UiT Norges arktiske universitet

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

Dystopian Fiction as a Pedagogical Tool: Illuminating Democratic Principles and Values through Vonnegut's *Harrison Bergeron* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

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Master's Thesis in English and Education, ENG-3983, May 2024

Abstract

In this thesis, the main objective is to look at how dystopian fiction can be used to illuminate pupils on democratic principles and values. The two dystopian texts, Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Harrison Bergeron* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* will be used to exemplify why and how dystopian fiction can be used as a tool. Additionally, the thesis proposes how these two dystopian texts depict the violation of the three democratic principles and values: freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to equality. Based on a study conducted at lower- and upper-secondary schools and a tentative teaching plan, this thesis will present how to implement education on democracy and democratic awareness when working with literature. It also suggests the benefits of working interdisciplinary between the subjects of English and Social Science, in addition to the didactic importance of choosing age- and level-appropriate text. Finally, this thesis seeks to prove why it is essential for pupils to be educated on democracy, to not take democracy for granted, and to pass its values and principles onwards.

Acknowledgments

To my supervisor Cassie, whom I could not have done this without. Thank you for your encouragement, your perceptive feedback, and engaging discussions. Your expertise and eloquence have inspired and intimidated me since day one. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for accepting to be my supervisor.

To my practicum teachers, Patrick and Bjørn, thank you for your guidance and advice throughout my study. Your didactic perspective and constructive feedback helped improve my study and ability to teach.

To my previous professors at UiT, for sharing your knowledge and passion.

To my father and mother, for providing me with advice and being exceptional role models within the educational field.

To Gustav, for patience, love, and hugs.

Thank you.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis Aim and Research Question

Democracy is both a sacred and a promiscuous word. We all love her but we see her differently. She is hard to pin down. Everyone claims her but no one can possess or even name her fully. To give any definition for a class to learn would not be particularly democratic. (Crick, "Democracy" 2).

The 2022 Global State of Democracy report claims that "democracy is under both literal and figurative assault around the world" (iv). Further, the 2023 report states that for the sixth year in a row, "more countries experienced net declines in democratic performance" (18). The webpage of the Global State of Democracy Initiative presents a monthly democracy tracker of democracy and human rights development in 173 countries. In November 2023, twenty-three countries experienced adverse democratic or human rights events, and six countries experienced positive events (Global State of Democracy Initiative). The reasons for these adverse events are the curtailment of the human right of abortion in Georgia, ethnic violence in Sudan, forced displacement of foreign nationals in Pakistan, and the violation of twenty-five articles of Panama's constitution done by the Supreme Court (Global State of Democracy Initiative).

The issue of safeguarding democratic principles and values is vital. However, the question of how is complex. Some of the responsibility of passing the knowledge forward falls within the educational system. Democratic principles and values, its history, and its role in protecting human rights should be a central part of the education of young citizens. To become active democratic citizens, it is essential to acquire knowledge of democratic characteristics and what is expected of us as democratic citizens. One way of gaining this knowledge is through acquiring awareness of the contrasting states and rules, such as totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. It is essential to develop a historical understanding of what went wrong and which traits to look for in present-day leaders and societies. Bernard Crick defines history as "not a dead past but conditions how we understand the present and the future" ("Democracy" 2). Crick's definition highlights the relevance and importance of historical knowledge.

The question of how to educate pupils about the democratic principles and values of freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to equality will be the aim of this master's thesis. The didactic tool to illuminate the potential threats of democracy to Norwegian pupils in lower- and upper secondary school is dystopian fiction. The genre dystopia is used to "describe a fictional portrayal of a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand" (Claeys 107). In other words, dystopia is a warning of what might be in totalitarian regimes. I primarily chose this genre as a didactic teaching method for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to find a genre that would suit most pupils since I know that many youths associate reading novels with pain. I believe it is a teacher's job to convince them otherwise since the issue might lie in their previously chosen and assigned novels not suiting their interest. The two dystopian texts I have chosen for this quest are the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four, written by George Orwell, and the short story Harrison Bergeron,* written by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. The two texts portray a civilization of injustice, rebellion, and violence, in addition to some love and sexuality. The combination of violence and love is what I hope will result in a higher total of reading pleasure among the pupils since the chance of accommodating their various interests is higher with contrary themes.

Secondly, dystopian literature allows for interdisciplinary teaching, creating a two-for-one deal. The interdisciplinary subjects in my MA thesis are English and Social Science. Reading literature when acquiring a second language can help develop "grammatical understanding, vocabulary, spelling, and general writing abilities" (Carlsen 210). In other words, it can be an effective source for gaining grammatical and literary proficiency in the second language. Gaining reading literacy requires the pupil to use written text as a tool for their development and learning and to understand the content, emphasizing critically reflected and functional reading (Gamlem & Rogne, 24). In the context of social science, the satirical, political critique in my two chosen dystopian texts allows me to draw connections between the literary story and actual, non-fictional politics and political history. As the introducing quote by Crick highlights, democracy is hard to pin down. Democracy can be a complex subject to be educated on. This is due to its many institutions and aspects, which are easy to take for granted. By combining English and Social Science, a teacher can provide pupils with democratic competence through fiction. This might give the pupils hangers that they can refer to later.

In 2021, an international survey regarding reading ability and pleasure among ten-year-olds showed that Norwegian children reported the lowest reading pleasure among all participating

countries. Also, the survey presented decreased reading proficiency among Norwegian ten-year-olds since the previous survey, conducted in 2016 (Government). Given the weakening interest and proficiency in reading literature among Norwegian children, it is essential to help teachers acquire the necessary tools to help turn the trend around. With this in mind, what makes dystopian literature an exciting read? As previously mentioned, the combination of nerve-wracking drama and violence, as well as a love interest, has the potential to accommodate readers' interest. The sense of an end of the world, which the dystopian genre provides, levels the excitement in several ways. Jessica Finden highlights the opportunity to face one's fears regarding the future (8). Finden also mentions the benefit of reading about characters who face challenges that reflect real-world events but make a difference despite those obstacles (8). There is also something highly romantic about a love story that blossoms despite all odds or is portrayed as a forbidden love.

In writing this MA thesis, I want to learn more about the complex relationship between didactics and literature and potentially bring new information. Didactic development is essential as the world is constantly changing. Everything is meant to happen as efficiently as possible, and the pace is speeding due to the scope teachers are required to include in their teaching. Interdisciplinary teaching allows teachers to slow down the pace. Reading is a receptive skill, meaning language is not actively produced but taken in and processed (Tishakov, 178). The skill can easily be implemented in subjects other than language subjects. Consequently, reading is well suited for acquiring language proficiency and subject proficiency. In the Core Curriculum at the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, one of the three interdisciplinary topics is Democracy and Citizenship. This topic shall "give the pupils knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy and its values and rules, and prepare them for participating in democratic processes." (Democracy and Citizenship Line 1). The goal is to help the pupils gain insight into challenges and dilemmas in Democracy and Citizenship and the relationship between actions and consequences (Interdisciplinary topics Lines 3-4). Combining English and Social Science as interdisciplinary subjects creates the opportunity for educating pupils on democracy through literary work.

In 2017, Michiko Kakutani wrote an article in the New York Times about teens seeing parallels between the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the then-present government. Some of the parallels made were the correlation between the constant surveillance in the novel and the surveillance in the real world. In the novel, an eye called "Big Brother" sees and hears

everything. In the real world, high-tech devices can be hacked and eavesdrop on people's homes. In addition, there is a possible correlation between Big Brother and the National Security Agency. A second comparison is the novel's portrayal of "alternative facts," which is "whatever the Party holds to be truth is truth," and falsehood told by President Trump's press secretary, Sean Spicer, regarding the size of Trump's inaugural crowds (lines 2-5). The fact that teens can see a correlation between the Party's govern in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and present-day politics indicates independent thinking, reflections on democratic values and processes, and hopefully, the relationship between actions and consequences in democratic rule. One correlation is how President Trump is currently on trial for some of his actions as the President of the United States.

1.2 Justification of the Chosen Literary Work

Nineteen Eighty-Four was written by George Orwell in 1949. The novel functions as a satirical response to the horrors of totalitarian regimes. According to Bernard Crick, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four: Context and Controversy,* the novel intends to "discuss the implications of dividing the world up into Zones of influence" (147). George Orwell, born in 1903 as Eric Arthur Blair, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. As a political writer, Orwell was profoundly interested in political questions (Rossi & Rodden, 1). Orwell was known for his social criticism and gained worldwide fame for his unique political allegory, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in particular *(*Penguin Books, par. 1). Fascinated by H. G. Wells's novel *Modern Utopia* as a child, Orwell spent years making notes for what was to become *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Davison, v). Inspired by his Spanish experiences, his growing conviction that totalitarianism was undermining the idea of objective truth and his frustration with the *BBC's* bureaucracy played a part in giving birth to Orwell's dystopia and his last novel (Rossi & Rodden, 9). According to Rossi and Rodden, the novel poses the question, "Can the individual survive in the face of the collective power of the modern state?" (9). Further, they mention some of Orwell's insights in the novel as prophetic, highlighting the omnipresent telescreens and the manipulation of language by Newspeak. However, Orwell was not saying this had to happen. He believed it might happen if society was not alert to how the government can be corrupted by those who abuse power (9). Gregory Claeys claims that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* defines the genre of dystopian literature (107) with its pitiless, blunt, and stark dystopian world-state (118).

Throughout Orwell's life, a few occurrences influenced his political path and the writing of his last novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* As a young man fresh out of Eton College, Orwell flirted with the idea of socialism. However, Rossi & Rodden state that the maturing of Orwell's political beliefs stems from his five years as a policeman in Burma from 1922-1927 (2). Orwell hated the British Empire, was radical in a superficial way, struggled to deal with authorities, and despised being a part of enforcing the rules of the Empire upon the oppressed (Rossi & Rodden, 3). After resigning in Burma, Orwell traveled back to England. In the following years, Orwell gradually moved to the left, identifying with the poor and the oppressed. Orwell's authentic, eccentric brand of socialism arose after he traveled to the North of England to visit the people whom the Depression hit the hardest in 1936 (Rossi & Rodden, 3). In Orwell's essay *Why I Write,* it says, "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism, as I understand it" (Par. 11). However, Orwell's emphasis on egalitarianism is one of the major things that separates him from many of his fellow socialists. In addition, Orwell believed there was little chance for the socialist movement to succeed until they overcame the sense of distance from the working classes (Rossi & Rodden, 4).

Another incident that changed Orwell's political beliefs was the six months he spent as a member of a Trotskyist-anarchist group during the Spanish War. Despite experiencing in the Trotskyist group that true socialism was possible, Orwell was outraged when he saw that any left-wing forces that the communists could not control would be destroyed (Rossi & Rodden, 5). When returning to England, Orwell experienced what later inspired him to call the Ministry of Truth. In English newspapers, the Spanish War had been distorted for political reasons. Battles that never happened were retaliated in newspapers as great battles with hundreds of deaths. Consequently, Orwell feared that the objective truth was in danger of disappearing (Rossi & Rodden, 5). Orwell wrote articles and reviews on the Spanish War to clarify the truth. However, they were all rejected by left-wing journalists on the grounds of causing trouble (Rossi & Rodden, 6). According to Claeys, Orwell's concern regarding the totalitarian disregard for historical truth was growing. In addition, Orwell feared that mass propaganda would influence the population to no longer love liberty (122). Further, Claeys claims that Orwell increasingly feared "the destruction of the ideal of the 'autonomous individual', and the belief that socialists might so blindly worship at the altar of industrial progress that they would forgo democracy and any other but mass-produced goods" (122). Orwell went on to spend two years working for the BBC Eastern Service during the Second World War. He considered his

time at BBC to be a waste of time. Nevertheless, it inspired what would later surface in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as The Ministry of Truth, Newspeak, and the ghastly cafeteria (Rossi & Rodden, 8).

The three democratic principles and values of focus in this thesis are freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to equality. These three principles and values are found in the novel in various ways. The society of Oceania is divided into three groups. The proles are the lower class, the outer circle is the middle class, and the inner circle is the upper class. The inner party strictly regulates the hierarchy of the classes. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* discusses equality by portraying what happens when socialism divides a society instead of uniting the classes for a common purpose. The divide of the social classes inhibits a society's proper function by denying citizens fair and equal treatment. The non-existence of freedom of speech in the novel is apparent from the introduction of the Thought Police. A person in Oceania is arrested, tortured, and, in some cases, killed for making rebellious statements. The ruling power, "the Party," has gone to the length of depriving its citizens of freedom of speech, that even giving the impression of improper thoughts is reason enough for execution. The non-existence of freedom of privacy is provided by the surveillance cameras in every street, house, and living room, in addition to the Thought Police dressed as civilians.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is both a relevant and an essential read. Firstly, as literary art. Secondly, what Kakutani wrote in *The New York Times* regarding the novel illustrates important political traits and threats. In an article by Rebecca Klein in *Huffington Post*, Klein refers to a Michigan teacher, Mike Becker, who states, "A lot of students came up to me in the last few weeks and said stuff along the lines of 'We're living in 1984'" (Par. 3). The statement emphasizes the relevance and the correlation between the novel and present-day political challenges: the never-ending wars, the surveillance, and the absence of objective truth. Orwell's political history, truth-seeking, and other literary works set the bar for his ethos. The fact that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* continues to show up in journalism in Newspapers such as *The New York Times and Huffington Post shows its relevance, not only as a well*-written novel but as a novel with significant insight.

In Orwell's essay *Why I Write* he writes that what he most wants with his writing is to "make political writing into an art" (Par. 11). This is accomplished by his intriguing use of literary elements. The literary elements I will focus on in my analysis of *Nineteen Eighty-Four are*

setting, characterization, and theme. Throughout the novel, the setting is sterile and cold. The exception is the forest and an apartment where Winston and Julia explore and nurture their love relationship. I will be primarily concerned with the contrast between the cold and warm settings and how it might help engage pupils in the reading process. Characterization is used to depict the terror and delusion of living in a totalitarian regime. All characters seem damaged in one way or another. They are either depressed, aware of what the world has turned into, or delusional due to psychological manipulation from the government. The themes I will include in my analysis are independence and identity, the dangers of technology, the dangers of totalitarian regimes and lust for power, and the control of truth and mind. The chosen themes cover freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to equality.

Harrison Bergeron was written by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. in 1961. The satirical short story was one of many pieces Vonnegut wrote before he passed away in 2007. His political and military past influenced Vonnegut's writing. During the Second World War, Vonnegut was captured by the Germans and held as a prisoner in Dresden. The trauma and brutality of war are portrayed in several of Vonnegut's literary works in the aftermath of the war, the novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* in particular (Klinkowitz 4). In an essay by Benjamin Reed, he claims that Vonnegut is one of the most influential American writers from the latter half of the twentieth century (45). Further, Reed argues that *Harrison Bergeron* is an important read among youths due to Vonnegut's "hyperbolic diagnosis of a sharp decline in American intellectualism… during the era in which television replaced popular literature as our primary medium of diversion" (45). Reed exemplifies qualities such as individualism, creativity, empathy, and basic cognition (45). In *Kurt Vonnegut's America,* Jerome Klinkowitz praises Vonnegut's writing style. Klinkowitz claims that Vonnegut's writing not only pleases people but makes them feel better about life, no matter the circumstance. This is due to his "narratives constructed as jokes, carefully setting a tension… and timing it just right (4). Klinkowitz makes an analogy between mice scavenging for food and humans looking for answers. As an author, Klinkowitz claims that Vonnegut provides answers when they are valid, but when there are no answers, Vonnegut "gently shows us how we've been wasting time and energy, worrying about nothing at all (4).

Harrison Bergeron has taken the right to equality to another level. While citizens should have equal rights and opportunities, it should not be carried out by force. Vonnegut writes, "They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else" (Par. 1). The

short story's setting is 2081. The level of complete equality among the citizens is due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th amendments to the Constitution, in addition to "the unceasing vigilance of the agents of the United States Handicapper General (Par. 1). Equality is constructed through various handicaps. If you are beautiful, you wear a mask. If you are strong, you wear canvas bags with birdshot. If you have above-normal intelligence, you wear a radio transmitter in your ear, sending out sharp noises every twenty seconds to prohibit smart people from taking unfair advantage of their brains. As a result, the weakest link is created as the new normal. Freedom of speech is limited in the short story. Early on, we are told that George and Hazel's fourteen-year-old son Harrison has been arrested by the H-G men. Later, we find out that Harrison was arrested on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. The act of arrest on the grounds of plotting against the government is similar to the actions conducted by a totalitarian regime, where the motto "my way or the highway" is executed. The nonexistence of freedom of speech is also depicted towards the end of the short story when Harrison is shot dead by Handicapper General Diana Moon Glampers. Though Harrison intends to claim the throne as the new emperor, the act of execution on the grounds of rebellion amplifies the level of governmental control conducted by the government.

The issue of freedom of privacy is less explicit than the other two. However, some elements hint towards a supervised and controlled existence. When Hazel suggests that George take some of his handicaps off to ease the weight on his shoulders, George refuses even though they are in the safety of their own house. His reasoning is the penalty of "two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball…" (Vonnegut, par. 27) he takes out. A question to be asked is how the government found out that Harrison was plotting against them. Harrison is depicted as a highly intelligent person. For the government to find out about his plans, it is highly plausible that there was some surveillance behind it. Lastly, when the short story was written in 1961, the United States had twenty-three amendments to the Constitution. In 2081, it had at least 213 amendments, meaning there have been 190 amendments in 120 years. In addition, the short story specifies that the three amendments mentioned above involved the ruling of equality. It does not specify what the prior 188 amendments ruled or if there are others following the 213th amendment. This indicates a strong totalitarian rule with a limited amount of freedom.

I will focus on three literary elements in analyzing *Harrison Bergeron*: characterization, setting, and theme. The characters are characterized through the absence of description. One of the only things the reader is told is which handicaps the characters carry or if they are spared

of handicaps due to average. The handicaps the reader is made aware of are intelligence, beauty, and strength. The characterization through the handicaps amplifies superficial qualities, excluding qualities such as morals and kindness. The setting is limited to two settings: the living room and the television screen. I will be primarily concerned with how the setting can be seen in Vonnegut's social criticism of the mass media, where television, in particular, is stupefying collective creativity and intelligence. The short story presents multiple themes. However, the themes in focus will be those that amplify democratic awareness. Themes such as the power of the media, the dangers of a totalitarian government, and equality and individuality.

1.3 Structure

This thesis is structured in five chapters. The current chapter reveals the purpose and aim of the study, as well as an introduction to the two literary texts and their authors. The justification of the chosen literary work will also be included, and how it is meant to accommodate the purpose of democratic knowledge. Chapter two aims to bridge dystopian literature and democratic principles and values. It consists of the theoretical background and the benefits of using literature in the classroom and interdisciplinary work in school. In chapter three, I present a literary analysis of the short story *Harrison Bergeron.* A study conducted twice in two of my practicum sessions will also be presented as an example of working with the short story in school. I will elaborate on why my study went well in third-year upper secondary school and almost failed in eighth-grade lower secondary school. Chapter four consists of a literary analysis of the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Further, the chapter includes a tentative didactic teaching plan on how I would implement the novel in my teaching. The literary analysis in chapters three and four focuses on the elements of freedom of speech, privacy, and the right to equality. The literary elements I will focus on in my analysis are setting, characterization, and theme. The two chapters also contain justifications and reasoning for my didactic choices. Finally, chapter five contains the concluding remarks of my thesis. In addition, I will include self-reflection on my study and how it affected the way I planned my tentative teaching plan.

2 Educating for Democracy through Dystopian Fiction

2.1 Dystopian Fiction

In *The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell,* Claeys argues that dystopian fiction is a fictional portrayal of "a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand, or as a satire of utopian aspirations which attempts to show up their

fallacies" (107), or in simpler words, a world we must make sure to avoid due to religious or political tyranny. Claeys argues that dystopian fiction, in many instances, is sharply critical of the societies the author reflects (107). Political dystopias can help teachers educate pupils on the correlation between social development and political rule. The events and social climate at the time the text is being written, is highly likely to affect a writer both consciously and unconsciously. As a result, dystopian fiction often represents the values, ideas, and trends of that time. Therefore, dystopian fiction can be used as a road map into the historical and political values, issues, and ideas of the past. With *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an example, Booker claims in *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide* that the novel "refers most directly to the oppressive Stalinist regime then in power in Russia, but it echoes Hitler's German Nazi regime in numerous ways as well" (213). Orwell has written in a statement that the novel functions as "a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have already partly been realized in Communism and Fascism." (Claeys, 123).

The opposite of dystopia is the euphoric universe of utopia. In the utopian genre, sociopolitical institutions, individual relationships, and norms are perfectly organized and fantasized (Fitting, 135). According to Fitting, in *Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction,* the shift from a dominated utopian demand to dystopian fiction occurred around the first half of the twentieth century (139). Fitting claims that the change was due to "Social upheaval and the negative reactions to the prospect of socialism at the dawn of the twentieth century played an important role in the turn from utopia" (139). The Russian Revolution of 1917 is argued to have contributed to the rise of the dystopian genre, among others, such as the First World War and the Great Depression (Fitting, 140). Other characteristics of dystopian fiction are a place where individuality has been eradicated (Claeys, 118) and "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space" (Fitting, 135). The first characteristic is highly overt in Vonnegut's *Harrison Bergeron,* where individuality is obliterated by an absolute demand for equality among all citizens. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an example of an author depicting a society in considerable detail, time, and space. The city of Oceania is described in detail, down to the mud pounds on the road and the vegetation in the forest. A third characteristic of dystopian fiction is the use of satire. The element of equality in *Harrison Bergeron* amplifies this characterization. The short story satirizes the mistaken notions of equality and "the American definition of freedom as the greatest good to the smallest number" (Hattenhauer, 391). The exaggeration of equality, where the phrase "survival of the

fittest" is replaced with "as strong as the weakest link," manifests the ridicule of the sought-perfect ideal.

2.2 Freedom of Speech, Privacy, and the Right to Equality

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway, Article 98 states, "All people are equal under the law. No human being must be subject to unfair or disproportionate differential treatment" (Lovdata). Article 98 safeguards the right to equality in all aspects of the word. Religious beliefs, skin color, gender, social class, or any other differences that in the past and plausible future have caused discrimination or hatred. In the core curriculum of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, there is a section called *Human Dignity.* This section states that "all pupils shall be treated equally, and no pupil is to be subjected to discrimination." (Par. 3). Further, the section states that "we may all experience that we feel different and stand out from the others around us. Therefore, we need acknowledgment and appreciation of differences." (Par. 4). To grow up with fundamental human rights, safeguarded by law in institutions such as the school, heightens the chance of passing the same values on to the next generation. The goal is to create an environment where the principle of equality becomes an unconsciously self-evident state of mind. To achieve this goal, the school must educate the pupils in democratic knowledge and awareness. By integrating democratic education into various subjects and in multiple ways, such as textbooks and novels, pupils are more likely to acquire democratic awareness both implicitly and explicitly.

Article 100 in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway states, "There shall be freedom of expression… Everyone shall be free to speak their mind frankly on the administration of the State and any other subject whatsoever" (Lovdata). The word "shall" in the first sentence implies a vagueness. However, it is specified in the same paragraph that one can be held liable by law if "this can be justified in relation to the grounds for freedom of expression" and further, "Such legal liability shall be prescribed by law" (Lovdata). The wording of Article 100 allows prosecution regarding issues such as hate speech. Nevertheless, it does signify the need for trust in the judiciary. The section *Democracy and Participation* in the Norwegian core curriculum states, "Participating in society means respecting and endorsing fundamental democratic values, such as mutual respect, tolerance, individual freedom of faith and speech, and free elections" (Par. 1). As teachers, the promotion and endorsement of freedom of speech is important. However, it can be challenging due to the pupil's cognitive maturity or individual

opinions, such as hateful opinions. However, the role of the teacher is to educate pupils on how to express themselves respectfully. In addition, immature statements should be disregarded as groundless and instead amplify the positive, respectful statements.

Article 102 in the Norwegian Constitution states, “Everyone has the right to the respect of their privacy and family life, their home and their communication. Search of private homes shall not be made except in criminal cases” (Lovdata). To feel safe in one’s own home should not be a privilege but rather a matter of course. A home is a place to feel at peace, recharge, and grow. Modern technology can be seen as a threat to the right to privacy. This is due to hacking or tracking devices such as Google Home, smartphones, and computers. To be made aware of the issue of modern technology is essential. A teacher can help pupils make intelligent and conscious choices in this regard. Regarding freedom of privacy, under *Democracy and Participation* in the core curriculum states, “School shall provide the pupils with the opportunity to participate in and learn what democracy means in practice” (Par. 1). In a school setting, freedom of privacy entails knowledge about rights in respect of their privacy, home, and communication. In addition, it involves the right to set individual boundaries. Individual boundaries regarding subjects such as personal space, belongings, and body. To learn what freedom of privacy means in practice is to know about our individual rights in society.

2.3 Dystopian Fiction in the Norwegian Classroom

There are many reasons why dystopian fiction should be taught in school. One of them is the popularity of dystopian fiction among the youth. If a teacher is eager to have its pupils read, choosing a genre they are likelier to enjoy is highly beneficial. In the article *36 Best Dystopian Novels Everyone Should Read* by Carolyn Quimby, two of the novels have won the Pulitzer Prize award and Nobel Prize award, and over half of the novels are national bestsellers, worldwide bestsellers, or *New York Times* bestsellers. According to Danny McLoughlin, the first book in *The Hunger Games* tetralogy spent over one hundred weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list (Par. 1). The quality stamp of being a bestseller implies to a reader that something is worth exploring. Alex Campbell asks why dystopian fiction continues to grow in popularity among today’s teenagers in his article *Why is dystopian fiction still so popular?* A part of his answer to the question is the response from a sixteen-year-old girl called Ellen. Her answer is, "It's the way the characters are oppressed and have to fight to get their voices heard – that's how you can feel as a teenager, silenced and unable to really express yourself." (Par. 4). Ellen’s

reasoning is interesting. Her focus is solely on the individual's reading experience, not on the politics or the literary elements, but on how it makes her feel and how she can relate.

In *Litterær forståelse,* Åsmund Henning writes, "Reading literature is an aesthetic experience that means something to the individual reader" (11). When the text and the reader meet, a new world is created, which has never before existed or ever will exist in the same way again (Henning, 11). Further, he writes that literature "gives us language and a way to structure objects, thoughts, and events" (12). In other words, the reader interprets the text through their "glasses" of perception. In the case of Ellen, her literary experience with dystopian fiction might have helped her structure or reflect upon the feeling of not being heard. Her glasses of perception made her relate to the sense of oppression. Reading about someone who fights the same struggles as oneself and seeing how they tackle the challenge might be soothing. The fresh perspective from the text and relatability might give her the courage to speak her truth. Though the oppression of being a teenager is much less severe than being oppressed by a totalitarian government, the feeling of relatability might encourage a desire to learn more about the oppression inflicted by totalitarian governments.

Throughout Vg2 and Vg3 of Norwegian high school, there are a few literary competence aims the pupils are meant to master in the English program subject. In the second year, pupils are meant to be able to "read and use different types of texts in English as a basis for their own language learning and academic reflection" and "analyze and interpret fictional texts in English, including self-chosen texts" (English 1). These competence aims include grammatical language learning, reflection, and text analysis. In the third year, pupils are meant to "demonstrate independent reflection and critical thinking when reading and discussing different types of texts" and be able to "interpret and discuss some types of fictional texts in English considering their historical and cultural contexts" (English 2). Regarding the competence aims required in both school years, a teacher can easily facilitate an interdisciplinary collaboration between English literacy teaching and Social Science democracy teaching. Independent reflection and critical thinking depend on the reader's comprehension of the text. Henning calls the act of reading the act of understanding. He claims that "to read literature is important because it helps the reader understand both him or her and the world better" (12). In the context of the competence aims, dystopian fiction facilitates linguistic, political, historical, and individual learning and growth.

To fulfill the competence aims above, a teacher is dependent upon choosing a text that invites reflection and critical thinking, analysis of intriguing literary elements, and motivates to further reading. In *Fra sokkel til klasserom*, Vestli claims that "an important criterion in choosing texts, including a certain canonical perspective, is that the texts should illustrate central tendencies and phenomena in life in the target language country, which will contribute to making the country's culture, society and history come alive" (14). While the previous curriculum, LK06, specified that teachers had to choose texts from English-speaking countries, the 2020 revision requires text in the English language. This offers a broader range of linguistic and cultural diversity. According to Henning, "A teacher's task is to make the pupils familiar with a great variety of novels. It will help pupils build up an arsenal of texts that will provide them with great literary experience" (143). The literary experience will help the pupils learn to see the world from a standpoint different from their own (Carlsen, 210).

Norway has become a multicultural society with a multitude of norms, values, and morals. Integrating classroom diversity into teaching can be challenging due to opposing opinions and beliefs. Literary texts are especially suited for such a task because they do not contain a definite conclusion. Pupils can read the text through their perspective "glasses". There is no right or wrong. A diversity in point of view, reliability, and analysis is welcomed and often preferable. It opens for discussion, reflection, and, in my opinion, engagement. However, a motivated pupil is dependent upon a literate and enthusiastic teacher. Henning claims that "[i]f the teacher is not a literary person with textual competence and [does not have the] ability to enjoy literary experiences, including organized reflection, it will be difficult to create enthusiasm in the classroom" (77). Analytic work can be grueling when perceived as pointless (Henning, 77). While there is no empirical data to support Henning's claim above, the precondition of literacy proficiency when teaching text analysis goes without saying that proficiency is required in any teaching subject.

Like in the past, there are issues of great concern in today's society. Some are global warming, terrorism, epidemics, military conflicts, and rapid technological progress. Issues that pupils might fear or want answers to. These issues are typical subjects in dystopian fiction. By using dystopian fiction such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* pupils may learn about the author's fears about society and the future and compare the novel to their fears based on the society we live in today. According to Claeys, Orwell feared that "intellectuals in the socialist movement had been corrupted by power-worship, and hence would not function as capable or morally honest leaders

in any new socialist society." (119). Untrustworthy leaders in our time are a fathomable fear. Presidents of our time lie, encourage violence and racism, start wars, and commit genocide. Their actions make you wonder how the future will play out. How will it affect our lives? These questions are questions dystopian fiction often conveys an answer to. The answer does seldom have a happy ending. However, it does portray a society democratic citizens want to avoid. In addition, if one were to use excerpts from a novel or divide the novel into themes, dystopias often depict moralistic quality, which could provide a possible answer. Other media, such as comics and films, could be used in the classroom with the dystopian text. The use of different media allows for in-depth work on the chosen topic. It will enable analytic work where pupils are meant to analyze both the novel and the other media and possibly seek out differences or similarities. Finally, it might help pupils who are weary of reading a full-length novel to use other media to access the topic using a different approach.

2.4 Democratic Awareness and Education

According to Glaeser et al. in *Why does democracy need education,* as seen across countries, democracy, and education are highly correlated (77). One of their reasons is that "better-educated nations are more likely both to preserve democracy and to protect it from coups" (94). They reason that educated people are better able to acquire new information, learn, and understand. In addition, they are also better able to express their knowledge, persuade, and inform (Glaeser et al., 82). Learning how to behave democratically is important to become active, formed citizens. According to Crick, this entails treating all citizens as worthy of equal respect, regardless of being unequal in status or talent. All opinions are to be respected to a varying degree. Varying degrees, such as hate speech and similar statements, cannot be judged of equal worth ("Democracy" 5). However, allowing free speech and hearing the pupil out is essential. If one cannot respect the pupil's opinions, it will, in my opinion, cause more harm to dismiss the pupil than to hear them out.

As a teacher, one should try to see where the pupil is coming from instead of shying away from unwanted statements. Under the section *Human Dignity* in the core curriculum, it says, "Human beings are vulnerable and make mistakes. Forgiveness, charity and solidarity are necessary principles for the growth and development of human beings" (Par. 5). To have an open-ended discussion might help the teacher to center the pupil back into a democratic unity. Further, the core curriculum states, "When the voices of the pupils are heard in school, they

will experience how they can make their own considered decisions. Such experiences have a value in the here and now, and prepare the pupils for becoming responsible citizens in society" (Democracy and Participation, par. 4). The educational setting facilitates seamless information exchange through social participation (Glaeser et al., 82), and is, therefore, a perfect place to learn democratic behavior.

In today's multicultural society, pupils must learn that all can be active citizens, on the condition that all must mutually respect the equal rights of fellow citizens, within a regulatory legal order that protects, defines, and limits those rights (Crick, "Democracy 4). The idea of 'democracy' today in the countries influenced by the US and European political ideas is "the fusion of the idea of the power of the people and the idea of legally guaranteed individual rights" (Crick, "Democracy" 4). The multitude of beliefs and religions that may occur in a classroom depends on the democratic idea of mutual respect in beliefs, culture, religion, and way of life. The democratic idea in the classroom correlates to the democratic idea in society. It is based on the belief in human rights, freedom of the press and public debate, free and fair elections, institutional procedures protected by law, and established procedures to change the law (Crick, "Democracy" 5) (Crick, "Democracy" 8). According to Glaeser et al., a "variety of evidence shows a positive connection between education and civic engagement". Through participation in areas such as the school paper or student council, pupils are exposed to respectfully participating in the press and freedom of speech. Further, election to the student council demonstrates a free and fair election, where the majority vote is the final vote. While the teacher should make the pupils aware of their democratic participation, a lot of the civic engagement and coexistence in the school setting results in implicit learning of democratic values. Democratic awareness and education require a variety of ways of learning. Achieving this through reading dystopian fiction is not necessarily better than through a textbook. It is simply one of many ways pupils should be made aware and educated on democracy.

2.5 Dystopia and Democracy

Dystopian fiction can teach democratic values through the political content or morals of the text, which is typical for dystopian fiction. The political content, or the political events that may have inspired the literary work, can contextualize the novel to historical events. As mentioned earlier, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was inspired by the cruelty, injustice, and falsification of truth during the Spanish War, World War 2, and the Vietnamese War. Orwell used his personal

experiences as inspiration to fulfill his desire to make "political writing art" and convey his worry about totalitarian ideas. As a result, the novel not only refers to political events in the past, but also depicts political messages that are relevant today. This is apparent in the earlier mentioned *Huffington Post* article *High School Students Reading 1984 See A Mirror, Not Science Fiction* by Rebecca Klein. Several aspects of *1894* depict democratic threats happening today. Democratic threats such as the manipulation of truth or facts, never-ending military conflicts, and technological omnipresence. According to Hattenhauer, Vonnegut satirizes the mistaken notions of equality. In addition, "the American definition of freedom as the greatest good to the smallest number", where "the American myth is that only in a class society can everyone have an equal chance for achieving the greatest economic inequality" (391). In a classroom setting, it would be interesting to oppose the Norwegian class society and the American class society. While the two nations share many similarities, the Norwegian democracy has managed to equalize equality regarding wealth and class to a far greater extent than the American democracy.

Second, dystopian fiction can not only teach pupils about democracy as a constitution but also help pupils reflect upon the democracy in our Norwegian society. When reading dystopian fiction such as *1984* or *Harrison Bergeron,* pupils are exposed to the worst-case scenario of totalitarian regimes, a scenario quite the opposite of Norwegian society. The juxtaposition of the two worlds might illuminate the democratic benefits of Norwegian society, which we often take for granted. In the *NRK* article *Avslører den mest typisk norske verdien* by Mari Aftret Mørtvedt, sociologist Harald Eia refers to the World Values Survey, and states that the most common Norwegian value is independence. In the same article, social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen states that the need for independence "gives a strong sense of the right to choose one's own life because rights are considered more important than duties" (Mørtvedt). The gift of independence and the opportunity to make independent choices are values that are easy to take for granted. As youths, it is understandable that a way of life, which to them has always been, falls under the virtue of ignorance. In the article mentioned above, Eia states that he wants people "to start wondering about the society we live in, and what makes us in Norway so special. The rest of the world envies us, and we have no idea how we did it. What a strange arrangement!" (Mørtvedt). Eia's suggestion implies the need for democratic awareness and self-reflection. His reasoning might be that ignorance facilitates growth in the wrong direction. An example is the growth of private institutions in Norway, such as hospitals, over the public ones. The result is health benefits to those who can afford the extra cost.

In modern democracy, it is essential to be aware of populism, which is the simplification of democracy (Crick, "Democracy" 9). Crick states that politicians in a modern democracy must be mindful of the danger of simply aiming to flatter and follow public opinion when it appears to have adverse long-term public interests or the common good ("Democracy" 8). As democratic citizens, we must separate egoistic desires and wants from the right path for society. To become an unselfish citizen can be challenging. However, a well-functioning democracy needs virtues such as morality (Crick, "Democracy" 8). It is important to learn that what benefits society will benefit the individual in return through various institutions. An example is tax payment and fees. Glaeser et al. assert that "democratic regimes offer weak incentives to a wide base of potential supporters, while dictatorships offer strong incentives to a narrower base" (94). The strong incentive to a narrow base is often clearly depicted in dystopian fiction and can be a nice way to initiate awareness of democratic processes. Society-wide support for democracy is increased by education since democracy relies on people with high participation benefits for its support (Glaeser et al., 94). Debates on tax payments and fees are interesting subjects to discuss in the classroom. It will help the pupils reflect upon the subject and create awareness of what taxes do for society. Another subject that is interesting to discuss in the classroom is freedom of speech. To what extent does the freedom of speech allow free speech? Are there any limitations? What are your thoughts on actions such as the burning of the Koran, drawing caricatures of Mohammed, or Zionists chanting "gas the Jews"? These subjects are complex and are not intended to have the pupils conclude with an answer but to start a thinking process of right and wrong and what democracy is in real life.

Dystopian fiction will occasionally depict populist leaders. This can be used to refer to real-life populist leaders. Recently, wars have been initiated by populist leaders who gained power through democratic procedures. Crick asserts that it is a "bad mistake to assume that all dictatorships were and are unpopular, even if in our eyes their leaders subvert political compromises and individual liberties by appealing to the masses against traditional institutions and restraints" ("Democracy" 6). Adolf Hitler is an example of such a leader. Hitler was an eloquent speaker with a toxic political ideology of radical totalitarian racism, nationalism, and anti-democratic populism. Hitler alienated the Jews by blaming them for the German defeat in World War One and fueling the conspiracy theory that Jews were seeking world domination (Overbye). In pre-war times, desperate times equal the need for someone to blame, and the one to blame is the one who stands out. The desire for one homogenous type is evident in *Harrison*

Bergeron and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While the Nazis praised the Aryan race, Vonnegut depicts absolute equality. The populistic General, Diana Moon Glampers, has created a society where most citizens are dumbed down to prefer the rigid rule of total equality. This is apparent when Hazel and George Bergeron express their animosity towards how things were before the Equality Act. Their loyalty is evident despite the execution of their son for rebelling against the government. Orwell depicts similar traits. All citizens are put into a social class, and interaction among the different classes is considered suspicious and advised against. The slightest sign of uproar or heterogenous act is struck down.

2.6 Interdisciplinary Teaching

Interdisciplinary teaching is a requirement in Norwegian schools. This is stated in the core curriculum of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The section states that the interdisciplinary topics are "based on prevailing societal challenges which demand engagement and effort from individuals and local communities, nationally and globally" (Par. 1). One of the interdisciplinary topics the school shall facilitate learning in is democracy and citizenship (Lines 1). One of the goals is for pupils to "learn about the relationship between actions and consequences" (Par. 1). Dystopian fiction is an excellent genre to teach pupils about the relationship between actions and consequences. In many ways, dystopian fiction conveys the consequence of no action or the consequence of taking democracy for granted. It portrays the worst-case scenario of power-hungry leaders with an interest in the greater good for the smallest number. Under Democracy and Citizenship, it states that the school shall provide the pupils with proficiency and knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy, with a focus on its values and rules. In addition, prepare them for participating in democratic processes (Par. 1). The goal is to "stimulate the pupils to become active citizens, and give them the competence to participate in developing democracy in Norway" (Par. 2). Further it states that "the teaching and training shall give the pupils knowledge and skills to face challenges in accordance with democratic principles" and "learn why democracy cannot be taken for granted and understand that it must be developed and maintained" (Par. 3). As dystopian fiction often depicts a worst-case society with totalitarian regime, it can be used to illustrate a contrasting regime to the Norwegian democracy.

The subject of Social Science has several competence aims, one of which is to facilitate democratic learning and awareness. Pupils are expected to "assess how the exercise of power

affects people on the individual and societal level", "explain the foundations of human rights and explore and give examples of violations of human rights, nationally and globally", and "assess the causes of and initiatives that can be taken to prevent racism, discrimination, and hate speech, and discuss the boundaries for freedom of speech". As previously mentioned, the boundaries for freedom of speech are an important and interesting subject to discuss in the classroom. While *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Harrison Bergeron* depict a society with the non-existence of freedom of speech, the extremes between Norwegian society and dystopia allow a teacher to exploit the leap in political governance. The section Basic Skills, in Social Science, states "Using reading skills in social science also refers to their ability to reflect on how texts with varying perspectives can express different thought processes and arguments" (Par. 3). The process of achieving this skill is a perfect example of why the two subjects' social science and English work well together as interdisciplinary subjects. Vestli claims, "By using literary texts, the pupil will be introduced to authentic language in different genres, as well as cultural discussions" (6). Through reading literary texts, pupils are exposed to an abundance of different thought processes and arguments. In a dystopian context, pupils are exposed to the political perspective of the oppressor and the oppressed. In addition, an interdisciplinary approach facilitates the implementation of time-consuming competence aims in English and Social Science. This will allow a teacher more time to go in-depth within the assignment and ensure all pupils understand the material.

3 *Harrison Bergeron* with study

Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut is a satirical short story with political depiction of total equality under a totalitarian regime. Its length (six pages), humor, political content, and interesting angle on equality makes it an excellent dystopian text to use in school. The short story allows a political and literacy focus, perfect for interdisciplinary teaching. In addition, the short story's totalitarian violation of individuality and freedom of speech designates the text as an excellent example of drawing correlations between democratic principles and values and the lack thereof. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part consists of an analysis of the short story, focusing on the literary elements: setting, characterization, and theme. The second part consists of a study I conducted during my fourth and fifth practicum. I will go through my intentions and goals, the methodology, produce a data analysis of the collected data, and finally give some concluding thoughts.

3.1 Analysis of Literary Elements in *Harrison Bergeron*

3.1.1 Setting

The short story *Harrison Bergeron* is set in 2081, 120 years in the future time of being written. The time period of the story is between fifteen to thirty minutes. The story swaps between two settings: Hazel and George Harrison's living room and the television screen, showing dancing ballerinas and a news bulletin. The setting is set through the limited space created by the living room and the television screen. The depiction of the setting can represent a lack of freedom of privacy. A living room is supposed to be welcoming and warm. Instead, it is depicted as uncomfortable and intrusive by the presence of George's many handicaps. When Hazel suggests that George take some of the lead balls out of the canvas bag around his neck, George is unwilling to do so. His reply to Hazel is that the penalty for conducting such an act is "two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball" (Vonnegut, 2). George's response depicts a feeling of being watched. It was as if the H-G men could walk through the door at any given moment to examine whether George was abiding by the rules. She reasons that George is not competing with anyone at home. He just "set around" (Vonnegut, 2). Hazel's comment sets a tone of nothingness. They go to work, then come home and sit around watching the television. The only time one of them leaves the room is when George goes to the kitchen to fetch a can of beer (Vonnegut, 5). In total, the handicaps, TV-watching, and beer-drinking depict a depressive home atmosphere.

The News Studio is linked to the living room through the television. The intrusion of the television and the limited personal space projects the feeling of invasion of privacy. Having the main characters in one of the two settings watch the other characters creates a sense of being observed. It is as if Vonnegut is trying to convey a message. According to Reed, Vonnegut's social criticism is aimed at the consumerist imperatives of mass media, where television, in particular, is an existential threat due to censorship and the vitality of our collective creativity and intelligence (50). If this is true, Vonnegut might be using the act of watching television to depict the emptiness of Hazel and George's life. The television is stupefying humanity into nothingness. The shutdown of the news bulletin after Harrison is killed might be Vonnegut's way of criticizing censorship. The alteration of truth and transparency in the media is a consistent threat to democratic values. It is a way for totalitarian regimes to keep their citizens oblivious to their actions.

3.1.2 Characterization

The characters in *Harrison Bergeron* are characterized through the absence of description. Neither character is given any distinct individual traits that represent their personality. Instead, they live in a society of absolute equality. Equality is introduced by the narrator: “The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else” (Vonnegut, 1). Vonnegut inhibits inherited abilities that are known to grant individuals benefits in life to achieve equality. Benefits that could serve you in situations of work life, love life, or grant you a physical advantage. Abilities such as intelligence, beauty, and strength. To inhibit these qualities, Vonnegut uses handicaps such as face masks, earpieces, and canvas bags with bird shots. The presence of a handicap indicates a suppressed quality. The satirization of a society where everyone is equal in every way is absurd in multiple ways. Initially, the question of how a government has convinced an entire society to abide by its rules comes to mind. If a government succeeds, is it conceived through fright, loyalty, or both? A second thought is, how is it feasible? Vonnegut's society indicates that a person is only as strong as the weakest link. If this goes for strength and intelligence, how can it be viable in work relations and economic and societal growth?

In a letter to Darryl Hattenhauer, Vonnegut admits that he might have unconsciously written the short story about his high school trauma. Vonnegut writes, “I can’t be sure, but there is a possibility that my story “*Harrison Bergeron”* is about the envy and self-pity I felt in an over-achievers’ high school in Indianapolis quite a while ago now. Some people never tame those emotions” (Hattenhauer, 388). This statement leads to the question of whether *Harrison Bergeron* was unconsciously written to illustrate a dystopia of what political order would look like when motivated by envy. Or to deal with an unconscious bitterness by living out a naughty dream of equality in “every which way”. High school can be a brutal period in a teen’s life, where feeling superior to the league of inherited youth is normal. The unfairness of the weight in inhibited qualities and abilities is both ruthless and a way of life since the dawn of time. The saying “survival of the fittest” applies to all species and has been a determinator of life and procreation. However, Vonnegut satirizes the absurdity and lack of feasibility of a society with total equality. While the movement for the right to equality is essential in every democratic society, I think the short story equally projects the necessity of individual growth and diversity. This is why the short story is a perfect literary piece to implement in teaching in secondary and

upper secondary schools. The pupils are right in the middle of competitive ruthlessness. To have the pupils reflect upon the absurd idea of total equality might help them see the bigger picture of individuality.

3.1.2.1 Hazel

To bring the characters to life, Vonnegut uses elements such as speech, name, and handicaps. Hazel, for instance, is the picture of perfect average. Our first introduction to Harrison's mother is her name. Hazel is so average that even her name is the color between brown and blue, which many regard as plain and boring. Our second introduction is her lack of handicaps, which tells us a great deal about her. Hazel does not inhibit any of the inhibited abilities Vonnegut regards as handicap-worthy. She is said to have average intelligence. However, if her intelligence is equivalent to George's handicapped intelligence, the wording "average" is unfit. Through conversations with George, it comes across as if Hazel is cognitively disabled. When George responds as a figure of speech, "You can say that again", Hazel takes George literally and repeats her initial comment in the exact wording. Further, it only takes Hazel a few seconds to forget that she witnessed her son being murdered on television. The only evidence that is left of her grief is the tears on her cheeks.

Hazel is stripped of the abilities that might give a person an unfair advantage. In that sense, Hazel is naked, pure, the essence of the fundamental body. In some sense, Hazel could function as a modern Mother Teresa, with her unselfishness and empathic heart. For example, she is conscious of George's well-being. She is considerate of the announcer who, due to a severe speech impediment, can't finish his or her speech. Hazel says, "That's all right-" Hazel said of the announcer, "he tried. That's the big thing. He tried to do the best he could with what God gave him. He should get a nice raise for trying so hard" (Vonnegut, 3). Her consideration and how she roots the announcer is like a mother standing on a court field, rooting on her 5-year-old son. Hazel's motherliness is characterized through being Harrison's mother and her empathy for everyone else. It is, however, a sadness over the fact that she is unable to remember much of her son or process his death. It portrays some sort of irony of obviation. In relevance to envy, we learn, on page one, that Hazel is envious of the interesting noises going through George's head. Hazel's envy and "averageness" could, in some sense, reflect Vonnegut's self-esteem and being as a boy.

3.1.2.2 George

George and Harrison Bergeron are depicted as the essence of the strong male figure, both with multiple handicaps. The handicaps serve to prohibit an intelligence way above normal and physical strength. Similarly to Hazel, George cannot dwell upon his son's imprisonment or pay attention to his son's rebellion on television. Due to his handicapping earpiece, George's indifference is at the level of leaving the living room right in the middle of his son's rebellion to fetch a beer. Despite these handicaps and his son's situation, George does not want to go back to the way things were before equality, to "the dark ages". One cannot help but wonder where George's loyalty stems from. Is it faith in the new regime, has he given up, or does the handicapping earpiece prohibit him from thinking clearly? When Harrison has the capacity to reflect on the consequence of removing his handicaps, should he not have equal capacity to reflect on the violation of the handicaps?

On the last page of the short story, George tells Hazel to "Forget sad things", when she is crying over something sad. The comment indicates an attitude of ignorance is bliss. A quote from The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood says, "Ignorance is not the same as ignoring, you have to work at it" (53). Atwood's quote can be interpreted as ignoring as the act of choosing not to pay attention or do anything, while ignorance is not knowing. George's comment sounds like he has given up. It is like he does not mean to give up, but he can no longer remember what to work for or do, as if he is incapable of thinking about the reality of their situation. Although the story is somewhat motivated by Vonnegut's experience of feeling inadequate in school, ultimately, the story critiques the measures of producing equality by reducing people's talent. With George as an example, thus being depicted as a strong and intelligent man, the only abilities he is left with is the ability to be rational regarding the law and empathic towards Hazel when she is crying (Vonnegut, 5).

3.1.2.3 Harrison

Contrary to George, Harrison is unwilling to renounce his abilities. Harrison is depicted as a superhuman, buried in handicaps. However, Harrison also portrays dictator-like traits, which, on the other hand, paints him as undesirable. Harrison intends to end equality and rule when he escapes jail, claiming that "I am the emperor! Everyone must do as I say at once" (Vonnegut, 4). Seen in relation to Vonnegut's High School experience, his depiction of Harrison does, in many ways, resemble the cliche version of the popular sports junkie at school. The guy who is the loudest at parties, gets all the girls, and lives life with an abundance of benefits. Benefits

due to his looks and physical strength, as well as inherited abilities that he is granted through his DNA. From an outsider's point of view, this could feel unfair or undeserving. At the climax of the short story, Harrison is killed by handicapper General Diana Moon Glampers. Harrison's killing might depict that there are more important qualities to a person than beauty and strength, qualities such as good morals and kindness. The idea of complete equality to amplify inner qualities puts Harrison in a worse light. He is depicted as someone with an abundance of superficial qualities fighting the government to live out his best potential. He is the animal fighting for the survival of the fittest, and he is confident he will win.

From a political perspective, Harrison's killing depicts the ways of totalitarian regimes. Harrison is a boy who seeks to show others his true potential and who the government cannot control. His words and actions demonstrate that he is not scared of the consequences that the regime tries to impose on him. Instead of being dumbed down like his father and the rest of society, Harrison is dancing. Dancing in broad daylight, televised for the whole world to see. This makes Harrison extremely dangerous, as he could influence others to rebel and help them remember a world without handicaps. A world where you can dance and be joyful. By killing Harrison, Vonnegut might depict two things. The first is the ruthlessness of how totalitarian regimes act upon resistance. If Harrison is able to abolish equality and disrupt the peace, the Handicapper General and the others in the upper class might lose their power. Therefore, Harrison is extremely dangerous and must be eliminated. The second is by conveying how a martyr is born in totalitarian regimes. With small chances of success, Harrison is willing to sacrifice the safety of his life for his beliefs in a new world. The new world he is fighting for is a world with himself as the emperor, indicating that Harrison seeks his influence and power.

3.1.2.4 Diana Moon Glampers

Glampers does not appear to be wearing any handicaps. If it is due to Glampers sharing Hazel's intelligence or Glampers posing as an exception to equality, it is not mentioned. However, she can hunt and kill Harrison, indicating intelligence and drive. According to Huttenhauer, the short story satirizes "the American definition as the greatest good to the smallest number" (391). This could imply that Glampers represents the upper class, someone with power and influence. Or said differently, making her the puppeteer and the citizens her marionettes. When Harrison attempts to cease power, Glampers overpowers him with "a doble-barreled ten-gauge shotgun" (Vonnegut, 5) and kills him. However, Glampers does not stop with Harrison. She kills the ballerina who joined Harrison to be his empress and threatens the

musicians who followed his orders, projecting a classic dictator approach. Her actions have the effect of eliminating the governmental threat and displaying power. Silencing any potential threat to the government is common in totalitarian regimes. There is no such thing as freedom of speech. There is only support and loyalty towards the government. Showing the murder on television has the effect of broadcasting what happens to those who rebel, causing fright.

Glampers and Harrison depict dictator-like qualities, and the question of who the reader will likely sympathize with is complex. Glampers portrays the satirization of freedom as the greatest good to the smallest number. The character of Harrison depicts the unfairness and ruthlessness of High School popularity. However, due to Harrison being the character who is suppressed by being jailed and killed, he is likely to be the one sympathized with. Hattenhauer claims that while Glampers "apparently recalls the likes of John Wilkes Booth, proponent of slavery", Harrison "embodies a feudal society" (389). The question that arises is why Vonnegut has chosen to depict Harrison as the losing party, the one to receive the pity. This is if Harrison depicts Vonnegut's envy and self-pity in the over-achievers. The answer could be to appeal to the public demand. According to Hattenhauer, Vonnegut made a short story that appeared to "rehearse central tenets of the dominant culture's ideology" because he "could not have sold a story overtly sympathetic to leveling" (389). If this is true, it would not be the first time an author has hidden a secret message or moral in their story to appeal to the audience.

3.1.3 Theme

3.1.3.1 The Dangers of Totalitarian Regimes

Totalitarian regimes are known for their strict rule and restricted or lack of freedom. Claeys has outlined seven assumed main features of totalitarian regimes. The first is "a one-party state with hegemony over the secret police, and a monopoly over economic, cultural and informational sources" (119). The second is "a technological basis to centralized power, e.g., especially through the use of the media and surveillance techniques" (119). The third is "the willingness to destroy large numbers of domestic 'enemies' in the name of the goals of the regime, such as the Jews under the Nazis". The fourth is "the use of 'total terror' (an emphasis particularly associated with the work of Hannah Arendt) to intimidate the population and ensure complete loyalty" 119). The fifth is "the willingness of the regime to annihilate all boundaries between the individual and the party/state" (119). The sixth is "a 'totalist' philosophy or ideology which demands absolute loyalty and sacrifice, and the absolute submission of the citizen to the party/state, leaving no part of private life unpoliticized" (119-120). The seventh

is “a cult of leadership” (120). In this regard, the theme of totalitarian dangers is thematized through obedience, torture, and killing.

The goal is to achieve total government control among all American citizens. The torture of wearing handicaps that impede the ability to think or weight that prohibits strength and grace is dumbing down the citizens. As a result, the chance of resistance is reduced to a minimum. The obedience that totalitarian regimes demand is absolute. Absolute to the degree where the characters feel unsafe in the personal space of their living room. This indicates the non-existence of privacy, where the living room resembles a prison, and the television is viewed from the living room. According to Claeys, some of the main totalitarian features are “the willingness of the regime to annihilate all boundaries between the individual and the party/state” (119) and the demand for “absolute loyalty and sacrifice, and the absolute submission of the citizen to the party/state, leaving no part of private life unpoliticized” (119-120). The murder of Harrison and his ballerina depicts the brutality of not following orders. There was no arrest. No democratic trial. No freedom of speech. There was only a demand for absolute loyalty and the exhibition of power.

3.1.3.2 Equality versus Individuality

The theme of equality and individuality is thematized through the absurdity of equality in every way. The characters are reduced to bland versions of themselves, too afraid to show individuality or special attributes. Their blandness is depicted through inconsistent conversations and the ignorant act of watching mediocre television. Vonnegut is satirizing the mistaken notions of equality by creating an extreme version of a one-demanded average. Calling Hazel “perfectly average” is ironic since it is evident that she is not an average person. She is, in some sense, the weakest link. Harrison, on the other hand, is a complex individual. He is the only character who is motivated to put an end to equality and projects individual-like qualities. When we first learn of Harrison, we are told that H-G men took him away, but not on which grounds. Later, when the news reporter announces that Harrison has escaped jail, we are told that “he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government” (Vonnegut, 3). This indicates that Harrison never did anything wrong. He might have been jailed solely because of his superhuman qualities, being a threat to the government. If this were the case, then would not any person in his situation be filled with emotions of bitterness, hate, or retaliate the same injustice? However, Harrison might also function as a warning of what might happen if individuals were allowed to use their innate privileges for depraved ends or evil. An

interesting question is why Vonnegut has chosen to handicap some abilities but not others, qualities such as the ability to show empathy, courage, or justice. A possible answer could be that the handicapped qualities could solve political issues or damage the totalitarian government.

3.2 Study in Lower- and Upper Secondary School

3.2.1 Intention and Goal

My intention with the study was two-sided. The first is to gain experience and learn how to work with literature in school and work across disciplines in English and Social Science. The second is for the pupils to see that literary learning can be fun and educational. Reading is supposed to be a pleasurable and fun activity where learning happens implicitly. In Gro-Anita Myklevold's chapter *Working with Literature: Two Case Studies,* she argues that pupils "must be conscious of how they learn language best" (237). To achieve the consciousness this requires, teachers need to facilitate various exercises. Carlsen claims reading literature "serves the combined object of developing language skills and intercultural awareness" (210). This occurs through exposing pupils to real-life language in meaningful settings and facilitating proficiency in grammatical understanding, spelling, vocabulary, spelling, and general writing abilities (210). If reading is as beneficial as Carlsen claims, it is a shame that the pleasure of reading and reading skills among Norwegian children have declined to the degree the 2016 international survey indicates. Carlsen's claim of implicit learning has inspired me to learn more about how to educate pupils through reading literature. My goal is to help pupils regain the pleasure of reading. It would be a shame to miss out on all the magic and mystery literature has to offer.

3.2.2 Methodology

In my fourth- and fifth year practicum, I studied how to work with literature in Norway's English Foreign Language. My fourth-year practicum was held in an eighth grade in lower secondary school, and my fifth-year practicum was held in a third-year upper secondary school. The study was qualitative, and it sought to gain experience and knowledge regarding facilitating literacy proficiency and interdisciplinary work. According to Marielle Gleiss and Elin Sæther in *Forskningsmetode for lærerstudenter*, a qualitative study allows the researcher to adjust and adapt to unexpected turns of events that can occur throughout the study (30-31). This is necessary in a teaching setting when different aspects of the classroom dynamic might influence

the study. Further, Gleiss and Sæther claim that a qualitative method is well-suited to map, collect, and analyze non-numerical data (30-31). With "Dystopian literature, exemplified by *1984* and *Harrison Bergeron*, is a powerful didactic tool that illuminates the potential threats to democracy, thereby educating pupils about the importance of safeguarding democratic principles and values" as my thesis statement, I decided to include four different areas of working with literature to my teaching approach. Read, analyze, argue, and convey analytical discoveries. When the task was completed, the pupils were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding the assignment. The task was adjusted according to school level to facilitate the difference in ability. I chose *Harrison Bergeron* primarily because of its interesting take on equality, hoping it would create great reflections and discussions in class.

The first execution was at the eighth-grade lower secondary school. To conduct the study, I had access to four one-hour classes. In the first class, I introduced the assignment in front of the class. I told them what we would do, the purpose of the assignment, and the goal. To refresh their memory on how to analyze a short story, I used Nasjonal Digital Læringsarena's (NDLA) web page on *How to analyze a short story* as a method. The webpage has short individual videos that we watched on the blackboard. The videos informed how to analyze the literary elements of characterization, conflict, climax, narrator and point of view, setting, plot and structure, and theme. We went through the content of the video after each video. When all videos were watched, I informed the pupils that the link to the webpage was given access on Teams. This was in case the pupils needed to refresh their memory during the group work. Next, I handed out the short story *Harrison Bergeron* and a paper with a glossary list to begin the reading exercise. The words in the glossary were made of difficult words from the story and occurred chronologically according to the text found in Appendix 2.

Firstly, I read the first two pages of the story while they were asked to follow individually. While I read the first two pages, I stood in between the desks to create an intimate and present atmosphere. Next, the pupils were asked to read the following pages, two and two, with the person sitting beside them. While the pupils read out loud, I walked around the classroom. This was done to amplify my presence, make myself available, and gain control of what the pupils were doing and how far they were. By using observation as a method, Gleiss and Sæther claim that it opens to collecting data built on the idea of observing and registering human behavior, which further allows supplementary analysis of the observations (101). Finally, the pupils were asked to read the remaining page and a half individually. Since the pupils read at various speeds,

some finished before others. When a person was done with the short story, he or she was handed the task of beginning the group work of analyzing the story. If any of their partners were already done with the text, they were asked to join their group. The task is found in Appendix 1. The divide of the reading exercise was selected based on collecting as much data as possible.

In the second and third classes, the pupils worked on analyzing the text in groups. At the beginning of the second class, a few pupils needed a few minutes to finish the text individually. The task highlighted three aims. Interpret what you have found, argue your discoveries, and convey your discoveries through a presentation. Under "interpret", the pupils were asked eight questions based on the categories from NDLA's introduction videos on how to analyze a short story. Under "argue", I wrote an example to illustrate what was expected of them. In the last section, "convey", I gave them the options of using a PowerPoint, poster, and notes, in addition to other suggestions. All pupils chose PowerPoint. The groups consisted of three to four pupils and were made by me and my practicum teacher. This was due to some pupils being unable to cooperate. During the group work, I was active and walked around the classroom. This was done to make myself available, make conversations with the pupils, observe where they were in their work, and help them reflect on the text. My choice to implement group work for the task was based on Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, stated in Kitt Lyngsnes and Marit Rismark's textbook *Didaktisk Arbeid,* "Learning happens in interaction with others" (67). The perspective is based on the idea that "language is a tool for thinking" (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 67-68). The fourth class was initiated with fifteen minutes to finalize their presentation and thirty minutes to complete it. Each group was given five minutes for their presentations. After the presentations, the pupils were asked to answer a questionnaire, found in Appendix 3. The questionnaire was optional. Sixteen out of twenty-four answered. When they were finished, they were allowed to take a break.

The study was conducted in a very similar way in the third year at upper secondary school. I was allowed two double classes, equal four clock hours. The study contained the same reading exercise, followed by group work with interpreting, arguing, and conveying through a presentation. The task is found in Appendix 4. However, colored by the lack of success at my first attempt with the short story in lower secondary school, I was anxious and excited to give it another attempt at a higher level. Carlsen states, "Students' motivation to read will be influenced by their reading skills and previous reading experience" (211). With this in mind, I hoped their elevated reading skills would help their short story analysis. In addition, I made a

few differences to facilitate their skill level and made some adjustments to match my experience with the first attempt at the study. The difference was the lack of an introduction to analyze a short story. This was due to their teachers claiming that they had it under control and due to efficiency. Instead, after the reading exercise, I made time to summarize the short story in class. This was included to ensure a unified understanding of the story and to help those who needed repetition of the main elements.

Since my fifth practicum only consisted of five days, I knew our lack of relation might affect their willingness to raise their hand. Lyngsnes and Rismark claim that it is the teacher's responsibility to create suitable learning environments and develop positive relationships with the pupils (134). I gave a twist every time they raised their hand to motivate their participation in the summary. The twist was meant to lighten the mood, encourage participation, and introduce myself as welcoming and fun, with a professional focus. As seen in Appendix 4, the questions differed from those at the lower secondary school. This was done to facilitate the difference in competence level. In addition, in contrast to the first implementation of the study, I wanted to give the pupils different group questions. My intention was for the pupils to learn from each other. The groups were of four to five pupils, and they were given three to five minutes to complete the presentation. In case some of the groups finished before the others, I implemented a few questions for them to answer, called "if time". These questions were meant to help me in my study and add insight into their understanding of dystopian literature and democracy.

Throughout the study, I made choices that intertwined validity and reliability with the study. Reliability refers to the quality and consistency of the study. It examines if the study can be reproduced by other scientists or teachers, in addition to whether the data has been affected by the way it has been collected (Gleiss & Sæther, 202). Validity refers to the accuracy and quality of your measurements. It refers to how well the various aspects of the research project are connected (Gleiss & Sæther, 204). The questionnaire was included to maintain the study's reliability and the information it gave me. A questionnaire, as a method of collecting data in a qualitative study, can be used to provide a more extensive selection of knowledge from the participants or study object, knowledge such as the participant's experience or opinion (Gleiss & Sæther, 143). In the first question of the questionnaire, I asked what the pupils liked or disliked about the short story. My wish was for pupils to elaborate on their pros and cons of *Harrison Bergeron.* In question two, I asked about the reading exercise.

As teachers, it is essential to be aware of the variety of reading preferences among the pupils. Some might find it easier to follow a text if a teacher is reading, while they can follow independently. Some might find it easier to concentrate if they are reading quietly to themselves. Some might find it fun to read out loud, which motivates paying attention. Through question 2 in the questionnaire, I gained insight into the pupil's experience regarding the reading exercise. I saw the percentage in total for which reading exercise the majority of the pupils preferred. Based on Gleiss and Sæther's claim that how you word the questions is essential to the information you seek to collect (143), the questions were worded with the intent to be understandable and neutral and to encourage a complementary answer. The validity of the study was sought through conducting it twice. However, since the age gap turned out to be significant, eighth-grade secondary versus third-grade upper secondary, the validity is not as strong as it would have been if both studies were conducted at the same age. It did, however, portray the importance of choosing a level-appropriate text to achieve the best result.

3.2.3 Lower Secondary School

3.2.3.1 Data Analysis

In this section of my thesis, I will analyze the study based on the observations I made during the study and the pupils' answers to the questionnaire found in Appendix 3. As I mentioned earlier, the choice to answer the questionnaire was optional. Out of the twenty-six pupils in the eighth grade, twenty pupils answered the questionnaire. In the first question, I ask what they think of the short story and what they like or dislike about it. Out of the twenty who responded, four pupils responded exclusively positively. Their responses were, "It was an interesting story when I understood the story," "I liked it because I enjoy reading," "I liked the text, it was interesting," and "liked it." Five pupils responded that they thought the text was boring. Another four pupils found the text too hard, answering "I think it was too hard, so I didn't like it", "hard words", "the text was entertaining, although it was a lot of difficult words", and "I think the text was creative, it was a bit hard to read, but overall, it was a good text". Some of the remaining answers included "no comment", "I did not read it", "I did not think that much of it", or blank. The average response, which was that the short story was either boring or hard to read, coincides with my observations. Even though most of the pupils seemed to concentrate and pay attention to the reading exercise, most pupils had difficulty understanding the story. This is despite their use of the glossary list found in Appendix 2. I guess that most of the pupils who answered that the story was boring or that they did not like it were based on the difficulty of the text. This is because most of the pupils complained that the story was too difficult and

impossible to understand. Reading a text that mainly contains words one does not understand is demotivating and frustrating. Therefore, it is understandable that most pupils found it tedious or challenging.

The question regarding the reading exercise showed that three pupils preferred the teacher reading out loud. Their reasoning was “because it was easier”, “because the class was more chill then”, and “because then I don’t have to read”. Seven pupils preferred to read two and two. Some of their reasoning was “It was fun to read to a mate” and “I like to read out loud”. Further, nine pupils preferred to read individually. Their answer was “because I have more control” and “it’s easier to remember if I read myself”. In addition, one pupil preferred reading two and two and reading individually the best. The result from the questionnaire correlates with my observation. Though the pupils appeared to be silent while I read, many were lying on the desk or looking the other way and did not seem to pay attention to the story. However, some pupils sat at their desks and looked straight at me or the text, indicating that they were paying attention.

The second reading exercise, where the pupils read two and two, was completed within a reasonable timeframe as the first class's second half. Some pupils needed reminders to focus on their reading but were quick to continue when told to. The third reading exercise, where the pupils read individually, was completed at different times. The pupils read at varying speeds, and this affected the timeframe of the reading. Those who finished the short story were asked to begin the group work. This affected the volume in the classroom since some pupils were reading two and two while others were reading individually. However, the noise did not seem to play a negative factor to the exercise since almost half of the pupils answered that they preferred to read individually. All pupils finished reading the story in the middle of the second class.

The group work was conducted efficiently but not as in-depth as I had hoped. Their presentations portrayed a combination of good answers and a quick and half-correct answer. When asked to describe the short story's setting, all of the pupils gave a partial answer. Some answered, “the living room and the television” without further description, and some answered, “a world under a dictatorship of the government”. When asked to describe the theme of the short story, the pupils answered in varying degrees. Some answered, “Everyone being different is not always a positive thing”, or “Everyone is equal and those who are not will be handicapped

to fit in". Despite the short answers in the presentation, thirteen out of 20 answered that they had enough information to go into the group work. Two pupils answered blankly, two answered "I don't know", two stated that they were missing a lot, and one answered that "it was hard to start the presentation". In general, the critique of the task was that it was too hard, did not enough time, could have been done more creatively, and was boring. The four negative factors correlate with the lack of in-depth answers or the correctness of their presentations. The positive feedback was that the assignment was good; some learned new and difficult words, and one liked working in groups because he or she did not like to present individually.

3.2.3.2 Conclusion

My study in lower secondary school was affected by the early stage of my thesis. By this stage, I knew I wanted to write about how to work with literature in school, but I had not landed on the correlation between dystopian literature and democracy. This influenced the task and how I wrote the questions in the questionnaire, as those are less relevant to my thesis than the ones in the following study in upper secondary school. During the fifth-year practicum, I had a better picture of what I wanted to collect from my study. Further, through observation, the answers in the questionnaire, and conversation with my practicum teacher, it is evident that the text was too difficult for their skill level. The lack of motivation from some of the pupils was evidently and understandably affected by the feeling of not being good enough or not being able to understand despite hard effort. Not mastering a task can, to some, be experienced as embarrassing. The result of embarrassment can, therefore, result in a lack of effort. In addition, the time available for the task needed to be longer. I should have spent more time introducing how to analyze a short story. The web page does not carry enough information. Instead, I should have implemented time to analyze a section or question jointly with the whole class. Further, the presentations might have been more thorough if the pupils had more time during the group work. However, there is a fine line regarding the time the pupils need for a task. I believe they would have had enough time if they had done efficient work throughout the sessions available. However, since the task was too difficult for most of the pupils, many did not work as efficiently as they could have.

3.2.4 Upper Secondary School

3.2.4.1 Data Analysis

Similarly to the study at lower secondary school, the analysis of the study at upper secondary school will be based on my observations and the pupil's answers in the questionnaire found in

Appendix 5. Conversations with my practicum teacher will also be included. Out of the twenty-three pupils in class, nineteen answered the questionnaire. The remaining four were not present in class. As mentioned earlier, the implementation of the second attempt of the study was increasingly aimed at my thesis. The questions for the group work in Appendix 4 and the questionnaire in Appendix 5 both have a dystopian and democratic focus. Through observation, it was clear that the short story and task were more suited to the third-year level. All pupils were quiet during the reading exercise and seemed to concentrate on the task. They worked efficiently, to the extent that I had underrated their speed and capacity. Colored by the first attempt in the eighth grade being too challenging, I had made too few questions for the group work. The consequence was that one group finished their presentation at the end of the first double class. The remaining four groups finished during the first half of the second double class—the remaining time before the presentations was spent rehearsing.

My observation of the task being a greater success at a higher level was amplified in their response to the questionnaire. Most answers were positive to the task and several pupils produced relevant feedback to what they liked and preferred regarding the task. In the first question in Appendix 5, fourteen pupils answered that they enjoyed the text, three disliked the text, and two pupils answered neither nor. Those who enjoyed the text complemented its take on equality, the creativity of the writer, and the plot twist at the end. One pupil wrote, “I liked how it commented on today’s focus on equality. It was also refreshing to work with a post-modernism text. The text was also entertaining”. Another pupil wrote, “I think the text explores the consequences of extreme equality in a good way. It displays a future society and the dangers of the government taking complete control over their citizens”. Those who did not like the text argued that the text took the content way out of proportion, that the writing style was childish, and that the point was overemphasized. In the second question regarding the reading exercise, the answers varied greatly. Five pupils preferred the teacher reading out loud, responding that it created the opportunity to take notes simultaneously. Three pupils preferred reading two and two. Three pupils preferred reading individually, where one answered that he or she tended to zone out if not. Further, three pupils enjoyed all three equally. Two pupils enjoyed that the teacher read and two and two equally. Finally, two pupils preferred the teacher and individual reading the most. The exercise projects the diversity in preference and highlights the importance of implementing various reading forms.

After the reading exercise, the summary was a success, as it helped those who did not understand the text and created exciting discussions. In addition, handing out a twist to every pupil who raised their hand and gave a comment motivated the pupils to participate. One pupil commented that he or she did not understand much of the text before we discussed it. Another pupil answered in the questionnaire that he or she enjoyed "discussing what we read afterward, as it gives more insight and different opinions. Having questions with no black or white answer can often spark debate leading to many opinions and by extension opening for a lot of information and learning". The implementation of democratic principles and values was, however, not as successful. Ten pupils answered that they did not learn anything new about democratic principles and values, and two answered blankly. However, seven pupils claimed they learned something new, with one answering that he or she learned about "principles such as freedom of speech, expression, and movement, and values such as equality". The reason this part of the study did not go as planned might be due to how I asked the questions in the task. If they were too vague or did not carry enough relevance, it might affect their reflections and implicit learning.

3.2.4.2 Conclusion

In hindsight, the short story *Harrison Bergeron* is better suited at the upper secondary school level. The story demands both careful reading and thoughtful reflection. The upper secondary level seems to possess the necessary cognitive ability regarding skill and reflection. However, if I were to repeat my study, I would implement some improvements. For starters, I would include more questions for each group. I would also ask the questions in a manner that would promote or introduce the political elements of the short story more clearly. For example, I might ask about the correlation between one specific value or principle and democracy to make it more implicit. In addition, I would include democratic questions in the summary discussion to create awareness of the correlation and start a thinking process. Through conversations with my practicum teacher, he commented on how I could improve my teaching. He recommended increased repetition and clarity regarding oral messages and written assignments, in addition to the benefits of a plan-b or having some extra questions at hand. I agree with his comments, and as I have already stated, I would implement the changes if I were to repeat the task. However, throughout the study, I was positively surprised by how active and dedicated the pupils were. I loved listening to their opinions during the summary discussion, conversations during the group work, and the presentations. Though four or five pupils were more active than the rest of the

class, the opinions of those who did not speak out in class were happy to discuss when I walked around during the group work.

4 *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with Didactic Plan

Nineteen Eighty-Four is an exciting novel that portrays political content relevant to many present-day issues. The novel depicts, brilliantly and intricately, the violation of freedom of speech, freedom of privacy, and the right to equality. These violations can easily be compared with the Russian silencing of opposition, the invasion of technology, and class equality. Further, the combination of violence, love, lust, and rebellion invites the possibility of a bigger crowd enjoying the novel. The excitement, political content, and relevance make it a good choice when choosing a literary text to teach. It opens for analysis of the many intricate literary elements and the political aspects. The political content also allows interdisciplinary work between the subjects of English and social science. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part consists of an analysis of the novel, with a focus on the literary elements: setting, characterization, and theme. The second part consists of the didactic method I would use if I were to implement *1984* in my teaching. I will introduce my goals, the methodology, and my teaching plan and provide some comments and reflections on what I have learned through work with my study of *Harrison Bergeron.*

4.1 Analysis of Literary Elements in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

4.1.1 Setting

The novel is set in a fictionalized version of London, in one of the three world powers, Oceania. London is depicted as a grey, cold, and sterile city. The main character, Winston, lives in the part of London called the Outer Circle. The words used to depict this part of town are "run down, "grimy" (Orwell, 5), and houses falling to pieces (Orwell, 63). By choosing London as the setting in *1984,* Orwell creates the atmosphere of a real-life war-torn city. Orwell's intent was likely to capitalize on the relatability of the city. The three world powers in *1984* are Oceania, Eurasia, and Eastasia. Influenced by the political circumstances at the time, Orwell created three powers that share a close resemblance to the political distribution of the Cold War era starting after World War II. All three powers are run by totalitarian regimes, which impose a constant threat on multiple fronts. The effect of creating an entire world of war is the impossibility for Winston to escape the terrifying place of his present circumstances.

In close resemblance to Claeys's main features of a totalitarian regime of using surveillance techniques to centralize power, London is strictly monitored. All settings impose the threat of being monitored, with either surveillance cameras, telescreens, the thought police, or the Junior Spies. The surveillance creates the mood, which Fitting calls the "dystopian mood, the sense of a threatened near future" (140). There is no feeling of safety, only the constant feeling of being watched. There is no trust among the peers, only skepticism and fright of being reported to the Thought Police. The lack of privacy is further depicted through Winston's apartment. All apartments in the outer circle are surveilled through a telescreen in the living room. However, due to unknown reasons, Winston's telescreen is placed at an angle that allows him the space of a shallow alcove, "By sitting in the alcove and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen… He could be heard, of course" (Orwell, 7). The way Orwell depicts Winston's home space implies to the reader that Winston is lucky to have a small corner of privacy in his home. A space that, safeguarded through Norwegian law, is supposed to offer safety, the right to privacy, and individuality.

The political structure of the social classes in London is the Inner Circle as the ultimate ruling class, the Outer Circle as the educated workers, and the Proles as the working class. The Inner Circle consists of less than two percent of the population. The Outer Circle consists of about thirteen percent, and the Proles numbering the remaining eighty-five percent of the population (Orwell, 217). The part of town where the Proles live is depicted as filthy, with endless poverty and depravity, doorways comparable to rat holes, roads with puddles of filthy water, and bombed streets everywhere (86-87). The lack of worth and consideration of the Proles is evident in the Party slogan, "Proles and animals are free" (Orwell, 75), being juxtaposed to animals. However, through Winston's tormented eyes, the reader is let into the revelation that "the Proles had stayed human" (Orwell, 172).

As a reader, one is left wondering what the proles are intended to depict, other than the working class. Throughout the novel it becomes obvious that Winston is drawn towards the part of London where the proles live. Winston envies their freedom and at one point, Winston writes in his diary, "If there is hope… it lies in the proles" (Orwell, 72). In conjunction with their superior population number, Orwell's intent might be to highlight the massive control and superiority totalitarian regimes pose, as the proles clearly outnumber the outer and inner party. In Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, the disparity in wealth between the few people in the ruling class and the masses in the working class was massive. However, the relationship

in these nations, as in *1984,* depicts the impossibility of revolting. The setting of the proles is described as a part of town consisting of outlaws and dumb masses. The proles' area is the only area in London attacked by bombs frequently. At one point, Julia suggests that the inner party is behind the bombing (160), and her statement makes sense. If an enemy were to strike, why would he hit the weakest link and not where it would hurt the most? It is highly plausible that the Inner Circle is the one who is responsible for the bombing as an excuse to validate their war actions and cause terror. If this is the case, it would further emphasize the Prole's worthlessness, being used as worms on a fishing hook. On the other hand, due to the Inner Party's lack of interest in the Proles, they are seemingly left on their own. There are no surveillance cameras, pubs, betting, no uniforms, antique shops with supplies, which are banned for the Outer Circle, prostitutes, and children running around being children. In other words, something resembling a sanctuary.

The exceptions of the cold and depressive settings are O'Brien's home and Winston and Julia's hideaway spots. O'Brien is a member of the Inner Party and lives in a part of town where there is a huge block of flats with "the richness and spaciousness of everything" (Orwell, 175). The wealth of the inside of O'Brien's house starkly contrasts the run-down apartments in the Outer Circle, with a personal servant and the house smelling of "the unfamiliar smells of good food and good tobacco" (Orwell, 175). The most significant contrast, however, lies in the freedom of having the privilege of turning off the telescreen, the freedom of privacy. Though Orwell is British, the wealth of O'Brien's flat validates Hattenhauer's claim of the American definition of freedom as the greatest good to the smallest number.

Throughout the novel, Winston and Julia sneak away on executions to nurture their secret affair. Jamie Wood claim, in the article *George Orwell, Desire, and Encounters with Rural Sex in Mid-Century England*, that "whilst we tend to think of Orwell's novels as charting an increasingly pessimistic social vision, this vision of rural sexual bliss remains a constant… as if Orwell needed to remake his fictional landscape in consistently harsher hues to keep testing the myth of sexual redemption under tougher conditions" (403). The contrast between the cold and sterile everyday life and the warm and inviting love scenes is like black and white. Two hideaway settings are the colorful forest, "A landscape I've seen sometimes in a dream" (130), and Mr. Charrington's upstairs apartment. The apartment is described as curiously inviting in the warm, dim light (100), with its homie furniture made of woodwork, a fireplace, pictures on the wall, and a bookcase. The sudden warmth from the hideaway spots allows the reader to

hope for a better world. However, a plot twist occurs when one of their safe spaces turns out to be surveilled. Mr. Charrington is part of the Thought Police, and Winston and Julia were arrested. The arrest makes the reader question everything. Is hope dead? Were the other hideaway spots also monitored? Upon the discovery that O'Brien is part of the Thought Police, the concluding thought is that nowhere is safe. Hope is shattered.

4.1.2 Characterization

4.1.2.1 Winston

Winston Smith is the novel's protagonist, from whose view the reader sees the world. According to Edmond van Den Bossche, in an article in *The New Your Times*, Orwell had the intention to call *1984 The Last Man in Europe* as "a tribute to the essential quality that distinguished man from the world around him, namely his ability to think for himself" (Par. 2). "The man" is in this context, Winston. Winston is portrayed as the only living man left with individuality and the ability to think and reason for himself. Winston carries an intense hatred towards the totalitarian regime he lives under. In his journal, he writes, "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" (Orwell, 20), an act that is more severe than killing a man. Through his work at the Ministry of Truth, Winston alters old books and Newspapers to fit with the party's current version of truth. Through his job, the reader is drawn into his ability to think freely and his desperate truth-seeking. Nevertheless, Winston does not carry the typical heroic-like qualities. Through Winston's broken and depressive state of mind, we get to know him as prematurely aged, weak, and a pitiful figure of a man. He is described as a man with a "Smallish, frail, figure" (Orwell, 4) with "very fair" hair, a "naturally sanguine" face, and a "skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades" (Orwell, 4). Wood claims that Orwell's use of heroes, in their own peculiar ways, "represent a new breed of suburban man, struggling with the pressures of their unique worlds, and with the deadening regularity of blue-collar professions" (403). Though there is nothing heroic about Winston, he is relatable to the reader. Although he is far more depressive and unhealthier than the average man, he is dutiful and appears kind and polite, helping his neighbor, Mrs. Parsons, with her blocked sink (Orwell, 22).

Winston embodies the values of a civilized society. Values such as peace, freedom, love, democracy, and decency. Further, early in the novel, it says, "Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work" (Orwell, 46), which is both sad and admirable. There is nothing distinctly special about him. However, the reader relates to his ability to think of reason, love, hope, and yearn for a better life. In addition, it is easy to feel sorry for his miseries and his loneliness as

the only individual with the ability to think freely and reasonably. In a cliche way, Winston depicts the classic underdog, and since everyone knows that David beats Goliath, it creates hope that in the fight between Winston and Big Brother, Winston will win. However, as we later find out, that is not the case. By writing in his diary, the reader is let into his deepest thoughts. In *Orwell's Literary Context: Modernism, Language, and Politics,* Lisa Mullen writes, "The reader ducks hopefully into Winston's dreams, his memories, his revolutionary stirrings, his desires and longings, only to find the Thought Police have not only got there first, but have been there all along" (97). Without Winston's or the reader's awareness, the Thought Police has been lurking in the shadows, aware of Winston's thought crimes and sexual affair with Julia.

Throughout his imprisonment, the reader is left with hope of a victorious ending in Winston's favor. However, defeat is set when Winston cries, "Do it to Julia" (Orwell, 300). The outburst indicates the sacrifice of the woman he loves and the renunciation of love. Van Den Bossche describes the act of letting go of his individuality as "When he finally is "converted" to believe in and to love Big Brother, another slave is born, another cog is placed in the machinery of the State, the last man in Europe is dead" (Par. 3). However, if Orwell had rewritten the ending as a happy ending, the novel would not pose as the powerful warning of what totalitarian regimes are capable of, as it does today. In reference to the first quote by van Den Bossche, of Orwell considering calling the novel *The Last Man in Europe,* O'Brien orders Winston to take his clothes off and see what he has become while saying, "You are the last man… You are the guardian of the human spirit. You shall see yourself as you are" (Orwell, 283). Looking in the mirror, "an involuntary cry had broken out of him" (Orwell, 283). Winston sees what he has become. The last man on earth is no more than a withered thing. What is both ironic and sad is the act of crime Winston committed before this nightmare. This is the outcome of loving another human being, disagreeing with the government, and writing in a diary.

Winston's appearance before and after his months of torture by O'Brien can be seen as Orwell's critique and warning of a totalitarian regime. Depicted as "A bowed, grey-colored, skeleton-like thing" and "A forlorn, jailbird's face with a nobby forehead running back into a bald scalp, a crooked nose and battered-looking cheekbones above which the eyes were fierce and watchful" (Orwell, 284), Winston is no longer human. His inhumanness is amplified through words such as "the creature's face", "Its actual appearance", and "thing" (Orwell, 284).

Orwell's reason for destroying Winston might be to portray the brutality of totalitarian regimes, the lengths they will go to, their mind games, cruelty, and indifference to human worth.

4.1.2.2 Julia

Julia is Winston's twenty-six-year-old lover. One of the first descriptions we get of Julia is, "Except for her mouth, you could not call her beautiful" (132). Further, she is described as a young woman with a "youthful body", thick, short "dark hair", wearing boyish overalls (149). Julia represents elements of humanity, such as sexuality, cunning, and survival. By Blu Tirohl in the article *'We are the dead...you are the dead'. An examination of sexuality as a weapon of revolt in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four,* Julia is portrayed as someone with an animal instinct, and "amoral, self-indulgent, hostile to other women and a person incapable of abstract thought" (57). Orwell uses Julia to depict what being born into a totalitarian regime is like. Not remembering how things used to be, Julia radiates a type of rebellious indifference. Winston describes her as only questioning the Party "when they in some way touched upon her own life. Often, she was ready to accept the official mythology, simply because the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important to her" (160). Julia's indifference can be related to her inability to imagine a better world. However, Julia is not stupid. Tirohl highlights the fact that Julia has "side-stepped full indoctrination" (57) and can think independently. Though she is oblivious to airplanes being invented before the Party's regime (Orwell, 160), she suggests that the bombing of London probably is fired by "the Government of Oceania itself "just to keep people frightened"" (160). The difference between Julia and Winston is that while Winston is obsessed with the truth and longs for a better world, Julia is content as long as she has the space to carry out her self-centered rebellion against sexual relations and illegal treats.

Written in 1949, Julia's strong character might reflect Orwell's foreshadowing of women's liberation. Julia puts on make-up during one of the evenings Julia and Winston spend at Mr. Charrington's apartment. Winston's reaction is Julia being "very much prettier… far more feminine" (149). In some ways, dressing up feels empowering and creates the feeling of what could have been. According to Tirohl, Julia's "genuine power lies in her 'deviant' behavior: sexuality directed for her own pleasure and not towards the party" (57) or "for procreation" (57). When Winston asks if Julia has had sex before, her answer is "Of course… scores of times" (Orwell, 131). Winston responds, "The more men you've had, the more I love you" (Orwell, 132). Winston's response to Julia's sexual escapades might be Orwell's way of celebrating female sexuality. Here is a man not condemning a woman's right to reclaim her

womanhood through sexuality, even though it is frowned upon as illegal. Julia possesses all the heroic qualities needed to rebel. She is intelligent, sly, strong, optimistic, bold, and driven. Julia's indifference and hate towards the Party is amplified when we learn that "during the Two Minutes Hate, her great difficulty was to avoid bursting out laughing" (160). The opposition of Winston and Julia are apparent, and while Winston simply happens to survive, Julia is a true survivalist. Julia knows precisely how to play the system. This is amplified in her response to Winston that she does the amount of community service she does because it helps her blend in and divert suspicion from her more unorthodox escapades.

Throughout the novel, the reader can't help but wonder if there is something more to Julia than what we are told. Questions raised are who the other men she has spent time with are, where she gets the forbidden goods or the Inner Circle food supplies. During Winston and Julia's first meeting, we learn that Winston does not know Julia's surname. In addition, when discussing their joint hatred for purity and virtue, Julia says playfully, "I'm corrupt to the bone" (Orwell, 132). The statement could be foreshadowing Julia's allegiance with the Inner circle. In addition, being described as a malnourished, thirty-nine-year-old man with varicose veins and false teeth (Orwell, 126), Winston does not understand why Julia likes him. He does not understand why she handed him the secret note where she claims she loves him. During Winston's months in imprisonment, we learn from O'Brien that the Party has been watching Winston for years. If Julia were to be involved with Winston's downfall by the Inner Party, it would explain why she so quickly supports Winston's suggestion of trusting O'Brien (Orwell, 159). Further, it would explain why she can live her rebellious life, as it is unlikely that she could conduct her many illicit affairs without having attracted the Party's notice.

4.1.2.3 O'Brien

The character of O'Brien is characterized by the psychological mind games he puts Winston through. O'Brien's approach illustrates the deception and evil totalitarian regimes are capable of. O'Brien is an essential member of the Inner Circle, depicting the freedom, privilege, and luxury of the Inner Circle. He is described as "a large, burly man… and a brutal face" (Orwell, 12). Mullen introduces O'Brien as "the initially blank apparatchik who morphs slowly from rebel ally, to agent provocateur, and finally to torturer as Winston's downfall achieves terminal momentum – becomes more and more human as his evil expresses itself" (102-103). His ability to morph into the different stages is due to O'Brien projecting an inherent charm that makes him "curiously disarming" and "curiously civilized" (12). Given that O'Brien shares that they

have been watching Winston for years due to their suspicion of his thought crime, it is evident that O'Brien's charm is used to lure Winston into believing that he shares his anti-party sentiments. The Party's surveillance of Winston is apparent in how well O'Brien knows Winston. He has complete control of what to say, what hurts the most, and Winston's worst terrors. Their control further emphasizes the totalitarian control of society. Nothing goes unnoticed while luring in the background and knowing exactly when to strike. Through allegiance between Winston and O'Brien, he gains control of Winston's plans, whereabouts, and co-conspirators.

The brutality, evil, and indifference to human worth are depicted through Winston's imprisonment in the Ministry of Love. During the time Winston spends in imprisonment, O'Brien tortures him until his existence is left as a mere shadow of his being. According to Natasha Periyan, in her chapter *Teaching and Learning in and Beyond Nineteen Eighty-Four,* the torture is conducted to re-educate Winston, to "erode Winston's confidence in his own reasoning processes and to indoctrinate him in the Party's illogical reasoning" (33). Towards the end of the novel, O'Brien says to Winston, "You have been kicked and flogged and insulted, you have screamed with pain, you have rolled on the floor in your own blood and vomit. You have whimpered for mercy, you have betrayed everybody and everything. Can you think of a single degradation that has not happened to you?" (286). Despite the torture performed on Winston, O'Brien is never affected by Winston's torment or appearance. On the contrary, he displays a stone-cold figure and signals that Winston has brought this upon himself, as in, "Look what you have made me do to you". Acting as Winston's interrogator, O'Brien is identified as knowledgeable, intelligent, and omniscient, with the ability to "echo and rework Winston's thoughts" (Periyan, 32). The almightiness of O'Brien can be juxtaposed with a totalitarian regime, as its power, capacity, and abilities are pervasive.

Further, O'Brien depicts the perfect balance of the psychological torture of comfort and evil. On the one hand, he acts like a teacher to Winston. The torture is conducted for his own good, as healing to save Winston, to make him perfect, while chanting, "You must love Big Brother" (Orwell, 295). On the other hand, O'Brien uses his position as a mentor to degrade, humiliate, and psychologically vaporize Winston's individuality. Periyan states, "The repeated associations made between teaching and torture figure the pupil-teacher relationship as one of coercion, bullying, and totalitarian oppression" (33). When O'Brien is done with Winston, he is left as a being no longer a human. At Winston's worst state, O'Brien calls Winston "a bag of

filth" while stating, "If you are human, this is human" (Orwell, 285). The mocking of Winston's individuality and appearance is a brutal attack, considering the months of torture Winston has persevered to maintain humanity. The brutal attack is further apparent considering the sick and disturbing teacher-pupil bond they have developed during Winston's imprisonment.

4.1.3 Theme

4.1.3.1 Dangers of Technology

The use of modern technology poses a threat to the human right to privacy. When humans are deprived of privacy, there is no trust, peace, or room for mistakes. In resemblance to *Harrison Bergeron,* a home is supposed to be a safe space with comfort and room for a private individual. However, instead of being the object watching the television, *1984* depicts the object being watched, where every move is being surveilled. The stress of being monitored through all aspects of life reduces the freedom of privacy and the freedom of speech to a minimum. As Claeys states in his second main feature of totalitarian regimes, the use of media and surveillance techniques is used to gain power and control. At the novel's beginning, the reader is introduced to a telescreen workout. This is a morning routine where all members of the Outer Circle must work out in front of the telescreen, with an instructor monitoring their participation (Orwell, 39). The routine shows how regimes excuse the use of surveillance to favor the citizens, as in, we care about you and are here to help you keep fit and healthy. However, in reality, they are monitoring your mental state, attitude, and actions.

In his article, van Den Bossche states that "the management of the news and the censorship of the written and spoken word… severely impairing man's ability to think freely (Par. 8). Van Den Bossche's claim shares a close resemblance to Orwell's portrayal of the citizens of the Outer Party and the Proles made out as an ignorant sheep heard, caused by the Party's fabrication and indoctrination of truth. According to David Dwan, written in his chapter *Orwell and Humanism, 1984* implies "it is hard to be free in a world without truth" (73). Through Winston's work, the reader is given insight into how the Party alters the truth to fit their narrative. For example, if a person has become "unperson" and all traces of that person are to be vaporized from old newspapers or books, Winston is given access to the original text and assigned to rewrite the text by changing the name or event (Orwell, 47). The result is no existence of the person being unperson and the alteration of truth. Further, after Winston has been converted into a believer in Big Brother, Winston ponders upon a conversation he had with O'Brien and the revelation of truth. It goes, "The so-called laws of Nature were nonsense.

The law of gravity was nonsense. 'If I wished,' O'Brien had said, 'I could float off this floor like a soap bubble.' Winston worked it out. 'If he thinks he floats off the floor, and if I simultaneously think I see him do it, then the thing happens" (291). This depicts the absurdity and danger of living without the compass of truth and false based on the law of science, but replaced by the law created by the Party.

4.1.3.2 Liberty Beset by Ideology

The theme of liberty beset by ideology is thematized through the total order and control inflicted by the totalitarian regime of the Party and the annihilation of individual thought. While the citizens of Oceania are free to make certain everyday choices and are not in prison, they are functionally imprisoned, especially mentally. According to Periyan*, "*Orwell's vision of totalitarian systems in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depict a form of intellectual control exerted by more intelligent members of society… in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston's inquisitor, O'Brien, is repeatedly identified as 'intelligent'" (26). Interestingly, they do not hide their iron grip on the civilization. In a conversation between Winston and O'Brien, O'Brien states, "We control life, Winston, at all its levels" (Orwell, 282). Further, when asked about the future, O'Brien answers, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever." (Orwell, 280). The answer means that for the rest of the time, the Party will oppress its citizens, and there is no hope of a better world.

Their oppression and deprivation of freedom over their citizens are gained using surveillance, a ruthless rule driven by fright, and the Ministry of Love. The latter is a prison where people are brought if they rebel or threaten the Government, either by action or thought crime. In prison, they are tortured and indoctrinated into the manufactured version of the depressed, passive, and obedient citizen the Government desires. The irony of calling the prison the Ministry of Love reflects O'Brien's way of describing the torture as healing as if they are there to help you. This further highlights the way totalitarian regimes often use mind games to manipulate and conceive their citizens. One way the novel depicts the use of fright in totalitarian regimes to gain control is through the term "unperson". When a person is unpersoned, they vanish from society without a trace. The person is either killed or arrested, and all traces of the person are vaporized as if they never existed (Orwell, 48). This happens to Winston's friend Syme because he is too intelligent. One day, Syme does not show up for work, and his name is removed from the chessboard, "Syme had ceased to exist: he had never existed" (Orwell, 154).

The theme of liberty beset by ideology is further thematized through the non-existence of individuality and equality. In reference to Claeys seven traits of totalitarian regimes, a totalistic ideology demands the sacrifice and absolute submission of all citizens to the party, leaving no part of private life unpoliticized. The novel depicts this through the destruction of individuality and everything involved, such as the ability to love, think, and speak freely and the inhibited bond between parents and their child. The deprivation of individuality is depicted through the depressive revelation of no individual thought. Mullen claim that the invention of Newspeak is intended to "abolishing curiosity and empathy in Oceania" (104). Mullen's claim highlights the systematic approach in annihilate individuality and unity. In his journal, Winston writes, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows" (Orwell, 84). There is no freedom of speech where there is no freedom of thought. If all thoughts are to be manufactured by the government and one is not allowed to think reason, individuality is lost. Further, the reader is invited into Winston's workplace in several parts of the novel. The workplace is depicted as a bunch of sheep in a sheep herd, fabricated to run around in dumb nothingness, conducting jobs benefitting the Party. They all must wear uniform blue overalls (Orwell, 63), making them melt into a piece on a factory band. Factories equals efficiency and are an excellent way to make a profit.

To love is one of the most naturally inhibited qualities of human beings. While portrayed as an unhealthy, prematurely aged man, Winston depicts the benefits and magic love can do to the human spirit and body. After a month of love, Winston is a new man. He seems to have lost his need for gin, has gained weight, and healed many of his health problems (Orwell, 157). However, by deleting the bond of love, Orwell depicts the absoluteness of totalitarian loyalty, and their desire to limit the spirit and bond love can create. The loyalty to the regime is not to be challenged in any way possible. To limit the possibility of a challenge, children are manufactured into the government's desired version. This will ensure a workforce and an everlasting regime. In the novel, this is depicted through the Junior Spies. The Junior spies are used to monitor adults for disloyalty to the Party, and loyalty to one's parents is non-existent. This is evident in Mrs. Parsons's fright for her children, whose biggest wish is to catch a non-believer in the Party. Orwell depicts the consequence and absurdity of constructing a society where the bond between the parents and their child is annihilated when Mr. Parson is arrested for thoughtcrime. His daughter turned him in for saying "Down with Big Brother" in his sleep (Orwell, 245). The humor is found in the uncertainty of whether Mr. Parson said those words aloud or if his daughter scapegoated her dad to catch a disloyal Party member.

4.2 Didactic Plan

4.2.1 Intention and Goal

My intention and goal with the teaching plan is to educate the pupils in a fun and inclusive way. By choosing dystopian fiction, I hope to give my pupils a positive reading experience and create motivation for further reading. Through literature, the reader acquires literacy skills. This is why exposure to positive reading experiences is highly beneficial. Reading can involve all kinds of subjects, and the scope is endless. This facilitates interdisciplinary teaching, which is both efficient and allows for in-depth teaching. By combining the two subjects, English and Social Science, the pupils are exposed to elements such as a second language, literacy, politics, and history. In this context, I aim to combine the two aspects of acquiring literacy proficiency and democratic awareness through reading the novel *1984*. Based on the survey regarding reading abilities and the pleasure of reading from 2016, I believe it is our job as teachers to help pupils regain their confidence in reading abilities and show them the infinite scope of genre and theme. Dystopian fiction often explores social and political structures, and it contains violence and brutality, in addition to some clichés. The combination of the three elements is what I hope will engage the majority, if not all, pupils in my teaching plan.

4.2.2 Methodology

I have made two different teaching plans to facilitate the variety in skill levels and time available. Plan One is designed for the younger group, aimed at 10th-grade lower secondary school and first-year upper secondary school, with two weeks to complete the assignment. Plan Two is designed for the older group, aimed at 2nd and 3rd-year upper secondary school, with one month to complete the assignment. The competence aims Plan One is based on is "read, analyze, and interpret fictional texts in English", "explain the reasoning of others and use and follow up input from others during conversations and discussions on various topics" (Vg1 programme), and "express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient, and situation" (Year 10). The competence aims for Plan Two are "analyze and interpret fictional texts in English, including self-chosen texts", "use appropriate sources in a critical and accountable way", "demonstrate independent reflection and critical thinking when reading and discussing different types of texts" (English 1), and "interpret and discuss some types of fictional texts in English considering their historical and cultural contexts" (English 2).

Based on Lyngsnes and Rismark's claim that a teacher must convey what is planned and what is expected of the pupils in a clear way (136), I have decided to introduce the assignment with the relevant competence aims and an article about *1984*. A clear plan will contribute to "predictability and safety and facilitate the teacher's teaching and the pupils' learning" (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 136). The article I have chosen to read is *The Message for Today in Orwell's 1984* by Edmond van Den Bossche. The article was published on the 1st of January 1984. It provides a nice summary of the novel, in addition to drawing out the political correlation between the novel and events happening at the time. The article consists of approximately twenty paragraphs, and the intention is for each pupil to read one paragraph. After we have read the article, I will initiate a discussion to repeat its content and start their reflections on the correlation between the novel and politics. The introduction will be conducted in Plan One and Plan Two.

As mentioned earlier, Plan One will extend over two weeks. Since the pupils have five forty-five-minute English classes every week and two forty-five-minute Social Science classes, the total number of classes will be fourteen. Many of the classes will occur as double classes. *1984* does not contain too advanced language, but the novel's length is 326 pages. There is often a big leap in skill levels and interests at this level since the pupils do not get to choose their individual subjects. Therefore, since the skills required to find the correlation between the novel and the violation of democratic rights demand maturity, I have decided to simplify the assignment. After discussing the article, I will divide the class into four groups and hand out the assignment found in Appendix 6. Each group will be assigned one chapter from the novel that depicts the violation of democratic rights.

The assignment is intended to accommodate the requirements from Democracy and Citizenship at the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. It states that the school shall provide the pupils with proficiency and knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy, with a focus on its values and rules (Par. 1). Further, pupils are required to learn "why democracy cannot be taken for granted and understand that it must be developed and maintained" (Par. 3). The chapters I have chosen are chapter I, Part I, which depicts freedom of speech, chapter IV, Part III, which depicts the right to equality, chapter I, Part I, which depicts freedom of privacy, and Chapter IV, Part II, which depicts the crime of love. I have chosen to include a chapter that depicts the criminalization of love to illustrate the way totalitarian regimes work. To love is an inherent human quality. It is as fundamental as the need for safety,

good health, and food, whether it is love for a partner, family, or friend. These needs are often stripped away in totalitarian regimes, and my intent is for the pupils to reflect upon the question of what is left in life if one is deprived of the ability to love. Also, the theme of the violation of democratic rights can be perceived as heavy. Therefore, I wanted to include something more intriguing to create a contrast.

To facilitate the various preferences in reading exercises, each group will be allowed to decide whether they want to read the chapter individually or together. When the groups have read their chapters, they will be asked to start on their presentation. The choice to implement group work is based on Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, which states that "learning happens in interaction with others" (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 67). Vygotsky's core idea was that learning happens through "dialogue and interaction with someone more competent than the learner (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 70). In a group setting, this entails that the pupils can learn from each other. All humans have areas where they excel due to interest or cognitive abilities. Group work allows the opportunity to benefit from each other's strengths. Or, as Lyngsnes and Rismark put it, "the teacher can arrange for the students to have scaffolding functions for each other" (74) through group work. Group work is also intended to accommodate the Democratic and Citizenship requirement of "the teaching and training shall give the pupils knowledge and skills to face challenges in accordance with democratic principles" (Par. 3). Working in groups is dependent on cooperation and communication, which is an excellent way to learn democratic processes. During the weeks when the pupils work on their presentations, my role as a teacher will be to guide, motivate, and be available for discussions and questions, in addition to ensuring progress among the groups. The presentation will be held during the last class, and each group will have 10-12 minutes to present.

Plan Two involves reading the whole novel, where the initial plan is to spend one month on the assignment. Since 2nd and 3rd year pupils can choose the programme subjects, likely, they will not be able to work interdisciplinary with Social Science. However, being educated about democracy is essential no matter what subjects the pupils choose. Therefore, the implementation of democratic principles and values in the English subject is exclusively beneficial. The introduction of the assignment will be conducted as explained in the second paragraph above. The first two weeks will be spent reading the novel. The novel consists of three parts, each of which is approximately one hundred pages long. During this time, the English classes will be spent reading the novel. It consists of three parts, and every third class

will be spent discussing the completed part of the novel. I have chosen to go through and discuss consecutively throughout the reading process to ensure everyone is reading their part and understands the novel. In addition, allowing the pupils to ask questions in the classroom facilitates the ability to learn from each other.

After they have read the novel, the pupils will be asked to go together two and two. I have decided to let the pupils choose their groups to allow them some influence over the assignment. When the groups are in order, they will be asked to draw a straw from a box. To find out the order, they will get to choose their question from Appendix 7. I decided on the straw-in-a-box method because I wanted each question to be picked once and wanted an unbiased approach. As indicated in Appendix 7, the pupils will be asked to write a two-page long paper where they answer their chosen question, followed by a presentation where they present their paper and discoveries. To initiate the group work, I will highlight the importance of delegating within the group and inform them that the paper will be graded. The following two weeks will be spent writing the paper and making their presentation. Similarly to Plan One, my role throughout these weeks will be to guide, motivate, ensure progress, and be available for helpful discussions and questions. To provide time to make their presentations, the deadline for handing in their papers will be during the first class of the last week. The presentation will be held during the last two classes of the fourth and final week. Each group gets 5-7 minutes to present their presentation. After each presentation, another group will be assigned to ask two questions in addition to the opportunity for other groups to ask questions. This approach is included to increase the motivation to pay attention and to gain off-script knowledge from the group presenting.

4.2.3 Teaching Plan

As mentioned, Plan One will last over two weeks and be interdisciplinary within English and Social Science. The first class will introduce the assignment and convey the competence aims the task assignment is based on to help them understand the intention of the assignment. To introduce the novel and topic, I will hand out the article *The Message for Today in Orwell's 1984* by Edmond van Den Bossche. The article will be handed out in paper form, and we will read it aloud together. It consists of twenty paragraphs, and the pupils will read one paragraph each. We will discuss and review the article in the classroom when we finish reading. I will ask questions such as "What have we just read?", "What is your knowledge of the Soviet Union,

NATO, and the Far East?", "Has anybody read the novel?" and "Are there any questions regarding the article?".

When we finish the article, I will divide the classroom into four groups. Each group will receive a chapter from *1984* that depicts the violation of one democratic right. Each group can decide whether to read the chapter individually or together. The pupils will be given the remainder of the class to finish reading their chapter and familiarize themselves with the assignment. The assignment is found in Appendix 6. The four chapters contain a depiction of democratic rights, freedom of speech, freedom of privacy, the right to equality, and the right to love. During the remaining six classes, the pupils will be asked to make a presentation regarding their chapter, answer the reflection question, and answer the four questions under "make a presentation" in Appendix 6. Throughout these classes, I will actively speak to the groups, see that they are on the right track, show progress, use their chapter well, and stay relevant. The presentation should be 10-12 min long and will be presented in class during the last class.

As mentioned in the methodology, Plan Two will last one month, which equals twenty English classes, lasting forty-five minutes. I will introduce the topic in the same way as Plan One. Firstly, I will briefly inform that we will read the novel *1984* by George Orwell, write a task, and present it to the rest of the class. Secondly, inform the pupils of the relevant competence aims. Lastly, hand out the article *The Message for Today in Orwell's 1984* and read together in class, followed by a discussion regarding the article. The remaining time, after the article will be dedicated to reading the novel. The first two weeks will be spent reading the novel. The pupils will be assigned two English classes to read for each of the three parts of the novel. If the pupils do not finish the part in class, it will be homework. Every third class will be used to go through the part previously read. If the discussion does not have a natural flow, I will ask leading questions to get the debate in the classroom going. I will also encourage writing notes from the novel along the way.

When the pupils are done reading the novel, they will be asked to go together two and two. Then, they will be asked to choose one of the questions from Appendix 7. Since each question can only be selected by one group, the groups will be asked to draw a straw from a box to find out the order in which to choose their question. I will emphasize the importance of delegating the various questions and tasks within the group. In addition, they will be informed that the paper will be graded. The following weeks will be spent writing their paper and making their

presentation. My role throughout these weeks will be to make myself available in class for discussions to increase further reflections, questions regarding the task, and guidance and motivation if the pupils need help or encouragement. The deadline for handing in the paper will be during the first class of the last week. The presentation will be held during the two last classes of the fourth and final week. Each presentation should last from 5-7min. After each presentation, I will assign one other group to come up with two questions regarding their presentation. In addition, the different groups will also be allowed to ask questions.

4.2.4 Reflection on Study and Teaching Plan

Through the study of working with *Harrison Bergeron* in school, I have learned the importance of choosing age and level-appropriate texts. This is why I have chosen to plan two different teaching methods for the novel *1984.* Since the language in the novel is not too advanced, the two different plans facilitate skill level and time available. Regarding reading skills, a third-year pupil will likely complete a novel in a shorter time than a 10th-grade pupil. The literacy level and the capability to see the correlation between the novel and the violation of democratic rights is why I have chosen to simplify the assignment and create two plans. Further, early in the study, I experienced the diversity in preference in reading, varying between individually, in groups, or from the teacher. The pros and cons were found in all three ways of reading. This made me aware of the importance of varying the reading exercises in the classroom.

In the teaching plan of *1984,* the pupils are asked to read one paragraph each from the article at the beginning of class. This is to facilitate reading aloud for those who enjoy it, while slightly challenging those who prefer not to. In Plan One, the pupils can choose how they would like to read their chapter within the group. I chose this method to make the pupils take independent choices on how they learn best when reading and agree upon the decision within the group. Lastly, in the study, and especially with the 3rd year pupils, I saw how much they enjoyed and benefitted from having discussions in class. This is why I chose to implement a class lesson after every three parts of the novel, to discuss and go through the previously read part in Plan Two. As further work, in a classroom setting, it would be interesting to see how pupils in upper secondary school would link the issue of freedom of speech to present-day issues. Issues such as women in Iran speaking up against the injustice they are facing based on their gender. Or the issue of false news. How does the falsification of truth affect freedom of speech? Also, are pupils at upper secondary school aware of their activity being tracked on their phones and

computers, and how easy it is to hack into private technology such as Google Home. These issues and questions are important to be addressed and can easily be implemented into debates and discussions in the classroom.

5 Conclusion

In the first quote in the introduction of my thesis, Crick introduces democracy as a sacred and promiscuous word that is hard to pin down. Educating pupils about democracy is important but complex. We might know what to aim for and have the same foundational pillars, but the path to achieving our agreed goal can be vague. A democratic society is based on trust in one's fellow citizens, and those voted into power. To know whether that trust is broken, it is wise to have knowledge of untrustworthy behavior. Such knowledge can be gained through education on contrary regimes, both historically and fictionally. On a micro level, that could be Donald Trump's many lies and twists of truths, to his own benefit. On a macro level, that could be Hitler's gain of power and the consequences of World War Two. Gaining knowledge about totalitarian regimes through fiction can be helpful because there are no personal sentiments toward the story being read. Further, the author is allowed artistic freedom to shape the literary work however he or she may choose, which often adds to the intriguing elements and pleasure of reading.

Harrison Bergeron and *1984* are two dystopian literary pieces easily applied to teaching. While Reed claims that *Harrison Bergeron* is Vonnegut's most taught short story (46), Periyan states that Orwell's work, with *1984* as one of his leading pieces, has "formed a spinal part of British GCSE and A-Level educational syllabi and American high school curricula" (23). Being a short story, *Harrison Bergeron* is readily applicable to teaching. However, due to its advanced language, the short story might be better suited at upper secondary school level. The novel *1894* requires a longer time frame if the novel is being read in class. However, as my teaching plan portrays, a teacher can modify the novel by focusing on a few chapters. Also, the language is not too advanced, which allows more time to focus on aspects such as the political content of the novel and literary elements. The two dystopian pieces' relevance to democratic education is through their depiction of the violation of democratic rights inflicted by totalitarian regimes.

Harrison Bergeron depicts the violation of the right to equality with a satirical tone, where all sense of individuality is eliminated. As democratic citizens, many teens today engage

themselves in the right to equality regarding feminism, choice, and social class. However, as the short story eliminates equality by the roots, taking away all sense of cognitive abilities and freedom, it forces the pupils to reflect upon the most fundamental aspects of equality. Further, due to the competitiveness and unhealthy expectations caused by social media, I believe it would be healthy for pupils to reflect upon the importance of individuality and equality. It might make them reflect upon aspects such as individual worth and why people are fighting for equal rights worldwide, equal rights such as women in Iran fighting for equality regarding law and fundamental human rights. The short story depicts the violation of freedom of speech and privacy through the governance of the totalitarian regime inflicted by Diana Moon Glampers. There is no justice system. People suspected of rebelling are arrested, people rebelling are killed, and the government uses power moves such as murdering those who rebel on television to cause fright and obedience.

Like *Harrison Bergeron, 1984* depicts a society where individuality is neutralized and prohibited. The totalitarian government's brutal and ruthless rule is evident in their oppression of all sense of equality and freedom, where even a man's thoughts are criminalized through thought crime. Winston is portrayed as the last man alive, and throughout the novel, the reader is torn between the hope of a happy ending and the misery of his reality. Orwell's decision to implement the tragic ending of Winston's downfall is due to Orwell's intent to write the novel as a warning of totalitarian regimes. Though the violation of freedom of speech and equality is found in *Harrison Bergeron, 1984* depicts the given existence more explicitly. Surveillance and spies are actively used to detect any mischief, writing in a journal is portrayed as a death sentence, and their language is constantly being dumbed down through Newspeak. Using the novel in school, pupils are forced to reflect and think individually to observe and grasp the correlation between the novel, politics, and history. Despite being fictional, the novel shares many similarities with previous totalitarian rules, such as Hitler's World War Two and Stalin's Soviet Union.

Dystopian fiction demonstrates and introduces political content on historical and present-day issues. The historical content could be previous wars, the resurrection of totalitarian regimes, or power-hungry leaders attempting to overthrow the government. Present-day issues could be Donald Trump's many violations of democratic values and principles or the ethical debate regarding surveillance. The political content often depicts the violation of democratic rights with a worst-case scenario. Exposure to this genre stimulates the need for reflection, seeing

correlations, and independent thinking since the information is not handed to the pupils explicitly. Pupils and all citizens need to be aware and learn about democracy. The reason is to ensure that it is never taken for granted, that we learn to value it, and that we help pass it along. The genre is not meant to scare the reader but rather convey possible outcomes if we do not safeguard democracy. In a classroom setting, using literature to educate pupils about democracy is not necessarily better than a textbook. However, teaching requires variety in learning, and dystopian fiction is one of those ways. In addition, the genre seems to appeal to youths due to the intriguing aspects of violence, suspense, and oppression. In Campbell's article regarding why dystopian fiction continues to grow in popularity among teens, sixteen-year-old Ellen answers it is because of the relatability of being oppressed, silenced, and having to fight to be heard as a teenager. Being able to relate can create the desire and motivation to read, and teachers must be aware of such bonds. The bond could be an entrance ticket to the pupils' attention and help them see the bigger picture and the correlation between the genre and the violation of democratic rights.

Reading literature can help pupils improve their literacy skills through implicit learning. As mentioned earlier, Carlsen claims that reading literature when acquiring a second language can help develop "grammatical understanding, vocabulary, spelling, and general writing abilities" (210). In addition, Henning claims that "to read literature is important because it helps the reader understand both him or her and the world better" (12). The decline in reading skills and pleasure among youth, as seen in the survey mentioned earlier (Government), is a trend teachers must be aware of and counteract. As Carlsen and Henning highlight, reading literature can be immensely beneficial. The reader receives grammatical exposure and the writer's knowledge, perspective, and creativity.

Interdisciplinary teaching in school is both a requirement and intelligent. Democracy and citizenship is one of the interdisciplinary topics. The topic states that the school shall provide pupils with proficiency and knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy (Par. 1). One of the competence aims under Social Science states that pupils are expected to "assess how the exercise of power affects people on the individual and societal level". By combining the two subjects, English and Social Science, the teacher is given access to a literate and political focus, facilitating political education through fictional societies. Without interdisciplinary teaching, a teacher seldom has the time to enable both or go as in-depth as preferred or needed to make all pupils comprehend the material. In the context of working with a novel and focusing on

educating pupils about politics and democracy, the requirement for enough time is essential. This is one of the main benefits of interdisciplinary teaching, as it allows extra time to review the material. Secondly, pupils are exposed to two teachers with different expertise. J. Rody Borg and Mary O. Borg argue that when there are two experts in the classroom, called team teaching, pupils are exposed to teachers with different expertise who sometimes see issues in contrasting light (21). In interdisciplinary teaching, the two teachers usually have a teaching plan, a goal, and an assessment plan. However, pupils might experience teachers with differences in analysis, interpretation, or the general focus. According to Borg and Borg, this can, in some cases, be beneficial because it "promotes independent thinking and diminishes the degree to which the classroom is centered on the teacher" (21). However, within a new subject, I can also see how it might be confusing for pupils not to receive unanimous information from the two teachers.

In my study, I learned that level-based learning is required to gain new knowledge. My first trial of the study, at lower secondary school, did not go as hoped due to *Harrison Bergeron's* advanced language and not having enough time to go through the material. My experience was that if the pupils did not understand the assignment or text, their motivation and effort were quickly lost and hard to regain. Though English is an educational subject, Henning states the importance of initially helping pupils evolve as competent and confident readers to prohibit forcing them to read texts they are yet to mature for (139). The lower secondary school years can be a vulnerable time in the pupil's life, and the feeling of not comprehending or failing can hit hard. However, the second trial of my upper secondary school study was successful and fun. The pupils were active, gave positive feedback to the short story and assignment, and participated in exciting discussions.

Colored by my previous experience with the study, I underestimated the pupils and their capacity. This highlights the importance of knowing the pupil's skill level and capacity. If I had been their English teacher and not their substitute teacher for a week through my practicum, I would have had better knowledge of their skill level, work speed, and interests. Lastly, my experience through my study taught me the importance of explicitly implementing the aspects in focus. In the questionnaire at upper secondary school, some of the pupils answered that they did not feel like they had learned anything new about democratic principles and values. Though some pupils answered that this was because they already had sufficient knowledge of the subject, it was still disappointing. What I would do differently the next time would be to

introduce the assignment's theme and goal explicitly from the start. Additionally, I would add specific questions within the assignment to stimulate reflections on democratic principles and values.

Being educated on democracy is vital. As mentioned in the introduction, the reports from the Global State of Democracy have shown a negative trend six years in a row. The 2023 report states that "more countries experienced net declines in democratic performance" (18). To turn this trend around, the democratic civilization must accept the collective responsibility of safeguarding our democratic principles, values, and procedures. As one of the interdisciplinary topics teachers are required to implement is democracy and citizenship, teachers are in a position with great responsibility. Additionally, as Crick states in the first quote, to produce a definition of democracy is not "particularly democratic" (2). Instead, pupils need to be educated on democracy in various ways, both implicitly and explicitly. As argued throughout this thesis, dystopian fiction can be used as a pedagogical tool to fulfill the requirement from democracy and citizenship, since dystopian fiction often depicts the events and social climate the author reflects. Thus, pupils are invited into a historical past with a political aim. As exemplified in *1984,* the political objective can also depict the potential threat of what might happen if we do not safeguard our democracy. Education and awareness of our historical and political past might help us turn the negative trend of net decline in democratic performance, as one main reason we learn about history is so that it does not repeat itself.

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7 Appendix

Appendix 1

Detective work on a short story

Task:

Group work:

Interpret – What have you found?

Answer these questions:

1. How will you describe the setting of the short story?
2. Who are the characters of the short story? And what are their characterizations?
3. What is the plot? Describe the structure of the plot.
4. Describe the use of the narrator in the short story.
5. What is the conflict?
6. Identify the turning point, climax, false ending, and ending.
7. How would you describe the theme of the short story?
8. Anything you would like to add?

Argue your discoveries:

In example

- Why do you believe that the plot is such and such?

Convey your discoveries through a presentation:

- Powerpoint
- Poster
- Notes
- Other suggestions?

Analyze of the short story:

- https://ndla.no/subject:1:9b93cd9e-a45c-428c-a8fb-b4955169efdf/topic:339ecc7e-4c23-47c5-8416-6d0768c0c537/topic:8d1a6ea7-22bf-4f7f-861d-b681af342c7c/resource:1:9075

Appendix 2

Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr
Glossary

Engelsk	**Norsk**
Equal	Likestilt
Amendments	Endringer
The Constitution	Grunnlov
Unceasing	Uopphørlig
Vigilance	Årvåkenhet
The Handicapper General	Handicapp-general
Clammy	Klamme
The H-G men	Handicapp-general men
Average	Gjennomsnittlig
Intelligence	Intelligens
Short bursts	Korte støt
Required	Påkrevd
Government transmitter	Statlig sender
A burglar alarm	Innbruddsalarm
Sashweights	Rammevekter
Bags of birdshot	Poser med fugleskudd
Vague	Uklar
Scattered	Spredte
Winced	Krympet
A ball peen hammer	En kulehammer
Envious	Misunnelig
Resemblance	Likhet
Chimes	Klokkespill
Glimmeringly	Glimtende
Abnormal	Unormal
Trembling	Skjelvende
Temples	Tinningene
A canvas bag	En lerretspose
Padlock	Hengelås
Lead balls	Bly baller
Bargain	Handel
The dark ages	De mørke århundrer
Cheating	Jukser
Bargain	Handel
Siren	Sirene
Reckon	Regner med

News bulletin	Nyhetsbulletin
Speech impediment	Talevansker
Luminous	Lysende
Grackle squawk	Høyt og hardt skrik
Suspicion	Mistanke
Overthrow	Styrte
Genius	Geni
Calibrated	Kalibrert
Hindrances	Hindringer
Tremendous	Enorm
Spectacles	Briller
Whanging headaches	Svingende hodepine
A walking junkyard	En vandrende søppelplass
Hinges	Henglser
Consternation	Bestyrtelse
Clanking	Klirrende
Emperor	Keiser
Bellowed	Brølte
Crippled	Forkrøplet
Tore	Rev
Willow	Selje
Snatched	Snappet
Reeled	Rullet
Swiveled	Dreid
Deer	Hjort
Shotgun	Hagle
A can of beer	En boks øl
Winced	Krympet
Rivetting gun	Naglepistol

Bulletin: a short official statement or broadcast summary of news.

Appendix 3

What did you think of the project?

1. What did you think of the text Harrison Bergeron?
   What did you like/dislike about it?

2. Which reading exercise did you prefer? And why?
   - The teacher reading out loud
   - Reading two and two
   - Reading individually

3. When using the web page “How to analyze a short story”, did you feel you had enough information to start answering the questions for the presentation? If not, what information were you missing?

4. How did you find working in groups and presenting your discoveries? What was good/bad? Why?

5. Did I explain the assignment and expectations clearly enough at the beginning of each class? If not, what was unclear?

6. Overall, how did you find the assignment? What did you learn? How was the time frame?

Appendix 4

Harrison Bergeron by Kurt Vonnegut

Task:

Read the short story:

- Teacher – pages 1-2
- Two and two – pages 3-4ö–
- Individually – pages 5-6

Discuss in plural:

- Summary of short story
    i. "What is the short story about?
- Initial thoughts
    i. Who is Harrison Bergeron?
    ii. What has he done?

Group work:

Interpret – what have you discovered?

Answer the group questions:

Group 1.

1. What is the plot of the short story?
2. In the second paragraph of the American Constitution, it says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal". How accurate is this quote today? Give examples.

Group 2.

1. What is the setting of the short story?
2. What is interesting regarding the author's choice of creating the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments of the Constitution? How does this pose a threat to democracy?

Group 3.

1. How would you describe the characterizations of the short story?
2. What traits of an authoritarian government can you identify from the short story?

Group 4.

1. What is the theme of the short story?
2. What is the moral of the short story? Elaborate.

Group 5.

1. Describe the point of view of the short story.
2. How is Harrison Bergeron considered a threat to society?

Argue – your discoveries!

In example:

Why do you believe the plot is such and such?

Convey – your discoveries through a PowerPoint presentation.

- 3-5 min
- Script, images -
- Send to iar016@post.uit.no
- Hand in: One Note – collaboration space

If time

Answer these reflection questions:

1. What are your thoughts on dystopian literature?
2. How can dystopian literature depict threats to democracy?
3. What do you believe are the values and principles of democracy?
4. Does complete equality sound like the way to go? Why/why not?
5. Can you link the issues of H B to any present-day issues? For example, equality?

Appendix 5

Thoughts?

Answer using two to three sentences per question:

7. What did you think of the text “Harrison Bergeron”?
   What did you like/dislike about it?

8. Which reading exercise did you prefer? And why?
   - The teacher reads out loud.
   - Reading two and two
   - Reading individually

9. Would you say you’ve learned about democratic principles and values through this task? If yes, which values and principles?

10. What are your thoughts on Vonnegut’s portrayal of equality in “Harrison Bergeron”?

Appendix 6

Violation of democratic rights in George Orwell's *1984*

Read the chapter: Optional to read individually or together.

Group 1: Freedom of speech: Part I, Chapter I

- Reflection question: What is the correlation between freedom of speech and freedom of thought?

Group 2: Freedom of Privacy: Part I, Chapter I

- Reflection question: What is more important, our privacy or national security?

Group 3: Right to equality: Part III, Chapter IV

- Reflection question: Why do some individuals take a stand against oppression while others choose to participate in it?

Group 4: Love: Part II, Chapter IV

- Reflection question: Why is Winston and Julia's relationship criminalized?

(It is wise to read the chapter more than once)

Group work:

Make a presentation:

- Present the chapter: What is the chapter about?
- Introduce your democratic right.
- How does the chapter depict the violation of your chosen democratic right? Give examples.
- Answer the reflection question.

Presentation: (10-12min)

Present for the rest of the class using PowerPoint, poster, or notes.

Appendix 7

Violation of democratic rights in George Orwell's *1984*

Read the novel.

Go together two and two.

Choose ONE of these tasks:

- Describe the function of fake news in the novel. How do they get away with it? Describe the issue of fake news vs. truth today.
- What is the function of dystopian satire when writing political literature?
- How is freedom of speech violated in the novel? Resemblance to today?
- How is the right to equality violated in the novel? Resemblance to today?
- How is freedom of privacy violated in the novel? Resemblance to today?
- Describe the contrast between loyalty based on shared ideas versus due to fright depicted in the novel. Find one regime from today with similar issues and compare.
- Describe the novel's gradual decomposition of democracy. Compare with a country facing democratic decline in modern times.
- Describe the function of the class structure/hierarchy. Resemblance to today?
- Describe the freedom of speech as it appears to the characters. Resemblance to today?
- Describe the freedom of privacy as it appears to the characters. Resemblance to today?
- Describe the right to equality as it appears to the characters. Resemblance to today?

Write a paper: Two-pages

- Answer your chosen question
- Give examples from the novel and real-world
- Source reference

The paper will be graded.

Presentation of your paper: (5-7min)

Present for the rest of the class using a PowerPoint, poster, or notes.