' practiced by authors such as Saltykov. (qtd. In Mikkonen 314)

The implied or tacit meanings generally find their ways to the readers' minds through fictional writings. This genre, in turn, characterizes almost all books written for young adult readers and is built upon many techniques such as creating seemingly legitimate utopian or dystopian imaginary settings. Those untrue settings are generally projected onto the realities of the readers' world. It might be said that Young Adult Literature primarily serves adult needs and interests, whether positively or not, as it builds an image of the adolescent inside the book into desirable forms of attitude that are appropriate for a certain ideology.

Implying meanings in fictional works, therefore, is built upon many techniques that authors employ based on their own backgrounds as well as their works'.

Literary interpretative conventions relate to the literary historical context of the work (genre, literary tradition), common beliefs of the contemporary audience and the prevailing ideologies, the author's public biography, her *oeuvre*, and the like. These are the criteria critics lean on, when, for instance, interpreting the theological message of Dante's *Commedia* or social critique in Dicken's *Oliver Twist*. Further, although the reader is not able to hear the author's tone of voice, she is able to detect the author's tone of utterance: her style of writing, manner of depicting characters and way of representing events.(Mikkonen 326)

when it comes to psychology, Professor *Cialdini* shows that there are few types of "mental shortcuts" that make our thoughts vulnerable (5); some of them can be created, while others are already in our minds installed by our society and ready to be used. As an example, "Eberhardt et al. studied police officers and found that when directly asked "who looks criminal?", they chose Black faces over White ones, particularly those that were more stereotypically Black" (Cheryl Staats 36). This mental shortcut is the result of the image depicted in media and literature over decades of bias and racism. Those mental shortcuts can be well employed when analyzing literature using such theory as Reader Response.

1- Psychological Techniques of Influence:

1.1 Cialdini's Six key Principles of Influence:

Cialdini's six basic rules, or triggers, that compliance professionals use to get people to say "yes" without thinking include: Reciprocation, Liking, Commitment and Consistency, Social proof, Authority, and Scarcity. Only the first two of the above rules are defined and taken as examples of psychological techniques of influence that might be used in fictional writings:

The Rule of Reciprocation: "the Old Give and Take ... and Take"

Always return a favor (Cialdini13); it means that people feel indebted when given anything, whether it's a gift, an invitation, a compliment, or even a piece of information. A small initial favor can produce a sense of obligation to agree to a substantially larger return favor (Cialdini 25). This rule, along with other psychological rules, was well applied by a college girl when writing a letter to her parents (Appendix 1)

By giving her parents the assurance that she was well and nothing bad had happened to her, after her invented story, she moved from larger to smaller problem; by this she made her parents move from being non-compliant to compliant with her having low marks in the exams. By this strategy, she attained her intended goal, which is avoiding her parent's blame.

The Rule of LIKING: "The Friendly Thief"

Liking is related to Reciprocation as when people show that they like us or when we feel familiar with them, we tend to like them in return. Because of its effect on liking, familiarity plays a role in decisions about all sorts of things, including the politicians we elect (Cialdini 133).

In writing, this rule can be applied by pushing the reader to like and stand in the main character's shoes making the plot more personal. Sharing common problems or ambitions with fictional characters makes readers sympathize with or relate to them, and eventually, like them. An example of this strategy is *Jonas*, the major character of Lois Lowry's novel 'The Giver', who is depicted from a teenager point of view making him seem familiar to young adult readers. Lois Lowry presented her main character as sharing his inner struggle with young adult readers knowing that all adolescents have such kind of troubles "Nor did Jonas, tonight. His feelings were too complicated this evening. He wanted to share them, but he wasn't eager to begin the process of sifting through his own complicated emotions, even with the help that he knew his parents could give" (Lowry 3).

The opposite way of the Liking Rule can also be employed when a writer wants his audience to dislike, or even hate, a given character. This was well applied by George Orwell in his *Animal Farm*, where '*Napoleon*' the pig, who represents Stalin in the novel, is depicted in a hateful way. The traits of *Napoleon* signify the character's dictatorial personality hated by all human beings after the misdeeds of dictators through history.

1.2 Heinrich's Tools for the Rhetoric Art of Persuasion:

The previously mentioned tools seem to be clearer in oral communications, thus fiction follows more the rhetorical art of persuasion. From his part, Jay Heinrichs emphasizes, among many techniques of persuasion, on Aristotle's three tools of persuasion, namely *Ethos* (character), *Logos* (logic), and *Pathos* (emotion) as he called them the "Aristotle Big Three" (39) "megatools of rhetoric" (45). He also refers to key techniques like speaking the audience's language (191) and seizing the right occasion and medium (226).

For Heinrichs, Pathos or argument by emotion is the engaging part of persuasion; it can cause mood change making the audience more sympathetic to the addresser's logic. One can alter their audience's beliefs by referring to their own experiences or creating a virtual experience by storytelling (290). Among the persuasive emotions employed in Pathos are: one, Patriotism, where the audience's sense of group identity is linked to the choice or action communicated. As an example for this, the choice of a young protagonist (Jonas), who is a misfit in his community in *The Giver*, is linked to the sense of teenage group identity shared by young adult readers. And two, Emulation, where Ethos (character) plays an important role in making the audience imitate and show positive response to a role model (291). In this sense, the same protagonist (Jonas) might represent a role model (hero) for young readers.

2- Rhetorical (linguistic) Tools of Influence in Fictional Literature:

Language, as defined by almost all linguists, is a system of spoken and written symbols by which human beings communicate. In writing, symbolism "is the use of symbols to represent ideas, especially in art and literature" (Oxford Dictionary). In other words, it is the use of a word, a phrase, or a description, which represents a deeper meaning than the words themselves. This dimension of meaning can transform the written word into a very powerful instrument.

2.1 Rhetorical Language:

Rhetorical language is a style of using spoken, written and visual language effectively and persuasively to influence a certain audience. Users of Rhetorical language employ many devices and enthymemes (syllogism) to convey meaning or to persuade.

“(formal, often disapproving) (of a speech or piece of writing) intended to influence people, but not completely honest or sincere” (Oxford Dictionary).

2.2 Rhetorical Devices:

Code Grooming: it is one of Heinrichs’ linguistic tools of persuasion. An addresser can get close to their audience by using (politely) their unique or appropriate language as a group (199).

Figures of speech: Also called *tropes*, are expressions or uses of language in a non-literal sense in order to achieve a particular effect. Metaphors, similes, hypophoras, parables and allegories are examples of familiar figures of speech.

“(pl. figures of speech) a word or phrase used in a different way from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental picture or effect” (Oxford Dictionary).

Allegory, Allusion, two important figures of speech, are taken as examples for this part

a- Allegory: Sometimes referred to as ‘Extended Metaphor’, is an imaginary narrative or inventive expression that conveys a symbolic meaning parallel and more important than the literal one. *Fables* and *Parables* are types of allegory with some differences.

“noun (PL. allegories) a story, poem, or picture which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one: Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory of the spiritual journey” (Oxford Dictionary).

Allegories have often been used to represent and send moral, political, or historical messages, and have long been popular as vehicles for satire. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is perhaps one of the best known examples of allegory in

which a group of animals revolt against their human owners and form their own government. In this fable the farm governed by animals represents the Russian communist regime of Stalin in the period before the Second World War.

b- Allusion: A hint or reference in history or previous literature to an event allowing the writer to convey a message without going into a lengthy discourse

“(formal) something that is said or written that refers to or mentions another person or subject in an indirect way” (Oxford Dictionary).

Intertextuality

A term coined by the French originally Bulgarian semiotician *Julia Kristeva* meaning that any literary work is a hypertext and is affected by other texts, or in other words, is the product of prior literatures and that it contains a mixture of direct or indirect quotations.

“(Technical) the relationship between texts, especially literary texts” (Oxford Dictionary)

Sentimentality

A way of trying to create emotion within the reader, it is a linguistic technique that has an immediate impact on the psychological state of the reader (Pathos). Sentimentality employs stock response - an emotion that has its source outside of the story (babies, puppies, young love, patriotism...). A good writer draws forth emotion by producing a character in a situation that deserves the reader's sympathy and showing enough about the character and the situation to make those situations real and convincing. It might occur as a shock or warning concerning the future results of a present issue to awaken the readers' feelings in order to make things change.

2-3 Symbolism in characterization and setting:

Some fictional characters' names along with descriptions of settings are interpreted to symbolize a certain quality or concept. Examples of characters are: again, the major character of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* 'Napoleon' the pig, who represents Stalin in the novel. The name 'Napoleon' symbolizes the character's dictatorial nature after *Napoleon Bonaparte* the French Emperor known for his imposing character. Another example is *Jonas*, the major character of Lois Lowry's novel 'The Giver', who revolts against his seemingly utopian community to save his people. The name 'Jonas' comes from the Biblical name *Jonah*. The prophet who succeeded in saving his people by making them repent.

The setting, on the other hand, can be a symbol as in the case of *The Giver* where the story is set in an unknown future year in "almost December." time. Here Lowry uses the word *December* to symbolize short, dark days, cold weather, and endings, a time when nature seems dead (Carey 14). This resembles an atmosphere of hopelessness where choice and free will are absent. Anders Pettersson argued that "The formal aspects of the content – the local, temporal, and attitudinal point of view, et cetera – modify the verbal meaning in important ways" ("The Concept of Literary Application" 8)

3- Types and Purpose of Tacit Messages and Dogmas in Fictional writings

When thinking about tacit messages many things come to one's mind. It depends on the writer's purpose, as causes or points of view that authors of fictional stories promote, to affect readers' thoughts, differ according to authors' history, culture and circumstances (Acosta), and to the type of message behind their stories. Readers, thus, are more prone to be affected when reading the fiction genre which might be labeled as escapist. More research is being done in the field on the effect of fiction and many

Studies show that when we read nonfiction, we read with our shields up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to make us rubbery and easy to shape (Gottschall)

This manipulating nature of fiction is not always negative. As *Jonathan Gottschall* argues that it can improve the readers' capacity of understanding other people, advance morality that reinforces the cultural, religious, and political norms and dogmas, or give a sense of hope by believing "the lie that the world is more than it actually is".

The effect created by any fictional story follows the type of messages behind it, which in turn results from the writer's purpose. The latter varies as it can be entertaining, prompting public thought and action, supporting a set of beliefs, carrying out business or government marketing, transmitting knowledge and education (Schwartz et al. 111). The broad authors' purpose from crafting their works, then, is to persuade the targeted readers to their logic, inform the readers about a given topic, or to entertain and share experiences or feelings with them (Roberts).

4- Fiction, Meaning, and Young Adult Literature:

4.1 Fictional vs. Non-fictional literature

Fiction is the term for works of imagination, in any media, that are not presented as facts even if they may be based on real events. Nonfiction describes any work that is not fictional, that claims to describe real events, ideas, or people. The phrases fictional and non-fictional works are mainly used to describe written literature or other media but are commonly confused by most people. For instance, fiction is the basis of comedies and narrative dramas in popular media such as film and television, while nonfiction, on the other hand, includes documentaries and news coverage.

The word fiction derives from the Latin word *fingere*, meaning to shape or create. The same word provides the root for the English words finger and figment (idea). Linking fiction with the phrase figment of imagination may present a helpful mnemonic, or memory aid to help remembering the meaning of Fiction. Nonfiction is accordingly any work that is not created in the imagination and that has its root in reality.

Stories and fables have mixed elements of fiction and nonfiction since their creation; this made it not easy to distinguish the difference between them. Writers frequently use events and ideas from real life to color their fiction with realistic elements.

An essential difference between fiction and nonfiction is the author's purpose. Fictional stories may use imaginary characters and settings to discuss real issues. For instance, TV series like *The Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek* used concepts of science-fiction, such as aliens, to represent and examine social issues of racism and prejudice. Writers of nonfiction, on the other hand, intend to depict real happenings. Television news journalism is supposed to be nonfiction, while dramas and comedies are pure fiction. Reality TV, by employing coached spontaneity, often manages to be neither fiction nor nonfiction. Comic books, audio recordings, and stage performances all have formats that encompass both fiction and nonfiction. (Fritsky)

Speculative Fiction

According to *dictionary.com*, speculative fiction is a broad literary genre encompassing any fiction with supernatural, fantastical, or futuristic elements.

In other words, it is a mixture of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and utopian elements that characterizes almost all utopian and dystopian novels. So, the difference between speculative fiction and any other kind of the previously mentioned fictions is that the former imagines a different world with familiar but strange circumstances, that

are possible, and pushes the reader to ask a sort of existential questions starting with ‘what if’.

Utopian vs Dystopian Fiction

“Utopia” and “dystopia” are both equal and opposite at the same time. They are the ideal examples of Speculative Fiction as they picture a science fiction setting of two opposite societies. Literature, in turn, explains the two genres in a more profound way.

By definition, “utopia” is a society or community setting wherein the people experience the ideal and most perfect life possible. By contrast, “dystopia” highlights the complete opposite, which is a place of extremely unpleasant living and working conditions for most people. Most or all of the societal and governmental systems are terrible. (Rollins)

The term “Utopia” was first coined by Thomas Moore in his work “Utopia” in 1516, but the concept has its origin in Plato’s Republic in about 380 BC. Moore described an imaginary and solitary island where everything seems to be running smoothly. It’s like what many would think as a paradise. This work seems like describing England at Moore’s time¹, however, a utopia is regarded as a pure work of fiction because the idea of its existence as a perfect world seems to be impossible. Among the features of utopian genre we can estimate that it is set in no particular place or time, only an isolated location, and in the late 19th century, it moved to explore different times but not different place in what became known as *Uchronia*. Another feature is that the society of a utopia seeks perfection in everything, in other words it is a hope to find a better place. Authors of utopia generally use evocative

¹ An island with 54 cities

and symbolic names for their characters; additionally they tend to use the frame narrative where the narrator is like a visitor to draw readers in.

Contrastingly, Dystopia, which was also coined at the same time as utopia and is known as anti-utopia or *kakotopia*, it took its actual form from the post modern utopian story that shows the price paid for happiness then turned to describe a society entirely in appalling conditions. Similarly to utopia in its features, it is a hope to find a better place too, among its major concerns is to express a series of social anxieties such as economic disparity, totalitarian regimes, and technology and environmental degradation. In a dystopia the setting is dry and gloomy because of the severe exploitation of its totalitarian leaders. Dystopian societies are likely advanced technologically and have a distinct class system. Dystopian fiction works give the reader some allusive information about the time when they were produced. Moreover, they prepare the audience for a pessimistic future by highlighting many social ills to create a sense of desire for change.

In several publications, the dystopian setting is also guised as somewhat similar to a utopian society. It's just that upon further immersion into that society, you'll eventually learn that there's excessive control, repression, and abuse. This description practically fits into the idea of police states where great power is used to control the citizens. In this connection, the people holding power become far more advanced and progressive than the rest, which also emphasizes the distinct separation of different social classes. (Rollins)

This call for change is not always expressed openly, as it is the case in our case study, Lois Lowry's novel *The Giver*. In his search for answers, the protagonist Jonas asks about the absence of colors and differences after he received their memories from the Giver, here the later said: "we gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others", then Jonas replied fiercely: "we shouldn't have!" The Giver's answer, then, was as follows: "you've come very quickly to that conclusion, he said,

it took me many years. Maybe your wisdom will come much more quickly than mine” (94). The reader can notice that this wisdom will be manifested in Jonas’s organizing a coup against his totalitarian society. This agreement trust that the Giver puts in Jonas might create the previously mentioned sense of desire for change in Jonas and, consequently, in the young reader facing social or parental lack of freedom and forced conformity.

Religious fiction

Religious fiction is any work of literary fiction that includes religious themes or elements. Many people tend to think that religious elements in fiction are related to the religious affiliation of the author.

Religion might be communicated in literature in many ways like presenting evocative characters and characterizations taken from religious manuscripts. Some western religious fictions borrow heavily from the Judeo-Christian conception of God. This is the case of Jesus Christ, known in Judeo-Christian religion as the Son of God. Other religious fiction may use narratives like the Creation story of Adam and Eve, in addition to the Serpent, known in Christianity as Satan or the Devil.

Other forms of religious fiction address religion in a non-classical form, rather they focus on the manifestation of a specific religion throughout the course of its history put in a seemingly realistic plot. Literature uses religion often to confirm a certain point or worldview, or to set out a fundamental theory of morals in what is known as the *Metanarrative*.

This act of setting a ‘moral to the story’ is widely applied in religious fictions that seek to convey religious thought. In this religiously oriented fiction, the writer would try to show the endings in differences between religious and non-religious people. (Leverkuhn, Jones)

Political Fiction

Works of political fiction are made up of stories that provide a commentary on actual events in the political systems and theories. It often criticizes an existing society directly, or offers an alternative to an existing society or political system. Sometimes works in the political genre make use of satire to convey their point. Examples could be: *1984* or *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. (Maul)

Dystopian literature genre provides the favourite ground for authors of political fiction to express their anxieties, and that is why it became one of the main literary genres in the 21st century. Many works of dystopian political fiction came to denounce a political reality at their time. As an example, this genre witnessed an increase of production after the US Senator McCarthy's wave of fear against Communism during the Cold War. At that time, works like Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and David Karp's *One* (1953) came to protest a society that fears the Other and condemns any difference in its members. These works might serve as a critique against the politics of both poles – the US and the USSR- toward their citizens during the 50s.

4.2 Meaning:

In Hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, Paul Ricoeur's theory about forming the meaning in the reader's mind is based on three stages. These stages are: Explanation (what the text says), Appropriation (when a reader makes the world of the text their own by becoming familiar with), and Understanding (when a reader combines the internal world of the text and their external world to form a new interpretation of the text) (Ghasemi, Taghinejad, Kabiri, Imani 1626).

Literature, in this sense, exists only as means of conveying meaning. The latter is composed in order to evoke impressions or responses from the reader's part. Thus, to form

meaning, the reader should form a clear insight of the context in which a particular meaning appears (pragmatic meaning) and link it to similar situations in reality. In literary texts, meaning appears in two levels, namely implicit (deep) and explicit (surface):

Tacit or Implicit meaning

What is tacit is inferred, it is implicitly suggested, but not openly said. Tacit meaning can be more difficult to uncover than explicit meaning. It's the reader's role to interpret the text's ideas about the themes or characters that are revealed implicitly. For example, the below extract from Louis Sachar's novel *'Holes'* contains a set of tacit information about the man it describes:

A man was sitting with his feet up on a desk. He turned his head when Stanley and the guard entered, but otherwise didn't move. Even though he was inside, he wore sunglasses and a cowboy hat. He also held a can of cream soda, and the sight of it made Stanley even more aware of his own thirst. He waited while the bus guard gave the man some papers to sign. "That's a lot of sunflower seeds," the bus guard said. Stanley noticed a burlap sack filled with sunflower seeds on the floor next to the desk. "I quit smoking last month," said the man in the cowboy hat. He had a tattoo of a rattlesnake on his arm, and as he signed his name, the snake's rattle seemed to wiggle. "I used to smoke a pack a day. Now I eat a sack of these every week." (BBC - KS3 Bitesize English)

Apparently, this extract doesn't tell much about Mr Sir, but the reader might form an opinion about him. Reading between the lines may allow the reader to tell that the man leans to impress people and acts as if in charge. He is sitting "with his feet up on a desk" wearing sunglasses and a cowboy hat indoors. Generally, people like him are obsessed with power, and can be tough.

When we think about the can of soda, we can say that Mr Sir is a selfish man. This is because he did not offer either Stanley or the bus driver anything to drink during their long cross-desert journey. The fact that he keeps his drink in front of Stanley and the bus driver suggests that he is cruel and careless.

Mr Sir could be expected to be bad and short-tempered as we learn that stopped smoking recently. The reader is led to believe the sunflower seeds are there to help him stop smoking, but it seems that they won't be successful. (BBC - KS3 Bitesize English)

Explicit Meaning

Something that is explicit is apparent and obviously stated. Explicit meaning is easy to recognize in a text. The next extract is an example of explicit meanings:

Jim Wellings was not a man to be glanced at. But nor was he a man to be stared at. To say he was a big man is like calling Buckingham Palace a big house. He was a man who filled whatever space there was. He wasn't fat, though; just big.

Even from this short extract, we can tell a lot about Jim. (BBC - KS3 Bitesize English)

4.3 Young Adult Literature and its Importance:

Young adult literature is as diverse as its readers, and it mirrors adolescents' experiences and changes as they try to find their place in the world. Due to its importance, it witnessed a considerable increase in multimedia versioning lately. Young adult literature is a coming of age literature; it mainly reflects adolescents as they become aware and responsible for their lives and actions. Consequently, it focuses on characters and themes interesting to young adult audience addressing them openly most of the time.

Young adult fiction no longer shies away from plots and topics once considered only for adults; yet authors of young adult literature use less graphic details while still conveying the reality of the situation (Vogels, 1996). However, the literature is not boring in subject matter or in its appeal to young people. Rather, it contains exciting and intriguing plots and characters (Christenbury, 1997). (Manning, Butcher)

In addition to developing the critical reading capabilities, young adult literature is written for several purposes like teaching about the world outside adolescents' communities

to show the importance of civic engagement, opens the door for ethical conversations, and introducing readers to writers and writing to increase literacy and the ability to explore literature. (Manning, Butcher)

5- Fiction from a Critical Literary Point of View

Different literary theories help common readers and professional critics uncover and interpret the moral, social, cultural, and political meanings that a literary work might convey. There are particular perspectives or ways to see literary works as holding ideologies; in fact those perspectives are ideologies that became theories in literary criticism. Although the case study of this thesis, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, can be approached using many theories, only two of them, Reader Response and Marxism, were chosen due to their suitability in interpreting the novel's religious and political dogmas respectively.

5.1 Reader Response Theory:

A modern reader might approach *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, with expectations different from those of someone from Shakespeare's time. In this sense, Reader Response approach assumes that different meanings are assigned to a text only by readers according to the effect of texts on the reader, with regard to the intellectual community they belong to alongside their life experiences they carry to the text. (Tyson 169)

Reader response stresses the importance of the reader's role in the interpreting texts. Rejecting the idea that there is a single, fixed meaning inherent in every literary work, this theory holds that the individual creates his or her own meaning through "transaction" with the text based on personal associations. Because all readers bring their own emotions, concerns, life experiences, and knowledge to their reading, each interpretation is subjective and unique (Mora, Welch)

Social reader-response is one of the main branches of the Reader Response theory; it is associated with the writings of Stanley Fish. For him, there is no "entirely

individual subjective response” seeing that what a reader may think to be their “individual subjective responses to texts” are actually products of the *interpretive community* that they are part of. By interpretive community he means people who share the “interpretive strategies” brought to texts by readers. These interpretive strategies are, in turn, products of the “*institutionalized assumptions*” (prior assumptions established earlier in life, which are consolidated by conventional religious or cultural attitudes and philosophies). (Tyson 185)

Because *The Giver* was destined primarily for American young readers, the coming chapter will provide possible reader responses based on the religious institutionalized assumptions of the western Christian interpretive community.

5.2 Marxist Theory:

Many authors of fiction, mainly dystopian fiction, tried to picture the aspects of a totalitarian society with a dissatisfied hero who tries to fight the system. From this regard came a critical theory based on the external aspects that form the experience of the individual and their group.

Marxist theory, which is drawn from the economic, social, and political theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in late 19th century, is among the most influential and controversial theories of literature currently practiced throughout the Western academic world. Unlike the Psychoanalytic Theory, Marxism focuses on the material (economic) and historical (sociopolitical) forces that, in their view, are the primary factors in shaping the psychology of individuals (Tyson 54).

For Marxists, socioeconomic class differences divide people more than religion, race, ethnicity, or gender does. The conflict, therefore, is between the “haves”, the ruling class or *bourgeoisie*, and the “have-nots”, the majority class or

proletariat. The latter are in constant need for change under their oppressive class system seeking to establish a true social system

Few Marxists today believe, as Marx did, that the proletariat will one day spontaneously develop the class consciousness needed to rise up in violent revolution against their oppressors and create a classless society (Tyson 54)

Marxism sees ideology as “a belief system, and all belief systems are products of cultural conditioning.” (Tyson 56). The second chapter, therefore, will provide a political interpretation on how the cultural conditioning of the totalitarian regime in *The Giver* creates unseen socioeconomic class differences.

Chapter Two

In the previous chapter, we've seen the predetermined use of psychology and language as tools of influence which, when combined deliberately or not, would serve to convey authors' thoughts, beliefs or ideologies to the reader. In this chapter, we will examine firstly, how the author's background and experiences could inspire her to write the novel in hand, in addition to her noteworthy choice of language as well as her construction of themes. Secondly and as a partial answer to the research questions, we chose to put most emphasis on the religious and political dogmas tacitly carried in the "The Giver", as being the most critical fields of influence in any fictional work, implementing the two previously explained: Reader Response and Marxist critical theories.

1- Life and Background of the Author

Lois Lowry was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1937. Her father was a dentist in the United States Army during World War II, and the family was on constant move almost everywhere in the world. Lowry is the author of more than twenty novels destined for young adults and she has won numerous awards, including two prestigious Newbery awards, one for *Number the Stars* and the other for *The Giver*. Her books portray sensitive, sharp-minded and wise protagonists who encounter difficult challenges and choices in life. She writes about themes which range from the hilarious adventure of Anastasia Krupnik to Jonas' self-awareness in *The Giver* that he has been living his life like a machine.

As a child, Lowry was "a shy, introverted girl; she sought companionship and entertainment in the wonderful worlds that existed within the books she found in her grandfather's library" Pavlos (5). After World War II, Lowry and her family joined her father in Tokyo, Japan, where they lived for two years in an Americanized community. Then, at the

outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Lowry returned to the United States to attend a small, private high school in New York City. She graduated with a title of “Future Novelist” in the school yearbook catalog. In the subsequent autumn; Lowry entered Pembroke College in Rhode Island to pursue her childhood dream of becoming a writer. She completed her sophomore year of college, and then, at the age of nineteen, she got married to Donald Lowry, who was a naval officer, Lowry continued to live a military lifestyle that made her travel on regular basis to settle wherever her military husband moved. Lowry eventually received a bachelor’s degree in 1972 from the University of Southern Maine.

As an illustration of how an author’s real life can inspire him/her to write a story, we stop by Lowry’s first novel, *A Summer to Die* (1977), which is about the relationship between two adolescent sisters, Meg and Molly, and the effect of Molly’s death by leukemia has brought to the family. Lowry based the relationship between Meg and Molly to portray her own relationship with her older sister, Helen, and on the feelings and emotions that she felt when Helen died of cancer (Pavlos 6). On the other hand, our case study novel, *The Giver* (1993), which also reflects Lowry’s contemplation about the importance of memory, due to her visit to her ill and aged father whose long-term memory started to fade away, allowing him, as Lowry mentioned, to forget “every sad or scary thing that had ever happened to him... he’d forgotten world war two in which he participated...he'd forgotten my sister who had died young”. (The Movie Times, “Lois Lowry: THE GIVER”) ²

Lois Lowry told Contemporary authors that she measures her success as an author by her ability to “help adolescents answer their own questions about life, identity, and human relationships”. Fairly, she said that she does not rely on awards to determine her success as a writer but, rather, on how well she communicates with her readers about individuality, life, and relationships (Pavlos 5)

² <https://youtu.be/Ez2vF5XCJBc>

2- Brief Summary of the Novel

The Giver is a tale about a seemingly Utopian community whose members live, or they think they live, a flawless life. There are no emotions or feelings of any sort, people cannot see colors; only monochromatic views, and there is no memory of the past that may bring pain and sorrow to the individuals. Moreover, Families seem, at glance, to be like all typical families, mostly consisting of four members: two children, father and a mother. Their inside life revolves around talking about dreams of the previous night, exchanging robotized smiles and supporting each other according to the community rules.

The community is ruled by The Committee of Elders who controls everything in it, even the weather. They issue laws without any warning or reference to other members of the population; they often dictate new instructions through loudspeakers installed in every corner of the city, including dwellings. The Elders control also birth, with the rate of fifty children per year; they supervise them from age eight to twelve in order to be assigned for a lifelong career, and that occurs in every December of every year in The Ceremony of Twelve.

The protagonist of the story is Jonas, a young, clever and curious boy who could get the highest rank profession in the Ceremony of Twelve as The Memory Receiver. The latter is a person who holds the memories of the entire community so people cannot remember anything that may compromise the order of the society. Daily, Jonas spends time with the present "Giver" – a name Jonas gave to the previous Memory Receiver – gradually receiving from him those feelings and memories. Well, Jonas received feelings of love, cold, color and war, eventually he started to realize that his people chose to give up their freedoms to be controlled by others and also noticed that their reactions were not natural but rather were all trained. One day, Jonas watched a video to a process called The Release, where the people who are sick or misfit in the society are killed by a lethal injection in order to preserve The

Sameness among the people. Jonas panicked because he used to think that Release is nothing but sending people outside the community or to what the author called *Elsewhere*.

At this point, the old Giver and Jonas agreed on a plan to alert the population and this can be done only by Jonas going to Elsewhere, that will release all the memories of his people back to them. On his way to Elsewhere, Jonas took two years old boy Gabriel who was going to be "Released" only because he couldn't get asleep at night. Both Jonas and Gabriel suffered from cold and starvation along the way and once they reached a top of a hill, they saw a house with Christmas lights and music coming out, and there they found a sled which they ride downhill toward the house. Abruptly, this was how the story ended; leaving many questions for the readers. Such questions vary from what happened to Jonas and Gabriel afterward? Was their journey to Elsewhere real or was it just another dream? How their community become after the release of their memories? As well as many other questions.

3- Language and Style with regard to the Psychological and Rhetorical Techniques of Influence:

As the novel is destined primarily for young readers, Lois Lowry narrates *The Giver* using a plain style and straightforward language. This relates to Heinrich's *Code Grooming* (see section 2 in chapter one) on employing a language that appeals to the audience, here the audience is the young adult who generally tend to understand the plain direct language. She also employs *sentimentality* (see section 2 in chapter one) by picturing the memory of the family celebrating Christmas, or showing the critical situation of the baby *Gabriel* when facing the danger of being released.

Lowry uses detailed and comprehensible descriptions to depict everyday life inside Jonas' community. At first, Jonas' community seems to be naturally normal; everyone is apparently nice, family is open and communicative, in a peaceful and quiet world but then readers are stunned to know that this superficiality comes with a heavy price as those citizens

have no freedom, no choice, and no real emotions. The author's gradual and deliberate revealing of the dystopia behind Jonas' community was because of: Firstly, Readers are not prepared at first to learn the horrible truth that lies beneath this superficially utopian lifestyle and secondly, the author intended to manipulate and plays with reader's perceptions and emotions as they slowly uncover the truth.

All readers can tell that the setting of *The Giver* is in an isolated community sometime in the future. Despite the fact that Lowry creates a world, entirely different from the one we know today, there are elements that make readers uncomfortable. The story is set in an unknown future year in "almost December." time. Here Lowry uses the word *December* to symbolize short, dark days, cold weather, and endings, a time when nature seems dead (Carey 14). *Jonas*, the name of the protagonist, who revolts against his seemingly utopian community to save his people, comes from and is another version of the Biblical name *Jonah* the prophet (see section 2 in chapter one) on symbolism in characterization and setting.

The novel is narrated from a third person point of view that is the whole story is revealed through its protagonist's thoughts and perspectives. In this regard, Lowry relied on enabling her readers to dive into Jonas' thoughts, as well as to witness the internal and external conflicts that Jonas' experiences by applying the psychological technique of *Liking*. Here, she presented Jonas in a way familiar to young adult readers knowing that all adolescents have such kind of troubles that make them feel different and alienated as Jonas was. Lowry reveals just how ridiculous it would be for Jonas to try explaining his experiences to his friends, as they could not understand his idea that life includes more than Sameness, since all they ever knew was Sameness. Unlike Jonas friends, young readers who are so familiar with such feeling of repression can sympathize once again with the character's state of mind.

Through the memories The Giver passes on to Jonas, readers quickly realize that those images are different from Jonas' daily life and environment. Lowry used a lyrical style to describe these memories; that is, using images that stimulate thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This type of imagery, mostly common in poetry, allows readers to picture these mystical and mysterious memories.

The novel is rich in material of allusion and allegory. Readers may notice many allusions such as the apple, and the names Jonas and Gabriel. These allusions refer to the biblical stories of Adam and Eve, Prophet Jonah, and the God's angel messenger Gabriel respectively. Allegories, especially religious, are abundant too and will be discussed in the "*Religious and Political Dogmas*" section.

Lowry continues to reveal the ironic absurdity of the community and this time is the language used among citizens. As an example, family units participate in the "Telling of Feelings." Amusingly, the term is ironic since these people do not have any feelings to share because of their Sameness. Moreover, the ironic word "Nurturer." A person who takes care of new born babies like Jonas' father, he also is the one who kills them.

The reason behind this memorized routine of language use among the community members is to make sure people will not lie. However, this helped in creating robot-like individuals who have no feelings whatsoever and through Jonas' experiences, readers can infer that the community itself is a one huge lie. This plot arrangement can arouse a sense of annoyance in the reader's mind that results from the author's use of the opposite way of the Liking Rule. From this sense, Jonas' sacrifice to save his community is justified gradually starting from employing the techniques of *Sentimentality* and *Liking* to pave the way for *Emulation* when Jonas is presented as a role model at least by saving Gabriel from being released.

Lowry ends her novel with an intriguing writing technique that is the open-ended plot structure primarily to allow readers to interpret the ending according to each person's beliefs, hopes, dreams, and experiences (Pavlos 52).

4- Major Themes

Memory

This is probably the most important theme in the novel as Lowry brilliantly succeeded to grow the reader's awareness to the significance of memory to the human life. As mentioned before when Lowry visited her ill and aged father, she realized that with the loss of memory, there will be no pain which, at first, seems to be a good thing. However, if someone did horrible things in his/her past and he/she couldn't remember doing so; he or she will not feel the regret to make things right or to repent. In addition, along with the loss of one's memory comes the loss of all happy moments and the forgetting of our loved ones that once we cherished the most in our life.

As we learned before, Jonas' community decided to eliminate all pain from their lives by giving up the memories of their collective experiences. Not only that, they become also immune from engaging in any sort of activities or relationships that might result in quarrel and misery, and suppressed their nostalgia for the things they gave up in order to live in absolute peace and harmony.

Despite the Elders decision of taking away memories, still they recognize how essential memory is. They realize if someone does not remember his/her mistakes, he/she may repeat them. Therefore the Elders assigned a Receiver to remember the history of the entire community so he will guide and regulate their behavior. But when Jonas became the Receiver, he learned that if there is no pain without memory, there is also no true happiness.

Interdependence and Sharing

The interdependence inside a community is one of the major themes in *The Giver*. Lowry says that the book speaks to “the vital need for humans to be aware of their interdependence, not only with each other, but with the world and its environment.”

At the beginning of Jonas’ training, The Giver informed him that he must pass on “the memories of the whole world” (76) to him. And because the Giver’s life is much richer than the lives of other members of the community, he can see color, he can hear music and he can feel love. On the other hand, he can also feel pain which is a great burden to him. Jonas could notice The Giver’s suffering so he said. “If you gave some of it to me, maybe your pain would be less.” (106)

The Giver did give Jonas some of his pain, and Jonas suffered from those agonizing memories but he felt glad that he could share them with The Giver. Moreover, he hoped the memories could be shared by the whole community so the pain will be much less. The Giver agreed and confessed that “The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It’s the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared.” (153)

Freedom of Choice

Another major theme in this novel is Choice or freedom of choice. Jonas realized the importance of choices when he looked back at the choices his community had made. They chose to go Sameness but missed on the other hand the opportunity to enjoy other beautiful things such as color, music and love.

Jonas expressed his deep regret on the loss of choice saying “If everything’s the same, then there aren’t any choices! I want to wake up in the morning and decide things! A blue tunic or a red one?” (96)

The Giver made it clear to Jonas that taking away people’s freedom of choice was also to eliminate the possibility of making wrong choices. He said “We really have to protect people

from wrong choices, it's "much safer." (97) And he added that they had to let go of some things to gain control of others. However and above all this, the Giver seemed to be uncomfortable with this concept.

Sameness versus Diversity

Jonas's community chose to go to Sameness because they could find security in it. In this regard, Lowry said, "I think that people are always more comfortable with familiar things. It is not easy to stand out, and that's why teenagers like to wear the same sneakers as other teenagers. The world of The Giver is a world where nobody has to take any risks. It's a very safe and comfortable world." (Pavlos)

The same takes place in Jonas's world, he and his friends wear the same kind of clothes, they have the same kind of bicycles, and the same kind of family units. Additionally, the weather is static and everything is colorless. Jonas started to gain awareness of Sameness once he met The Giver; he eventually became unhappy with it. He realized that he wants to see colors, hear music; he wants snow, hills and sleds.

When Jonas escaped from his community, he escaped Sameness; it was his journey toward diversity or as Lowry narrated: "After a life of Sameness and predictability, he was awed by the surprises that lay beyond each curve of the road." (171)

Individuality

Individuality refers to the set of qualities that distinguish a certain person or thing from others of the same kind, eventually leading others to value them or treat them differently. In the case of Jonas' community, there is none of that due to the built-to-core Sameness. Accordingly and every time in the Ceremony of Twelve, the alienation of the individuality concept is often emphasized by Chief of Elders who said: "You Elevens have spent all your years till now learning to fit in, to standardize your behavior, to curb any impulse that might set you apart from the group." (50)

For instance, children do not even know their actual birthdays to celebrate them individually; instead they celebrate their new age collectively at the December Ceremonies. So when Jonas received the memory of a birthday party, “with one child singled out and celebrated on his day,” (120) Jonas tasted the feeling of “joy of being an individual, special and unique and proud.” (120)

5- Religious and Political Dogmas in Lois Lowry's The Giver

As mentioned before, authors of fiction might convey tacit dogmas deliberately or not. Thus, the interpretation of such dogmas might or might not represent authors' intentions. As well, *The Giver* novel is clearly affected by the significant impact of Lois Lowry's background that the messages interpreted might not be deliberately conveyed.

The story deals with important social issues, including the value of the individual, the importance of memory, the dangers of manipulation through language and social controlling, and the need for color and music. *The Giver* also can be compared to some important adult books, like Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), which uses imaginary future societies to question the devaluation of the individual in some present cultures. It also can be compared to Lowry's own previous stories, namely *Number the Stars* (1990), when the story can be seen as an adaptation of the theme which deals with one small act of heroism against the Holocaust of World War II. The protagonists of both books learn more about the meaning of fear and that they must ultimately risk their lives for those they care about. At the same time, in both *Number the Stars* and *The Giver* euphemisms are used in order to soften acts of violence.

5.1 Religious Dogmas

The Giver can be read in many ways, one of which is a religious allegory. Several interpretations can be deduced relying on the themes, setting, and characters of the story as mentioned in the previous chapter. Due to that, we tend to apply the Social Reader

Response theory in providing those interpretations and accordingly, we will try to uncover the religious dogmas tacitly incorporated in the novel.

Since the novel's targeted audience is constituted of a majority of American Christians, mainly young adults, they can form, as stated by Social Reader-Response, an *interpretive community* sharing a set of *institutionalized assumptions* rooted in their society.

The first interpretation, then, is based on the allegory in the character's name "Jonas", which is another version related to the name *Jonah* in the *Old Testament* (first part of the Christian Bible corresponding to Judaism). It implies the story of Prophet Jonah who was ordered to go east from Israel to Assyria to call against wickedness in the city of *Nineveh*. Jonah, who didn't want this task, flees by sea. A storm hits his ship, and sailors believe that God is punishing Jonah. He, then, volunteers to be thrown overboard. A whale swallows him and spews him out on land after three days. This time, Jonah obeys God and goes to Nineveh, where he succeeds in saving the people by making them repent.

The story is almost the same in Islam (*Prophet Yunus*), except for few details. Like Jonah, Jonas is unwilling at first to accept the task assigned to him; he had no choice to be a Receiver of memories typically like Jonah who did not choose to go to Nineveh and invite his people for repentance. Therefore, Jonah and Jonas are both mediums of change for the greater good of their people.

The second interpretation, according to Kyle Barton, is based on the theme of repentance in Christianity, where the Giver represents a pious Christian. All Christians are givers of reality, to transmit to others. Jonas has been chosen by God and assigned to receive the reality (in the form of memories) from the Giver. The story symbolizes the

transition of the Christian from one community to another. Jonas' community represents the world, which is well-organized, but still harsh and colorless that people cannot escape from. This community, which is based on unseen violence, is the product of man's own choices (the choice of the Elders in the novel). The second community that Jonas reaches at the end of the story represents the church, the house of Christ. It is filled with reality, color, music, warmth, love, and joy.(THE GIVER- A Christian Interpretation)

The third interpretation, Jonas along with little Gabriel had suffered a lot in their journey toward Elsewhere; they suffered from cold, hunger, tiredness...etc. But once they reached the house where Christmas lights and music are spreading out, Jonas realized that his mission is partially over. Accordingly, Christians perceived Jonas as the symbolization of Jesus Christ who also suffered heavily for the salvation of his people, and Jonas arrival to Elsewhere symbolized the death of Christ.

In addition, the little pure and innocent Gabriel represented the angel Gabriel who carried God's message to Christ in the first beginning, he will also preach Jesus' second coming to earth at the end of days (Haley 11). As Haley puts it "Jonas is once again reminiscent of Jesus, who compares his own life and mission of salvation to Jonah's (Matthew 12:39-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32)." (qtd. Haley 11)

Dogmas included within this religious frame can be summarized in: Firstly, the novel endorses the fact that the Christian Manifest Destiny was and still utterly embraced. Christians throughout history had always nominated themselves as the sole holders of truth and their mission is to enlighten the ignorant regardless the means used. Likewise in the Giver, we can see that the course of events in the story, as discussed in the interpretations above, is tightly confined to the Christian element.

A reader, thus, cannot help it but to reflect the story to the Christian theology as it is triggered by the overuse of the biblical names or as Bassman asserted “It is interesting to note that Lowry, who so adamantly claims to avoid religious bias, employs overtly Biblical names for major male figures in *The Giver*” (11). Additionally and unlike other authors who choose to enrich their stories with a diversity of legends and theologies, we clearly notice that the story in hand failed to break away from the Christian model of sacrifice and heroism which was chosen solely to be a way of salvation and liberation.

Secondly, Lowry’s dependence on the Christian element had brought her the accusation of instilling Christian beliefs in the young readers’ minds. In this regard, Bassman pointed out that “despite Lowry’s contradictory protests, *The Giver* concludes with images that invoke an inherently Christian interpretation.” (2) Accordingly, readers who could infer the strong presence of the Christian imagery throughout the novel, they could attach the notion of Elsewhere and the abrupt ending of the novel to the concept of afterlife in Christianity. That is because Elsewhere had been always associated with death or “Release” in the novel and Jonas finding the house which also happens to have a Christmas ceremony is just a sign of him going to a heavenly afterlife. To support this claim, we quote this passage from the novel where the old Giver addresses Jonas telling him “ I love you, Jonas...but I have another place to go. When my work here is finished, I want to be with my daughter” (162). On the light of this passage, Bassman commented “The Giver’s daughter is dead. Combined with the story’s previous connections between death and Elsewhere, the reader might easily infer that *The Giver* is suggesting an afterlife where loved ones reunite and that Elsewhere is this other place”. (10)

5.2 Political Dogmas

The novel can also be treated as a political allegory in which many interpretations can be deduced. As mentioned before, we will analyze the story from a Marxist point of view in order to detect any similarities to the Marxist ideology, or its derivative Communist doctrine, regarding the structure of society and the politics that govern them.

Before we go any further, it is preferable to form an idea about the construction of a communist society. Communism, in general, had taken many forms throughout history and one of which is Totalitarian Communism. A simple description to it is that all authority lies in the hand of the state and the government controls all aspects of public and private life (YourDictionary). In modern totalitarian governments, people are made totally reliant on the wishes and whims of their leaders creating, once more, a class system of *Bourgeoisie*, represented by governments, and lower classes of *Proletariat* and the *poor* people.

This modern form of dictatorship bans the freedom of choice, speech, and even allows the leaders to interfere in the personal affairs of the masses. As an example, the fact that Jonas' family in *The Giver* comprises of parents and a little sister, which seems absolutely ordinary, makes readers realize that they are selected by The Committee of Elders to form a family unit; this is a clear reference to the excessive control practiced by totalitarian governments.

This pressure imposed on the masses produces either total compliance or total revolt in longer terms as stated before. In the case of the Arab spring, it proved that total revolt was an inevitable scenario after decades of total compliance. Another prime example would be The Soviet Union, a regime that used to put extreme censorship over

its citizens and had always intended to make society live in a monotonous fashion. People daily conversations were limited to only few repetitive topics that, with time, resulted in unwillingly loss of consciousness about what really matters. Likewise, Jonas' community was subject to the well applied cultural conditioning of Sameness, and regardless to the intention that lies behind it, Sameness made people of Jonas' community - the same case with the Soviet Union - live their life like hypnotized robots, leaving no room for creativity, individuality or freedom of speech.

The allegedly perfect society of the Giver, as well as the one of the Soviet Union had met the same destiny of collapse, proving themselves to be a myth, since human beings are, by nature, in constant search for renovation, diversity and freedom. Moreover, it is worth noticing that *The Giver* was written in 1993, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, hence the story as a whole could be considered as a call for youth to stand against totalitarian systems of government, generally ruled by people of older generations who lack the sense of renovation.

The author, accordingly, seems to criticize totalitarian Communism, as the case of the Soviet Union, and to warn younger generations that isolation, sameness and the strict control of the Elders, kill the spirit of individualism on which western societies were built upon.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the present thesis, we have explored the topic of tacit dogmas in literary fiction and focused on Religious and Political Dogmas in *Lois Lowry's The Giver*. We investigated the combination of psychological and linguistic (rhetoric) techniques used by authors of literary fiction, mainly utopian and dystopian genres, to convey, whether deliberately or not, any dogmas or ideologies to their audience tacitly. Additionally, we tried to highlight the purpose behind these messages.

Since this research is primarily based on the hypothesis that writers of fiction frequently aim to convey implicit dogmas and ideologies in their works, our purpose was, therefore, to present the different psychological and rhetorical devices or techniques used by writers of fiction as tools of influence, as well as to show the different types of tacit dogmas in fictional writings. This investigation focused on the attempt of uncovering and categorizing those techniques that writers of fiction employ, as the more powerful and delicate those techniques are, the more they may provoke concerns on behavioral change. Still, the techniques in question are difficult to dissociate, actually, there is no fixed scientific set of rules to do so, as the use of those tools depends on each writer's style and perspective.

As such, this topic is widely debated within the discipline of literary criticism as discussed by Mikonnen in his *Implicit Assertions in Literary Fiction*. A literary fictional work might have many interpretations according to readers' reception; but when the work contains markers or devices showing the author's invitation to consider a given subject from a particular viewpoint, the work, then, may have a limited number of interpretations. Through the clear use of two previously mentioned devices, namely sentimentality and symbolism in characterization, our case study novel *The Giver* proved to be a highly suggestive work.

The *Giver* novel clearly maintains an established dystopian practice of critiquing totalitarian governments and stressing on the importance of individual freedom. But, in its

original country of publication, the United States, the novel has been challenged and opposed many times on moral and religious grounds too (Baldassarro). The tradition of opposing fictional novels, and even censoring them, clearly supports the claim of this thesis that even fictional stories can convey dogmas and ideologies that are beneficial to some societies and governments and harmful to others. A convenient example can be, the case of Dan Brown's novel "The Davinci Code"(2003) which was banned in Lebanon after being considered offensive to Catholicism a year after its publication.

In the end, as a Master study, this thesis was limited in length and content, this is due to the scarcity of literature done in the field. However, if an opportunity would be given in the future to study the tacit dogmas and messages in fictional literature at larger scale, it would be beneficial to cover other possible areas of the topic such as the grounds of book Censorship.

Poetics takes meanings of literary works already established and tries to work out how those meanings are possibly expressed by the text's form; And Hermeneutics, by contrast, starts with text forms and seeks to interpret them, to extract their meanings. From this regard, it wasn't until the end of this research that we figured out that this topic could be approached using both literary criticism, as we attempted, in addition to literary semiotics and Poetics.

GLOSSARY

Advocacy: giving a public support to an idea, an action or a belief, like the work of a lawyer.

It is used by authors to make their themes and characters attractive inviting and pushing readers to share their view

Assent: to show agreement, especially authors' unconscious agreement and use of values and beliefs established in their society

Bias: a strong feeling in favor of or against one group of people, or one side in an argument, often not based on fair judgment.

Censorship: the suppression of all or part of a play, movie, letter, or publication considered offensive or a threat to security.

Children's Literature: writings designed to appeal to children -either to be read to them or by them- including fiction, poetry, biography, and history. Children's literature also includes riddles, precepts, fables, legends, myths, and folk poems and folktales based on spoken tradition.

Cognitive: from *Cognition* which is the act or process of knowing. Cognition includes attention, perception, memory, reasoning, judgment, imagining, thinking, and speech.

Compliance: the state or act of conforming with or agreeing to do something.

Dystopia: the opposite of *Utopia*. An imaginary place where everything is as bad as it possibly can be.

Fairy Tales: a story for children about fairies or other imaginary beings and events, often containing a moral message.

Fictional Writings: literary works of imagination, generally novels and stories that describe imaginary people and events. Sometimes it is presented in a way that readers assume it to be true regardless of whether or not it is true.

Ideology: a set of beliefs, values, and opinions that shapes the way a person or a group such as a social class thinks, acts, and understands the world.

Implicit: the term is defined as something expressed indirectly or in an unclear manner. Something that is implied, or implicit, is something thought to be understood through unstated words or assumptions.

Literal Plot: superficial, apparent account, and thematic development of a story or narrative.

Manipulation: using clever, devious ways to control or influence somebody or something

Rhetorical: relating to the skill of using language effectively and persuasively in an elaborate way.

Sophist: a member of a school of ancient Greek professional philosophers who were expert in and taught the skills of rhetoric, argument, and debate, but were criticized for fallacious reasoning. The sophists were active before and during the time of Socrates and Plato, who were their main critics. The term is used to refer to a deceptive person who offers clever-sounding but faulty arguments or explanations.

Totalitarian: (of a country or system of government) in which there is only one political party that has complete power and control over the people (Oxford Dictionary). It is generally characterized by its dictatorial way of ruling.

Utopia: an ideal and perfect place or state where everyone lives in harmony and everything is for the best.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1:

Dear Mother and Dad:

Since I left for college I have been remiss in writing and I am sorry for my thoughtlessness in not having written before. I will bring you up to date now, but before you read on, please sit down. You are not to read any further unless you are sitting down, okay? Well, then, I am getting along pretty well now. The skull fracture and the concussion I got when I jumped out the window of my dormitory when it caught on fire shortly after my arrival here is pretty well healed now. I only spent two weeks in the hospital and now I can see almost normally and only get those sick headaches once a day. Fortunately, the fire in the dormitory, and my jump, was witnessed by an attendant at the gas station near the dorm, and he was the one who called the Fire Department and the ambulance. He also visited me in the hospital and since I had nowhere to live because of the burnt-out dormitory, he was kind enough to invite me to share his apartment with him. It's really a basement room, but it's kind of cute. He is a very fine boy and we have fallen deeply in love and are planning to get married. We haven't got the exact date yet, but it will be before my pregnancy begins to show. Yes, Mother and Dad, I am pregnant. I know how much you are looking forward to being grandparents and I know you will welcome the baby and give it the same love and devotion and tender care you gave me when I was a child. The reason for the delay in our marriage is that my boyfriend has a minor infection which prevents us from passing our pre-marital blood tests and I carelessly caught it from him. Now that I have brought you up to date, I want to tell you that there was no dormitory fire, I did not have a concussion or skull fracture, I was not in the hospital, I am not pregnant, I am not engaged, I am not infected, and there is no boyfriend. However, I am getting a "D" in American History, and an "F" in Chemistry and I want you to see those marks in their proper perspective.

Your loving daughter, Sharon

Sharon may be failing chemistry, but she gets an "A" in psychology (Cialdini 11).