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Rebels Against Restriction:

A Look Into the Effects of Restrictions and Censorship on
Adolescents

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Proposal

This paper is a discussion and exploration on the effects of restriction and censorship during the adolescent years. The adolescent years for the purposes of this paper are going to range from childhood to early college aged students. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how different authority figures try to restrict this age group in certain ways and how the decision to do this generally does not produce the desired results. In the end I would like readers to walk away being more conscious of the dangers involved with too much restriction by authority figures in the lives of younger generations.

In constructing this thesis, the goal was to use adolescent literature to show the different levels of authority and the types of affects they can have on adolescents. I used The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn to demonstrated parental authority, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian to show the influence of cultural environments, The Giver to represent the dangers of restrictive governmental control, and The Handmaid's Tale to ultimately show how desirable over-restricted items and behaviors become. An academic article pertaining to the book or author that further proves the argument supports each point that is made through one of the pieces of literature. Studies on child conduct disorder, drug-use and rebellious attitudes, and the "Red Scare" are also incorporated to show the realities of restriction in social settings.

Overall I would like this thesis to show patterns of unnecessary restrictions leading to rebellious younger generations. The more aware of patterns people become the more chances they have to try and break the cycle. The main point being

that forbidden things become the most enticing things, so in order to encourage obedience instead of resistance we need to be more open and welcoming of new ideas and ways of thought. This will makes inevitable changes smoother instead of being lead by radical rebellions.

Rebels Against Restriction

“Book bans serve only to shame children and heighten their curiosity. Intellectual freedom advocates share this viewpoint. The responses from both children and adult experts point to a paradox arising from the act of restricting access to materials. Items are restricted to prevent children from reading, viewing, or listening to them, but the restrictions ultimately increase children’s curiosity and desire for the restricted material” (Isajlovic-Terry, and Mckechnie). When children are told not to touch the stove because it is hot, they tend to touch it anyway, because the forbidden things become the most enticing. This is a principle that can be seen true at several different levels. Whether in a family setting or with government control, the more authority restricts individuals from certain aspects of the world the more they seek out those areas. Throughout the centuries it has been a common practice to restrict the youth of a culture from certain things; for the future of society belongs to the next generations. There is a power that adolescents and teenagers represent that is commonly feared by adults and leaders. Because of their fear, they feel the need to limit the exposure younger generations have to “corrupt” material, substances, or influences in order to protect them from the dangers of the world. In theory, this philosophy should work wonderfully; but more often than not, it backfires and has the opposite effect.

This discussion will take a journey through adolescence and demonstrate how censorship can affect developing generations. It will parallel each authoritative influence with a piece of juvenile literature that paints a picture of what each type of authority looks like in action. Beginning in the family structure, dealing primarily

with the parent-child relationship, parenting styles will be seen as they have an influence on Huckleberry Finn. Then, progressing to a cultural dynamic, an example will be seen in the novel The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian of how influential these pressures and restrictions can be. After that, we will see the importance of showing youth the outcomes of dystopic societies through the book The Giver. Finally, we will see how devastating complete government control and dictation can be by observing the impact it has on Offred from The Handmaid's Tale. Each of these books has the potential to teach children lessons that can only be learned through the process of individual interpretation and understanding. The goal of this discussion is to show the importance of not denying future generations the right to those things by restricting them from controversial issues and that the tighter authority figures try to bind younger generations the more they are going to fight for their freedoms and opinions.

The first form of authority children come in contact with is the family unit. This is the initial place they experience rules, restrictions, and censorship. The way parents handle these issues at a young age can do a lot to shape the way a child deals with them in the future. As shown by the hot stove illustration, most individuals do not need to be taught rebellious tendencies; it is part of the "sin nature" in people, the dark side of the yin yang. Most cultures and religious groups believe in the idea of everyone being born with a little bit of good and a little bit of evil in them. It is the role of elders and authority figures to find the good, and nurture it until it outweighs the bad. Since the parents are the first authority to take on this challenge they lay the

groundwork for a child's view on right, wrong and obedience. Once the groundwork is laid, it is the child's choice as to whether to obey or not.

The thought processes behind these choices is a long-standing debate that has been going on for centuries: whether someone is born with a certain predisposition or whether behavioral tendencies are shaped by the child's environment. In an article discussing the factors that shape childhood conduct disorder, "Lytton acknowledges the 'undoubted evidence' to support the contribution of environmental factors, such as parental monitoring and rejection, and mounts a persuasive case that child effects, such as heritable genes and autonomic reactivity, also operate. The evidence for interactional effects is even more convincing. Lytton, however, concludes that 'the child's own tendencies are stronger than contributors to the conduct disorder than are the parental influences', that child effects are primary, and that they 'predominate' " (Dodge 298). Basically he is saying that children have tendencies at a very young age that shape the way they will behave in certain circumstances as opposed to their being initially shaped by the way parents treat them. Children are born with rebellious natures or obedient natures, and based on that make their own decisions as to whether they will conform or rebel.

Either way, from this point forward parents are forced to choose a path by which to raise their children that could shape the rest of their lives. The first option is to be lenient and just let nature take its course. This option can be either good or bad depending on the way it is practiced. Sometimes all that can be done is to teach right and wrong and hope for the best; when an open environment is created for children they can be much more receptive to criticism and correction. On the other hand, if a

parent is lenient to the point of being uninvolved and lacks basic parenting abilities, it can lead to children who never know the difference between right and wrong or care about either; “confused or missing parents are often responsible for their teenagers' recklessness”(Cohen 251-270). The second option is to tightly restrict children from the outside world and its negative influences, creating a dominant and authoritarian atmosphere. This option can be effective over a short-term period, but eventually the power to control the child’s world will deteriorate and they will be left in a state of either confusion or anger; both have the potential to lead to rebellious or delinquent actions.

One work of literature that gives an excellent example of both positive and negative authority and allows readers to see them both enforced upon one character is The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Huck is just an adolescent and is exposed to many different approaches to authority throughout the story. In the beginning he is with the Widow Douglas, who takes the positive lenient approach. “The widow said I was coming along slow but sure, and doing very satisfactory. She said she warn't ashamed of me” (Twain, Ch. 4). She tries her best to teach Huck her version of right and wrong, and because of the way she treats him with kindness and care, he respects her and does not want to do wrong by her. Miss Watson, however, has a propensity to take the extremely restrictive approach, which includes an incomprehensible amount of rules to a boy like Huck. The endless restrictions she puts on him make him resent her and act in rebellion for the sole purpose of upsetting her. In the school environment, where there are many rules as well, he misbehaves occasionally just because he can; he is not fazed by the punishments and, in fact, they amuse him. The

last major authoritative figure he is faced with before embarking on his escape is Pap. Pap uses the uninvolved approach and interacts with Huck as little as possible, only using him to get money and as a punching bag. This is the final straw for Huck's toleration of authority; constant neglect and abuse eventually lead to his fake death and escape. As seen in this piece of literature, the most effective authoritarian relationship Huck has is the one with the Widow, where she is in control but feels a desire to relate to Huck.

In a study performed by J. M. Lewis in the 1970's, used to examine the family systems children come across in juvenile literature, there were beliefs that the families shown are generally happy and portrayed in a positive uplifting way. He came up with several elements that make for happy families in adolescent literature that also show the impact of the different ways parents interact with their children. "One important element in J. M. Lewis' definition of family structure is Overt Power... who holds the power and how that power is wielded in a family setting. Lewis notes that healthy families do not rely on the use of raw power by one family member... although holding to a core of absolute beliefs,... (they) explore various options and they recognize the complexity of personal motives and cause-effect relationships.... The prevailing power structure found in families in the sample novels was found to be one of moderate dominance... control is close to absolute, but moderate goal-directed negotiations are permitted..." (Lukenbill 219-227). This means that the most successful family structures kids witness in literature are those where open communication is welcome, even though there is a set authority. When children feel like they are being heard and that their opinions matter, they are more willing to

attempt compromises instead of resisting instruction.

However, parents and immediate family members are not the only ones to blame for rebellious children. The next influence on children and adolescents' behavior is the culture they grow up in. According to Gerard Bradley, "Culture is the *byproduct* of so many human choices and acts. People do not usually act for the *purpose* of making a culture; they simply choose and act and speak and join. When they do so, they effectively build a culture. When they are done, they leave behind a culture." Cultural influences are strong and usually well established. They are rooted in long practiced traditions and ingrained ways of thinking that, more often than not, attempt to overpower free will and free thinking. He goes on to explain, "But morally significant free choice cannot be eradicated by culture; choosing is a fact about persons which persons are incapable of choosing to obliterate. Where a culture is organized around the denial of that freedom, one sees a grotesque deformation of freedom. The choosing and acting person operates as if in trance..." (Bradley). Meaning that when cultures become so restrictive that they try to take away free will and choice, they are bound to produce a few rebels.

Evidence of this statement is seen in the adolescent novel The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. This is a novel about a middle school aged Native American boy who was born and raised on a reservation. The Native American reservation life provides a true example of the kind of impact a specific culture can have on individuals and groups of people. They have a set way of life, set religious beliefs, set activities and for the most part their lives are predictable and planned. These traditions were never established with the intention to harm or hold people

back: “culture is shaped by what people consider valuable, choice-worthy, worthwhile, good, as all human acts are intelligible according to their ends, aims, purpose” (Bradley). The original leaders and creators of cultures are just trying to protect and nurture their specific values and beliefs. Contrastingly, throughout this book we see the harmful effects reservation life has on the main character, Junior. He suffers from a medical condition that makes it difficult for him to fit into his cultural circles easily, which in turns makes him feel like a bit of an outcast within the reservation. At the same time, his ability to see beyond the reservation encourages his desire to rebel against the forces keeping him within the boundaries established by years of tradition. Junior makes the decision to transfer to a school just off of the reservation and so begins to see that he can fit into that world much more easily. He is liked, appreciated, and befriended; he gets a girlfriend and becomes a star basketball player. He is living the dream off of the reservation. However, he knows that there will always be strong ties to the reservation and all of the people he loves that are still there, “I wept because I was the only one who was brave and crazy enough to leave the rez” (Alexie, ch. 29). He is still tied to his culture because, “Culture is comprised most importantly of large social institutions and practices... *These* matters have great purchase upon persons' hearts and minds” (Bradley). He realizes that no matter how comfortable he feels in his new life, he will always be a part of his original tribe, and he accepts that. Even though Junior rebels against his culture in the beginning, when given the freedom to make his own choices and an environment in which he could process his own thoughts and feelings, he eventually comes back to his roots as a more educated and mature individual. This proves the point as well that

all not rebellious tendencies are negative or harmful. Occasionally, rebellions result in positive personal, cultural, and political changes.

As difficult as it can be for some individuals, it is important to recognize and be able to discuss the difference in all types of cultures with an open mind. Joseph Coulombe wrote a paper regarding Alexie's use of humor in his novels as a way to connect with the reader on universal issues. According to him, "the power of laughter generates "a crude zone of contact" that "demolishes fear and piety," allowing the "absolutely free investigation" of its subject (23). Alexie's humor creates that zone- or offers that space-to his readers. He provides an emotional and intellectual meeting ground for his readers to reconsider reductive stereotypes and expectations. While Owens defines the frontier as "a multidimensional zone of resistance" for Indians (41), Alexie uses humor to add a new element to it, one that extends beyond resistance (although that is certainly part of it). Alexie challenges readers of diverse backgrounds to join together to re-evaluate past and present ideologies. Humor generates a freely occupied space in which readers can begin sorting through the myriad connections and disconnections that face us all today... Readers are not passive receptacles; they engage, question, resist, learn, and grow during the reading process" (Coulombe 94-115). Alexie allows readers to engage with his stories and characters in ways that evoke emotional connections that help them to see past cultural differences and demonstrate the similarities in all people. This is the best way to create open-minded individuals who would rather form their own personal opinions than be told to follow strict social divisions. These individuals are the ones feared most by power hungry authorities because they are the hardest to force ideas

into.

Culture plays a large part in shaping the way one sees the world, but within a nation there can be several cultures, and the force that determines what cultures are allowed or forbidden is the government. The governments of the world are the next type of authority that needs to be looked at in the discussion of restrictions placed on society and individuals; and a key way governments try to control their citizen's thoughts and attitudes is through censorship. Obviously, not all governments have the same outlooks and standards on censorship, probably because of the uncertainty about which is most beneficial to the people of that country or which is most effective for power purposes. Every government has different motives and a specific purpose behind its forms of censorship and legal restrictions, but certain governments do not like their people to be influenced by other perspectives and viewpoints they deem 'threatening'.

"The pervasive Red Scare of the 1950s, which peaked just before mid-decade, legitimated the sanitizing of the nation's political culture, not only through prosecuting and persecuting anyone or anything smacking of communism, but also manipulating a whole range of suspect people, ideas, and artifacts. Purifying society of corrupting influences became a permissible activity, upheld by the religious, political, economic, legal, and cultural establishment. Everyone was vulnerable, but particularly the impressionable young, whose naiveté and search for excitement could easily lead to moral corruption or worse" (Cohen 251-270).

This article refers to the U.S. government trying to erase all communist influences

after World War II. The political leaders of the time thought it was necessary to eradicate all traces of communism and communist ideas from every part of American life, especially for adolescents. This singling out of a certain age group left the younger generations with an unsettled feeling that resulted in rebellious tendencies, not because they agreed with the ideas and philosophy behind communism, but because their own government was attempting to confine their knowledge.

It has become increasingly popular in modern societies to challenge laws and be rebellious towards government restrictions. This is a topic especially proven by the increase in recreational drug use. According to two researchers at York University, "There are both empirical and theoretical reasons to suspect that drug use and drug-use attitudes may be related to overall sociopolitical ideology, notably attitudes in such spheres as authority, ...conventionality, ...and social deviance" (Kohn, and Mercer 125-131). They went on to conduct a study of college participants regarding their drug history and also their views on authority and related matters. The results of the study showed "some clues as to who among North American college students is likely to develop permissive attitudes toward and indulge in illicit drug use. He, or perhaps no less likely she, ...professes... some atypical religious preferences... and most to the point here, has a markedly left-wing, rebellious sociopolitical outlook" (Kohn, and Mercer 125-131). With these results in mind they reference the opinion of C. MacInnes on the subject in that he "related the modern drug phenomenon" to what he terms "an anti-authoritarian spirit, which, although a minority one, seems to be growing throughout the world" (Kohn, and Mercer 125-131). Since this study was performed, these points have been proven even further.

The scope of people with rebellious attitudes towards the government in this regard, especially in college age students, has broadened past the subjects described in the results of their sample.

With this type of rebellious movement gaining momentum, the struggle between adolescents and the authorities trying to restrict them has only increased. Throughout the last hundred years authorities, “have attempted to publicly control, and even censor, teenagers' access to various artifacts of mass culture-including magazines, music, comic books, movies, television and radio programs, and books. The motivation has been twofold: to shield the young from certain perceived pernicious influences and to encourage a national cultural uniformity/conformity” (Cohen 251-270). Unfortunately, they found that these restrictions only fueled the fires of rebellion. During this crucial adolescent period in a person’s life they are beginning to form opinions about themselves and to discover where they fit into the world. While going through this self-development process they become even more resistant to authority that tries to hide things from them. Adolescents tend to be the most rebellious age because they are more forced into things and they are old enough to have developed the reasoning skills needed to understand the motives behind the actions of those in authority over them. They watch public figures push the line and challenge boundaries, so they begin to do the same.

It is almost impossible to shelter and restrict kids forever. What many adults tend to overlook when attempting to censor material viewed by adolescents is the fact that most of them have already been exposed to the subject content. Once the adolescent age is reached, most children already know more than the parents or

governments would like to admit; they know about sex, drugs, and communism. After knowledge of this type is gained, it becomes difficult to cut out of their lives without causing some kind of uprising. Unless discussing utopic or dystopic societies, as soon as interaction with the world outside of their family unit begins, they become exposed to many things they may have been sheltered from before. This leads to troublesome issues in the family and within the individuals themselves. Not knowing how to productively cope with these inconsistencies is one of the major reasons for rebellious behavior in adolescents and entire societies.

One of the classic dystopic novels that demonstrates this concept is The Giver by Lois Lowry. In this book a new society has been created in which elders have adapted people and their perceptions over many generations of careful study and control. These elders have created a world where no one knows pain, because they have never felt it, no one knows hatred, because they have never experienced emotions that strong, and no one knows death, because they have been sheltered from it. The people of the society are assigned careers at age 12 based on attributes they have displayed, they are assigned a spouse, and then they are assigned one male child and one female child. There are no exceptions to the rules, but for the most part none of the citizens fight the rules because they do not know there is any other way to live. They live life in the protective bubble created for them by the elders in which they are sheltered from the bad things in life, but they do not know any of the joys in life either. They have never heard music or seen colors or experienced sunshine or snow. Everything in their lives is regulated according to the standards found appropriate by the elders and the Giver.

The Giver holds the responsibility of storing and having all of the memories of how life used to be. The elders realize the importance of not letting all of the world's knowledge slip away and that history has a way of repeating itself; they want to learn from the mistakes, pain, discomfort, and revolts of the past in order to prevent them from happening in their 'perfect' world. The elders realize that they need someone to store all of this knowledge, but they are unwilling to experience all of that pain themselves, so the Giver is the only one who knows all of life's emotions, feelings, and the natural world. It is his job to transfer all of these memories to the Receiver of Memories, the main character, Jonas. The novel is focused on Jonas's journey through the memories, and then, in turn, how he copes with his society after receiving the memories.

This idea of memory and the power it represents is one of the central themes in the novel. "Like many definitive dystopias, The Giver warns against the dangers of cultural amnesia by depicting the suppression of historical memory as a tool of static totalitarian control and the production of infantile citizens. But Lowry also shows that memory, when not brought entirely under state control, is a source of considerable individual and emancipating power" (Hanson 45). Most modern governments have the ability to control what their citizens know about or are denied access to; this is just a small demonstration of the power they hold. They are also not afraid to censor and restrict materials, such as novels, that challenge their right to control or teach children to think for themselves instead of just believing everything they are told. The Giver represents "a reading which demonstrates that memory, historical awareness and hope can be harnessed to bring about resistance and significant change. By

privileging memory as the novel's one means of anticipating an alternate, better existence, which is hope... Lowry makes memory both the source of potential transformative change and of the novel's final moment of possible Utopian realization" (Hanson 45). This could be part of the reason this book is so controversial in some areas.

The main struggle Jonas has in this book is much the same as the struggle modern societies have with censorship. Jonas lived his life up until this moment believing the things he had been told by everyone everyday; he had no reason to doubt those things or to question them until the truth is revealed. It takes him a long time to really comprehend the immensity of the lies he has been told. When the Giver first starts to try and explain the truth and the concept of memories Jonas responds by saying, "I'm sorry, sir. I don't understand exactly. Maybe I'm not smart enough. I don't know what you mean when you say 'the whole world' or 'generations before him.' I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now" (Lowry, 78). Eventually, as the training continues, he begins to accept the reality of his situation. Adversely, with the truth he learned came the responsibility of determining what to do with it. How much of the truth could the rest of his society handle? If he were to share the memories with them, he would have to share them all; the bad memories become essential to fully understanding the good memories. If he were to only share happiness, love, and family with them they would not be able to fully understand what those things meant. Happiness is nothing if one has never experienced grief and sadness. True love cannot be understood unless someone knows the extent of what hate can do. Family is just a group of people unless loneliness and abandonment have

been felt. Jonas and the Giver discuss whether or not it is better to just leave the society as it is, in its state of bleak life, or whether the people should know the truth that lets them live life with full understanding. This correlates with governments' struggles with censorship. Most censorship happens to either protect individuals or to protect the government from what might happen if the populations knew there were other ways of living. If leaders begin to restrict aspects of life and keep individuals from knowledge and freedom, then what will happen when the truth eventually gets out? Governments have a much higher risk of rebellion when the people feel like they are being forced into a certain way of thinking or when they feel as if limitations are being placed on them for unjust reasons.

When things are taken away from people or heavily censored they become even more desired and cherished; whether an illegal drug, a favorite TV show, or simply a small luxury, things become more valuable the more scarce they become. The Handmaid's Tale illustrates this principle as well as any other piece of literature. When the handmaids are denied every form of luxury they begin to desire things that were never appreciated before, things like words and passion. Since they are not allowed to have any sort of interaction with words, Offred becomes extremely conscious of every letter she sees; even something as simple as an embroidered pillow becomes sacred and comforting. She begins to relish her time with the Commander purely for the interaction with words and letters that allows her to reconnect with the life she used to take for granted and the person she was before the take over. "We lean towards him a little, iron filings to his magnet. He has something we don't have, he has the word. How we squandered it, once" (Atwood, ch. 15). She

realizes that by restricting the handmaids from written language, and even spoken language at times, the persons in charge are trying to de-humanize them. This leads her to hold on to every glimpse of language with a fervor she never imagined she could have. It is the only thing that helps remind her she is still human and that she had a past life. Trivial things from the memories of her past become cherished in an astounding way. Definitions, meanings, and relationships become the only things she can focus on; remembering things like this is the only form of rebellion she can afford to exercise. This demonstrates how powerful the act of restriction can be.

Another major luxury that has been taken away from this society is passion, especially in regard to sexual acts. The whole society is centered on the need for procreation; they see sex only as a means to ensure survival of the species, which is the only reason for the handmaid's existence. Even between husband and wife the act of intercourse has lost any passion and in most cases does not happen at all. Because of the lack of any intimacy, when Offred begins having sex with Nick, she relishes it beyond her own understanding. She takes advantage of every second, momentarily not concerned with the consequences, because this is possibly the closest she will ever come to passionate sex again; this is a luxury she cannot deny herself.

Throughout the book she becomes more and more determined to join any type of rebellion she can find, because only then will she have hope for a governmental change in the future. She remembers life before the takeover and wants to find a way to get back to that type of life. She hopes to gain the personal strength needed to fight the government and carry out the actions required by the rebellion.

In an article Atwood wrote regarding her own writing, she refers to the power of imagination. This is a key point in both her book and all of the others listed above. These books represent the power imagination and the desire for a different situation can have, but also the dangers of a society where imagination is stifled. Improvements stop when people are not allowed to imagine better solutions. Atwood says, "Literature is an uttering, or outering, of the human imagination. It puts the shadowy forms of thought and feeling -heaven, hell, monsters, angels, and all- out into the light, where we can take a good look at them and perhaps come to a better understanding of who we are and what we want, and what our limits may be. Understanding the imagination is no longer a pastime or even a duty but a necessity, because increasingly, if we can imagine something, we'll be able to do it" (Atwood pp 513-517) This fear of what literature could allow children to imagine is perhaps why authorities try to exert so much control over the literature children and adolescents have access to.

The whole idea behind restriction is control, whether it is parents trying to control their children or governments trying to control whole populations. The need for control normally stems from older generations trying to resist the change desired by younger generations. This is especially prevalent in the censorship of adolescent materials. "However adults attempt to exert control-physical, spiritual, intellectual, moral, educational... often the young resisted or ignored such manipulation, perhaps at their peril, as the generational struggle continued" (Cohen 251-270). The difference in opinions between generations is one of the reoccurring causes of insurgences; change is not normally welcomed or accepted easily by either side. The

older generations do not like the changes proposed by the younger ones, and the younger generations do not like the changes forced upon them through censorship and restriction by their elders. Control and power are closely related; in order to have a more legitimate power one must sometimes relinquish a certain amount of control. When discussing overt power earlier, we saw that the most successful relations came when there was someone with ultimate authority who also encouraged and relied upon those they were in power over, therefore relinquishing some control to others. This rarely happens successfully in authoritarian relationships. Every time a new idea or way of life is brought about by younger generations it is fought.

It is interesting that literature is viewed so highly as a necessary teaching tool for students to be considered well educated yet is also the source of so much controversy. As seen throughout this paper, there is a great deal to be learned from these books alone, and yet each one has been censored or restricted for certain reasons. Each has a strong, intelligent, and thoughtful main character that is presented with a problem; each shows the characters' reactions to an issue and an important lesson that can be learned. Huck teaches kids that each person must find a place they fit and are happy, even if it is not the same as most people; Junior shows that tradition can be broken while still finding peace; Jonas is able to demonstrate the importance of balance in life; and Offred shows kids that it is important to fight for justice and what is right, however possible. One would think that these would be the types of characters society would want their children to learn about. Adolescent literature is able to paint a picture and explain it to students in a way that few other methods are able to. It can demonstrate the dangers of an intrusive government, or it

can portray a life without the protections a governing body can provide. Books, stories, and bodies of work have the ability to show any side of a situation or society that they want to, and it is important for adolescents to be able to learn about and see every side of an argument and make their own decisions about where they stand. Issues begin to arise when governments try to manipulate people into only seeing one side, the side that is most beneficial to their agendas.

Governments like those portrayed in The Giver and The Handmaid's Tale do not want to see generations rise up that are able to legitimately challenge the rules forced on them. Such challenges make them feel threatened and that their missions are all for nothing, because eventually they will have to leave their offices, posts, and leadership positions. They attempt to “brainwash” their citizen into believing that there is the only way to live. Unfortunately for them, problems arise when just one individual figures out their secrets, as we saw with Jonas. Then the knowledge of the possibility for change is sometimes all it takes. Change is the only constant in life, and change breeds fear in the hearts of the leaders at the top of the pyramid of power and knowledge.

People in power, especially on a parental level, try and censor the material available to adolescents because they do not want them to act on the ideas portrayed. They feel those actions are bad or disrespectful, as in the living situations portrayed in Huckleberry Finn and The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian. In reality, parents and authority figures need to feel like they have some control and know all of the correct answers. Unfortunately, it is easy to see that with things constantly changing, even if the adolescents of one generation change things to how they see fit,

the next generation will only find new things to try and rebel against. That is where Huck and Junior are such interesting characters for children to get to know. Huck in particular shows how children tend to really interpret authority figures' actions. He is able to think and reason for himself and determines that the "civilized" life is not for him. These types of novels help children see the need for open minds. Open minds are the only things that are going to break the overbearing cycles of power that our societies have come accustomed to. Even when we promise that we are never going to do the things our parents did, we always end up reverting to the things we know and are comfortable with. This is what makes adolescents and their rebellious attitudes so important, especially in literature. It allows us to see the areas we could improve in the future. Sadly, most of the time adults become so caught up in traditions that instead of embracing changes like Junior's parents did, by supporting his decision to leave the reservation, they end up trying to reign in and control their children even more. Hence the adolescent and teenage years are the most vulnerable to censorship, and they are the most powerful force in the rebellions of their time.

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