Claiming mastery of the word

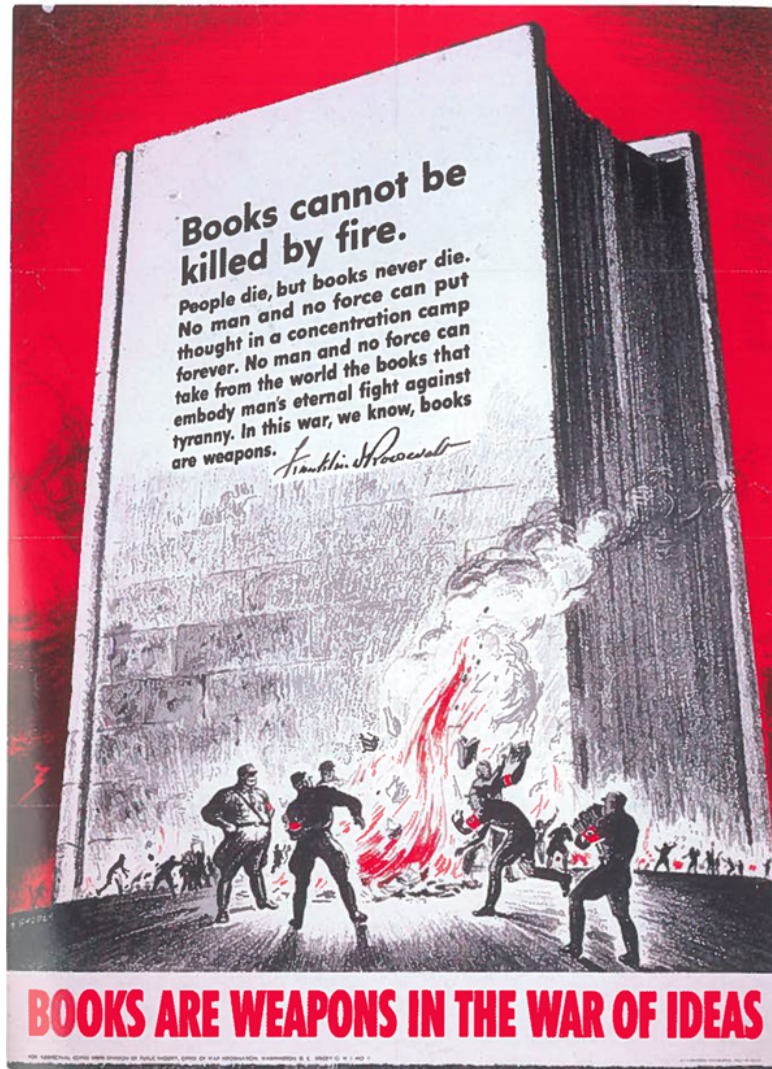The power of discourse in Ray Bradbury's
Fahrenheit 451 and George Orwell's *1984*

Henriette Wien

5   One of the more famous propaganda posters of the war, using Roosevelt's 'Books cannot be killed by fire' speech.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

'Books cannot be killed by fire.' Illustration from Fishburn, M. (2008) *Burning Books*, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Abstract

In this thesis, the main objective is to look at the power of discourse in relation to two dystopian texts, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Additionally, the thesis proposes how these two texts, as well as literary texts in general, are suitable for the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) in upper secondary school, especially in terms of a pupil's personal development. Since a majority of dystopian literary texts are concerned with systematic corruption of power and technology, this thesis explores how discourse – in its many forms – may be used to both maintain and disrupt power relations in totalitarian and authoritarian societies. It also suggests that these power relations may exist in other parts of society, including the classroom. Finally, this thesis seeks to prove that discourse is made powerful through both positive and negative discursive practices.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has occasionally been difficult, gruelling and filled with moments of hopeless despair, but there have also been laughs, inspirations and moments of pure joy. I started out wanting to write about Old Norse's impact on English, but instead ended up combining linguistics, literature and didactics through discussions on how discourse can be made powerful. There are many who deserve my heartfelt gratitude for making this thesis into what it is.

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To Kristian, thank you for your love, understanding, patience and feedback during this writing progress. There have been long days and the occasional bad moods when I was down, but the thought that you would always greet me with a smile, a hug and a hot meal has helped to bring me through the worst of it.

To my parents, thank you for long phone calls, sympathies and encouragement, especially when I struggled with my decision to postpone my thesis deadline. I am forever grateful that you are always there for me.

Finally, to my friend Gunnar, thank you. Your political passion, and your belief in the strength of individuals, society and the ultimate good, inspired me to choose the power of discourse as a topic for this thesis. I will always remember you.

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Abbreviations

1984	=	*Nineteen Eighty-Four*
CDA	=	Critical Discourse Analysis
ELC	=	English Literature and Culture programme subject
F451	=	*Fahrenheit 451*
IE	=	International English programme subject
L97	=	*Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskole* (Norway)
LK06	=	*The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training* (Norway)
OED	=	*The Oxford English Dictionary*
SSE	=	Social Studies English programme subject
TEFL	=	The teaching of English as a foreign language
VG2	=	second level of upper secondary school (Norway)
VG3	=	third level of upper secondary school (Norway)

References to the works mentioned above will be written as abbreviations followed by page numbers, as exemplified in (1) and (2).

> (1)   "You weren't hurting anyone, you were hurting only *things*!" (*F451*: 36)

> (2)   "'Reality control', they called it: in Newspeak, 'doublethink'." (*1984*: 37)

Full references to the sources abbreviated above may be found in the Works Cited section at the end of the thesis.

1   Introduction

When faced with an enemy, what are our options? Some would say there are three: flight, freeze or fight. In one way, the first two are easy. The third is not, no matter how you look at it. How do we fight? If we are bullied or threatened by classmates, by supervisors or by dictators, which weapon do we choose in our defence? There is a phrase that says 'the pen is mightier than the sword'. Some would most certainly argue that the pen would not be as fatal as the sword, and yet others would argue that the sword may take your life, but it cannot take your soul. It is a romantic and poetic notion, and often found in literature. The hero prevails against evil with both physical might and cunning as long as he is true of heart and spirit. In our modern age, the sword has – mostly – been put aside in favour of the metaphorical pen, which is an image for language and discourse. With the pen, Martin Luther rose up against the Catholic Church, and Shakespeare criticised the royal institution. Although the pen may be seen as a symbol of peacetime, it may have as sharp an edge as the sword. It is often the weapon of the underdog. A dictator may have the mightiest arsenal of weapons at his disposal, but discourse cannot be defeated with a sword. Whether spoken or thought, discourse is adaptable; it is a survivor. We might even argue that no matter how far dictators or bullies go in their attempt to silence thoughts and speeches, there will always be discourse.

In this thesis, it will be argued that discourse is an intrinsic part of human society and communication, and that its positive and negative uses in dystopian fictions like George Orwell's *1984* (1948) and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) prove that discourse is powerful. It will also be argued that the novels are ideal to use in cultural, historical and social discussions in the upper secondary school's English classrooms, especially with the power of discourse as a central topic.

1.1   Dystopian fiction

In *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias,* Sisk argues that a dystopia "does not exist in a vacuum" (1997: 167). Like an author is affected by the events and social climate of his time, a dystopian fiction is equally reproducing trends, values

and ideas of that time. It does not simply pop up into existence without a context and a reason for being. As Booker claims in *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide*, "[Bradbury's] *Fahrenheit 451* responds directly to the cultural environment in America in the early 1950s" (1994: 88), which is particularly marked by a rapid growth in mass media influence. In relation to Orwell's *1984*, Booker says, "[it] refers most directly to the oppressive Stalinist regime then in power in Russia[1], but it echoes Hitler's German Nazi regime in numerous ways as well" (1994: 213). Both novels paint a rather bleak, dysfunctional future society. Anything that could possibly have gone wrong in the construction of a new and better world has indeed gone extremely wrong.

According to Vieira in 'The concept of utopia', the idea of dystopia is in essence "the idea [of] 'utopia gone wrong'" (2010: 16). The first recorded use of dystopia was in an 1868 parliamentary speech by John Stuart Mill, who tried to find a name for an opposite of utopia: "if utopia was commonly seen as 'too good to be practicable', then dystopia was 'too bad to be practicable'" (*ibid.*). Both dystopian and utopian literature use the same narrative devices in which they imagine what their current society would be like in the future, but with different predictions as to the outcome (Vieira 2010: 17). While utopian fictions are mostly optimistic in nature, the dystopian fiction is clearly pessimistic. There are, however, some texts that navigate the borderland between these two extremes. In *Scraps of the Untainted Sky,* Moylan claims that:

> [s]ome [texts] have [an] anti-utopian stance, whereas others make room for utopian enclaves of resistance or horizons of hope beyond the pages of the text, and yet others forthrightly or hesitantly negotiate the contested or undecided space between militancy and resignation (2000: 181).

If we use the novels *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984* as examples of the above, we may certainly argue that while both show signs of pessimism in the narrative structure, they are not exclusively dystopias.

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*[2] revolves around Guy Montag, a fireman who sets fire to books and literature rather than extinguishing fires. The society in which

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[1] Booker is thinking here of the late 1940s.
[2] Ballatine Books first published *Fahrenheit 451* in 1953, but it was only after publishing excerpts in three of the first issues of *Playboy* that the novel – and the magazine – became truly famous. It is

Montag lives is clearly marked by the growing mass media of Bradbury's time. Three walls of Montag's living room are television screens, but none of the programs shown contain any intellectual substance. They are instead a mix of colours, loud noises and neutral interactive dialogues that make people feel something akin to an adrenaline rush or, at the very least, placid contentment. The same is true of the Seashell radios that Montag's wife Mildred uses, even in sleep, ensuring that she is always connected to the mass media. Combined, the television screens and the radios are like a constant bombardment of impressions on the senses that in reality leaves very little intellectual impact. The only source of substance is suggested to be literature. However, literature is forbidden as it is claimed to be the source of confusion and discontent among the population. To ensure that everyone is 'happy', the authorities of the society found in *Fahrenheit 451* go to great lengths to silence any sign of dissention or intellectual deliberation. So the firemen burn books, people who show signs of critical thinking and intellectual awareness – such as Montag's neighbour Clarisse – either disappear or are killed by unknown perpetrators, and the media downplay the fact that their country is in imminent threat of a large-scale attack. As Montag slowly realises what his society has become, he decides to take a step forward to reclaim what has been lost: literature, history, language, memories, critical thinking and true happiness. From being the creator of fire, Montag ends up floating in the river at the end of the narrative, cleansed and on his way to a new and different future. As he finds like-minded, intellectual allies in the countryside, he sees the city he came from being engulfed in fire. The war that had been ignored has arrived while the citizens still sit passively in front of their televisions, unaware.

Fahrenheit 451 certainly supports the various claims made that dystopias are written with didactic and moralistic intentions (Sisk 1997, Vieira 2010: 17). "If," Vieira claims, "dystopias provoke despair on the part of the readers, it is because their

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difficult to say whether it was the controversy of the magazine or the controversy of the novel that furthered their equal fame, or something else entirely. However, Bradbury, who died in June earlier this year (2012), has stated that no other magazine wanted to publish *Fahrenheit 451* at the time because they were "running scared" (Kelley 1996). Presumably, this was due to Bradbury's outspoken anti-authoritarian stance in the McCarthy era. On one occasion, he was one of the few members of the Screen Writers Guild that opposed the loyalty oath imposed upon its members (*ibid.*). As *Fahrenheit 451* may be read as a clear criticism against for instance political correctness, authoritarianism and the involvement of politics in the fields of education, one might understand why the novel made certain editors – and politicians – nervous. In the 1950s, Bradbury was even investigated by the FBI for communist sympathies, on the basis that he was "spreading distrust and lack of confidence in America" (Flood 2012).

writers want their readers to take them as a serious menace" (2010: 17). As quoted above, dystopias do not exist in a vacuum. Often, the pessimistic predictions made by the author in a dystopian literary text are based on current trends, values and ideas in his time that he sees as potentially problematic or disastrous. Vieira points to two ideas that have fed dystopian discourse: (1) the idea of totalitarianism; and (2) the idea of scientific and technological progress which, "instead of impelling humanity to prosper, has sometimes been instrumental in the establishment of dictatorships" (2010: 18). Although we do not find a clear totalitarian society in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* as in Orwell's *1984*, it is nonetheless obvious that power and personal freedom are not available to the general population. Montag's escape from the authorities at the end of the novel serves as *Fahrenheit 451*'s glimmer of hope. If not for that, it would be a truly grim reading. According to Vieira, many writers of dystopias have tried to make it clear "that there is still a chance for humanity to escape", because "[d]ystopias that leave no room for hope do in fact fail in their [didactic] mission" (2010: 17). However, in the case of George Orwell's future vision in *1984*, hope seems to be practically non-existent:

> The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible and glittering – a world of steel and concrete of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons – a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting – three hundred million people all with the same face. (*1984:* 77)

The society found in *1984* is totalitarian. The Party has complete control of everything and everyone, exemplified by Winston Smith's statement that "[n]othing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull" (*1984:* 29), and even this turns out to be a subject to control at the very end of the narrative. Winston, who works for the Ministry of Truth in the Records Department, alters past records to ensure that they always comply with the Party's current standing and predictions, thus validating the Party's claim to power. In defiance of this, Winston begins to write his own diary, recording his life, his thoughts and his opinions, which slowly grow more in opposition to the Party's tenets. He also falls in love with Julia, a fellow Outer Party member, and together they set out to rebel against the oppressive and controlling regime of Oceania. For a short time, they live quite happily in the hope

that they have outsmarted the Party, but Big Brother has watched them from the beginning, even before Winston began his diary. Caught by the Thought Police and a man they believed was their ally, Winston and Julia are sent to Room 101 in the Ministry of Love where they are both forced to accept that 'two plus two equals five'. This is a fundamental principle that has become the symbol of the Party's unlimited control, reaching even into the individual's mind. Defeated, Winston ends the narrative very different from Montag in *Fahrenheit 451*. He claims first that to "die hating [the Party], that was freedom" (*1984:* 294), but ends by admitting that he "loved Big Brother" (*1984:* 311). Consequently, it leaves the reader with possibly little hope that Orwell's vision of the future society was capable of change, as the Party has shown it truly controls everything.

Some critics have defined *1984* as anti-utopian rather than dystopian in this regard. In *Scraps of the Untainted Sky,* Moylan claims that Orwell, while

> powerfully [exposing] the terror of official utopianism as he has come to see it (Socialism), he also sets up a narrative structure that denies the possibility of an oppositional utopian resistance – be it in an organized formation, in the individual actions such as those of Winston and Julia, or in the everyday lives of the Proles (2000: 162).

Hope, Moylan goes on to argue, comes in the form of the Newspeak Appendix (*ibid.*). Since the narrative of *1984* revolves in a cycle of endless present, there is no open-ended parable with utopian horizon (Moylan 2000: 163), indicating that there is no hope for a better world without the Party. Despite these arguments, however, I will argue that *1984* stands firm in a didactic and moralistic point of view. The text gives ample warning to its readers, whether past or present, to beware the tyrants and the lures of complacency. As such, it has served its purpose as a dystopian literary text.

1.2   Dystopian fiction in schools

There are many reasons why this particular topic and these particular novels caught my attention. In recent years, there has been an upsurge of films, comics and literature that deal with a not-so-distant future gone wrong. They are not all dystopian. Some deal with dramatic climate change, nuclear world wars, post-apocalyptic worlds or worlds that have been affected by pandemics and viral outbreaks, resulting in

everything from genocide to living dead[3]. Films like *Equilibrium* (2002) and *V for Vendetta* (2005) introduced me to the specific dystopian genre in terms of having totalitarian, high-technological societies as their setting. Once I began to explore the genre, I realised there were texts dating back to the Enlightenment that all dealt with the idea of a utopia gone wrong, and I began to read. A frequent topic of interest was the uncertainty of the future. In our time, like in the past, we have issues of great concern. Among these are rapid technological progress, military conflicts, terrorism, epidemics and global warming. We wonder how they will play out in the future, how they will affect our way of living, and this is a topic that I find very interesting. It is also one I believe would be very relevant to take up in a classroom situation. As mentioned above, dystopias often have a didactic and moralistic quality. By using dystopian and anti-utopian literary texts such as *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984*, either as a whole or as excerpts, pupils may learn about the context in which they were written, the fears of the author for how his society would turn out, and compare them to their own fears or thoughts about our future based on the world we live in today. There are also other media such as films and comics that may be used in conjunction with these two novels, and which may provide a different approach to the topic for those who are somewhat weary of reading full-length novels or excerpts. Primarily, though, the novels chosen here are in my opinion exciting enough to interest the majority of the pupils. Should a full-length novel either be too advanced or intimidating for a pupil, he or she may read excerpts instead.

1.3   Terminology

In this thesis, there are two concepts that warrant further definition.

1.3.1   'Literary texts' in the classroom

While being used frequently in discussions of literature didactics and in other fields of literature, the term 'literary text' lacks a comprehensive definition. It has been and still is difficult to frame within a certain discourse. To some, a 'literary text' is a piece of high quality fiction, both in form, content and style. To others, it is simply all kinds of written fiction (drama, prose, poetry), no matter its quality. There are even those

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[3] These creatures have many names: zombies, undead, creatures, monsters, walking dead, etc.

who would include non-fiction in the category 'literary texts'. For clarity with regard to this thesis, I will turn to *The Oxford English Dictionary.* The first definition of 'literary' in the OED describes the term as an adjective "of or relating to the writing, study, or content of literature, esp. of the kind valued for quality of form" (OED 2012). With this in mind, I understand the term 'literary text' to possess a level of quality in content, form and style that is generally associated with literature such as fiction, in some cases including popular fiction. As such, non-literary texts would in my understanding include non-fiction genres such as newspapers, journal articles and blogs. In addition, I would define the texts written for school textbooks as non-literary. The reason for this is that most of these texts are either adapted versions of published texts, simplified narratives or factual descriptions that are written intentionally for specific themes in a textbook.

1.3.2 'Authentic texts' in the classroom

The term 'authentic texts' is used here to refer to published texts that are considered authentic in relation to the subject in question. While canonical texts may be included, 'authentic texts' do not necessarily require a certain level of quality as long as the texts say something about real life and contain real language. Textbook-designed texts are not seen as authentic, as these are often either simplified or adapted narratives that show perceptions of more generalised situations rather than real life. The relevance of 'authentic texts' in this thesis dates back to the previous national curriculum, L97, and a Norwegian tradition named after Gudmund Hernes. He was the Minister of Education, Research and Church Affairs in the period 1990-95, and launched a reform programme that emphasised the use and value of authentic texts in school. Included in L97 was a list of what was considered authentic texts and authors in each language subject. Teachers were encouraged to use these texts in the classroom as a way to expose the pupils to real language and "condensed life" instead of the textbook-designed text. As Eikrem puts it,

> [t]he significant role of literary texts [in L97] makes it possible to include in the TEFL[4] curriculum not only what traditionally has been defined as language (vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, structure, etc.), but also social practices, cultural codes and their ideological implications (1999: 24).

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[4] Abbr. 'The teaching of English as a foreign language' (Eikrem 1999: 9)

When the new curriculum, LK06, was launched in 2006, these lists were removed and the role of literature was less pronounced than in L97. The focus on personal development, ideological practices and cultural and social insight, which were all introduced in L97, is still important.[5] However, mention of specific literary texts have been replaced in LK06 by phrases such as "a representative selection of texts from literary-historical periods in English literature, from the Renaissance up to the present time", "a major piece of fiction" and "one lengthy literary work" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a). While this lack of specificity opens up for more freedom on the teacher's part in the selection of literary texts, it also presents the option to replace literary and authentic texts with other resources as long as it fulfils the competence aims.[6]

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[5] For further details, see section 2.1 (page 11), and 2.2 (page 13).
[6] For further discussion, see section 2.3 (page 16).

2   'Carriers of civilization': Literature and TEFL

> Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill.
> Barbara W. Tuchman

> A book is the most effective weapon against intolerance and ignorance.
> Lyndon Baines Johnson

Hennig[7] claims in *Litterær Forståelse* that "reading literature is an aesthetic experience that means something to the individual reader" (2010: 11). Literature gives us language and a way to structure objects, thoughts and events (Hennig 2010: 12). When the text and the reader meet, a new world is created that has never existed before or ever will exist in the same way again (Hennig 2010: 11). In other words, when the reader looks at the text, he or she interprets it through his or her 'glasses' of perception. If we turn to Piaget's constructivist theory of learning, we know that no two individuals share the exact same interpretation or understanding of a mental concept, object or abstract. We are affected by our experiences and by how we mentally catalogue concepts and emotions. This influence is both individual and social, with the former supporting Piaget's constructivism and the latter following Vygotsky's social-cultural theories of learning. For example, a young child might entertain the notion that the sun goes to sleep and wakes up just like he or she does. Once in school or kindergarten, however, the child would learn that the Earth actually turns on its axis to create night and day. This process of using one's own perceptions to create meaning could also be adapted for readers.

For instance, while a text may reflect norms and values from both the writer and the social context in which he or she wrote the text, readers are equally reflecting a social, cultural and historical background. A reader in 2012 would probably not have the same perception of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as a reader in 1886. A likely difference in perception could be found in how these two readers would draw upon their own and their society's views on science and medical knowledge to explain the mystery concerning the novel's protagonist. The two readers would in all likelihood have different answers to the question 'what happens when Dr

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[7] All references to and quotations from Hennig (2010) are my own translations.

Jekyll turns into Mr Hyde?' depending on how they and their surroundings perceive the world. According to the learning theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, when they read and interpret the text, they would both be influenced by their individual mental concepts, as well as their social and cultural context.

Importantly, this does not mean that all readers in 2012 would have the exact same experience and understanding of Stevenson's text. "We neither feel nor think in a vacuum", says Hennig (2010: 20). Our individual experiences, our mental catalogue of concepts and emotions, as well as the teachings of our society and environment, affect us all. As such, Hennig says the worlds created by the *individual* readers in a social setting such as classrooms should be the point of departure for teaching literature in schools (2010: 11, my emphasis). Ibsen and Wiland seem to be in agreement with this assessment, saying in *Encounters with Literature* that in

> theories about aesthetic learning, interaction is central, and such aesthetic interaction is defined as the communicative link between social, cultural, and mental processes, often spurred by a creative impulse or an aesthetic input. It is an effort to create a synthesis between social needs, inherited norms and values, and reality itself, in short it is the dialectics between an individual's experience and a collectively created system of meaning. (2000: 143)

When we read the same text and talk about it, sharing both our individual and combined interpretations, we create a new community in which literary worlds blend that will never exist in the same way again. Literature, being ambiguous enough for varied interpretations, becomes an important factor in what could be called "valuable aesthetic learning experiences" (Ibsen & Wiland 2000: 143). Ultimately, we wish to create meaning out of a literary text so that we may understand it, and sometimes we have a great need to do this collectively (as we may miss something profound on our own). In *Fahrenheit 451,* Montag desperately tries to force his wife and her friends into sharing the experience of reading 'Dover Beach' by Matthew Arnold, perhaps because his own aesthetic knowledge is so limited that he is unable to fully understand the poem on his own (*F451*: 99). In the classroom, however, there are often pupils with sufficient aesthetic knowledge who may still feel as if their own thoughts about a literary text are less valuable than the views of the teacher or a fellow pupil. The pupil might perceive the teacher or classmate as more clever, and thus their views are perceived to have more value. Consequently, the collective

becomes an important stage to either find support or challenge for the pupils' views. If plenary discussions seem too intimidating, dividing the class into smaller groups or pairs, with the teacher either listening in or participating, may encourage most pupils to be forthcoming about their views. An ideal classroom, in my opinion, should be a place where all pupils feel comfortable sharing their views, either orally or in written, as *all* perceptions of the literary text are acceptable. This, however, might be difficult to achieve on occasion, and would likely depend on factors such as the interpersonal relationships and dynamics in the classroom. Even so, it is an ideal that a teacher of literature should keep in mind.

2.1   Literature in the English classroom in Norway

According to Ibsen & Wiland in *Encounters with Literature*, literature "appeals to emotions, and thereby paves the way for a more profound and conscious attitude towards language" (2000: 12). Additionally, literature offers a "potential for personal growth, through identification with fictional characters and a different culture" (*ibid.*), a view that is also reflected in the *National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training*, or LK06 as it is abbreviated in Norwegian. In the English programme subject on the second and third level of upper secondary school, VG2 and VG3, the general purpose of the programme states that "English literature and other cultural expressions can be a wellspring of experience, satisfaction and personal growth" and that "the programme subject's broad approach to culture and society in the English-speaking world shall develop one's skills in critical analysis and reflection" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a). As such, literature seems to serve a central function in the English programme, both to be a platform for language teaching and to provide the pupils with a source of entertainment and insight into a different culture and history. In addition, literature is a tool to help the reader *think* (Hennig 2010: 12). As Hennig says, "reading literature is important because it enables the reader to better understand both himself and the world" (*ibid.*). As teachers, it is our wish to see that pupils develop skills and knowledge of literature, as well as the ability to communicate and use these two aspects (Hennig 2010: 11-12). When it comes to the practical implementation of literature in the English classroom, however, there is much to be left desired.

While literature didactics have been researched extensively in relation to the Norwegian classrooms, its application should also be considered very important in the foreign language classrooms such as English. Vestli[8] argues that while

> linguistic approaches have been integrated into foreign language didactics, literature has mainly become an "elite" discipline that has its traditional place in foreign language studies at graduate levels, where it is mainly canon-oriented (2008: 4).

Because of this, Vestli says, it might often seem as if there is a large gap between the literature and literary texts taught at university and the literature taught in schools, both in terms of the choice and level of the texts, and the method for working with them (*ibid.*). It seems to be Vestli's belief that many foreign language teachers might shy away from the use of literary texts that are either seen as too advanced, too long or too extensive to work with in the time allotted. Judging by my own experiences in practical-pedagogical education, many teachers employ the textbook as the sole source of literature in the classroom. The issue with textbooks, as discussed briefly in the definition of 'literary texts'[9], is that the texts are frequently designed by non-native speakers and does not contain perceptions of real life or real language. In relation to foreign languages in general, Vestli refers to an Austrian survey that claims no more than 5 % of the texts found in central textbooks may be classified as literary texts, and these are often the first to be left out if teachers believe there is not enough time to use them (2008: 4). Vestli believes that there is no reason to suspect conditions are any different in Norway (*ibid.*), and it might not be in terms of other foreign languages than English[10]. Still, if the intention of LK06 is for Norwegian pupils and students to learn and be exposed to authentic English as it is used in major English-speaking countries, then the texts that are chosen for reading in the classroom should reflect this. Exposing pupils to the more advanced language found in authentic texts might in turn further their linguistic abilities and vocabulary. Consequently, it might seem prudent to change tactics and re-introduce major, authentic literary texts

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[8] All references to and quotations from Vestli (2008) are my own translations.

[9] See page 6.

[10] Problematically, Vestli's paper does not specify which foreign languages were represented in this survey. While English is classified as a foreign language, it does have a higher status in Norway than for instance German, Spanish and French. The latter are not taught until 8th grade, while children begin to learn some English words as early as the 1st and 2nd grades. As such, they would be competent enough to read more advanced and authentic literary texts in lower and upper secondary school as opposed to those learning other foreign languages at the same time.

to the English classrooms at the VG2 and VG3 levels. If we take a closer look at LK06, we will see that the limit does not lie within the framework of the English programme subject.

2.2   English literature in LK06

Vestli points out that one of the primary functions of foreign language learning is to open doors to different cultures and increase our understanding of how people around the world live and think, which may also lead to personal growth for the pupil (2008: 5). The notion of personal growth echoes a trend in recent years, namely that constructivism and social-constructivism are gaining ground as leading learning theories in general pedagogics. Both learning theories feature a construction of identity, whether it be individual or in conjunction with society, and are highly valued in the classroom. As a way to "spiritual expansion of horizons and moral development", Skarðhamar[11] argues, studies of literary texts may help pupils achieve this growth (2011: 55).

In the English version of LK06, it is stated that the "English [programme subject] is both a utilitarian subject and educationally universal" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a). We may say that it is intended to educate the pupil in more than simply the language. However, 'educationally universal' is a rather awkward concept[12]. The Norwegian version of LK06 uses the term 'dannelse' to explain this 'other' education (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006b), but it might be better to use concepts like 'character formation' or 'personal development', as these are the closest English equivalents. They are terms that have specific social and cultural meanings in the school setting.

Historically, Norwegian schools were a place where pupils were expected to acquire certain mental and moral qualities besides pure academic knowledge and skills. In this regard, we may argue that character formation and personal development both signify a type of life-long, on-going social modification of manners, attitudes and values. A

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[11] All references to and quotations from Skarðhamar (2011) are my own translations.
[12] 'Educationally universal' is the official translation of 'dannelse' in the English version of LK06, which, in my opinion, is an appalling translation. To those who do not understand the Norwegian concept 'dannelse', 'educationally universal' would in all likelihood be misleading and confusing, hence my discussion on 'character formation' and 'personal development' as alternative translations.

person should acquire certain social skills deemed necessary by his society and culture, and to mature beyond childhood and youth to become a responsible adult. Any modification process would indicate that there is a social and cultural understanding of what is considered good and bad, for instance in terms of behaviour or manners. Simply put, we could argue that character formation, especially, is a synthesis of common knowledge, education and social manners, including social modification of attitudes and moral values. For example, in most societies it is generally considered polite and good manners to give up your seat on the bus for an elderly or disabled person, while speaking ill of others behind their back may be seen as bad manners. Personal development, though, may be a wider and less formal approach to character formation, and could be what both the Norwegian versions of L97 and LK06 try to encompass in the term 'dannelse'.

The notion of personal development was introduced as a key factor in L97: "the ultimate overarching aim of the Norwegian ten-year compulsory school is to give children and young people a broad preparation for life and to stimulate the development of the whole person" (Eikrem 1999: 24). Following this trend from L97, personal development in LK06 and TEFL clearly underlines that teachers are expected to fill the role as educators in more than just the ins and outs of the English linguistic system. They also have to consider social and cultural knowledge and context, including behaviour, attitudes, values and manners in a variety of settings, both formal and informal. Skarðhamar points to possible challenges in this regard: "[a] difference is that there is no longer an approximate consensus on [how to view humanity and the world], values and norms, religion and morals" (2011: 55). We have to keep in mind that our society is multicultural, with a multitude of values, norms and morals, some which might even be in opposition to each other. However, my argument is that this is where literary texts are especially suited for such a task. A literary text may represent "'condensed life' or real life related through an author", whereas language itself is a "social practice" and "a matter of ideology" (Eikrem 1999: 26). Being aware of ideological processes in language and literary texts, Eikrem argues, is important in order for pupils to "ask questions and be critical" (1999: 26), which in turn would further their "social and moral development" (Fosby Elsness 2007: 4, qtd. in Skarðhamar 2011: 57). With literary texts it is possible to study a variety of different worldviews or ideologies from a distance, and to use the

classroom to explore the questions and reflections pupils might come up with in plenary discussions. In addition, authentic literary texts are sources of authentic language. When combined with the above, this suggests how versatile their uses may be in the classroom. As Vestli argues, "literary texts […] take to heart the central – and more down-to-earth – competence aims" in all three main subject areas of the [foreign language] programme subject, as well as four of the five basic skills: reading, the ability to express oneself orally and in written form, and to use digital tools (2008: 6). By using literary texts, the pupil will be introduced to authentic language in different genres, as well as cultural discussions (*ibid.*).

In LK06, the importance of literature and literary texts is not forgotten, although it is not as explicitly specified as in L97. A third of the three English programme subjects at the VG2 and VG3 level deals with what has already been discussed above. It is mirrored in the main subject area named *Culture, society and literature*. The intentions of this particular subject area are clearly expressed (see examples 1-3 below).

(1)   [International English] deals with key themes related to international cooperation, cultural understanding, literature, different kinds of media and cultural expressions drawn from the English-speaking world. It is concerned with challenges facing international society, and with communication that spans cultural distinctions and dissimilar value systems.
(Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a)

(2)   [Social Studies English] deals with key issues related to culture and society in the English-speaking world, and covers factual prose, literature and other cultural expressions. It deals with political, social and economic circumstances in a number of English-speaking countries, with an emphasis on Great Britain and the Unites States. It also covers historical events and processes that have affected the development of society [in these two countries]. Furthermore, it is concerned with current issues and regional and international conflicts in the English-speaking world. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a)

(3)   [English Literature and Culture] deals with key issues related to literature and culture in the English-speaking world, and includes literary texts and other artistic means of expression, such as visual art, theatre, music and architecture

from various time periods and different parts of the world. It is about the relationship between text, culture and society. In addition, the main subject area covers historical processes that have led to the spread of the English language and Anglo-American culture, as well as current issues in international culture and the world of news. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a)

Based on these examples, LK06 does not suggest that literary texts are unsuited for teaching language and values that may lead to personal growth for the pupils. In fact, LK06 leaves room for interpretation by the individual teacher, the teacher collegium or the local school as to what the "key [and] current issues" entail, and which methods to use. Although the competence aims are supposed to narrow the field further from the general descriptions above, they are similarly open-ended, thereby giving teachers some freedom to choose whether they wish to use literary texts, non-literary texts or films to draw attention to a specific issue, and to use these works as a basis for further cultural, personal or societal discussions. Politically, though, these guidelines may change, but at the moment, they illustrate that teachers have been given more personal freedom to shape the pupils within a certain framework. In this regard, we could argue that it empowers them[13]. If that were the case, I would suggest that teachers must possess certain levels of competence.

2.3   Teacher competence and English literature

In my opinion, the freedom – and power – to choose within the LK06 framework comes with responsibility. As teachers, our duty is to set the stage for learning processes in the classroom, and to guide pupils within their zone of proximal learning. It is my opinion that a teacher who chooses his or her own topics and methods should be competent in these so that s/he fulfils this objective. There are many critics who agree with me. In terms of literature didactics, they have pointed to teacher competence as a vital factor in teaching literature in the classroom (Hennig 2010, Ibsen & Wiland 2000, Vestli 2008). The reasons behind this claim are many. For instance, Hennig believes that the teacher may hinder the pupils' desire to read, which is the first and foremost challenge to teaching literature:

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[13] For further discussion on power relations in the classroom, see section 3.4 (page 32).

> [i]f the teacher is not a literary person with textual competence and [does not have the] ability to enjoy literary experiences, including organised reflection, it will be difficult to create enthusiasm in the classroom (2010: 77).[14]

While there is no empirical data to support Hennig's claim, I believe that many would at least agree that an unmotivated teacher, or a teacher who does not know what s/he is doing and why, would most likely create a majority of unmotivated pupils. However, as there are too many issues regarding teacher competence to mention here, I have decided to focus on three aspects that I deem the most important, namely knowledge, communication and motivation. These are in my opinion inter-connected.

According to Vestli, literature in LK06 should first and foremost support "language training and […] cultural communication" (2008: 14). As previously mentioned, there are as many interpretations of a literary text as there are individuals. There are also as many opinions on what is good or bad literature, what is exciting to read and what is not, and what kind of genres appeal more than others. In the classroom, it is therefore necessary to have someone knowledgeable who may assume the role of mediator, guide and leader. Teaching literature should form its basis on what the literature-loving teacher enjoys about literature and reading (Hennig 2010: 74). While pupils should have the opportunity to *uncritical and extensive reading*, where they choose on their own what they want to read" (*ibid.*), they "should [also] have the opportunity to read [literary] texts they would not normally choose on their own – literature that challenges the familiar and makes us see things in a new way" (Hennig 2010: 76). In addition, they should also be able to read and work with the literary texts in a critical manner (Vestli 2008: 9, 12-13).

To be able to adapt to all of these situations, a teacher should have extensive knowledge of and enjoy a variety of literature in terms of genre, quality and length, and also of various working methods. Knowing both the content and form of the literary texts gives the teacher an advantage when it comes to creating a framework for working with them in the classroom, as well as which texts to choose. As Vestli says,

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[14] Additionally, Hennig wonders if a teacher may hinder a pupil's joy of reading when it must meet certain requirements, for instance that a pupil must read a certain number of pages between lessons, read books s/he did not choose, answer questions about everything, etc. These are demands, says Hennig, that we would not put upon ourselves as readers (2010: 71).

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 (2008: 14).

Context is an important keyword here. Although pupils should be encouraged to value their own views on the literary texts, a teacher may in some cases provide a more extensive and contextual view that might otherwise be unavailable to the pupil at his present stage in the zone of proximal learning. A teacher who has read extensively might also be more open to use literary texts beyond the textbook, which Vestli considers a current tradition in the classroom that should be challenged, and treat the uniqueness of the specific literary text properly (2008: 15). In addition, a teacher may also delve into the literature and the topic for discussion *with* the pupils. Rather than simply teaching them what s/he knows, the teacher may in this instance expand his or her own horizons and understanding of a text by taking part in the classroom discourse as an equal. Perhaps the pupils may offer a view of the text that the teacher has not seen before.[15]

In order for the pupils to benefit from the teacher's knowledge, it is very important how s/he communicates in the classroom. Poor communication may lead to declining interest on the part of the pupils, which in turn may affect the pupils' motivation and desire to read. Often, a bored pupil is a disruptive pupil. It falls to the teacher, then, to not only maintain a solid communication and dialogue with the pupils that keep them from losing interest, but also to motivate them. I would argue that this is closely connected to the teacher's own motivation. Some of the more engaging teachers are those that clearly let their own enthusiasm show through what they say and do. These will often inspire most of the pupils to view reading literature as something fun. The teachers that clearly do not enjoy teaching literature will rarely have a majority of pupils that do.

Many critics have pointed to 'the literary dialogue' as both a challenging and rewarding working method in the classroom, among many others (Hennig 2010, Vestli 2008). In the case of the teacher, Vestli claims, s/he "must have good

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[15] This would also remove the inferior-superior relationship that may otherwise be present in the classroom, given that teachers are normally in a position of power (see section 3.4, page 32).

knowledge of the [literary] text, and […] must have the ability to be attentive to the pupils' input" in order for the dialogue to become rewarding (2008: 17). On the part of the pupils, their textual competence and ability to express it, as well as their personal and social situation as basis for their response to the text, may become challenges to the outcome of the dialogue (Hennig 2010: 78, Vestli 2008: 17-18). Another challenge for both teacher and pupil is the actual character of the chosen text, including its ability to facilitate a response from the reader (Hennig 2010: 78). If we are able to overcome these challenges, however, the literary dialogue should be an ideal method to discuss and work with a literary text in the discourse of the classroom. As quoted in Vestli,

> the every-day dialogue is the most common arena for communicating culture […]. In the every-day dialogue we exchange reading experiences: We express our enthusiasm, difficulties, solutions, what we like and do not like, and we compare [it] with reality and with other texts that we have read (Helgevold, Vik & Hoel 2005: 18; 2008: 17-18).

To sum up, a teacher should have extensive knowledge about content and form of literature, as well as knowledge about context and theme. S/he should be motivated and be able to communicate both his or her motivation and knowledge so that it may benefit the pupils. With these abilities, a teacher should be encouraged to use literary texts other than the texts found in textbooks, as these are sources of both authentic language and insights into a foreign country's culture, society and history. However, a teacher should also be aware that s/he is in a position of power, which section 3.4 will discuss further.

3   The power of discourse

> You see these dictators on their pedestals, surrounded by the bayonets of their soldiers and the truncheons of their police. On all sides they are guarded by masses of armed men, cannons, aeroplanes, fortifications, and the like - they boast and vaunt themselves before the world, yet in their hearts there is unspoken fear. They are afraid of words and thoughts; words spoken abroad, thoughts stirring at home - all the more powerful because forbidden - terrify them. A little mouse of thought appears in the room, and even the mightiest potentates are thrown into panic. They make frantic efforts to bar our thoughts and words; they are afraid of the workings of the human mind.
>
> Winston Churchill, "The Defence of Freedom and Peace (The Lights are Going Out)", October 16, 1938

History provides us with many examples of how far social groups and individuals are willing to go in order to strangle or censor what they consider dissentious or "incorrect" ideas and values. Personally, I believe that there are three major ways to accomplish this. First, it might be done in public but relatively peacefully, such as officially condemning a specific or general way of thinking or set of ideas. An example of this could be the Chinese government's reaction of disapproval when Liu Xiaobo received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. Second, it might be done both publicly and violently, as shown by the 22/7 Oslo bombing and Utøya massacre in Norway in 2011, which according to the perpetrator Anders Behring Breivik was carried out to make the nation aware of – and to stop – 'dangerous' third-world and Muslim immigration. A third variant, but perhaps the most important trend to look out for, is the more subtle and unnoticed approach. Nothing is more dangerous than complacency and ignorance, shown at its most extreme in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. If a trend is not questioned, it is allowed to put down roots and grow into something that is eventually out of the masses' control – or even awareness. To use *Fahrenheit 451* as an example, the downfall of literature and independent thought might begin with a sentence removed from a classical work, which opens up the possibility to remove a paragraph, a page, a chapter, and eventually the entire book. The method of removal, or censoring, might take many forms. In *Fahrenheit 451,* the system destroys literature by fire, a highly visible and noticeable method, while in Orwell's *1984,* the ruling Party edits and revises literature in secret until the original content is far from recognisable, if not completely rewritten.

When someone turns to censorship of literature as an act to silence ideas, values and thoughts, it suggests that there is something about literature and language that is powerful. Why else would the character Syme, a loyal worker for the system, say in *1984*, "It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words" (*1984*: 54), if not for the hint that words – and discourse – hold some kind of power?

3.1 Definition of 'discourse'

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'discourse' is "communication of thought by speech" or "conversation" (OED 2012). In other words, communication is intrinsically part of human society. If we remove it, what would be left? At the very least, it is an interesting question to pose. Although communication is not something solely restricted to humans, nor only in the form of speech, it is one of our major forms of interaction. Through body language, sounds, colours, textures and scents, we communicate on every level that we are able to sense, even if we might not always be aware of it at the time. Different types of discourse develop through seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. For instance, some of us may associate the colour black with death or fear, or the heat of a fire with something good. It is not easy to say whether these associations are the result of centuries of poetic language and cultural stereotypes, or something else. What we could say, however, is that literature often reflects the negative and positive impressions we have towards our surroundings. The words and phrases we choose to describe things are part of a discourse, which is why discourse is a highly relevant topic for linguistic studies.

The term 'discourse', as indicated by the OED's definition above, relates to two-way communication. In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, the meaning of 'discourse'*,* as used within the field of linguistics, is defined as "the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning; language that is studied, usually in order to see how the different parts of a text are connected" (Hornby 2005: 435). While this particular definition focuses on the spoken and written language we use for communication, critical discourse analysts have in recent years also included other aspects such as layout, framing and artwork. These are primarily researched in relation to newspaper discourse, as pictures and positioning are often used in conjunction with stories to spark a reaction in the reader on a subconscious level.

While newspapers are trying to merely report the facts, their use of specific pictures and layout may more often than not reveal their moral judgement or political inclinations. However, these strategies are not restricted to newspapers. We find similar examples in for instance advertising or political propaganda. Their common denominator is that they take advantage of the instinctual human reaction to what we see or hear. For example, humans may have different notions of who looks 'good' and 'evil', depending on cultural conditioning and dominant discourse in their society. In the decades leading up to WW2, the so-called 'Jew nose', among other derogatory characteristics, was used to stigmatise and justify the Nazi persecution of Jews, whereas the Caucasian, blonde and blue-eyed Aryan was considered the ideal and superior 'good'. We see similar discursive practices today. After 9/11, Western discourse related to 'The War on Terror' has in all likelihood contributed to an increased distrust, or at the very least scepticism, towards people of Middle Eastern descent. In contrast, the Christian Westerner – most likely white – is more probable to be seen as the 'good' counterpart, although official authorities have never expressed this outright. However, thoughts of this kind may show themselves in the subtle ways discourse is used.

3.2   Us vs. Them: Discourse and propaganda

In *Scraps of the Untainted Sky,* Moylan says that "discursive power [in dystopian fiction is] exercised in the reproduction of meaning and the interpellation[16] of subjects [as] as parallel and necessary force [to the material force of the economy and the disciplinary apparatuses]" (2000: 148). Creating a contrast between Us and Them is one of the major strategies of any propaganda and rhetoric. Social groups and individuals will always compete for the values, ideas and thoughts they think ought to be dominant. After all, these ideologies define the society and set a standard for how all the different elements and people should be balanced or work together. The primary tool in this competition, whether in real life or in fiction, is discourse. There cannot be propaganda without discourse. As Moylan states, "the conflict of the [dystopian] text has often turned on the control of language" (2000: 148). A fight

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[16] Meaning 'the act of bringing into being or give identity to (of an individual or category)'. From Althusser's theories. (See for example: Ngyuen, C. Interpellation. University of Chicago. Available at: http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/interpellation.htm [Accessed October 26, 2012].)

between social groups is a fight between ideological propaganda. In some instances, two ideologies may reach a form of stalemate, as seen in the Cold War, whereas other times one will dominate over the other, as seen in *1984* with Winston's futile attempt to rebel against the Party.

For the past two decades, this fight for power through discourse has been the topic for research among many discourse analysts. Critical discourse analysis, as the field is called, "primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk 2008: 85). As van Dijk explains it, CDA "aims to offer a different 'mode' or 'perspective' of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field [of discourse studies]", naming "pragmatics, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetoric, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography [and] media analysis" among the areas of interest (*ibid.*). While primarily addressing "social problems", CDA claims that "power relations are discursive" and that discourse "constitutes society and culture", "does ideological work", is "historical" and "a form of social action", and that it mediates between "text and society" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 271-80, qtd. in van Dijk 2008: 86). In other words, CDA brings political and societal issues into discourse analysis and finds explanations to, for example, how power relations are either upheld or brought down by current discourse.

In CDA, discourse is analysed on both a micro and macro level to form a more complete image of how it functions in a specific setting and with a specific social group. This is because discourse and language in general are neither good nor bad. The choice of specific words or phrases might bring to mind associations that are negative or positive in certain cultural settings, but the words themselves are not necessarily biased either way. In *Discourse and Power,* van Dijk details that "[l]anguage use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro level of the social order", while "[p]ower, dominance, and inequality between social groups (…) belong to the macro level of analysis" (2008: 87). The two levels are two halves of a whole, so to prove that discourse is powerful they should be considered equally important from an analytical point of view. To use a previous example, the image of and the phrase "Jew nose" would in all likelihood have been less or non-effective in the Nazi propaganda if it appeared on its own without an additional

discursive context that attached a variety of negative values and ideas to it. As such, we should look at both specific language use and context to see how discourse functions on the micro and macro level.

3.2.1   Language: Lexis and other textual strategies[17]

According to Richardson, lexis is the first micro-textual point of analysis. Other textual strategies include rhetoric, naming and reference, and predication (2007: 47, 49, 52), which all serve to shape perceptions of especially events and its participants. "[But] words," Richardson says, "convey the imprint of society and of value judgements in particular – they convey connoted as well as denoted meanings" (2007: 47). As seen in the pre-WW2 Nazi discourse concerning Jews, the choice of words (pragmatics) and the meaning of words (semantics) become important markers of value judgements. There are similar examples in *1984*, such as in Winston's description of Goldstein during the Two Minutes Hate:

> It was a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard—a **clever** face, and yet somehow **inherently despicable**, with a kind of **senile silliness** in the long, thin nose near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled **the face of a sheep**, and the voice, too, had **a sheeplike quality**. (*1984*: 14, my emphasises)

On the one hand, Goldstein might be looked upon like a grandfatherly figure with white hair and spectacles, but at the same time the choice of specific words turn him into a caricature, someone to be ridiculed and targeted with Oceania's fierce hatred.

In *Fahrenheit 451,* however, it is not necessarily the choice of words that reflects the system's values, but rather the lack of them. Behind the extreme form of censorship in Montag's society is a belief that the difference of opinion and values in literature inevitably leads to unhappiness. Hence, the system executes an extreme form of political correctness. Discourse and literature is completely stripped of substance and values so that no one will be offended and everyone will be happy. The irony, though, lies in the system's establishment of the firemen to achieve this goal. As Captain Beatty, the head of the fire department, says: "we're [i.e. the firemen] the Happiness

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[17] Parts of the following two sections (3.2.1 and 3.2.2) have previously been used in my home exam in ENG-3003, "Newspaper Language", at the University of Tromsø, autumn 2011. It is reproduced here with revisions.

Boys […]. We stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought" (*F451:* 62). "Those", we may theorise, are understood to be writers, readers and intellectuals. It would therefore seem that in its intention to make people happy by removing differences, the system has nevertheless created an Us vs. Them discourse in the firemen and their perceived opponents.

Both *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* have elements that support van Dijk's theory of discursive expression of social groups (1998), in which words, and particularly metaphors, serve a function of differentiating between Us and Them. Metaphors, especially, appear to be used in order to shape perceptions of a societal or political issue, such as in the case of firemen as "the Happiness Boys" and Goldstein as a "sheep". In addition, the final level of micro-textual analysis – syntax and syntax constructions – serves to put added emphasis on one thing or the other. Among these constructions are for instance usage of transitivity, which modifies the sentences in terms of active and passive, and modality, which indicates the author's attitudes and commitment (Richardson 2007: 54-62).

Texts may also be analysed on a macro-textual level. Here, rhetoric is one of the important strategies, and highly relevant when discussing propaganda. Richardson, who bases his definition on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, claims there are three different varieties of rhetorical discourse. Each have "specific rhetorical goals and hence tend to adopt special topics in articulating, and specific means in fulfilling, such goals" (2007: 157). Firstly, *forensic* rhetoric "concerns itself with the *past*", uses "accusation and defence, and its special topics are the justice and injustice of actions (allegedly) committed by the defendant" (*ibid.*). Captain Beatty, when talking with Montag about the history of book burning, defends the past – and current – actions made by the system (*F451:* 57-62). The second variant, *epideictic* rhetoric, is "concerned with the *present* [and] its means are praise and censure, and its special topics are honour and dishonour" (*ibid.*). An example of this could be Winston's praise of the fictional Comrade Ogilvy's life and death, whose commemoration he wrote on the orders from his superiors (*1984:* 49-50). Last, we have *deliberative* rhetoric, which "is concerned with the *future*", uses "inducement and dissuasion, and its specials topics are the advantageous and disadvantageous" (*ibid.*). In this case, we may use both the Two

Minutes Hate (*1984:* 13-18) and Captain Beatty's conversation with Montag about book burning (*F451:* 57-60) as examples. Both scenes indicate what the respective systems – in the forms of Big Brother and the firemen – believe are the best approaches to society's future: rejection and ridicule of Goldstein and his democratic values on the one hand, and destruction of books and dissension on the other.

If we combine the micro- and macro-textual strategies mentioned so far, we have examples of strategies that may be used in van Dijk's theory of *'the ideological square'*. It is an evaluative structure used in discourse that (1) emphasise *our* good properties/actions; (2) emphasise *their* bad properties/actions; (3) mitigate *our* bad properties/actions; and (4) mitigate *their* good properties/actions (van Dijk 1998: 33, my emphasis). This square is central to the Us vs. Them discourse, as it functions to promote the ideological self-interest of a group and demote the interests of other social groups (*ibid.*). Accordingly, it is highly relevant when analysing propaganda and political discourse, as well as personal discourse, in dystopian literary texts like *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*.

3.2.2   Context: Ideology

On the macro level of CDA, the pure analysis of language is put aside to look more closely at the ideas, thoughts and values – or ideology – that lie behind a particular occurrence of discourse. According to the OED, 'ideology' is the study of ideas, but also "[a] systematic set of ideas, usually relating to politics, economics, or society and forming the basis of action and policy" (2012). Although the term is usually attributed to and associated with the three fields mentioned by the OED, it could certainly be argued that a systematic set of ideas is not solely restricted to political, philosophical or economic theories. As van Dijk states, "[t]he concept of 'ideology' is one of the most elusive notions in the social sciences" (1998: 23). We could use it to describe any systematic set of ideas within society, whether it is the ideology, ethics and values favoured by teachers, journalists, sports fans or the military. At the very least, ideology serves a distinct social function. Van Dijk claims that this social function is not only evident in the physical and social interactions between members in a group, but also on a cognitive level (1998: 22). Within each individual, the systematic set of socially shared ideas and beliefs about politics, economics, football supporters,

military hierarchy and other social issues is reflected in a mental dimension. In a way, we could say that society does not only exist in the material world, but also cognitively. Each of us carries a set of notions of how the world and our society is structured, and which values, attitudes and beliefs we feel are or should pre-dominate our actions and interactions. It is because of this socio-cognitive perspective, van Dijk claims, that we are

> able to explain in detail how social ideologies 'monitor' the everyday practices of social actors like journalists, and conversely, how ideologies are formed and changed through the everyday interaction and discourse of members in societal contexts of group relations and institutions like the press. (1998: 22-23)

Because we share a mental representation of society with other like-minded, we are affected when an institution or a group member make a statement that either challenges or agrees with our ideology. In *1984*, Winston begins to question the Party after receiving orders to eliminate three people from history – from existence – who he knows for a fact exists. He is therefore happy to find someone like-minded in Julia. Similarly, Montag begins to wonder about the system in *Fahrenheit 451* when he meets and talks with Clarisse, who makes him aware of things he and society have forgotten. He, too, is content once he meets up with fellow escapees outside the city who share his newfound beliefs.

These examples prove a point. In order to make sure the intended audience is reached, the group member need to operate on the same ideological level as that of the audience. To use Richardson's words regarding journalists, he or she needs to be both "a subject who is produced by society" and "a subject who acts to support or change that society" (2007: 29). Journalistic discourse, argues Richardson, is one active element in bringing about such change through shaping understandings, influencing audience attitudes and beliefs (particularly through their reinforcement), and transforming the consciousness of those who read and consume it (*ibid.*). Arguably, we could say this holds true for any discursive practice, including the discourse found in literary texts.

Richardson's argument resounds quite clearly in the mass media-dominated society of *Fahrenheit 451*, where the citizens are constantly bombarded with sensations through

wall-sized televisions and Seashell radios. Although their senses are laden to the point where citizens feel something akin to adrenaline-induced contentment, none of the programs on television or radio carry any particular intellectual substance, which is the system's intention. Consequently, literary texts become important didactic channels for developing, for instance, the ability of critical thinking, as well as serving as historic reminders of the past.

Richardson's argument is similarly relevant for *1984*'s various levels of discourse, ranging from public propaganda to personal conversations. Each section of the Ingsoc society works towards a single goal: to maintain the hegemony of the Inner Party. Literature and the past are edited to reflect a never-ending present. The accommodations and comfort items given to Outer Party members, such as cigarettes and gin, are labelled 'Victory' (*1984:* 6-7), reinforcing the image that the system the Party members work for is victorious in its endeavours and societal structure. Despite the obvious fact that these so-called 'luxury' items are far from high quality, Outer Party members have no choice but to accept and take part in the notion that their society is not supposed to be any other way. In this way, discourse is used to maintain the pretence that power is shared equally between the Outer Party and Inner Party. In addition, it discourages the thought that change is possible, or even desirable, considering that the Outer Party has already achieved 'Victory'.

The quotations from Richardson reflect what has already been discussed previously with van Dijk's views. All individuals are actors in a physical society, as well as carriers of a cognitive understanding of society, and ideologies may be shared within groups of like-minded individuals. Journalists, bureaucrats, writers and readers are both individuals and members of a social group. The complexity lies in that people do not only belong to one particular group, but to a range of social groups that each has its own sets of values, ideas and attitudes. As concerns newspapers, van Dijk argues that "ideologies and opinions of newspapers are usually not personal, but *social, institutional* or *political"* (1998: 22). The same may be said for all kinds of institutions, including the Fire Department in *Fahrenheit 451* and the Party in *1984*. However, while institutions have their own sets of ideas, values and attitudes, group members do not necessarily conform completely to the particular institution's ideology, as seen with Montag and Winston.

In *1984*, Winston begins to write his own diary, and in *Fahrenheit 451,* Montag starts to read books. Both acts are in clear violation of their society's views on creativity, intellectualism and thought control. Both men are supposed to be governed by their respective elite power's ideology, but instead they represent what van Dijk argues is one of the basic discursive expressions of ideology, namely an indirect statement about Self and Others, or Us and Them (1998: 25). It is a common way to differentiate between groups and individuals that have different opinions, values, and attitudes, especially in a negative way. By drawing a line between Us and Them, a group indicates who may become a member, as well as which activities, goals, values, resources and position they have as opposed to or in relation to other groups. In short, the group defines which homogenous views the group members should reflect as well as promote. Thus, when a group member decides to go against the group, he or she will automatically become one of Them or Others in the eyes of the group. In a totalitarian society, where homogeneity is the desired norm, this becomes a powerful act of rebellion, which is why many dystopian literary texts feature a system that seeks to prevent these acts before they occur.

3.3   Combining the micro and macro level of discourse: Censorship

So far, it would seem that Richardson and van Dijk are offering some rather hopeful views that dysfunctional or totalitarian societies may change through discourse. Sisk and Chomsky might share these sentiments, albeit critically. Sisk argues that "[t]he fear that language could be manipulated in order to control thought has remained powerful since the turn of the century", which is why "concern over language has served as the most timeless dystopian apprehension" (1997: 163). It is not only to gain control over discourse, but also over memory. As Moylan argues:

> An important result of the reappropriation of language by the dystopian misfits and rebels is the reconstruction of empowering memory. With the past suppressed and the present reduced to the empirica [18]of daily life, dystopian subjects usually lose all recollection of the way things were before the new order, but by regaining language they also recover the ability to draw on the alternative truths of the past and "speak back" to hegemonic power (2000: 149).

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[18] E.g. trivialities

Moylan cites Baccolini on this topic, who claims that "journeying to the past through memory often coincides with the realization that what is gone represented a better place and time" (Baccolini 1996: 345, qtd. in *ibid:* 149).

Media, technology and public discourse, as shown in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*, are primary examples of how discourse is used to control thought, attitudes and memory[19]. It is not solely restricted to dystopian fiction. In relation to the growth of Western mass media and new information technologies in the 1980s, Chomsky points out that rather than "providing [citizens of Western democracies] with the information needed for the intelligent discharge of political responsibilities," the media have instead served "to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state" (Herman & Chomsky 1988: 298, qtd. in Sisk 1997: 165). As such, one might believe Chomsky does not see the hope in discourse being used for good. If we recall the examples of Us vs. Them discourse in relation to "The War of Terror"[20] we might understand what Chomsky means. However, Sisk argues that Chomsky believes an "instinct for freedom", if it exists, "finds strong expression in language" (1997: 167). He claims further,

> Chomsky's avowed belief in language as both a means of expression and a metaphor of free will has always been at the heart of dystopian literature. […] The more actively characters in these dystopias pursue language as their key to freedom, the greater the degree of hope we find on the novels' surface (*ibid.*).

It is precisely this notion of hope that ultimately proves that discourse holds some kind of power, particularly in the way that the system in dystopian societies seeks to censor what it considers erroneous ideas, values and attitudes. As Booker says:

> The governments described in dystopian literature tend to focus their energies on language not only because it is a potentially powerful tool with which to control and manipulate their subjects but also because language may harbor powerfully subversive energies that such governments would like to suppress (1994: 19).

Censorship, as a preventative method, could arguably have both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, it clearly states what is considered dissident and indicates

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[19] See chapter 4 for further details.
[20] See page 23.

what the dominant power fears most, thereby giving any rebels both cause and something to rally around. On the other hand, it states in frank terms what is considered the dominant or 'correct' way of thinking, excluding anything that does not fit the norm and thereby functioning in a negative manner. Of course, it is possible to flip this opinion around depending on our point of view. In short, however, the existence of censorship proves without a doubt that there is something in discourse that indicates power, just as much as it indicates powerlessness. There is something to be silenced and there is something to be said, and these two counterparts create power relations that dictate how a system functions.

3.4   Discourse and power in the classroom

Whereas Chomsky, Richardson and van Dijk look to the role of the mass media as a way to socially control thought, attitudes and memory, Foucault looks towards the institutional systems of prisons, schools, hospitals and factories. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault theorises upon a new form of discipline that emerged in the 20th century. This discipline emphasises a "gentler" way of punishment, as opposed to torture and summary execution. The point, he argues, is "not to punish less, but to punish better" (1977: 82). Punishment of criminals should serve the good of society, for instance in the form of labour, but at the same time there should be total control. As Foucault says,

> In the old system, the body of the condemned man became the king's property, on which the sovereign left his mark and brought down the effects of his power. Now he will be rather the property of society, the object of a collective and useful appropriation (1977: 109).

In a way, we could argue that this resembles what happens to Winston in *1984*, which, in itself, is a powerful image of total control. Rather than simply be executed for his resistance to the system, Winston must first be "reformed" in Room 101. Once he has embraced and admitted his love for the system, he's allowed back into society and would, eventually, undergo a public execution. O'Brien, the novel's representative of the elite power, calls this "re-integration" (*1984*: 273): "We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves" (*1984:* 269). Winston would, according to

Foucault's theories, become a "docile" body, someone who has been explored, broken down and rearranged by a "machinery of power" (1977: 138)[21].

Disciplinary measures as those found in *1984* are certainly extreme, but they illustrate what could happen if a system decides to abuse its power. If we follow Foucault's way of thinking, a punitive system may function in similar manners to other institutions such as schools, albeit in far less extreme circumstances. Like prisons, schools have a set timetable and framework for what its denizens – both teachers and pupils – should do at specific times. The government decide educational policy and curriculums, as well as which topics will be covered in national examinations. The local school administration decides how classes, programme subjects and breaks will be organised in a week. In the classroom, teachers decide which topics pupils should study within the respective programme subjects at any given time. On behalf of society, teachers are also in charge of a form of social control, or discipline, which is the element that Foucault believes "makes" individuals: "[discipline] is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (1977: 170). Through discipline, those with the power may shape the individual as they wish, for instance to ensure that the individuals will become productive, knowledgeable members of society. This relates to my previous discussion on "character formation" and "personal development" in section 2.2[22], but here I will look more closely at the role of the teacher and the school system in relation to discipline, discourse and power.

Discipline in schools, while far less severe than in prisons, still serve the same purpose as some of the more "gentle" ways to reformation that Foucault mentions in *Discipline and Punish*. It is intended, for instance, to modify behaviour, to encourage good skills and abilities while discouraging the bad, and promote certain cultural, historical and social discourse. "The means of correct training", as Foucault puts it (1977:170), revolve around three methods: (1) hierarchal observation, (2) normalising judgement, and (3) examination.

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[21] Gutting exemplifies this with military boot camps, where soldiers are made rather than originally chosen for certain suitable attributes. Specific routines and practices are drilled into the soldiers, so that they become "bodies that not only do what we want, but do it precisely in the way that we want [it done]" (2005: 82).
[22] See page 13.

Foucault argues that in "the perfect camp, all power would be exercised solely through exact observation" (1977: 171). His theory on hierarchal observation claims that, through surveillance, it is possible to indirectly transform an individual's behaviour and attitudes. In the classroom, with pupils facing the front, a teacher's seat by the blackboard enables him or her to see everything that goes on, and his or her body language could function as a silent reminder of the power he or she possesses. Foucault believes that this would ensure that pupils would not cheat, disturb the class with noise or chatter, and generally not waste time with things other than schoolwork (1977: 201). Implied in this assumption is the fact that pupils are in all likelihood aware that if they are caught doing something "wrong" in terms of discipline, they will be punished. Consequently, most pupils are paying attention to for instance the teacher's body language as an indicator of when they need to modify their behaviour.

In relation to this, and based on the competence aims set down by the national curriculum (LK06), the teacher assesses and compares the pupils' conduct and performance in class. Foucault calls this normalising judgement. He claims that the "whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable", exemplifying some disciplinary "offences" in the classroom with lateness, interruptions of tasks, inattention, negligence, impoliteness, disobedience, insolence, idle chatter, "incorrect attitudes" and indecency (1977: 178-179). Offences such as these, combined with for instance the aims of LK06, serve to create a dichotomy of what should be considered normal and abnormal. Needless to say, most people fear to be labelled abnormal. To many pupils, who are at an age where identity is one of the primary interpersonal issues, the fear of being categorized as abnormal or different may serve to dictate his or her behaviour and aptitude, thereby functioning as a self-modifying method of discipline.

It is in this regard that it is very important for the teacher to be aware of the power s/he may possess, and how to act accordingly. Through evaluations, grades, praise and reproach, the teacher make differential value judgements based on a personal, institutional or governmental norm, or multiple ideologies as discussed in section 3.2. We could argue that the teacher's discourse in the classroom demonstrates that there is a power relation between teachers and pupils. Foucault would argue that pupils, like prison inmates and soldiers, become "docile" bodies that are both subjects and objects

of the elite power. Discipline and discourse both serve to reinforce the image that pupils are the inferior part of the relationship, and that they need to be imprinted with the values and needs of the ones in power to become productive subjects of society. In this way, they are objectified. Examination, the third method of Foucault's theory on "correct training", combines the former two methods in this regard as a

> technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them [e.g. the pupils] in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects (1977: 187).

Whether national, regional or local, examination serves as an ultimate form of objectification of pupils. Rather than individuals who are praised for their uniqueness, they are reduced to a student number and compared to a national norm, and then become part of a wide range of statistics. The marks they receive on their examinations and diploma, whether academic or behavioural, often decide their eligibility in higher education, the job market and a number of other arenas. Based on Foucault's theories, discourse and discipline would therefore work as a form of social control, in which the individual becomes not only "an 'ideological' representation of society", but also "a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I [e.g. Foucault] have called 'discipline'" (1977: 194). In this regard, the teacher-pupil dynamics of the classroom does not seem too far removed from the power relations and more extreme methods of discipline found in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*.

However, the Norwegian classrooms today have changed in many ways from the Western school systems Foucault based his theories on in the 1970s[23]. Physical disciplinary measures have been replaced by oral and written remarks that could have a negative impact on a pupil's evaluation of order and conduct. Parents have also largely become part of the discipline, where, depending on the "offence" to use Foucault's word, they may be contacted by the teacher or principal and be called for a meeting, or receive a written note about the pupil's conduct. Additionally, pupils are in greater detail aware of their academic and social rights in the classroom, thus

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[23] Foucault looked especially at the development of general Western institutional systems, such as the French and American, in the 20th century. Consequently, his theories might deviate from the development of the Norwegian school system at the same time. Physical discipline, for instance, was not used as an officially sanctioned method of discipline since the middle of the 20th century. It would rather depend on the individual teacher.

balancing parts of the power relation between teachers and pupils. If it is within their rights, the pupils may even successfully request a new teacher. As for the teachers, most teacher education programmes today encourage them to have authority rather than be authoritarian[24], and many different teaching methods work to equalize the balance between pupils and teachers[25]. With this development in today's Norwegian school system, we might question Foucault's relevance. As stated earlier, his theories on discipline and discourse in institutions are extreme, but they do show how far it could go if a system should choose to intentionally abuse its power, which is shown at different extremes in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*. Both Winston and Montag find themselves in situations where they are under observation by the system, where they are expected to conform to the system's preferred homogeneity, and where they eventually reach a point of ritualised examination that decide their fate.[26] How they respond to their respective 'examinations' demonstrates how the system may or may not be defeated. In the case of Montag, *Fahrenheit 451* seems to suggest that the system was set up for self-destruction with the bombing of the cities, which was advantageous for Montag's escape. Winston, however, is rendered powerless by the system. As Foucault would say, he was broken down and made into a "docile body" that would always be a subject – and object – of the system. Compared to Winston, pupils in Norwegian school system have far more power to change their circumstances. While teachers still retain certain disciplinary measures and discourse that give them power in the classroom, their roles have changed historically from strictly authoritarian to a more mellowed possession of authority. Even so, Foucault's theories on discipline and power remain relevant in its most basic terms. The teacher could, whether intentionally or inadvertently, abuse his or her power in the classroom, which could be very detrimental to a pupil's personal and social development. Subsequently, teachers must be aware of the power in their discourse and discipline as potential methods of mistreatment and manipulation of the pupils.

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[24] This was at least my personal experience in practical-pedagogical education at the University of Tromsø.

[25] In relation to this thesis, one such example would be the literary dialogue, where teachers are encouraged to treat the pupils' views on a literary text equal to his or her own view (see section 2.3, page 16).

[26] When Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love and Room 101, he is subjected to a ritualised series of 'examinations', represented by how he responds to O'Brien's questions and torture. Montag's 'examination' comes in the form of what he chooses to do with the books Captain Beatty knows he possesses, and also how he responds to the eventual arrest. Compared to Winston, Montag is the only character that successfully breaks free from the power of the system.

4   Destruction of discourse in 1984 and Fahrenheit 451

> The decline of literature indicates the decline of a nation. The two keep pace in their downward tendency.
>
> <div align="right">Johann Wolfgang von Goethe</div>

> The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end.
>
> <div align="right">From Goldstein's book (*1984*: 214)</div>

In *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias,* Sisk claims that the "struggle for mastery of the world boils down to the mastery of the word" (1997: 180). By looking at censorship and how discourse may be destroyed or silenced, we would be able to see how discourse functions as negative and positive elements in dystopian fictions. Specifically, we would see how discourse is directly related to power in a totalitarian and authoritarian society, and who benefits from its positive or negative use.

4.1   The micro-destruction of discourse: Words and language

Words, as discussed briefly in section 3.2.1, are not just letters organised in a line. There are meanings and value judgements in these collections of letters and syllables, whether shared by social groups or held true by individuals. As such, it follows that with the destruction of words, we also destroy something far more poignant. As Churchill's quote at the start of chapter 3 indicates, there is nothing more dangerous to a dictator on his pedestal than the words and thoughts he cannot control. In "The Prevention of Literature", Orwell sums this up nicely:

> [a totalitarian] society, no matter how long it persists, can never afford to become either tolerant or intellectually stable. It can never permit either the truthful recording of facts, or the emotional sincerity, that literary creation demands. (1968a: 67).

In *Discourse and Power,* van Dijk claims, "if controlling discourse is the first major form of power, controlling people's minds is the other fundamental way to reproduce dominance and hegemony" (2008: 91). This certainly holds true for the Party's

intentions and actions in *1984's* Oceania*,* but history is no stranger to this concept. To ensure that they would remain in control even when outnumbered, the British colonisers established cultural hegemony in their colonies by assigning their culture, language and religion higher value and authority than the local equivalents. According to Nesler et al., the first factor in this type of control is to remember that "recipients tend to accept beliefs, knowledge and opinions (unless they are inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences) through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals, or reliable media" (1993, qtd. in van Dijk 2008*:* 92). Secondly, it is easier to maintain the first type of public discourse if no alternate public discourse or media is available to provide a second opinion (Downing 1984, qtd. in *ibid.*). Finally, recipients of the public discourse may not necessarily have "the knowledge and beliefs needed to challenge the discourses or information they are exposed to" (Wodak 1987, qtd. in *ibid.*). Together, these three factors work in tandem to ensure that an elite power or dominant group may use a specific discourse to support their dominance, as shown with the systems controlling society in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451.*

The system found in *Fahrenheit 451* has one 'official' aim in mind: to keep everyone happy. The method to achieve happiness is to eradicate all things that cause unhappiness, exemplified especially with literature. After Montag returns one of the books he was supposed to burn, Captain Beatty, the main representative of the system in *Fahrenheit 451*, seeks to prove a point about the confusing nature of literature:

> Do you know, I had a dream an hour ago. […] in this dream you and I, Montag, got into a furious debate on books. You towered with rage, yelled quotes at me. I calmly parried every thrust. […] Oh, you were scared silly […] for I was doing a terrible thing in using the very books you clung to, to rebut you on every hand, on every point! What traitors books can be! You think they're backing you up, and they turn on you. Others can use them, too, and there you are, lost in the middle of the moor, in a great welter of nouns and verbs and adjectives (*F451:* 106-107).

"If you don't want a man unhappy politically," Beatty says while visiting Montag earlier in the narrative, "don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none. Let him forget there is such a thing as war" (*F451:* 61).

On the surface, this type of thinking might differ somewhat with the one found in *1984*, where the system use the binary opposites of the Party (Us) and Eurasians/Eastasians (Them) as part of the rhetoric and propaganda that validates the system's hegemony. Ensuring everyone's happiness is still a political issue used in the Party's rhetoric, but it is implied that this happiness may only be found by supporting the system, which means the citizens would need to hate and oppose the Others. However, the system in *Fahrenheit 451* has also created a binary opposite between those that read literature and those that destroy it. Common in both *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* is the system's underlying intention to make citizens forget past events, emotions and concepts that could generate opposition to its ideology and hegemony. Subsequently, both systems use discourse as a way of social control. "Political language," Orwell claims in his essay "Politics and the English Language", "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (1968b: 139). In this regard, Beatty and O'Brien, representatives of their respective systems, become important challengers to Montag and Winston's resistance by making them re-evaluate their growing discontent with the system and the power of its rhetorical discourse.

Referring to *1984* and Orwell's essays on language and totalitarianism*,* Sisk claims that *"*Orwell insisted that language is the tool through which a totalitarian state can most effectively maintain its own power and stifle dissent" (1997: 41). Apart from the obvious control of public and personal discourse[27], in no small part due to the presence of telescreens, Thought Police and eavesdroppers, the Party (e.g. the system) still aims to guarantee their complete control down to the most basic level of discourse: the formation of meaning and thoughts in people's minds. As Goldstein's book claims, "[t]he two aims of the Party are to conquer the whole surface of the earth and to extinguish once and for all the possibility of *independent thought*" (*1984*: 201, my emphasis). By attacking the language and the mental concepts of the smallest components – words – the system tries to eradicate dissentious thoughts before they are formed. As O'Brien explains to Winston, "[t]he Party is not interested in the overt

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[27] Since they are constantly under surveillance in both public places and their homes, citizens are never able to actually say what they want in fear of being "vaporised", which is why Winston's diary becomes such an important outlet of unrestrained personal discourse. The diary also illustrates that the system is currently unable to control every form of discourse before it forms, as they wish to do through Newspeak.

act: *the thought is all we care about*. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them" (*1984*: 265, my emphasis). He goes on to claim that "[i]t is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be" (*1984*: 267). As such, every strategy that the system employs in *1984*, including their methods of censorship, is tailored to one specific aim: to remain in power.

4.1.1   Leaving no room for dissension: Newspeak

Newspeak, the constructed language in Oceania, intends to establish an entirely new way of speaking and thinking that conforms to the system's values, leaving no spare room for thoughts and ideas that are considered dissentious or "erroneous" (*1984:* 267). Concepts that are considered erroneous or politically unorthodox are removed, leaving only those concepts that are accepted: "[Newspeak] will enable people to discuss nonpolitical practicalities and spread Party orthodoxy without leaving the possibility of dissenting thought" (Sisk 1997: 43). For example, most of the nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs in the current language will disappear, especially synonyms and antonyms. As Syme, a loyal worker to the system, states, "what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other words?" (*1984*: 54). This sentiment echoes in what Beatty says above about presenting citizens in *Fahrenheit 451* with only one, or none, sides to an issue to 'ensure their happiness'. The primary example Syme presents, and perhaps the most profound considering *1984*'s dystopian features, is the noun *good*, which in its many forms will be the only word necessary to describe goodness and badness. These include *ungood* (bad), *plusgood* (excellent), *doubleplusgood* (splendid) and similar compounds. In this way, the system in *1984* excludes any direct notion that something is simply *bad*. By saying *ungood*, the emphasis is still on the *good* part rather than the binary opposite of *bad* that the word intends to encompass. This would constantly remind people that the primary stem word is *good*, which semantically is a positive thing. If we turn back to linguistics and CDA, this strategy would be a part of van Dijk's ideological square[28]. Considering that *good* in Newspeak is the stem word for both positive and negative compounds, this certainly emphasises what the system believes should be the foremost concept in people's minds. Things are primarily good and if something is

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[28] See page 27.

bad it is simply *ungood*, which is another version of good, thus destroying the idea that something may be just plain bad.

According to van Dijk's ideological square, language strategies mentioned in section 3.2.1 would fit with the Party's interest in maintaining their power, ensuring that their ideology will remain dominant. Take for instance the constant barrage of propaganda and rhetoric that depicts "our [e.g. the citizens] new, happy life" (*1984*: 61), or that alternately presents the Eurasians and the Eastasians as the antagonists. Goldstein is similarly depicted as the principal traitor and enemy of Oceania[29]. His countenance and ideology is ridiculed to the point where – even as he preaches each day about "freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought" during the Two Minutes Hate (*1984:* 14) – no one dare to believe such freedoms exist, or that they are necessary and valued in their society. To present-day readers it sounds preposterous, as these are values that lie at the core of most democratic societies today. In "Politics and the English Language", however, Orwell points out "the defence of the indefensible" necessitates "political language [that] consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness" (1968b: 136). Using for instance the phrase "our new, happy life" to describe social conditions that border on the brink of starvation and destitution, "is needed if one wants to name things without calling up [uncomfortable] mental pictures of them" (Orwell 1968b: 136). The same could be true of Beatty's description of the firemen in *Fahrenheit 451* as "the Happiness Boys" (*F451:* 62). Due in part to such phraseology and rhetoric, the majority of citizens in the fictional Oceania accept their position in society and the conditions of their life, even though they are worse off than before the Party seized control. Additionally, what is presumed to be Goldstein's book offers further reasons for this acceptance:

> Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down (*1984*: 207).

> The masses never revolt of their own accord, and they never revolt merely because they are oppressed. Indeed, so long as they are not permitted to have standards of comparison, they never even become aware that they are oppressed (*1984*: 216).

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[29] See Winston's description of him during the Two Minutes Hate on page 25.

Mainly, we could argue that by disassociating alternate discourse and alternate versions of society from the citizens, the system in *1984* have created what Foucault would call "docile" bodies. These 'bodies' would do anything the system demands, precisely in the way the system desires it. In this way, they are no longer individuals with free will, but rather subjects of the system that work to ensure its continued hegemony and social control. How long this control would endure, however, might depend on how the system treats history and memories.

4.1.2 Creating an everlasting present: Altering history and memories

The second quote above from Goldstein's presumed book brings to light another major censorship strategy in *1984*: altering the past in both records and memories. It is represented in one of the central Party slogans: "who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (*1984:* 260). In his essay "The Prevention of Literature", Orwell states that:

> From the totalitarian point of view history is something to be created rather than learned. A totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy, and its ruling caste, in order to keep its position, has to be thought of as infallible. But since, in practice, no one is infallible, it is frequently necessary to rearrange past events in order to show that this or that mistake was not made, or that this or that imaginary triumph actually happened. (1968a: 63)

On the one hand, Newspeak attempts to create a language where unorthodox thoughts are impossible. On the other hand, the Ministry of Truth and the Records Department edit and revise written records and literature, destroying the original content – if one could call it as such – in memory holes. The latter is the system's attempt to eradicate both personal and official history, making it so that there has never been a point in time in which the Party was fallible, exemplified for instance in Eurasia's almost seamless transition from hated enemy to beloved ally (*1984:* 187-191). Goldstein's book states that

> The mutability of the past is the central tenet of Ingsoc. Past events, it is argued, have no objective existence, but survive only in written records and in human memories. The past is whatever the records and the memories agree upon. […] At all times, the Party is in possession of absolute truth, and clearly the absolute truth can never have been different from what it is now. (*1984*: 222)

Winston, who has directly changed history on behalf of the system as a worker in the Records Department, tries to explain this strategy to Julia, "Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right. … The only evidence [that the past is falsified] is inside my own mind …" (*1984*: 162). There is a similar alteration of history in *Fahrenheit 451* concerning the background of firemen, exemplified in the firemen's rule book: "[Firemen were] Established, 1790, to burn English-influenced books in the Colonies. First Fireman: Benjamin Franklin" (*F451:* 34). To the system, the idea that firemen once prevented fires rather than stoke them is detrimental to the firemen's current purpose, hence the alteration.

In addition to Newspeak, altering records and history would validate the system's continued claim to power in *1984*, at least for as long as it is able to maintain the notion of an infallible Party. It is in this regard, especially, that the system has created the concept of *doublethink*. "Reality", claims O'Brien, representing the system,

> exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes […] but in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal." (*1984:* 261).

Personal memories, which led Winston to question the system in the first place, are still something the Party does not completely control. Through *doublethink*, citizens must simultaneously disregard the truth as well as accept it. In his essay "Writers and the Leviathan", Orwell calls this "a sort of schizophrenic manner of thinking, in which words […] can bear two irreconcilable meanings" (1968c: 410). For instance, the citizens in *1984* must know that the Party slogan "Freedom is Slavery" is, morally, both wrong and right, and focus their mind on the latter rather than the first. Thinking like this seems, in a way, to function as a way to accept uncomfortable truths and to subject to the system's control without succumbing to thoughts of rebellion, even if they exist.[30] Consequently, *doublethink* works to further restrict personal freedom and discourse. Combined with Newspeak and the creation of 'the endless present', the system has ensured that the citizens have no freedoms left. One of the powerful examples of this is what Winston writes in his diary: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows" (*1984*: 84). This resembles what Orwell states in his essay, "The Prevention of Literature": "[f]reedom

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[30] This might also be exemplified with the Victory-labelled 'luxury' items given Outer Party members (see page 29).

of the intellect means the freedom to report what one has seen, heard, and felt, and not to be obliged to fabricate imaginary facts and feelings" (1968a: 62). Since O'Brien forces Winston to accept that two plus two equals five – even if he knows that this is logically impossible – it follows that there is no freedom left. Even the very word freedom has lost its meaning through *doublethink,* as shown by the Party slogan "Freedom is Slavery". Subsequently, *1984* exemplifies what van Dijk expresses in *Discourse and Power:*

> If dominant groups, and especially their elites, largely control public discourse and its structures, they thus also have more control over the minds of the public at large. (2008: 93).

Despite van Dijk's added caution of "such control has its limits", underlining that one cannot always predict the outcome of how specific discourse affects specific individuals (*ibid.*)*,* Winston's fight against the system – especially in the form of his diary – is ultimately futile. To Winston, "language is a means of resistance, but not of salvation" (Sisk 1997: 169). As it turns out, the system knew what Winston was up from the moment he bought the diary in a proletarian shop. While subjected to O'Brien's "re-integration"[31], Winston redefines his notion of freedom by stating that "To die hating them [e.g. the Party] […] was freedom" (*1984:* 294). However, even this hopeful statement proves futile as his final thought at the end of the narrative is: "He loved Big Brother" (*1984*: 311).

In this way, *1984* is as a powerful example of how a system's different discursive practices ensure that there will be no hopeful or successful conclusion to an individual's resistance. Interestingly, though, Sisk points to several critics that view the Appendix section on Newspeak as a "part in the story [that reveals] the Party's ultimate downfall" (1997: 51). The Appendix seems to be written in a distant future; all verbs are in the past tense and it is written in Standard English, which according to *1984* was supposed to be suppressed once Newspeak replaced standard discourse. Some critics have therefore said that the Appendix provides the only ray of hope in *1984,* as the story doesn't end with Winston's defeat, but rather the future's view on Newspeak as a failed linguistic experiment (Sisk 1997: 51-53).

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[31] See page 32.

4.2   The macro-destruction of discourse: Literature

While the system in *1984* attacks language and impresses upon us as readers the power and abuse of discourse – dealing with words in their simplest forms – *Fahrenheit 451* shows what might happen when the total collection of printed words, namely literature, is obliterated. Although words have meanings in and of themselves, when put together in a wider context such as literary texts the words gain a poignant role that extends beyond mere syllables. Many critics have turned to John Milton in this regard:

> […] for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; […] And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. (*Areopagitica* 1644)

The destruction of books is an image that frequently appears all over the world. In February 2012, American soldiers were reported to have burned copies of the Koran in Kabul, Afghanistan, which incited a widespread revolt among the population that resulted in several deaths (Rubin 2012). Whether or not the incident was a conscious provocation or done in ignorance of Muslim culture and religion, the fact remains that the image of a burning book considered the holiest text in Islam illustrates intolerance at best; at worst, resentment and aggression. To many readers and book-lovers, it is hard to see literature – whether a religious or secular text – destroyed from disuse or intentional damage. Literature is a gateway into different cultures, histories and personalities. As Faber, an intellectual ally, tells Montag in *Fahrenheit 451,*

> Most of us can't rush around, talk to everyone, know all the cities of the world, we haven't time, money or that many friends. The things you're looking for, Montag, are in the world, but the only way the average chap will ever see ninety-nine per cent of them is in a book (*F451*: 86).

People invest their emotions, interest, motivations and intellect into a literary text, trusting the text to take them to either unfamiliar or familiar places in our world or the next. To put it differently, literature and discourse connects us to a spiritual and

emotional dimension. We could argue that this dimension is almost non-existent in *Fahrenheit 451* because of the system's method of censorship through book burning. Following the event where Mrs Blake was burnt along with her books, Montag wonders about people's connection to literature in a comment to his wife Mildred:

> You weren't there, you didn't *see*. […] There must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing (*F451*: 51).

Mildred, of course, attempts to rationalise the woman's behaviour, but her view on the world stems from an almost child-like naiveté about how humans are supposed to act in society. She is, like many others in *Fahrenheit 451,* a result of the system's machinery of social control. Captain Beatty, Montag's boss, describes the "intellectual pattern for the past five centuries or more" as "[o]ut of the nursery into the college and back to the nursery" (*F451*: 55), indicating that the loss of literature has made people less intelligent. In some ways, Mildred's behaviour echoes the sentiments of *doublethink*. On the one hand, she is probably aware on a subconscious level that her current situation in life makes her unhappy, hence the attempted suicide by overdose (*F451:* 13-16). On the other hand, she plainly ignores uncomfortable truths or deflect them by changing the subject, and prefers to succumb to the adrenaline of the TV parlor and the Seashell ear thimbles where there is no necessity to think, or feel. In the end, she shows that she would not stay in a burning house on behalf of literature, unlike Mrs Blake. Loyal to the system, Mildred reports Montag to the authorities and then leaves him behind to face the system alone.

4.2.1 'Into the furnace': Fire as a method of censorship

The idea of burning books – and people – as a way to censor unorthodox thoughts and ideas, which is the system's chief method of the control in *Fahrenheit 451*, is rooted firmly in the real world. This is illustrated for instance by Mrs Blake's quoting Hugh Latimer: "Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out" (*F451:* 36), which refers to when Latimer and his friend Ridley were burned for heresy in 1555.[32] In 1933, the German Nazi regime collected hundreds of books from libraries, personal homes and

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[32] The two of them believed in and taught Protestant reforms in 16th century England, and were considered major figures in the English Reformation. When Mary Tudor, a Catholic, ascended to the throne, they were arrested, tried and burnt on the stakes (Diocese of Ely 2012).

schools, and took these to a public square to be burned. Music, cheers and propagandistic speeches accompanied these book burnings, turning the event into a highly visible show of what was not considered the 'right' way of thinking.

The message sent by book burnings is impossible to ignore. Fire cannot be ignored. It draws attention, whether big or small. In *Fahrenheit 451,* people even show up to fires as a way of entertainment. Captain Beatty attempts to explain the system's particular fascination with this elemental:

> "What is there about fire that's so lovely? No matter what age we are, what draws us to it?" Beatty blew out the flame and lit it again. "It's perpetual motion; the thing man wanted to invent but never did. … [Fire's] real beauty is that is destroys responsibility and consequences. A problem gets too burdensome, then into the furnace with it." (*F451*: 115)

On the one hand, fire gives life, as illustrated by the Greek myth of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods, paving the way for civilization and technology on Earth. We use fire to sterilize, to cook food and to heat our houses. On the other hand, however, fire is a highly destructive force if let loose. One spark might be enough to set fire to forests, houses and cities. Widespread fires almost destroyed London in 1666. Even when controlled, fire has the ability to destroy, as shown by old-fashioned cannons and black powder, which require the ignition of fire to cause an explosive reaction.

It is this latter image of fire as a destructive force that makes book burnings such intense and emotional events. Once fire takes hold, it destroys the item completely. If not doused with water or modern CO_2 fire extinguishers, there will be nothing left except ashes. It is precisely this suggestion – that nothing will be left – that seems to indicate that even the abstract ideas and thoughts found *in* books will be destroyed when a book is completely burnt to ashes. Setting fire to a book is a kind of censorship. Nazi Germany's book burnings certainly underlined this type of thinking. The books that were thrown into those fires were clearly put there due to their content. If we take the Nazi ideology into consideration, it should not come as a surprise to find 'unorthodox' literature that opposes or discredits their way of thinking in the fires. Henley (2010) claims that the literature thrown into the fires were considered "anti-German" or 'degenerate', and included works by both German and foreign

authors such as Albert Einstein, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Ernest Hemingway, Friedrich Engels and Franz Kafka.[33]

Book burning is the central image in *Fahrenheit 451,* and even the title is claimed to be "the temperature at which books burn" (*F451*). As representatives of the system, the firemen's chief objective is to track down all kinds of literature and burn it, the reason being that literature is only a source of confusion and unhappiness. This type of action is an extreme form of censorship. Rather than just revising or editing the literature to suit a current dominant way of thinking as in *1984,* literature is completely eradicated, which resembles the Party's strategy "vaporisation" – the removal of unwanted persons, or *unperson* as it is called in Newspeak. As O'Brien tells Winston in Room 101,

> Posterity will never hear of you. You will be lifted clean out from the stream of history. We shall turn you into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you; not a name in a register, not a memory in a living brain. You will be annihilated in the past as well as in the future. You will never have existed. (*1984*: 266-267)

O'Brien's sentiment here echoes in what Captain Beatty tells Montag upon the latter's arrest:

> A problem gets too burdensome, then into the furnace with it. Now, Montag, you're a burden. And fire will lift you off my shoulders, clean, quick, sure; nothing to rot later. Antibiotic, aesthetic, practical. (*F451*: 115)

Through 'vaporisation' and through fire, nothing will remain of records, books and people but ashes. They will not even remain in memory, as the systems in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* have ensured that even memory cannot be trusted, either in the sense that it is altered through *doublethink* or that long-time memory disappears as a result of having no evidence of comparison. Winston barely remembers his childhood, and Montag does not even remember where he met his wife less than a decade ago. In both cases, however, their journey of resistance and self-discovery eventually lead them to recall these things. Other citizens, though, continue to live in an everlasting present.

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[33] This context seems especially suited for both *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*, but the latter was also a product of the McCarty era in the USA, which was marked by various methods of censorship related to the fear of Communism. (See footnote 2, page 2.)

4.2.2   Reduced to ashes: Losing more than discourse

Combined with the societal pressure of mass media – the TV parlor, Seashell radios – and instant availability to said media, *Fahrenheit 451* suggests that some of the major consequences of book burning are diminished long-term memory, critical thinking and appreciation of poetic beauty, as well as unhappiness. In fact, thinking, whether critical or not, seems to be a missing ability. Mildred and her friends, who are obsessed with the TV parlor, do not question anything, not even the fact that the shows they find so entertaining have no discernible plot or substance. We could compare this to the phrase 'living in a bubble', except that instead of being focused on internal impressions, Mildred and her friends allow external impressions to affect them so long as they are familiar and comfortable. Anything unorthodox, for instance Montag's reading of 'Dover Beach' by Matthew Arnold, scares them and threatens to burst the 'bubble' of superficial happiness they live in. In this case, they represent the 'docile' bodies mentioned in Foucault's theories of social control. They are passive subjects and recipients of what the system considers 'right' behaviour and conduct. According to the system, they are not supposed to have opinions of their own, as individual opinions may lead to confusion and unhappiness. To put it shortly, they are not supposed to think at all, just comply with the system. Montag is eventually fed up with this widespread submissive behaviour, as well as the system itself, and complains to Faber that

> Nobody listens anymore. I can't talk to the walls, because they're yelling at *me*. I can't talk to my wife; she listens to the *walls*. I just want someone to hear what I have to say. And maybe if I talk long enough, it'll make sense. […] We have everything we need to be happy, but we aren't happy. Something's missing. (*F451*: 82)

Occasionally, Montag shows that he is also a 'docile' body, but he is at least aware of this. At three separate junctures, he has a strange sensation that his hands are doing something on their own, and that he has no part in what they do. In the opening page, Montag's hands "were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history" (*F451:* 3). Later, in the house of Mrs Blake, Montag steals a book, but he "had done nothing. His hand had done it all […] with a brain of its own, with a

conscience and a curiosity in each trembling finger" (*F451:* 37). Finally, after burning down his own house, Montag turns on Beatty with the flamethrower:

> Beatty glanced instantly at Montag's fingers and his eyes widened the faintest bit. Montag saw the surprise there and himself glanced to his hands to see what new thing they had done (*F451:* 119).

It is possible that Montag's hands represent his subconscious and the secret desires he cannot or would not admit to possess, such as delight, curiosity and rage, in fear of what the system might do. Like everyone else, he has been indoctrinated and he does not free himself from this until he steps out of the river that carried him to freedom outside the city. Also, by setting fire to Beatty for his own personal gain, Montag turns the system's method of censorship back on itself: "Beatty, he [e.g. Montag] thought, you're not a problem now. You always said, don't face a problem, burn it. Well, now I've done both." (*F451*: 121).

Fahrenheit 451 implies that, through its intention to remove the unorthodox thoughts and confusion that cause unhappiness, the system has also removed that which could bring happiness. By burning books, they have effectively removed one of the major reference bases for understanding human emotion and life, as well as history. Without a widespread, fulfilling discourse, and without context in which to put their current lives, characters like Montag and his wife do not understand – or even realise, in Mildred's case – why they are unhappy. As Montag admits to Mildred after Beatty's visit on his 'sick day': "I'm so damned unhappy, I'm so mad, and I don't know why" (*F451:* 64). This is one of the reasons why he seeks out Faber, someone he met in the past who might know something about the allure of literature. In order to help Montag make sense of the world and his own unhappiness, Faber asserts that what Montag really seeks is *in* the books, not the books themselves. Their society, Faber claims, lacks three things that are vital to humans: "quality of information", "leisure to digest it", and "the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the interaction of the first two" (*F451*: 84-85). Consequently, Faber indicates that individual thinking, personal uniqueness, and the breadth and quality of human understanding, are lost in the ashes of burnt literature and the pressure of an 'empty' mass media. This is especially illustrated at the end of the narrative when Montag has escaped the Mechanical Hound by jumping into a river and let it carry him away. When he steps

out, he has "left a stage behind and many actors" and is "moving from an unreality that was frightening into a reality that [is] unreal because it [is] new" (*F451:* 140). In nature, Montag is able to find something that did not exist in the city:

> He stood breathing, and the more he breathed the land in, the more he was filled up with all the details of the land. He was not empty. There was more than enough here to fill him. There would always be more than enough (*F451:* 144).

Even his association to 'fire' change once he has left the city, from something that eats, blackens and changes (*F451*: 3) to something that does not burn, but warms (*F451:* 145). Montag's revelation above illustrates the dichotomy between the technological and the natural in *Fahrenheit 451*. The system is a machinery of power, just as in *1984*, and nature becomes the stage in which Montag may finally re-connect with something that was previously unavailable to him. The narrative implies that this is something that humans cannot acquire from a machine, as indicated by the "vacuum upon which the nothingnesses had performed" [e.g. the TV parlor and the shows' 'aunts' and 'uncles'] (*F451:* 117) and the Seashell Radio. It is something fulfilling that transcends mere discourse and physical adrenaline rushes. I would choose to call this an emotional and spiritual dimension. In nature, Montag has returned to a place where fire is no longer a method of censorship, but rather a way to keep warm and to cook food as people used to do before technology modernised such customs.[34]

4.3 Destruction of discourse: A topic for education?

Literature, as mentioned before, is a gateway to different worlds, times and cultures. It connects us as readers with the past, the present and the future, and as well as our – and the writers' – emotions and spirituality. Old or new, controversial or not, most literary texts are suitable for TEFL, especially given the open-ended framework of LK06 that enables the teacher to choose more freely as to which topics and texts to cover in the classroom. As long as the literary texts and the teaching of these contribute to the readers' – the pupils' – cultural understanding and cognitive development, or personal development, they will fulfil the TEFL requirements and

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[34] In *1984*, even nature has been claimed by the system and its technology, as microphones ensure extended surveillance beyond the cities.

intentions of LK06. Hennig says that "the literary experience is meaningful because it is an experience that says something about our own reality" (2010: 77). Through literature, pupils may find answers or questions that pertain to their own views on the world, on humanity and on different cultures. Accordingly, I would argue that *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* are quite relevant for pupils in the three English VG2 and VG3 subject programmes.

One of the basic skills in the three English programme subjects, International English, Social Studies English and English Literature and Culture, is to read. LK06 states, "*Being able to read* in English involves understanding, exploring and pondering demanding texts, thereby gaining insight across cultures and special fields" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a). Given the non-specification of "demanding texts", I choose in this instance *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*. As an example, I will use two of the competence aims of SSE in the sub-category 'Culture, society and literature' to illustrate how it is possible to use the two literary texts in the English classroom:

> [a pupil should be able to] elaborate on and discuss how key historical events and processes have affected the development of American society and British society [and to] interpret at least one major work of fiction, one film and a selection from other English-language literature from the 1900s up to the present. (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a).

On the basis of these two competence aims, we may use *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* to teach thematic topics such as dystopian fiction, WW2 and the Cold War, the threat of totalitarianism or censorship. It is also possible to look at other topics such as history and imperialism, and use for instance *Fahrenheit 451* as a starting point to discuss the history and growth of mass media and its cultural influence beyond the United States, as well as the power of the majority[35]. This would also fit well with the competence aim in ELC, same sub-category: "elaborate on and discuss the cultural position of the United States and Great Britain in the world today, and the background for the same" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a).

As shown in both chapter 3 and 4, the power of discourse in the form of censorship is a recurring topic in both history and in fiction. If LK06 has an overarching aim of personal development through cultural, social and historical discussions, then both the

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[35] Or as Faber puts it: "the terrible tyranny of the majority" (*F451*: 108).

historical contexts of *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* and the texts themselves are ideal as starting points for these discussions. For instance, how do Great Britain in the 1940s and the USA in the 1950s compare to today's political, cultural, technological and economical climate? Are there differences and similarities? What about our own society and culture as compared to these two? Based on the answers to these questions, pupils would be able to also discuss whether the future visions in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* are relevant to both their historical contexts and today's. Do the pupils share some of the same fears as Orwell and Bradbury did in 1948 and 1953? What do they think of the negative use of technology in the two novels, as compared to our current use of similar technology? Needless to say, *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* raise a lot of cultural and personal questions, far more than I have included here. For the purpose of this thesis, however, I will focus on the destruction of discourse as a potential topic for discussion.

There is no specific mention of discourse as a topic or theme in LK06, although it may be alluded to in competence aims such as "[analysing] linguistic tools in different kinds of texts" or "in dissimilar genres" and "*[assessing] their impact*" (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2006a, my emphasis). Discourse in literature is nevertheless very relevant in the classroom today. Chapters 3 and 4 have both shown how discourse may work in visible and subtle ways, especially as a tool in maintaining, destroying or creating power relations such as 'Us' and 'Them'. Consequently, destruction of discourse may be used to illustrate this theme in the real world, as well as the fictional. If we raise awareness of subtle censorship and the dangers of ignorance, pupils may become more active in cultural discussions on current issues such as the increased Western focus on the Middle East and Islam[36]. It might also make them aware of self-censorship in a society without governmental censorship, in which one alters one's beliefs because they stand out, for instance against what they perceive as the majority's views. This echoes what Orwell is concerned with in "The Prevention of Literature". In the essay, he claims that people in his time do not "Dare to be a Daniel […] to stand alone […] to have a purpose firm [… and] to make it known" (1968a: 60). Instead, they conform to a majority that does not necessarily demand such actions. In my opinion, this is as true for our society today as for Great

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[36] This is related to the topic 'War on Terror' and Us vs. Them discourse in chapter 3 (see page 23).

Britain's society in the 1940s. *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* are both very powerful examples of what might happen to a society where conformity becomes the norm, hence their relevance for pupils, who are at an age where identity is a major interpersonal issue. Additionally, by participating in these discussions pupils would become active subjects in charge of their own personal development – and their future – which contradicts Foucault's claims that all institutions create 'docile' bodies that will conform to the system in power.

These are only some of the current societal and cultural issues that pupils may reflect on in the classroom, whether it is in plenary discussions or in smaller groups. As for the literary texts on their own, pupils may discuss how the destruction of discourse functions as a power tool, and whether it has both positive and negative impacts. For instance, Winston and Montag found literature and discourse as either means of resistance or salvation. The texts might indicate that this is because their respective societal systems suppressed all kinds of history, memories and personal discourse, but it is entirely possible for the pupils to view this differently. As stated in chapter 2, there are as many views on a literary text as there are readers. Readers do not think or feel in a vacuum. They are shaped by their surroundings, their history and emotions, and may therefore find alternate explanations on how discourse is made powerful or powerless in fictional and real cultures. It is one of my personal hopes, however, that raising awareness of discourse might arouse the pupils' motivation for reading literature. Perhaps when they see how discourse permeates every layer of society and affects each individual or social group, they will find this interesting. *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* are, in my opinion, certainly exciting enough to at least warrant a look into the power of discourse.

5   Conclusion: Rising from the ashes

> Look at the world out there, my God, my God, look at it out there, outside me, out there beyond my face and the only way to really touch it is to put it where it's finally me, where it's in the blood, where it pumps around a thousand times ten thousand a day. I get hold of it so it'll never run off. I'll hold onto the world tight someday. I've got one finger on it's now; that's a beginning.
>
> <div align="right">Guy Montag (F451: 162)</div>

Discourse, as shown in this thesis, permeates every layer of society and is displayed in forms beyond mere oral and written language. Even the destruction of discourse is a type of discourse. It shows us what type of discourse is considered dangerous or 'wrong' to those who destroy it, and subsequently exposes power relations in society in the form of Us vs. Them discourse, whether this is on a large scale (government policies) or a smaller scale (teacher-pupil relations). In *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984,* discourse presents itself in both language and literature. Particularly, the narratives indicate that the discourse found in a literary text becomes powerful because it holds or creates meaning for the reader, as exemplified for instance in Winston's diary, Goldstein's book or Montag's Bible. Literature is our connection to the past and to our memories, emotions and spirituality, as well as gateways into different cultures and personalities across the globe. In this way, books, with their context and wide array of thoughts, ideas and values, represent something that is potentially very powerful. This power, some would argue, comes through the readers, who assign value and meaning to the literary texts. As Hillerbrand claims,

> The burning of a book is a symbolic act. Obviously, a book itself constitutes no physical threat to either individuals or society. It is the content, the ideas, and the words that are at issue—therefore, the ideas of a book are burned and executed without its pages ever destroyed and no torch, no match, and no gasoline [ever comes] near the book. The burning of a book stands symbolically for all books with the same ideas. … A book itself is not alive; it is a dead convergence of printer's ink and paper. The power, the authority, and the argument of a book rest on its ideas. (2006: 604)

When faced with his own burning books, Montag seems to realise that books in themselves are worthless, and that it is the impression we are left with after reading them that is important:

> Montag stood looking in now at this queer house, made strange by the hour of the night, by murmuring neighbor voices, by littered glass, and there on the floor, their covers torn off and spilled out like swan feathers, the incredible books that looked so silly and really not worth bothering with, for these were nothing but black type and yellowed paper and raveled binding (*F451*: 115).

Even so, Montag does not seem to be able to stop thinking that books have a life of their own, as indicated by how they "leapt and danced like roasted birds, their wings ablaze with red and yellow feathers" (*F451:* 117). This poetic image brings to mind the legend of the Phoenix, which is mentioned specifically by Granger, a fellow intellectual Montag encounters after his escape from the city. Like the Phoenix's never-ending circle of fiery resurrection, Granger says "we're doing the same thing" (*F451:* 163). Their one difference to the Phoenix, however, is that

> we know all the damn silly things we've done for a thousand years and as long as we know that and always have it around where we can see it, someday we'll stop making the goddamn funeral pyres and jumping into the middle of them (*F451:* 163).

Remembering the past, Granger claims, is vital to stop the human circle of self-destruction. As Faber says earlier in the narrative to Montag, "The books are to remind us what asses and fools we are" (*F451*: 86). Consequently, those that have escaped the bombs and are now living in nature, including future generations, have one goal only: to remember. To this end, they memorise literature so that each of them will become a living book of ideas and history that cannot be destroyed. This is how they'll "win out in the long run"; they will one day "remember so much that [they'll] build the biggest goddamn steamshovel in history and dig the biggest grave of all time and shove war in and cover it up" (*F451:* 164). To these survivors, which include Montag, discourse then becomes a means of salvation and of hope. From the ashes of their society, they will rise to reclaim the future.

Recalling what Milton wrote in his *Areopagitica*, that by destroying literature, you destroy life[37], *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984* stand as powerful examples that book burnings and constant alterations do not only destroy discourse. They destroy something far more poignant. In section 4.2.2[38], I claimed that literature and language

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[37] See page 45.
[38] See page 49.

connect us to a spiritual and emotional dimension. Both *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* illustrate this argument. Through different discursive methods, the two systems attempt to disassociate their citizens from their emotions, spirituality, past and memories, and replace them with the system's own. By becoming 'docile' bodies, or subjects of the system, citizens lose their individuality, meaning that they will also lose all the details that make them unique. A subject of the system does not need to think critically, does not need to engage in spare time activities that serve no purpose to the system (such as reading or writing a diary), and does not need to worry about what has been, is or will be. They will only have to exist and do as they are told. In systems such as these two, emotions and spirituality are just hindrances to the machinery of power, which is why they are suppressed. Both Winston and Montag's resistance, therefore, should be read as paths to the ultimate emotional and spiritual re-connection, even if only the latter succeeds.

The paths Winston and Montag undertake in *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* may also be read as personal developments that are especially furthered by their exploration into literature and discourse, and how these two play a part in human existence in general and in their respective societies. As discussed in section 2.2, personal development is one of the major keywords of the current national curriculum, LK06. Given the didactic nature of dystopian literary texts, *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* illustrate how readers may find themselves changing their views on the world, on humanity and on themselves through literature that either supports or challenges their current way of thinking. It is entirely possible to bring these stories of personal development into the classroom, especially in relation to cultural, historical and social discussions, and to discuss the implications of Montag's victory over the system as compared to Winston's defeat. As for the pupils' own personal developments, they might find meaning in these two texts, or at least find issues and themes that either provoke them or delight them. At the very least, the two literary texts provide pupils with the impression that discourse could be made both powerful and powerless, and that there is always – relatively speaking[39] – a measure of hope. That, in my opinion, is one of the most important lessons.

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[39] Some critics argue that even though Winston is defeated by the system, *1984* may be read with some degree of hope. See page 44 for further details.

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