

# Language and human rights in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Never Let Me Go

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## Abstract

In his thesis, the main objective is to look at the connection between language and human rights in two dystopian novels, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005). This thesis also proposes how these two novels, and literary texts in general, can be taught to pupils in upper secondary school. As the lack of or loss of human rights is an element in many dystopian novels, this thesis explores how the societies in the two novels accept this due to the use of certain words by the governing body. This thesis seeks to prove that, in these two dystopian novels, language can lead to groups of people losing their rights as human beings, either at the whims of a totalitarian regime that controls the population through fear or by a society where they were never even considered human in the first place.



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# 1 Introduction

*On the one hand people are deported then exterminated, on the other language is uprooted then depopulated of its words (Courtine 71)*

Dystopian novels have become increasingly popular these past few years in both literatures for young adults and for adults. This is interesting to look into and especially as this has become a trend in film and television as well. *The Hunger Games* is one of the most popular dystopian books for young adults and has had success on the big screen as well, but one of the most popular dystopian novels of all time is *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. I have chosen to look at the novel by Orwell as well as the novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro as both deal with human rights issues as well as language and its direct or indirect impact on the human right issues that the two novels bring forth. As *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a popular dystopian novel from 1949 and *Never Let Me Go* is a newer novel from 2005, the material that can be used in the theory chapter might be disproportional in favour of the Orwell's novel however, because of my chosen focus in this paper I will be able to use the theory from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in both of the analyses. The theory chapter will begin with a look at what a dystopian novel is and then proceed to look at language and human rights in novels and narratives.

In both novels language is used as a tool by the dystopian government as a way to control part or the entirety of the population. They use the language to create barriers between the people that live within the society and to make this seem normal in their liberal use of everyday words or expressions to hide this in plain sight. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the regime has named what we would call the department of defence or war as the Ministry of Peace,

which in itself is a contradiction. In *Never Let Me Go*, the clones are referred to as students when they are young and as carers and donors later in life. Orwell portrays a country that has taken a wrong turn and become a dystopian society forever locked in wars whilst Ishiguro presents a world where human life and the worth we have as beings is questioned as lives are taken before they truly had a chance to live to give others a longer life. My goal in this paper is to show how human rights and language is connected in the two dystopian novels as well as how they can be used in a classroom.

As dystopian fiction is popular at the moment, I will focus on how one can use this popularity to introduce different dystopian literature than *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* to pupils to broaden their perspective on how societies within a dystopian setting can be both blatantly obvious and subtle in how they control the people within, as in *Never Let Me Go* the control is vague whilst in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it is central to the society. By doing this I hope to encourage discussions on a variety of subjects in history, sociology and literature as these books can be used for more than just the English subject in upper secondary as a part of the development the pupils have to becoming members of the society we live in. Dystopian fiction is, as I have stated previously, extremely popular today and by using this popularity in a classroom setting I will use these novels, or similar pieces of literature that deal with dystopian novels, to teach the pupils the dangers that labels make and how societies that have gone wrong can be eerily similar to real ones in how they deal with the people within their society. Teaching the pupils about human rights, freedom of speech, equality and the importance of freedom is something that can be made easier by using literature. Because literature has a way to connect to most readers on an emotional level that might create an increase of understanding how other people live and how their society functions, which is an important part of the curriculum. Creating an environment where the pupils are free to discuss

elements from the books is also important, as this will make a foundation for them to examine their own reactions to the novel and the themes within it as well as allowing them to discuss how the reading experience can differ in regards to what the individual thinks is most important.

## 2 Theory

This thesis explores the power language has in two novels in relations to the lack of human rights seen in the novels. The focus of this analysis is to show how language can be used to create differences between people and how this relates to the loss or lack of human rights that occur to the main characters in the novels.

Language seems to hold power in every word that can be twisted to the purpose of the writer or speaker, and this is something that both George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* use with a purpose to create a society that from birth creates a sense of being unable to change things or simply that they do not know what they are missing because of the lack of words.

I will argue that language and human rights are closely connected in the novels, as one can lead to the lack of the other. By allowing some of the citizens basic human rights whilst at the same time withholding it from other members of the society, the regime or the people in charge of the society create a us vs. them mentality in the population that makes it easier to control people. In both of the novels language is also used to dehumanize people, as some are seen as not even being human or have lost their right to be considered human by the government.

### 2.1 Dystopia

Dystopian fiction started as a reaction to the blissful and peaceful utopian societies that were described and as a way for the author to highlight the possible dangers one faces when the government gains too much autonomy from the people they are there to serve. This causes the society to switch to become totalitarian regimes and dystopian in nature as opposed to the blissful utopian societies. The fiction is also in general, interested in the dangers that technology poses in the lives of people if certain boundaries are not set.

John Stuart Mill first improvised the term dystopia from its Greek roots in 1868 (Stableford 259). Thus dystopia, unlike utopia, has had a shorter history in literature and the richest literature of dystopian fiction can be found within the British literature which has two of the most known examples of dystopian writing, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Claeys 109). Both of the novels depict a totalitarian state, that is somewhat omnipotent, that demands complete obedience from its citizens and relies on science and technology to keep the population under their control at all times.

Dystopian societies are societies that have taken a wrong turn, societies where people are worth something to the government based on who or what they are to the regime and are given rights based on their behaviour and subservience to the leaders of the society. The population is usually divided into groups within the society. This gives them a sense of being together as well as creating us versus them situations that the leaders can use to their advantage to keep control over the population as "...many group ideologies involves the representation of Self and Other, Us and Them. Many therefore seem to be *polarized* – We are Good, They are Bad..." (van Dijk 25, emphasis in original). Dystopian societies often rely on distorting the truth through the rewriting of history or by limiting the accepted language to words that can create confusion and allow the leaders to be vague in all they do.

A limiting of personal freedom and dehumanization is also common in many dystopian societies due to the fear that people were becoming mechanised and an increase of critical thinking that, by many of the authors of dystopian novels, was a worrying sign and needed to be explored whilst at the same time warned against. They believed that "There is, however, another significant element ... the fact that the lives of the factory workers are excessively regulated by the nature of their labour and their shift-patterns, to the point where they become mechanised themselves" (Stableford 264). The authors of dystopian novels found this mechanisation of humans during the nineteenth-century to be an interesting and

daunting element in the industrial world. This was something that was an established anxiety that, according to Stableford, dated back to the Romantic movements. The factory workers in question were the many poor and people living in environments that were subpar that worked for the rich. As Gregory Claeys explains in regards to why this became a part of dystopian writing, “For many, the theme of science- (or scientists) gone- wild, then, first heralds dystopia, from Swift onwards” (110). Thus the issues of dehumanisation can be seen in many dystopian novels from the very beginning. This is also to a certain extent present in the two novels that this thesis is centred on, especially in the didactics chapter.

In ‘The Origins of Dystopia’ Claeys points out, from the novels of Swift and onwards, that “...after 1900 the characteristic form of the imaginary society would be both dystopian and often cast in the genre of science fiction, set normally in the future rather than the past or elsewhere in the here-and-now” (110). As the writers of dystopian fiction felt that science and scientists “gone-wild” would be the starting point of a possible dystopian society where man was more a machine than human because of the mechanisation in the workplace. They also feared that this could lead to the loss of critical thought. As the time of the first dystopian novels corresponds with the start of the industrial revolution and many new and productivity increasing inventions, the rise of a genre that did not see this as a positive step forwards is understandable.

Claeys writes about the history of dystopia and the start of it through the events of the French revolution, where the creation of utopias and the reaction of dystopias, or anti-utopian, began in full as “...much utopian writing in this period can be read as a discourse upon corruption and degeneration.” (110). This new writing into all the ways a utopian society could be wrong that started at this time in history, would later bring forth a wave of writing later on in what Claeys calls the second dystopian turn. This dystopian turn includes Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and the themes and ideas within as a source for writing in both utopian and

dystopian fiction, especially in novels where a war between races where one side has won or where one race is above the other can be traced directly to Darwin and his book as this escalated after it was published according to Claeys. This turn started in the 1880s and includes works like *Red England: A Tale of the Socialist Horror* (1909) by John Milne, where socialist and eugenic themes are combined in a dystopian form, as well as reactions to the threat of war and invasion that nourished the dystopian fiction.

Claeys also describes the works of H. G. Wells, Huxley and Orwell as some of the biggest contributors to the dystopian genre through novels such as the *Time Machine* (1895), *Brave New World* (1932) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) respectively, though most of Wells' writing is, by Claeys, considered to be a little too fantastical and not really dystopian as such. These three novels are all products of the utopian and dystopian writings that came before them. Many of these novels are satirical in nature and this is also the case with the three novels Claeys presents as big works in dystopian fiction; *The Time Machine* and *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In Orwell's novel the main target is totalitarianism and the happenings within the soviet union was also one of the reasons Orwell wrote his book.

As totalitarian regimes are a usual element in the dystopian novels, Claeys describes the seven main features of those regimes. One of those is the feature that the regime demands complete loyalty through "...the use of 'total terror'...to intimidate the population and ensure complete loyalty..."(Claeys 119). Orwell in particular took this to an extreme in his novel, as the totalitarian regime in his novel achieve this through "...the debasement of logic and language..."(Claeys 123). They also achieve this through use of terror and fear whenever someone opposes them. To Orwell, language control was an important part of how the totalitarian regime in the novel functions, as well as totalitarian regimes in general.

## 2.2 Language

In both *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* language is a key element that the governing powers use to subjugate and differentiate between the people within the society. Language in itself is a powerful tool. By actively using this as a political tool and means to control the population the government would be able to create a dystopian society that is most likely totalitarian in nature. George Orwell commented on language in his essay “Politics and the English Language” with special attention to the dynamics between language and political power that “...one ought to recognise that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language” (26). In other words, language is a powerful tool to use and by making their words diffuse and “officialese” or too bureaucratic in nature, politicians were, and are, making simple sentences vague and difficult to understand. This makes the power that language has on how we see the world easy to recognise as we struggle with the language that is used by the people that we vote for.

As language can be used to create differences between people, and this differentiating is a common element in the novels, it is not only an important issue to look at but also a way to understand the society as it is used by the people and about the people within the society. According to Teun van Dijk the ideological square explains how a society can use words to impact the worth of certain individuals within it. As it “...moves in the overall strategy of ideological self-interest...[and] may be expressed in the choice of lexical items that imply positive or negative evaluations...” (33). This creation of differences where there might not be any, can be done in a variety of ways and some are used in both *Never Let Me Go* and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Creating a social group where one is better or more prestigious is one way. Another is to create special elements that people within one classification has and the other lacks. It might also be to have an us versus them thought in regards to the relations between people. This is common in war type situations, and there can be people that are

outside of any and all classifications and are not even considered people within the society. The classification might be whom the person was born to, their gender, skin/hair/eye colour or what their work is.

The oppression of language or the loss of free speech is also seen in many dystopian novels, as freedom of speech is destabilising to the oppressive authorities that rules the society and thus not allowed. The common element of many novels within the dystopian genre is that the dystopian society has a fear of free will that leads to a need to control all aspects of people's lives and again leads to the limitation of language by the people themselves due to fear of what might happen to them if they utter these words. Jean-Jacques Courtine argues that "Language threatens the totalitarian enterprise" (70). Thus any totalitarian regime will try to control this aspect of people's lives in any way that they can. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* this is done through the invention of a new language, Newspeak, as well as with the rewriting and constant changing of history to keep the past vague and hard to grasp.

Language can be used as a form of control that may be subtle enough that the people influenced might never truly notice that they have been influenced by the words that they have heard. Orwell argues "Political language...is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" ('Politics and language' 26). By constantly referring to certain groups in a specific way, the general population will probably close its eyes and ears to the horrors this group faces because of their classification unless presented with the facts in a way that cannot be ignored. The same happens if the government continues to do this to other groups of people that they deem to be something that is either lower than the rest of the society or not worth anything at all. Language is as said previously, a powerful tool, as language can be used to create these

subgroups of people, a society within the society, and used to change the way people think of the world they live in and make sure that certain ideas are never spoken out loud.

Language and ideology are usually seen as being closely connected by most as language can influence people and be influenced by people. This can be seen in political debates and especially after they finish as the expressions used by the politicians in the debate and the way they use them in their debate based on their belief system will have an impact on how people see this theme or group of people afterwards. Sometimes political influence will change the way certain words are used and they gain a new connotation. Orwell argues that “All issues are political issues...” and that “When there is a gap between one’s real and one’s declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms...”(‘Politics and language’ 22-23). This is not something that suddenly stopped after this essay, but something that is on-going today, and might be done even more today than back when he first commented on this. According to Deborah Cameron, who is a sociolinguist, “In many discussions of ideology, language is rather like the mythical giant turtle that supports the world on its back, or like the god in a machine who comes down at the last moment to extricate the protagonist of a tragedy from whatever predicament they have got themselves into.” (143). She argues that “Language should not be treated either as pre-existing raw material for the fashioning of ideologies or as a post-hoc vehicle for their expression.” (143). This view of language is in contrast with Orwell’s and she also believes that language cannot be used in the way that Orwell believed, something that makes her look at ideologies and language interesting to compare to Orwell’s view on it.

Language might change naturally, but many changes that occur in language today are the result of certain elements within the society that push some idea to the masses through use of slogans and campaigns that carry simple but effective messages that “...anaesthetizes a portion of one’s brain...” (Politics and language 23) as Orwell put it. In regards to ideology,

Cameron, in her article “Ideology and Language”, argues that language is “... an important problem in and for the study of ideology” (151) as it is not necessarily the answer to the problems that one faces when trying to understand the connection between the two, as ideology can change language and language change ideology. Mary Klages explains that “Ideology is how a society thinks about itself, the forms of social consciousness that exists at any particular moment; ideologies supply all the terms and assumptions and frameworks that individuals use to understand their culture...” (128-9). Whilst van Dijk believes that “...ideologies are socially shared and used by groups and their members...” (22) but also that “The concept of ‘ideology’ is one of the most elusive notions...” (23). Thus ideology becomes that which a society needs to call itself a society. However, in many dystopian societies this ideology is in some way wrong when one looks closer at the beliefs that the people within the society actually have.

Orwell believed that “...if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.” (Politics and language 23), which is a problem any dystopian government would try to contain, and within *Nineteen Eighty-Four* they do this to the extreme. I will come back to this thought in the chapter on this novel. Language and thought is connected, as when asked how I think, I will answer that my thoughts are usually in the form of words. As language and thought is by Orwell believed to be corruptible, it can be seen in his novel as a major element of the control that the government has on the population.

Language in itself is a problem and a solution for the governments and political leaders. This is regardless of their political view or if the society is dystopian, utopian, or real. Words carry power, at times more power than actions. This can be seen in many novels based on real events as well as in fictional ones, as the nonviolent protests are usually the ones that manage to show the true atrocities that people live in to the general population in a way that creates understanding for their suffering. Situations where one part of the society suffers at

the hands of another have a powerful impact if the subjugated side suffers in silence or by telling the truth. An example of this is the nonviolent protests of Mahatma Ghandi.

Control language and you control people. This seems to be the general consensus amongst the dystopian societies and something that in *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* leads to the belief of the main characters that nothing will ever truly change in the way they lead their lives or their peers lead their lives now or in the future. Using language to create an environment where freedom of speech and thought and freedom in general is a foreign idea to the people being oppressed, makes the dystopian societies seem even more sinister than they do at first glance, as the fear of your own thoughts betraying you and making your life even more difficult is something that is difficult to face for most. According to Courtine “Purification of language thus constitutes the imaginary horizon of totalitarian power: the final solution, the completion of the revolution, the end of history” (71). Especially the idea of the Thought Police in Orwell’s novel makes these societies ones that most would never want to have to face in real life. Language becomes a way for the totalitarian regime to control not only thoughts but also to control the population through fear.

## 2.3 Human Rights

Human rights narratives have close ties with the study of language in novels as “...literary critics have tried to develop systems for thinking about meaning and language that have far reaching implications for ethical systems achieved through language like the human rights regime” (Dawes 405). Thus language and human rights can be seen as influenced by one another in many ways as without one the other would not have any real meaning in these forms of novels.

The universal declaration of human rights that the UN ratified in December 1949 consists of thirty articles and was a result of the horrors seen in the Second World War. It is a

document that describes the rights that every human being is entitled to from birth until death. The preamble to the articles tells the reader of them that “...disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people” (Morsink 329). This coincides with what this thesis set out to look into in the novels, as free speech is one of the most important elements that is, usually, non-existent in dystopian societies. The concept of freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear is especially interesting to look at in relations to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as the world described in the novel is void of all three elements, and this is something that will be explored more in chapter 3.

Human right narratives are usually individual narratives that depict suffering and injustice in a way that draws sympathy and empathy from the reader of the narrative. The act of telling stories is, to James Dawes, essential for how we make sense of our world and the people that we surround ourselves with in our daily lives. He believes that “This means that when considering basic issues about the ‘self’ that are fundamental to the work of human rights and humanitarianism - ... - we need to be highly sensitive to the structure of narrative and the role of storytelling” (Dawes 395). By giving a voice to the oppressed the choices that are made after this in the society might be influenced by the narration because it had an impact on the population and their own sense of self. It connected with them on a level where they felt empathy and/or sympathy towards the marginal group that is given a voice. Giving a voice to the oppressed is the main element in Ishiguro’s novel, as it is given to Kathy who is a clone and as such a part of the oppressed group within the society that is depicted in the novel. Winston in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is also given a voice however, Kathy, he knows how he is oppressed.

Human rights have from the start been about the individual rights and how these are to be handled within societies. According to Joseph Slaughter human rights law has “From its inception... relied on both philosophical inquiry into, and sociological understanding of, the nature of human subjectivity, whether explicitly expressed or implicitly referenced” (2). The nature of human subjectivity, or the subjective way each human being sees the world, is something that is an important part of how human rights issues are handled in dystopian novels. According to Claeys “...some ‘utopias’ black peoples have been entirely eliminated... but for the non-whites this would be a dystopia” (111). This is how one person believed that a utopian society would be, how a perfect society for the author would be like. Thus one person’s utopia can be another’s dystopia based on their outlook, their subjective view on a perfect society. Human subjectivity is an important part of how we perceive others and how we see the world. It can also be a part of our natural self-preservation, something that is somewhat challenged in *Never Let Me Go*, where the clones seem to have no self-preservation instincts as we would think of them, as they simply accept their fate.

Human rights are closely tied in with not only language, but also the individual outlooks on societies and how they function as well as one can see how human rights follow the individual’s freedom of speech and freedom to act in both a social and a psychological way. By looking at the individual’s right to free speech one can quickly ascertain if the society allows for the individual freedom that is part of the human rights laws or not. If the society is totalitarian in nature, limiting of the vocabulary that is allowed when speaking of the individual rights of the people that live in the society makes it more obvious. Though Slaughter focuses on the Algerian Revolution in his paper to show his argumentation, the main element that is of interest to this thesis is his look into the close ties the French have to the creation of the ideas of human rights that apply to every member of the society from the French revolution, with its use of *égalité*, *liberté* and *fraternité*, until very recently. The

discussion on the history of human rights narratives and human right laws as well as the impact that human rights writing can have on the readers is also something that Slaughter looks into in the article. Even though the paper focuses on this connection between the two revolutions, it also explores the beginnings of the idea of human rights and how closely it is tied to the individual freedom that exists within narration and how this again follows the concept that human subjectivity and dignity is an universal and fundamental part of the discussion on human rights (Slaughter 3). Thus human rights and its conception after the Second World War can be seen as not only a reaction to this war, but also as something that has been in the making for many decades prior to the final document being ratified in 1949. Human rights issues have been at the basis for writing since the beginning of the utopian and dystopian writings began, and thus they are usually important elements in the novels that, in dystopian writing, show how the society is found to be missing vital elements that we see as important and universal.

Slaughter in his argumentation also points out; “International human rights norms, even when they cling to Enlightenment ideals of bourgeois individuality, have evolved in tandem with changing sociological and philosophical conceptions of individuality and human subjectivity” (5). Thus human rights norms follow the changes that occur in society in the development that within the ideas of individuality and subjectivity that is, in all countries and societies, a large part of the way their society functions. Even if this change has occurred, the human rights narrative still retains the ideals from the French revolution of equality, brotherhood and freedom which is especially present in free speech rights, as this is a right that allows everyone, despite their lot in life, an opportunity to speak their mind on subjects that concern them either personally or on a more general basis. Slaughter argues that, though “...postmodern theory argues the unknowability of the self...” (13), the individual experiences themselves are a part of history through the act of self-narration. “The freedom of

speech, the liberty to tell one's story, is precisely what the following thirty articles of the Universal Declaration attempt to ensure through prohibitions of abuses that tend to destroy the human voice..." (Slaughter 6). Therefore, free speech is not only important only to the individual but also to the society because the human rights narrative has a power to challenge the oppressive powers that control the society that the narrative is set in through its use of not only emotions but also the use of the more disturbing elements that most might not want to face, things like the torture or enslavement of others because they do not conform or because they are seen as something not someone. The power to challenge the oppressive power is something that is not only important to be aware of in real life, but also something that can be seen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* when Winston is being tortured for keeping a journal where he writes down his thoughts on the oppressive powers of the society he lives in. This is also present in *Never Let Me Go*, as the narrator is Kathy, one of the clones that is suppressed by the society, who not only manages to prove through her narration that she is human, she also does it in a way that challenges the society to take notice of her and her fellow clones in a way that they have never before been able to.

Dawes sees a problem with the human rights narrative in the unknown ways that the telling of the story will impact the person or group telling it. He calls it the paradox of representing suffering in his essay, and that "...to stop people from being injured, we have to tell the story of what's happening; but in telling the story, we often end up injuring people in unexpected ways" (401). This fact is important to keep in mind for any narrative where trauma is involved, but it is also something to keep in mind in regards to the dystopian novels as it is something that is in the background of many of these novels as the dystopian regimes have no real limit to what they might do to people that disobeys the system or tries to speak out against them. Exploring the issue of human rights through a fictional narrative might allow for the themes of the novel to be explored without fear of the way the regime or society

might react to the person that narrates the novel, as one might, or should, in a novel based on real events and people.

Looking into dystopian novels in light of the human rights angle allows for a more in depth reading into the choice of narration that most of these novels have and why the novels allow the reader such a close look at the human suffering. This human suffering is in many dystopian novels very explicit, where they violate many or all of the human rights that we accept to be fundamental rights in most of the societies that we have today. It is also a way to bring forth discussions in a classroom on these themes as well as the important connection between the power of language and the loss, or lack of, human rights. As well as why this is something that many take for granted today when, historically speaking, this is a relatively new way of structuring the society.

The next two chapters will analyse the two novels and provide examples of how language and human rights issues are handled in the texts. The main focus of this study of the two novels in this thesis is on how language and human rights are connected in the novels because both societies create differences between people with language and then give them different rights based on this separation. The following chapter will analyse the two novels in regards to language and human rights respectively, then compare the two novels in regards to what is in them and then discuss how literature and dystopian literature can be used when teaching literature at an upper secondary level.

### 3 Nineteen Eighty-Four

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* language and human rights are at the centre of the themes that the novel contains. The novel is clearly a dystopian novel that contains a society that is ruled by a totalitarian regime to an extreme that most do not understand. This is because the Party and its leader, Big Brother, who is all seeing and always present in the lives of the members of the party, rules the society by limitations on language and slogans as well as limiting their personal freedom. He is even present in the most private sphere in their lives and they cannot be certain that they are truly alone. This presence that is always there creates a paranoia that none of the members can ever truly escape. The novel is set in a totalitarian regime in 1984 in a world that differs from our own in what happened after the Second World War. In the novel we follow the life of Winston, a lower member of the Party from the time he begins to think more for himself to the end where he is a broken shell of his former self and tries to not think about anything.

#### 3.1 Language

Orwell was concerned with the use of language in relations to political ideology, as seen in his essay and the novel, and the problems that this increasing use of slogans can have on the everyday man and woman and how they think. Courtine explains that “Totalitarian power has a real stake in language and aims to dominate it. This is the warning given by Orwell in 1984 with his invention of *Newspeak*” (69-70, emphasis in original). He feared a loss of critical thought that might occur because of the increased use of political language in speeches and that the politicians deliberately chose words that were unnecessarily complicated instead of making their language clear and concise. In his article Nicholas Lemann argues that “To Orwell, the connection between the English language and politics was that the debasement of the latter requires the corruption of the former” (31). Thus

language becomes that which one must pay attention to throughout the novel, as it is used by the regime as a tool to create a us versus them mentality within the society and within different groups in the society. As we the readers follow the story of Winston and his dealings with the society, we are exposed to the various ways that language is used as an effective tool and the ways that this tool makes the society react, if they ever do, to what is going on in their society and to individual people that somehow go against the regime.

By renaming or rebranding certain elements within the society that we also have in real life, the novel, in many ways, forces the reader to pay close attention to the language used, to the very words that are being used to describe certain elements. The Ministries are good examples of this renaming that the novel utilises as a tool to make the dystopian society seem even more sinister. They are given names that are the complete opposites of what they truly are or what they really do. As “Orwell’s great insight was to see that any ideological assault on human nature is intimately connected to the assault on human language...Moreover, he saw that the essential textuality of human time and history is precarious in a world where language and texts are destroyed” (Blakemore 355-6). Winston works in a ministry where they destroy and edit history and is therefore acutely aware of the manipulations that the Party conducts through their control on the language. He describes the four ministries in the novel and these names are interesting to look at and their true meaning.

The Ministry of Truth, which concerns itself with news, entertainment, education and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerns itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs (Orwell 6).

These ministries’ true meaning and nature are something must be discovered throughout the novel. The way that the regime has named the ministries makes the reader from the very beginning of the novel aware that there is something that is not right with the way language is

used in the novel, as "...the reader sees the prefixal 'mini' as a thematic abbreviation of the Party's linguistically compressed world, and he also sees the irony by which the Party unwittingly tells the truth about 'mini' or 'little' truth, peace, love and plenty" (Blakemore 352). Thus even their names in Newspeak give the reader an idea of the truth behind the Party from the very beginning. On the next page of the novel we are given a more in depth description of the Ministry of Love through the explanation on how one can access the ministry and that it is only accessible "...by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors and hidden machine-gun nests" (Orwell 7). That is later on in the novel more understandable as the Ministry of Love is the ministry that deals with any and all that are declared unpeople. The ministry is also in charge of the interrogation and torture of the individuals that try to go against the regime and Big Brother or people who make the mistake of forgetting that they are always seen and their words are always heard. Edward Herman compares the novel with real life propaganda campaigns that the government or private enterprises orchestrate to gain the favour of the people and control the information that people might gain concerning certain subjects that they would rather they know nothing about. He argues that a similar control is happening in relations to war, as "...this country is never an aggressor, terrorist or sponsor of terrorism, by definition, whatever the correspondence of facts to standard definitions" (116), and that the very thought that the U.S. might be the 'aggressor' during the 'invasion' of Vietnam, was unheard of and unspoken in the media.

Language in this society has become something that is dangerous and could possibly lead to their death if they are overheard saying something that goes against the regime in any way. Steven Blakemore believes that "This control of language masks a profound hatred of language, for as long as language can express a rebellious reality the Party will never be completely satisfied" (354). Thus the regime seems to hate language to the extent that they try

to abolish certain words and phrases from use and from history, going as far as to rewrite novels and literature in general to fit with their view of how language should be. Lemann argues that if you “Take away words, and you have taken away mental function; take away mental function, and you have taken away the possibility of political action” (32). By restricting language, the Party believes that they secure their position in the society, they believe that they control all aspects of the outer Party members lives and that they are in no danger from the proles as long as they keep them happy by supplying them with certain goods. Slogans like “War is Peace” and “Freedom is Slavery” are designed by the regime to be simple yet effective means of controlling the masses. This idea is based in their belief that their mastery of the language that people use cements their rule in a way that makes them able to feel secure, whilst at the same time they fear the very thing that cements their rule. This is an interesting paradox that fuels the way the regime deals with the Party members that work with language as well as how they deal with people like Winston that refuse to doublethink.

The ministry that the reader is allowed more in depth knowledge of is the Ministry of Truth that Winston works in. Winston is one of the people in charge of changing and rewriting newspapers whenever something is misquoted or has become historically wrong. It could be something that a ministry or a member of the Party or Big Brother predicted wrongly, that someone is declared an unperson and so on. As Blakemore explains, “In 1984 the absence or deletion of a name ‘means’ that the person, place or thing never existed. ...As persons, places and things are literally ‘expressed’ or forgotten through the linguistic documents which acknowledge or ignore them, this ironically elevates the importance of these linguistic documents” (352). Thus Winston, through his work, becomes aware of the lies and deception that the Party surrounds itself with simply because he is in charge of rewriting historical events that have been deemed a threat to the party. Because “Orwell’s growing concern was particularly with the totalitarian disregard for historical truth, as well as the

possibility that mass propaganda could produce a population who no longer loved liberty” (Claeys 122), this is a major part of the novel and its descriptions of the Party and the people within. The work Winston is doing within this ministry is basically forging the past events to fit with the present thoughts within the party towards certain people or events that have been reported, which is in accordance with the party policy of “Who controls the past... controls the future: who controls the present controls the past” (Orwell 40) which Winston tells us is the base of the idea of ‘doublethink’ where you had to accept that “Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting” (Orwell 40). This way of looking at the society’s view of history is interesting as it depicts a world where history is not a constant fact, but is instead ever changing at the whims of the totalitarian regime through the use of language. As van Dijk explains “Ideological opinions selectively invoke and hide history...No historical background or explanation for Their violence against Us is given...” (60-1). By exchanging some words for others in the news that he edits, Winston can delete a person’s involvement in the event or their entire official existence. This makes him intimately aware of the lack of freedom that they have. As this is a lack of basic human rights it is an interesting issue to look at through the way that Winston deal with it.

Language is used not only for the purpose of creating falsified information by the regime but also is used to create differences between people where none existed prior to the change in wording about the people in the group that is effected by this change. In the novel, Winston is given messages for what he is supposed to change because the regime deems it necessary to change the past. One example of this is that

The messages he had received referred to articles or news-items which for one reason or another it was thought necessary to alter, or, as the official phrase had it, to rectify. For example, it appeared from the Times of the seventeenth of March that Big Brother, in his speech the previous day, had predicted that the South Indian front would remain

quiet but that a Eurasian offensive would shortly be launched in North Africa. As it happened the Eurasian Higher Command had launched its offensive in South India and left North Africa alone. It was therefore necessary to rewrite a paragraph of Big Brother's speech, in such a way as to make him predict the things that had actually happened (Orwell 45).

This is from the very beginning of the novel and seems as if, from how easily Winston managed to change this, to be a regular task that he performed at the Ministry of Truth. I have already mentioned unpeople in the way that Winston describes them in the novel. This word is present in all the events following the first mention, as it is the fate that probably awaits Winston because of his rebelling against the regime by thinking for himself instead of following the slogans that the regime throws at the population to make them stop thinking.

The language that this novel uses to segregate and differentiate between the various groups of the society is not only political but also subtle in a way that makes even the reader start to explore the pros and cons of the limitations that the regime puts on the language that is to be used. Lemann explains this as "Its aim is to make individual, independent thought impossible by depriving the mind of the words necessary to form ideas other than those fed to it by the state" (31). By creating strict social groups that people have to keep within by accepting that there is no real hope that they might be able to rebel against the oppression that they are under.

Newspeak is also a big part of the language issues in the novel that contribute to the oppression of the population in general through the limitation of language and loss of words and synonyms that makes it impossible to even consider to rebel against the Party as those words are no longer a part of the vocabulary and thus out of reach of the people that might have rebelled. According to Jonathan Lewis "We are introduced to Newspeak right at the beginning of the novel in a footnote...thus it is very clear that Orwell wants the reader to be

aware from the start of the Party's desire to control thought through the reduction of language" (39). As the appendix at the end of the novel explains, "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the worldview and mental habits proper to devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible" (Orwell 343). Certain words were deemed undesirable by the Party, and therefore removed completely from the language they were creating. Certain words that were eliminated were only eliminated in certain forms. The word freedom was one of the words deemed irrelevant, but the word free when speaking of something that was no longer there was still present in the language. The whole point of the limitation was to remove any and all obstacles that might exist for the leaders of the Party to completely control the lives of the people within the society. As "The Principles of Newspeak envisage a world where the link between language and thought is severed completely"(Lewis 46). As the appendix goes on to say, "Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought..."(Orwell 344). Thus, according to Lewis, "It is ironic, therefore, that the very people that are capable of designing the new language are, despite their zealous efforts, themselves a threat to the Party for they comprehend too well its motives..." (42). This is the reason the party fears the very people that work on changing older texts to Newspeak texts, they know too much about the way the Party works for them to be allowed to roam free in the society. They have gone from being an asset to the regime to be a liability that they cannot afford to let live.

The difference in how an inner Party member, an outer Party member and a Proletariat are treated by the society based on their grouping is interesting. The Proletariats, or the proles are the ones with more freedom, as the Party believes that the middle class, which is the outer Party members, are the ones that historically start revolutions. Therefore this is the group that is most watched and has the most people eliminated or re-educated in the Ministry of Love, or Minilove in Newspeak, whereas the proles have freedom because the Party assumes that they

lack intellect. Winston believes that “If there was hope, it lay in the proles!”(Orwell 251). The reality that the proles have more freedom from the totalitarian regime than the members of the outer Party is interesting and is mostly based on the wording that the regime uses to refer to the different groups. This is closely tied together with the continued war and the way the regime uses this to spread their slogans and ideals through the news, both written and spoken, and how they use words to create a certain belief within the society.

Thus, the issue of language in the novel seems to be the lack of stability for it to function, as not only does the regime limit the words that are allowed to be used, they also want to limit and change the way the people think. They want to control everything that has to do with language, from spoken to thought to what is written down. According to Blakemore “The Party, however, is not only engaged in perverting language, it wants to destroy language” (353). They fear language and its possibilities for revolution because of words that might trigger knowledge about the way life used to be in any member of the society. They fear that language is able to cause a revolution; therefore, they try to destroy any link to Oldspeak in their new language.

The elements of human rights and language are closely tied together in the novel. These elements are also important when looking at them in the classroom. Language and human rights look at the power that the regime has in how the everyday lives of the people in the society is and thus needs to be further examined. Language in this novel not only defines what grouping you belong to, but also what rights you have as an inner and outer member of the Party and as a prole as well as what happens to those that lose all rights. This is something that I will look closer at in this next section on human rights.

## 3.2 Human Rights

In the novel, many of the events that occur contain elements that are close to a human rights narrative and that have aspects of a novel that is meant to spotlight issues of abuse and torture by one group on another. This is especially present in the last part of the novel where we are allowed an insight into the torture, both mentally and physically, that Winston experiences at the hands of the inner Party member O'Brien. The complete loss of rights that he experiences from the moment he is arrested by the Thought Police as well as the way that they do their utmost to break him down into something that they can mould into a sort of machine-like member of the society, makes the novel even more eerie as this is the part where the fact that the novel is dystopian is truly front and centre.

Earlier in the language section of this chapter on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, I explored the way the regime utilised language as a way to create separation between the groups of the society as well as the people that exist outside of the society. This is closely tied together with human rights narration, as the novel presents us with Winston and his struggles against the oppressive and constricted society that he lives within. Even though Winston is a member of the Party, he is not a member of the inner Party, but instead a member of what is considered the middle class of the society within Oceania's Airstrip One, England has become a part of Oceania after the events that split the world in three regimes that are in a constant state of war, and thus believed to be too dangerous to leave alone, but not smart enough to be considered for the inner Party.

Logically speaking, Winston and his peers in this middle class should be treated better than the proles, but because the Party believes that it is the middle class that is responsible for uprisings and revolutions this is not something that they would consider. This makes a twisted sort of sense as the members of the Party, even if they are outer members, still know too much of what is going on within the Ministries and what the Party truly does behind closed doors

which makes them a bigger threat than the proles are to the regime. Instead of being treated as potential assets, the outer members of the Party are constantly under surveillance through the cameras that they are required to have within their homes. By limiting the lives of the outer Party members through language and their lives in general through strict rules, the regime seem to believe that they have less reason to fear rebellion due to the monotone way of life that they live. The proles "...are kept from rebelling by a diet of mass literature, heavy physical work, films, football, beer and gambling...they could not rebel until they were conscious, and vice versa" (Claeys 124). That the proles were Winston's hope for a change in the society show how he believes that there is still hope, but at the same time he is aware that something special has to happen to spark the rebellion or change in how the society is governed.

The question of free speech is also a central point to the novel as the constant surveillance and fear of the Thought Police and Big Brother makes free speech and free thought seem impossible. Winston's act of rebellion against the regime by writing his journal is something that the reader knows from the very beginning could be something that will end in either re-education or death for Winston, and anyone else that the regime believes associates with this rebellion. As he tells us "How could you make appeal to the future when not a trace of you, not even an anonymous word scribbled on a piece of paper, could physically survive?" (Orwell 32). This fear of being forgotten that he relays clashes with the work that he does every day at the bidding of the regime, though it can also be seen as his realisation that what he is doing to other people that are no longer considered people might someday be done to him by one of his co-workers. This can be seen especially in how one of the first things that he writes down in his book is a repeat of the phrase "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" (Orwell 21). This makes his stand from the very beginning a fragile and easily

destabilised one when he eventually becomes more at odds with the Party and begins to pay more attention to everything that is wrong with the society that he lives within.

The fear that Winston relays in regards to being forgotten is directly linked with his work as well as his fear that someone will notice his inability and, perhaps, unwillingness to believe two truths at once. His inability to doublethink as the party wants him to do, makes him acutely aware of the fragile nature of words and language in the society. This is because of the work that happens around him at the 'Minitruth' deal with not only rewriting history and older news articles and such, but also the work into developing the language so that certain words, such as freedom, will be incomprehensible to the population in the society. This fear of being forgotten is also connected to the lack of certain human rights, namely the freedom of speech, thought and freedom from fear also makes this an important part of the novel. This is important because it not only is something that is important to look at for a reader but also because this fear is what drives the novel forwards.

The torture scenes in the novel also make the human rights approach to the text an interesting one, as Winston becomes both someone that not only the reader empathises with; but also a person that loses any and all rights he once had as a human being in the society that he lives within. It is interesting as this is the moment where not only Winston, but also the readers find out exactly how far the regime is willing to go to suppress any free thought and beliefs that might compromise them. This moment in the novel is where a teacher needs to take time to allow the pupils time to express themselves on their emotional responses. This is the moment where the true face of the totalitarian regime is unmasked and laid bare before the reader. This is the moment where all the things that Winston fears might happen to him if he is discovered, actually happened. The torture continues to the point where he loses all hope and has a mental breakdown. The start of this change is in chapter X of part two of the novel when Winston and Julia are caught by the Thought Police as rebels. The scene of their capture

by O'Brian and the 'Minilove' incorporates many of the elements that the novel tries to tell the reader about the dangers of language to the rights that people have as humans and the dangers that might occur when a regime becomes totalitarian in nature. The loss of free thought is obvious when Winston relays that it was "Unthinkable to disobey the iron voice from the wall" (Orwell 253). Because they had no real freedom nor believed that they might actually get away from the oppressive Party and thus they stood still until the Thought Police arrived in the room.

When Winston is tortured both physically and psychologically, the regime tries to make him doubt himself. Winston starts out believing that "Nothing in the world was so bad as physical pain" (Orwell 274), but this is before he is subjected to the psychological aspect of the torture. They want him to lose contact with his own thoughts and substitute them for their beliefs. They want him to doublethink, to stop thinking for himself and blindly follow their teachings and opinions. Slaughter argues that "Torture accomplishes this substantiation by destroying the individual's ability to produce language with her voice. More insidiously, the system of torture replaces the tortured's voice with a voice supplied by the torturer that, read by the torturing institution, confirms and produces the power of that institution" (12). This way of maintaining control seems to be the preferred way by the regime in the novel, as it allows them to control the victims of torture long after they are released from their imprisonment in the 'Minilove'. Language is also very integrated into this as "For the victims of torture, language fails to function; the tortured often has little or no access to the information that the torturers earnestly claim to need. Instead, the torture victim can only provide irrational responses...to the torturers' questions" (Slaughter 12). In the novel, Winston makes the realization that "Their real weapon was the merciless questioning that went on and on, hour after hour, tripping him up, laying traps for him, twisting everything that he said, convincing him at every step of lies and self-contradiction, until he began weeping as

much from shame as from nervous fatigue” (Orwell 277). That is the way that most of the torture that he is subjected to aims to do, to break him down into a mental state where he knows nothing, where they can make him believe whatever they need him to believe. As Winston describes it, “He became simply a mouth that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him. His sole concern was to find out what they wanted him to confess, and then confess it quickly, before the bullying started anew” (Orwell 278). The torture has an extreme impact on how Winston thinks after some time, and this way of destroying his ability for rational thought and replace it with whatever they think he should say. In this, Slaughter’s article and its look at torture is not only important to the understanding of why Winston reacts the way he does, but also as a way to explain this later on when teaching the novel in a class.

The international law of human rights is, as discussed in the theory chapter, a rather new development from the same time as the novel was written. Thus the lack of many of these rights in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* needs to be seen as a reaction to the lack of human rights that happened in the second world war and in many countries that were either totalitarian or in other ways lacking of basic rights for all. Lewis argues that “*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is essentially a dystopian warning as to the dehumanising effect of totalitarian power” (45). The novel uses the unstableness of the rights any of the citizens have as a way to make the point of the novel, that it is a warning of what might happen if someone goes too far. It is a strong one that also connects with people more intimately because we follow one person through his struggles and the torture that he experiences at the hands of his fellow Party members. This is part of what makes this novel an interesting book to consider for teaching, as it is both easy and complicated to figure out what the main problem that the novel set out to warn the reader about truly is and what this means for the population in the novel.

The change that occurs in Winston’s status within the society when he is considered a threat to the Party is interesting to look at not only because of the implications for the rest of

the people in the society, but also because it reveals the control the Party have on the population. O'Brien tells Winston that "Sometimes, Winston. Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane." (Orwell 287) in regards to how many fingers he is holding up, four, and this is the reason that the party was after him in the first place. Because he did not practice doublethink, he still remembered and according to O'Brien and this was something that the Party knew about as O'Brien admits to having followed him for years prior to the initial contact. This torture and the following break in Winston's psyche can be seen as a warning that Orwell gives the reader of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to the way that language is being utilised as a tool by people in charge and in politics to create a sense of apathy toward their lot in life that might happen in real life and not only within the dystopian society in a novel. This apathy is a way to control the population and their reactions towards certain happenings in the society, especially towards what the regime refers to as enemies of the state.

One moment that is especially connected with the ideas of human rights narratives and human rights in general is from the very start of the novel where we are introduced to Goldstein and his ideas and opinions that differ from Big Brother's way of controlling and subjugated way of structuring the society.

"... he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, he was demanding the immediate conclusion of peace with Eurasia, he was advocating freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed – and all this in rapid polysyllabic speech that was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words, indeed, than any Party member would normally use in real life." (Orwell 15).

Because of this, Goldstein is considered an enemy of the people, he is a focus in their “Two Minute Hate” and used as a way for the Party to make the association between the ideas that he presents with something that is wrong, something unnatural and something that would inevitably lead to a death sentence if one dared to agree with this enemy of the state.

According to Blakemore “The Party’s attempt to control man through language, to control time and history, is subverted...by the oldspak narrator who asserts the linguistic ‘past’ against the Party’s anti-historical ‘present’”( 349). Thus, even if

Ultimately, Orwell’s novel is a warning about what could happen if we were to allow the reductionist principles of Ogden’s *Basic English* to be used by a power-mad dictator, such as the world has indeed seen in the form, for example, of Josef Stalin. It reminds us of the need to preserve our freedom of speech and ensure that the space of language can remain as wide open and unconstrained as possible (Lewis 50).

The novel still makes the reader believe that there might be a hope in the future of this society through the appendix where the narrator seems to be looking back at the events in the past whilst referring to Newspeak and the Party in terms that would not be allowed if the party still existed. It reminds us of the importance of freedom and free speech and tries to show how the dangers of a totalitarian regime can be used for the purpose of assuring that this never happens in reality.

## 4 Never Let Me Go

*“You poor Creatures.” (Ishiguro 267)*

In this novel we follow the life of a clone named Kathy from her early days attending Hailsham to her final decision to become a donor after the death of her last real tie to her childhood, Tommy. The society that the novel depicts is one where the clones are a vital part of the healthcare system and thus not recognised as human due to the many complications that this admission would create. The main focus is the relationships that Kathy has to Tommy and Ruth from Hailsham to adult life, also the way their situation is imprisoning them from the start is a constant issue in the background.

The novel is an exploration of many human rights themes and the way that one can be, from the very start, influenced by the society to accept something that would usually be unacceptable and terrifying. The intricate way that language becomes a tool to lay down the foundation for the treatment of the clones by the governing powers in the society in relation to the human rights issue in the novel is one that is interesting to explore because it is relevant to how we treat others. Language and its uses and misuse is something that is especially important in society today as it is not only something to use to create segregation, but something that we rely on to create meaning across social and cultural barriers to gain understanding and coexist. As Titus Levy explains, “*Never Let Me Go* examines the ways in which atrocity can become normalised, hidden in the routines of daily life” (2). This is something that is accepted by the society as an acceptable part of their daily lives.

## 4.1 Language

The importance of language in this novel is slightly more concealed in this novel compared to Orwell's novel, but the way that language is utilised makes it an important part of the novel. As the narrator of the novel is Kathy, one of the clones, one of the people that are oppressed, the novel gives her a voice to show what she has experienced as a part of this group of people. Her pain becomes a powerful tool to use against the society that has put her in the position that she is in. According to Dawes "To transform pain into language is to exert control over it, to undo pain's original theft of autonomy" (408). By telling her own story, she takes control of how the reader understands the society. It is a powerful and effective tool to use, as this way of telling her story not only shows how her emotional responses were, but also because the reader becomes more involved with what she goes through and more open to the point that the novel tries to make; who is human and who is not in this dystopian society?

The ironic way the clones are named is one of the direct ways the novel utilises language as a way to emphasise the role the society has in the treatment of the clones. They are named in a way that makes the listener believe that it is voluntarily to become what they become. In their youth they are called students. They study at a boarding school where they live with other clones older and younger than themselves and are thought the regular subjects, but also learn, piece by piece, that they are not allowed a normal life, a free life, like the rest of the society. As Gabriele Griffin points out, "In *Never Let Me Go*, there is – seemingly – no import of scientific language. Instead, ordinary or everyday language is 'made strange'..." and that "Words and phrases such as 'carer', 'donor', 'fourth donation' and 'her own kind' all appear on the first page, 'carer' and 'donor' repeatedly, to establish an apparently closed world narrated by Kathy H." (651). Thus the language used is not only ordinary, but lacks the usual use of scientific terms that many novels that have scientific elements employ. Instead the novel creates a world where the wrongness of the situation can only be discovered by

understanding that the language and the specific words used in relations to the clones are in many ways antonyms of the reality that is hidden by the words. The way that the words used create an impression of something being wrong in the society from the first pages of the novel because of the lack of scientific terms, makes this a novel that is especially interesting to use in a classroom setting for the purpose of learning to read between the lines or to look closer at certain phrases used, this will be further explored in Chapter 5. The lack of scientific terms is significant as the novel not only use everyday words in place of more scientific terms when referring to the clones, but also because it displays the narrator's, Kathy's, lack of knowledge beyond the knowledge that she gained at Hailsham. It seems to be on purpose to remind the reader that the clones, especially those at Hailsham, have no real understanding of how they came to be beyond the fact that they were created to die so that others may live.

When they are older, the clones leave the school and have an opportunity to choose their next step themselves, at least for a while, and can make a decision to either become a donor or a carer. A carer is a clone that chooses to wait to become a donor. Carers travel to various donors across the country to visit and sit with them as a sort of member of their family yet not. The carer is responsible for visiting donors and is supposed to be a link to the life they used to live when they were young and had not become a part of the donation programme. As Anne Whitehead argues,

Is 'caring' viewed in this light, a form of labor that is socially valuable because Kathy is making a positive difference to others (preventing 'agitation'), or – given the political resonances of Ishiguro's choice of word here – is it a means of preventing resistance and unrest, securing passive compliance through endless, exhausting activity and minor compensation? (61).

If we look at the carers in this light, their purpose in the society seems to be not really helpful to the donors they visit, but simply a way for the society to keep them occupied until they

themselves are to become donors. A donor is a clone who has begun their last journey in life and may never have been a carer at all, prior to becoming a donor. They donate their organs simply because that is what the society has taught them to do. It is what the society expects of clones and also something that they have been told from a very young age to be their only possibility in life. According to Anjali Pandey “The ironic and antonymic meaning of the word in the novel is soon made apparent” (388). A donation is supposed to be voluntarily, not forced or coerced. Thus, what actually happens is not donating, but harvesting of the organs.

This explanation of what a clone is becomes even darker when we learn that the clones do not die but complete. They complete their life when they have donated all that can be donated and the society has no more use for them. As “Ultimately, in *Never Let Me Go*, guardians are no longer safe-keepers, but guards, carers are no longer tender, but accomplices in murder, and donations are no longer voluntary, but coerced” (Pandey 388). From the time they are called students whilst growing up and later on when they become carers and donors before they finally completing, they are brought up in a closed off part of the society, hidden away from view. This allows the atrocities that occur to continue because they are hidden behind the normal, everyday language whenever people refer to the clones. Kathy and how she is describing the society that she experiences emphasize the feelings of normalcy, “Her measured account suggests normalcy, the everydayness of what she describes” (Griffin 351). This creates a certain strangeness in how Kathy describes the world that she lives in, as everyday words that are used in other settings might also carry the same background meaning as carer and donor do.

Language is what makes this seem easier to accept for the general population in the society, as the way they refer to the clones by calling them donors and carers as well as calling them students when they are young, makes the society turn a blind eye to the atrocities that occur right in front of them. Language is powerful, and even more so when put to use in

this manner, as the words that the society uses to refer to the clones makes it seem normal as if there is nothing to see or care about in regards to the clones, even though they can see it happening because of the organs that keep saving the lives of the people in the society. They choose to remain ignorant instead of having to face the true reality of where those organs came from. Pandey argues that “Ishiguro prods readers to ‘see’ the ‘organic’ sense in which the word is really being used” (388). This is one of the ways that the reader is prodded, as Pandey refers to it, to understand the wrongness that comes with this use of language and as a way to emphasize the dystopian nature of the novel. Because of the way that the clones are being referred to by the society, the society lacks empathy and sympathy towards them, as they are simply parts of what makes the society function, on par with farming and meat production for food, they are not really acknowledged as anything more than this by people.

The discussion whether or not the clones have a soul is also a discussion of the language that is used. If the clones have souls they cannot be used in the way the society does, but if they are without a soul there is no need to change their way of life. The clones are unaware of the discussion going on that is centred on their lack of souls, but they still on some level understand that they are considered as less than the ‘real’ humans by the society. This realisation is not only on a subconscious level in response to actions towards them, but also because of the words that the teachers of the school use when they are speaking to and with them in certain situations. The way that they encourage the students to make art is tied in with the discussions on souls. This is something that Kathy and Tommy discuss early on in the novel as something that they know is connected to their purpose in life, but they do not know exactly what it is. Kathy mentions that the Gallery’s importance and their donations in the future are interconnected, that it is “...about how one day we’ll start giving donations. I don’t know why, but I’ve had this feeling for some time now, that it’s all linked in, though I can’t figure out how” (Ishiguro 31). They know that something is behind the explanations and the

expectations the teachers at Hailsham had in regards to the art for the Gallery. They know that something is strange or wrong in how the Gallery's purpose is presented to them, but they have no way of finding out on their own what this strangeness is as they are not aware of the controversy they represent simply by being a part of the project at Hailsham. The interesting thing is that they from the very beginning use words like donation as if it is something that is unavoidable, that it is something that they are meant to do. This is a result of the way they are being taught and the way their guardians refer to their fate at the hands of the society.

The power words have is seen clearly in *Never Let Me Go*, as it allows the atrocities to continue, they allow the society to pretend that nothing is wrong and everything is normal and okay, it makes the clones themselves believe that nothing will change and that they have no other way to live their lives. As Griffin explains, "At the heart of *Never Let Me Go* is the question of the relative status of the clones and of what it means to be human." (653), and this is a deliberate move by Ishiguro as he uses the novel to ask the question if the clones are human or not.

## 4.2 Human Rights

The main human rights issue in this novel is the very fact that the clones are not considered humans and therefore not eligible for being treated as if they are. When Ishiguro wrote the novel in the early 2000s, the debate on human cloning was making headlines in many newspapers and in many debates going on around the world, as Griffin say, *Never Let Me Go* "...appeared first during a period – the early 2000s – when cloning, and biotechnological developments and debates associated with these more generally, were high on the agenda" (646). This issue was especially in the spotlight when new ways of manipulating genes and human embryos were being discovered and studied. "In the same year [2004] a Korean scientist claimed to have cloned the first human embryos – his revelation,

later shown to be false, prompted renewed public discussions about the desirability of human cloning” (Griffin 646). She also explains that the debates also touched upon the purpose cloning could have in organ donation “...and its more sinister form, organ harvesting...” (646), as well as creating siblings for the purpose of saving the older child and the option to choose to only have boys or girls. The debates on cloning in the real society bleed over into the novel through the characters and especially the confrontation Kathy and Tommy have with Madame and Miss Emily in the last part of the novel and the history cloning has in this society. The way that this novel opens the discussions on human clones and creating ones for the sole purpose of being harvested from is interesting in a school setting, as it is a subject that might be easier to discuss when set in a fictional society, rather than our own. I will return to this idea in Chapter 5.

The reasons for the lack of openness in regards to the clone situation is made clear when Kathy and Tommy confronts Madame and Miss Emily in regards to the possibility of being allowed to postpone their donating for a year, as a rumour had it they could if they could prove that they were truly in love. This leads to them explaining the real reason they were attending Hailsham in the first place as well as the cruel truth that they were not considered human in any way by most. The way that the world thought about the clones was something that was almost set in stone, as “In the early days, after the war, that’s largely all you were to most people Shadowy objects in test tubes” (Ishiguro 256). The way that they were treated was irrelevant to the society as they were a means to an end for most. With the clones the way they are, the society has access to cures that they would not have otherwise.

Their discussion also touches upon the very beginning of this way of ‘curing’ the general population, the ones considered human, and the way that they from the very beginning kept the clones in the shadows. As Miss Emily explains;

And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum. Yes, there *were* arguments. But by the time people became concerned about...about *students*, by the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late (Ishiguro 257, emphasis in novel)

This made the idea of Hailsham become an opportunity to explore if something changed if the clones were brought up differently. To Miss Emily one of the reasons they conducted the experiment was that "...we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being. Before that, all clones – or students, as we preferred to call you – existed only to supply medical science" (Ishiguro 256). Thus, the entirety of Hailsham was one big social experiment for the people involved in it. Though they had no hope of changing everything, they seemed to have a hope that they might influence how the clones were treated prior to becoming donors. According to de Villiers, "By embracing their roles as organ donors the students are, of course, inevitably confronted with their looming deaths, as the fulfilment of their projects will inevitably result in their earthly demise" (92). But at the very start this thinking makes the transition harder for the students, as well as making it difficult to tell the clones that they only have one purpose in life from the start. In some ways, they manipulate the complacency shown by the students in regards to their inevitable demise by releasing the information in small amounts whilst they are growing up.

The living arrangements of the clones at Hailsham were at best an attempt from members of the society to alleviate their feelings of guilt for the situation the children would have to face later on in life. This is obvious when we later learn the reason Hailsham becomes a thing of the past following the scandal of a scientist that wanted to create 'perfect' children in the same way that the clones were made. The fallout after this is what makes the school,

and the other schools like it, become a thing of the past. As “The idea that the clones have no souls could have been the scientists’ assumption, as they have not been conceived by ‘parents’ – they were created artificially and could, therefore, not be classified as humans” (de Villiers 94). Miss Emily explains that “The world didn’t want to be reminded how the donation programme really worked” (Ishiguro 259). This led to the funds that were donated to the school to dry up as “In other words, my dears, they wanted you back in the shadows” (Ishiguro 259). They were once again not interested in the way that the clones were treated seeing that “However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think about you” (Ishiguro 258), thus they wanted them away from their sight, in a place where the suffering and inhumane ways they were treated were away from them. As Whitehead explains it, “Here, then, the true horror of Ishiguro’s dystopic society is revealed: it is shown to be founded, precisely, on relations of care” (77). According to Whitehead, this makes the society even more gruesome, as “Empathy, in other words, is not unambiguously beneficial, and it can lead as readily to exploitation and suffering as to more altruistic behaviours” (57). By caring for their families, the society simultaneously condemns the clones to half-lives; to suffering at the hands of the society without a chance at actually living or having any true freedom.

Another element that could be seen by the reader as problematic is the lack of resistance that the clones have towards their fates. As “None of them ever questions their own existence. Instead they embrace the roles carved out for them” (de Villiers 92), instead they “... blindly accept their functional state of existence as determined by society. They do not consider the possibility of pursuing authentic lives...they act as if they were things” (de Villiers 92). Even if Ruth who at one point dreams about working in an office, eventually cast

it aside and embraces her role as a clone. The lack of resistance might be confusing to many readers, but I personally see it as an example of how the society has from the very first day of their lives made it clear that they are different, they are not like the rest, they have only one true purpose as organ donors later on in life, and nothing more.

One of the most important things that the novel touches upon are the way the society within the novel depends on the organs from clones to treat the diseases that they have. As Miss Emily points out in the novel, “Here was the world, requiring students to donate.” and that “While that remained the case, there would always be a barrier against seeing you as properly human” (Ishiguro 258). The human rights issue is a question about what makes a person a person. How do we differentiate between a clone and a human when both are human beings that think and feel, that have hopes and dreams, that want to live and learn, and, most importantly, love? This question is one of human rights and the potential that exists in our own society for this to become something that could happen. Ishiguro highlights the possibility of science gone wrong, a key element in dystopian novels. Even though the novel is dystopian in nature due to the segregation and oppression of the clones, the novel does this subtly and by using the restricted way of life that the clones have as an element that makes the reader understand that the situation is wrong on any and all levels. The emotional tie in with Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, and their ultimate fate as well as the way that their lives have no real point besides being a part of the use and toss mentality of the society they live in makes the human rights issue obvious. As “...the final section of the novel portrays Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth as loving and sensitive individuals, even if they are not accorded the status and rights of citizens within the dystopian political system that has brought them into being” (Whitehead 56). This shows exactly how the society they live within thinks on the clones, and the reality of their lives clashes since “Being an identical replica of another human being does not strip the clones of emotions, nor does it leave them without an individualised sense of

self” (de Villiers 95). The whole point of Hailsham was to prove if the students, or clones, had souls, if they were human or not. But because of the dependency that the society has in regards to the organs that the clones provide, this is ignored and the status quo is maintained whilst the society closes their eyes to the suffering of the clones.

### 4.3 Comparing *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Both *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are set in worlds that are fictional. Orwell wrote about a future society and Ishiguro wrote a novel on events that seem to have occurred prior to the novel being written. Thus both of the novels are set in the 1980-90’s, flashbacks in Ishiguro’s novel to Kathy’s childhood display events that had to have occurred in this timeframe, and both show a world that deviates from our own after the Second World War but where technology is explored in different directions. Orwell’s novel makes it clear who controls the society and what they use the technology they have for, whilst Ishiguro chose to make the people that decide the fate of the clones vague throughout the novel with Kathy referring to them as “...they...” (Ishiguro 3) whenever she speaks of them. Both novels are clearly dystopian, but their focus is different, to a certain extent, as to the way that the society works.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* language is used as a tool for oppression by the removal of certain words and the change or destruction of certain meanings that some words have. One example was that of the word free, which the regime sought to have only mean that someone was free when they were out of something and not as in the word freedom or in regards to free speech, which ceased to exist in Newspeak. This way of utilising language in the novel is a result of Orwell’s fear that the totalitarian regimes lacked understanding, or possibly that they understood all too well, the importance language has in how revolutions or critical approaches to the society begins. Orwell’s novel can be seen as an attempt to show exactly

how a society that seeks to have full control over the language and thoughts of its population could be, how terrifying a society without freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of thought. As Winston realise in the novel “‘The proles are human beings,’ he said aloud. ‘We are not human’” (Orwell 191). The novel set out to make the reader understand that the true horrors of the dystopian society is the lack of free thought that leads to loosing that which makes one human.

In *Never Let Me Go* language is used to create a sense of normalcy for the general population in the society that it depicts in regards to the clones that also exists within it. The use of the everyday words to describe the terrors that the clones go through and the way that the society, and they themselves, look at their prospects in life is a way to use language that creates an understanding of how wrong things can become if one never looks beyond the words to the reality behind them. Ishiguro’s choice of having one of the clones as the narrator in the novel also adds to this feeling of wrongness in the words that are used not only by Kathy, but also by others towards Kathy that can be seen in how one of the main people behind Hailsham calls her and Tommy “Poor Creatures” (Ishiguro 267). This is not how the novel prior to this has referred to the clones. The repeat of words like ‘students’, ‘carers’ and ‘donors’ to refer to them also brings out the power language has in how we see the world, as the society also use these words as a way to describe what the clones do. Even if their real purpose is the exact opposite, as the donors are not voluntarily, the carers are almost not there to take care of donors but more of a way to occupy the clones that are not yet needed as donors.

In both novels the use of irony is obvious. In *Never Let Me Go* this is mainly in how the clones are referred to. A donation is supposed to be voluntary, not forced, thus a clone being called a donor is ironic in a way that also opens up for discussions on the impact being called a donor has on the clones and on the society that calls the clone donor. In *Nineteen*

Eighty-Four the main irony is in the way that the Ministries are being named both in ‘oldspeak’ and in Newspeak. Calling the ministry of Love for Minilove show this irony through using mini as a way to show how the ministry is lacking love in a subtle way.

In both novels human rights are essential to how the people within are treated as not everyone has the same rights in the two dystopian societies. Even though they both deal with human rights issues, they do so in different ways. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell depicts a society where people’s rights depend on their status in the society, their importance to the regime, whilst always maintaining an underlying threat that if they do not act as the regime wants them to, they might lose all rights and be declared an unperson. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the crimes that are most heavily punished are those that deal with thought crime, those that deal with language and memory. Thus language and human rights issues are closely tied together in this novel, as the human rights are both given and taken away through language and the crimes that the regime puts on thinking freely.

In *Never Let Me Go* the human rights issue is placed front and centre as the narrator, Kathy, is a part of the subjugated group. The clones have only one purpose in life, to donate their organs to the real humans. In this novel Ishiguro shows the dangers of cloning and how Kathy, in many ways, is more human than the humans that she is supposed to eventually donate her organs to. The novel creates an emotional response as the question the novel truly asks is if the clones are truly worth less than the humans they are supposed to save, if they are not actually human even if they were created in a laboratory. Their human rights were removed because they were not deemed to be human, they were clones and thus not human. Language can be said to have taken away their rights, as language is what is used to segregate them from being included in the general society.

In the next chapter the issues of these two novels in regards to teaching them in a classroom will be looked into as well as looking at literature in the classroom in general.

## **5 Teaching literature in the classroom: dystopian novels and the critical mind**

This chapter explores the general teaching of literature in a classroom setting and specifically at *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* at upper secondary level in Norwegian schools. These novels offer a starting point for further discussions and explorations into the themes of the novel, which includes the focus of this thesis; language and human rights in relations to each other and the power language has over the distribution of rights in dystopian societies. This chapter will show how these novels can be used in accordance to the English subject curriculum and the core curriculum as well as in an inter-subject project or focus area by exploring the themes within the two novels.

### **5.1 Teaching English literature in Norwegian schools**

Teaching literature in a classroom setting can be a demanding and challenging thing to do as a teacher. This is especially true in an age where there is always a synopsis, film and SparkNotes available online for the pupils to use instead of actually reading the novel or story that they are supposed to read. Using longer works of literature in the classroom can be both challenging and rewarding for both pupil and teacher in many ways and this is something that I will explore in this part of the thesis. I will also look closer at how one can teach the two novels that this thesis explores as well as how they can be used outside of English lessons and in some of the other subjects as well.

English as a subject has become increasingly important in the Norwegian schools after the Second World War as a result of a rapidly changing economic and social movement, and from the school reform in 1997 the pupils start their education in English in first grade. This

focus on English is seen as a prominent part of being a part of the society today, as it is a universal language. Thus, pupils need to develop their skills in oral and written English, as well as informal and formal ways of communication. These skills are to be taught through the English subject and the interaction pupils have with the language in the specific lessons and their diversity in issues and themes. The English subject curriculum explains that this learning happens when the pupils work with a variety of texts that they might see in the future. This study of texts is one of the ways that pupils can get a better understanding of the variety that exists within the society. This understanding can lead to a realisation of their place in the society as well as highlight that they should never ‘judge a book by its cover’. It might also prompt them to look deeper into certain issues instead of making assumptions based on what they have been told is true. The study of texts can also lead to the pupils understanding different cultures that exist in the world as well as giving them an insight into different cultures than their own. This again can lead to the realisation that the cultures and people they read about in the novels are similar to each other and this might lead to increased tolerance and respect of people that are from different cultures. *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are two longer texts that could be used to teach the pupils more on history, propaganda, and the power of words in general, and human rights issues. Teaching these novels, and novels in general, can develop the pupils’ critical thinking and their reflections on how these societies within the novels compares to their own.

Literature to use in a classroom setting can be difficult to find as a teacher of English as there are many things that one needs to look at prior to choosing a novel or a short story for the pupils to read. Amongst those is the competence aims in the Knowledge Promotion Reform and in the subject curriculum. These aims are what the pupils should have learned after finishing different levels in their education; after year 2, 4, 7, 10 and Vg1 programmes for general studies and Vg2 vocational education programme (ESC 5-10). These aims do not

specify certain texts that the teacher has to use, thus a teacher is free to choose the literary pieces themselves. This freedom does not mean that the teacher can just pick a novel or a text at random without any thought to the didactic part that the novel needs to fit within. That the text the teacher chooses is within the subject aims is usually not that difficult to achieve, but the real question is if the literary text can be defended in a didactic light. One tool that the teacher can use is the didactic diamond that Bjørndal and Liberg made to show how the different didactic aspects relate to one another (Imsen 2010, 406). Gunn Imsen also comments on how this diamond does not adequately explain the impact that the local society and the society in general affect the happenings in the classroom (2010, 407). This diamond does, on the other hand, explain the various aspects that a teacher needs to think about prior to organizing and preparing for the class.

Some of the main issues are whether or not the pupils will be able to read the novel, if it is within their level of understanding in English, and if they would want to read the novel and not just look at a synopsis online. Rachel Wilkinson also touches on this as she found that “This results in students asking why they can’t just read the SparkNotes instead of the assigned novel” (25). If all we want is pupils that only look at the plotlines and themes and not the subtlety of the story and the emotions that they might get from reading the novel, then the focus of teaching literature is wrong.

The choice of literature also depends on what the pupils are supposed to gain from the reading experience. The piece of literature chosen depends on the theme or issue that the pupils are to learn more about, in the case of the two novels that this thesis is centred on, this could be issues of human rights, propaganda, issues dealing with being recognised as a thinking person with feelings by a generally unfeeling society and issues of dystopian fiction that deal with the dangers of technology in the wrong hands. Another point is the emotional response that one can expect from the pupils that read the book, if the book deals with torture

scenes, this can be easier for pupils to understand compared to real events that have occurred. This is especially relevant if the goal is to discuss these events and use them as a way to discuss torture and the repercussions to the human psyche, as one might with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The impact literature has on pupils can be emotional and also relevant for their personal growth into members of society, which is a part of the core curriculum.

An important part of the English subject curriculum is that the pupil is able to read in English. “Being able to read in English means the ability to create meaning by reading different types of texts...to understand, reflect on and acquire insight and knowledge across cultural borders...and of varying lengths and complexities... to understand, explore, discuss, learn from and reflect upon different types of information” (ESC 5). To read is considered a basic skill that the teacher can encourage by choosing texts that could interest the pupils to not only read that specific text but also to continue reading. Choosing to teach a dystopian novel to the class will not only present them with an interesting novel to read in itself, but also a novel that will cover many if not all of the elements that are mentioned in the ability to read in the curriculum. This is not necessary at all times, but what this is supposed to show is how literature can be all this and more easily, the difficult part is making this not only interesting to read but also to discuss and work further with during and after reading it. Depending on the themes present in the novel the discussions and work later might allow for the pupils to choose their own medium for the presenting of their ideas or that the after work is a project that enables the pupils to use digital, oral or written skills to present their findings.

## 5.2 What to keep in mind prior to teaching literature

The framework conditions deal with the plan the teacher makes for teaching the novels in regards to if it is in the VG1, VG2 or VG3 levels of English classes and what the teacher needs to be aware of in order to create a teaching plan for the novels. The didactic diamond is especially useful here, as it deals with most of the elements that a teacher needs to consider prior to the actual class. This section will be a basic look into what a teacher needs to consider to be able to teach a literary piece in an English class and what they need to consider beyond the didactic diamond. The level of the pupils is a key to what the teacher can and cannot choose as texts to teach. If the general level of the class in reading, writing and speaking English is important to what and how the literature will be taught to the class.

Elin Vestli's article, "Fra Sokkel Til Klasserom : Litteraturens Plass i Fremmedspråkundervisningen", centre on the importance literature has in a classroom and for learning languages. She claims that language is not only an important skill but also an entrance to other cultures and values as well as teaching the reader about other people's way of life and their personal beliefs. Vestli defines literary didactics as an invitation to a dialogue between theory and practice, as a dialogue between the taught and the teacher (Vestli 8). She also explains that the teacher needs to be aware of the needs of the group as well as their ideas in regards to the chosen literature. The way that literary didactics is used in the classroom depends, to Vestli, on the level the pupils are at in regards to abilities to read, write and speak the language. To be aware of the pupils' level is important to remember, as it is imperative to the effect the text is supposed to have on the students when they are reading it (Vestli 8). If the text is too difficult or easy, the pupils might find the reading experience to be negative, thus a teacher must always try to find literature that will suit the needs of the group.

Vestli also comments on the fact that the literature was originally aimed at native speakers, and that this may be a problem. According to her depending on the level the

students are in, the teacher may have to use extra time editing the text (Vestli 30). Another thing that the teacher may have to do is to create a list of difficult or new words that occur in the text and, depending on the level of the group, either translate them into Norwegian or find synonyms that they already know in English. The success a literary text has in a classroom depends upon the knowledge of and access to interesting texts to teach to the pupils. (Vestli 31) depending on the class, the teacher can bring forth texts within many different genres. She believes that this is something that should be a vital element in the studies that prospective teachers have in higher education, as this would allow the future teachers a foundation of texts to choose from in their chosen language.

Motivation is also a vital element when teaching literary texts. The texts need to be engaging in some way. Fun, interesting, exciting, scary or mysterious texts are easier to read than a text that is less engaging. They also need to expand the reader's horizon in some way (Vestli 30). The text has to be able to hold the readers' attention in some form and also engage them on an emotional level. A good text is one that makes you react in some way, as they engage you as a reader. This is especially important in schools where reading longer texts is something that the teachers are to encourage. According to Alfie Kohn "You can tap their motivation, in other words, but you can't 'motivate them'." (2010). In his article, Kohn explains that motivation is not something that comes from outside forces, but something that must come from within. To motivate the pupils, they need to find the reading experience interesting and challenging, but not too challenging. In my opinion both *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* accomplish this. Looking at both these novels, the teacher can not only motivate by creating interesting debates in class about what they have read, but also have the pupils look for moments where they feel something. It may be a feeling of sadness, happiness, something that they think is fun or something that makes them angry. Emotional responses when reading literature are important to the learning process in regards to the competence

aims, as one of them is that the pupils should be able to "...discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English speaking countries." (ESC 12). Even if a novel is not set in the real society, like the two dystopian novels discussed in this thesis, they might still be relevant as they can open up for discussion on the differences between the real and the fictional society and the motivation the author had at the time the novel was written to write it.

Another part of motivating the pupils to read the novel is if they have some part in choosing the novel. If they are a part of the decision to read the novel they are far more likely to actually read it and not just look it up online and read a synopsis. As Vestli explains it; most teachers prefer realistic and problem orientated literature, whilst the younger readers read fantastical and science fiction literature (31). Thus the literature that is chosen should motivate the pupils to read as well as contain something that is relevant to teaching English in the classroom. One example of a way to motivate pupils could be to "Let students sample a work of literature, then generate their own questions and discussion topics – for themselves and one another" (Kohn 20). By allowing the pupils a chance to, as a group, come to a decision on what they would like to focus on when reading the literature and in the work after reading it, they might feel more motivated to read and work with the text.

Especially when teaching literature, with its many and sometimes difficult themes, the teacher should be aware of the fact that most pupils learn more if they work together as well as having the time to process the information on their own. According to Vygotsky a child learns more if they have the help of a knowledgeable adult when they first tries something new. Vygotsky called this the zone of proximal development as he believed that learning proceeds development and that this zone explained how a child learn something by first doing it with the teacher then by themselves. The zone is meant to show how children can learn from this interaction between themselves and someone with more knowledge (Imsen 2008 258).

Vygotsky's thought was that one of the people involved would have to know more than the other, meaning that in a school setting, the teacher is the most probable to take on this part and not the pupils (Imsen 2008 259). Though, if a pupil has knowledge within an area that is relevant to the lesson, the pupil would naturally be a resource for the teacher and their fellow pupils. By using the zone of proximal development when planning to teach literature, the teacher is aware that this theory supports adapted education and that by having this as something in the back of their minds when planning a lesson the pupils will learn more than they would if not. "Education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice and training candidate" (The Education Act 6).

### **5.3 The specifics of teaching dystopian novels in classrooms**

When considering teaching a dystopian novel in a classroom setting, teachers also have to take into consideration more than subject aims and didactic aims. They need to be aware of the emotional impact a dystopian novel might have on the readers. As most literature aims for the reader to grow attached to certain characters or to feel empathy towards them, the events that occur in the novels can be difficult to understand. This lack of understanding can make the teaching situation difficult, thus a teacher should consider making time to discuss dystopian novels and what one can expect in a dystopian novel that may be difficult to understand when one comes from a society where most of the issues from the novels are difficult to accept as possible.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the society that is described is similar to our own, which in turn could make this a novel that not only creates more emotional responses but also one that can make the pupils see the difficulties that increased technological achievements without firm boundaries can affect the society. Using novels like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Never Let Me*

*Go* in teaching opens up an opportunity for cooperation between different subjects. The effectiveness of teaching this novel to a class can be increased by making it an interdisciplinary teaching by bringing in natural science and biology to teach the pupils not only about the way that the book utilises the technological idea of cloning, but also the real life issues that we have today with cloning and the laws that have been put in place. Using *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in a classroom opens up many different themes that could be used in an interdisciplinary project or theme-weeks. The times that history and the rewriting of history as well as literary works can be used in not only history, but also in social science and psychology. *Never Let Me Go* can be used in the same subjects as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but also has elements that are relevant for biology and the other natural sciences when discussing the clones and the possibility of creating a cloned human being. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be used in sociology, history and psychology as an example of the impact that can be seen in societies that are totalitarian in nature. The many themes that are present in the novel can be used in a variety of ways and the main focus can be changed based on the pupils' interests.

Because the dystopian novels usually have a wealth of themes and elements that one can work with the teacher can adjust the focus depending on the interests that the pupils have. If the class has many people that are within the programme area for natural science and mathematics or for languages, social sciences and economic studies, the themes that the class focus on can be either parts of the more science fiction elements or the social issues at hand if the interests the class have are within these. This does not mean that the teacher should disregard these if the class consists of only or mostly of one of these groups, but use that advantage by introducing these important themes as well as the ones from the other focus. If the class has students that specialize in one of the programme areas, the teacher can use this in the teaching of the novel by cooperating with the teachers of the relevant subjects, for example natural science, and thus create discussions not only on the literature and general

ideas but also by tying it to real life and the issues that society has today. If we look at the example with natural science in relations to the novel *Never Let Me Go*, the teacher has an opportunity to discuss cloning in the novel and compare it to cloning in real life as well as explaining that when the novel was written there were debates on cloning and especially human cloning. This also gives the natural science teacher the opportunity to explain cloning and the ethical elements in scientific studies and research.

The real effort in teaching dystopian novels to pupils is that most of these novels have an abundance of issues that can be looked into, especially issues that deal with technology and human rights, as these are some of the issues that many writers of dystopian fiction, as explored in the theory chapter, were anxious about in the rapidly changing society that came with the industrial evolution and the new technology. The importance of being aware of the dangers that certain ways of using language can have, is something that will always be important to convey to the pupils. Especially *Nineteen Eighty-Four* can be used for this purpose, as one of its major themes is the language control that the dystopian regime tries to maintain. As Wilkinson found, “I’ve been astonished over the years to learn that many students see this type of malevolent governmental control as laughable – comically evil. They doubt an outside force could wield this kind of control.” (25). This is a comment from a teacher that also agrees that the extent that the novel takes this to is extreme, but also that it happens in lesser forms today. This is important for students to understand, as the ability to read a political paper or the political platform for a specific party.

Both *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* touch upon themes that can elicit emotional responses from pupils, but they also contain elements that can be easier to teach because they are set in fictional societies. This is especially seen in the moments that deal with brainwashing and torture in the novels as these can be difficult to face when this is an event that actually occurred and not something that is written to highlight the injustice and

inhumanity of the act. In teaching *Never Let Me Go*, one of the main elements that one might bring out in discussions of the novel is the human rights issue in regards to cloning. The lives that the clones live as well as the brainwashing that occurs from their very conception to their completion can also be tied to the issue of human rights and cloning. Another element can be the contra-factual historical events in both novels as both split from our own from the time after the Second World War. This is something that might be interesting not only within the English subject, but also in history and sociology as well as examples of societies where history and human rights are subjected to the whims of the ruling body wherein important elements in our own society is therefore lost.

*Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* both depict societies with social injustice. They also show the power of language has in regards to how the society looks at certain people and how individuals look at each other based on what they have been told about them. To create awareness and understanding for other people and their lives, these two novels can be good options as they allows the reader to see this differently. In *Never Let Me Go* the separation created by language is subtle but obvious at the same time and shrouded in the use of everyday words and phrases to hide the clone reality in plain sight. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this separation is in many ways blatantly obvious, but at the same time this obviousness still hides something in plain sight from the people in the society. These elements can be interesting, and especially relevant today, to teach in a class as the way that people look at the world is constantly being influenced by politicians and newspapers and polarisation between different groups. As one of the articles on Orwell's novel argues; "The U.S. 'Department of War' had been renamed the 'Department of Defence' reflecting the Amcap-Amerigood view that our military actions and war preparations are always defensive, reasonable responses to somebody else's provocations, and ultimately in the interest of peace." (Herman 112). Thus language, as seen earlier in the thesis, can be used to change the way we see certain elements

and the two dystopian novels show this through different means but similar in mind. 'Out of sight, out of mind' is something that can be seen here as the change in name that the Department of War to the Department of Defence creates different connotations and thus also changes the way people think when the department is mentioned.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the way that language and human rights is connected in the two novels *Never Let Me Go* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It shows how the two novels, though different in their approaches, both utilise and explore the way that language carry power and how this power can be used in regards to the lack of human rights or ignoring it based on what the person is described by the regime or the people in charge of the society. The two novels share an understanding of the importance of human rights and the way it can be connected to a lack of words or a limited language to describe the atrocities within the society. The importance language has for the lives of the people in the society, more specifically the impact certain words and phrases have on the way that they live their lives, is a concept that both novels explore. Whilst *Nineteen Eighty-Four* do this through the use of slogans and a focus on limitations on language, *Never Let Me Go* do this through a use of everyday words in strange positions that create an understanding that something is wrong in the society. In chapter 3.1 and 4.1 language and its importance for the people within the two dystopian societies is explored. In chapter 3.2 and 4.2 human rights and its importance in how the two societies deal with their citizens is explored. Human rights is one of the major factors in the two novels, as one deal with a society where those rights depend on the regime whilst the other deal with a society where a group is not even considered human from their very conception. The end to both novels deal with the main characters acceptance of their lot in life. Winston accepts his situation because the torture that he underwent left him a broken man with a broken mind, whilst Kathy, on the other hand, accepts her situation and decides to become a donor and thus accept her imminent completion at the hands of the society.

The didactics chapter first discusses what to keep in mind when teaching literature in general and then looks at what these two dystopian novels might be used for in relations to what the pupils are supposed to learn according to the curriculum. Both novels can be used to

teach the pupils the importance of language and human rights and the dangers that might come from limiting human rights. They can also be used to create an understanding of the importance that words carry, especially when phrased in a certain way, as it might have an unforeseen impact on the people that they describe. To teach the students that actions and words have consequences that they might not be aware of is important. The novels can also be used in interdisciplinary projects or classes and be combined with other subjects like history, philosophy and biology to mention a few.

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