

The Giver - A Model Society?

I have read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry a number of times and the description of the ordered and controlled society always strikes me as good idea at first. Now, don't get me wrong - I have read the whole book and I know that this whole reality of Sameness will become less attractive as the story unfolds, but the concept itself has merit.

In the interest of keeping list-writing alive (it's my favourite genre of writing, after all), I thought I'd make a list to try to process the reasoning for the following statement:

The Community is a Model Society (and we should all be like them).

Radical, I know, but let's give it a shot.

1. There is no pain (physical or otherwise) - think a minute about what this means...

- No war
- No injury
- No bullying
- No hurt feelings
- No grieving

What wouldn't we do to be free of these inconveniences in our lives? I guess the question is, would you be willing to give up a few freedoms in order to ensure the safety and inclusion of all members of society?

2. There is no hunger.

- Food is delivered to each household and everyone has what they need to stay healthy.
- Rations are monitored to ensure equality and proper consumption

of all food.

- All citizens are taught and monitored about their eating habits. They eat what they need and don't overeat.

3. There is order.

- This is not an attractive quality for everyone, but for me, the idea of calm, peaceful, and maintained structure is alluring.
- Everything has a name and a place and an expectation. What's so wrong with that? It makes me wonder if we've wandered too far away from self-discipline.

4. Sameness.

- Climate Control: a guarantee that the weather is just right for growing crops, that it is always pleasant.
- No color: This reduces competition about fashion and racism.
- Ordered appearance ensures that no one stands out. No one is more special or less accepted.

5. Assignments based on careful observation.

- Spouses (Divorce is obsolete)
- Children (matched with parents who will be best suited to help the child flourish in the Community)
- Occupations (Imagine knowing you have the job best suited to you - no guess work involved here...)

Although their way of life resembles what I sometimes crave in my own, I do realize the importance of a little chaos. The one thing that would be hardest to give up would be choice - having to suppress my thoughts and opinions and doing as I was told regardless of my own ideas. And a life without books??? Unthinkable!

Lowry describes some sort of Utopia within the Community, depending on how you see it of course, but then she introduces freedom and variety and the whole idea of order becomes stifling. I love order - but

how ordered my life is should be my choice, right?