

How lowry develops the theme of emotion (888 words)

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



How Lowry Develops the Theme of Emotion (888 words) Emotions are an integral part of human life. Positive emotions can reward our existence and negative emotions can warn us against things we dislike. By understanding both pleasure and pain, we can contrast them to one another, allowing us to experience both in full. In Lois Lowry's book *The Giver*, the characters live in a community where emotions are almost numbed to non-existence in an attempt to achieve the perfect societal structure of a utopia. By depicting a community in which emotions are not a part of life, Lowry shows the importance of emotion in helping people fully appreciate life, individualizing them and empowering them to do amazing things. Emotion allows people to fully appreciate life. The Giver community has removed pain from the lives of its residents and has taken away from one of the core values of life. No matter how pleasurable an experience is, its value cannot be truly appreciated unless one has experienced pain. This affects the Giver community greatly as they do not feel pain and thus cannot fully appreciate the joyful experiences of life. Their lives are hollow and meaningless; monotonous and devoid of any form of emotional variation. An example of this is when Lily says that she is angry at the telling of feelings. Jonas realizes that anger is not what Lily felt, merely shallow impatience and exasperation. He knows because in the memories he had "experienced injustice and cruelty, and he had reacted with rage that welled up so passionately inside him that the thought of discussing it calmly at the evening meal was unthinkable" (p. 132). Also, as the people of the community cannot fully appreciate life, they do not grieve about death. The release of elders and infants alike are not mourned but instead celebrated.

This is shown when Larissa, the old woman Jonas bathes at the house of the old, describes the release of a fellow elder as " wonderful" (p. 31). As their lives are not valued, their deaths do not evoke grief. From a moral standpoint, this is completely and absolutely absurd as human life is one of, if not the most precious things in the world. Finally, emotion allows people to express themselves as individuals rather than the lifeless clones shown in the Giver community. In certain situations, people will react differently and express different emotions. This allows people to be individuals, unlike in the Giver community. In the Giver community, the superficial emotions felt by its citizens are briefly acknowledged and then released. This ensures that everyone will feel the same so that conflict can be avoided. At the beginning of the telling of feelings, Lily claims to be " angry" at a group of Seven's misbehaving on the playground. After brief discussion with the rest of the family, when asked if she still feel angry, she says " I guess not" (p. 7). By releasing her anger, Lily has returned to being an emotionless being, despite being given the chance to show individualism. On the other hand, when Jonas stops taking the pills to suppress the stirrings, he is a perfect example of how emotions can allow people to express themselves as individuals. He stops taking the pill because something " told him to throw the pill away" (p. 129). This alludes to Jonas subconsciously disliking the pill for inhibiting emotions that he feels in the memories given to him by the Giver, but not in real life. By rejecting the pill, he is separating himself from the sameness of the Giver community. As can be seen, the lack of emotion leads to similar and dull lives whilst the presence of emotion allows people to express themselves as individuals. Lastly, emotions can empower people to make

decisions and take action. This aspect of emotion is severely restricted in the Giver community due to the choices all being made for the people by their ancestors and Committee of Elders. An example of this is when Rosemary is chosen to be the next receiver. It is very likely that she was "filled with fear" (p. 64) when she was first selected in the same way Jonas was when he was selected, due to the uncertainty of what the job entailed. If she had followed her feelings of fear, she could have chosen not to do the job and thus avoided her eventual release and death. Conversely, strong emotions can empower people to do amazing things. The most obvious example is when Jonas takes Gabriel with him during his escape from the community. He shows his love for Gabriel is shown when he feels a "passionate yearning to share the warmth with the one person left for him to love" (p. 176). At this point, both he and Gabriel are freezing in the snow. Jonas remembers sunlight and decides to give the memory to Gabriel instead. This is a perfect example of how emotions can empower people to do things. In summary, emotion is important in helping people fully appreciate life, individualizing them and empowering them to do amazing things. It is an essential part of life that is severely compromised in the Giver community illustrated by Lois Lowry. The core value of emotion is developed throughout the text and shows how the lack of it can harshly affect how appreciative of life people are.