

## LANGUAGE OF CONTROL IN LOIS LOWRY'S NOVEL *THE GIVER*

**Pradivlianna L. M.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,*

*Associate Professor at the Department of English Language*

*Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University*

*Ostrozkoho str., 32, Vinnytsia, Ukraine*

*orcid.org/0000-0003-1752-8613*

*lpradivlianna@vspu.edu.ua*

**Gladio S. V.**

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,*

*Associate Professor at the Department of English Language*

*Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University*

*Ostrozkoho str., 32, Vinnytsia, Ukraine*

*orcid.org/0000-0002-6698-524X*

*Svitlana.Gladio@vspu.edu.ua*

**Key words:** *dystopia, young adult literature, linguistic manipulation, euphemisms, Lois Lowry, The Giver.*

The article explores the phenomenon of linguistic manipulation and control in Lois Lowry's young adult dystopian novel *The Giver* (1993). The narration presents a society founded on the principles of «Sameness», a social order originally designed to eliminate hunger, pain and inequality, yet achieved at the cost of freedom and individuality. Lowry's fictional community is governed by surveillance, strict social rules, and, most decisively, through the «precision of language» – a system of linguistic restrictions.

The aim of the paper is to examine how the suppression and regulation of language in the novel function as mechanisms of cognitive control. The analysis focuses on two interrelated aspects of the novel's linguistic organization: the language within the fictional community, which serves as an instrument of suppression; and the language of the narrative itself, which mirrors the protagonist's cognitive and emotional evolution.

The study employs tools of semantics, cognitive linguistics, and stylistic analysis to trace the shifts in lexical density, metaphorical expressiveness, and syntactic complexity that accompany the protagonist's growth as an individual. The results of the study demonstrate that in Lowry's novel, language as the mechanism of social control is employed by the community authorities as a means of ideological manipulation: imposed vocabulary, pre-formulated linguistic patterns, lexical restrictions, and euphemistic substitutions prevent citizens' development as free individuals capable of moral choices. At the stylistic level, the author employs linguistic simplification followed by linguistic enrichment to dramatize the protagonist's mental liberation: gradual transformation of narrative style reflects his growing linguistic and cognitive awareness. By choosing the perspective of a child, Lowry illustrates how the community members are trained into obedience, how they learn from childhood to voluntarily relinquish their freedom of choice. Ultimately, the novel illustrates how language becomes a perfect instrument for teaching conformity and compliance.

## МОВА КОНТРОЛЮ В РОМАНІ ЛОЇС ЛОУРІ «ХРАНИТЕЛЬ»

**Прадівлянна Л. М.**

*кандидат філологічних наук,*

*доцент кафедри англійської мови*

*Вінницький державний педагогічний університет*

*імені Михайла Коцюбинського*

*вул. Острозького, 32, Вінниця, Україна*

*orcid.org/0000-0003-1752-8613*

*lpradivlianna@vspu.edu.ua*

**Гладьо С. В.**

*кандидат філологічних наук,*

*доцент кафедри англійської мови*

*Вінницький державний педагогічний університет*

*імені Михайла Коцюбинського*

*вул. Острозького, 32, Вінниця, Україна*

*orcid.org/0000-0002-6698-524X*

*Svitlana.Gladio@vspu.edu.ua*

**Ключові слова:** антиутопія, підліткова література, мовні маніпуляції, евфемізм, Лоїс Лоурі, «Хранитель».

У статті досліджується явище мовної маніпуляції та контролю в антиутопічному романі Лоїс Лоурі «Хранитель» (The Giver, 1993), який зображує спільноту майбутнього, що побудована на принципі «однаковості» – соціальному устрої, створеному з метою усунення голоду, болю та нерівності, але досягнутому ціною втрати свободи та індивідуальності. Усі аспекти життя громадян регулюються за допомогою нагляду, генетичного добору, суворих соціальних правил і, найголовніше, через «точність мови» – систему мовних обмежень, що формує мислення та поведінку людей.

Мета статті полягає в аналізі мовної організації роману: по-перше, розглянуто мову в межах художнього світу твору, де вона виконує функцію соціального контролю та когнітивного обмеження громадян; по-друге, досліджується мова самого наративу, що відзеркалює поступову інтелектуальну й мовну еволюцію головного героя. У фокусі аналізу – способи, за допомогою яких мовні обмеження, нав'язані мовні моделі, евфемізми та семантичні підміні створюють у спільноті систему значень, що позбавляє персонажів здатності усвідомлювати власні емоції, індивідуальність чи моральний вибір, а також допомагає приховати брехню, на якій побудоване все суспільство. Паралельно простежується, як зміна стилю нарації – від лексично спрощеного до емоційно насиченого й образного – відображає розширення когнітивних можливостей головного героя.

Методологічно дослідження спирається на поєднання інструментарію семантики, когнітивної лінгвістики та стилістичного аналізу, що дає змогу простежити зміни в лексичній насиченості, метафоричній виразності та синтаксичній складності тексту, які супроводжують становлення героя як самостійної особистості.

Результати засвідчують, що на рівні зображеного світу роману мова стає засобом ідеологічної та емоційної маніпуляції, тоді як на рівні художнього стилю – індикатором внутрішнього визволення героя. Роман Лоурі демонструє, як маніпуляція мовою не лише забезпечує соціальну конформність, а й визначає межі людської свідомості, що робить твір цінним матеріалом для дослідження когнітивних та ідеологічних аспектів мовного контролю.

**Introduction.** Lois Lowry's 1993 novel *The Giver*, awarded the prestigious Newbery Medal for «the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children», has been praised by *The New Yorker* as «perhaps the best children's novel ever written» [Waldman, 2021]. At the same time, it has been among the most frequently challenged books, often removed from school curricula because of its unsettling themes. This paradoxical reception makes *The Giver* a particularly compelling subject for scholarly research.

The narration is set in a territorially isolated community founded on the principle of «Sameness», a social order originally designed to eliminate hunger, pain and inequality among people. While all citizens thrive in «blissful» happiness, the protagonist of the story, twelve-year-old Jonas, a well-bred and obedient member of this utopian world, is chosen to become a new Receiver of Memories. His assignment is to learn and preserve in his head all memories, pleasant and excruciatingly painful, of humanity's past. The knowledge he receives from his predecessor, The Giver, makes him question the foundations of their life and recognize dystopia behind the perfectly happy utopian world of his community. Life in their society is regulated by surveillance, genetic regulation, strict social rules, and, probably most decisively – by what its leaders call «precision of language», a restriction on the use of words. Communication is only possible through strictly conventionalized expressions.

Such focus on knowledge and language as a tool of manipulation sets this novel within the broader dystopian tradition, alongside works such as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Yet Lowry addresses these issues to young adult readers, merging elements of science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction into a hybrid narrative that warns and provokes.

**Aim of the Research.** In this paper, we aim to examine how the suppression and regulation of language in the novel function as mechanisms of social control and to demonstrate how the narrative's style reflects the protagonist's expanding awareness. Language in *The Giver* is not merely a neutral medium of communication but an instrument of cognitive and emotional manipulation. Through depiction of linguistic restrictions, the novel exposes the paradox of a society that achieves stability by sacrificing essentially human freedoms of choice and individuality.

**Object of the Research** is the linguistic organization of Lowry's novel, including both the narrative's linguistic form and the depiction of the use of language within the depicted community.

**Subject of the Research** is the system of linguistic strategies and stylistic devices that shape and convey the protagonist's perception of reality in *The Giver*.

**Research Objectives** include: 1) to examine the stylistic organization of the narration to see how it reflects the protagonist's cognitive and emotional development; 2) to identify linguistic rules imposed on the citizens of the fictional community and analyze how these mechanisms function as instruments of cognitive and ideological control; 3) to attempt to interpret the author's ideas about the relationship between language, thought, and social conformity within totalitarian systems.

**Analysis of Recent Publications.** Lowry's work has already attracted a great deal of attention, receiving both high praise and, as S.L. Steward puts it, «its share of resistance» [Steward, 2007, p. 21] for the depiction of infanticide, euthanasia, and «puberty-driven sexual awakening» [ibid.]. The majority of critical studies deal with «utopian vs dystopian» characteristics in the novel. The authors examine the representation of «abuse exercised by a totalitarian power over its citizens in order to transform them into a mass of pliable material» [Toma, 2017, p. 227], the community's collective commitment to preserving idyllic life, and the reasons why the citizens «surrender to the Committee complete agency over their lives and esteem them with indiscriminate faith» [Roozeboom, 2017, p. 24]. The scholars emphasize that «a world where memories are controlled, suppressed, or erased, leads to a disruption in the formation of individual and group identities» [Jaithallia, 2023, p. 282]. Many interpret the novel as a warning that «the manipulation of memory serves as a tool for maintaining dominance and shaping collective consciousness, ultimately distorting individual and communal identities» [ibid.], thus offering young adult readers a way to «political and social awakening» [Hintz, 2002, p. 254].

One of the mechanisms of the memory restriction and cognitive control, as Lius Lowry demonstrates, is through limiting the language available to the community. According to N. Jaithallia, «deliberate limitation of vocabulary stifles the ability to convey complex emotions, experiences, and memories accurately», thus turning them into «diluted, simplified and diminished» recollections [Jaithallia, 2023, p. 285]. Without memories, people fail to develop wisdom, critical thinking, responsibility. Toma develops similar ideas and argues that «language reinforces the power of the Committee, benefiting its totalitarian agenda of creating numb, robot-like citizens, with childlike level of awareness, which never think for themselves or question authority» [Toma, 2017, p. 231].

Although the role of language as a tool of manipulation in Lowry's novel has not yet been thoroughly examined, it has been addressed in part by scholars such as Roozeboom, Jaithallia, Toma and others who regard it as an ideological weapon,

«a principal method that the existing power structure engages to control the residents» [Roozeboom, 2017, p. 25]. However, these discussions focus primarily on the effects of linguistic control, revealing how restricted language and memory, going hand in hand, produce «a society where the richness of human experience is sacrificed in the name of conformity and control» [Jaithallia, 2023, p. 285].

In this paper, we are interested in **linguistic strategies** of control and take a more comprehensive approach to the study of language in Lowry's novel. The analysis will combine approaches from cognitive linguistics, semantics, and stylistics. Cognitive linguistics provides a theoretical framework for understanding how restricted vocabulary shapes perception and thought. Semantic analysis will focus on euphemisms, lexical substitutions, and the manipulation of denotation and connotation, while stylistic analysis will reveal how Lowry's narrative strategies reinforce the theme of linguistic control. Together, these methods allow for a comprehensive examination of how language functions as a tool of manipulation in *The Giver*.

**Findings and Discussion.** As a Young Adult dystopia, the novel is narrated through the limited perspective of a teenager, Jonas, who lives in his «family unit» with a sister and, temporarily, a small child Gabriel, who is in danger of being «released» (euphemism used for «euthanasia/infanticide»), because of his «annoying» restlessness at night which interferes with adults' sleep. Jonas's point of view, though quite reliable because of his complete inability to lie, is still an outlook of a child. At the beginning of the novel, he is a contented young teenager who accepts his life «here and now» unquestioningly and who can't imagine «*How could someone not fit in?* *The community was so meticulously ordered, the choices so carefully made*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 48]. So, the reader, accustomed to classical dystopias, does not encounter overt criticism of the totalitarian control, explicit satire, nor the depictions of horrors of the all-powerful regime or state terror. All possible adult questions are completely neglected: who is in power, how can community run so smoothly without the horrors of punishment for disobedience, why community members are so content to be so ignorant.

Instead, by choosing the perspective of a child, Lowry illustrates firsthand how the community members are trained into obedience, how they learn from childhood to voluntarily relinquish their freedom of choice and entrust all decisions – significant ones (like, choosing a spouse or a future job) and minor (for example, which medicine to take) to the Elders. The citizens never feel any doubts, pain, or responsibility connected with choice-making because they believe that the Elders are never wrong. Everyone is happy – either with the choices done for them by the Elders

or because they themselves don't have to make the choice. And language seems to be a perfect instrument for teaching such compliance.

From early childhood, all citizens are instructed in the «precision of language» and are chastised, even punished corporally, for misuse of words. This equally applies to a three-year-old child's simple act of confusing similar-sounding words like «smack» and «snack», and to more serious violations of the established linguistic norms like using strong adjectives or the word «release» playfully.

In the community, the language is as an important tool that helps to shape human thought, perception, behavior. Jonas learns that their society is built on rules and lies, and language itself becomes the very mechanism which conceals those lies and teaches the citizens to accept them as truth. Readers easily follow his revelations because the narration itself, Lowry's style, mirrors Jonas's linguistic and cognitive awakening.

Thus, in the opening chapters, the language is deliberately plain and repetitive, reflecting Jonas's limited worldview of a boy who has mastered «precision of language» and is happy with all the community rules which he finds logical. Lowry's text at this point is written in «routinish» language, her style is simple and straightforward, her descriptions – clear and exact, demonstrating that «precision of language» limits what the people can conceive of. As Ludwig Wittgenstein said, «the limits of my language mean the limits of my world» [Wittgenstein, 2021, p. 155]. Community members are taught the language that limits their cognitive awareness and emotional growth. They are tamed to live without feelings and emotions in the world devoid of art, sport, music, literature, as well as of colors, climate, animals or natural diversity, all of which are sacrificed in the name of Sameness. Their limited language leads to limited consciousness.

And Lowry's narration of opening chapters, too, is «precise»: short declarative sentences, minimal figurative language: «*Jonas hurried through the door and found himself in a comfortably furnished living area. It was not unlike his own family unit's dwelling. Furniture was standard throughout the community: practical, sturdy, the function of each piece clearly defined. A bed for sleeping. A table for eating. A desk for studying*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 74]. Simple style, neutral vocabulary, short sentences and terminology which is conventional in their community – «family unit», «dwelling», «living area» – make the description matter-of-fact and impersonal.

As Jonas receives more memories, Lowry's language subtly shifts, becoming more sensory, metaphorical, emotional. It gradually expands in imagery, becomes more vivid: «*a brisk sail on a blue-green lake; a meadow dotted with yellow wildflowers;*

*an orange sunset behind mountains»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 110]. Jonas learns to recognize the colors and enjoy the beauty of the natural world expressed in the text through a number of epithets – *brisk, blue-green, dotted, yellow, orange*.

When he experiences the memory of snow, the narration becomes lyrical and evocative: «*The ground was thick with the furry snow»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 81]. When he experiences first pain, the text becomes emotional and metaphorical: «*Then, the first wave of pain. He gasped. It was as if a hatchet lay lodged in his leg, slicing through each nerve with a hot blade. In his agony he perceived the word «fire» and felt flames licking at the torn bone and flesh»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 109]. The report-like narration of the early chapters transforms into sensory language and manifests Jonas's awakening to life with feeling and emotions.

The more experiences of humanity's life outside their community he obtains in the memories, the more complex the language of the book becomes. Probably it's natural that the strongest emotions that Jonas experiences are in the memories of the war: «*He was in a confused, noisy, foul-smelling place. It was daylight, early morning, and the air was thick with smoke that hung, yellow and brown, above the ground. Around him, everywhere, far across the expanse of what seemed to be a field, lay groaning men. A wild-eyed horse, its bridle torn and dangling, trotted frantically through the mounds of men, tossing its head, whinnying in panic. It stumbled, finally, then fell, and did not rise <...>*

*The colors of the carnage were grotesquely bright: the crimson wetness on the rough and dusty fabric, the ripped shreds of grass, startlingly green, in the boy's yellow hair»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 119].

Jonas who lived all his life in a placid emotions-and-feelings-proof community, fills these descriptions with particularly strong images of different perceptions. Now the range of feelings he experiences is huge. He sees colors: *yellow, brown, crimson, green* and what he calls *the colors of the carnage* for how else can they be defined? He recognizes the shades of light: *dim daylight* of the early morning through the *yellow smoke*, grotesquely *bright colors* of things around. He feels the smells: *foul-smelling place*. He hears sounds: *noisy place, groaning men, dangling bridle* of a horse *trotting, whinnying, falling*. Words of tactile semantics: *thick with smoke air, crimson wetness*. But mostly – lexemes of strong emotional semantics which render the horror that Jonas witnesses – starting with a rather neutral *confused* and rising through the images of a *wild-eyed* horse, *trotted frantically*, *whinnying in panic* to a complex image of a soldier with *the ripped shreds of grass, startlingly green, in the boy's yellow hair*.

Even the syntax reflects Jonas's emotional state. Most of the sentences are not very long, but they are broken into smaller chunks, the word order is violated, different punctuation marks. The sentences imitate an emotional flow of thought, as if the boy cannot speak and needs time to regain breath.

The knowledge of war and death will make Jonas think about the value of human life and will be crucial in his growth as a personality. The second part of the book is written in a complicated language as Jonas not only receives the memories but acquires the skill to see the world differently. As a result of his training, his life acquires richness, his perception of the world changes completely and he is now full of emotions forbidden and unknown in the community, expressed in equally forbidden words.

All in all, the theme of Jonas's awakening to new life is reinforced through the transformation of the plain narration into the text with vivid imagery, repetitions, strong epithets, complex sentences. Lowry as an author crafts linguistic manipulation to affect the readers, who, while reading closely, notice that Jonas's recognition of the limitations of his community is accompanied by his newly-acquired ability to perceive language and to express himself in a more complex and linguistically diverse way. Stylistic shifts in narration itself mirror Jonas's cognitive and emotional liberation.

Not less interesting, however, is Lowry's focus on the language as a mechanism of manipulation and control. The principle of Sameness in the community manifests in fake equality and similar conditions of life. Citizens' limited spectrum of experiences results in limited possibilities of individual growth and self-expression, which is even further diminished because of a strict linguistic censorship.

Use of «precise language» ensures the community's sense of order and happiness as they assume that for success they need to follow rules and to avoid speaking about forbidden things. Jonas's mother explains: «*Our community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 127]. «Precision of language» actually implies several things.

### 1. Natural limitations. Scarcity of vocabulary.

The language in the community is scarce and lexical choices are limited, because their whole world is conceptually limited, deprived of such phenomena as art, literature, religion, travels, history which could contradict and disrupt the idea of Sameness. The collective memory of the past is erased. It is preserved only in the mind of the Receiver of Memories. Many concepts are deliberately lost. Words for the things that could endanger the secure order of the community, inflict pain and ruin the stability have become obsolete. Out of use are not only such words as «warfare» or «starvation», but also «red», «blue», «hills», «snow», «grandparents», «love» and a lot of

others. There's no room for imagination, storytelling, or books in this community. As Toma says: «Many concepts have lost their meaning for the inhabitants and language is too deficient to express real emotions and experiences» [Toma, 2017, p. 230]. They operate with a limited vocabulary stock and, although they know the meaning of stronger words, they avoid using them, thus keeping up with the illusion of happiness, stability, and success.

## 2. Shifts in word semantics.

Many common words lost their original semantics. A number of words from the «old times» are still in use but they have shifts in meanings. For example, being deprived of animals or pets in their world, they use the word *animal* only to speak about bad people.

*«I don't know. They acted like... like...»*

*«Animals?» Jonas suggested. He laughed.*

*«That's right», Lily said, laughing too. «Like animals». Neither child knew what the word meant, exactly, but it was often used to describe someone uneducated or clumsy, someone who didn't fit in» [Lowry, 2004, p. 5].*

Although semantically it's a proper use (one of its semes is «a person who behaves in a cruel or unpleasant way, or who is very dirty» [Oxford]), but the lexeme lost its most common meaning. They still have such words as «hippo» or «elephant», but they are used as names for «a comfort object» – a soft toy-animal given to a child to sleep at night with until the age of eight. These words changed semantics: *«Lily giggled at the strange word. «Hippo», she repeated»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 21] and now mean only «a toy».

## 3. Ready-to-use language.

People are given clichés for everyday use. Among the most common expressions – apologies. Community members are required to apologize for the tiniest inconvenience, and they have to use the same language, as do the people responding to their apology. As a result of using the clichés, these conversational formulae turned into linguistic signs with zero meaning. «I apology» and «I except your apology» are the phrases that are pronounced automatically, mechanically without thinking or actually apologizing. It makes language empty.

Other «semiotic zeroes» include:

**Family unit** – a concept which is completely void of traditional semantic features: parents, grandparents, siblings, family bonds, family responsibilities and represents an artificial group of two selected adults and two selected children, who feel certain duty towards each other, but no warmth or connection. Family unit is dismissed as soon as the children become adults, all its members shift completely apart and never show any interest in each other's life or death. They live in a **dwelling** – another conceptually meaningless word (a house, flat, etc. where a person lives [Oxford])

which is never referred to as *home* (the place where a person feels they belong [Cambridge]). And they never feel *love* to each other. Jonas learns about *love* in one of the memories («*it was a word and a concept new to him*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 125]), but for his parents, love was «*a very generalized word, so meaningless that it's become almost obsolete*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 127]. They «*meaningfully* substituted it with *enjoy, take pride* – both states are much easier controlled than love.

Probably, that's the reason also for the use of such over-general gender terms as *male* and *female*. Both of them describe biological species, whereas *man* and *woman* are words specifically used for people. Referring to human beings as *male* or *female*, especially when used as a noun instead of an adjective, produces a dehumanizing effect.

Thus, «precise words» in this community is a language in which the meanings of words are intentionally unclear: they are so general and imprecise that the true meaning can be easily overlooked.

## 4. Restrictions on the use of strong words.

The most ruthless rules are applied to the words of emotions and feelings. The children from early age are taught to avoid strong emotional words. The novel starts with Jonas very carefully trying to pick up a correct word for his anxiety before the Ceremony of Twelve where he would be given his final assignment.

*«...he realized that frightened was the wrong word to describe his feelings, now that December was almost here. It was too strong an adjective.*

*<...> he wasn't frightened, but he was... eager, he decided. He was eager for it to come. And he was excited, certainly. All of the Elevens were excited about the event that would be coming so soon.*

*<...> Apprehensive, Jonas decided. That's what I am»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 4].

In similar situations, Jonas's friend Asher was chastised for the use of «strong» adjective *distraught* instead of *distracted*, and Jonas was scolded for the use of strong word *starving* instead of a neutral *hungry*.

Suppression of strong vocabulary resulted in a world of shallow emotions and artificial (if any) instincts. It restricted the chances of the development of individuality with a broad range of feelings and emotions. «*Feelings are not part of the life she's learned*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 153] – says the Giver about Jonas's «sweet friend» Fiona. After experiencing, in the memories, injustice and cruelty, and reacting «*with rage that welled up so passionately inside him*» [Lowry, 2004, p. 132], Jonas recognizes that people in his community are incapable of strong feelings. When his sister Lily tries to speak angrily, he sees the shallowness of her reality:

*«I felt angry because someone broke the play area rules», Lily had said once, making a fist with her small hand to indicate her fury. <...>*

*But Lily had not felt anger, Jonas realized now. Shallow impatience and exasperation, that was all Lily had felt» [Lowry, 2004, p. 131].*

Jaithallia describes this language as «being stripped of emotional nuances and ambiguities, designed to avoid any discomfort or conflict» [Jaithallia, 2023, p. 286]. We would add, that restriction of emotional vocabulary leads to suppression of undesirable emotions and ideas.

Jonas himself starts using much stronger words by the end of the novel signifying his increased freedom of thought and freedom of self-expression: «*He thought of the rules he had broken so far: enough that if he were caught, now, he would be condemned»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 165]. «*If he had stayed, he would have starved in other ways. He would have lived a life hungry for feelings, for color, for love»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 174].

### 5. Lexical substitutions

Precision of language serves as cognitive control. People use the language that was approved by the Elders. In the course of his training, Jonas learns that linguistic chunks that people are taught to use actually allow them to lie. This is one of the most distressing revelations about his utopian world that Jonas receives. «*He had been trained since earliest childhood, since his earliest learning of language, never to lie. It was an integral part of the learning of precise speech»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 70]. And yet, the community is built on lies with the harsh realities of life being hidden behind the **euphemisms** – «a pleasant replacement for an objectionable word that has pejorative connotations» [Routledge, 2006, p. 388].

People's thoughts are easily manipulated and controlled without them ever realizing it. The language of lies creates an allusion of caring. Thus, they use the euphemism **release** («to let somebody come out of a place where they have been kept or stuck and unable to leave or move» [Oxford]; «to give freedom or free movement to someone» [Cambridge]) for euthanasia, which «camouflages» the true meaning and blinds people's perception of manipulation: «*It says so in the rules. If you don't fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released. My mother says that once, about ten years ago, someone applied and was gone the next day». Then he chuckled. «She told me that because I was driving her crazy. She threatened to apply for Elsewhere»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 48].

The term «**Elsewhere**», which Jonas initially understands as lands beyond their community, stands for the same concept of being euthanized, which is usually applied to senior citizens, new-born twins and babies that don't fit, as well as those who committed serious transgressions against the community. But the act of violence is softened by a positive word and

everyone is happy to be blind to the real meaning of what is happening.

Similarly, the euphemism **stirring** is used as a substitution for teenagers' first sexual awareness, which is strictly forbidden in the community and is regarded as an illness that requires treatment. The use of such euphemism prevents the citizens from questioning or challenging the authorities. In early chapters, Jonas happily wipes down with a pill the pleasant feeling he has towards Fiona without realizing that he is manipulated by the community Elders who don't want to encourage love among young people.

Other examples of «comfortable language» include such concepts as **committee of the Elders**, where the Elders («an older person, especially one with a respected position in society» [Cambridge]) in reality stand for the governing and all-powerful authorities. **Volunteer hours** – a term which, ironically, conceals «obligatory work» done by the community children, presented as purposeful and needed for the recognition of their skills, talents and inclinations, but in reality, a perfect excuse to observe and control. Jonas's father's job is called **Nurturer** – he takes care of the newborn children, but he also kills them if they don't fit.

### 6. Reticence or manipulation by silence.

One more way of manipulating human minds is by silence. There are many things nobody is supposed to speak about or they are even forbidden. These include differences in appearance – Jonas feels awkward about his light (blue) eyes, which are very rare in the community of dark-eyed people. People are not supposed to speak about achievements – their own or someone else's, as this will be qualified as bragging and punished by chastisement. It feels awkward to be different and it's impolite to be better than the others.

Manipulation by silence is applied to citizens who broke the rules and thus disgraced themselves. Their names are never mentioned and are never used for newborn children: «*A name designated Not-to-Be-Spoken indicated the highest degree of disgrace»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 67]; «*No one ever mentioned it; the disgrace was unspeakable. It was hard to imagine»* [Lowry, 2004, p. 9]. Manipulation by silence goes hand in hand with manipulation by shame.

**Conclusions and Further Research.** Due to a limited young teenager's perspective, it is still difficult to speculate on the actual role of language in Lowry's world. Is it possible that the totalitarian society in the novel functions under the totalitarian power of the language? Readers have no proof that the Elders are more emotional, power-thirsty or that they enjoy the control they exercise over the population. They are certainly uncomfortable with the memories. The banning of the name of Rosemary, the former Receiver of Memories who committed suicide and disrupted placid life of the whole community that

received the unwanted chaotic memories, actually suggests even certain fear of such consequences. Even the Elders seem to be afraid of the memories.

The same is true about the language. They know the words «love» or «starvation», for they react appropriately when asked – they don't show the ignorance of the terms themselves. Yet, they feel uncomfortable and call these words «imprecise». As if they instinctively feel the potential of the language to violate their world, their comfort zone, the laws they had once approved, the limitations of choices and freedoms they eagerly accepted, the satisfaction with «not-my-responsibility» way of life.

Lowry's novel, ambiguous at times and disturbing, offers much food for thought. And one of the most interesting ones is the intimate connection between linguistic complexity and the expansion of consciousness as seen in the example of the protagonist of the novel and his rise into awareness. The language influences our ability to critically perceive the world. Eradication of linguistic richness, concealment of truth behind meaningless words, use of cliches or set patterns, restrictions on the use of strong words, lexical substitutions, euphemisms, banning of the words – all these, as Lowry shows, kill individualities, suppress freedom of thought, bring up law-abiding citizens – not only incapable of protest but also genuinely happy to be controlled and manipulated.

The present study can be further expanded through the examination of the interplay between memory, emotion, and linguistic competence in *The Giver*, particularly with regard to how the restoration of memory reintroduces metaphor, imagery, and evaluative vocabulary. Future studies may also undertake a comparative analysis of linguistic control across young adult dystopias (such as *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, or *Matched*), revealing broader genre-specific patterns in how language is used to regulate cognition and social behavior.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Cambridge Dictionary Online. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
2. Hintz, Carrie. Monica Hughes, Lois Lowry, and Young Adult Dystopias. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 2002. 26, 254–264. <https://doi.org/10.1353/uni.2002.0022>
3. Jaithalia, N. Exploring the Nexus of Memory, Power, and Identity in Lois Lowry's The Giver and Yoko Ogawa's The Memory Police. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 8(5), 282–287. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.85.44>

*Social Sciences*, 2023. 8(5), 282–287. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.85.44>

4. Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, 2004. 226 p.
5. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online. URL: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
6. Roozeboom, Alison Nicole. Lois Lowry's The Giver and Political Consciousness in Youth, *Articulāte*, 2017. 16, article 3. URL: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/articulate/vol16/iss1/3>
7. Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics. Ed. by Bussmann Hadumod. London and New York, 2006. 1304 p.
8. Stewart, Susan Louise. A Return to Normal: Lois Lowry's The Giver. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 2007. 31(1), 21–35. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/uni.2007.0009>
9. Toma, Monica Alina. Dystopian Community in Lois Lowry's Novel the Giver. *Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai*, 2017. 32, 227–235. <https://doi.org/10.24193/cechinox.2017.32.18>
10. Waldman, Katy. New Yorker Interview. What Lois Lowry Remembers. 2021. URL: <https://is.gd/dfG4Jp> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
11. Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: Centenary Edition. Anthem Press, 2021. 250 p.

## REFERENCES

1. Cambridge Dictionary Online. Retrieved from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
2. Hintz, Carrie (2002). Monica Hughes, Lois Lowry, and Young Adult Dystopias. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 26, 254–264. <https://doi.org/10.1353/uni.2002.0022>
3. Jaithalia, N. (2023). Exploring the Nexus of Memory, Power, and Identity in Lois Lowry's The Giver and Yoko Ogawa's The Memory Police. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 8(5), 282–287. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.85.44>
4. Lowry, Lois (2004). *The Giver*. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, 226 p.
5. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online. Retrieved from: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
6. Roozeboom, Alison Nicole (2017). Lois Lowry's The Giver and Political Consciousness in Youth, *Articulāte*, 16, article 3. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/articulate/vol16/iss1/3>

7. Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (2006). Ed. by Bussmann Hadumod. London and New York, 1304 p.
8. Stewart, Susan Louise (2007). A Return to Normal: Lois Lowry's The Giver. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 31(1), 21–35. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/uni.2007.0009>
9. Toma, Monica Alina (2017). Dystopian Community in Lois Lowry's Novel the Giver. *Universitatea Babes-Bolyai*, 32, 227–235. <https://doi.org/10.24193/cechinox.2017.32.18>
10. Waldman, Katy (2021). New Yorker Interview. What Lois Lowry Remembers. Retrieved from: <https://is.gd/dfG4Jp> (retrieved 29.10.2025).
11. Wittgenstein, Ludwig (2021). Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: Centenary Edition. Anthem Press, 250 p.

Дата первого надходження рукопису до видання: 21.10.2025

Дата прийнятого до друку рукопису після рецензування: 17.11.2025

Дата публікації: 30.12.2025