

Quest for the Impossible: Conformity and Sameness in Two Science Fiction Dystopias: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993)

Radwan Gabr El-Sobky

ABSTRACT: This paper is a comparative study of the quest for the impossible: conformity and sameness in two science fiction dystopias: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (Britain in 1932) and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (America in 1993). It is an attempt to demonstrate the two novelists' ideologies of the quest for perfection through achieving conformity and sameness in two dystopian societies; such a quest is a quest for the impossible. The methodology of this study is based mainly on the concept of dystopian science fiction and on the characteristics of the dystopian society depicted in science fiction literature that are stated in M. Keith Booker's *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide* (1994), and in M. Keith Booker's and Anne-Marie Thomas' "Dystopian Science Fiction" in *The Science Fiction Handbook* (2009).

KEY WORDS: utopia, dystopia, conformity, sameness, Aldous Huxley, Lois Lowry.

Introduction: Replacing Utopia with by Dystopias

Most utopias written in the twentieth century tended to be replaced by 'dystopias', a term suggesting negative utopia. Dystopia as a term and concept appeared clearly in the first half of the 20th century as a result of the appearance of various dictatorships that caused two disastrous World Wars; these dictatorships

manipulated people and robbed them of their freedom, will and dignity. Dystopias tend to criticize all forms of totalitarianism and to expect what may happen in the future. Janet Witalec delineates the reasons for appearance of dystopia in the 20th century:

Some of the finest dystopian works were produced during the Nazi era in Germany, during the Stalin era in Russia, in response to various wars over the decades, and as a commentary upon various totalitarian regimes (Witalec 1).

So the dystopian fiction of the 20th century criticizes the dictator political regimes that manipulate citizens by every possible means. In his book *Dystopian Literature*, Keith Booker sees that the dystopian society is characterized by problematic and political practices as a result of an entire control:

Dystopian literature generally constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the Utopian premises upon which these conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions (Booker 3-4).

Major Characteristics of Science Fiction Dystopia

According to Booker and Thomas there are major characteristics of the society depicted in dystopian science fiction. First, the authority imposes various types of control on citizens' lives by using various ideologies such as corporate control through products, advertising, mottos and/or the media; mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials; distorting or eliminating past history; complete censorship and surveillance; scientific and technological control. Second, people in the dystopian society lose basic human traits such as freedom, individuality, love, family and identity. Third, the authority misleads people by claiming quest for perfection through achieving conformity and sameness among all people. Fourth, preoccupying

people with constant entertainment provided by the state (Booker and Thomas 65–74).

Utopias and Dystopias vis-à-vis Science Fiction and Fantasy

Both utopias and dystopias share characteristics of science fiction and fantasy; and both are usually set in a future in which technology has been used to create perfect living conditions. However, once the setting of a utopian or dystopian novel has been established, the focus of the novel is usually not on the technology itself but rather on the influence of science and technology on the minds, psyches, emotions, and behaviours of people who live under such conditions.

Most writers view utopia as a place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions. In their views, utopia symbolizes a perfect world. It denotes to a visionary or ideally perfect state of society whose members live the best possible life. In utopias, there are no problems like war, disease, poverty, oppression, discrimination, inequality and so forth. In his book, *The concept of utopia*, Ruth Levitas cites Moritz Kaufman's definition of utopia as follows:

What is utopia? Strictly speaking, it means a 'nowhere Land', some happy island far away, where perfect social relations prevail, and human beings, living under an immaculate constitution and a faultless government, enjoy a simple and happy existence, free from the turmoil, the harassing cares, and endless worries of actual life (Levitas 12).

The Early History of Utopia

The early history of utopia began with Plato's *The Republic* (380 B.C.); and after that came Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). In their book *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel see that Plato's *The Republic* is one of the earliest utopian texts which served as "a plan for an ideal society in which laws were non-existent, and where static perfection and immutability were vital" (Manuel 158).

The influence of Thomas More's Utopia on the genre

The influence of Thomas More's *Utopia* on the genre has been immense, not only because it is as the earliest work mentioning the word "utopia," but also because it presents contemporary issues within the context of an ideal society. It is said that "Thomas More was the discoverer of the Greek word 'Utopia' which is translated to mean 'no place'" (Claeys 77). Thomas More's *Utopia* emphasizes the construction of the utopian society upon the principle that "nobody owns anything, but everyone is rich" (More 28). In this novel More shows an ideal society close to perfection in almost every way. His main focus is to show a world without poverty, greed, or crime. He presents a utopian society that shares the same language, customs, institutions, and laws.

Dystopia is a futuristic, imaginary world in which nothing is perfect

On the contrary, dystopia is a futuristic, imaginary world in which things have gone wrong and in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one. Dystopia is a world in which nothing is perfect. The problems that cause worry and distress to people in the real world are often even more extreme in dystopias. The dystopian world is characterised by various oppressive societal controls with the plea of questing for a perfect society free from pains, diseases and poverty. In other words, "dystopia represents the fear of what the future may hold if we do not act to avert catastrophe" (Levitas 165).

The idea of dystopia in the 20th century fiction and "carceral city"

The idea of dystopia in the 20th century fiction was influenced by the idea of "carceral city" discussed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) which he dates to 1840, the date of the opening of Mettray prison colony in France. It was a private reformatory open prison without walls; it was established in 1840 for the rehabilitation of young male delinquents. In this open prison there were various ways of control used by authoritarian governments that extend to the private affairs of people's lives.

Mettray represented the birth of a new kind of supervision. This carceral system is a kind of dystopia. Foucault's discussion of the "carceral city" as a modern system of punishment based on supervision resembles societies depicted in dystopian fiction because censorship and surveillance in dystopias overwhelm all people of society by a network of power that shapes everyone's life (Foucault 300–305). This carceral city is like the society of Huxley's *Brave New World*, the world of Orwell's *1984* and the community of Lowry's *The Giver*.

Various factors influenced the concept of dystopia

The dystopian literature of the twentieth century took on a gloomy and prophetic nature. It acquired this dark vision from major works that appeared in the second half of the 19th century. These works have influenced the concept of dystopia up till now. The first work was *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who planned the communist future from the existing patterns of their time. They advocate public ownership of property and natural resources rather than private ownership. This call for the abolishment of private property is considered a destruction of the personal freedom and individuality. The second work was Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) which is considered to be the foundation of evolutionary biology. Charles Darwin described evolution of human beings by the process known as "natural selection" in which "changes in genetic traits allow a person to better adapt to its environment and help it survive" (Williams 125). This theory of evolution was opposed by the Church of England and scientific establishments. The third work was H. G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1905) in which Wells envisioned a World State to be characterized by entire control over its inhabitants. These works influenced modern and post-modern utopias to be ironic and to turn into dystopias.

The influence of these works appears clearly in the themes of most dystopias especially Huxley's *Brave New World* and Lowry's *The Giver*. Numerous philosophers and authors imagined the dark visions of the future where totalitarian rulers governed the life of ordinary citizens. Those dictator rulers misled people by giving

them false impressions that they live the paradise of utopia but in reality it is the anti-utopia. So the dystopian literature situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought.

In her introduction to “Dystopias in Contemporary Literature” Janet Witalec defines dystopian literature as “fiction that presents a negative view of the future of society and humankind”; she also delineates the common themes of dystopian literature in the 20th century:

Some common themes found in dystopian fiction include mastery of nature; technological advances that enslave humans or regiment their lives; the mandatory division of people into castes or groups with specialized functions; and a collective loss of memory and history making mankind easier to manipulate psychologically and ultimately leading to dehumanization (Witalec 1).

The dystopian protagonist is depicted as an outsider

In the dystopian fiction, the protagonist is depicted as an outsider who often feels trapped and struggles to escape. He ponders the existing social, scientific, cultural and political systems and feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he lives. Through the outsider’s perspective, the reader recognizes the negative aspects of the dystopian world. In this type of fiction, the authorities represent the antagonist as they work against the protagonist’s aims and desires.

A quest for perfection is a quest for the impossible and The Concept of Conformity and Sameness

Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Lowry’s *The Giver* quest for perfection in a form of utopia by means of achieving conformity and sameness. This quest for perfection is a quest for the impossible because no world can be perfect; for the only way to have a perfect world is not to have a world at all. The intended meaning of conformity here is the acceptance of or adherence to the standards, laws, rules and

regulations of society so that the behaviour and actions of people can be the same. In dystopian fiction conformity is the blind obedience to the rules of the authorities of the state; and it can be attained through obliging all people to think and act in the same way at the expense of their will and freedom of choice. In one of his speeches, President John F. Kennedy said: "Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth" (Kennedy's Speeches). That is to say when people allow themselves to conform to what the totalitarian government asks them, they lose the ability to grow into their own persons.

Leon Mann in his *Social Psychology* sees that "The essence of conformity is yielding to group pressures, but, it too, may take different forms and be based on motives other than group pressure" (Mann 48). The word 'group' in Mann's context means 'society'. Mann's definition emphasizes the important role of society in attaining conformity. Elliot Aronson describes conformity as "a change in a person's behavior or opinions as result of real or imagined pressure from an individual or group of people" (Aronson 19). This type of pressure mentioned by Mann and Aronson is in normal society. But in dystopian society conformity is imposed by the pressure of the higher authority represented in the government or the society as a whole to make people similar and conformed. So it is the "conformity in which the opinions and behaviors of individuals become more similar to the opinions and behaviors of the majority of the people in the group" (Stangor 167). **As for** sameness, it means uniformity or complete similarity or lack of variety among people. It means that all individuals in a community are made to be the same. It is the loss of individuality.

The differences between Huxley's Brave New World and Lowry's The Giver are based on differences of Time and Place and Background

In regard to the two novels, some critics see that the major ideas of Lowry's *The Giver* were taken from Huxley's *Brave New World*. So Lowry's novel may seem like a new version of *Brave New World* but in different form and style. Those critics state that *Brave New World* is the America of the 1930s because Huxley was fascinated by the American progress and culture at that time. And respectively

The Giver is the America of the 1990s. The differences between the two novels are based on differences of time, place, background and the way of using scientific theme. Huxley wrote his novel in 1932 in London with a scientific background as he is the grandson of the zoologist and comparative anatomist Thomas Henry Huxley who was known for his defence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution; whereas Lowry wrote her novel in 1993 in Portland, Maine in America with an interest in children and young adults.

Huxley's Brave New World and Lowry's The Giver are two dystopias set in future

Huxley and Lowry set their dystopias in future. The two authors design their fictional societies to be very advanced scientifically and technologically. This advancement allows the authorities to manipulate humans completely by adopting certain methods or ideologies such as genetic engineering, cloning, brainwashing, censorship, surveillance and conditioning to oblige people to behave in a certain way. The authorities in both future societies are in constant quest for perfection by exerting efforts conformity and sameness and consequently achieving stability and happiness. In their attempt to achieve conformity and sameness, the authorities do away with basic human traits such as freedom, love, identity, individuality and family. And in order to have full control over people, the authorities oblige people to adhere to certain ideologies to achieve their intended goal.

The Goals of Dystopian science fiction

Dystopian science fiction has its goals. Critics and writers state that one of the possible aims of dystopian literature is that it often serves as a warning of various problems that can possibly happen in the future. The authors of dystopian fiction often present a future ideal society which seems to be built on utopian principles of harmony, peace and stability but in reality it is a problematic society that requires rethinking. Dystopian writers not only points out the flaws of the present world, but also urges young readers to be critical

rather than ignorant of what goes on in the world around them. David Sisk sees that dystopian literature is “concerned with improving human existence and directing attention toward contemporary problems” (Sisk 10). Many critics point out that often the purpose of dystopian literature is to warn and to inform generations of what their worlds may look like if they continue on the same path. Dystopian fiction also serves to warn members of a society to pay attention to the society in which they live and to be aware of how things can go from bad to worse without realizing what has happened. Critic Susan Stewart sees that “Dystopian novels serve as cultural critiques and models as to what might happen if we pursue some of our present courses” (Stewart 28). Thus dystopian fiction functions as a criticism of politics, societal values, technology and corporate control, showing the reader the worst case scenario that may happen, and making him question social and political systems.

The Purposes beyond achieving conformity and sameness

The authorities of the two dystopian societies in Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Lowry’s *The Giver* determine their aims beyond achieving conformity and sameness. The intended aim is to achieve comfort, equality, happiness, stability and finally living in a perfect world.

Authorities in Brave New World aim at maximizing happiness at the expense of truth and beauty

In *Brave New World* the authorities aim at maximizing the happiness of all members of society. According to Mustapha Mond—one of the ten controllers who represent the authority—the World State prioritizes happiness at the expense of truth and beauty:

We believe in happiness and stability. . . Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. . . it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered (Huxley, *Brave* 158).

The citizens of this dystopian society are happy and content with their simple lives as it is stated in the novel when some

characters declare: “We don’t want to change. Every change is a menace to stability” (Huxley, *Brave* 153). But in reality such happiness is unreal and deceptive: “In accordance with Fordism, truth and beauty have been replaced by comfort and one brand of ‘happiness’ for all, a happiness which to Huxley signals humanity’s quiet and irreversible self-destruction” (Deery 260).

Conformity in The Giver is called “Sameness”

In *The Giver* the authorities aim at achieving “Sameness” which means all people must be equal and the same. Lois Lowry describes a world of “sameness” where the lack of differences allows each member of the community to have a predetermined role and to follow a strictly enforced set of rules. The Elders depict sameness in a way that makes it sound absolutely necessary, and without it, the whole world may fall apart. In the community of *The Giver* people accept everything as it is because they do not know any difference: “Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time . . . we relinquished sunshine and did away with difference” (Lowry, *Giver* 95). This sameness is terrifying and further imposes conformity on all people. So the community of *The Giver* is a uniformed society. People dress the same clothes; eat the same food; their houses are the same; and most of them look the same as well. By the age of ten, they all have a short hair style: “As each child’s hair was snipped neatly into its distinguishing cut: females lost their braids at Ten, and males, too, relinquished their long childish hair took on the more manly style which exposed their ears” (Lowry, *Giver* 46). In *The Giver* the purpose of sameness is to protect people from wrong choices and to achieve safety for them.

In The Giver the purpose of sameness is safety and protection of people from wrong choices

In both novels people are prevented from choice. In *Brave New World*, occupations, spouses, even children are chosen for people rather than allowing them to choose themselves; and for the community of *The Giver* people are not able to think for themselves and to differentiate between right and wrong, so choice is banned:

“We don’t dare to let people make choices of their own (Lowry, *Giver* 124). All choices in *Brave New World* are made by the controllers and in *The Giver* choices are made by the Elders. Susan Lea sees that people’s inability of choice in *The Giver* is because choice requires acknowledgement of difference and contrast which is lost by sameness. She sees that “one might propose that choice is dangerous unless exercised only by the dominant who know how to make right decisions, in which case, choice ensures safety and sameness” (Lea 56). When Jonas, the hero of the novel, chooses to leave, he regrets his choice: “Once he had yearned for choice. Then, when he had had a choice, he had made the wrong one: the choice to leave. And now he was starving” (Lowry, *Giver* 174). In reality choice is what makes life worth living. If choices sometimes cause pain, they can also cause great happiness.

Conformity and sameness replace diversity and individuality

Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Lowry’s *The Giver* explore the idea that conformity and sameness replace diversity and individuality. All differences are eliminated. The two novels depict two abnormal societies in which uniqueness and individuality do not exist. So the ideology of eliminating individuality and uniqueness is one of the requirements of the continuity of the dystopian functional society. Chris Ferns sees that in the dystopian society “people are types rather than distinct individuals” (Ferns 113). Booker and Thomas also see that “people are even referred to as numbers rather than people. These numbers have lost all true individuality; they are merely interchangeable parts in the giant machine of the State” (Bookers and Thomas 67). This elimination of individuality prevents individual choice and keeps people away from participating actively in society.

In Brave New World, community is given priority above the individual

In *Brave New World*, the community is given priority above the individual; and although this priority may seem like a sort of devotion, the way in which Huxley illustrates it strips a person of any form of individuality. William Matter argues that in Huxley’s

new world, "individuality must be repressed because it invites a malleable social structure" (Matter 95). Because of the suppression of individuality, there is no depth of feeling, no artistic creativity and no intellectual excitement. What makes a person an individual is to have a sense of himself as being separate, distinct, and unique. This sense of self includes both the joys and sorrows of one's life. The motto by which all citizens of the World State must live is "Community, Identity, and Stability." In the World State, the word "community" does not represent the same significance as it may to someone living in the modern day and age. Instead, the community in in this slogan refers to the caste system that separates people with similar characteristics and destinations from the larger society.

The Giver's community is founded on the idea of Sameness

Like *Brave New World*, *The Giver's* community is founded on the idea of sameness which means the elimination of difference in its members. In order to achieve this sameness, individuality is discouraged. Almost every aspect of the community in *The Giver* exists to stop and prevent diversity and individual creativity; all rules and ceremonies are the same for all children. Even the physical appearances of the people are the same, and any variation is not allowed.

After Jonas is appointed the new Receiver of Memories, his individuality appears. Jonas begins to see things differently: "I saw the way things were going, a long time back. . . . I'm one of the innocents who could have spoken up and out" (Lowry, *Giver* 82). And through his training with the Giver, Jonas witnesses a birthday party which is a foreign concept to him; it makes one person stand out from the crowd. After seeing this birthday party, Jonas "understood the joy of being an individual, special and unique and proud" (Lowry, *Giver* 121). Thus the idea of achieving conformity and sameness is based on eliminating individuality and the emergence of community.

People of *Brave New World* are conditioned according to their castes

So such a dystopian society is functional because it consists of five castes; each caste has its function in society. These castes are kept under strict surveillance by various control methods. They are controlled mentally as well as physically. They are programmed to behave in the same way and therefore allow social stability. Every caste is programmed through childhood to be suited for the jobs in which they will be placed and to be happy within their class and position in life. According to Michel Foucault's theory of carceral societies: "the distribution [of classes] according to ranks or grade has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes" (Foucault 181). So the people of *Brave New World* are conditioned according to their castes. By favour of genetic engineering scientists can control the amount of oxygen given to the embryo and consequently influencing the form and size of the upcoming baby. Mr. Foster explains the idea:

Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par. . . . The lower the caste . . . the shorter the oxygen. The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters . . . who are no use at all. An Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as Epsilon heredity (Huxley, *Brave* 8).

The special education program for the manipulated people is called "Elementary Class Consciousness"; it is closely connected to one of the most important conditioning techniques of the World State called "hypnopaedia" on which class conditioning depends. This program effectively forces people of one caste to dislike other castes to prevent risks of social unrest from an early age onwards. A loud speaker states the aspects each caste:

Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They

all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I *don't* want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta. (Huxley, *Brave* 19).

These aspects illustrate the ideology of the government of *Brave New World* towards achieving conformity and sameness: "no civilization without social stability. . . stability can be achieved if people think and look the same" (Huxley, *Brave* 28). Stability, in this way, demands automatons, human beings. The government designs people's lives so that no one can desire something one cannot have.

Thus in *Brave New World*, social status was determined before birth. Each caste is assigned certain professions based on predetermined features before and after birth. The lower classes are assigned professions that require hard physical labour while higher classes are assigned professions in the field of culture, thought and education.

People of *The Giver's* community are conditioned according to age groups

Unlike *Brave New World*, *The Giver's* community is divided into age categories. From birth to the age of twelve children are classified according to their ages e.g. the sixes, the sevens, the eights till elevens. Each age category receives certain instructions from the authorities. These instructions concern everything about children's lives such as food, drink, clothes, behaviour, advice, warning, etc.

Everyone in the community lives by rules contained in the Book of Rules. Each family is called a family unit and is made up of a mother, a father, and two children. The government puts a rule for family: "Two children – one male, one female – to each family unit. It was written very clearly in the rules" (Lowry, *Giver* 11). Parents in a family unit must apply for each child because they are not allowed to choose children.

In the Age of Twelve, conformity can be achieved through imposing psychological and mental control

In both novels controlling children before twelve is to some extent easy because they are still too young to understand the policy of the totalitarian governments. So both Huxley and Lowry give the age of twelve a great consideration. This consideration comes as a natural result of the importance of this age in the life of man. It is the age of transition from childhood to adolescence. When children reach the age of twelve, they are faced with physical, mental and psychological changes. Almost this age is the beginning of maturity. It is the age of forming a teenager's sexual, emotional, cultural, and spiritual passions. So the writers of dystopian fiction choose this age of twelve to be a start of mind control over teenagers to achieve their claimed utopia. At the age of twelve, authorities start to impose psychological and mental control on people for the sake achieving conformity. In this age social influence involves a change in beliefs and behaviour in order for people to fit in with a society. This change is in response to pressure imposed upon people by their authoritarian governments.

In Brave New World and The Giver, professions are assigned in the age of twelve

In *Brave New World* and *The Giver*, professions are assigned in the age of twelve. This assignment takes different forms. Huxley identifies certain job for each caste. The job of every caste is predetermined before and after birth through genetic engineering. Through scientific control of the genes, the laboratories determines who is going to be what. But in *The Giver* when children reach twelve years old, they begin training for the professions they will be assigned to. It is supposed that such professions are based on the adults' interests, abilities, and limitations. But the jobs here are assigned to people at the age of twelve regardless they want them or not; they do not have the freedom of choice:

I heard about a guy who was absolutely certain he was going to get assigned Engineer . . . and instead they gave him Sanitation Laborer. He went out the next day, jumped into the river, swam

across, and joined the next community he came to. Nobody ever saw him again (Lowry, *Giver* 60).

Ideologies of quest for conformity and sameness

In order to attain conformity and sameness, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* create some ideologies that influence people's beliefs and behaviour. These ideologies are just dark visions of a utopian society that may achieve happiness and stability by altering the mindset of people. The ideologies of achieving happiness and stability in these dystopian societies are based mainly on total control of people's lives. People must sacrifice their identities and freedoms to make sure that everybody is able to survive, advance, and live a life of happiness. The two novels present a gloomy future where almost total conformity is an important aspect of society.

Science and Technology and the use of Genetic Engineering

The best ideology to perform conformity is through science and technology. By favour of genetic engineering in *Brave New World* thousands of babies are manufactured to be alike and consequently look identical. In their quest for conformity and sameness, Huxley and Lowry depict characters as genetically engineered and conditioned to follow the rules of the authorities and like what they have and be happy. Emotions and feelings are not supposed to exist in either dystopia. So seeking for utopia leads to dystopia. The society in *Brave New World* is more technologically advanced than that of *The Giver*. So the emergence of science and technology as a superior ideology of control makes critics label *Brave New World* and *The Giver* as science fiction dystopias that follow the rules and assumptions of futuristic imagined science. They are labelled science fiction because they deal principally with the impact of future science and technology upon people. Basil Davenport defines science fiction as "fiction based upon some imagined development of science or upon the extrapolation of a tendency in society" (Davenport 15). John Clute and Peter Nicholls see that a story of science fiction is "a narrative of an imaginary invention or discovery in the natural sciences and consequent adventures and experiences" (Clute 311).

Isaac Asimov, an American professor of biochemistry and a novelist, sees that science fiction story:

must be set against a society different from our own – usually, but not necessarily, because of some change in the level of science and technology. . . . The science fiction story destroys our own comfortable society. It does not deal with the restoration of order, but with change . . . we leave our society and never return to it (Asimov 226).

In science fiction literature, the authors imagine scientific advances ahead of their time. This advanced technology appears in Huxley's usage of genetic engineering in *Brave New World* which is visible mainly through the idea of eugenics and the genetic modification of embryos. In this novel children are no longer born to mothers and fathers but they are produced and grown in governmental laboratories where embryos are genetically manufactured with homogeneous characteristics. This usage of genetic engineering is considered a major feature of a dystopian society in which one can find: "standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg" (Huxley, *Brave* 7). So people in *Brave New World* are mere clones that are conditioned and brainwashed to conform to their dystopian society.

The program of genetic engineering in Lowry's *The Giver* has common features like that of *Brave New World* but it takes different form. In *The Giver* humans are genetically engineered to stop seeing differences. The process of genetic engineering in this novel is made by genetic scientists who study human genes and attempt to eliminate differences or unique characteristics in people and in the environment to keep sameness. The climate and topography are scientifically controlled. If selective breeding, in real scientific experiments, is used with animals for certain purposes, it is used with people in *The Giver* for choosing the best genes that are able to achieve sameness. The scientists in this dystopian society use selective breeding to keep people from passing on dangerous diseases. Within the society of *The Giver*, birthmothers are not

allowed to keep their own babies after giving birth to them. Babies are moved to Nurturing Centers where they are fed and trained in a certain way until families can be found for them. In these Nurturing Centers, there is a process of development and application of scientific methods, procedures, and technologies that permit direct manipulation of genetic material in order to change the hereditary traits of a cell or organism. Jonas states that in these centres the “instructors in science and technology have taught us about how the brain works. It’s full of electrical impulses. It’s like a computer. They are well trained. They know their scientific facts” (Lowry, *Giver* 106).

Science Fiction uses science and Technology as an ideology of control

Therefore writers of dystopian science fiction use science and technology as a major ideology of control. In order to achieve conformity and sameness, both Huxley and Lowry introduce the idea of genetic engineering which does away with the uniqueness of the human beings. Through the use of scientific theme, both novelists raise questions as to whether or not cloning and conditioning can be futuristic logical steps in order to achieve a utopian society controlled by science.

Elimination of all problems and all sources of trouble and pain

By favor of genetic modification, both novelists managed to depict people as carefree, healthy and advanced. Authorities could mislead people that war, poverty, diseases and all pains have been eliminated. The irony is that all of these things have been achieved by eliminating many things people derive real happiness from such as family, cultural diversity, art, literature, science, religion and philosophy. In *Brave New World* Mustafa Mond, the Resident Controller of Western Europe declares: “No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, as far as that is possible, from having emotions at all” (Huxley, *Brave* 26).

Like *Brave New World*, *The Giver* presents us with a world where war, poverty, crime, suffering, and bigotry have been completely eliminated. In this community, people strive to maintain

“sameness” where all people are equal and same. But the reader quickly perceives that something is wrong with this supposedly perfect society. Memories of basic human emotions such as love and hate have been completely suppressed; and also cultural practices including art, music, literature, and even colour, have also been completely erased. Lowry herself, in an interview, says that the community in *The Giver*: “lost everything—literature and music and art and all of that” (Lowry, *Giving Up*). Both the best and the worst aspects of humanity are instead stored within the mind of the Giver who explains the idea of sameness to Jonas the protagonist saying:

Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back. We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with difference . . . We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others (Lowry, *Giver* 96–97).

Mass Consumption as an ideology of attaining conformity, sameness and equality

According to the authors of dystopian fiction, one of the ideologies of achieving conformity and sameness is by encouraging mass consumption as long as there is no poverty. Mass consumption means the use or purchase of goods or services by all people more than their needs. And by the way *industrialization allowed for mass consumption of material goods*: “Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry. The sole result . . . ‘Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches’ (Huxley, *Brave* 29).

In the field of economics mass consumption is an economic theory that means expanding consumption of goods is beneficial to the economy. In the field of dystopian fiction, mass consumption is an ideology for achieving social and political stability and consequently conformity. Most dystopian societies are mass-consumption societies in which people are encouraged to consume more to compensate for their suppression. Many writers in the field of economy define mass consumption society as the society in which all people expand their range of consumer goods. The idea of mass consumption is

new in the human history because it requires mass production and both require opulence which was not available in the past. In 1964 George Katona, an American psychologist, confirmed this idea:

Throughout the course of human history, poverty has been the rule, riches the exception. Societies in the past were called affluent when their ruling classes lived in abundance and luxury. . . [Now] We are rich compared with our grandparents and compared with most other peoples of the world (Katona 5–6).

In Huxley's *Brave New World* and Lowry's *The Giver* people are trained to be over-consumers and hard workers. In these dystopian societies human behaviour is conditioned so that people can consume goods and services as much as possible. This conditioning in turn means that the makers of such goods or providers of such services are able to stay employed. The caste system in *Brave New World* encourages consumption and production. And in *The Giver* each person gets a job which should be productive for the sake of consumption.

Brave New World encourages and supports the culture of mass consumption

The authorities of *Brave New World* encourage and support the culture of mass consumption: "We condition the masses to consume manufactured articles as well as transport . . . And that is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you've got to do" (Huxley, *Brave* 23). Huxley's attitude towards mass consumption is also clear in Linda's attitude towards more consumption of clothing:

And look at these clothes. This beastly wool isn't like acetate. It lasts and lasts. And you're supposed to mend it if it gets torn . . . it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they've got holes in them, and buy new. The more stitches, the less riches. Isn't that right? Mending's anti-social (Huxley *Brave* 78).

The controllers of *Brave New World* ask people to throw the old things away even if they are beautiful and to have new ones based on the principle of over-consumption:

World Controller: 'We haven't any use for old things here.'

John: 'Even when they're beautiful?'

World Controller: 'Particularly when they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones' (Huxley, *Brave* 219).

The ideology of mass consumption in Lowry's *The Giver* is a sort of compensating people for loss of identity

Like *Brave New World*, in *The Giver* the ideology of mass consumption is used but in a different way. If mass consumption in *Brave New World* is used as means of distraction, in *The Giver* it is used as a sort of compensating people for loss of identity and freedom. In *The Giver* Lowry is influenced by her American capitalist society and material culture where people tend to form their identities through consumption. Consumption can be related to self-identity formation and expression. Jean Baudrillard sees that the American society is "organized around the consumption and display of commodities through which individuals gain prestige, identity, and standing" (Baudrillard 71). Lowry invents the jobs of Food Delivery People to deliver food for each meal to community members because people in this community do not cook their own food. This type of jobs encourages people to consume more food not caring about its preparation and its cost especially there is no poverty; and at the same time to spare time for them to be mass productive. "Food Delivery people usually populated the community at that time [afternoon] of day" (Lowry, *Giver* 2). *The Giver's* community includes also a salmon hatchery, a place where salmon are raised for the people's consumption. People consume as much as possible without exerting any effort to get their consumed materials.

The Use of Sex an ideology of achieving conformity and Sameness

Promotion of promiscuous Sex in Brave New World as an ideology of achieving conformity

Another ideology of achieving conformity is controlling sex. *Brave New World* promotes promiscuous sex and the general attitude toward sex is that one sexual partner is not enough. Promiscuous sex in *this society* is legal whereas emotional attachment or love is illegal. Sex is dehumanized and made devoid of passion; it is treated casually and publicly rather than as a personal matter. Promiscuous sex is celebrated in different ways; it is presented in the 'Feelies' and in ceremonies. There is no real relationship between sex, love, commitment, intimacy and reproduction or any kind of deep emotion; it is used for distraction and pacification. The act of sex in *Brave New World* is controlled by a system of social rewards for promiscuity and lack of commitment. Even children play erotic games in the hatchery and conditioning centre. For them it is normal that children do such things and have fun doing them. When people grow older and their passions grow calm and become less excited and less excitable, they use sex as a form of entertainment. On the contrary chastity is dangerous. Mustapha Mond delineates the dangers of chastity:

Chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can't have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices (Huxley, *Brave* 209).

For the sake of preventing women from reproduction through this promiscuous sex, the World State sterilizes two thirds of women. The women who are not sterilized have to use contraceptives. If a woman gets pregnant, there are many abortion clinics where she can abort her baby. Sex in Huxley's world is abnormal and odd.

Repression of Sexual desires by using drugs in The Giver

Unlike *Brave New World*, in *The Giver* sexual desires are repressed. It is not allowed for people to have sex outside one's

spouse. And if there appears any sexual stirring, it is suppressed by using a certain drug not named in the novel. There is a medication used for stopping sexual urges in young people. Sex is an alarming matter for the elders. When Jonas has a dream interpreted as sexual stirrings, his mother gives him a medication and informs him about it:

It's the pills. That's the treatment for stirrings . . . you mustn't forget. I'll remind you for the first weeks, but then you must do it on your own. If you forget, the Stirrings will come back. The dreams of the Stirrings will come back (Lowry, *Giver* 39).

It is clear that both Huxley and Lowry are on opposite directions concerning sex. In *Brave New World* sex is free and promiscuous because marriage is not permitted but in *The Giver* sex is repressed because marriage is permitted. Both sex and marriage in the two novels do not mean love or any type of family ties.

Hiding the Past from people and deactivating memory in dystopian societies as an ideology of achieving conformity

Both Huxley and Lowry use history as an ideology of control. The authoritarian governments usually make use of history in their favour. It is an important ideology for achieving conformity and sameness and consequently the supposed perfection in dystopian societies is controlling the past through eliminating history. People are hidden from the events of the past. The authorities hide the past from people in order to prevent comparison. People are hidden from the existence of God, of mothers and fathers, of family and of natural and biological processes such as reproduction and creation. Chris Ferns sees that achieving perfection through conformity requires no change by hiding the past from people:

Once perfection (of whatever kind) is achieved, change automatically becomes a threat—and the problem with the past is that, simply by showing that things were once different, it demonstrates that change is at least possible. The very existence of the past where things were different implies that society is

'not static but kinetic', and dystopian societies uniformly go out of their way to obliterate its memory (Ferns 119).

Controlling History is through Controlling Memory
Who controls the past controls the future

But the question is how authorities in dystopian societies can hide the past. Controlling past history can be done through the idea of containment of memory which means that knowledge of the past is either banned or changed by the controllers to prevent unjust and unpleasant comparisons. Controlling memory is a way to show people that there is no other way for the existence of things rather than what is available for them and to convince them that their life is the best. As memory is important for man, authorities of the dystopian societies deactivate it. Man without memory of the past is nothing. Deactivating memory is an ideology for abolishing identity. Edward Said sees that memory is strongly related to identity and nationalism and he believes that the representation and manipulation of memory has an effect on identity: "memory and its representations touch very significantly upon the questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority" (Said 176). Said also explains that the issue of memory is related to national identity: "memories of the past are shaped in accordance with a certain notion of what 'we' or 'they' really are" (Said 177). In dystopian society memory becomes a tool to be used by authorities to influence public opinion to take their sides. And since it becomes a tool, memory can be controlled. In his dystopian novel *1984* George Orwell put a slogan at the tongue of the ruling Party to change the past history: "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past" (Orwell 37). And this is the policy of dystopian despotic governments in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Lowry's *The Giver*.

In Brave New World Knowledge of the past is banned because History is bunk

In *Brave New World* Mustapha Mond instructs people to disregard the painful lessons of history and to ignore the past in order to focus on the future progress. The authority disregards history because if people understand what came before, they may

find it better and consequently rebel. Mond quotes Ford's slogan that "History is bunk" (Huxley, *Brave* 34) because it revolves around human vices, weaknesses and emotions such as love, anger, vengeance and temptation. This is clear in the director's remark that "Most historical facts are unpleasant" (Huxley, *Brave* 24). Such facts are no longer part of the human experience and they have no place in a society built around maximizing happiness. Mustapha Mond distorts the past history saying: "No wonder those poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy" (Huxley, *Brave* 29). Mond's meaning is that by doing away with events of the past, the World State has finally brought stability and peace to humanity.

In The Giver Forgetting the Past is to forget the defects inherent in the past society

Like *Brave New World*, Lowry, in *The Giver*, imagined a society where the past was deliberately forgotten in order to allow people to live in a kind of peaceful ignorance. She, like Huxley, sees that there are a lot of defects inherent in the past society: "I knew that there had been times in the past – terrible times – when people had destroyed others in haste, in fear, and had brought about their own destruction" (Lowry, *Giver* 112). By removing people's memories and giving them all to the Receiver of Memory, the authority refuses to acknowledge the past and consequently its own humanity.

Deactivating Memory an ideology of achieving conformity in The Giver

In *The Giver*, Lowry sees that conformity and sameness can be achieved in the community through deactivating memory. She realizes that to eliminate all sorts of pains, memory must be abolished. Memory can be deactivated through abandoning and stopping the memories of the society's collective experiences. When Jonas was assigned to be the new receiver of past memories, he learns from the Giver that such memories are a source of wisdom for the receiver only; but for people there must be no memories

at all because if they get wisdom, they will have deep thought and may rebel:

The Giver explains to [Jonas] that memories give wisdom which he needs in order to advise the rest of the Elders on issues . . . The memories also enable Jonas to experience new feelings at greater depth. Having seen things like colors and oceans, Jonas realizes that the kind of feelings his family and other citizens in the community feel are not genuine – only shallow feelings (Lowry, *Giver* 137).

The price of losing the memory of the past is high. Losing the memory may make people avoid the pains of the past but they are deprived of wisdom as well. When Jonas asks the Giver: “why can’t *everyone* have the memories?” the Giver answers: “everyone would be burdened and pained. They don’t want that” (Lowry, *Giver* 112).

Effect of Eliminating Memory in The Giver: Life is Monotonous and Meaningless

It is clear that eliminating memory in these dystopian societies causes life to be meaningless, dull and boring because memory is related to the idea that there can be no pleasure without pain and no pain without pleasure. The people of the two societies of *Brave New World* and *The Giver* cannot appreciate the joys in their lives because they have never felt pain; their lives are totally monotonous and devoid of emotional variation. By losing memory, people lose their humanity. John, in *Brave New World*, realizes his need for pains to feel real happiness: “I’m claiming the right to be unhappy; . . . the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind” (Huxley, *Brave* 185). In an interview, Lowry was asked: “What did the community gain by not having memory? And what did they lose?” She answered:

They certainly gained safety, security, comfort. No war, no crime no poverty, no pollution . . . those are good things. What did they lose, though, in exchange? Maybe their very humanity (Garrett 129).

***The Use of Medication as a means of Achieving Conformity
Drugs for the sake of distraction and Entertainment***

Another ideology for achieving conformity and sameness is the use of drugs for the incurable and intricate cases. The authorities of the dystopian societies encourage people to use some drugs to keep them away from considering their circumstances and from dealing with the reality of their situation. The function of these drugs is to cure any thought of rebellion if exists. Bookers and Thomas state the function of drugs in dystopian societies:

Individuals spend most of their time in the pursuit of instant happiness through the use of drugs, and mind-numbing multi-sensory entertainments, that are continually broadcast to keep the minds and senses of the citizenry occupied at all times . . . sex, drugs, and popular culture prevalent in this society are intended primarily to divert attention from social problems and to prevent individuals from developing any sort of strong feelings that might lead them to challenge official authority” (Booker and Thomas 67).

Soma is a source of happiness in Brave New World

The authoritarian government of *Brave New World* society succeeds in inventing a new drug called ‘soma’ after six years of pharmaceutical research. The World Controllers deliver this drug to control people’s emotions, desires and minds that may threaten the conformity and stability of the World State. ‘Soma’ is legalized to remove any case of sadness, misery or suffering. It is half tranquilizer, half intoxicant which produces an artificial happiness that makes people content with their lack of freedom. This drug gives the users high pleasure and puts an end to all their worries. People take the soma drug in order to give their minds ‘holiday’ by absenting them from their surroundings. Mustapha Mond highlights the true reasoning behind soma:

If ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen . . . there’s always soma to give you a holiday from the facts. And there’s always soma to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-

suffering. . . . You can carry at least half your morality about in a bottle. That's what *soma* is (Huxley, *Brave* 162).

In this dystopian World the people are dependant upon soma at anytime when unpleasant thoughts, feelings or emotions are shown. Soma can drive any bad thoughts out of mind. Doctors declare that one cubic centimeter of soma cures ten gloomy sentiments. When Linda was discovered to be 'mother', unfamiliar and obscene word, she was given soma to absent her mind and then end her life. For Linda, taking soma gives her:

the possibility of lying in bed and taking holiday after holiday, without ever having to come back to a headache or a fit of vomiting. . . . The holiday it gave was perfect. . . . The remedy was to make the holiday continuous. . . . Every soma-holiday is a bit of what our ancestors used to call eternity (Huxley, *Brave* 87).

A relief-of-pain medication provided to community members to relieve pain in The Giver

Like soma drug in *Brave New World*, in *The Giver*, there is a relief-of-pain medication that is provided to community members to relieve their pains so that no one can suffer. Whenever there is any kind of unpleasant thought or pain or disease, people are immediately given this unnamed medication to ease their pains. This medication is given to all people of the community except for the Giver who bears the pains and memories of the whole society. It is in the form of ointment or a pill or an injection:

Relief-of-pain . . . was always provided in his [Jonas'] everyday life for the bruises and wounds, for a mashed finger, a stomach ache, a skinned knee from a fall from a bike. There was always a daub of anaesthetic ointment, or a pill; or in severe instances, an injection that brought complete and instantaneous deliverance (Lowry, *Giver* 137).

Unlike *Brave New World*, the value of pain in the life of man is stated in *The Giver*. When the Giver transmits to Jonas a memory of pain and nausea during training to be the next Giver, it is a memory

that gives Jonas an understanding of true physical pain, something the rest of the citizens in the community never feel. The Giver explains to Jonas that it is only by facing pain and loneliness that a person can grow and develop courage. According to the rules of the authorities, the relief-of-pain medication prevents people from development, courage and wisdom. When Jonas asks the Giver: "Why do you and I have to hold these memories [of pain]?" The Giver replied: "It gives us wisdom" (Lowry, *Giver* 139). It is the wisdom that all people are deprived of.

Censorship and Surveillance as an ideology of Achieving Conformity

In order to achieve conformity and sameness, the authorities use the ideology of censorship and surveillance to control people. Censorship means controlling and reviewing all sources of information for the sake of removing or hiding parts of it that are considered unacceptable or inconvenient by the authorities. On the other hand, surveillance means the continuous observation of people especially those who are suspected of something illegal by the authorities. In dystopias people are also denied the right of having information.

In Brave New World, Citizens are also forbidden to read or even have access to reading material

In *Brave New World*, censorship consists in controlling and eliminating undesirable information which authorities consider to be dangerous for stability. Citizens are also forbidden to read or even have access to reading material. In this dystopian society people are conditioned to be interested in other things except for books. The authorities consider reading a waste of time. Children are trained to hate books as well as flowers by conditional linking between books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks in their minds: "They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives" (Huxley, *Brave* 17).

In The Giver surveillance through loudspeakers in people's houses

Like *Brave New World*, Lois Lowry, in *The Giver*, shows that the citizens are always being watched. Everything they do is under supervision by the Elder Community. They have no freedom in this hellish civilization. Every little thing done by people is observed. If a person is out of order, he will be publicly called out by a loudspeaker. There are loudspeakers installed in people's houses which cannot be turned off. These loudspeakers – like telescreens in Orwell's *1984* – are used to maintain order and guide people to act accordingly. The speakers are used to remind people of proper behaviour, the rules and regulations of the community. For instance, the speaker talks to a young girl indirectly while she is in her own residence: "Attention. This is a reminder to females under nine that hair ribbons are to be neatly tied at all times" (Lowry, *Giver* 28). Jonas feels humiliated when he realized that he is being watched all the time. He is bewildered by an announcement that had been specifically directed at him when he had taken an apple home. No one had mentioned it, not even his parents: "Attention. This is a reminder to male elevens that objects are not to be removed from the recreation area and that snacks are to be eaten, not hoarded" (Lowry, *Giver* 29). This constant surveillance is an important ideology of dystopian fiction to keep order and stability.

Ideologies for eliminating differences

If the previous ideologies are adopted for achieving conformity and sameness, there are other anti-human ideologies for dealing with differences. In the two novels any appearance of any difference is not tolerated. In order to eliminate differences and to have total conformity and sameness, the governments of the two dystopias commit terrible atrocities. In both novels, old people after sixty are considered to be different. Their difference consists in their being experienced and consequently they are old enough to think deeply in their situations; and as a result they may be a reason for disturbance and rebellion. So there must be an ideology for eliminating old age.

Ending the life of old people in Brave New World and The Giver to keep Conformity

In *Brave New World*, old people after sixty are killed: “All the physiological stigmata of old age have been abolished. And along with them all the old man’s mental peculiarities” (Huxley, *Brave* 228). Ending the life of old people is good for the dystopian society of *Brave New World* because they are dangerous. Mond argues that man thinks more in his old age and this means that thought itself is inherently harmful. He sees that old age is dangerous for the community—not because of physical weakness, but because of mental prowess. He states the reasons for killing the old people:

We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don’t permit their magnesium–calcium ratio to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusion of young blood. We keep their metabolism permanently stimulated. . . . Youth almost unimpaired till sixty, and then, crack! the end’ (Huxley, *Brave* 111).

Like *Brave New World*, the authority in *The Giver* ends the old people’s life and those who are different to achieve total conformity. Old people after sixty are killed by lethal injection even if they are healthy. Release is a term used for ending life in the community of *The Giver* but it is never described that way; so the people of this dystopian community think that the released people are sent to somewhere else but in reality they are killed. The old are released because they are no longer valuable. In *The Giver*, release is either punishment or euthanasia:

There were only two occasions of release which were not punishments. Release of the elderly, which was a time of celebration for a life well and fully lived; and the release of a new child, which always brought a sense of what–could–we–have–done (Lowry, *Giver* 5).

Other cases of ending the life of some people in *The Giver*

Unlike *Brave New World*, in *The Giver* there are other cases of ending the life of some people by killing. First, when identical twins are born, they are weighed and the lighter one is killed. The reason for this type of killing is that identical twins cause confusion for everyone and the community avoids confusion. Second, when a person is discovered to be suffering from incurable pain or disease, he is killed. Third, release is done to a newborn child who does not grow fast enough. Fourth, release is used for those who break three rules or make a mistake. These various types of ending the life of people are done for the sake of achieving sameness.

Views of dissatisfaction with the World in Brave New World and The Giver

In *Brave New World* Huxley expresses his dissatisfaction with the modern world he lives in. He envisions the future of totalitarian societies in which individual liberty has been usurped by totalitarian rulers. So the consequences of state control are a loss of dignity, morals, values, and emotions—in short, a loss of humanity. Such consequences express: “a vision of a nightmarish future, fears of totalitarian ideology and uncontrolled advances in technology and science” (Baker 22). It is an unhealthy society for human beings to live in.

Like Huxley, Lois Lowry wrote *The Giver* as a dystopian novel because it was the most effective means to communicate her dissatisfaction with the lack of awareness that human beings have about their interdependence with each other, their environment, and their world. She uses the irony of utopian appearances which can be considered a sort of deception from the side of despotic government against citizens.

The Price of Conformity and Sameness

All these ideologies of control indicate that the price of achieving conformity and sameness is too costly. In *Brave New World* and *The Giver*, a lot of sacrifices have been made in order to achieve conformity and sameness. People have to give up things like feelings, beauty and truth. Huxley and Lowry seem to pose some questions:

how much does conformity cost? What if sameness is achieved? What gets lost when people's desires are immediately met? The outsiders realize very well that the ideologies of control done by the authorities are wrong because they eliminate deep thought, culture, and strong passions without which people are automatons not human beings.

There are two opposing views concerning the price of quest for perfection. The first view concerns the authoritarian governments who see that by achieving conformity and sameness, they succeed to achieve happiness and stability and consequently utopia. The second view concerns the dystopian protagonists: Bernard, John and Jonas who see that by losing individuality, identity, freedom, love and family in return for unreal false happiness and superficial stability, the populace lost their humanity and live in a dystopia. In *Brave New World*, Mustafa Mond confirms the first view of the authorities:

The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave (Huxley, *Brave* 183).

John the Savage, who represents the second view of the outsiders, is convinced that people lost a lot of basic human qualities, so at the end of the novel he expresses his dissatisfaction and anger by shouting:

'I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.' . . . 'I'm claiming the right to be unhappy; the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.' . . . 'I claim them all' (Huxley, *Brave* 185).

The Cost of Happiness

The cost of happiness in both novels is sacrificing feelings, beauty and truth. Jonas, in *The Giver*, like John in *Brave New World*, realizes how much has been taken from people by the path of conformity and sameness. Both realize the significance beyond the absence of choice in the life of people. One cannot choose a spouse, a child, a job or even clothes. Jonas longs for difference:

‘Well’ . . . Jonas had to stop and think it through. ‘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’ He looked down at himself, at the colorless fabric of his clothing. ‘But it’s all the same, always.’ . . . ‘I know it’s not important, what you wear. It doesn’t matter. But–It’s the choosing that’s important, isn’t it?’ ((Lowry, *Giver* 67).

In reality the price paid for achieving conformity and sameness in dystopian societies is very high because it costs people to do away with many basic human traits making them semi-humans or non-humans. Humans are created not to be the same but there must be some differences; they are different in their minds, bodies, tempers, colours, faiths, hopes, ambitions, fears and dreams. The absence of difference in these dystopian societies symbolizes an absence of joy, pleasure, choice and creativity in general. The people in these dystopias have been transferred to a meaningless and passionless existence. People get things in return for giving up other things: “The community of the Giver had achieved at such great price. A community without danger or pain. But also, a community without music, color or art. And books” (Lowry, *Giver* 122)

Dystopia in the Outsiders’ Perspective

Therefore, the dystopian societies often appear superficially perfect but often underneath they are faulty and imperfect places. People of these societies often appear as if they live in paradise but it is only due to the outsiders’ views that the bitter reality of this society is presented. So this apparent dystopia often functions as an example of perfection that has gone too far.

In Huxley's *Brave New World* John the Savage uncovers the shortcomings of his society and thinks of escape; in Orwell's *1984* Winston Smith questions the morality and legitimacy of the Big Brother regime but could not escape; and in Lowry's *The Giver* Jonas feels defeated and alienated and consequently thinks of escape. So dystopias are fictional worlds where oppressive societal control exists under the illusion of creating a perfect society.

Exile or escape for the outsiders is the Final procedure

If the shortcomings of the dystopian society are uncovered by symbolic outsiders in both novels, those outsiders are punished severely. The price paid by those outsiders is either exile or escape. Those few who do not fit into the community of *Brave New World* are exiled to far isolated islands. Bernard is exiled to Iceland; Helmholtz Watson is exiled to the Falklands; John escapes to a hill outside London. Jonas escapes from the community of *The Giver* to a hill outside America. Exile or escape of the outsiders is symbolic of questing for normal life in which they can find pains, diseases and poverty; they look forward to unhappiness instead of the superficial false happiness of their supposed utopias. Critic Carter Hanson argues that exile and escape are for the outsiders only because "The stability and static nature of Sameness [and conformity] . . . depends upon a contented populace who ask few questions and perceive little need for change" (Hanson 49).

The End of Brave New World: John Escapes to a hill outside London

When John decides to go away and leave London, he seeks for a normal life far away from this brave new world. The end of the novel brings John the Savage into direct physical conflict with the brave new world he has decided to leave. Fasting, whipping himself and vomiting the civilization of this harmful world to purge himself, John cries: "I ate civilization. It poisoned me; I was defiled . . . I ate my own wickedness . . . Now I am purified" (Huxley, *Brave* 183). He spends the first night on his knees, not sleeping but praying to God: "Oh, my God! Oh forgive me! Make me pure! Oh, help me to be good!" (Huxley, *Brave* 184). Of course, the reason for his coming to

this hill is to experience unhappiness and to think about the horror of the civilized world. In his new life of seclusion among the pretty forests, groves, ponds, and flowers, John realizes that he is happy. But this happiness does not last long because he dies few days later. He does not have enough time to enjoy his new life. Huxley seems to say that real happiness in this world is difficult to attain. The reason for his quick death is left for the reader to guess.

The End of The Giver: Jonas Escapes to a hill outside his community

Like John in *Brave New World*, Jonas in *The Giver* decides to escape to a hill outside his community. He, like John, seeks for a normal life far away from his hellish society. Jonas escapes to Elsewhere, an unknown land that exists beyond the boundaries of the communities. But, unlike John, Jonas does not declare his comfort and purity. He just declares his feeling of hunger and disease.

Both novelists' choice of 'hill' as a new escape for John and Jonas is significant. Geographically, hill is a natural elevation of land, or a mass of earth rising above the common level of the surrounding land; or a group of plants growing close together. Symbolically, hill symbolizes the elevation of both protagonists above the level of their disastrous civilizations. The biblical significance of hills can be seen in some verses as in the Book of Psalms: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." (Psalm 121:1). This verse refers to optimism by God's help. There is another verse for hills in Old Testament chapter eight the Fifth Book of Moses Called Deuteronomy:

For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; . . . A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. (Deuteronomy 8:7-9).

Here hills symbolize the new paradise for which John and Joas long. They also symbolize seclusion through which man can contemplate his own status to have a new start.

Ambiguity in Dystopian Fiction

John's happiness in the new environment of hill does not last long because he dies few days later. He does not have enough time to enjoy his new life. Huxley seems to say that real happiness in this world is difficult to attain. The reason for his quick death is left for the reader to guess. The same can be said to Jonas whose escape is ambiguous; the reader does not know what may happen in his future. Both Huxley and Lowry intends her readers to have an open en. The open end is one of the aspects of dystopian fiction. This open end, which causes an ambiguous effect, is clear in both novels but in different proportions. Each novel leaves out one vital detail that can hardly determine exactly what may happen, leaving the reader to guess what may occur based on his own thoughts and opinions. The story of the dystopian novel is often unresolved even if the hero manages to escape from the dystopian society in which he lives. The reader is not informed about the end of dictatorships of those dystopias. The dystopian protagonists may succeed to escape to a new desired society but they cannot overthrow the totalitarian dystopian society. Why is the dystopian world not overthrown in both novels? The audiences are left to their own conclusions.

The ending of Brave New World is less ambiguous than The Giver

The ending of *Brave New World* is less ambiguous than *The Giver*. When John chooses for himself a new life, his life ends in death. The reason for death in this time in particular is left for the readers' inference. Does this mean that humans must live under control? Or does it mean that freedom is destructive? There is no clear answer. *The Giver* has also an an open ending. When Jonas moves towards the unknown land of Elsewhere, the reader does not know whether the place he is looking for exists or not. This is because Lowry leaves us with the warning that "perhaps it was only an echo." Lowry intentionally writes an ambiguous ending so that

readers can decide for themselves about Jonas' destiny at the end of the novel. She mentions the reason for choosing an ambiguous ending of the novel:

I liked the ambiguity of the ending. The reason is because *The Giver* is many things to many different people. . . . So I don't want to put my own feelings into it, my own beliefs, and ruin that for people who create their own endings in their minds. . . I like people to figure out for themselves. And each person will give it a different ending (Lowry, *Newberry* 130).

The Messages of Dystopian Fiction

As the ending of dystopias is usually ambiguous, there are various messages conveyed to the reader at the end of each novel. Most writers of dystopian fiction usually seek to uncover truth about the plight of the present world by projecting the major expected problems in the future and amplifying them. Most dystopian fiction is often connected with science fiction where imagined technology plays an important role. So one of the messages of science fiction dystopias is that technological advancement must be controlled and must be based on ethical considerations without which there will be disastrous consequences. There is another important warning message about the nature of totalitarianism. Dystopian fiction also attracts people's attention to the current political situation in order to tie them to the political attitudes of their countries. It usually tends to resolve the central conflict by death because there is no life without troubles; and in this world man cannot get rid of all his problems and to live an ideal perfect life.

Huxley's Message

Huxley wrote his novel to transmit a warning message that scientific progress can be dangerous if used incorrectly. The novel explores the dangers of technology and what it can do to a whole world. Huxley's idea is that technology does not have the power to save humanity successfully. So Huxley warns people of the potential dehumanization of man in a technological world in the future. In a 1962 interview, Aldous Huxley, defends his purpose in writing

Brave New World and warns of a society controlled by the factors that rule his fictional society. He says that the new forces of science and technology, pharmaceuticals, and social conditioning could:

iron humans into a kind of uniformity, if you were able to manipulate their genetic background . . . if you had a government unscrupulous enough, you could do these things without any doubt . . . We are getting more and more into a position where these things can be achieved. And it's extremely important to realize this, and to take every possible precaution to see they shall not be achieved. This, I take it, was the message of the book (Goodman 13).

The Giver's Message is Choice is Constructive and absence of choice is destructive

The main message of *The Giver* is that man without freedom, love, family and will is semi-human. For man choice is constructive and not destructive. And this is a shared message with *Brave New World*. Lowry wants also to transmit her clear message that freedom, choice and memory are related and important. So it is impossible for man to have a good life without them. In the novel's conclusion, Jonas sees the lights of a village below the hill. It is very likely that this supposed community is just a conception of fantasy:

All at once he could see lights, and he recognized them now. He knew they were shining through the windows of rooms, that they were the red, blue, and yellow lights that twinkled from trees in places where families created and kept memories, where they celebrated love. . . . Suddenly he was aware with certainty and joy that below, ahead, they were waiting for him (Lowry, *Giver* 179–180).

The lights seen by Jonas symbolize the lights of a new civilization that may be better than his dystopian society of *The Giver*.

The Shared Message of the two novels: achieving conformity and sameness is impossible

Both *Brave New World* and *The Giver* share common messages. One of these shared messages is that a genuine normal life is a mixture of happiness and suffering. So man must suffer in order to know true happiness. This means that achieving conformity and sameness in this way of dystopias is impossible. Huxley and Lowry argue that people without sorrow and distress are people without souls. The two novelists describe a world without suffering and a world without soul. They transmit a warning message against the dangers of unethical scientific progress that may do away with the soul of man.

By the end of the two novels—*Brave New World* and *The Giver*—Huxley and Lowry sent a frightening message to the whole world that one day in the future our world might just turn into the World State of *Brave New World* or the Community of *The Giver*. In this imagined world, basic human traits such as freedom, love, family, and parents may not exist. Therefore, the two novels describe a real dystopia. Another shared message of the two novels is that humanity is nothing without depth of thought and emotions. Humanity's true happiness and stability can be achieved by intimacy and profound attachment to others, close family ties and a strong sense of people's ability to have power over their destiny.

These messages of the two novels are transmitted through the dystopian protagonists who develop into independent maturing individuals with unique abilities, dreams, and desires. So the two novels can also be seen as an allegory for this process of maturation through which John and Jonas reject their societies where all people are the same to follow their own paths. John in Huxley's *Brave New World* and Jonas in Lowry's *The Giver* are the two main outsiders who find themselves similarly unable to fit into their dystopian societies.

Conclusion

In conclusion both Huxley and Lowry admit—in several talks and interviews—that their novels *Brave New World* and *The Giver* are negative utopias in which they provide frightening visions of the future. Both describe two futuristic societies that have alarming effects of dehumanization. This dehumanization occurs as a result of the absence of basic human qualities such as spirituality, religion, family, love, freedom. This dehumanization occurs also as a result of people's obsession with physical pleasure and finally the misuse of technology.

By eliminating all aspects of variation and diversity in favor of conformity and sameness, the World State in *Brave New World* and the Community in *The Giver* have rejected the truly utopian possibilities and have turned to truly dystopian societies where people are not free to move society forward. By eliminating the very things that make man human such as the arts, music, literature, culture, freedom, passion and emotion, it is impossible to achieve real conformity and sameness. By eliminating feelings, aspirations, identities, and many other things that make people human, authorities of these dystopias oblige people to live a pointless and meaningless life. A society in which individuality and creativity are eliminated and in which people have no control to make their own choices and form their own lives is not a beneficial society at all. Such a society, if exists, is disadvantageous, unfavourable, unhelpful, unfriendly, bad and consequently dystopian. Finally *Brave New World* and *The Giver* are two science fiction dystopias that quest for perfection through achieving conformity and sameness. Such a quest is failure because it is impossible.

WORKS CONSULTED

Aronson, Elliot. *The Social Animal*, New York: W. H. Freeman and company, 2007.

http://www.academia.edu/The_Social_Animal.pdf

Asimov, Isaac. *The Tyrannosaurus Prescription and 100 Other Essays*, New York: Prometheus Books, 1989.

Baker, Robert S. *Brave New World: History, Science, and Dystopia*. Boston: Twayne, 1990.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, London: Sage, 1998.

Booker, M. Keith. *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Booker, M. Keith and Anne-Marie Thomas. "Dystopian Science Fiction" in *The Science Fiction Handbook*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1st edition 2009. 65–74.

Claeys, Gregory and Lyman Tower Sargent. *The Utopia Reader*, New York: UP, 1999.

Clute, John, and Peter Nicholls. *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*, London: Brown and Company, 1993. 311–314.

Davenport, Basil. *Inquiry into Science Fiction*, New York: Longman, Green and Co. 1955.

Deery, June. "Technology and Gender in Aldous Huxley's Alternative Worlds," *Extrapolation*, Vol. 33 Issue 3, Fall 1992: 258–273. Available on 26 April 2015.

<http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/literary-criticism/technology-gender-aldous-huxleys-alternative-worlds>

Ferns, Chris. *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999.

Firchow, Peter. *Aldous Huxley: Satirist and Novelist*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1972.

Firchow, Peter. "Brave New World Satirizes the American Present, Not the British Future" in de Koster, Katie Ed. *Readings on Brave New World*, San Diego: Greenhaven, 1999.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Garrett, Agnes and Helga P. McCue. Eds. "Interview with Lois Lowry" in *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, Volume 5, 1990, 129–140.

Goodman, Aislinn. Ed. *Bloom's Guides: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World*, New York: Chelsea House, 2004.

Hanson, Carter F. *The Utopian Function of Memory in Lois Lawry's The Giver*, *Extrapolation* Volume 50, Issue 1, 2009: 45–60. Available on 7 April 2016.

<https://ecourses.uprm.edu/pluginfile.php//The-Utopian-Function-of-Memory-in-Lois-Lowry's-The-Giver-pdf>

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*, Ed. David Bradshaw. London: Vintage, 2004.

Huxley, Aldous "Interview with George Wickes and Ray Frazer" in *Writers at Work*. 2nd Series, Ed. George Plimpton, New York: Viking Press, 1963. 198

Katona, George, *The Mass Consumption Society*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Kennedy, John F. "Address to U.N. General Assembly, 25 September 1961" in *Presidential Papers*, U. S. Department of State.

- <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer>
- Lea, Susan. "Seeing Beyond Sameness: Using *The Giver* to Challenge Color-blind Ideology," *Children's Literature in Education*, Vol. 37, Issue 1, March 2006. 51-67. Available on May 23, 2015. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.100->
- Levitas, Ruth. *The concept of utopia*, New York: Wien, 1990.
- Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
- Lowry, Lois. "Newbery Medal Acceptance," *Horn Book*, July-August, 1994, 414-422.
- Lowry, Lois. "Giving Up 'The Giver' to Hollywood", Interview by Jessica Gross, *New York Times Magazine*, August 1, 2014.
- Mann, Leon. *Social psychology*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 1973.
- Manuel, Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel. *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Matter, William. "On Brave New World," in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*. Eds. Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg, and Joseph D. Olander. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1983. 94-109.
- More, Thomas. *Utopia*. New York: Dover, 1997.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, London: Penguin, 1990.
- Priest, Marissa. *Beyond the Wall: A Dystopia*, Colne: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011.
- Said, Edward. "Invention, Memory, and Place," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, winter 2000, 175-192.
- http://www.mohamedrabeea.com/books/book1_4205.pdf
- Sisk, David. *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias*, Westport: Greenwood, 1997. 1-16.
- Stangor, Charles. *Principle of Social Psychology*, Edited by John Mark Ockerbloom, published by Flat World Knowledge, 2013. <http://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Principles-of-Social-Psychology.pdf>
- Stewart, Susan Louise. "A Return to Normal: Lois Lowry's *The Giver*," *Lion and the Unicorn: A Critical Journal of Children's Literature* Vol. 31, Issue 1, 2007: 21-35. <http://literature.proquest.com.fama.us.es/searchFulltext.pdf>
- Williams, George C. *Adaptation and natural selection: a critique of some current evolutionary thought*. Princeton: UP, 1966.
- Witalec, Janet. Ed. "Dystopias in Contemporary Literature: Introduction" *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Vol. 168. Gale Cengage, 2003.