HOW CAN READING DYSTOPIAN FICTION AFFECT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION?

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By

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Abstract

This thesis considers how reading literature can be used as a resource for educational thought and how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of the functions of education. Key works of dystopian fiction were read using Felski's (2015) approach of hermeneutics of suspicion in order to gain a deeper understanding of education, focusing on Biesta's (2010) three functions of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Key findings include the relevance of using literature as research method, and the gains in terms of understanding of education that are possible through reading dystopian fiction. This promotes a discussion of how literature is used as a lens to view educational policy and practice. Furthermore, the reading of dystopian fiction highlights the fallacy of the narrative of education providing social justice: in each of Biesta's (2010) functions, it is the powerful who are in control and who lead with the intention of maintaining their power whilst promoting an image of benevolence towards those with less advantage. The power dynamic seen in dystopian fiction, including: Orwell's Big Brother and Inner Party; Huxley's Directors and Alphas; and Atwood's Commanders, are reflected in the power dynamic seen in England's schools, notably the UK government, aligned with the school inspectorate, and school leaders; school leaders and teachers; and teachers and students.

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Finally, I am grateful to educators and readers. Teachers do the most incredible job and readers have the most incredible stories. I have been fortunate enough to teach for nearly twenty years and still believe that education is the greatest gift we can give ourselves and others. I have worked with incredible teachers and incredible children and for that I am truly grateful.

But, as with all things in my life, ultimately, it's all about Harvey and Emma.

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Abbreviations

A Level	Advanced Level
APS	Average Point Score
DfE	Department for Education
CAGs	Centre Assessed Grades
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
KS	Key Stage
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TAs	Teaching Assistants
TAGs	Teacher Assessed Grades

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Genesis for the Research

In 1995, the philosopher of education David Carr wrote in the Journal of Philosophy of Education that student teachers 'may stand to gain far more from a sympathetic reading of Dickens, Orwell and Lawrence in relation to their understanding of education than they are likely to get from studying Skinner, Bruner or Bloom's taxonomy' (Carr, 1995, p329). I was drawn to Carr's statement as an English graduate, English teacher, former Head of English, current senior leader line-managing English, and bibliophile, because I have always enjoyed reading and studying literature. The notion that reading literature could help my understanding of education in terms of policy and practice, as opposed to helping my understanding of teaching literature, resonates. This research starts with the statement made by Carr, considering how reading literature can affect our understanding of education. Supporting Carr's statement, Peter Roberts (2012, p204) argues that 'fictional works provide, directly or indirectly, a window for viewing the embodiment and enactment of reason and unreason in educational policy and practice'. This idea of reading literature as a lens to view education is the foundation of this research.

Interestingly, there is very little research on the interaction between literature and education. At my current setting, a standard interview question from our previous Deputy Headteacher was to ask candidates to state their passion: their subject or education. Although there is theoretically no right answer, there was always a sense that those newer to the profession choose their subject while those with whole-school leadership positions choose education. McEwan (2003, p16) argues that 'some teachers are driven by a passion for their subject and see their central task as communicating it in ways that are meaningful to students; others are devoted to their students and see their central task as one of nurturing or care' and that 'it is very difficult to reconcile them [as they are] divergent narratives of the origins of teaching'. Aldridge (2019, p11) suggests that these 'two loves which make legitimate claims on the teacher' are less 'creative polyamory' but rather 'tragic tension'.

This 'tragic tension' (ibid) is an area of interest to me as I have always been drawn towards both education and English; I have completed masters degrees in both. I am therefore interested in the concept of linking literary and educational studies and seek to discover how literature can be a resource for educational thought. Roberts (2012, p204) suggests that 'literature can prompt us to ask searching questions of ourselves; it can unsettle and disturb, and in doing so can make an important contribution to our educational formation'. Aldridge and Green (2019, px) argue that 'it is important for students and scholars of literature and education to consider the ways in which their disciplines interact and in doing so offer opportunities for new understanding of both literary and educational processes' because there is a 'danger that the role of literature in education can become almost transactional' as literary texts are used purely for assessment and as a resource required to attain qualifications rather than as a resource those involved in education can learn from. Carr (1995, p329) identified that 'for even hinting at this possibility [...] one is liable to attract the reputation of an educational flat-earther'. Nearly thirty years later, it is interesting to consider if such a viewpoint has shifted.

This research will therefore consider how reading literature can affect our understanding of education, using literature as the method for research. This will then lead to both an evaluation of how literature can enlighten our understanding of education, and a consideration of the benefits of using literature as research method.

1.2 Dystopian Fiction

The wealth of English literature is so wide that it is difficult to know where to begin - perhaps explaining the lack of research in this area to date. Carr references both Orwell, whose most famous work, *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* is dystopian, and Skinner, whose novel *Walden Two* (1948) was intended to be utopian but is just as likely to be seen as dystopian, and therefore my research will focus specifically on dystopian literature and consider how reading dystopian literature can affect our understanding of education.

I decided to focus on the genre of dystopian fiction before COVID-19 struck, although the situation during COVID lockdowns certainly felt dystopian: pain, suffering, death, people fighting over toilet rolls, then the delusion of peace as case numbers fell in the summer only

to rise again, leading to the ultimate dehumanisation: the daily announcement of numbers of the dead.

However, my primary reason for choosing the genre of dystopian fiction is because I am interested in the links between dystopian concepts and education. The dehumanisation of students (and school staff) through silent corridors, performance management and uniforms, detailed in chapter 4. The delusion of a system which ensures only two-thirds of students are ever able to attain the qualifications considered good enough for society, discussed in chapter 3. Apple's (1980, pp. 2-3) consideration that we should focus 'on the ideological and cultural mediations which exist between the material conditions of an unequal society and the formation of the consciousness of the individuals in that society' and that 'schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination' suggests there are dystopian elements at play in education.

For all of these reasons, I have chosen to focus my research on dystopian literature, and will consider how reading dystopian literature can affect our understanding of education. In section 2.24 I will clarify how I am defining dystopia, and in section 2.25 how I define dystopian literature, while section 2.26 outlines the key texts that will form the research. This was not as straightforward as I originally thought, partly because the dystopian genre has such a crossover with other genres such as science fiction, but also because one person's dystopia is another's utopia, as shown through the reception of Skinner's *Walden Two*.

To be clear, I am not setting out to assert that the English educational system is in itself dystopian, rather I am seeking to explore how dystopian fiction can be used as a lens through which to read and interpret educational policies and practices.

1.3 Research Structure

Chapter 2 will be both a review of literature and an explanation of the methodology for the research. I will define the concepts of utopia and dystopia and explain my choices of dystopian literature. I shall outline my ontological and epistemological approaches and argue

for a new theoretical framework, that of hermeneutics of suspicion, using literature as my research method.

Having narrowed literature to dystopian fictional literature, I turn now to education. I intend to specifically focus on our understanding of the functions of education, and for functions, I will use Biesta's (2010, pp. 20-22) three functions of education to guide the research, as I believe these functions or domains of education serve to make useful links between education and dystopian fiction. These functions are outlined below and explained fully in section 2.27 and in the opening of chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Biesta's (2010, p20) definition of the qualification function focuses on providing children with 'knowledge, skills and understanding'. This is interesting because it raises questions of power including: what knowledge means; who decides what knowledge is provided; how the balance between knowledge and skills is aligned; and where responsibility lies if the function is merely 'providing' (ibid) rather than teaching. The socialisation function considers how students are socialised into the society or community in which they live, through 'the deliberate attempt to make students competent members of particular communities' (Biesta, 2010, p20). This again links education and dystopian fiction, particularly the use of body policing (see sections 4.1-4.6), surveillance (see sections 4.8-4.10) and operant conditioning (see sections 4.14-4.15) in both England's schools and dystopian societies. The third function, subjectification, is positioned as problematic by Biesta, as he recognises that it may be beyond the scope of schools, but proposes that 'any education worthy of its name should *always* contribute to processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting' (Biesta, 2010, p21). Subjectification links to both the idea of being a subject and of having subjectivity and there are links here between dystopian literature and education, such as the consideration of how to teach for subjectification without it becoming a threat to those with power.

Throughout the research, specific schools are considered in depth, such as Michaela Community School (often referred to as simply Michaela) in Brent, North London. This school was established in 2014 and has become symbolic of so-called knowledge-rich

institutions and ideologies. I define knowledge for the purpose of this research in sections 3.8-3.10. References to Michaela or to Dreamfields Academy, the pseudonym used by Christy Kulz in her ethnographic book *Factories for Learning* which is based on the research she undertook for her PhD (Kulz, 2013) focusing on Mossbourne Academy in Hackney, East London, are intended as references to what the schools represent, notably their ideology that a focus on discipline and knowledge will raise the situations of their students, who are predominantly from working-class, minority backgrounds. These practices have been praised by government ministers, including Boris Johnson, who was Prime Minister from 2019 until 2022, and Gavin Williamson, whilst serving as Secretary of State for education. Therefore references to individual schools are because they are symbolic, rather than an intention to promote or criticise practice in these individual schools. As Cushing (2023, p17) notes, 'tempting as it might be then to label names [...] as malicious individuals, we must locate their work as part of a broader education architecture'. My critique is thus towards the systems and structures which legitimise certain forms of educational practice in schools, as opposed to critiquing individual schools.

1.4 Benefits of the Research

Chapter 6 will explain the findings of the research, ultimately arguing that literature can be a resource for educational thought and a method for educational research and share the key findings of the research, notably the control the powerful have in dystopian societies and in England's schools, and the perpetuation of power through educational policy and practice. Interestingly, just as those with power in dystopian societies share the idea of their power as benevolent rulers, with O'Brien telling Winston Smith 'You must love Big Brother' (Orwell, 1987, p334) and the rulers of Gilead reminding the subjugated women that they have 'freedom' (Atwood, 1996, p34), those with power in England's schools propagate their power by aligning themselves with 'social justice' (Ofsted, 2019-1, p8). Here, social justice in Ofsted's terms may appear to refer to fairness within society and therefore link to the idea of meritocracy, or the notion that those with power attained their status through their merits, meaning everyone can aspire to be powerful. However, in terms of education, social justice relates more to the idea that everyone has a role in society and must work to fulfil their role, be it one with power or without. The narratives within education are often subtly (and at times overtly) dystopian. Within the research my intention is to raise questions regarding

these ideas, particularly in relation to the function of education and its links with social justice. I intend to use dystopian fiction as the lens through which to consider Biesta's (2010) three functions of education, and I believe that dystopian fiction will allow a particular critique of the function of education and challenge the extent to which the English educational system approaches Biesta's (2010) three functions.

This research will be of relevance to all stakeholders involved in education although the research may not create clarity but may instead create tension or questions. The intention of the research is to use dystopian literature to provide unique insights into education which will be relevant to all involved in the profession and to consider whether literature can be used as research method. The research will consider educational policies, practices, systems and structures both historic and current, including policies published whilst the research was being undertaken.

There are limitations to this research. The research methodology of literature as research method means the research is subject to interpretation by the researcher. By limiting the research to dystopian fiction there are clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, and consideration of the criteria for this genre is covered in section 2.26.

By the end of this research, the aim is to understand how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of the three domains of education outlined by Biesta (2010, pp. 20-22) and to understand how literature can be used as a research method. These two interlink: literature is the educational research method and understanding about education is occurring through literature.

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Chapter 2: Literature as Research Method

This chapter is not a traditional methodology because this research will not be empirical, but this chapter is as close to a methodology as will be found in this research. The research focuses on literary works and data will be gathered by reading selected dystopian fiction texts; more detail on this is provided in section 2.26. I will begin by considering why reading is important, then consider specifically the reading of literature before focusing on the genre of dystopian fiction. This chapter will primarily argue that works of literature can be vehicles for education and therefore set the tone and purpose for the thesis.

2.1 Ontological Perspective

From an ontological perspective, reading matters because of the effect it has on the reader. Let us begin with considering this assertion. Rita Felski (2015, p65) argues that 'readers can be touched, troubled, perhaps even transformed by the texts they read and that reading allows us to gain 'a deeper sense of everyday experiences [...] it can also expand, enlarge, or reorder our sense of how things are' (Felski, 2008, p83). For Maxine Greene (2000, p3) reading feeds the imagination which 'makes empathy possible' and gives 'credence to alternative realities'. She proposes that imagination 'allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions'. Chris Hanley (2019, p114) argues that reading helps us to understand, 'to grasp objects, not directly but through other words' and Greene (2000, p7) proposes that this creates unity with other readers, that reading has 'given me many imaginative experiences that I am sure are not mine alone' and that reading allows readers to engage with the aesthetic world to 'counteract the anaesthetic, the humdrum, the banal, the routine' Greene (2000, p76).

Felski, Greene and Hanley are proposing that reading affects and potentially transforms readers because it allows for both a more intense consideration of our current lives and the opportunity to explore others' lives, including those far removed from our own understanding. This is interesting as this research centres on the idea that reading dystopian literature can allow the reader to explore education, including ideas about education beyond our understanding.

2.2 Epistemological Perspective

If we accept the ontology that reading affects readers, then epistemologically I am drawn to Postman's (1987, p19) argument that epistemology is 'a complex and usually opaque subject concerned with the origins and nature of knowledge'. Postman proposes that epistemology is best defined as 'definitions of truth and the sources from which such definitions come' (ibid) and that the truths from our culture come from our language. I propose that this suggests that we draw truth from the language that surrounds us, from reading.

Felski (2008, pp. 93-4) argues that reading is important because of 'literature's epistemological license allowing it to convey a uniquely multi-layered sense of how things are' meaning that readers can understand characters, ideas, concepts better in fiction than in real life. She suggests that one way that literature does this is 'through its exercise of verbal virtuosity' (ibid) in that, as we read, we must consider and adapt to words, characters, expressions which 'encompass alternative ways of making sense of experience'. She proposes that this happens because literature affects our perception of the world. She suggests that *we shortchange the significance of art by focusing on the "de" prefix (its power to demystify, destabilize, denaturalize) at the expense of the "re" prefix: its ability to recontextualise, reconfigure, or recharge perception*' (2015, p17 - italics in original text).

I began writing this thesis at a time of global pandemic. For the first time in my career - and indeed in living memory - the country was affected by a global enemy: COVID-19. In March 2020, and again in January 2021, schools closed for all but the most vulnerable of students, the country locked down and students and teachers began to navigate their way through technology to form remote learning. Perhaps more than ever, as the world finds its way post-COVID, there is a need for the 're' prefix which Felski is promoting, a need to consider what should be returned to and what should be reconfigured. This research will make links between education and literature, inspired by Hanley (2019, p115) who argues that 'education research should revive its neglected links with literature' and Aldridge (2020) who asserts that literature matters because it shows us that the realm of education is not limited to educational spaces, that it tells us that 'there is something outside, there are alternatives'.

Felski (2015, p57) argues that 'all texts teem with meaning'. So why am I choosing to focus on literature?

2.3 - The Power of Literature

Robert Eaglestone (2019, p24) compares reading in general to 'running for the bus' and reading literature to running 'the 10,000m in the Olympics', asserting that they 'are the same activity but each on an increasingly formal and intense scale'. If literature is the gold medal standard, then that suggests it does more for the reader than the everyday act of reading.

Greene (2000, p76) muses that reading literature 'may nurture all kinds of understanding of lived structures of meaning' but I am drawn to Stockwell (2019, p43) who frames the question by asking if 'the main function of literature is its power to defamiliarise' and Aldridge (2019), who argues that 'texts have a grain, which can of course be read against'. I propose that this is what is part of literature's power. Reading literature can force the reader to reconsider the familiar through making the reader read against the grain and question what has become normalised. As Felski (2015, p16) states, literature is able 'to lay bare the banality of the commonplace, to highlight the sheer contingency and constructedness of meaning'.

2.4 - The Case for the Novel

For the purpose of this research, I am considering literature to relate to literary fiction and draw from Phelan (2020, p1) who claims that 'there is a tradition that takes all literature to be fictional by definition'. In order to justify my decision to focus on novels, I turn to Bakhtin (1994, p47) who argues that the author is 'omnipresent' in the novel but 'with almost no direct language of his own'. Instead, Bakhtin (ibid) argues that 'the language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other' and that 'it is impossible to describe and analyse it as a single unitary language'. For this reason, Bakhtin (1994, p50) argues that 'it is only in the novel that discourse can reveal all its specific potential and achieve its true depth'. Eaglestone (2019, p52) argues that literature 'can change us; this is why some people don't like it or find it dangerous or risky, and why others

embrace it'. The power of literature can perhaps most clearly be seen in the action of dictatorship regimes who routinely promote the burning of books to control the thinking of the masses and attack the pre-existing culture. However, Manguel (1997, p21) argues that 'not only totalitarian governments fear reading', perhaps because 'something in the relationship between a reader and a book is recognised as wise and fruitful, but it is also seen as disdainfully exclusive and excluding'. This is an increasingly common and therefore normalised phenomenon, particularly in the United States of America and Canada. In October 2021, Canadian school boards removed books, including Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, from their libraries, and in some cases school curricula, because of concerns the books were 'harmful to staff and students' (Coxson, 2021), although no information was provided about how the selected books were deemed harmful and others were considered acceptable.

And yet, how can novels exert such power? Felski (2015, p97) argues that power is 'diffused throughout society via undetectable capillaries of control' and illustrates the point by arguing that the Victorian novel was 'stealthily engaged in regulating and discipling its readers, schooling them in modes of appropriate conduct' through various techniques including the representation of the 'domestic and the deviant'. Bakhtin (1994, pxxvi) argues that the novel was a 'marginal genre' for much of its history and that the novel 'constantly experiments with social, discursive and narrative asymmetries'. Bakhtin (1994, pxxviii) proposes that this is because the novel is unique in that it 'seeks to shape its form to languages [and] constantly experiments with new shapes'. For Bakhtin, and for me, the novel is a 'supergenre' (ibid).

Perhaps the power of the novel stems from the emotional reaction and sense of transformation a reader feels for a text, which can be different from the emotional reactions the same reader has for the world around them. Increasingly, students sitting qualifications in literature are encouraged not to consider the texts studied as real events, to avoid writing about Pip's decisions, for example, but instead to analyse Dickens' presentation of Pip. Teaching activities such as debating who is to blame for the death of the central characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are discouraged as they create a sense that the characters of the play are real people rather than constructs. However, it is the relationship between

reader and character that can create the emotional transformation in the reader. As Felski (2008, p114) states, 'no one would dispute that our sense of anguish at the suffering of a person close to us far exceeds, in its intensity and magnitude, our response to a work of art', but it is the literary text's ability to hone in 'with exceptional vividness and graphic power' (ibid) on individual characters and focused scenes: 'rather than serving up suffering at a distance, they allow us to witness it close up, magnified to the nth degree' (ibid). Bayard (2008, p111) argues that 'language does not allow us to make a separation between real beings and imaginary characters' and identifies the use of 'mixed sentences [which] cross between worlds by combining fiction with reality' using the example 'Sherlock Holmes walks down Baker Street' to show how 'imaginary entities [are allowed] to wander through our world'. Bayard (2008, p113) also considers the psychological link between fictional characters and reality: 'we know perfectly well, on a conscious level, that these characters "do not exist" [...] but things manifest in an entirely different way on the unconscious level, which is interested not in the ontological differences between worlds but in the effect they produce on the psyche'. This research will focus on the effect they produce in terms of affecting our understanding of education.

2.5 - Novels as mirrors, windows, hammers

Novels are often compared with mirrors or windows in terms of the way they allow the reader to see the world of the novel and reflect back on the world of reality. Bishop (1990, pix) took this further, suggesting that novels are windows, sliding glass doors and mirrors. She proposes that 'literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience'. Perhaps more interesting is the idea formed in a quotation normally attributed to Brecht, as art is described as 'not a mirror with which to reflect reality but a hammer with which to shape it'. Aldridge (2020) proposes that literature does not reflect reality but it 'transforms' and Felski (2008, p79) supports this idea, arguing that fiction 'transfigures and transforms, breaking through the crust of conventional schemata to call up new forms of consciousness, other ways of seeing' and proposes that this is because novels are neither a mirror nor a window but more like a lamp, 'allowing us to apprehend truths previously unseen'. It is these ideas that form the foundations of this research; to investigate how novels can shine a light on our ways of viewing education, particularly formal schooling in

England, and perhaps transform our understanding of it.

2.6 - The Role of the Author

Of further consideration here is the role of the author. The arguments above consider whether the world of the novel allows a reader to see the real world more clearly but do not address whether the created world of the novel encapsulates reality or is the creation of a whole new world.

Author John Fowles (2004, p96) proposed that writers 'wish to create worlds as real as, but other than, the world that is'. Interestingly, Gadamer (1989, p102) considers that 'Reality is defined as what is untransformed and art as the raising up of this reality into its truth', and argues (1989, p109) that writers show the 'truth' of 'reality'. This is interesting as it proposes that we can read literature but we cannot compare what we have read with reality because we see reality in light of what we have read. This is supported by Bruner (1986, p7), who argues that texts are 'an instantiation of models we carry in our own minds' which I take to mean that what we read is influenced by our experiences in the world, but that the very act of reading affects the models carried in our minds, creating a sense of symbiosis. Bruner also considers that literature is written in order to 'render the world less fixed [...] render the obvious less so, the unknowable less so' (ibid). Bettelheim (1991, p8) takes this further, suggesting that stories give 'suggestions in symbolic form', often nightmarish form, about how to solve the 'crucial issues'. Furthermore, having read a particular novel, the suggestion is that the reader is irreversibly changed as a result of the reading. Bakhtin (1994, p253) explains this when he writes that 'there is a sharp and categorical boundary line between the actual world as source of representation and the world represented in the work' and that the real and the represented world are 'indissolubly tied up with each other' and when a reader reads a novel, 'the work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world [...] in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers'. This symbiotic relationship is considered slightly differently by Bruner (1986, p36) who suggests that when a reader considers the meaning of a text, it is not the original text, but a version, a construct created by the reader under the influence of the original text.

2.7 - Learning from Literature

These ideas are exciting, suggesting there are unique opportunities to be achieved by reading literature, as it allows us to consider the world around us in different ways; Heidegger and Bruner both consider literature as having unique affordances. For the purpose of this research, this will look at education, particularly schooling in England, and the novels chosen will be considered in terms of how reading them can affect our understanding of education. As Elliot (2021, p17) considered, 'in order to change the world we have to be able to imagine it differently than it is'. Gadamer (1989, p102) frames this by arguing that 'the joy of recognition is rather that more is known than only the known' and Warnke (1987, p60) considers this to mean that readers can take up a novel, experience it and learn 'to view its own world in light of the work'. Gadamer argues that this recognition will happen unless the reader explicitly guards themselves against this occurring, although in a sense the reader has already been changed as they begin their reading expecting their beliefs to be challenged and therefore modify their behaviour as a result. This change upon a reader is particularly the case for the novel which, according to Bakhtin (1994, p371), is linked to multiple genres, including journalistic, dramatic and lyric, but has most in common with 'rhetorical forms' because each word in a novel is 'shot through with intentions' and that 'each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions' (Bakhtin 1994, p293). The role of the reader is, in part, to consider these intentions from ethical and moral perspectives, to question the intentions of the writer. This is never more true than in the novel, which is seen as having what Miller (1988, p17) describes as 'blander intentionalities' than novels really do, and cites novels including characters who are police officers, which appear to be stories about the police, but are really teaching readers to police themselves: the novel, Miller argues, is used as a form of social control.

2.8 - The Relationship between the Reader and the Author

In section 2.2 I proposed that, epistemologically, texts become meaning makers because readers draw truths from the language that surrounds us, which includes the language of the novel. The relationship between the reader and the author has been touched upon but requires more consideration here.

In the past century, New Critics have focused solely on the text, proposing that what needs to be understood is not an author's intentions or a reader's interpretation but the text itself; a text contains meaning in its entirety. However, such an approach is a proxy for true understanding; it removes the challenging interrelationship between reader and author and is lacking as a result. It is the relationship between reader and author that allows a novel to become a space for making meaning and this is incredibly powerful. The power of the author is best described by Vygotsky as the way writers use 'language [as] an agent for altering the powers of thought' (in Bruner, 1986, p143) whilst Piaget counters this by promoting the power of the reader by arguing that 'language *reflects* thought and does not determine it in any sense' (in Bruner, 1986, p144). This symbiotic relationship is what makes reading so powerful; the language of the author meets the thoughts of the reader and the thoughts of the reader are affected as a result.

Gadamer (1989, p95) argues that the author is powerful because they have authority (interestingly, the two words have the same root) over the reader because they present a text which causes the reader to challenge their understanding of reality. Kafka (in Manguel, 1997, p93) argued in 1904 that authors can produce books which 'axe the frozen sea within' the reader and 'hit us like a most painful misfortune'. The power of the author is also promoted by Postman (1987, p58) who considers that authors can play with their readers and are not to be trusted: 'They lie, they become confused, they overgeneralize, they abuse logic and, sometimes, common sense'. He proposes that readers can attempt to be prepared for this but that is not easy because 'one's responses are isolated, one's intellect thrown back on its own resource'.

Such arguments assert the undeniable power that an author has. However, they do not consider the fundamental power of the reader who must choose whether or not to read a novel. Barthes' (1977) paradoxical argument is that 'the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the author'; Manguel (1997, p179) further suggests that 'all writing depends on the generosity of the reader [...] reading is writing's apotheosis'. The power of the reader is promoted by Bruner (1986, p156), who argues that 'a text means nothing in and of itself; it is the reader who gives it meaning'.

For Gadamer (1989), engaging with art, for example, reading a book, has similarities with playing a game. In both, the reader (or player) has to leave their own concerns behind and submit to the principles of the game - or the content of the book. However, the game (or text) cannot function without the player (or reader) therefore the players of the game (or readers of the text) are also the creators of the game (or meaning-makers of the text). Using this analogy, the game remains the same although it can vary depending on the player, just as the content of the book remains the same but will vary depending on the reader. It could be argued that players cannot fundamentally change a game, which would suggest that a reader cannot fundamentally change the meaning of a text, although literary criticism can lead to fundamental changes in the meaning of a text, for example Bayard's detective criticism that shall be discussed in section 2.18. Ultimately, a book exists whether or not anyone reads it (much like this thesis) but for a book to have meaning it must be read. As Gadamer (1989, p110) considers, 'a festival exists only in being celebrated [...] the same is true of drama: it must be presented for the spectator, and yet its being is by no means just the point of intersection of the spectators' experiences'.

It is also important to consider that the first reader of any text is the author and yet that the author may reread their own writing at a later date and find new meanings in their own work. Thus the intentions of the author cannot be considered without reference to the text itself and the reader brings their own context to the encounter with the text. Ultimately, it could be argued that the author has power as what they write affects the reader whilst simultaneously the reader has power as they interpret the text. The relationship between author and reader is symbiotic and transactional; Rosenblatt (1978, p12) describes this as 'the coming together of a reader and a text', and meaning is produced by the interaction between the reader and the text. This interaction is considered by Bakhtin (1994) as one where the author creates a text where meaning is imprisoned in paper, and the reader is presented with a text at a particular time and space. The reader may be reading what an author wrote in a vastly different time or place from the author's situation but the act of reading creates unity between reader and author. He proposes that this combination of reader and author at particular time and place is what the text truly is. Crotty (1998, pp. 108-9) helpfully describes this as meaning 'constructed by the reader *during* the act of

reading' explaining that the meaning may not be the intention of author or reader but nevertheless comes 'into being in and out of our engagement with [the text]' (ibid) and Warnke (1987, p48) posits that 'when a text is understood its meaning cannot be attributed to either writer or reader'. Rather than a forced attribution for either reader or author, the text creates a union between the two to allow meaning to be made. Postman (1987, p58) describes this union between author and reader to create meaning 'the most serious challenge to the intellect', which sounds like an exciting starting point for this research.

2.9 - Texts as Spaces for Making Meaning

If texts create spaces to make meaning because readers draw truths from the language of the texts, the next area for consideration is how that takes place. How does a reader create meaning from texts? Bruner (1986, p4) is clear that literary analysis rarely considers 'how and in what ways the text affects the reader and, indeed, what produces such effects' and muses that this may be because 'the task is too daunting'. E.B. Huey (1968, p10) argued that to analyse what happens when we read would 'be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind'. To simplify the process, I turn to Stockwell (2019, p2), who argues that 'literature is made of language, so the best way of understanding it is to draw on our current best understanding of language and mind'. For the purposes of this research, a constructionist perspective, as proposed by Crotty (1998, p79) will be followed, as 'the object [dystopian fiction] cannot be adequately described apart from the subject [the reader]'. This is different from constructivism, as the reader is not making sense of the dystopian texts without 'the melange of cultures and subcultures' (ibid) that are already established within the reader.

When considering how readers draw meaning from texts, Stockwell (2019, p5) reframes the notion, proposing that when we ask what a work of literature means, we are really asking what it does, 'which is another way of asking what it is being used for. Meaning, then, is what literature does'. If meaning is what literature does, one way it does this is to allow readers to link what they have read to what is already known about the world, and having recognised that in a text, to literally relearn it and consider it differently. Felski (2008, p25) describes this process as a reader seeing 'something that may have made sense in a vague, diffuse or semi-conscious way now take on a distinct shape that is amplified, heightened, or

made newly visible' which leaves the reader to understand that 'something that exists outside of me inspires a revised or altered sense of who I am'. Rather than presenting ideas that are completely alien to the reader, a text can help the reader make sense of the world through metaphor and analogy. Eaglestone (2019, p16) describes this as 'the profound connection between literature and how we live and share the world together'.

Another thing literature does is make the reader question rather than provide clear cut answers. Bruner (1986, p7) proposes that there are multiple, alternative readings of any texts and these many ways of reading 'may battle one another, marry one another, mock one another in the reader's mind' and that 'we *must* read and interpret in some multiple way if any "literal" meaning is to be extracted from a text'. Jakobson (1960) suggested that all meaning is a form of translation, and that multiple translation (polysemy) is the rule rather than the exception, and Roland Barthes (1981) considered the interplay of interpretation by coding the meanings of Balzac's *Sarrasine*. Such ambiguity is part of the beauty of literature. We may ask of a novel yet to be read: what is it about? Or, what happens in the narrative? But a better question may be what does it provoke? What in the narrative reflects your thoughts and what questions them? Ultimately, how are you changed as a result of reading the novel? And such changes are not instantaneous; the reading may impact upon the reader at a later date: minutes, hours, days, years after the initial reading took place, as a situation can cause the reader to reflect upon the reading and question the initial reading.

2.10 - Author as Reader - Ethical Considerations

Here I must make clear my own history. As a teacher and senior leader, the texts I read will make a claim on me. E. D. Hirsch, who is considered in detail in section 3.8, would argue that understanding the meaning of a text equates to understanding 'that which the author meant' (Hirsch, 1967, p253) but Gadamer (1989, p107) considers that 'interpretation is probably in a certain sense recreation [...] each person has to bring [the text] to representation in accord with the meaning he finds in it'. For Gadamer (1989, p415) 'no text and no book speaks if it does not speak a language that reaches the other person [...] there cannot, therefore, be any single interpretation that is correct "in itself"'. Gadamer (1989. p382) calls this a 'fusion of horizons' as understanding the meaning of a text does not

involve deducing the original understanding but considering the text within the reader's own context. Therefore, when reading dystopian fiction I will be interpreting it from the point of view of my own thoughts of education.

For clarity, I applied for ethical approval and received notification on the 22nd May 2020 that my project was confirmed to not require ethics approval (Appendix 1). However, there are ethical considerations within my thesis. Althusser (1979, pp. 14-15) argued that there is no such thing as an innocent reading and we must consider 'what reading we are guilty of' and the reader must 'defend his way of reading by proving its necessity'. Paul Greenbank (2003) argues that we are all led by values defined by Rokeach (1973) as moral values (Greenbank defines these as 'what a person feels is the right thing to do'), competency values (defined as 'what an individual believes is the most effective way to go about doing something'), personal values ('what a person hopes to achieve for themselves') and social values ('how they wish society to operate'). Greenbank argues that the ontological and epistemological position of researchers is influenced by all of these values, that 'value-neutrality cannot be sustained' and that 'those who profess to carry out value-neutral research are deluding themselves [and] misleading others'. Greenbank (2003) and Boyd (2000) propose that this is because all research, including sampling and design, are influenced, often unconsciously, by the researcher's values. Eisner (1992, p7) sums this up when stating that 'the facts never speak for themselves. What they say depends upon the questions we ask'. For this research, the questions I ask of the texts in relation to education will largely determine the findings of the research and the questions will be limited by my biases. And yet it is not possible to be a human and not be influenced by anything.

I take comfort from Greenbank (2003) who proposes that, rather than trying to 'eliminate the effect of bias', the researcher should accept that this is not possible and therefore 'a value-laden approach to educational research should be accepted'. Skeggs (1994) and Williams (2000) propose that researchers include biographical details and make a statement about their underlying values in order to enable those evaluating the research 'to take account of the values that are influencing the work' (Gummesson, 1991). This has been considered in the previous chapter, although Scott and Usher (1999) counter that such accounts are still insufficient as they are constructed by the researcher. Crotty (1998, p7)

proposes that researchers 'bring a number of assumptions to our chosen methodology [and] we need, as best we can, to state what these assumptions are'. Crotty (ibid) suggests this is done when 'we elaborate our theoretical perspective'. Hence:

2.11 - Theoretical Perspective

As stated at the start of this chapter, this chapter is not a traditional methodology but is as close to one as will be found in my research, which does not follow traditional conventions of academic writing. My methods for gathering and analysing data will be to read dystopian fiction in order to ascertain how doing so can affect our understanding of education. I will consider education using Biesta's three functions, explained further in section 2.27 and will consider educational policy and practices. As explained in section 1.3, I will refer to schools such as Michaela and Dreamfields as symbolic of certain approaches to, and manifestations of, education in England. Michaela has produced a wealth of literature and publicity regarding its practices and these have been praised by leaders within government and elements of the school's practice, such as the focus on knowledge, made explicit in its 'Knowledge is Power' strapline, are now seen in government policy, such as the focus on knowledge in the school inspection handbook. Knowledge will be considered in detail in sections 3. 8-3.13.

The choices of dystopian fiction texts are explained in section 2.26 which details inclusion and exclusion criteria. Crotty (1998, p2) argues that justifying methodology and methods 'reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work' and 'into the understanding you and I have of what human knowledge is'. For Crotty, the epistemological questions are those concerning how readers of this thesis will regard the outcomes I lay out before them. This raises a further question: how will reading this research into how reading dystopian fiction affects our understanding of education affect the reader of this research? For such readers, it is important to reflect that 'each of us must explore our own experience, not the experience of others, for no one can take that step 'back to the things themselves' on our behalf' (Crotty, 1998, p84).

2.12 - 'Back to the things themselves' (Crotty, 1998, p84)
For Crotty (ibid), to focus on dystopian fiction is to focus on 'the things themselves' and

therefore to adopt a phenomenological approach. I am drawn to the idea of a phenomenological approach as decreed by Crotty because he suggests that, by focusing solely on the things - and for things I insert dystopian fiction texts - 'possibilities for new meaning emerge for us' (ibid).

This links to my intent: how does reading dystopian literature, these works of fiction that are right under our noses, affect our understanding of education? Felski (2008, p23) links literature with phenomenology as literature allows us to make 'a flash of connection', to be 'startled by the prescience of a certain combination of words' and to feel 'addressed, summoned, called to account', to see 'my perspective has shifted', to 'see something that I did not see before', to see things 'differently by gazing outward rather than inward, by deciphering ink marks on a page'. By laying aside what we know about the texts, by calling 'into question what we take for granted' (Crotty, 1998, p82) can we 'break free and see the world afresh' and 'engage with the world in new ways to construct new understandings (Crotty, 1998, p86)?

Such an approach is supported by Felski (2008, p98), who considers phenomenology as 'a philosophy of things, a patient and purposeful turning towards the object' and that words 'speak of the secret lives of things, reveal something of the mute matter to which they gesture'. For Ricoeur (in Felski 2015, p107) phenomenology is 'a preference for description over explanation, a willingness to attend rather than to analyse' which is supported by Felski (2008, p17) who suggests phenomenology 'encourages us to zoom in and look closely', and (2015, p107) that the purpose is 'to try to figure out how things mean and how they matter'. Here Felski delineates between the how and the what, which is important at this point of the research as I focus on the methodology for determining meaning, the how. The what will be considered in terms of Biesta's (2010, pp. 20-22) functions of education in chapters 3-5.

By attending to the dystopian fiction texts, I hope to experience phenomenology as Wolff (1984, p192) proposes, which is to be able to 'question our whole culture, our manner of seeing the world and being in the world in the way we have learned'. This idea of the things themselves opening up a new world is supported by Sadler (1969, p377) who argues that phenomenology is an 'attempt to recover a fresh perception of existence, one unprejudiced by acculturation' and Marton (1986, p40) who argues that phenomenology exists 'to make

us conscious of what the world was like before we learned how to see it'. Sadler and Marton are considering what Piaget coined as cognitive conflict; the notion that, by reading dystopian fiction, where I will have to make accommodations to my understanding of education as I assimilate the new learning I acquire through reading.

When examining how reading dystopian literature affects our understanding of education, the phenomenological perspective will mean I will have to open myself up to the phenomena, the fictional texts, 'in their stark immediacy' (Crotty, 1998, p82), and to do so I will 'draw upon language' and will likely finish 'with a reinterpretation [...] new meaning, or fuller meaning, or renewed meaning [and this] is precisely what we as phenomenologists are after' (ibid). However, this idea of the stark immediacy of the texts invites a consideration of how the meaning from these phenomena of dystopian literature will be created. In order to fully explain my research method, I therefore need to turn attention away from the things themselves, and consider what is arguably the opposite: a hermeneutic view of 'texts as strange and far off' (Crotty, 1998, p90).

2.13 - Hermeneutics

Crotty's depiction of a hermeneutic approach also includes a recognition of the link between text and reader and the transmission of meaning from text to reader, considering the importance of 'intentions and histories of authors, the relationship between author and interpreter, of the particular relevance of texts for readers' (Crotty, 1998, p90).

Hermeneutics historically referred to guidelines for the study of the Bible, specifically linked to the explanation of what a biblical text means, or exegesis; Crotty (1998, p87) proposes that 'hermeneutics is to exegesis what grammar is to language or logic is to reasoning'. Two hundred years ago, F.D.E. Schleiermacher (Warnke, 1987, p2) argued that it is not possible to have an objective interpretation of texts, that the hermeneutic question was not how the Bible could be understood but 'how meaning can be comprehended', proposing that the context of the reader affects the comprehension of the meaning.

For Ricoeur (1970, p8), hermeneutics is focused on 'the theory of the rules that preside over an exegesis - that is, over the interpretation of a particular text' and he famously proposed

that 'the symbol gives rise to thought'. Here, the symbol is the content of the novel and the thought is the interpretation or understanding enabled by the symbol. Habermas (in Gallagher, 1992, p4) suggested hermeneutics focuses on 'an "ability" we acquire to the extent of which we learn to "master" a natural language, the art of understanding linguistically communicable meaning and to render it comprehensible'. Such mastery of interpretation is affected by the context of the reader, which links to Dilthey's argument that hermeneutics is 'a critique of historical reason' (in Gallagher, 1992, p3). For Dilthey, interpretation of a text is subject to the historical context of the world and the individual within it. He proposed that nothing is definitive because we are living within history and therefore historical characters and texts should be understood in their own terms rather than those of doctrine. Following this approach, the author's historical and social context is the beginning of understanding any text. Dilthey would argue that the hermeneutic circle involves the reader understanding their own historical and social context, then simultaneously understanding the historical and social context of the author and these two understandings coming together in a place where the text can be situated. The Bible would be understood by understanding passages and books as individual texts in light of the Bible as a whole, and the Bible as a whole would be understood by understanding the individual passages and books. For Dilthey (1970, p178), all interpretations by individuals occur because 'the individual experiences, lives and acts constantly in a common sphere and only within such does he understand [...] everything that is understood bears within itself the mark of being familiar'. Felski (2015, p178) argues that 'it is an axiom of hermeneutics that we cannot help projecting our preexisting beliefs onto the literary work' and that 'this hermeneutic circles [means] we may in turn be brought to feel differently by a text'.

2.14 - Hermeneutics as Understanding

For this research, I am drawn to Heidegger's consideration of hermeneutics as being 'the existential, phenomenological analysis of human existence insofar as "understanding" is an existential-ontological characteristic of human beings' (Gallagher, 1992, p4) and therefore consider hermeneutics to be, as Palmer (1969, p8) proposed, 'the study of understanding, especially the task of understanding texts'. However, my method diverges slightly as this research does not centre on the task of understanding texts, but rather what we can understand about education by reading texts which are not in and of themselves about

formal schooling. Gallagher (1992, p24) argues that hermeneutics 'holds out the promise of providing a deeper understanding of the educational process' and Gadamer (1989, p318) would argue that reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of education because 'understanding is always interpretation' and meaning is always a 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1989, p382) of the interpretation and the text.

2.15 - Hermeneutics and Ethics

It is also important to consider hermeneutics in terms of ethics. As outlined in section 2.10, I have endeavoured to make plain my background and theoretical perspective. However, as part of virtue ethics, I must recognise the importance of contexts, both of reader and author, within my research. I cannot consider the content of the dystopian novels without the influence of my historical context. This is where the hermeneutic circle of whole and part adds clarity: the text is a whole with the individual reader's, my, interpretations of the parts. Gadamer (1989) argues that, as a reader, I have to assume that a text has an authority on the subject matter greater than my own and that reading the texts, which for the purpose of this research means reading dystopian fiction novels, will challenge my views. Otherwise, reading only confirms my established knowledge and beliefs. However, to do so is challenging and therefore Gadamer (1989) proposes we should read a text to guide a process of interpretation, using what has been read as a springboard to developing our own understanding rather than blindly accepting what has been read. This approach enables a reader to learn from what is read rather than just accept the content of a text, to actively participate in the construction of meaning through a dialogue. This has implications for this research as I am not attempting to understand what has been written about a topic - education - but to consider how reading fiction can affect understanding about education, with a particular focus on formal schooling.

2.16 - Construction of Meaning

Actively participating in the construction of meaning between author and reader is described by Gadamer (1989, p302) as 'a process of transmission' which begins with the notion that understanding is 'primarily, agreement' (Gadamer, 1989, p186) which I take to mean agreement of meaning between reader and author. This differs from the

pre-Romantics who assumed texts were true and that understanding involved deducing their truth, and from the Romantics who focused on understanding the creative intentions of the author. Gadamer (1989, p307) rejects these ideas, arguing 'not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author'. For Gadamer (1989), we construct meaning based on our own perspective, meaning that reading can never be objective because of the influence of our past experiences and there is no method for interpretation that can transcend this. Instead, we come to an understanding through texts, and 'one emerges enriched and more mature' (Gadamer, 1989, p63) as a result of reading. This links back to Carr's (1995) point that student teachers may learn more about education by reading novels than by reading texts about educational research as they emerge 'enriched' (ibid) through coming to understanding by reading. Gadamer's argument draws together these ideas and proposes that reading different views and perspectives, which for the purpose of this research equates to dystopian novels, can enrich our understanding, which here equates to understanding of education. Meaning is constructed through the 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1989, p382) where a reader both understands a text from the perspective of his or her own context and simultaneously has that perspective affected by encountering the text, allowing a reader to develop their understanding.

2.17 - Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Whilst this research will focus on dystopian novels and therefore partly offer a phenomenological perspective, centring on the things themselves, as in the dystopian novels, there will be elements of a hermeneutic perspective within the research. Gadamer (1989) proposes that literary texts cannot be approached phenomenologically because our own meanings enter our interpretations and that there is no original meaning because understanding a text involves placing ourselves within a tradition. As we interpret texts we contribute to the hermeneutic circle: our understanding is a part that adds to the whole meaning of the text. For Gadamer, this hermeneutic rule means that understanding extends in ever-widening circles.

Schleiermacher proposed two different forms of hermeneutic practice: 'grammatical and psychological or technical interpretation' (Warnke, 1987, p13). Grammatical interpretation focuses on the analysis of language - 'the precise meaning of linguistic terms' (ibid) -

whereas psychological interpretation focuses on the analysis of the author's history - 'the core decision or basic motivation that has moved the author to communicate' (ibid). These two forms link to the hermeneutic circle of part and whole by analysing the grammatical units (part) and linking to the complete text (whole). This has implications for this research, which will include selecting extracts from dystopian novels and examining their content and language, as part of the hermeneutic circle of extract and whole text. This links to the thoughts of Gallagher (1992, pp. 5-6), who suggested that understanding 'is a linguistic event' and therefore 'language is a central concern of hermeneutics' and Habermas (ibid), who proposed that hermeneutics 'is not the study of language as an objective entity; it is a reflection on the way language operates, such as, in the reader's interpretation of a text'. This focus on language recalls Gadamer's fusion of horizons (1989, pp. 378-389), where 'the fusion of horizons that takes place in the understanding is actually the achievement of language' and is 'a creative communication between reader and text' (Gallagher, 1992, p9).

As my research focuses primarily on fictional texts, it will offer a mixture of a phenomenological perspective and a hermeneutical perspective. I am reassured in this approach by Crotty (1998, p14), who argues that researchers must 'forge a methodology that will meet our particular purposes in *this* research' and suggests that 'perhaps none of them do and we find ourselves drawing on several methodologies, moulding them' or that 'we need to be more inventive still and create a methodology that in many respects is quite new'. I also take guidance from Heidegger, who saw hermeneutics as 'phenomenological seeing' (Crotty, 1998, p96). Crotty (ibid) argues that Heidegger saw ontology as phenomenology and suggests 'we must rid ourselves of our tendency to immediately interpret' and instead focus on the things themselves and particularly the language contained within. Richardson (1963, p631) argues that, for Heidegger, hermeneutics and phenomenology become one if hermeneutics retains a nuance of its own, this is the connotation of language'.

2.18 - A Nuanced Methodology - Hermeneutics of Suspicion

When considering a new methodology, one underpinned by a mixture of phenomenology and hermeneutics, I am drawn to Felski's concept of a hermeneutics of suspicion. Felski (2015, p53) argues against overly-close analysis of a text: she does not feel that reading is

'an act of digging down to arrive at a repressed or otherwise obscured reality' because trying to consider hidden meanings, messages and meanings from texts could be missed or considered too surface level for further analysis. Who decides whether the real meaning is the apparent meaning? Felski (2008, p84) argues that 'literary conventions [should be] devices for articulating truth rather than as obstacles to its discovery'. Similarly, she does not consider reading to be the act of standing back or staring 'intently at these surfaces, seeking to render them improbable through the imperturbability of her gaze' as considered in poststructuralism. Felski (2015, p55) considers surface and depth to be 'complementary rather than mutually exclusive approaches' and argues that gazing at the surface 'does not denote an end to interpretation'. She names this approach 'second-level hermeneutics' as she considers it to be a refining, rather than an eradication, of hermeneutics, and calls for a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (2015, p2), proposing that readers should no longer dig deep 'in pursuit of buried treasure' (Felski, 2015, p70) but should look down at the text 'with a puzzled or ironic gaze' (ibid) and be 'passionately curious about hidden mysteries' (ibid). She suggests critics should 'read wide' instead of deep and consider 'a panoramic view of systems of discourse and grids of power'. For Felski (2015, p82), reading 'is more like falling into a bottomless pit rather than striking solid ground'.

Such an approach was taken by Bayard (2008) when reading detective fiction. Bayard considered one of the classics of the genre, Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* suspiciously and read the text with a puzzled, curious gaze, and the result was *Sherlock Holmes was Wrong* (2008), where Bayard outlines how Sherlock Holmes, like all literary characters, led 'an autonomous existence' (Bayard, 2008, p7) and that because Conan Doyle was 'failing to grasp his characters' independence [...] one of them had entirely escaped his control and was amusing himself by misleading his detective' (ibid). Bayard suggests that the Holmes method of detection, which has been 'considered a model of scientific rigor, even an inspiration for certain procedures taught in police academies' (Bayard, 2008, p42) is not infallible, as 'Holmes sometimes makes mistakes' (Bayard, 2008, p47) and therefore 'all the solutions to Holmes's cases are open to suspicion' (ibid).

Bayard's reading of Conan Doyle reflects Feski's approach of a hermeneutics of suspicion. He questions why some of the signs in the text are not considered as clues and adds that the

'correct interpretation can significantly change the overall solution' (Bayard, 2008, p50), assuming that his interpretation is the correct one. Bayard created his own method of investigating texts, termed detective criticism, which was influenced by Goodhard and Felman's interpretation of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*: reading the text suspiciously 'cast doubt on the traditional version of the murder of Laius by Oedipus' (Bayard, 2008, pp. 57-8) and arrive at 'the conclusion that it was never actually proven that Oedipus was guilty of the crime of which he finally accuses himself' (ibid). Bayard (2008, p70) states that 'detective criticism is suspicious by nature' and takes Goodhard and Felman's suspicious reading further; rather than simply pointing out the problems with a text, he takes a constructive approach and solves the mystery and identifies who the real murderer is, creating what he terms as the 'interventionism' of literary criticism. Bayard (2008, p59) considers that detective criticism 'intervenes in an active way, [...] casting doubt on presumptive murderers [...] boldly risks any number of consequences [...] in its passion for justice' and exemplifies his approach through both intervening in Conan Doyle's work and in Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot novel: *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?*.

Whilst an interventionist approach will not be required as the basis for this research, I am interested in Bayard's (2008, pp. 64-5) argument against 'the notion that a text includes only a limited number of readings' and his argument that '*the world that the literary text produces is an incomplete world*' or 'a *gapped universe*' (italics in original text). For the purpose of this research, I intend to be passionately curious about the hidden mysteries within dystopian fiction and opt for a hermeneutics of suspicion when reading the selected novels. This method fits appropriately with dystopian fiction, where suspicion is often interwoven into the narrative: characters may be suspicious of each other and/or of events, or be presented in a way that arouses the suspicion of the reader. Bayard's (2008, pp. 65-67) argument that texts are incomplete is also relevant here; Bayard considers that every text has gaps, in terms of description, narrative and character and 'it is hardly likely that [the reader] won't be tempted to fill them' and, once a reader has created their own '*subjective closure*' (ibid) through completing the gaps within the text, it is impossible to have a conversation with another reader of the same book, because they are not talking about the same book. Interestingly, Bayard considers the idea that any text can be objective and shared to be 'utopian' (ibid) and, once this research has started, my understanding of the

dystopian fiction will be subjective as I will complete gaps within the text with consideration of what can be learnt about education, particularly schooling in England.

Bruner (1986, p46) promotes that curiosity 'allows us to probe what people take for granted'. He proposes that 'the nervous system stores models of the world' and that reading something can 'let input violate expectancy', meaning we no longer 'stop noticing the touch sensation produced by our clothes or the lint on the lens of our eyeglasses'. Bruner (1986, p122) argues that 'when we are puzzled about what we encounter, we renegotiate its meaning'. For me, Bruner is proposing that reading can jolt our understanding of our stored models of the world and make us think differently. Bruner (1986, p123) argues that this leads to 'a *forum* for negotiating and renegotiating meaning' and that this has 'deep and direct implications' for education as it allows participants to play 'an *active* role' in 'making and remaking the culture' of education. For the purpose of this research, I am considering education to relate primarily to formal schooling in England, and Bruner's assertions wholeheartedly link back to this research: reading dystopian fiction will allow for a negotiation of understanding of education, particularly formal schooling in England. It also suggests that reading curiously, or suspiciously, means looking beyond what dystopian novels are typically seen as being; reading in the way that Felski (2015, p122) argues is overcoming 'a resistance' in order to overcome the 'self-evident' content of the novels.

As someone who is naturally curious and interested in challenging people and practice, this hermeneutics of suspicion, this passionate curiosity, is an approach that I am aiming for in this research. I am excited about considering how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of education. I am drawn to Felski's approach towards literature as a method of approaching texts with curiosity in order to consider what we can learn about education, and to draw links between literary studies and educational research. As Felski (2015, p84) argues, texts 'can surprise or startle us, nudge us into unexpected moods or states of mind, cause us to do things we had not anticipated'. Bettelheim (1991, p5) argues that a story will hold the child's attention if it is entertaining 'but to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination [...] it must at one and the same time relate to all aspects of his personality [and give] full credence to the seriousness of [his] predicaments'. This idea of surprise and curiosity underpins this research, particularly Felski's (2015, p160) argument that 'past texts

have things to say on questions that matter to us'. It is for this reason that I have chosen to focus on dystopian fiction. Whilst crude links between education and dystopian visions are easy to make, the ability of a dystopian novel to shock, to stimulate the imagination and to shine a light on serious issues is what makes the genre a rich source of material for this research.

Felski (2015, p168) argues that literature allows us 'to make sense of our lives' and that literature can 'serve as frameworks and guides to interpretation'. Taking this idea further, Aldridge and Green (2019, pxi) in the foreword to Hanley's (2019) *Orwell and Education* argue that Hanley 'adopts a creative style and structure that is neither purely literary interpretation nor educational theory' and suggest that this 'produces an effect that is in itself educational; this is literature as research *method*'.

2.19 - Literature as Research Method

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire (2017, p54) identifies a 'banking' model, where knowledge is 'deposited' into the students' heads (because they are deemed to be novices) by the teacher (an expert), much like information is downloaded from the internet onto a device. Eaglestone (2019) relates this to grammar and the subject, object, verb elements of sentences, by comparing the teacher to the subject, with the verb teaching the objects - students. In this model, students are done to rather than collaborated with: 'the teacher does the lesson to the students' (Eaglestone, 2019, pp. 31-2). Rather than actively participating in their education, students are 'passive regurgitators of information' (ibid). Literature allows a different approach because literature involves the readers - the teacher and the students - encountering a text and creating meaning from it together. This ensures that learning takes place as a process or a dialogue, rather than as a deposit of information from one person (or account) to another. However, where literature is the means for assessing skills, as in GCSE English Literature, for example, the system breaks down. Here, texts are taught in order for students to complete assessments that are marked based on a set of assessment objectives. Rather than a teacher being able to collaborate with the students to create meaning together, texts are used as the basis for a formal examination system. Bakhtin (1994, p338) argues that most of the information we hold is 'not

communicated in direct form' and this is where literature can prove its worth in a formal school system. As Phelan (2020, p23) states, considering what facts we learn from reading fiction and the cognitive gains from reading fiction are different questions that should not be 'conflated'; paradoxically for formal literature qualifications this is precisely what happens.

Postman (1987, p19) considers this from a different perspective, and suggests that we derive truth from the way information is communicated and that, because the media has become more television-based than print-based, meaning messages are just flashed up and then replaced with a newer message, the public has become used to acquiring knowledge quickly. For Postman (1987, p80), books allow for 'the accumulation, quiet scrutiny and organized analysis of information and ideas' which resonates with Felski's notion that reading literature is 'a sure path to moral improvement and cultural refinement' Felski (2008, p2). Reading involves a different kind of knowing and I refer to the idea of dialogue here because I agree with Eaglestone (2019, p20) that 'literature is a living conversation' because it is this communication that 'makes things matter' (Eaglestone, 2019, p8) because literature takes thoughts, feelings and experiences and puts them into language which, as Bakhtin (1994, p422) describes can be 'creatively transformed in different eras' and therefore resonate long after the original creation.

So why do we not make more use of fiction in educational research? Why is the idea of literature as research method innovative? Perhaps the focus on evidence-led or evidence-informed practice, with the Education Endowment Foundation measuring the impact of pedagogical practices, reduces the desire to engage with literature, whose impact on our understanding of education 'cannot be easily measured' (Aldridge, 2017). As Phelan (2020, pxv) explains, literary examples are 'hyper-specific' and therefore potentially cannot lead to the analysis typical of empirical research. Rather, the 'cognitive gain' from reading novels comes from the process of closely reading' (ibid) and such a process does not conform to traditional research methods. Whilst there is weight in Phelan's proposal that literary examples are hyper-specific, there is also the potential for literary examples to match empirical research in terms of the level of analysis that can be created by reading. The cognitive gain from reading may not conform to traditional research methods, but a focus on the traditional can, in itself, be dystopian. At this point, is it important to start considering

the ideas above in relation to dystopian literature.

2.20 - Dystopian Fiction

I turn now to the 'object' within my research: dystopian fiction. The Oxford English Dictionary (2019) defines the abstract noun dystopia as 'an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible' whilst the Cambridge Dictionary's (2019) definition is 'relating to a very bad or unfair society in which there is a lot of suffering, especially an imaginary society in the future, or to the description of such a society'. The word stems from the Greek 'dus' or 'bad' and 'topos' meaning 'place' and is believed to have been first used in 1868 when British philosopher and civil servant John Stuart Mill used the term in a parliamentary debate (Mill, 1965-91, vol. 28, p248). Mill was denouncing the government's Irish land policy and dismissed the utopian ideas as dystopian, because all utopias have in-built flaws that mean the dreams can never be realised. Prior to this, a contrast to utopia or perfect government had been named by the British philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham as a cacotopia, a bad place; the idea of the worst government, combining cacophony in terms of chaotic noise, with the place of government.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, dystopia as a concept stretches the mind in a myriad of directions. We may recall ancient images from religious texts: the world submersed through flood waters; the apocalypse; the wrath of an angry god. Or we may consider the aftermath of wars: barbed wire and waterlogged trenches; towers occupied by armed guards; brutality; the horrors from concentration camps; piles of corpses. Perhaps we consider the images of a lawless society: abandoned cities; neglected buildings; desperate crowds queuing for food or scavenging in a way that questions their humanity. If dystopia is a colour, for Professor Gregory Claeys, Professor of the History of Political Thought at the University of Holloway, (2017, p4) it is 'blood-red'. If it is a sound, for Claeys it is 'violent explosions interspersed by screams of terror [which] deafen us and rock the earth' (ibid). And if it is a smell, for Claeys it is 'burning flesh, cordite, sweat, vomit, urine, excrement, rotting garbage [...] naked barbarism' (ibid). The common themes are typically destruction, coercion, pain, suffering or perhaps worse: the delusion of peace and pleasure. Perhaps death is the only way out for the oppressed. Certainly the individual is dehumanised under the rule of a tyrant or in the aftermath of an environmental disaster. The language of utopia

and dystopia has entered the lexicon to refer, not just to places, but to situations, concepts and policies.

The genre of dystopian fiction makes for interesting links between dystopia and education. The dehumanisation of students (and school staff) through silent corridors, performance management and uniforms, detailed in chapter 4. The delusion of a system which ensures only two-thirds of students are ever able to attain the qualifications considered good enough for society, detailed in chapter 3. As explained in chapter 4, at Michaela Community School in Brent, the students are drilled in 'a Behaviour Bootcamp for several days' (Birbalsingh, 2015, p42) before starting at the school to ensure students know the rules: 'all teachers use 'go' as the keyword to set the pupils off on tasks, all use [Lemov's 2015] 'slant' as the call to attention, all use 'track' to get pupils to look at [the teacher]'. The individual students are dehumanised under the rule of the teacher, and the regime is praised by the visiting authorities, including a future Prime Minister. Phelan (2020, p52) argued that literary fiction 'plays a crucial role in exercising the imagination to enable the person imagining to practise skills that prove useful in non-imaginary scenarios'. For this research, the scenes presented in dystopian novels will allow me to consider what we can learn about non-imaginary scenes in education. Whilst, as Phelan counters, the experience of reading can never be the same as a real experience, reading allows 'space for reflection' (2020, p55) and does so in a way that allows the reader to consider a scenario without 'the pressures of reacting to a real life scenario. We can put a book down and go away and think about the significance of a certain event but we cannot put life on pause in the same way.' (ibid). Felski (2015, p66) argues that 'no work of art can yield up all its resonances in a single moment' and that 'our preliminary hunches about what a text means are modified after a more careful reading'. By considering dystopian fiction using Felski's notion of suspicious hermeneutics, what appears to be primary, in terms of the dystopian landscape, can turn out to be secondary; as a reader I may 'lose [my] bearings' (Felski, 2015, p83) and require 'ongoing adjustment and correction'. There is an element of hubris here, a suggestion that the reader knows more than the text itself, but there is also an element of creativity, of allowing what Felski (2015, p108) considers 'a jolt in perspective that allows previously unsuspected patterns to come into view'.

Ruth Levitas (1990, p22) suggests a definition of dystopia as 'the fear of what [the future] may be at worst' although adds that dystopia is 'the fear of what the future may hold if we do not act to avert catastrophe'. For Booker (1988, p324) dystopias are 'an imagined world in which the dream has become a nightmare'. The dream, of course, being the antonym of dystopia: utopia. Thus to fully comprehend dystopia, it seems reasonable to now consider its opposite: utopia.

2.21 - The Concept of Utopia

Utopia was first used in 1516 by Sir Thomas More, as the title of his socio-political satire, depicting an ideal society with common property and altruism. The word was coined from the Greek ou-topos, meaning 'no place' or 'nowhere', although the Greek word eu-topos means 'good place'. This suggests that a utopia is both a place of goodness but also a place that can never exist. Krishan Kumar (1987, p166) argues that More did not just invent the word, but 'he invented the *thing*'. Kumar suggests that More created a new literary genre and the 'far-reaching conception of the possibilities of human and social transformation'. Utopia as More's thing equates to two ideas: a good place and a non-existent, impossible place. For the purpose of this research, utopia shall therefore be considered in these two terms, leading utopia to be an ideal place where all of the world's problems faced by society have been solved and considering how education fits into this ideal.

The purpose of thinking of such an ideal place could be, as considered by Levitas (1990, p1), 'an escapist fantasy' or it could be to allow for idealist thinking in order to better express the desire to improve current societal concerns. For Levitas (1990, p8), utopia allows us to 'learn a lot about the experience of living under any set of conditions by [reflecting] upon the desires which those conditions generate and yet leave unfulfilled'.

For many, education is society's pathway to utopia. During the global pandemic, with over 40,000 people dying from COVID-19 in the UK (as of June 2020), the language of education included the closure of schools as a 'national disaster' (BBC, 13th June 2020), ignoring the reason for the school closure as part of a national lockdown strategy to save lives. The panacea of education is described by Matthew Arnold in 1869 when he argued that the 'best

hope [for] our present difficulties' was 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p7). Over a hundred years later, E.D.Hirsch makes a similar argument for, as Michael Fordham (2015) describes 'the liberating power of knowledge over ignorance'. The knowledge agenda shall be considered further in chapter 3, but a number of English educators (Eaglestone, Bleiman, Cushing) would see Hirsch and Fordham's argument as being entirely at odds with education and English. The essence of the subject cannot be reduced to knowledge; there is no knowledge organiser that can truly compartmentalise the understanding of a work of literature.

Oscar Wilde (1891, p40) famously argued that 'a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias'.

2.22 - Utopia for Education

Wilde could be suggesting that anti-utopia is when total deterioration is realised. Or perhaps that it is only by arriving at utopia that we see its flaws and set sail, hoping to find the true utopia. But perhaps we never arrive at utopia: just a place that looked like it might be utopian from a distance - the reality being different.

If Arnold's utopia (1869, p7) was achieved by learning 'the best that was thought and said', for Chris Husbands (2015, p49) it is important to remember that, because 'there is simply too much knowledge which could be taught, the questions of what knowledge deserves its places in the school curriculum is often as much a matter of who has the power and authority to choose as anything else'. When the National Curriculum was introduced in 1988 it was based on ten foundation subjects: English, mathematics, science, technology, history, geography, a modern foreign language, music, art, and physical education. As John White (2004, p2) argues, 'it is hard to say for certain why these were chosen, since no rationale was provided for them'. Such ideas will be examined as part of this research, using the literature to improve our understanding of how such decisions are able to be made.

2.23 - Utopia and Dystopia

Utopian novels have existed since the Ancient Greek myths and the philosophy of Plato and the stories of the Bible. And for all utopian stories, there is the suggestion of the 'other'; the hell to the heaven just as dystopian stories have the reverse. Claeys (2017, p6) argues that 'like the snake in the Garden of Eden, dystopian elements seem to lurk within Utopia'. He suggests that the country Utopia 'was founded by civilising its barbarians and then artificially isolating a peninsula by transforming it into a fortified island' and that 'Utopia's peace and plentitude now seem to rest upon war, empire and the ruthless suppression of others, or in other words, their dystopia'. The impossible nature of utopia is perhaps due to the fundamental nature of what it means to be human. Taking Claeys' argument, utopia can only remain utopian whilst it is a fortified island, because once the island is inhabited by humans it is no longer able to meet the needs of each individual's ideals. I also like Sypnowich's proposal (2018, p3) that utopia is less compelling than the catastrophic, and muses that 'no wonder Adam and Eve concluded, however ill-advisedly, that the Garden of Eden was a bit of a bore'. The compelling nature of dystopian fiction is part of the reason the genre is the basis of this research. Using literature as research method is not only exciting but also reflects the contrasting perfection of utopia and catastrophes of dystopia; emotional reactions are, as discussed in section 2.1, part of the joy of reading literature, and such reactions will support with making links between literature and education.

I propose that utopia and dystopia are not opposite ends of a continuum and appreciate Williams' (2010, p94) assertion that 'utopia and dystopia are comparative rather than absolute categories' and Kumar's (1987, p100) comparison with the religious and the secular: 'the relationship is not symmetrical or equal' but dystopia 'is the mirror-image of utopia - but a distorted image, seen in a cracked mirror'.

Levitas (1990, p2) argues that 'definitions are tools, not ends in themselves'. Having an understanding of the history of dystopia, both as a concept and as a genre of literature, is undoubtedly useful but is only the beginning of this journey. By using dystopian fiction to learn about education, this thesis will satisfy what Felski (2015, p108) proposes is 'the challenge of drawing together what seems disparate and disconnected into a satisfying

pattern'.

2.24 - Dystopian Principles

At this point it is helpful to create a definition of dystopia for the purpose of this research. Taking the arguments listed above as proposing that utopia cannot exist if inhabited by humanity, the first principle of a dystopia must be the presence of humanity. Furthermore, utopian principles often underlie dystopian realities, suggesting that the vision for dystopian societies may be underpinned by positive intentions. This leads to the third principle: a sense of people working together to collectively achieve the positive vision. However, whilst in utopia there is the sense that this collectivism is welcomed by all and voluntarily engaged in, a principle of dystopia is the power imbalance between what can be called the main (individual or group) and the 'other'. A further principle is that there is an aspect of coercion to ensure conformity in order for the power imbalance to be maintained. This leads to a sixth principle: the permeation of suffering amongst the 'other', albeit that this suffering may not be realised by those afflicted. The final principle is the dehumanisation of all of those involved: the main must cast off human characteristics in order to carry out the required coercion to dehumanise the 'others'.

To surmise, the seven underlying principles of dystopia that will underpin this research are:
- the presence of humanity thus creating a society;
- a vision for that society which has positive intentions;
- a sense of the group working towards a common goal;
- a power imbalance between main and 'other';
- the need to conform, typically achieved through coercion;
- suffering for those in the 'other';
- dehumanisation of all.

2.25 - From Dystopia to Dystopian Fiction

Whilst utopia is often used without reference to fiction, dystopia is almost synonymous with the idea of dystopian fiction, whether that be dystopian visual media such as films or TV shows, or dystopian literature. At the start of the research, I naively considered that the

discussion of genre would be fairly straightforward and set about researching what exactly makes something dystopian fiction as opposed to science fiction or fantasy fiction. However, I soon realised that there is no such definition. Instead, as Stockwell (2019, p18) argues, 'there are only good, less good, bad, and really bad examples' because, as Eaglestone (2019, p3) suggests 'the categories we use to define things, from grammatical terms to animal species, come much later than the things themselves' and because 'for literature, the categories we generally use just don't seem to work. There are always exceptions, hard cases or examples that don't fit'.

As it therefore seems that dystopia is less of a genre and more of a set of features or functions that sits across texts already functioning in a range of genres, I intend to use the seven principles outlined above as determining features of dystopian fiction in order to clarify my position.

Not all novels that have dystopian features are entirely fictitious; many have a link to events that are represented in the real world, which is partly why this research is of interest. Margaret Atwood famously declared that nothing in her 1987 novel *The Handmaid's Tale* was invented, but rather it had all happened at some point in some part of the world and Booker (1988, p324) suggests that such 'a strong satirical dimension [...] is designed to warn against the possible consequences of certain tendencies in the real world of the present'. Whilst satire may be present in works that can be considered to contain the principles I have outlined as underpinning the concept dystopia, the use of satire is not one of the principles. So, when considering satirical works such as Swift's 1726 novel *Gulliver's Travels,* which satirises government, humanity and corruption through the story of Gulliver's travels to distant lands, I incline to agree with Kumar (1987, p104) who proposes that such works were 'a distorted reflection of utopia' rather than specifically dystopian as the satire served the purpose of both criticising and suggesting better ways of being, although Kumar warns that the reader is not always sure of the true intent of the author. Certainly, there are works which have terrified readers but there are more which have created feelings of anxiety or unease rather than outright fear. It is also true that the reader is not always sure of the intent of the author: B.F. Skinner's (1948) novel *Walden II*, intended by the author to depict a utopian society created through behaviour modification, is often received by readers as

depicting a dystopian vision of coercive group control. This reflects Booker's idea of warning against possible consequences, and the explicit warning against the effects of the dystopian world is not itself a principle of dystopia as outlined in this research.

One of the principles is the power imbalance between main and 'other'. However, this principle has links with science fiction. Raymond Williams (2010, p93) was clear that the utopian, dystopian and science fiction genres all link through their focus on 'otherness' which forces the reader to separate their mind from reality. However Williams separated science fiction and dystopian fiction, considering dystopia as a 'socio-political subgenre' of science fiction that focused on 'radical imperfection' and science fiction as having the presence of science and technology. The idea of radical imperfection fits with the principle of a group working towards a common goal although the vision for the society is one with positive, rather than imperfect, intentions.

Whilst dystopian and science fiction clearly cross over, the separation of the two through the consideration of whether they contain science or technology is problematic. Claeys (2017, p5), proposes that 'the technological dystopia [is] where science and technology ultimately threaten to dominate or destroy humanity'. Here technology is being primarily used as a reference to machinery or equipment linked to scientific knowledge. However technology can also be considered in wider terms as organisational structures or mindsets. Using this addition to the definition, education can be considered as a technology, one funded by the state to deliver aims that are decided by the state. Claeys (2010, p108) argues that dystopian fiction portrays 'feasible negative visions of social and political development, cast principally in fictional form' and suggests that 'by 'feasible' we imply that no extraordinary or utterly unrealistic features dominate the narrative'. He therefore does not include H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1898) in the genre of dystopian fiction, arguing that the novel 'is not based on the extrapolation of some existing trend as such, and is thus not a dystopia' (ibid) because Martians belong to either the science fiction or fantasy genre. He argues that the boundaries that classify dystopian fiction as a genre shift and that 'a voyage in a balloon in 1863 is not science fiction; a journey to the moon is' (ibid). However, such definitions are not part of the seven principles underpinning a dystopia and therefore are not overly helpful here.

And why do we read dystopian fiction? If it is to shock ourselves, this is partly because reading can be a way 'to blur the distinction between self and 'other', to unravel the certainty of one's own convictions rather than sustaining them' (Felski, 2008, p110). For Felski (2008, p112), shock can either be because of an 'affront to our moral or aesthetic sensibilities' or as a 'notable absence of emotion'. This is certainly true for dystopian literature where the need to conform, typically achieved through coercion, the suffering of some and the dehumanisation of all leads to the inclusion of the grotesque, of torture but also of numbness and subservience created by endless, browbeating subordination. Shock, for Felski (ibid) occurs as a result of a surprise because 'while we can fear what we already know, shock presumes an encounter with the unexpected, an experience of being wrenched in an altered frame of mind'. Whilst many associate reading with pleasure, shock is the antithesis of this, or perhaps the true pleasure. Schools make a distinction between reading for pleasure and other forms of reading, although do not go so far as to name the other forms reading for displeasure or reading for neutral emotions. Reading texts for GCSE studies can be anything other than pleasurable and yet students are placed in a dystopian conundrum; they do not gain pleasure in order to gain a qualification. Instead, students are told the books they have studied are some of the greatest works of literature ever produced - the best that has been thought and said - and yet their perspective is often of tortuous reading and study and endless quotation memorisation in order for literature to be used in a way for which it was never intended; to meet narrow assessment objectives which do not include scope for students to have personal or creative interpretations.

And if a text is not considered the best that was thought and said, then it is often considered to be reading for a guilty pleasure, as if reading a particular author or genre is something less worthy or valuable than reading something that qualifies as commendable. Bayard (2007, pxiv) posits that 'reading remains the object of a kind of worship [...] particularly to a number of canonical texts [...] which it is practically forbidden not to have read if you want to be taken seriously': A Sky Arts poll (Jones, 2019) found that 31% of respondents admitted to lying about having read particular books (including *The Odyssey* and *To Kill A Mockingbird)* in order to appear more intelligent. And yet, as Bayard (2007, p6) makes clear, 'reading is first and foremost non-reading' because 'the act of picking up and opening a book masks the

countergesture that occurs at the same time: the involuntary act of *not* picking up and *not* opening all the other books in the universe'. This links to dystopian ideas and this research: using literature as research method ultimately involves discarding another potential choice of research method.

And if part of the pleasure of reading dystopian fiction is to be shocked, then that is a positive. Shock can 'wreak havoc on our usual ways of ordering and understanding the world' (Felski, 2008, p113). It can leave us struggling to put our sense of order back together and force us to question what we once held as known truths. And this does not end when the book is closed: the 'after-shocks can reverberate in the psyche for some time; the suddenness of the initial impact is succeeded by an extended, delayed, or belated array of psychic or somatic reaction' (ibid). This reaction is part of the reason for using dystopian fiction as the texts for research; my intention is to wreak havoc on my understanding of education and, in doing so, my aim is to develop that understanding. And perhaps that is what reading for pleasure really means.

2.26 - Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

When deciding on the texts to be included, I was drawn to the arguments of Felski, as she states that it is the reader who decides which texts matter. Felski (2015, p167) argues that literature can be 'a blank screen on which groups of readers project their preexisting ideas and beliefs' and, because of this, we cannot 'explain why any text should matter more than any other, why we can register the differences between individual texts so strongly, or how we can be aroused, disturbed, surprised, or brought to act in ways that we did not expect and may find it hard to explain' (ibid). Certainly there are texts which win the popular vote and top the bestseller lists and there are texts which are deemed worthy and awarded canonical status. However the vast majority of literary works are published and then drift away. Occasionally there are texts which were overlooked when first published and then become recognised as meritable at a later date. And whilst the reasons for these successes may include successes in marketing, there are also those texts which resonate with readers, whether at the time of publication, or later, or over a number of years, and therefore remain successful. Felski (2015, p171) proposes that readers' responses are 'never entirely predictable or knowable'.

All texts used in this research will meet the seven principles underlying the definition of dystopia outlined earlier. I intend to focus primarily on the texts which resonate with me in terms of consideration of education. Whilst I am reader and researcher I would like to believe that I have autonomy in my reading, and Felski (2015, p171) reminds me that I am 'not mere flotsam and jetsam tossed on the tides of social or linguistic forces that [I am] helpless to affect or encounter'.

I will refer to a number of works as part of the research, using the texts as 'points of orientation' (Felski, 2015, p172) to consider how reading the texts can affect our understanding of education. I will focus predominantly on texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and, in order to ensure a balance between breadth and depth, I will focus primarily on three texts: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. I have chosen the three texts carefully. Aldous Huxley's 1931 *Brave New World* depicts a dystopian London in 2540, a world where 'consumerism has replaced religion, science has eliminated illness and aging; the happiness of all is ensured by genetic engineering, brainwashing recreational sex and tranquilising drugs' (Huxley, 1976, p1). In Huxley's London, humans are bred into one of five castes named after Greek letters, from Alpha, who are intellectually superior and have the most power, through Beta, Delta and Gamma down to Epsilon, who do menial work. Clearly influenced by earlier works, and yet almost synonymous with the dystopian fiction genre is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948). Set in the year 1984 in London, Oceania, the novel's protagonist Winston Smith is confronted with the ever-watchful Big Brother and the ever-controlling Party. To demonstrate its educational impact, much of the language created in the novel has now entered the British lexicon, including thoughtcrime and Room 101. Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* was first published in 1985 and represents the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian state which has been established in the American state of Maine. Here, women are considered both lesser to men, with their freedoms restricted based on their rank, and superior, as declining birth rates makes the ability to conceive the highest value. The novel takes the form of a journal of a Handmaid, known as Offred, who narrates her experiences as Handmaid to a Commander and his Wife, and, through flashbacks, her experiences before the establishment of Gilead. Atwood wrote

a sequel, *The Testaments* in 2019 which explores the lives of three women and the eventual destruction of Gilead. Atwood has always maintained that *The Handmaid's Tale* is not science fiction, arguing 'the seeds of everything it contains lie in the reality around us' and that it 'is a slight twist on the society we have now' (Whisker, 2011, p88).

The three texts all meet the seven principles of dystopia outlined for the purpose of this research. However, as elaborated upon earlier in this chapter, I will be using literature as a research method and adopting Felski's approach of a hermeneutics of suspicion. For this reason, the three texts have also been chosen as they also all have central characters who are themselves suspicious readers of the world around them. The central function of their narratives all include a character reading society suspiciously. Furthermore, all three texts include an element of literary interpretation as part of their narrative. Orwell uses extracts from Emmanuel Goldstein's political theory 'The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism' which Winston Smith reads whilst with Julia. Huxley includes Mustapha Mond's prolonged self-defence of the regime and has extended references to Shakespeare, whilst *The Handmaid's Tale* is revealed to be a rewriting of Offred's original narrative by two men. Therefore my method - to read suspiciously - is adopted by the central characters in the three primary texts, and their suspicious reading of society allows me to link events in the novels with educational functions.

2.27 - How Can Reading Dystopian Fiction Affect Our Understanding Of Education?

My method for considering education will be based on Biesta's (2010, pp. 20-21) proposal of three functions of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Biesta proposed that considering education in light of these would allow for a discussion about what makes a good education, and particularly links to the idea of what education is for. Biesta (ibid) considers that the fundamental question: what is education for, is often overlooked in favour of more managerial questions about education and accountability or effectiveness. I am using these functions to ensure that the research centres around the idea of what education is for and how reading dystopian fiction might allow me to add to this debate. My intention with the research is to consider the why, rather than the how, in terms of educational practice and Biesta's functions provide a useful language with which to do this. Biesta (ibid) suggests that, when considering what education is for, these three domains

should be the focus, and therefore my three chapters will each focus on one of these domains. The first function is qualification, which focuses on the knowledge, skills and understanding young people need in order to prepare for the adult world. The second function, socialisation, refers to the ways we become part of the social, cultural and political orders, the ways children learn existing ways of being and doing. The third function is termed subjectification, and is the opposite of socialisation; the way individuals develop subjectivity, assert their independence and potentially reject the social, cultural and/or political order(s). Biesta argues that education must have a role to play in human freedom.

The three main chapters of the research will focus on each of these functions of education. Chapter 3 will consider what can be learnt about the qualification function of education by reading dystopian fiction, chapter 4 the socialisation function and chapter 5 the subjectification function. Chapter 6 will draw together the conclusions, and will consider how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of education.

Chapter 3 - How can reading dystopian fiction affect our understanding of the qualification function of education?

In this chapter, I shall consider how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of the qualification function of education and consider what it means to be qualified, differentiating between qualification, as Biesta considers the domain, in the sense of being qualified to 'do something' (Biesta, 2010, p21) and qualifications, which provide certification rather than determining if an individual has been enabled to fulfil their role. I will also consider who decides which roles individuals are being prepared to fulfil by exploring what we mean by knowledge and considering what knowledge is taught and why, and whether students should be given knowledge that relates to their experiences or takes them beyond their context, to expose students to other ways of thinking and doing. I will argue that qualification appears to have links with the concept of social justice, as the narrative surrounding this function of education promotes the importance of 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (ibid) in providing opportunities for students, but that reading dystopian fiction raises questions concerning how qualification is used by the powerful in 'state-funded education' (ibid) to ensure social control, with the intention for society to remain in its current state and the onus placed on the 'other' to become more like the powerful in order to have the opportunity, not the right or even the true possibility, of being qualified to join their ranks.

For Biesta (2010, p21) qualification is defined as 'providing them [students] with the knowledge, skills and understanding and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgement that allow them to "do something"'. Biesta defines the concept of students being able to 'do something' (ibid) as ranging from the specific, such as for a particular job role, to the more general, such as life skills. Biesta does not define who decides which 'knowledge, skills' (ibid) should be given to students, or what 'something[s]' they should be provided with the means to do. He acknowledges that qualification 'constitutes an important rationale for having state-funded education' partly because of the importance of young people having knowledge and skills because these will help the economy, but also because

education provides students with the required political and cultural learning to enable them to fulfil their roles as citizens and because education plays a part in 'the preparation of the workforce' (ibid). Biesta does not define who decides what area of the workforce students are being prepared for or how they will fulfil the citizenship element of their roles, nor does he define whether or not these roles are determined by circumstance, such as gender, or whether these roles are achieved as a result of the 'understanding' (ibid) this function of education provides.

3.1 - Qualification and Qualifications

It is important to separate the concept of qualification from the qualifications students in schools in England work to achieve. Qualification, as I interpret Biesta's function, relates to being qualified to 'do something' (Biesta, 2020, p21) through the knowledge and skills students are taught, which relate both to particular subjects and to social situations, for example the knowledge and skills to solve equations and the knowledge and skills to buy items in a food store.

Biesta (ibid) identifies that qualification is 'an important rationale for having state-funded education', recognising the importance of the qualification domain in terms of the impact on the state. It is vital for society that young people are prepared for the world of work and for their place in society. As discussed in section 2.24, dystopia involves humanity with a sense of people working together to achieve a collective, positive vision, but with a power imbalance between the main and the 'other'. Schools in England are similar here, with a sense of people working together to achieve a vision of students having knowledge, skills and understanding, but with a power imbalance between students and teachers, teachers and senior staff, and senior staff and government. Those with power, the main, provide education through the state but not wholly for benevolent reasons, rather to create the conditions for future generations in society. It is the powerful who decide what the state education will involve, including what knowledge and skills will be taught, and how students and schools will know whether they have been successful in terms of having the ability to 'do something' (ibid), which links the qualification function and the qualifications students attain. Both qualification and qualifications ensure individuals are qualified to fulfil their roles, but it is the powerful who decides what the role will be for the individuals in society. In

Gilead, the Handmaids are successful if they attain a pregnancy to ensure the procreation of their Commander. They are given the knowledge, skills and understanding to be qualified to do this through their learning at the Red Center, but their qualification is a successful birth.

Qualifications in England's schools are the end product of students being tested on the knowledge and skills they have understood through externally set and assessed examinations at key points of their educational journey. The qualifications with the highest stakes start at the end of Key Stage 2, typically the end of students' primary school education, when the student is 11, through nationally set and assessed tests in reading, maths, and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students are assessed again at the end of Key Stage 4, when the student is 16, through level 2 qualifications, typically GCSEs. The vast majority of students are tested again when they are 18, through level 3 qualifications at the end of Key Stage 5, typically A Levels. Tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were abolished in 2008 and assessments remain at the end of Key Stage 1 but are marked by teachers rather than being externally assessed. The national tests at the end of Key Stages 2, 4 and 5 are intended to measure the knowledge, skills and understanding of young people and therefore give the appearance of quality assuring how schools have fulfilled the qualification function of education. The results at these three points are published in league tables, ostensibly to provide information for school leaders and government officials but also for parents, to compare school performance. These qualifications are also used to set targets for the next qualifications, with Key Stage 2 scores used to set GCSE targets and GCSE average point scores used to set A-level targets. The progress students make are also part of the league tables, for example at the end of Key Stage 4, schools are compared using a Progress 8 score, which ranks schools in terms of the progress students made from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4: a score of 0 would place the school as broadly average.

3.2 - Qualification as high-stakes performativity

However, the publication of these results in the form of league tables has exacerbated an inherent high-stakes performativity culture. As Marshall (2017, p31) states, 'government involvement in the assessment of pupils meant that teachers could be held to account through examination results' and, since 1989, the league tables have allowed for the marketisation of schools where schools are measured on the performance of students in these particular qualifications. This has led to, as Ball (2003, p222) identifies, 'the kind of

teacher who simply produces performances - of her own and by her children [...] Teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice, account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but are required to produce measurable and 'improving' outputs and performances, what is important is *what works*' in order for students to attain the highest marks in the examinations that lead to their qualifications, regardless of whether or not they are qualified to 'do something' (Biesta, 2010, p21) as a result.

As Marshall (2017, pp. 27-8) identifies, 'assessing pupil performance used to be an educational issue, and now it is not. Politics [...] has become part of the assessment process'. When qualifications are high-stakes, teachers have to focus on making sure students pass the tests, rather than using assessment to check students' 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21). Knowing this, the content that is best placed politically is therefore the content of the assessments, for example grammar at Key Stage 2 and pre-twentieth century literature at GCSE, rather than the content of the National Curriculum, because not all schools have to follow the National Curriculum, but all schools have to ensure students attain qualifications. This ensures that all students are given the information required to fulfil their roles in society, as determined by the powerful. Anything not assessed as part of qualifications is not mandatory on a school's curriculum and therefore education is reduced to the content determined by the powerful. Students are denied access to other areas of 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (ibid) such as the ability to be creative or to learn how to form conversations with peers, because those areas are not part of the assessment process that is measured and therefore are not taught.

The performativity culture of the past forty years contrasts with the situation prior to the 1950s, when around three-quarters of children left England's schools at age 15 with no examination qualifications. Although, as Marshall (2017, p28) identifies, 'this in itself is a kind of political decision' as it ensured three-quarters of children had no expectation of rising to the ranks of the powerful. In Oceania, Winston Smith considers that the most qualified are those with the least knowledge, because 'the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity

of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening. By lack of understanding they remained sane' (Orwell, 1987, p186). Sane, and no threat to the powerful.

3.3 - Doublethink

Orwell created the concept of doublethink, which Winston Smith describes as 'to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them' (Orwell, 1987, p44). When the Prime Minister told the nation that schools were safe on Sunday 3rd January 2021 and then that all schools were going to be closed for at least six weeks on Monday 4th January 2021, the public had to choose to believe two things that are diametrically opposed at almost the same time. Before the rules for school accountability measures were changed in 2017, schools were able to improve their Progress 8 score, and therefore their accountability measures and reputation, even their Ofsted judgement, by navigating the system; schools were able to enter students for more than one examination board for each subject, with students taking the best result from, for example, both English GCSE and the international English GCSE or iGCSE (Phillips, 2016). Clearly the appearance would suggest that this was best for the students as they were able to attain their best possible English GCSE whilst the school could rise in the league tables. The appearance is of the school doing the right thing by the communities the schools serve. However, the reality was that students were sitting multiple examinations to attain one qualification. Multiply this by up to nine or ten GCSE qualifications and students were attending examination factories rather than schools.

Kulz reflects this in her 2017 work *Factories for Learning*, where she draws upon her time at an inner-city academy she calls Dreamfields. Here, students from disadvantaged backgrounds attain success, in terms of qualifications, because the school's ethos is to liberate through structure, a paradox reflected in the party slogans of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and Kulz notes that what the structure liberates the children to is never made clear or questioned. Kulz (2017, p20) describes how the Headteacher of Dreamfields believes that 'routines are not necessary when dealing with middle-class children because they come from disciplined homes', that lack of structure leads to unhappiness and that 'Dreamfields' disciplinarian structures [aid working class children] by instigating academic success that

creates happiness'. The appearance of success is also reflected in academic qualifications at Dreamfields. Kulz (2017, p53) describes how teachers at Dreamfields puts grades into the central system at regular intervals and if the grade shows the student is not achieving, the teachers must put appropriate steps in place 'to make sure that the students are achieving and it's a green light on the assessment system, so that shows the government and the school that they are progressing' (Kulz 2017, p54). Kulz notes that teachers will 'put a grade in that satisfies the system instead of it satisfying the student's knowledge and needs' (ibid), thereby giving those measuring the appearance of success for the students.

3.4 - Appearance of Being Qualified

Atwood (1996, p23) describes the activities of the Wives including knitting scarves for the medical professionals (or Angels) with Offred questioning whether these scarves are just 'unravelled and turned back into balls of yarn, to be knitted again in their turn'. This reflects the often seen busy work within schools where it would appear that students are engaged and working; the correspondence theory (Bowles and Gintis, 2002) suggests this is to teach students the values in schools that will enable employers to exploit them in the workplace. Furthermore, rather than questioning the knitting practice, Offred remarks on a sense of 'envy' (Atwood, 1996, p23) towards the Commander's Wife and her knitting, arguing that 'it's good to have small goals that can be easily attained' (ibid). Here the idea of achieving small goals resonates with the appearance of being educated and the reality of passing qualifications. Students may attain a qualification in a particular subject by learning how to pass the qualification rather than the qualification representing an assessment of the learning that has taken place. Students in their first year of secondary school are prepared for assessments that will take place five years later, prepared down to the detail of how long to spend on an exam question they will sit at a time that equates to half their current life away. This appearance of an education was particularly clear in the summer of 2020 when schools created centre assessment grades (CAGs) in lieu of students sitting external examinations such as GCSE and A Levels. Rather than accept the professional judgement of teachers, the awarding bodies and their regulator initially used an algorithm to judge grades, calculating a student's qualification by considering those of students in older years to calculate the school's likely performance (the algorithm was proven to disproportionately affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds and between A-level results day and GCSE

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results day in 2020 it was announced that students could take the higher of their CAG or the grade that had been adjusted by the algorithm). This highlighted the fallacy of examinations which give the appearance each year of a fair judgement of students' knowledge and skills but in reality means that around a third of students each year will always receive a grade below a 4 (or pass). Atwood's point that Offred envies the Wife for having a goal of completing the knitting cements the notion that the idea of equality, the appearance of fairness, is more important than any sense of reality of parity. Qualifications become more important than the concept of qualification (Biesta, 2010, p21). The league tables create an assumption that examinations are more than a crude method for measuring learning. Postman (1987, p118) suggests that the value of appearance stems from the mediatisation of our society, arguing that, on television, 'credibility replaces reality' and that leaders do not need to worry about reality but that 'their performances consistently generate a sense of verisimilitude'. He illustrates this by suggesting that Richard Nixon was dishonoured, not because he lied but because 'on television he looked like a liar' (ibid). This proposal suggests that appearance is more important than reality as individuals could look like liars but be telling the truth or look honest but be lying: neither possibility being positive. Atwood (1996, p93) describes Offred watching the television and the anchorman whose 'manner is kindly, fatherly' as he looks 'like everybody's ideal grandfather' with 'candid eyes, wise wrinkles' and a 'level smile'. Although Offred knows what he is saying is not true, that he has 'false teeth and a face job', she recognises that he is 'very convincing' and that this is partly because 'he tells us what we long to believe', just as league tables give the appearance of telling us what we long to be able to do, as in compare schools effectively.

3.5 - Value What You Measure

Whilst data allows for useful discussions around education and provides 'evidence' to support claims and opinions, the overwhelming quantity of data available can mean that only what is measurable becomes used in discussions about education and therefore becomes what is primarily valued: qualification and qualifications become synonymous. Furthermore, what is measured easily becomes considered more than what is challenging, or impossible, to measure, and therefore we tend to lend our attention to what we can measure, which is what can be assessed through external qualifications, without considering other areas, such as student dispositions, which are far harder to measure and therefore

dismissed, implying that they are less valuable than the measurable external qualifications. This leads to qualifications being valued above the concept of qualification. Offred may be qualified to procreate but unless she delivers a child for the Commander, she will not have fulfilled her role in Gilead. A student may be qualified in a subject, as in having the knowledge, skills and understanding of a topic, but must attain a pass grade in an externally-assessed examination in order to attain the accompanying qualification. In both cases, the failure to attain the qualification can equate to fulfilling the role for the individual, because society always needs failures: Gilead needs failed Handmaids to punish in order to ensure the other Handmaids behave appropriately, and England needs students who fail academic qualifications in order to ensure the qualifications are considered robust and valuable, and confer power on those who attain them, whilst those who do not are prepared for their lesser role in the workforce and society.

3.6 - Cheat the System

The appearance of academic success is further shown when Kulz (2017, p161) describes how students at Dreamfields who had attained five good GCSEs - a key measure for school accountability purposes - were not deemed capable of studying A Levels at the school. 'One teacher described how GCSE marks did not reflect the students' ability due to Dreamfields' extensive 'hot-housing' of students [...] although these students technically possess the right data, these data are subjectively interpreted and sometimes mistrusted' which means that 'results are not seen to measure what they are supposed to because of the immense amount of teacher labour that has gone into their production'. Kulz (2017, p162) notes the irony that students are supposed to be aspirational and achieve accordingly but instead are 'crushed beneath the pressure to guarantee predictable outcomes'. When we value what we measure and face such pressure, we start to consider how we can cheat the system.

Atwood (1996, p227) describes how Handmaids cheat the system by using 'a doctor' to impregnate them, rather than the Commander they are linked to. This links to students who consider cheating in non-examination assessment or even in formal examinations; in my current school every student walks through a metal detector, similar to an airport, before entering the examination hall, to make sure they do not have a mobile device on their person. When the results carry such high stakes, it is unsurprising that students consider

how to ensure they are successful in competition with their peers. Atwood demonstrates this; when Agnes wishes to avoid having to marry, she takes her friend's advice to trick the authorities and 'act crazy' (Atwood, 2019, p244) because they will not want anyone they believe to be crazy marrying as 'it will be their responsibility if you do anything violent'. Agnes then had to be interviewed with the Founding Aunts but was again coached by her friend 'on the best way to behave with each of them' (Atwood, 2019, p245), ensuring that with one she showed dedication but with another humiliation.

But it is not just the student or Handmaid who is tempted to cheat. The formal qualifications are so valued that it is those with an element of power, such as school leaders, who try to cheat, by manipulating the system through taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the Department for Education. Atwood (1996, p271) presents a similar strategy when the Commander's Wife encourages Offred to use Nick, the Commander's driver, to attempt to conceive. As the Commander's Wife walks Offred to Nick on the first such occasion, Offred describes the Wife as 'her left hand clamps the banister, in pain maybe but holding on, steadying her. I think: she's biting her lip, she's suffering. She wants it all right, that baby'. The appearance of success, the pregnancy and subsequent baby, is the goal, not the reality of ensuring the procreation of the Commander.

Similarly, schools focus on how to ensure high Progress 8 scores rather than ensuring students are appropriately qualified. When subjects such as the European Computer Driving License (ECDL), a simple computer qualification that students could gain in a matter of hours, counted for the same number of points for Progress 8 as a GCSE in a subject such as Art or Music, schools were able to play the system to appear to be successful by entering whole cohorts for such qualifications (Phillips, 2016). This appearance of progress is seen in Albert Camus' 1947 *The Plague*, which saw a resurgence in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the deaths mount up, Rieux explains that 'though the burials are much the same, we keep careful records of them. That, you will agree, is progress' (Camus, 2020, p187). Progress of qualifications, regardless of qualification.

3.7 - Measure What You Value

Atwood (1996, p124) describes what is valued in Gilead: Aunt Lydia explains that 'a thing is valued only if it is rare and hard to get' and refers to Handmaids as 'pearls' to reinforce this. Here there is resonance with the qualification function of education as what is valued is what can be measured. Qualifications in schools are created in a manner that means they are hard to get and therefore valued; the assigning of grades through the use of a bell curve ensures that roughly the same proportion of students attain each grade each year. In the summers of 2020 and 2021 these have been threatened, and in 2020 the Department for Education and Ofqual were eventually forced to allow students to take the higher of their centre assessed grade (CAG) or modified grade thus negating the bell curve as more students attained higher grades than in previous years. Whilst the idea of rarity linking to value seems rational, it also creates a situation where around a third of 16 year olds will fail to attain qualifications each summer, although they may potentially be qualified in that they have 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21). Atwood (1996, p222) depicts this when the Commander explains to Offred that the culture of Gilead, the systems implemented by the authorities, focuses on making things better. When Offred asks how such a system can be better the Commander replies 'better never means better for everyone [...] it always means worse, for some'. The use of norm referencing to allocate grades is worse for the so-called forgotten third and Atwood (ibid) makes us consider the ones for whom it is better as those top grades may be like pearls but, as Offred reflects, 'pearls are congealed oyster spit'.

Qualification and qualifications are like pearls and oyster spit: equated but not equal. Having a qualification does not necessarily mean one is qualified within society: in Cormac McCarthy's 2006 novel *The Road*, one is qualified based on whether you are a 'good guy' and how you avoid the bad guys. Similarly, Charlie in Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon* (2012, p63), who is made significantly more intelligent through artificial means, argues that 'all my intelligence doesn't help me solve a [moral] problem'. The Father, Charlie, Winston Smith, Offred: all these individuals have qualities that allow them to be qualified within their situations, but only under the control of those with more power. They all have 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21) which allows them to survive in their situation

but not to move beyond their situation. Biesta (ibid) considered the qualification function of education as starting with the idea of 'providing [students] with [...] knowledge' and it is important to consider this area. What knowledge is required in order to ensure an individual is qualified to fulfil their role in society, and who makes such decisions?

3.8 - Knowledge

The start of the twenty-first century has seen the promotion of knowledge as the ideological foundation for England's schools, and the emergence of so-called knowledge-rich curricula. This is often considered to be largely due to the work of the American professor E.D. Hirsch Jr but, as Cushing (2023, pp. 14-15) argues, the ideas Hirsch perpetuates were 'not invented by Hirsch [...] ideologies [...] in the knowledge-rich project are thus a simple recycling of colonial discourses in which the language practices of racialised communities are deemed to be impoverished'. Rather than being the founder of knowledge-rich ideologies, Hirsch, along with Michael Young, have become figureheads of the movement, just as Big Brother is the figurehead of the Party's ideologies. Hirsch introduced his theory of cultural literacy in the 1980s after his dismay at what he deemed to be the lack of historical knowledge displayed by his students. Hirsch (1987, p3) considered that 'literacy is more than a skill [because] to understand what somebody is saying, we must understand more than the surface meanings of words; we have to understand the context as well'. Hirsch (1987, pxvii) theorised that 'only by accumulating shared symbols, and the shared information that the symbols represent, can we learn to communicate effectively with one another' and therefore listed the shared information that he felt was vital to success in his 1987 text *Cultural Literacy*, literally listing the knowledge he considered all students should have. Hirsch defends himself against those who suggest that he is 'advocating a list of great books that every child in the land should be forced to read' (Hirsch, 1987, pxiv) by clarifying that the books included in his list do not need to be read, because they 'represent writings that culturally literate people have read about but haven't read' (ibid), suggesting that what is most important is knowing the right quantity about something. Cushing (2023, p7) argues that this list 'is symbolic of patriarchal, white supremacist, anti-Black and colonial logics in education policy' and interestingly it is Hirsch - a white man, and therefore powerful through circumstance - who is deciding the content and quantity of knowledge that is important. Hirsch maintained that cultural literacy was beneficial for all students, but particularly less advantaged students,

proposing that 'cultural literacy constitutes the only sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children, the only reliable way of combating the social determinism that now condemns them to remain in the same social and educational condition as their parents' (Hirsch, 1987, pxiii). Such a strong claim appears on the first page of his book, and Hirsch continues by arguing that schools '*can* break the cycle [of poverty and illiteracy] but only if they themselves break fundamentally with some of the theories and practices that education professors and school administrators have followed over the past fifty years' (ibid).

Rather than tackle 'social determinism' (ibid) by considering the roles of the powerful and the 'other' in society, the onus is on schools to 'break the cycle' (ibid) by teaching children prescribed knowledge. This thought has been powerful enough to lead to Hirsch's work becoming influential in educational policy in England. Nick Gibb was appointed Shadow Minister for Schools in 2005 and recalls in his 2015 essay, fascinatingly entitled *How E D Hirsch Came to Shape UK Government Policy*, how Gibb's personal assistant gave him Hirsch's 1999 book *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* upon Gibb's appointment. Gibb read the book on holiday and explains that 'no single writer has influenced my thinking on education more' (2015, p13). Gibb considers the National Curriculum of 2007 he inherited to be 'actively hostile to teaching prescribed knowledge' (2015, p17) but considers the 2013 National Curriculum he oversaw to be 'a programme of study in the spirit of Hirsch' (ibid) as it sets out the knowledge to be taught, for example that 'all pupils should learn three Shakespeare plays over the course of their secondary school education', in much the same way that Hirsch sets out the knowledge he considers 'every American needs to know' (Hirsch, 1987, front cover).

As Cushing (2023, p3) considers, 'the knowledge-rich project is an extension of the European colonial project [...] woven through schooling as a means to harbour white supremacy and anti-Blackness'. The powerful decide what the 'other' will learn, decisions made based on maintaining the power dynamic inherent in society, and do so 'under a guise of social and racial justice which requires marginalised children to display conformity with linguistic whiteness if they are to be perceived as knowledgeable' (ibid).

3.9 - Powerful Knowledge

Young (2020, p71) calls the knowledge possessed by the successful, 'powerful knowledge' and 'the best knowledge we have'. Young initially considered two types of knowledge: that of the powerful and powerful knowledge, promoting powerful knowledge as that which is important in its own right, as opposed to being important because it is the knowledge of the powerful. The distinction is important: powerful knowledge is considered by Young to relate to the knowledge and understanding that children would not come across in their daily lives but that which they are instructed in at school. Unlike Hirsch, he does not consider this to be a list of facts but rather the expertise to apply the knowledge, and it is the application that makes it powerful. Knowledge of the powerful is the knowledge those with power have which allows them to remain powerful. Educating children to apply the knowledge makes it powerful knowledge rather than remaining the knowledge of the powerful. In this way, children are given the opportunity, although not necessarily the possibility, to rise to join the ranks of the powerful, rather than remaining in the echelons of the 'other'. Whether or not they do so is not because of the powerful, who have provided these opportunities, but because of the student, and therefore qualification remains a means of social control. As Cushing (2023, p4) points out, this narrative is 'a powerful and enduring force which casts those who question it as deviant'.

Eaglestone (2021, p11) considers Young's idea of powerful knowledge to have been the 'touchstone' which 'successfully changed the focus of education away from the student or the skills they need to learn to the idea of knowledge' for 'politicians, Ofsted, academics and teachers'. It is certainly true that Ofsted's Chief Inspector of Schools, Amanda Spielman (2018) considers curriculum design as requiring schools 'to have a strong relationship with knowledge', and that 'a rich web of knowledge is what provides the capacity for pupils to learn even more and develop their understanding'. These statements are based on the principles of learning as building schemata, and supported by the Matthew effect: the idea that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, considered here in terms of knowledge rather than economics, although the two are entwined by the powerful in schools in England. The idea of using knowledge as a means of social justice is considered in more detail in section 3.16. However, as with Biesta's (2010, p21) consideration of qualification,

the content of the 'rich web of knowledge' (Spielman, 2018) is not clarified and can therefore be decided by the powerful. Whilst the narrative is of social justice and helping students to learn more, which would support effecting change in society, the focus on powerful knowledge in schools simply reinforces the current societal norms. Working on the premise that giving students who are part of the 'other' the knowledge that those with power have will give the 'other' the opportunity to rise up and join the ranks of the powerful rather than tackling the root causes of inequality, such as poverty. The qualification function of education becomes reduced to manipulating students into forms that serve the ruling powers, just as the Inner Party controls the knowledge in Oceania and the Directors control what the inhabitants of Huxley's London will 'do' (Biesta, 2010, p21). In Oceania, the Party is overt in its control of knowledge: 'Who controls the past [...] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (Orwell, 1987, p44). The rest of the population has no choice but to accept this. In England's schools, the ruling powers, starting with the government, control the present and therefore control the knowledge that is required to be taught in schools. Teachers, like Winston Smith, can choose to go against this but, as will be considered in section 3.16, the risks may be too great, and Biesta's (2010, p21) notion of qualification becomes reduced to a form of control. By using this narrative, those with power are able to claim they are supporting the 'other' because they are creating the educational landscape which allows change to be effected. Where those from the 'other' do not rise to the ranks of the powerful, it is not the fault of the powerful, who provided every opportunity (but little possibility) for them to do so. This way, the ruling powers are both serving their own interests and appearing to act benevolently to the 'other'. For both Hirsch and Young, the qualification function of education is primarily to provide students with the shared knowledge that allows society to continue in its present form, implying that education is not about progression but purely the entrenchment of the status quo, inherent within which is the divide between the main and the 'other', which Hirsch hints at when he recognises that this knowledge gives children only 'the possibility' of success (Hirsch, 2016, p2).

3.10 - What is knowledge?

Let us pause here and consider further the idea of knowledge: what does it mean to know or to have acquired knowledge? For Hirsch (1987, p147), it is knowing about, not necessarily

knowing truly. For example, he considers that it is reasonable that 'only a small proportion of literate people can name the Shakespeare plays in which Falstaff appears, yet they know who he is. They know what *Mein Kampf* is, but they haven't read it'. Aldridge (2018, p3) argues that knowing is also about not knowing or forgetting, and that 'we cannot separate the state of being a knower from the history whereby that knowing was achieved', proposing that we cannot know without going through the process of acquiring that knowledge. In Keyes' novel *Flowers for Algernon*, Charlie is told by Burt, who oversees his tests, that 'you're lopsided. You know things. You see things. But you haven't developed understanding' (Keyes, 2012, p107). This suggests that it is not enough simply to have the knowledge, it is the process of acquiring the knowledge and the resulting change in the brain and the individual that is key to ensuring an individual is qualified.

Ofsted (2019-1, p10) is clear that schools will be judged on how students are given 'the knowledge [...] they need to succeed in life', relating to Hirsch and Young's concepts of powerful knowledge. Ofsted's handbook (2019, p8) states that 'Learning can be defined as an alteration in long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned.' Ofsted state that learning 'can' (ibid) be defined that way and yet this has been transformed into 'must' because to go against Ofsted's definition may be too threatening for schools. The definition comes from Sweller's (2011) cognitive load theory, and the means of effecting the alteration in long-term memory, of making sure that students have retained the knowledge, is not made clear in the handbook. One approach used in schools is drilling, where students repeat, for example, verb endings in another language or times tables in maths until they have been learnt by rote. Huxley depicts an extreme form of altering long-term memory in *Brave New World,* as he describes the process of hypnopaedia, the use of repeated exposure to the same messages whilst children sleep in order to condition them to understand their place in society. The National Strategies, which began in 1998 with the National Literacy Strategy, took a form similar to hypnopaedic principles. The strategies involved resources for teaching literacy in primary schools and included guidance for teachers almost in the form of scripts to accompany the lesson. Their usage will be considered further in section 4.8. Altering long-term memory is certainly the endgame but the ability of students to apply and use the knowledge is not explicitly stated in

the Ofsted definition which is a stark contrast to Biesta's (2010, p21) concept of qualification as providing students with the knowledge to 'do something'.

In *Brave New World*, Huxley (1976, p19) exemplifies hypnopaedia's approach to altering long-term memory when he describes Tommy reciting that 'The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of all the rivers of the globe'. Such knowledge is impressive until the next morning when Tommy cannot answer 'which is the longest river in Africa?' unless prompted with the opening 'The Nile is the…'. Following this prompt, Tommy is able to repeat his factual statements about the Nile but is still unable to answer the question 'which is the longest river in Africa?'. His 'eyes are blank' and he 'burst into tears', howling 'I don't know' (ibid). Freire (2017, p44) recognises this process as teaching 'the sonority of words, not their transforming power' because a student 'records, memorizes and repeats' without really understanding what the words mean. The words have been learnt as defined by Ofsted, because Tommy's long-term memory has been altered, but it is difficult to argue that Tommy has understood this knowledge, as he is not even able to invert the terms he has learned, let alone use this learning to 'do something' (Biesta, 2010, p21) beyond recitation.

3.11 - Knowledge and Technology

Postman (1987, p81) argues that the development of technology, starting from the invention of the telegram and continuing through television, has changed what we mean by knowledge. He proposes that knowing changed from understanding 'implications, background, or connections' to simply knowing facts and that this has led to a situation where 'intelligence meant knowing *of* lots of things, not knowing *about* them' (ibid). Tommy knows how to recite facts about the Nile but does not know anything about it, in the sense of being able to answer questions related to the topic. He cannot even use the knowledge he has acquired apart from in the precise formulaic manner in which he has learnt the facts. Tommy could perform an internet search using the terms 'the Nile is the longest river in Africa' and find pages of results linked to these terms, suggesting that, because he has some knowledge, it can lead to further knowledge, but he has no understanding of the concept of rivers or their locations, he has merely memorised a sentence and is therefore not qualified through obtaining this knowledge.

Aldridge (2018, p1) argues that the idea of learning simply being a change in memory could lead to a dystopian future where 'knowledge could be inserted by a [...] technological process [...] implanting or more radically transforming the structure of the brain could save its subject the trouble of spending several years studying for a university degree'. Such conditioning is seen in dystopian fiction such as Vernor Vinge's (2016) *True Names* and Isaac Asimov's 1957 *Profession*, where 'one day you can't read and the next day you can' (Asimov, 1957, p5). If the qualification function of education is to allow students to acquire knowledge then this explains why many proponents of artificial intelligence are considering ways to do this using knowledge of technology and neuroscience. Ideas in literature become inspirational to such innovators as potential rather than fantastical. Fans of *True Names* include Marvin Minsky (founder of MIT's artificial intelligence lab), Danny Hillis (pioneer of parallel processing) and free software advocate Richard Stallman. In the foreword to *True Names*, Hari Kunzru reflects that, in the early 1990s, the story was 'passed around as a sort of Nostradmus, a tantalizing book of prophecy' (Kunzru, 2016, pix) and yet over the years its 'reality has moved closer' (ibid). Similarly, Elon Musk named his technology that could link the brain and computers neural lace after a concept developed by Iain M. Banks in his *Culture* series. This suggests that anything that ensures students have the knowledge ordained by the powerful to improve their qualifications could be considered appropriate under the ideology of implementing what is known to work.

In Huxley's London, hypnopaedia has moved on from Tommy's regurgitation of sentences, as it was recognised that 'you can't learn a science unless you know what it's all about' (Huxley, 1937, p24). Similarly, Aldridge (2018) argues that the insertion of a device into the brain to implant knowledge could then lead to transforming the actual structure of the brain, including ensuring that the knowledge inserted connects to the schema already held within the individual's brain about the given subject. The film *The Matrix* (1999) demonstrates exactly this type of knowledge insertion. Characters upload knowledge such as the procedural knowledge pertaining to martial arts, and become proficient within seconds. Aldridge (2018) differentiates between this interface model and a holistic restructuring model which is achieved by altering the shape of the brain in order to map states onto corresponding aspects of brain structure. This would allow the structure of the brain to

represent that of someone who has actually learnt the knowledge. And yet there is little thought as to whether such an approach is a positive idea. George Platen in Asimov's *Profession* is asked, before Reading Day when his brain is given the ability to read through a process of taping, why he would like to read. 'George stared, appalled. No one had ever asked him that. He had no answer' (Asimov, 1957, p9). And once the process was finished, he 'tried to remember how it was not being able to read and he couldn't. As far as his feeling about it was concerned, he had always been able to read' (Asimov, 1957, p10). In terms of the qualification function of education, these examples suggest that the individuals have been provided with knowledge or skills that have allowed them to 'do something' (Biesta, 2010, p21) and they fit the Ofsted (2019-1, p4) criteria of 'an alteration in long-term memory' but do not fit Young's (2020, p18) definition of knowledge as there has been no 'struggle' to obtain it. Qualifications have been achieved, but this does not reflect the qualification concept that Biesta (2010, p21) identifies. The definition of learning from Ofsted, which stems from cognitive load theory and cognitive science, has led to a logic that changing students' brains is the purpose of education, leaving individuals with knowledge, but unable to use it in ways beyond that in which it was delivered. This suggests that it is not just knowledge in the form of cultural literacy that enables individuals to be qualified to be successful within society, because having qualifications is different from the process of becoming qualified. In *Brave New World*, once it became evident that hypnopaedia did not successfully create true understanding, as Tommy showed earlier, it began to be used not to transfer knowledge but to create class consciousness, with messages such as 'I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid' repeated 'forty or fifty times before they wake [...] a hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson' (Huxley, 1976, p21). Biesta's (2010, p21) qualification function of education includes providing young people with 'the dispositions and forms of judgement that allow them to "do something"' and that includes having the knowledge and skills required for the cultural aspects of life. Biesta does not consider that having knowledge is the solution to society's culture of inequality. The hypnopaedia described by Huxley provides children with the knowledge to fit into the class into which they have been assigned. They have been prepared for their role through their creation in the Hatcheries and have been provided with the required information to be a Beta, including the disposition to accept their

status, through the hypnopaedic conditioning. They have not become a Beta but have been provided with the knowledge to accept that as their role in life. Knowledge does not provide a springboard, a possibility for changing structural inequality. This links to Biesta's (2010) socialisation function of education which will be discussed in Chapter 4, but again demeans the qualification function to mere provision of knowledge, rather than Young's (2020) consideration of grappling with what we are told in order to truly acquire the state of knowing.

3.12 - What Knowledge?

Knowledge, as Cushing (2023, p4) warns, 'is not a politically or racially neutral term, but imbued with colonial notions of what society needs to know'. In Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the job of the protagonist, Winston Smith, centres on the idea of controlling knowledge. Smith works in the Ministry of Truth, and his job is to rewrite newspaper articles and other documents to make sure that 'any item [...] which conflicted with the needs of the moment, [was n]ever allowed to remain on record' (Orwell, 1987, p42). In the year 1984, Oceania, the setting for the novel, is at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. For the purposes of all communication, this has always been the case although, 'as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia' (Orwell, 1987 pp. 36-37). Smith knows this, but he cannot admit this to anyone, even though the majority of the population will also know this. Instead, Smith considers this fact to be 'a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control' (ibid).

Knowledge is not fixed and our understanding of history is altered both through discoveries and by hearing different voices, as seen in the historical notes which end *The Handmaid's Tale* where the discovery of Offred's tale affected the Professors' knowledge of Gilead. Here, the Professors suggest that Offred was saved by Nick and reveal that Gilead is no longer. However, the message is that we should not judge the Commanders of Gilead too harshly, because they were echoing previous cultures and practices in order to salvage a challenging situation, and this hints that the post-Gilead world is not beyond the ideas that underpinned Gilead.

3.13 - Knowledge is Power

In Oceania, knowledge depends on what the Party wants the people to know in order to maintain their political power and therefore positions knowledge as inherently powerful. As Smith reflects, 'the frightening thing was that it might all be true' (Orwell, 1987 pp. 36-37). When the Party can decide what is and isn't true, can 'thrust its hand into the past and say of this or that event, *it never happened* - that, surely, was more terrifying than mere torture and death' (ibid).

The control of knowledge in Oceania can, worryingly, be compared with the curriculum content taught by schools in England. Whilst schools in England are guided to be politically impartial, which will be considered in section 5.16, Apple (1980, p61) reminds us that the perception that schools' 'teaching of cultural and economic values and dispositions that are supposedly 'shared by all'' is countered by the fact that 'schools were not necessarily built to enhance or preserve the cultural capital of classes or communities other than the most powerful segments of the population'. Whilst the Party uses the Ministry of Truth to control the knowledge of the inhabitants, Apple (1980, p66) recalls the use of the public school system in New York City in the 1850s as a method to draw together a disparate community to protect the 'life, values, norms, and economic advantages of the powerful'. Apple (1980, p63) reminds us that 'the knowledge that got into schools in the past and gets into schools now is not random. It is selected and organised around sets of principles and values that [...] represent particular views [...] of what 'good people act like''. Just as Oceania promotes the knowledge that serves the political interests of the Party, schools in England promote the knowledge that serves the political interests of the ruling political party. When Michael Gove, one of the key figures of the knowledge agenda, prescribed authors for the English curriculum, his argument was that the prescribed list would ensure students were exposed to 'our rich and varied literary heritage' (DfE, 2014), but Gove's 'rich and varied' (ibid) is neither: the quantity of selected writers is fewer than in previous iterations, and in the 30 texts or authors listed, only four are female and all but one of the 26 men are white. As with Hirsch and the Inner Party, the powerful are controlling the content of knowledge for all.

3.14 - 'Facts'

When considering this idea of the control of knowledge, it would be remiss not to mention Gradgrind from Dickens' *Hard Times*; first published in 1854 the school board Superintendent is synonymous with the teaching of knowledge in education and states (2009, p1) 'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts.' Concrete nouns that were considered important were given capital letters at the time Dickens was writing, and here Dickens suggests that Facts are all encompassing; Gradgrind adds 'nothing else will ever be of any service to them'. It is hard to argue against this idea: facts are, by definition, facts. It is important to consider what knowledge, skills and understanding should be taught beyond facts and to consider what 'Facts' (ibid) should be taught, and who decides what constitutes 'Facts'. Orwell (1987, pp. 47-50) describes Winston Smith rewriting 'Big Brother's Order for the Day in the *Times* of December 3rd 1983' which had originally focused on 'Comrade Withers, a prominent member of the Inner Party' (ibid) but who is now 'non-existent' (ibid). Smith rewrites the article, replacing Big Brother's praise for Withers with praise for 'Comrade Ogilvy. It was true that there was no such person as Comrade Ogilvy, but a few lines of print and a couple of faked photographs would soon bring him into existence' (ibid). Once the article is complete, including Ogilvy's life story and heroic death in battle, Smith reflects that 'Ogilvy, who had never existed in the present, now existed in the past, and when once the act of forgery was forgotten, he would exist just as authentically, and upon the same evidence, as Charlemagne or Julius Caesar' (ibid). In other words, he would be a Fact. In the future, children in Oceania could learn about Ogilvy in their history lessons, alongside others whose stories serve the purposes of the Party. It is simply not possible to teach students every piece of knowledge - real or otherwise - during their schooling, and therefore choices have to be made about what will, and will not, be taught. Students taught about Ogilvy and Caesar will learn the importance of their life choices and this will help them to prepare for their roles as citizens in society, ignorant of the Fact that one of these individuals never existed. The qualification function of education will have been achieved, as students will be provided with knowledge about Ogilvy's life and this will help prepare them for their role in society, as the insinuation is that Ogilvy's life is one the students should aspire to replicate.

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The current ideology in England's schools is epitomised in Michaela Community School in Brent, who have controlled their publicity to brand themselves as a very public example of a school focusing on traditional teaching and knowledge, leading to the school becoming symbolic of knowledge-rich institutions. The Headteacher, Katharine Birbalsingh, has also become synonymous with the idea of powerful knowledge and the school's ethos: Knowledge is Power, is reflective of the Party slogans in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, such as 'Ignorance is Strength' (Orwell, 1987, p29). Kirby (2016, p20), a teacher at Michaela, argued that all students deserve that 'which richer pupils take for granted', such as attending the theatre and learning about classical music because the best way to ensure social justice is to ensure all students have knowledge. Here, knowledge is considered to be a bank of information that students must learn in order to be successful, the knowledge itself is limited to what the powerful know, achieving social justice 'through practices which ask marginalised children to assimilate towards the cultural and linguistics behaviours of idealised, middle-class whiteness' (Cushing, 2023, p8). The 'other' must become like the 'powerful' and the role of the teacher is that identified by Freire (2017, p54) as 'deposit[ing]' the knowledge through a 'banking' (ibid) model. The qualification function is again presented as a reductive solution to the inequality in society: rather than addressing the root causes of poverty, children from poorer families are taught that 'which richer pupils take for granted' (Birbalsingh, 2016, p20) and this is considered to be the salve for societal inequalities.

Gibbons (2017, pp. 147-8) reflects on this assumption and considers that such ideas serve to reinforce 'existing structures and knowledge where power lies' and therefore does nothing to 'challenge the assumptions of whose knowledge is important' (ibid). Schools in England are providing students with 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21) but in a manner that preserves the disparity between the powerful main and the less-powerful 'other', by presenting the powerful as the ones who hold knowledge that the 'other' can only aspire towards, making Young's (2020, p71) consideration of powerful knowledge and knowledge of the powerful an untenable distinction. Apple (1980, p63-4) argues that schools who teach so-called powerful knowledge 'preserve and distribute what is perceived to be [...] the knowledge that 'we all must have' [and therefore] schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of specific groups'. As Apple (1980, p7) considers, schools 'ask

students to see knowledge as a social construction [but] do not enable them to inquire as to *why* a particular form of social collectivity exists, *how* it is maintained and *who* benefits from it'. To do so would lead to students questioning and developing subjective responses, as discussed in Chapter 5, and this would threaten the control of the powerful.

3.15 - 'Research' reviews

In April 2021, Ofsted began publishing research reviews into subjects, with the aim to 'collate currently available research evidence [and] consider what the evidence tells us about a high-quality education in each subject' (Ofsted, 2021). These reviews will feed into subject reports which will 'inform leaders, teachers and tutors, parents and policymakers about what we have learned about the state of the nation when it comes to the quality of school curriculum in a range of subjects' (ibid). When Ofsted inspect schools, their inspectors will 'draw on a shared understanding of a high-quality education' (ibid) which is based on the inspection framework criteria which is based on the research reviews which are based on selective research, including discredited research. Whilst the research reviews appear to be a useful tool for teachers and school leaders, they are research reviews in name only. Teachers and leaders will be fully aware that to go against what the evidence tells us in the review is to risk criticism from inspectors during an Ofsted inspection. As will be considered further in Chapter 4, the surveillance culture within schools and the risk of a negative Ofsted outcome being so high would mean few leaders would risk going against the findings of the review. Just as Winston Smith cannot admit that Oceania has ever been at war with Eastasia, teachers must not admit that they disagree with the content of the reviews. Furthermore, the content of the reviews, like Hirsch's cultural literacy list and Gove's prescribed authors, are a means to effect control of the 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21) taught within schools. Just as Hirsch and Gove - advocates of the knowledge-rich agenda - sought to take control of the content taught, the research reviews seek to take control of the pedagogy within classrooms.

3.16 - English research review

The state-control through qualification is exemplified in Ofsted's research review into English, published in May 2022. The powerful, seen here in the government, attempt to

control education by controlling the narrative of effective practice in teaching English. This control is created by controlling the language around educational research and academic knowledge but is purely about controlling the narrative, rather than engaging with educational research. The English and Media Centre responded to the publication by pointing out the lack of research available that focuses on English in schools, particularly in secondary schools. Because the stated aim of the review is to consider what the research evidence tells us about high-quality education, 'the review is unconvincing to say the least' (EMC, 2022) and 'the parameters are set narrowly along lines that are themselves flawed and partial [...] so its conclusions are unhelpfully skewed, distorting or entirely ignoring important issues in teaching the subject' (ibid). The review suggests that 'high-quality English may have the following features [...] teachers equip pupils with the right knowledge and vocabulary [...] ensuring that pupils can select and use appropriate grammar and register for audience and purpose, including Standard English where necessary' (Ofsted, 2022). The use of 'may' (ibid) is interesting: Winston Smith may point out that Oceania was recently at war with Eastasia, an English teacher may choose not to focus on Standard English but in both cases the potential risks are too great: 'everybody knows what is in [Ofsted's] Room 101' (Orwell, 1987, p309). The idea of there being the 'right knowledge and vocabulary' suggests that there must also be wrong knowledge and vocabulary and that this distinction is being made by Ofsted, who are more powerful than both the schools and the students. Furthermore, as the EMC (2022) response makes clear, the need to focus on vocabulary stems from a questionnaire where teachers were asked if vocabulary was an issue for their students, which is interesting but not 'research 'proving' anything about a vocabulary gap'' (EMC, 2022). As will be discussed in more detail in section 3.18, the idea of a vocabulary gap is largely based on flawed research. And, as the EMC response reminds us, 'Ofsted's hold over schools is so powerful that there's a real risk that many English teams will be compelled by management to act on many of the recommendations that the review contains' (ibid). The teacher is no longer empowered to choose the curriculum content or the pedagogical approach within the classroom, because both of these elements are under control of the powerful, under the watchful eye of Ofsted. Biesta (2015, p141) would argue that improving educational practice always involves considering purpose, suggesting that 'in education the question is never whether something is effective or not, but what something is supposed to be effective for' because what works in one institution does not necessarily

work elsewhere. The research review is portrayed as outlining what works but in reality is about control of education rather than considering what education is effective for. The Inner Party controls the narrative in Oceania supported by the Thought Police, just as the Department for Education is controlling the narrative in England's schools, supported by Ofsted. Just as Winston Smith can only privately and carefully go against the prevailing narrative, teachers and school leaders must publicly support and follow the guidance. In both cases, the risks are too great to do any different, even though Winston Smith, teachers and school leaders, may have serious concerns and questions about their roles in society.

3.17 - Freedom to...Freedom from

Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* takes place in a near-future part of the United States of America, called Gilead. The fundamental tenet of Gilead is that, under the old regime, women had the freedom to, as Biesta (2010, p21) would state 'do something', such as have a job or a bank account, but that they were also prone to threats. Under Gilead, women have freedom from such threats to their liberty as there are strict rules in place for all, regardless of their role in society, but now lack the opportunity to do things. As Atwood (1996, p18) makes clear, in Gilead the followers were 'in love with either/or'. And yet the dichotomy is clearly false. The two ideas are not mutually exclusive and replacing the issue of women being under threat with a dictatorial regime removing women's rights is not the answer for women; it is merely replacing one threat with a different threat, just as giving students powerful knowledge is not the answer for social justice, it is merely ensuring the continuation of social injustice. As Gandolfi and Mills (2022, p2) identify, 'teachers often primarily decide to join the profession to make a positive contribution to the lives of young people [but] for many, schools have very narrow purposes which do not go beyond [...] maximising their 'productivity' [...] exacerbated by [...] the prevalence of high-stakes examinations and concerns about ranking'. Teachers who are 'intent on establishing meaningful and ethical relationships with their students' (Gandolfi and Mills, 2022, p9), which would create the conditions for safe spaces for students and 'meaningful rewards to their own lives and work' (ibid) are 'at odds with the current trends in mainstream education in England [...] which have been consistently focusing on one-size-fits-all and behaviour-management strategies as flagships of 'good education'' (ibid). The 'one-size-fits-all' (ibid) approach of so-called powerful knowledge has been used by the

powerful to fit the narrative of the powerful maintaining the status quo whilst providing the appearance of supporting the most vulnerable. Ofsted (2019-1, p8) uses the language of social justice to reinforce the notion that the qualification function of education is related to providing students with the knowledge of the powerful, stating that 'it is the most disadvantaged children who are most likely [...] not to hear the rich vocabulary and encounter the concepts that this vocabulary communicates [...] they may not have access to the corpus of knowledge that should be the entitlement of every child'. This links to social justice in Ofsted's (2019-1, p8) consideration of the term because 'if we want to reduce economic and social inequality, a good place to start is the curriculum delivered in the classroom' (Ofsted, 2019-1, p7). Rather than actually dealing with the root causes of social inequality, such as poverty, the schools' inspectorate focus on providing students with the knowledge of the powerful. In Schulyer's 1931 satirical novel *Black No More*, scientist Dr Crookman, discovers a method to turn black people white. As Crookman explains, 'there were but three ways for the Negro to solve his problem in America [...] To either get out, get white or get along. Since he wouldn't and couldn't get out and was getting along only differently, it seemed to me that the only thing for him was to get white' (Schulyer, 2007, p15). Change the individual rather than the inequality within society, a logic which seems to underpin educational policy.

This is reflected in *The Handmaid's Tale* where Atwood (1996, p34) describes when Offred recalls the times before Gilead, when 'women were not protected'. She recalls the unwritten rules about self-preservation including not talking to strangers or not to 'go into a laundromat, by yourself, at night' (ibid). These rules that protected her are no longer required because of the Republic of Gilead and its strict rules that protect women, particularly women of child-bearing ability such as Offred. And yet, whilst these rules give freedom from, they also do not give freedom to do anything. Offred remembers the laundromats, how she put into them 'my own clothes, my own soap, my own money, money I had earned myself' (ibid). Atwood presents her reflections that women now 'walk along the same street' but that 'no man shouts obscenities at us' and yet before women had 'control' (ibid). Ofsted (2019-1, p8) considers that 'a good place to start' solving the issue of social inequality is by teaching students from less powerful families the knowledge those students from more powerful families have, framing the qualification function of education

as the root to social justice, highlighting that qualification is dichotomised between social justice and social control. The leaders of Gilead consider that the problem of men shouting obscenities at women can be solved by teaching women their fundamental roles in relation to men. Could women not be able to have both: to have freedom to have a job or a bank account, and freedom from threats and abuse from men? Could students not have 'access to the corpus of knowledge that should be the entitlement of every child' (Ofsted, 2019-1, p8) and have the root causes of poverty and social injustice dealt with?

3.18 - Knowledge…Skills - Breaking the False Dichotomy

Biesta (2010, p21) includes knowledge, skills and understanding in his consideration of the qualification function of education. However, Young (2020, p71) dichotomises knowledge and skills by describing them as what and how, arguing that 'it is only 'what' questions that take students beyond their experience and enable them to engage with and grasp alternatives'. This aligns with the knowledge agenda in England's schools promoted by Ofsted (2019) and exemplified in schools subscribing to the knowledge-rich ideological project. Whilst Biesta (2010, p21) includes skills, Young (2020, p71) proposes that these only pertain to 'functional literacy and numeracy' and considers knowledge as 'an entitlement' (ibid). Biesta does not separate the areas of knowledge and skills when considering the qualification function of education and Peal (2016, p8) argues that 'no one in education should be an absolutist [and] such dichotomies (skills/knowledge, child-centred/teacher-led) are perhaps better thought of as sitting at opposite ends of a spectrum'.

As with Gilead, by dichotomising knowledge and skills it reduces the options for other ways, where educators can consider sitting along the spectrum, rather than remaining rooted to one side. Peal (2014, p203) proposes that the focus should not be 'on knowledge over skills, nor [...] knowledge and skills, rather [...] knowledge then skills. The teaching of any topic is essentially a question of process, and knowledge must come before complex cognition'. That knowledge/skills is a false dichotomy is shown in Atwood's 2019 follow up to *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Testaments*, when Agnes joins Becka in Ardua Hall and begins her training to become an Aunt, which includes learning to read. Reading a map would be considered a skill and yet cannot be taught independently from the knowledge of maps and

pictures. Agnes is unaware that Gilead is not a global power and Becka explains that it is smaller than she thinks and offers to show it to her on a map.

> 'I must have looked confused because she smiled. "A map is like a picture.
>
> We learn to read maps here."
>
> "Read a picture?" I said. "How can you do that? Pictures aren't writing."
>
> (Atwood, 2019, p291).

In order to be able to read a map, Agnes requires the knowledge of places, distance and their recording on maps before learning the skill of reading a map, just as Tommy needs more than the ability to recite facts about the Nile.

In 2007, the National Curriculum included a focus on Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) which were to be taught through the curriculum, to ensure students learnt 'the qualities and skills needed for success in learning and life' and these skills aimed to make students 'independent enquirers, creative thinkers, reflective learners, team workers, self-managers, effective participants'. To be independent enquirers, students were to be taught how to 'plan and carry out research' and 'analyse and evaluate information'. These are clearly skills required in life but only when they are linked to an area in which the student has knowledge. It is all but impossible to analyse and evaluate information on a topic we do not have significant knowledge of; a football expert can analyse and evaluate data about football but not the weather, and a meteorologist the opposite. Knowledge and skills are both required to qualify an individual in a specific area.

Atwood's (2019, p291) presentation of Agnes' misunderstanding about how to read maps shows Agnes' clear knowledge gap which has occurred because of her upbringing. Interestingly, when considering social justice and powerful knowledge, Agnes was raised with all the advantages of the ruling class; her father was a Commander and her upbringing focused on preparation for being a Commander's Wife. And yet Atwood shows that she has less knowledge than the trainee aunts, who are far less socially advantaged. For educators, this calls into question Young's idea of powerful knowledge and Hirsch's claim that such knowledge is the knowledge of the powerful and raises the question: who decides what knowledge is powerful? In *Hard Times*, Gradgrind's obsession with Facts does not extend to the knowledge of horses shown by one of his students because that knowledge is not valued

by Gradgrind; it would not be found on Hirsch's list. Hirsch's language of gaps and the imposition of knowledge possessed by the successful is problematic. A gap in a wall can be filled, smoothed over and moved on from. A gap in knowledge cannot be considered in the same way. How does a teacher know what constitutes a gap, where the gaps are and how to 'fill' them? In *Flowers for Algernon*, the central character, Charlie, having been made artificially more intelligent, muses: 'Now I understand one of the important reasons for going to college and getting an education is to learn that the things you've believed in all your life aren't true, and that nothing is what it appears to be' (Keyes, 2012, p50). This erosion of the knowledge of those who are not part of the powerful will be considered in further detail in Chapter 4.

3.19 - The So-called Vocabulary Gap

Qualification is the way education functions to ensure students are given the 'knowledge, skills and understanding' (Biesta, 2010, p21) to fulfil their role in society, albeit with the caveat that society will not change and therefore it is for the 'other' to rise to the ranks of the powerful if they wish to achieve social justice. The so-called word or vocabulary gap stems from deficit discourses which consider that the inequalities in society are due to a so-called gap, with those in the 'other' being considered to have fewer, or lower-quality, language skills. Consequently, the 'other' are considered deficient compared with the language of the powerful. In England's schools, the concept of a vocabulary or word gap has spread from the research undertaken by Hart and Risley (1995) which led to the often-quoted statistic of a 30 million word gap. The research suggested that black children from poorer backgrounds heard a total of 30 million fewer words by the age of three than children from more affluent homes. However, the research focused on only 42 families and has been questioned in terms of the potential racist bias inherent within the study: the vast majority of the lower-income families were not white while the majority of the more professional families were white. Nonetheless, the research, with its headline-grabbing statistic of 30 million words, reinforced ideas of the curriculum as a means for social justice, leading to the proposition that all disadvantaged children 'arrive at secondary school with smaller vocabularies and less general knowledge than their wealthier peers' (Birbalsingh, 2020, p81) and therefore positions teachers as being required to fill the gaps. Not all women needed protecting in the world before Gilead, just as not all children from lower-income

homes have small vocabularies. Entrenched issues of poverty and marginalisation will not be solved through expanding vocabularies, just as entrenched issues of sexism and sexual assault will not be solved by indoctrinating society into enforced roles. As Schulyer (2007, p19) identifies, when questioned about the language used by black men, once they have become white men, 'there are no racial or color dialects; only sectional dialects' because 'you can't tell over the telephone whether you are talking to a white man'. And yet, as Rosa (2016, p4) identifies, 'we regularly encounter the view that if particular groups would just embrace standardised English, they would be provided ready made access to mainstream societal inclusion and upward socioeconomic mobility'. Just as the leaders of Gilead took a problem of male entitlement and considered the solution required female submission, Rosa (2016, p4) argues that promoting vocabulary as the solution for children from lower-income homes 'interprets structural inequality as a linguistic problem requiring linguistic solutions, rather than as a politico-economic problem requiring politico-economic solutions'.

However, the lure of provocative phrases such as freedom from or the 30 million word gap creates the space for a solution which ensures the powerful remain so; in Schulyer's novel it is to make money from the procedure that turns black men into white men, in Gilead, it allows women to have freedom from because they are protected from the men by the same men from whom they need protecting. In Hirschean terms, children who have gaps in their vocabulary need the gaps filled so that they can be improved, and they will be improved to be more like the powerful (typically white, professional adults) who will be doing the improving whilst remaining the powerful. Cushing (2023, p7) considers that 'these discourses of gaps, absences and missing parts are a central part of knowledge-rich ideologies, given that they begin with the premise that working class and racialised children lack adequate knowledge and require remedial interventions'. Atwood shows that reductive solutions, which ultimately are made by those with power to ensure the dominance of power for their kind, do not solve the problems they were intended to. Biesta's (2010, p21) qualification function is about providing students with knowledge that allows them to 'do something' yet the focus on the word gap only further reinforces the inequality between the main and the other. Rather than accepting students from lower-income backgrounds with the entirety of their experiences, the idea that there are vocabulary gaps that need filling

leads to assertions such as Young's (2020, p10), that 'the main purpose of schools [is] to enable all students to *acquire knowledge* that takes *them beyond their experience*'.

3.20 - Knowledge beyond Experience

Let us consider this idea of allowing students to have knowledge which takes them beyond their experience as it leads to the question of where they are being taken and why they need removing from their own experiences. Atwood (2019) shows this when Agnes begins to develop her reading. Although Agnes is a teenager, she is given books that are aimed at children. Already disadvantaged compared with the other Aunts in terms of her knowledge and reading ability, she is left with books that she has to decode herself, without the support from someone who has knowledge of how to instruct, guide and teach a teenager to read. The teaching of reading has been devolved to Agnes herself. In education, this dilemma is often seen with students with special educational needs who work closely with teaching assistants (TAs). The most vulnerable student has their education in the hands of the least qualified staff member in a classroom and therefore fulfils their role in society because they are not given access to the more powerful.

Furthermore, the content of the books, which contain pictures of a boy and a girl, do not represent anything of the way of life Agnes has known. She describes how the children and their baby sister 'lived in a house with nothing around it but a white wooden fence, so flimsy and low that anyone at all could climb over it' and that the three children 'played outside in full view of everyone' (Atwood, 2019, pp. 291-2). For Agnes, whose life has been surrounded by Angels and Guardians, it bears no resemblance to the life she knows; it is taking her beyond her experience. The attempt to alter the images have included applying paint to disguise 'that her skirt had once been above her knees and her sleeves had ended above her elbows' (ibid) but Agnes does not understand how the children can be exposed and nobody is protecting them from the risks of being 'abducted by terrorists [...] smuggled to Canada' or of 'Jane's bare knees [arousing] evil urges in any man passing by' (ibid). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argues in her 2019 TED talk that 'the single story' that is told about a group repeatedly becomes the truth and that these stories are not untrue, but are incomplete. Adichie is referring to the single stories told about particular nations and Cruddas (2021) links this argument to the way we discuss the impact of COVID-19 on students. Cruddas

takes Adhichie's point and emphasises that there has not been 'only one lived experience of Covid-19' and to reduce students to being 'a lost generation [with] the deficit narrative of catch-up means 'we risk flattening our children's experience'. Cruddas is not suggesting the stories of loss, sadness and anxiety are ignored but that they are told alongside the stories of kindness and resilience, that we do not 'define our children and young people' by focusing solely on the negative side. This has implications for Young's assertion: if we are giving students knowledge which takes them beyond their experience there is potential to flatten their experience, to only allow for a single story, such as the single story that Oceania has only ever been at war with Eurasia. Likewise, the single story that Agnes reads, of children who can play freely outside, is an incomplete story. It shows the freedom to, as in the freedom to play outside without protection, but not the freedom from, as in the so-called risks of the male gaze. Similarly, the ideology promoting knowledge in England's schools does not give teachers and school leaders freedom to make autonomous decisions about curriculum content and pedagogical approaches, but following the ideology does give the same teachers and school leaders freedom from the risks of a negative Ofsted inspection.

3.21 - Relatable v Powerful Knowledge

Limiting to a single story can allow children to learn what they recognise from their own experiences and therefore find relatable but can reduce or even remove knowledge which Hirsch and Young would consider powerful. The establishment of the tripartite school system after the Second World War was initially meant to separate students into three groups: the secondary technical to allow students to develop trade skills such as engineering (although these schools did not really take off in the manner in which they were intended); the grammar schools for the more academic students and the secondary modern school for the rest of the students. Proponents of grammar schools continue to maintain that the system allows for the promotion of disadvantaged students who are academically able but come from more deprived backgrounds. However there has been much research, including by UCL (Dickson, 2020) showing that the majority of students who attend grammar schools are not from disadvantaged backgrounds and the system is open to corruption, with children having extensive tutoring in order to pass the 11 plus entrance examination. In 2019, only 3% of grammar school students were entitled to free school meals compared to 15% of students in non-selective schools.

Rather than increasing positive outcomes for disadvantaged students, in the areas where the two-tier system remains, grammar schools cream the more academic students off the top and leave the less academically able to attend comprehensive schools. Furthermore, in areas where out of borough policies for selection are adopted, grammar school places within a local education authority can be given to students from out of borough, further reducing the opportunities for disadvantaged students. Whilst the diet at grammar schools may include more traditional subjects, the curriculum at comprehensive schools therefore has to cater for its intake and is likely to include a mixture of traditional and vocational subjects with some subjects or opportunities unavailable. Atwood (2019, p15) makes this link when Agnes describes how her father did important work in his office 'too important for females to meddle with'. Aunt Vidala compares girls in Gilead learning 'large thoughts' to 'trying to teach a cat to crochet' (ibid). Agnes questions this in the narrative, saying that 'cats did not want to crochet. And we were not cats' (ibid). Birbalsingh (2016, p125) asserts that at Michaela, every child is treated 'as if they are aiming for Oxbridge, regardless of starting point' without questioning whether students wish to attend Oxbridge. Whilst Birbalsingh studied there herself, it may be just as good for some of her students to attend Oxbridge as for cats to crochet. In Gilead, rather than aspiration, the reality is to know your place: 'Forbidden things are open to the imagination. That was why Eve ate the Apple of Knowledge, said Aunt Vidala: too much imagination. So it was better not to know some things. Otherwise your petals would get scattered' (Atwood, 2019, p15). This is reinforced later in the novel when Aunt Lise informs Agnes that 'all were equal in the sight of God, but some had gifts that were different from the gifts of others [and] if the various gifts were confused and everyone tried to be everything only chaos and harm could result' (Atwood, 2019, p164). Education is not considered to be a tool for social justice but a way of ensuring everyone knows what they need for their place in society, with Aunt Lise teaching Agnes and her peers 'manners and customs' because that was how society would continue to function. Atwood (ibid) makes the point distinct by having Aunt Lise explain that 'no one should expect a cow to be a bird!' and this is reminiscent of Huxley's London, where no one would expect to be anything beyond the caste they are bred into. Apple (1980, p43) considers this to be schools contributing 'to inequality in that they are tacitly organized to differentially

distribute specific kinds of knowledge [...] the sorting or selecting function of schools in allocating people to the positions 'required' by the economic sector of society'.

In *Walden Two*, Skinner (1976, pp. 109-110) proposes that formal schooling is flawed because it requires standardisation, which allows students to move from one school to another, and grades, meaning that all children of the same age are taught together. In the supposedly ideal community of Walden Two, there is no need for such restrictions, which Frazier considers do 'violence to the nature of the developmental process'. Instead, students are given the freedom or independence to focus on whichever area is of interest to them, and 'no time is wasted in forcing him to participate in, or be bored by, activities he has outgrown'. Such a model presupposes that children have innate interests or gifts that will naturally be discovered, rather than an ability to learn and improve through instruction and practice. Peal (2014, p5) proposes that these 'ideals of progressive education' which supposedly lead to 'freeing pupils from the overbearing authority of teachers, allowing them to follow their own interests, and making learning fun as opposed to coercive' have 'had a devastating effect on pupils' education'. Peal (2014, p5) cites four themes of such education, the most important being that 'education should be child-centred' as opposed to 'a more traditional vision of 'teacher-led' or 'whole-class' teaching', meaning that 'learning is superior when pupils find things out for themselves' as is the case in Walden Two, which promotes what Peal considers to be 'the analogy of a child with a growing plant [...] suggesting that no external input is needed to nurture a child's education, but simply the provision of the right environment in which they can flower'.

Half a century ago, there was a sense that more vulnerable children may be better given material they were able to engage with in order to secure their interest and enthusiasm. The Newsom Report (1963) suggests that, rather than ensure a challenging curriculum for all, those students deemed 'less able' would then be able to 'develop what strengths they have [so that] they will then enjoy what they are doing' because such students 'are good at so few school things'. Atwood (2019, p11) shows this when the girls from wealthy families learn 'petit-point embroidery or crochet work' and the poorer girls learn 'just plain sewing and the making of paper flowers and other such chores' (ibid). Apple (1980, p62) reminds us that 'schools and the curriculum within them evolved in such a way that the interests of [some]

were [...] subsumed under the interests of more powerful people [because] existing social and economic arrangements *require* that some people are relatively poorer and unskilled and others are not'. And the powerful people are the ones 'providing [students] with the knowledge' (Biesta, 2010, p21) for their place in society in order to ensure the continuation of 'existing social and economic arrangements' (Apple, 1980, p62). The outcomes for the children from the Econofamilies are already set and are clearly lower than the future of the children from special families. 'They were not pre-chosen to be married to the very best men - to the Sons of Jacob and the other Commanders or their sons' (Atwood, 2019, p11). Here the only hope they had was again due to their birthright - the girls' only hope of success was if 'they were pretty enough' (ibid). Should a group of students be good at so few things related to school, it would suggest that there was an issue with the school, rather than the students. Young (2020, p39) argues that such ideas led to 'well-intentioned attempts' to create programmes aimed at the interests of such children, which were often less academic for those not expected to stay on at school after the age of 16, and were determined by the powerful, choosing the so-called interests of 'other' children, to allow them to fulfil their roles in society, as determined by the powerful. Such students were steered towards more vocational courses but Young (ibid) asks 'was this social justice?' and links to his argument that the purpose of schools is to ensure students have the knowledge to take them beyond their typical experience. That may be, but whilst the powerful rule, there will always be those whose outcomes are lower than the children of the powerful.

3.22 - Concluding Thoughts

Biesta's (2010, p21) first function of education is about providing students with 'knowledge, skills and understanding' to 'do something' and therefore fulfil their role in society. Reading dystopian fiction raises important questions related to this function of education, particularly the consideration of who decides what knowledge and skills are to be taught, and what students should be able to do. Furthermore, it is not in the interests of the powerful for all children to be able to know and do the same things. This leads to a consideration of the qualification function moving from being the creator of social justice to the continuation of social control, with the powerful ensuring the status quo is maintained, and the 'other' having to either become like the powerful or be resigned to 'getting along only differently' (Schulyer, 2007, p15).

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The idea of knowledge is complex: what does it mean to know? In education, knowing largely relates to reproducing information in an examination, turning qualification as a function into simply the act of attaining qualifications. Changing long-term memory has resonances with artificial intelligence and yet in education it would appear the change needs only be as long term as the time until the examination. What is clear is that those with power are the ones who decide what knowledge and skills are to be understood, and those same people with power decide to what extent students have understood that knowledge and skills, which creates a high-stakes assessment system for students and schools. And those with power are not doing this benevolently, but with the interests of society and their powerful role within it. As can be seen in Gilead, dichotomies, such as freedom to…freedom from or knowledge…skills, create more complexity. Qualification is the first function of education for Biesta, and arguably the most important, but when the elements within are dichotomised it creates the opportunity for those with power to manipulate the knowledge and skills that students are being taught. And just as the leaders of Gilead claim that all of the decisions are done to protect women, and the rulers of Huxley's London premise all of their decisions on the logic that the inhabitants are happy, the powerful who decide the content of the qualification function in England's schools do so on the premise that their decisions are the stepping stone for social justice. It is the powerful who decide what is the basis for good knowledge, a good curriculum, a good pedagogical approach, and everyone must follow their decisions or risk negative judgements by the inspectorate. Whilst the decisions of the powerful typically raise legitimate questions, because they are often based on arbitrary decisions or situations (for example, the ever-changing war between Oceania and Eastasia/Eurasia, or Gibb's holiday reading of Hirsch directly leading to government policy), they are implemented through fear such as the threat of the Thought Police and Ofsted. Individuals are condemned and, like the proles of Oceania, overlooked because they are not 'conscious of their own strength' (Orwell, 1987, p85) because they are fulfilling the roles they are qualified to fulfil, roles determined by the powerful.

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Chapter 4 - How can reading dystopian fiction affect our understanding of the socialisation function of education?

After qualification, for Biesta (2010, p22), the second function of education is socialisation, which he defines as the ways students 'become part of existing traditions, cultures and ways of being and doing'. Biesta suggests that education 'reproduces particular societal and cultural configurations and identities' and links this to 'the deliberate attempt to make students competent members of particular communities'. Whilst this suggests a sense of optimism, in that education can ensure young people grow up as members of a cohesive society and therefore engendering a feeling of belonging, the socialisation function of education includes the idea of socialising into 'particular communities', which raises the question of who decides on the particular communities that students are socialised into, and that there are as many negative possibilities as there are positive options attached to this idea.

In this chapter I will consider how reading dystopian literature can affect our understanding of this function of education, focusing particularly on body policing and surveillance, both of which are used to ensure members of the community, both in terms of fictional dystopian and school communities, are socialised to behave in the manner that best suits that specific community.

4.1 - Body Policing - Physical Appearances

One method of socialising individuals is to monitor and standardise their physical appearance; to create uniformity in all senses. Atwood (1996, p18) describes the clothes the Handmaids have to wear when Offred dresses and notes that 'everything except the wings around my face is red: the colour of blood, which defines us'. Handmaids are created to ensure the procreation of the powerful; they must ensure the continuation of the bloodline of the Commander they are linked to, and blood also signifies the Handmaid's failure to conceive: the Commanders are not part of this failure and typically wear dark suits. Red has connotations of love or lust but the irony here is that these emotions are forbidden for

Handmaids. The wings they wear are white, signifying the suggestion of angelic hope and purity and linking their uniform and their role in society. The wearing of uniform also subjugates the Handmaids. They are not people, they are a group controlled by the ruling powers to the extent that even what they wear is not up for discussion. When the Commander takes Offred to Jezebels, she describes the women as looking like 'oversized children, dressed up in togs they've rummaged from trunks' (Atwood, 1996, p247) and Offred cannot tell if they are happy. Interestingly, whilst the women at Jezebels are not wearing a uniform in the same way that the Handmaids do, they do wear a uniform of sorts: lingerie or clothing designed to show more skin than the Handmaids or the Wives; the Wives cover up in the blue dress reminiscent of depictions of the Virgin Mary, the ultimate of mothers. Whilst at Jezebels there is no imposition of uniform, there remains a requirement to wear clothes that will attract the eye and interest of the attending men and all parties are aware of this. Regardless of status, clothing is used to signify the identity of the wearer, to remove any sense of the individual, and to control the women in terms of the behaviour of men. Atwood describes seeing tourists on the street whose skirts reach just below the knee [...] their heads are uncovered and their hair too is exposed in all its darkness and sexuality' (Atwood, 1996, p38) and then recalls 'I used to dress like that. That was freedom', proposing that the opposite of uniformity is freedom.

Most schools in England have a uniform and there are frequent reports in the media about schools sanctioning students for minor uniform infringements such as having the wrong haircut or shoes. In September 2020, Broadlands Academy in Somerset featured in the Metro having allegedly sent up to 70 children home for wearing the wrong uniform. One parent commented 'I'm more concerned about my child's education than their footwear' (Elvin, 2020) and it is hard to argue that a child's shoes can affect their ability to learn. Similarly, a Handmaid could conceive a child, walk to market and take part in ceremonies, regardless of the clothing they wear. Such stories regularly feature in the media and are part of the wider ideology: uniforms are about the socialisation function of education, not about the student's ability to learn knowledge in the sense of the qualification function but to understand that they must submit to those with more power. Uniforms in Gilead and in English schools are used to create a sense of equality, with both negative and positive possibilities. The tourists would not have seen Offred but have seen her as a representative

Ruth Hill
1702561

of Handmaids, in the same way that a person seeing a student in school uniform would not see that individual but see a representative of their school. Marshall et al (2018, p97) posit that 'it is difficult to disassociate uniform wearing from a wider sense of control, direction and conformity'. Regardless of the student's family background, all students wear the same uniform. Gilead, Huxley's London, Orwell's Oceania, and schools, are hierarchical institutions and the powerful must use methods to ensure their continued dominance over the other is apparent to all. Postman (1987, p118) highlights the importance of controlling appearance when he considers that Richard Nixon was not dishonoured because he lied but because 'on television he looked like a liar'. For Postman (1987, p118), this shows the true importance of appearance: 'one may look like a liar but be telling the truth; or even worse, look like a truth-teller but in fact be lying'. The wearing of a uniform imposed by the powerful is a part of the role of ensuring that those within the community, and those beyond it, are clear about who is in control.

4.2 - Body Policing - Punishment

Similarly, there are punishments that are used as a method of correcting the behaviour of an individual, and punishments that are used to assert the power and hierarchy of the powerful over the 'other'. Atwood (2019, p290) distinguishes between these; when Agnes learns that 'the R cellar was where Aunt Vidala did the Corrections' she reminds Becka that 'punishments are done in public [...] hanging people and displaying them on the Wall' but Becka replies that 'the Corrections in the cellar are different, they're for your own good'. The suggestion is that public punishments such as the imposition and control of a uniform, are done for a reason other than the good of the individual. Foucault (2019, p49) describes this concept when he considers the public demonstrations of punishment and public executions in the eighteenth century and earlier as 'a policy of terror: to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign. The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power'. Atwood (1996, p289) describes the public punishments in Gilead which are called salvaging. What is being salvaged is not the individual being punished but the society itself, which can only exist if all involved know the potential consequences of any action against it. Atwood describes one such incident and how, once the salvation is complete, and two Handmaids and one Wife have been hanged, Aunt Lydia prepares the Handmaids for a Particicution: participation in an execution. Before

the details have even been given, there is excitement: Offred describes how 'a ripple runs over us, a stir [...] there's an energy building here, a murmur, a tremor of readiness and anger' (Atwood, 1996, pp. 289-290). Aunt Lydia shows the Handmaids a man in a Guardian uniform and explains that he was convicted of rape, and the Handmaids have the time between two blows of the whistle from Aunt Lydia to punish him; Aunt Lydia's only rule is 'what you do is up to you' (ibid). Before blowing the whistle, Aunt Lydia explains that he not only raped but raped 'two of you [...] at gunpoint. It was also brutal. I will not offend your ears with any details, except to say that one woman was pregnant and the baby died' (ibid). For the Handmaids, including Offred:

> It is too much, this violation. The baby too, after what we go through. It's true, there is a bloodlust, I want to tear, gouge, rend.
>
> We jostle forward, our heads turn from side to side, our nostrils flare, sniffing death, we look at one another, seeing the hatred. Shooting was too good.
>
> [...]
>
> There's a surge forward, like a crowd at a rock concert in the former time, when the doors opened, that urgency coming like a wave through us. The air is bright with adrenalin, we are permitted anything and this is freedom, in my body also, I'm reeling, red spreads everywhere, but before that tide of cloth and bodies hit him Ofglen is shoving through the women in front of us, propelling herself with her elbows, left, right and running towards him. She pushes him down, side-ways, then kicks his head viciously, one, two, three times, sharp painful jabs with the foot, well-aimed. Now there are sounds, gasps, a low noise like growling, yells, and the red bodies tumble forward and I can no longer see, he's obscured by arms, fists, feet. A high scream comes from somewhere, like a horse in terror. [...] He has become an *it* (Atwood, 1996, pp. 290-292).

The wearing of the uniforms allows the Handmaids to depersonalise themselves. All of their suffering is symbolised as being for nothing; there is no 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34) if men are still able to rape Handmaids. And as their sole purpose is to conceive, for the man to lead to the death of the unborn child is seen as the ultimate violation. By allowing for

public punishment, the sense of power is maintained. The individual suffers a gruesome punishment and death, and other potential criminals are reminded of the possible consequences. The ones committing the punishment are similarly reminded of the consequences of rebellion, particularly important as the Handmaids are the only hope of procreation of the powerful within Gilead. It also allows the Handmaids an outlet for the anger and frustration they feel for the regime: Atwood (ibid) describes how the Handmaids become animal-like, with their 'bloodlust' and need 'to tear, gouge, rend' and how their 'nostrils flare, sniffing death' as they prepare to attack, how during the attack 'there are sounds, gasps, a low noise like growling' and after the attack Offred feels 'hungry. This is monstrous, but nevertheless it's true. Death makes me hungry. Maybe it's because I've been emptied, or maybe it's the body's way of seeing to it that I remain alive' (Atwood, 1996, p293). The Handmaids are able to express their anger towards the men who created a society that they needed freedom from, the oppressors who maintain their way of life, and perhaps even their inability to succeed in their way of life because they have not conceived. Without the ability to release these feelings in a public Particicution, Handmaids would be more likely to seethe in private and create rebellion. The criminal/victim of the Particicution is later revealed to be 'political. He was one of ours' (Atwood, 1996, p292) by Ofglen when she explains to Offred why she knocked him out before the rest of the Handmaids got close enough to truly hurt him. The Particicution therefore serves another purpose: to remind any who oppose the regime that their punishment will be carried out by the very people they are trying to help. The rebel was wearing the clothing of a Guardian which allowed the Handmaids to focus all of their anger towards their lives onto one man. 'One of ours, [Offred] think[s]. A Guardian. It seems impossible' (ibid). If the opposite of uniform is freedom, then uniform ensures power is activated and maintained.

4.3 - Body Policing as Normality

And once control over appearance is in place, however absurd it may seem (Handmaid wings, eleven year olds wearing ties) it becomes the norm. When Offred sees tourists walking in Gilead, (Atwood, 1996, p38), her immediate thought is that they 'seem undressed' and she realises that 'it has taken so little time to change our minds' and shows how quickly what once might seem unthinkable can become routine. Similarly, students wearing school uniform are almost immediately socialised into the environment of the

school and the understanding of its hierarchical nature. In *Brave New World*, Huxley (1932, p112) shows how Linda's first reaction upon seeing Lenina after Linda's time in the reservation is to comment on the 'real acetate silk [...] adorable viscose velveteen shorts [...] green morocco' of Lenina's Beta uniform, as symbolic of the sense of control she felt before life with the supposed savages. Interestingly, during the summer of 2020 when there was discussion about whether it should be mandatory for secondary aged students to wear masks to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, Headteacher Katharine Birbalsingh argued repeatedly on social media that it was impossible to expect teenagers to cope with wearing masks and suggested that it would lead to poor behaviour. And yet in March 2021 when it was mandatory to wear face masks in classrooms, students followed the rules, in the same way they follow all uniform rules. Once the 'other' has accepted the existence of a uniform, the content of the uniform (wings, ties, masks) is largely irrelevant. Huxley (1976, pp. 23-24) shows how this can be taken to the extreme: in Oceania part of the uniform is to be naked. The Director is charmed by two children aged seven or eight 'playing, very gravely and with all the focussed attention of scientists intent on a labour of discovery, a rudimentary sexual game' and concerned by a small boy who 'seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play'.

4.4 - Body Policing - Cloning

Essed and Goldberg (2010) argue that, whilst cloning is fictitious, the attempts to create sameness in appearance through school uniform is an example of creating a 'systematic reproduction of sameness' or cultural clones, which allows for social injustice and inequality. Cloning is possible in Huxley's world, where 'Bokanovsky's Process' (Huxley, 1932, pp. 3-4) involves taking one egg and creating 'ninety-six human beings where only one grew before. Progress.' Such cloning creates 'social stability' (ibid) because it creates 'standard men and women; in uniform batches' and the Director argues that means 'you really know where you are' because there is 'stability'. In fact, the ultimate aim for the rulers of Huxley's London would be for indefinite splitting of eggs, allowing 'the principle of mass production [to be] at least applied to biology' (ibid). Much the same way, English schools are socialising students into stability by creating identikit children, or 'millions of identical twins' (ibid). Cloning through uniform appearance exacerbates societal differences on grounds of both gender and class. Women in Gilead must cover up in order to have freedom to live without fear of

the male gaze, thus promoting the gender inequality at the heart of Gilead. Atwood (2019, p9) reminds us of this when Agnes recalls the uniform at her school which includes 'arms covered, hair covered, skirts down to the knee' and cites the reason for the uniform being that way 'because the urges of men were terrible things and those urges needed to be curbed'. For Agnes, it was clear that 'we were snares and enticements despite ourselves, we were the innocent and blameless cause that through our very nature could make men drunk with lust' (Atwood, 2019, p10). In Gilead, the 'ravenous men who might lurk around any corner' (ibid) were not to blame, the solution was for the girls 'to be kept safely inside glass houses', rather than the men to be educated and disciplined. This raises the question about the 'particular communities' (Biesta, 2010, p22) children are being socialised into. Women in Gilead are supposedly free from the male gaze but only by not being free to take part in particular activities. Agnes describes how girls were not allowed to go on a swing in the park 'because of our skirts, which might be blown up by the wind and then looked into' (Atwood, 2019, p16). This meant that only boys were allowed to use the swings and Agnes laments that 'it remains one of my wishes' to go on a swing. The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer in 2021 led to the Metropolitan police offering advice to women approached by a plain-clothes police officer including to dial 999 or flag down a passing bus to escape the scene, and received criticism for asking women to change their behaviour rather than dealing with the behaviour of serving police officers. The 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34) is only because of the self-protecting behaviour exhibited by women, not because of any change in the behaviour of men.

4.5 - Body Policing to Maintain Inequality

Class inequality is also maintained by controlling physical appearances. In Gilead, the uniform rules, with the different colour dresses, are not for the poorer children. The 'ordinary girls from Econofamilies' (Atwood, 2019, p11) wore 'ugly multicoloured stripes and grey cloaks'. As detailed in the previous chapter, for these girls their only hope was to be pretty enough to attract the eye of someone with power and then be successful. For the children from an advantaged background in Gilead 'pretty didn't matter so much' (Atwood, 2019, p11).

Using a change in physical appearance to create more equality in class status is one of the arguments schools in England have for enforcing smart uniforms. Kulz's 2017 description of Dreamfields explains that Dreamfields' uniform is aligned with ''smart' middle-class professional bodies [...] signifying normality and announcing that Dreamfields students were just like other Goldport [city] professionals heading to work' (Kulz, 2017, pp. 66-68). This directly links to Biesta's (2010, p22) idea of socialisation as making students 'competent members of particular communities', and reinforces the idea that certain communities are more desirable than others. Here the emphasis must be on 'particular', as the uniform does not make Dreamfields students look like others in the context of Dreamfields' locality but rather the more middle-class city workers. Kulz (2017, pp. 66-68) notes that 'the uniform seeks to socially equalise the student population by providing anonymity through conformity' and conformity is achieved through enforcement of the uniform, with staff 'demanding detailed compliance [...] regulating miniscule details narrows the range of possible actions, so that undoing a top button becomes subversive'. Kulz (ibid) considers that the school's uniform 'attempts to graft cultural capital onto the body through imposing a regime of ideological symbols'. Uniform is based on middle-class white appearances; a teacher notes that, whilst one boy's Afro was considered messy hair and he was sanctioned, another student's 'unkempt hair [...] was messy middle-class hair' (ibid) and therefore he was not spoken to by senior staff. This extends beyond the physical appearance to the control of behaviour. Whilst all Dreamfields students are supposedly equal, the white, middle-class students, particularly the girls, were identified by Kulz (2017, p91) as being 'more equal than others' (Orwell, 2000, p125). One student is often seen breaking rules, such as talking in lessons, but seldom sanctioned as she is 'positioned as aspirational' (Kulz, 2017, p91) because her gender positioned her and those like her 'as standard-bearers for middle-class family values' (ibid), just as those Handmaids who attain pregnancy are exalted for their pregnant status.

4.6 - Body Policing - Control of the Body

Stahl (2019) identifies schools subscribing to a no excuses culture as a method to socialise students, particularly students from more disadvantaged backgrounds who would be considered 'other'. Stahl (2019, p3) considers that schools implement a 'corporeal curriculum, where pedagogical practices, as a form of social cognition, account heavily for

monitoring the student body to achieve a high level of inter-corporeality'. The pedagogical

practices Stahl identified are perhaps best represented through Doug Lemov (2015), whose

Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) programme has been praised by many, including former

Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, and Stahl (2019, p7) notes that '52 out of the

75' TLAC pedagogical practices include 'explicit attention to the student body', such as

SLANT. SLANT is a technique for ensuring all students: 'Sit up straight; Listen to the teacher;

Ask and answer questions in full sentences; Nod your head; Track the speaker', and which

Lemov considers to be similar to 'lining up students for fire drills' (Lemov, 2015, p360) in

terms of training students for best practice. The method is used at schools such as Michaela,

where Birbalsingh (2016, p70) describes the 'consistency' such methods provide, both in

terms of consistency for students and for staff, who are consistently monitored by observing

each other's lessons to check for the use of such practices. Foucault (2019, p166) describes

this as the use of a 'signal' from 'the master of discipline to him who is subjected to it' (ibid)

where the signal ensures that 'the order does not need to be explained or formulated; it

must trigger off the required behaviour and that is enough' (ibid). Foucault considers that

the subject does not need to even understand the behaviour, but must simply react to the

signal, even if the obedience is 'prompt and blind; an appearance of indocility' (ibid). What

is important is 'both the technique of command and the morality of obedience' (ibid).

Cushing (2021, p11) proposes that methods such as SLANT are methods of control which

operate on both students and teachers, as the 'teacher is de-skilled, their pedagogical

autonomy curtailed to predetermined chunks of talk, with students' responses reduced to

predictable, measurable patterns'. Cushing (2021, p7) saw this at New Urban Academy as

teachers used ''question flow charts': tightly structured classroom scripts and procedures for

how to respond to 'errors' and 'misconceptions' which are designed to enforce standardised

pedagogies'. As described earlier, this control leads to compliance, as 'the repetition and

consistency in which these policies are enacted [...] eventually works to socialise students

and teachers into self-regulation and self-governance' (ibid). This is similar to the repeated

language structures seen in dystopian fiction: in Gilead this includes greetings such as

'Blessed be the fruit', 'Praise be' and 'Under His Eye' (Atwood, 1996, p29 and pp. 53-54)

which are the right forms of greeting and therefore create a sense of safety, even if the

words themselves are not meant seriously. When the Commander first invites Offred into his

study, he greets her with 'Hello' (Atwood, 1996, p147) and Offred almost cries to hear the old way of greeting. At Michaela, at the end of each lunchtime, students 'give an 'appreciation' to someone for an act of kindness that they noticed in the day' (Musarurwa, 2016, p208), creating a sense of gratitude, although there is no requirement for the words to be meant seriously.

4.7 - Language as a Method of Socialisation

The power of language is shown throughout dystopian fiction, for example Gilead is the name used in the Bible to refer to the land near the river of Jordan, suggesting the place is holy. Language is used to socialise through the terms that are used to identify groups. In Gilead, the Handmaids are thus called because they are there to serve their mistress by providing the vessel for the offspring, much as in Luke 1 v38, Mary described herself as the handmaid of the Lord. Atwood's Handmaids are also called after the Commanders they serve, such as Offred or Ofglen, to remind them that they are no longer people but are entirely owned by the powerful men they serve. All powerful men are known by their rank, such as Commander, whereas all women are known by their role in relation to men, such as Wife or Handmaid. Feminists and deformed babies are Unwomen and Unbabies. By removing their names, and applying the negative prefix 'un', their identities as individuals are also removed.

In Huxley's London, the castes are named after Greek letters, with Alpha denoting the highest class, followed by Beta and then right down through Gamma and Delta to the lowest class of Epsilon. Foucault (2019, p181) describes how students at the Ecole Militaire in 18th century Paris were classified based on their 'moral qualities' and 'universally recognised behaviour', from the first class, 'known as the 'very good'' who were treated as 'purely military troops' down to 'the last class, that of the 'bad'' who 'would always be separated from the others'. In English schools in the twenty-first century, students are described as disadvantaged or pupil premium, referring to the identifying criteria for those students eligible for premium funding due to their circumstances. Such language automatically segregates the students as 'other', compared with the more powerful children who are from wealthier (although not necessarily wealthy) backgrounds. Likewise, many teachers are in

the habit of referring to students as C grade or A grade students, again denoting students based on their academic attainment.

Orwell (1987, p16) highlights the need to use the right language through his description of the daily Two Minutes' Hate, a ritual reflective of Atwood's Particicution. Here, members of the Outer Party are shown key enemies to the Big Brother regime on video screen for two minutes each day and are encouraged to demonstrate their passion for the regime by displaying their hatred for the enemies of Oceania. Winston Smith watches as 'uncontrollable exclamations of rage were breaking out from half the people in the room' leading to people 'shouting at the tops of their voices' and shouting 'Swine! Swine! Swine!' and Smith feels 'obliged to act a part' (ibid). This is reminiscent of the importance of using the right language in order to act the part in education. At Dreamfields, newer teachers were advised by longer-standing colleagues to 'make sure in the first couple of months you are seen shouting at a kid in the playground, 'cause that will look really good with SMT' (Kulz, 2017, p41).

4.8 - Surveillance for Socialisation

Schools have embraced surveillance, as identified by Taylor (2013) who identified Surveillance Schools as those who routinely use technology, such as CCTV and fingerprints, and found that such practice serves more to reduce students' privacy than to safeguard students, arguing that Surveillance Schools serve as a microcosm for society. Page (2017, p1) proposes that 'the surveillance of teachers has proliferated as a means of managing the risks of school life', and that this surveillance has moved beyond a five-yearly visit from outside inspectors, as 'now teachers operate in a context of normalised visibility' (Page, 2017, p2). Courtney (2016, p5) identifies 'the feeling that school staff are always under surveillance'. Cushing (2020, p7) proposes that this surveillance is because schools are all socialised into behaving a particular way because of 'external, top-down surveillance systems such as Ofsted'. Acting a part of Ofsted can create a sense of the right school and therefore keep the school safe from being interrogated further. This was highlighted to me on a personal note when an Ofsted inspector working with my school as part of school improvement commented on the need for a 'clear script' to be shared with staff before an inspection. She explained that another school she had inspected 'told the inspectors all sorts of 'stuff' [...]

the subject leaders genuinely thought the inspectors were interested in what they had to say and did not recognise they were engaged in the 'triangulation' process' [...] the principal ended up teaching everyone what to say to inspectors so in the formal monitoring visit the subject leaders talked with 'one voice''. And just as Orwell describes how 'By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen' (Orwell, 1987, p7), so schools make choices depending on whether they are in the potential viewing of Ofsted, looking out for the 'cracks and crevices' (Fleming and Sewell, 2002, p7) that would allow them to transgress. Gibbons (2017, p87) describes how one of the senior figures involved in the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) 'confessed to being astounded that the poster of the literacy hour clock showing how the lesson time should be divided up was actually on the wall of the classrooms he visited - apparently he didn't think for one minute that teachers would take the NLS quite so literally'. As Gibbons notes, 'in an age of ever-increasing accountability, the pressure on primary schools was progressively being ratcheted up [...] it is not difficult to see why the NLS had such impact at the primary level; if for whatever reason the children in your class were going to fail [...] then at least they failed following the prescribed advice' (ibid).

Orwell (1987, p16) identifies that acting soon becomes innate compliance; Winston recognises that the most terrifying part of the Two Minutes' Hate was not feeling as if it was acting, but that 'any pretence was always unnecessary [...] turning one even against one's will'. Gilbert and Pitfield (2019) found similarities with the way Orwell's Big Brother operates to control society, and the guidelines placed upon teachers in England to control their behaviour. This started with the introduction of a National Curriculum in 1989, meaning that policy was 'dictated by the political imperatives of successive governments' and continued through the Labour party's National Strategies which ran from 1997 to 2011 and attempted to impose pedagogy' and remains present in the 'continued championing of a knowledge-based' curriculum in the current government. Much like the use of the Thought Police to regulate Big Brother's policies, Ofsted are used to police the implementation of government policy within schools. The link between Ofsted and the Department for Education is paradoxical; Ofsted claims to be independent from the government but the Chief Inspector of Schools is always appointed by the government. Page (2016) considers surveillance in schools to be focused on categorising teachers into those who pose least risk

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and those who post most risk 'to Ofsted and examination results' and, whereas historically schools were give notice and time to prepare for an Ofsted inspection, the lack of notice means that schools become perpetually preparing for Ofsted, 'essentially self-surveilling'. Perryman (2009, p615) argues that school leaders learn 'the accepted modes of behaviour [and then] continue to perform the good school [...] until that becomes how the school functions all the time'. Thus the concept of Thought Police is replaced with close scrutiny of teachers, for example through performance management. Performance management is fundamentally ensuring the teacher has socialised into the ways of doing and being within the school. Teachers must meet performance management objectives in order to gain promotion, a raise in salary and to remain in employment. Furthermore, the threat of the external enemy means that senior leaders bring in practices in order to ensure that staff become part of the existing culture because the threat of Ofsted is part of the existing culture within education. Historically, this involved lesson observations. However, just as individuals value a social media post being given significant likes and therefore carefully consider the best wording of a post or angle of a picture, teachers began to place value on being in the category of outstanding or good and therefore began to prepare lessons that presented themselves at their very best, rather than teaching in their day-to-day fashion. Lesson observations became almost worthless and therefore instead, leaders tend to undertake learning walks. These typically involve senior leaders dropping in to a range of lessons and talking to students about their work. Page (2016) considers this to link top-down surveillance, from senior staff, to bottom-up surveillance, through the use of student voice, and argues that teacher surveillance has become fluid, 'blurring boundaries, becoming democratised and seductive, luring the surveilled to become willingly complicit in their own surveillance'. Thus school staff begin to monitor themselves under the threat of school leaders, who are under the threat of Ofsted, just as residents of Oceania monitor themselves under the threat of Party leaders who are under the threat of Big Brother and residents of Gilead monitor themselves under the threat of the Commanders who are all 'under his eye' (Atwood, 1996, p54). The incredibly short notice schools are given for inspections means that teachers act as if they are being observed by Ofsted inspectors in order to be ready for an inspection at any moment, thus making the need for any observation redundant as compliance occurs due to teachers policing themselves, much like Winston Smith found it 'impossible to avoid joining in' during the Two Minutes' Hate (Orwell, 1987, p16).

4.9 - Surveillance for Socialisation - Newspeak

The language used to describe monitoring measures in education, such as performance management, are reflected in Orwell's concepts of doublethink and Newspeak. At the end of the novel, Orwell includes as an appendix the principles of Newspeak. The principles are detailed and divided into multiple categories: A, B and C vocabulary types (reminiscent of the three tiers of vocabulary identified by Beck and McKeown in 2002). Doublethink is exemplified using the word '*blackwhite'* which epitomises the principles as 'it means a loyal willingness to say that black is white when Party discipline demands this [and] to *believe* that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary' (Orwell, 1987, p221) . Furthermore, the control of the language meant that the control of thoughts was possible: under Newspeak, nobody could use the word free to mean 'politically free or intellectually free since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts' and Newspeak 'was designed [...] to *diminish* the range of thought'. (Orwell, 1987, p313). This suggests that thought is limited by language; Syme explains to Winston that 'in the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it' (Orwell, 1987, p55). The power of Newspeak is that 'every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten' (ibid). Syme considers that, in Oceania, people have to show 'self-discipline' in order not to commit a thoughtcrime, but 'in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect' (ibid). The limiting of language to limit thoughts is also shown by Huxley (1976, p197) when John the Savage is told that students are not taught to read Shakespeare but instead take part in 'violent passion surrogate. Regularly once a month' which has 'all the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, but without any of the inconveniences' and by Atwood (1996, pp. 148-149) when the Commander invites Offred to play Scrabble, a game that 'was once the game of old women, old men [...] to be played when there was nothing good on television' but was now 'something different. Now it's forbidden for us. Now it's dangerous. Now it's indecent' and as Offred spells out the words during the game 'the feeling is voluptuous. This is freedom' she thinks. In education, teachers are required to work in a system that ultimately serves to limit education and its practice. Performance management is an accountability measure as well as a system for

providing support to teachers: it is literally the managing by a superior of the performance of a teacher. In 2012, Ofsted changed its grade 3 designation from satisfactory, which is widely understood to mean acceptable or sufficient, to requires improvement, which is widely understood to mean not acceptable or sufficient. Ofsted's grade 4 designation, inadequate, placing a school in special measures, is unlikely to be considered special by any involved. The 2019 Ofsted framework refers to 'deep dives' into subjects, although they take place in less than a school day and therefore are more likely to be shallow. They typically involve learning walks, which in reality are an unannounced drop into a classroom in order to judge the quality of teaching by observing snapshots of lessons, meaning little will be learnt during the walk. In 2018 the Chief Inspector of Schools, Amanda Spielman, announced that Ofsted would change the way it inspected schools in order to reduce the accountability culture. Instead, Ofsted began to focus on curriculum and the quality of education. Whilst this could potentially reduce the accountability culture, there is also the possibility that, just as 'Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia' (Orwell, 1987, p36), so schools will be socialised into the new culture of curriculum in the same way as schools were socialised into the culture of accountability. Teachers are aware of all of this and must either battle the system subversively, as the Savage does through reading Shakespeare, or turn a blind eye to the knowledge that they are complicit within this system and read the script for Ofsted as Winston engages in the Two Minutes' Hate. Gibbons (2017, p103) muses that the impact of accountability is such that it has 'deprofessionalised English teachers to the extent that freedom would be meaningless', drawing an analogy between English teachers' 'central imposition and central testing' (ibid) and Stockholm Syndrome.

In dystopian fiction, the powerful show their control over the 'other' through their mottos: Huxley's dystopian World State's motto is 'Community, Identity, Stability' (Huxley, 1932, p1) whilst the Party who control Oceania live under the mantras 'WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH' (Orwell, 1987, p18). Interestingly, Huxley's world also sees the benefit of ignorance, as the Director proposes that workers need to have little idea of their place in society 'if they were to be good and happy members of society' (Huxley, 1976, p2). Schools, like dystopian states, have mottos, such as Michaela's 'Knowledge is Power' (adapted from the Knowledge is Power Program American public schools) and Dreamfields Academy, where Kulz (2017, p4) describes the headteacher's assembly where

he describes how ''structure' liberates students' and compares the borough of Urbanderry as 'culturally deficient' and the 'wealthier districts of Goldport [which] represent success and a wonderland of infinite possibilities' (ibid). The traditional values of the school are justified in order to ensure that students from Urbanderry are able to 'transcend structural inequalities through sheer determination'. Kulz (2017, p27) points out that 'the question of what Dreamfields' structures actually liberate individuals to is seldom considered', reminiscent of Atwood's (1987, p34) 'freedom from […] freedom to'. Students at Dreamfields start each lesson by reciting the Dreamfields reflection, in a manner similar to American students reciting the pledge of allegiance to the flag, 'a pledge of allegiance to the self and its aspirational fulfilment' (Kulz, 2017, p58) that takes place six times a day. Students recite: 'I aspire to maintain an enquiring mind, a calm disposition and an attentive ear so that in this class and in all classes I can fulfil my true potential' (ibid) and are punished if the pledge is not given sufficient attention or respect. And the power of language to socialise is recognised by two students at Dreamfields. Kulz (2017, p115) notes that one student compared the headteacher's language 'to a graphic novel she had recently read featuring a character who was fighting against the government's attempts to brainwash everyone [to] give them rules in order to free them'. Another student commented that she felt that staff wanted to have 'control over the student's body' (ibid). The idea of controlling language to control the physical was identified by Cushing (2021, p1), who proposed that 'the disciplining of *language* correlates with the disciplining of the *body*'. Cushing's research into New Urban Academy included considering policies which direct staff to 'model behaviour - i.e. no chewing gum, standard English should be used at all times' which equate language and behaviour, meaning that language is '*disciplined*, controlled and monitored as part of a wider policy designed to maintain standards, law and order'. All of these contribute to ensuring the powerful maintain their ruling of the other.

4.10 - Surveillance for Socialisation - the Language of the Powerful

As identified in Chapter 2, one of the features of dystopia is a power imbalance between the powerful and 'other'. One way of ensuring that imbalance is through the promotion of a sense that one way, the way of the powerful, is better than another way, that of the 'other'. Cushing (2020, p3) proposes that such a principle exists within schools, where the construct of standardised English is seen as better than non-standardised variants and Snell (2013,

p13) proposes that 'differences in social value are being attributed to different linguistic forms'. Cushing (2020, p3) further proposes that standardised English is 'a classed and racialised construct [...] perpetuating linguistic and social inequality'. Hooks (2020, p168) describes learning standardised English as 'learning to speak against black vernacular, against the ruptured and broken speech of a dispossessed and displaced people'. Cushing and Snell (2022) identified that Ofsted inspectors in 2020 were 92% white (and note that this is the lowest percentage of white inspectors since records became available) and that Ofsted 'has played a historical role as institutional language police [as] it listens out for what it perceives to be linguistic deficiencies as part of its routine inspections of schools'. These linguistic deficiencies are where students and staff do not use standardised English, meaning the language used by the 'other' (not white) is critiqued by the powerful (white inspectors) and schools' judgements are influenced by this critique. Cushing and Snell (2022) argue that 'language policing is historically and institutionally embedded within the inspectorate's practice, and how classed and racialised judgements about language are part of its organisational logic'. As linguist Deborah Cameron (2012, p98) points out, there is never any suggestion 'that black children in Brixton schools should be taught the proper use of skin lightening cosmetics. Language is a different case'. In Orwell's Oceania, the Party recognises the power of language, hence the need to promote NewSpeak. In Gilead, Offred covertly recalls the language of the old world, for example when she plays 'Zilch' (Atwood, 1996, p193) in her Scrabble game and has to tell the Commander that it's 'archaic' (ibid). Whilst not overtly expressed, there are examples of language that were used that have been denigrated, such as when the Commander tells Offred 'I'm taking you out' (Atwood, 1996, p243) and she reflects 'It's an archaic phrase' (ibid) or her repeated references to old sayings, such as 'smells fishy, they used to say' (Atwood, 1996, p28) and 'Exciting, they used to say' (Atwood, 1996, p105).

Hooks (2020, p168) considers standardised English to be 'the language of conquest and domination'. Because of the high-stakes nature of an Ofsted report, 'teachers are positioned as linguistic role models who are under state-level pressure to both use and promote standardised English, and who occupy positions where they can enact language policing in hostile ways' and Cushing and Snell (2022, p9) find that this leads to 'classrooms where the policing of spoken language is ubiquitous and normalised, and highlighted as good practice'.

Therefore, language, much like school uniform, can be used as a method to perpetuate social inequality. Just as the controllers of Gilead found it preferable to turn 'freedom to' into 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34), rather than attempting to solve the issues that women needed protecting from, so schools are considered effective if they turn children's language from a non-standardised variant to standardised English, rather than attempting to solve the issues of social inequality. The links to dystopian principles are seen most starkly when the ideas linked to a particular group, whether they be the language used, the clothes worn or the behaviour exhibited, are considered to be the only context that allows for success. Any variant to this idea, which allows an individual to form their own sense of subject, will be considered in the next chapter, which focuses on Biesta's subjectification function of education.

The promotion of the way of the main rather than the 'other' is evident when Cushing (2021, p8) highlights that, at New Urban Academy, part of the behaviour for learning policy includes the need to 'use correct standard English at all times and answer in full sentences' but that there is 'no justification provided for *why* students must do this, and no attempt to explore how and why different contexts require speakers to adapt and adjust their language' (ibid). Instead, teachers are steered towards 'eradicationist pedagogies where the aim is to remove non-standardised language and replace it with standardised forms, which ultimately denies speakers the opportunity to draw on their own linguistic identities and repertoires' (ibid). Cameron (2012, p94) proposes that 'ignorance or defiance of grammatical rules is equated with anti-social or criminal behaviour'. Taken to the extreme, Asimov (1957) describes how Reading Day, where all children have the ability to read created in their brains, occurs to 'insure a single language for all of us'. Standardised English is the single language in English schools because it is based on the language of the white middle class who are more powerful than other social groups. Sharing a single language allows for the socialisation of individuals into this group in broader ways.

Lemov (2015, pp. 117-8) argues that 'even if you believe that divergences from "standard" are acceptable and normal, or even if you think there's no such thing as "standard", there is a '*language of opportunity'* and that this language (Standard English) is 'the language of college'. Lemov's programme aims to 'put students on the path to college' (Lemov, 2015,

cover page) through the use of 62 techniques which Lemov (2015, p4) proposes put 'names on techniques in the interest of helping create a common vocabulary', although Cushing (2021, p5) counters that it 'is a mechanism for turning ideologies into practices whilst representing an explicit effort to manage, control and regulate others' linguistic choices and repertoires'. Lemov's techniques include 'Formal Matters' (Lemov, 2015, p117) which involves identifying and correcting 'errors' in spoken language; Cushing (2021, p12) argues that this leads to 'young people's language [...] branded as deficient under the neoliberal veneer of 'opportunity giving' and 'entry to college'' and considers that such programmes 'place responsibility on *individuals* to change themselves, rather than attempting to address structural inequalities at the intersection points of language, poverty and race' and proposes 'entry to college' as a cure for societal problems. For the powerful, it's far better not to attempt to effect social change.

4.11 - The Way of the Powerful - The Silence of the 'Other'

The quantity and volume of language is also used to socialise the 'other' into the control of the powerful. Christina Dalcher's (2019) *Vox* is based on the premise that women are only allowed one hundred words per day because America is ruled by Modern Christian Philosophy, and women are fitted with wristbands which emit an electric shock if the woman speaks more than her allocated words. Children are taught at school that men and women are biologically different and therefore should have different roles in society and earn college credits for studying such courses. When women attempt to argue against the doctrine, they are dismissed as 'getting kind of hysterical' (Dalcher, 2019, p50). Similarly, Atwood (1996, p29) describes Offred's desperation at a lack of language when she walks with another Handmaid to the market. Handmaids are allowed out but only in pairs and Offred has no way of knowing if her companion is trustworthy. Instead they must both act as if they are loyal to Gilead and Offred listens to her companion's chatter feeling uncomfortable but also realising that she is 'ravenous for news, any kind of news; even if it's false news, it must mean something'. Women and Handmaids are oppressed through the lack of language they are permitted. This oppression is shown in schools who focus on creating order as a system to improve outcomes for students considered disadvantaged. Lucy Newman (2016, p95), who teaches at Michaela Community School, considers that 'the lack of authority in schools impacts on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds most' and

that the powerful, as in school staff, must 'highly value adult authority and children's politeness and respect'. Another teacher at Michaela, Jane Brierly (2020, p281) adds 'these kids want order. Now ideally, they want order and learning, but in the absence of any learning they at least want order'. Such order consists of the powerful using whatever method that can be considered appropriate to claim their authority over the 'other', thus demanding order, politeness and respect; as Foucault claimed, it is about obedience rather than understanding. What can be considered appropriate depends on the community the 'other' are socialised into: in schools this can consist of behaviour systems operating on positive and negative reinforcement, which will be discussed in section 4.14 which considers operant conditioning. Positive reinforcement is aplenty in Huxley's London, where the use of soma means that the inhabitants 'love their servitude' (Huxley, 1994, p154), and in Oceania where the children love the traditions and ways of the Party because 'it was all a sort of glorious game to them' (Orwell, 1987, p26). The children love 'the songs, the processions, the banners, the hiking, the drilling with dummy rifles, the yelling of slogans' (ibid). Negative reinforcement is in plentiful supply in Gilead, particularly the use of silence, as Offred describes how the beds at the Red Centre were 'set up in rows, with spaces between so we could not talk' (Atwood, 1996, p13). In Gilead, at Michaela, at a myriad of other schools, the order is created through silence. At Michaela, students transition between lessons by walking the corridors in silence. Lia Martin, teacher at Michaela, (2016, pp. 184-185) justifies this by comparing corridors in other schools, which are 'a chaotic no man's land rife with disrespectful behaviour' whereas at Michaela (ibid), children are taught that 'your behaviour determines your outcomes' and teachers believe that to make adjustments for a student because of their situation, such as not sanctioning a student for incomplete homework because they were visiting a relative in hospital, means that you do not care enough about them. At Michaela, Martin (ibid) declares that 'when there are boundaries, pupils feel safe and happy'. The culture of no excuses stems from the zero tolerance ideology originally found in policing in the USA. The analogy of fixing broken windows to prevent further crime is reflected in the zero tolerance for disruption or noise in schools, with punitive police strategies being promoted for replication in schools. Peal (2014, p227) proposes that 'such structures are vital in building the sort of orderly school community within which freedom and self-expression can ultimately emerge'. In other words: structure liberates, or slavery is freedom.

In February 2020, the then Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, praised schools where 'corridors are silent - allowing classes to continue without disruption' and stated 'I want this kind of culture to be the norm'. The promotion of silence is reflected in the devaluing of oracy within the curriculum in England's schools; in 2013 the speaking and listening component of English GCSE, which had counted for 20% of the final grade, was replaced with a spoken language component which is a separate endorsement and does not count towards students' GCSE grades.

The volume of language is used as a form of control at Dreamfields, although interestingly, whilst a number of teachers were known for their 'lung capacity' (Kulz, 2017, pp. 43-4), the use of shouting was not allowed during high-profile visits. Kulz (ibid) describes how the Headteacher announced that the 'Shadow Secretary for Education would be visiting the school, so no screaming and shouting should occur between 8.30am and 10am; if teachers wanted to shout at a pupil after 10am, that was up to them and that 'emails reminding teachers to keep down shouting in learning areas were periodically sent before VIP visitors arrived'. Such deception puzzled some staff members, who argued that 'Dreamfields should either have confidence in what they do and how they do it, or do something else. Prohibiting shouting when Dreamfields assumes its role as a display case highlights a sense of guilt, or at least recognition, that verbal aggression is widely frowned upon' (ibid). One teacher at Dreamfields felt that 'surveillance and routine provide enough structure without the addition of verbal aggression' (ibid). He considered that the surveillance, combined with the 'verbal chastisement', is 'creating docile, pliable bodies'. Kulz (2017, p24) identifies that 'many teachers and students submit to discipline because they can see the fruits of their labour in the production of results' although as Biesta (2015) would argue, this does not mean that the results are worth the means: 'ineffective torturing is [...] as morally reprehensible as effective torturing'.

4.12 - The Way of the Powerful - Early Socialisation

Huxley (1932, p22) describes how language is used to socialise from the moment a child is born. Rather than leaving such socialisation to chance in the hands of the child's parents, children are raised in 'State Conditioning Centres' where they are conditioned using physical

conditioning, such as receiving electric shocks to 'wed indissolubly before the child can speak' (Huxley, 1932, p26) and hypnopaedia, or sleep-teaching. Hypnopaedia involves repetitions of the key messages, such as 'I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta' (ibid) and is described as 'not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob. Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions is the child's mind' (ibid). The effects are clear: Lenina's assertion 'I'm glad I'm not an Epsilon' is met with Henry's response 'And if you were an Epsilon [...] your conditioning would have made you no less thankful that you weren't a Beta or an Alpha' (Huxley, 1932, p74). Much like Huxley's hypnopaedia, such are the teachings of the Party in Oceania that Julia believes, 'having learnt it at school, that the Party had invented aeroplanes' (Orwell, 1987, p160) but, when Winston explains that this was not the case, 'the fact struck her as totally uninteresting. After all, what did it matter who had invented aeroplanes?' (ibid). Orwell's point is that 'the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important' (ibid) which means that 'History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right' (Orwell, 1987, p162). And the Party can always be right because 'who controls the past [...] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (Orwell, 1987, p37). Winston knows that the Party claims that 'Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia' (ibid) but also that 'He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago.' However, this truth only exists 'in his own consciousness' and therefore 'the lie passed into history and became truth'. In Oceania, 'whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting [...] all that was needed was an unending sense of victories over your own memory [...] reality control [...] doublethink' (ibid). Huxley's inhabitants have no need for the past: they proclaim that 'History is bunk' (Huxley 1932, p33) and enjoy their soma-induced joy. In Oceania, in order to maintain the control over the past, workers such as Winston make 'corrections' (Orwell, 1987, p42) to old newspaper reports which are then 'reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead'. Orwell describes how this occurs, not just with newspapers but with any written material, and how it meant history could be 'scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary' meaning that 'in no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place' (ibid).

Orwell (1987, p61) exemplifies this when there are 'demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the chocolate ration to twenty grammes a week and only yesterday [...] it had been announced that the ration was to be reduced to twenty grammes a week' (Orwell, 1987, p72). Winston reflects that 'what was terrifying was not that they would kill you for thinking otherwise, but that they might be right. For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four [...] if both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable' (Orwell, 1987, p84). Similarly, a school is only good if it is defined as such by their latest Ofsted inspection. Nothing else matters. And in order to mitigate the threat of an Ofsted inspection, schools must make sure their data is above national average and, as GCSE English and mathematics are weighted double compared with other subjects, schools begin to focus on exams in lessons in these core subjects, creating a performativity culture in schools similar to the performativity culture celebrated by the Party. The impact of an Ofsted inspection can lead to staff losing their jobs and therefore schools are high-stake environments. Regardless of the impact on students as individuals, who may not wish to focus on English more than other subjects, the risk to the individual school as an institution is such that they must make sure they meet the Ofsted criteria regardless of whether the school's leaders believe that the criteria are appropriate.

Because the powerful maintain control through their use of language, society can no longer cope with poetic language and the possibilities it holds. In order to maintain control, there must be order and hierarchy and there is no place for the lack of control of language and writing. Winston Smith's first act of rebellion in the novel is to write in 'a peculiarly beautiful book [with] smooth creamy paper' (Orwell, 1987, p8) and there is no place for Shakespeare in Huxley's London. John the Savage's questions about branching out from the society they are socialised into are an embarrassment to the inhabitants of Huxley's London. The Head Mistress is 'blushing' when asked if the students are allowed to read Shakespeare, and Dr Gaffney clarifies that students must go to the feelies if they wish to be distracted: 'we don't encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements' (Huxley, 1932, p150). Whilst the Controller later agrees with John the Savage that 'Othello's good, Othello's better than those feelies' (Huxley, 1932, p203), he counters 'but that's the price we have to pay for stability'. Huxley's world ensures socialisation through science and the manipulation of pleasure, whilst Orwell's world centres on punishment and fear. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the powerful

group has to work harder to maintain order than in *Brave New World*, as the inhabitants of Huxley's world have been successfully conditioned to enjoy the life they live. Postman (1987, p128) proposes that there is no need for newspeak or the manipulation of truth to lies or vice versa in our existing society. He argues that the public has been 'amused into indifference'. For Postman, we do not need a totalitarian regime like Gilead or Big Brother, the public happily 'dance and dream themselves into oblivion' (ibid) as the inhabitants of Huxley's London do, 'narcoticised by technological diversions' albeit that it is mass media rather than soma that is creating the societal and cultural configurations, with the totalitarian society's practice of banning books made irrelevant if nobody reads because they are too busy watching screens. Postman (1987, pp. 181-2) argues that we would be prepared to fight against an Orwellian world, 'to know and resist a prison when the gates begin to close around us' but asks 'who is prepared to take arms against a sea of amusements?', 'What is the antidote to a culture's being drained by laughter?'. The 'other' in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is suppressed from revolting through hard physical work and inane pleasures such as beer and football, with the past being continually rewritten to suit the Party's need in the present. The 'other' in *Brave New World* have no interest in the past and no interest in revolting because they have been tamed by science to accept sexual promiscuity as the norm and to use soma to ensure euphoria. Huxley described his world as 'a really efficient totalitarian state' because the 'other', the slaves, 'love their servitude' (Huxley, 1994, p154). Huxley's vision of self-induced euphoria is reflected in Raymond Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, where books are burned to ensure that the public are kept ignorant. Clarisse describes that she is considered 'anti-social' (Bradbury, 1954, p20) but argues that 'it all depends on what you mean by social, doesn't it?'. Here the idea of being social is linked to Biesta's (2010, p21) concept of 'existing ways of doing and being'. She does not enjoy 'an hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running' (Bradbury, 1954, p20) and is therefore considered 'abnormal'. Clarisse describes how people used to sit on their front porches and just think but the new ways of doing and being are not to have 'people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking [because] people talked too much. And they had time to think' (Bradbury, 1954, p46). However, in order to keep everyone happy, the books have to be burnt: 'Coloured people don't like *Little Black Sambo*. Burn it. White people don't feel good about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Burn it. [...] Burn them all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean' (Bradbury, 2016, p44).

4.13 - Big Brother is Always Watching

Orwell describes how the Party places the inhabitants of Oceania under constant observation, both overtly and covertly. The face of Big Brother is shown everywhere: 'on coins, on stamps, on the covers of books, on banners, on posters and on the wrapping of a cigarette packet - everywhere' (Orwell, 1987, p29) and 'even from the coin the eyes pursued you'. Orwell's Big Brother is only seen in pictures and O'Brien tells Winston that he exists as 'the embodiment of the Party' (Orwell, 1987, p272) and Winston reads that he is 'the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world' (Orwell, 1987, p217). His power stems from his inaccessibility; he can never fade or die. Similarly, the Headteacher of Dreamfields, Mr Culford, is described by Kulz (2017, p19) as being 'authoritarian' and 'cultivating a position of supreme authority'. He achieves this by only being seen at 'assemblies, staff briefings and special occasions' or when he 'routinely paces up and down the corridors' (ibid). The absence of his presence creates his true power. All Party members' homes include a telescreen which 'received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct - in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinised' (Orwell, 1987, p4). As Winston sadly considers, 'nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull' (Orwell, 1987, p29), although the Party can even watch and infiltrate that.

Similarly, schools ensure students are socialised into compliance using constant surveillance or, like with Big Brother, the constant possibility of being under surveillance. Kulz (2017, p38) describes how Dreamfields draws on the same logics as the Panoptic surveillance system first proposed by Jeremy Bentham in 1787 which involves controlling the behaviour of occupants through the constant surveillance they are placed under. For Bentham, the Panopticon would have a building at the centre that was surrounded by windows, and the

buildings all around would have windows that corresponded to the ones on the central building on one side and that allowed light to enter on the other side. The guard in the central building would then simply have to look at 'the small captive shadows [...] perfectly individualized and constantly visible' (Foucault, 2019, p200). Bentham considered that this would ensure order; the inhabitants cannot communicate with each other and are permanently supervised and therefore 'the Panopticon [will] induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 2019, p201) as the occupants begin to self-regulate. Foucault (2019, p172) took this further and considered that the Panopticon was a metaphor for surveillance in society, as the constant sense of surveillance creates self-discipline. Foucault argues that Bentham's ideas have transcended from prison to society in general, including schools. Dreamfields achieves its panoptic surveillance partly through its design. It has a U shape, with two wings, the front being largely glass, with 'all classrooms and teacher office areas on display' (Kulz, 2017, pp. 39-40) which means 'all activity is conducted within the bounds of this U, making movements visible through the glass frontage'. One teacher described this design as being created to 'encourage staff to be high-profile and vigilant at all times' (ibid). Whilst the architects describe the design as creating 'a sense of inclusion, openness and accessibility' (ibid), the narratives Kulz has with staff, students and parents focus more on 'surveillance, safety and security' including that 'there is nowhere in this school where anyone can hide' (ibid). Bentham argued that 'power should be visible and unverifiable'. It is almost impossible to set up a system of constant surveillance but Bentham argued that the unverifiability of observation would mean that 'the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so' (Foucault, 2019, p201). Therefore, surveillance is just as effective if the occupants felt that they were under constant surveillance, which Winston would be familiar with. Piro (2008, p13) considers that schools have created 'a surveillance curriculum' with 'video cameras and other high-tech devices [...] embedded into the design and planning of many new schools. In effect, the watching becomes built into the structure'.

Bentham considered the use of surveillance to be a shift from negative forms of discipline to more coercive forms: 'he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power [...] he becomes the principle of his own

subjection' (Foucault, 2019, p203). This is reflected in the practices at Dreamfields, where teachers monitor students from the moment the gates open at 8am and throughout break times. Kulz (2017, p39) describes the procedure at the end of each breaktime which is frequently timed and typically takes less than a minute, as hundreds of students 'assemble themselves in straight, silent alphabetised lines' and 'each head of year (HOY) stands on a bench in front of their respective year group; students stand to attention, with their bags off their shoulders'. Kulz (ibid) describes this scene as resembling 'military regiments awaiting inspection by their commanding officer'. Students are disciplined for talking, moving too slowly or not facing the front. The whole process is described by a teacher as 'phenomenal' (ibid) and this teacher's old colleagues at a private school were 'astonished' that it was possible for students in the catchment area for Dreamfields. This compares with Foucault's (2019, p6) description of Leon Faucher's rules for young prisoners in Paris in 1837, where prisoners perform all of their daily routines, including rising, dressing and forming into teams according to the 'drum-roll' given by the guards.

Referencing Bentham's idea of suggested surveillance, one teacher at Dreamfields describes how 'children know that they are being observed, which is the same for staff, they know they are being observed [...] there is nothing that the head doesn't get to see or know about. So it's constant inspection.' (Kulz, 2017, p40). Similarly, Cushing (2020) describes that, at New Urban Academy, 'all classrooms were fitted with video cameras, justified by management on the grounds that this allowed staff to critically review their own practice but arguably contributing to a culture of interpersonal and vertical surveillance in schools'. At Dreamfields, the constant threat of inspection becomes a source of dark humour for the staff. One member of the staff describes how 'in some ways it could be construed as a supportive thing to make sure that you are okay, but it certainly didn't feel like that' (Kulz, 2017, p41). Another teacher was 'warned that 'people are watching you', so she was to make sure students walked in quietly from the playground' (ibid). This reinforces the true power of the panopticon; its effectiveness is established when those being surveilled begin surveilling themselves. In Gilead and Oceania, the powerful have established their authority by conditioning the other to feel this way, just as is seen in schools. As Foucault (2019, p16) considers, if a punishment does not affect the body, it is still a punishment, but it affects 'the soul [...] the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations'. Marshall et al (2018, p96)

compare teaching in Canada and England, describing that Canadian teachers have 'more freedom' because 'the panoptic eye comes to the fore in England in a way it did not in Canada' due to the Ofsted regime. This leaves teachers focusing their 'performance in relation to the inspectors. The external control, the panoptic eye, predominates; the sense of agency, of ongoing self-reflection, disappears' (ibid).

And not only are students made to feel constantly under surveillance whilst at school, but staff at Dreamfields also monitor students within the community, sanctioning students for wearing a hoodie or visiting the chicken shop. The school employs 'two solidly built men [who] do not work as teachers [but] become the muscle behind the Dreamfields ethos, the arm of the law extending into the community demanding compliance' (Kulz, 2017, p51). There is similar surveillance at Michaela; Sarah Cullen (2016, p141) writes with pride about how the staff ensure students are shaped into 'individuals with kindness and integrity' through explicit character training which includes how to 'maintain eye contact', 'project their voices', 'listen carefully' and show 'appreciation'. It is considered a duty for students to offer their seats on public transport to older passengers. Raichura, a teacher at Michaela, (2020, p126) describes how seeing a student not offer up the seat led to a 'visceral' response, where he felt 'an immediate sense of embarrassment that my pupil hasn't carried out her duty'. Cullen (2016, p141) describes how students are even taught 'which side of a chair to walk around after standing up'. She describes that such 'intense character-building necessitates a constant teacher presence' at all times but states that 'far from being Orwellian, this level of surveillance is a constant reassuring presence' because 'teachers are looking to congratulate and reward more than catch wrongdoing' and that 'rather than being stifling [...] actually make the pupils freer' (ibid). Slavery is freedom. And, much like at Dreamfields or Huxley's State Conditioning Centres, this surveillance extends beyond the school gates. Birbalsingh (ibid) describes how she points out to parents when she thinks they are failing as parents because 'to do otherwise would be to let their child down'. She argues that 'a mother who is more interested in recovering her child's mobile phone after it has been confiscated than she is in supporting him with his homework is simply not fulfilling her job as his mother. And it is our duty to tell her this' (ibid), just as it is Offred's duty to conceive the Commander's children.

4.14 - Operant Conditioning

Watson's 1913 paper, *Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It* proposed that we learn through stimulus-response association, which B.F. Skinner termed operant conditioning, and the methods of socialisation in schools largely stem from this behaviourist movement. Skinner took his concept of operant conditioning for behaviour and created a fictitious community Walden Two in his 1948 novel of that title. In the introduction to the 1976 edition, Skinner describes how the science fiction 'behavioral engineering' (Skinner, 1976, pvi) he wrote about had been experimental, but that the 1950s had seen experiments of behaviour modification. Skinner considers that the settings where such experiments took place 'on psychotic and retarded persons', presumably without informed consent, were 'in essence communities'. He proposes that the challenges of the latter half of the 1900s, including 'pollution [...] overpopulation, and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust' led to the increase of 'a technology of behavior' including 'counseling and the design of incentive systems' in order to ensure that behaviour would change to allow people to act differently: use different, greener forms of energy; eat more plant-based diets; limit the number of children; vote against leaders who promoted atomic stockpiling. In his novel, Skinner shows how such behavioural engineering communities could live. Those who live at Walden Two reject the concept of higher powers such as a God and also reject the idea that humans have souls and free will. Instead, they consider that behaviour is affected by the environment, and that alterations to the environment can create a utopian way of life.

For Huxley (1976, p10), the changes made to the environment start before birth: 'we decant our babies as socialised human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers'. This is achieved through altering the conditions for the embryo, for example an Epsilon embryo has fewer revolutions per minute on the 'blood-surrogate pump [...] the surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals therefore gives the embryo less oxygen' (Huxley, 1976, p11). Scientific advancements have allowed people to be grown who are physically mature at a younger age and have the required mind for their caste, ensuring that 'an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as Epsilon heredity' (ibid). Similarly, those embryos who were needed 'to emigrate to the tropics, to be miners and acetate silk spinners and steel workers' were given 'heat conditioning [...] by the

time they were decanted the embryos had a horror of cold' (Huxley, 1976, p13). Whilst this process of fertilisation is considered to be an 'operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society' (Huxley, 1976, p2), the Director also adds that 'it carries a bonus amounting to six months' salary' (ibid). Just as children are bred into tiers in order to prepare for their future environment, the English schooling system enjoys its own tiered system. All students are entitled to attend comprehensive schools but those students who attain a particular mark on an optional examination at the end of primary school, the 11 plus, are considered academically suited to attend a grammar school, which caters for students with higher prior attainment. The private school system is only available to those children whose parents can afford the school fees: at Eton for the academic year 2021-22 there is a pre-joining fee of £3,400 and a termly fee of £14,698. Similarly, in Huxley's London, 'Eton is reserved exclusively for upper-caste boys and girls. One egg, one adult. It makes education more difficult, of course. But as they'll be called upon to take responsibilities and deal with unexpected emergencies, it can't be helped.' (Huxley, 1976, p148). Another slogan in Huxley's world is that 'everyone belongs to everyone else' (Huxley, 1932, p42). Such is the desire to work as a community that, even after death, as bodies are burnt and the phosphorus recovered and used as fertiliser. Interestingly, Lenina comments that it is 'queer that Alphas and Betas won't make any more plants grow than those nasty little Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons' (Huxley, 1932, p72).

Huxley (1976, pp. 17-20) further describes socialisation through the methods used in the school in the novel to socialise the Delta babies into disliking books and flowers. This is a lengthy extract but is worth quoting in full to show the extent of the conditioning depicted.

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

'Set out the books,' he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out--a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird.

'Now bring in the children.'

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumb-waiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with

eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

'Put them down on the floor.'

The infants were unloaded.

'Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books.'

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colours, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. 'Excellent!' he said. 'It might almost have been done on purpose.'

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, 'Watch carefully,' he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever.

There was a violent explosion. Shriller and ever shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded.

The children started, screamed; their faces were distorted with terror.

'And now,' the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), 'now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock.'

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

'We can electrify that whole strip of floor,' bawled the Director in explanation. 'But that's enough,' he signalled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped ringing, the shriek of the siren died

down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and

what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more

into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

'Offer them the flowers and the books again.'

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere sight of those

gaily-coloured images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep,

the infants shrank away in horror; the volume of their howling suddenly

increased.

'Observe,' said the Director triumphantly, 'observe.'

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks--already in the infant mind

these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of

the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has

joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

'They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an "instinctive" hatred

of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from

books and botany all their lives.' The Director turned to his nurses. 'Take them

away again.'

Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumb-waiters and wheeled

out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

The Director and his staff are employing Skinner's principle of operant conditioning and

proving exactly how effective it is at socialising the babies into associating books and flowers

with electric shocks. The babies are inherently excited about seeing the 'shining pages of the

books' and Huxley exemplifies their delight as the sun beams down just as the babies are

crawling towards the objects. The contrast of their 'squeals of excitement, gurgles and

twitterings of pleasure' and the 'screaming', 'yelling' and 'faces distorted in terror' (ibid) is

stark. The distortion is clearly due to the sudden change from delight at the appealing

flowers and pictures in the books to desperation as the siren wails and the floor emits an

electric current. The babies are 'desperate, almost insane' (ibid) as they spasm on the floor

and attempt to understand how an experience so pleasurable mere seconds before is now

associated with pain. Such methods are clearly incredibly effective at socialising Delta babies into ways of being.

4.15 - Operant Conditioning - Operant for Whom?

What can we learn from this for educational purposes? There is a move in education towards research-based and evidence-informed practice, such as the statement from the Department for Education (DfE) requirement for schools' pupil premium strategy in 2021, which is a statutory document outlining the school's plan to support students considered to be disadvantaged and therefore in receipt of extra funding, to 'demonstrate how your spending decisions are informed by a range of evidence' (DfE, 2021). Biesta (2015) writes about the role of research in the improvement of educational practice and warns that, if 'educational improvement is a matter of increasing the effectiveness of educational processes and practices', the problem is that ''effectiveness' is a process value' which Biesta defines as 'a value that says something about the ability of certain processes to 'produce' certain 'outcomes'' and clarifies that such a definition 'has nothing to say about the desirability of those outcomes'. The methods of socialising Delta babies is clearly highly effective and would therefore meet the requirements of the DfE should a school wish to consider a similar strategy to support disadvantaged children but, whilst the outcomes might be desirable, the process of achieving them would be considered highly inappropriate. The Director explains (Huxley, 1976, p17) that the reason to create an inherent repulsion for flowers is because 'they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy [...] we condition the masses to hate the country'. Schools in the twenty-first century could use this evidence-informed and research-led practice to create a similar hatred for social media or video games, thus conditioning the disadvantaged masses to instinctively hate any distraction from their studies. Biesta's (2015) proposal that, rather than considering the 'empty statement' that 'an increase in effectiveness constitutes an educational improvement', we should instead ask 'effective for what?' and 'effective for whom?'. This resonates with Atwood's (1996) opening of *The Handmaid's Tale* using quotations including a Sufi proverb which tells us 'In the desert there is no sign that says, Thou shalt not eat stones', and a quotation from Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. Both these quotations centre on the idea that just because we have the capacity to do something does not mean that it should be done.

Such methods of torture are not the only methods of socialisation depicted by Huxley. Class consciousness involves a loud-speaker projecting a repeated message of reinforcement of their caste such as 'I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write [...] I'm *so* glad I'm a Beta' (Huxley, 1976, p21) to the children, whilst they are asleep, 'a hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months' (ibid). This hypnopaedia is described by the Director as 'the greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time' (ibid). And it clearly works; Lenina remarks 'what a hideous colour khaki is' (Huxley, 1976, p52) to show her dislike for Deltas. Similarly, Huxley (1976, p133) describes how students are conditioned to normalise, or even enjoy, experiences that are typically considered upsetting or distressing. Dr Gaffney describes death conditioning, which 'begins at eighteen months' and involves the children spending 'two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying' which houses 'all the best toys' and, when somebody dies, the children 'get chocolate cream'. In Huxley's world, everyone is happy because they are conditioned to ensure you are left 'liking what you've got to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny' (Huxley, 1932, p13), whereas schools in England in the twenty-first century argue that education is about social mobility, whilst ensuring progress: children are conditioned to dislike flowers because 'a love of nature keeps no factories busy' (Huxley, 1932, p20). However, this leaves Bernard to comment that 'everbody's happy nowadays [...] but wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way [...] in your own way, for example; not in everybody else's way' (Huxley, 1932, p87). Bernard is arguing against the way of the powerful, for those from the 'other' to be allowed to be happy in the ways of the other.

In Gilead, women are made to understand their new role in society through negative conditioning when they are taken to the sports centre where facilities are withheld including toilet roll and consistently running water. Aunt Lydia comments 'you would be amazed at how important such things become - basics that you've taken for granted, that you've barely thought about until they're removed from you (Atwood, 2019, pp. 142-3). By removing their basic rights, the women felt like 'penned-up animals' and, after being broken, become incredibly grateful for what they are given; after being starved, then having bread for breakfast means 'how superlatively good that bread tasted' (ibid). The women are broken

down in order to accept the new traditions, cultures and ways of being and doing. Aunt Lydia muses that the reason the toilets were always clogged was because 'the guards went around at night stuffing various materials down the toilets' (ibid) and that once the women realised clearing the toilets was pointless they would give up, meaning that 'giving up was the new normal' (ibid). Much like the students of Michaela rebelling by wearing the wrong coloured socks rather than carrying a knife, the women of Gilead give up hoping for their right to work or have money because they get used to giving up hoping for food or an unclogged toilet.

4.16 - Socialisation through Isolation

Many schools now use isolation booths for students who are not following the culture of the school, those who are not socialised into the school's traditions. Such isolation areas are reminiscent of the 'Thank Tank' in Gilead (Atwood, 2019, pp. 147-9). The Thank Tank was 'a repurposed police-station isolation cell' where those who were not buying into the ethos of the regime were placed, alone, until such time that they became grateful for the situation. Aunt Agnes describes that 'you'd be surprised how quickly the mind goes soggy in the absence of other people' (ibid). The name is used in order to promote a sense of gratitude amongst its inhabitants, gratitude for the society they are in. In schools, isolation rooms are not typically called what they are but are also called something more contrastingly positive; in my own setting such a room is called Back on Track. And whilst on the surface Aunt Agnes comes out grateful, behind her words she is thinking '*I will get you back for this. I don't care how long it takes*' (ibid).

A common theme amongst dystopian novels is the removal of the family, replaced by the powerful, to ensure that children are all socialised equally. Joe Kirkby (2016, p18) considers it a 'travesty' that 'children from poor and illiterate homes tend to remain poor and illiterate [...] those who have lots of knowledge learn more knowledge and so achieve more; those who do not have lots of knowledge learn less and achieve less'. The philosophy at Dreamfields, the idea that 'structure liberates' (Kulz, 2017, pp. 19-21) is considered by the Headteacher, Mr Culford to be 'altruistic' in the sense that it aims 'to provide poor children with the same opportunities wealthier children enjoy'. This saviour complex is also described by Culford when he asserts that 'routines are not necessary when dealing with middle-class

children because they come from disciplined homes' (ibid) whereas 'the working-class, ethnic-minority 'urban child'' can be helped by 'Dreamfields' disciplinarian structures' to achieve the 'academic success that creates happiness' (ibid). This is further reinforced as teachers act as ''surrogate parents' in possession of the 'right' attitudes' (ibid). The suggestion is clear that the children's actual parents clearly have the wrong attitudes. In *Walden Two*, children are raised by the community and 'cared for as a group' (Skinner, 1976, pp. 87-9). Babies are kept in a room with filtered air, sleeping in soundproofed cubicles on a stretched plastic cloth and without clothes or blankets to 'save no end of laundry' (ibid). Frazier describes that the way children are brought up ensures each child 'knows nothing of frustration, anxiety, or fear' (ibid). Instead, 'we can build a tolerance for frustration by introducing obstacles gradually as the baby grows strong enough to handle them' (ibid). Frazier compares this process with the vaccination system typical in the world beyond Walden Two. Similarly, the love a child may or may not receive from a parent is not left to chance. When Castle asks about mother love, Frazier explains that 'our children are treated with affection by everyone - and thoughtful affection too, which isn't marred by fits of temper due to overwork or careless handling due to ignorance' (ibid). In fact, at Walden Two the intention is 'to have every adult member of Walden Two regard all our children as his own, and to have every child think of every adult as his parent' (Skinner, 1976, p132). Frazier argues that, at Walden Two, schooling is more efficient because 'we don't need to be constantly re-educating [...] changing the cultural and intellectual habits which the child acquires from its family and surrounding culture [...] here we can almost say that the school is the family, and vice versa' (Skinner, 1976, p109). Kulz (2017, p74) describes working at Dreamfields as 'a calling where teachers act as modern-day missionaries redeeming urban students'.

It is not just students who are conditioned. In Dreamfields there is no staffroom in order to create a 'businesslike nature' (Kulz, 2017, p42), with the suggestion that a staffroom would create an ethos where 'you can relax for the first hour and have a cup of tea and have a long lunch break'; at Dreamfields there is the same ethos as 'private-sector businesses' (ibid) which is ultimately to work incredibly hard. The idea of staff congregating in one room is considered 'troublesome' (ibid). This system of divide is also seen amongst the students: the playground is divided into year-group areas and classes are divided based on ability setting

in subjects. At Dreamfields, teachers are socialised further through a process of 'ordering and ranking' at staff briefings, where teachers are listed according to the progress data of their classes (Kulz, 2017, p53). Whilst this was sold as being a method of allowing high-performing teachers to support other teachers, in reality it 'mitigates trust and damages solidarities between teachers' (ibid). At Dreamfields, the powerful are, in some ways, the teachers, who rigidly enforce the school rules. However, the truly powerful are the senior staff, who manage the teachers. Kulz (2017, p74) identifies the contrast between the 'rigid inflexibility' of the rules teachers ensure students follow, and the 'flexibility of labour where teachers must go the 'extra mile'' (ibid).

Page (2017, p3) considers that 'the panoptic has been rendered obsolete' in schools because surveillance is about the present, whereas school leaders want to use surveillance to predict the future: as Page (ibid) considers, if a teacher is known to be good in learning walks, 'it can be predicted that they will be graded 'Good' in the next inspection'. Just as Winston Smith engages in the Two Minutes' Hate, so teachers 'actively seek to be engaged in [...] surveillance from a neoliberal desire to be sorted into the 'good' rather than the 'bad' categories' (Page, 2017, p4).

4.17 - Academisation

Skinner's promotion of behavioural communities to make the world a better place draws links with the academies originally created by New Labour to create a culture of excellence in order to overcome poverty. Lord Adonis, former Minister of State for Education, proposed that academising schools would 'break the cycle of underachievement in areas of social and economic deprivation' (Adonis, 2008, reported in Kulz, 2017). Here poverty is not so much having insufficient money but having low aspirations, and academies were created to ensure that students were given the best education. Academies are free from government control and therefore able to set their own curriculum, working conditions for staff, and rules. Kulz (2017, p2) explains that Dreamfields' methods of delivering the best education are 'rarely questioned' and instead leaders are allowed to create a school based on traditional values, 'rooted in empire, industrial capitalism' (ibid). Whilst the introduction of academies was to raise standards by reducing bureaucracy, in reality, accountability within schools was moved from the local authority directly to the Secretary of State for Education. The 2011 Education

Act granted the Secretary of State the power to direct the closure of schools causing concern and, whilst there was a requirement to consult with the governing body, the Secretary of State was able to override any concerns. In one example, 94% of parents voted against the conversion of a London primary school but the then Secretary of State, Michael Gove, approved its takeover by the Harris Federation academy chain (sponsored by Lord Philip Harris, Conservative Party peer and donor), arguing (Harrison, 2012) that those who opposed academisation were 'ideologues who are happy with failure', who felt that 'if you're poor, if you're Turkish, if you're Somali, then we don't expect you to succeed'. Kulz (2017, p12) argues that 'invoking 'inequality' to impose further inequality is an ingenious discursive conflation whereby resisting the privatisation of public services is equated with promoting prejudice': doublethink in practice. Academies were able to set their own rules, and rights of recourse previously open to parents, such as an independent appeal panel following a permanent exclusion, and open to teachers, such as the General Teaching Council for England, were abolished, with their powers given to the Secretary of State. Schools were identified as causing concern if they were considered to be coasting, that is to have 60% or fewer students attaining five or more good (A*-C grade) GCSEs. Previously, the target had been 40%. If identified as coasting, a school had to make an improvement plan that was assessed by one of eight regional school commissioners. These commissioners were appointed by the Secretary of State and, if they did not approve the plan, the Secretary of State would convert the school to an academy. Not so much he who controls the past, but he who controls the present.

Prime Minister at the time David Cameron announced in 2012 that academisation was to allow state schools to act like independent schools, allowing the 'other' to imitate the powerful. He described how independent schools have 'Headteachers who can hire their own staff. Shape their own curriculum. Set their own discipline. Captain their own ship' and proposed that academisation allowed state schools the same opportunities. He acknowledged that independent schools have more money but countered that pupil premium funding means 'schools with the poorest pupils get the most money' and that 'the real golden thread of success isn't just money, it's freedom', reflecting the 'freedom' (Atwood, 1996, p34) women supposedly have following the implementation of the Gilead regime. Cameron (2012) described how academies were 'working miracles in some of the

most deprived parts of our country' and singled out Mossbourne Academy in Hackney (the school Kulz writes about as Dreamfields) which had been 'the kind of school that people used to write off' but now had GCSE results that were 'stratospherically above the national average' and '11 pupils offered places at Oxbridge'. He claimed that this had happened because the Headteacher and staff had been given 'the freedom to teach and run their schools' and that this had been achieved through 'real discipline' and 'rigorous standards' (Cameron, 2012). Orwell defines doublethink as 'a loyal willingness to say that black is white when Party discipline demands this' (Orwell, 1987, p221) but also 'the ability to *believe* that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary' (ibid). Cameron's speech is a good example of doublethink; state schools improve by being given freedom. To use the language of Gilead, these schools are given freedom to invoke 'real discipline' and 'rigorous standards', because they are given freedom from state control. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education control the state that schools must be given freedom from in order to be successful, and all schools, including these supposedly free academies, are subject to Ofsted inspections and gradings, and to performance tables which compare schools on headline accountability measures. Furthermore, the speech promotes a truth that academies raise standards. Five years on, Harrison and Francis (2017) show in their research that 'while there have been some outstanding performers, too many chain sponsors, despite several years in charge of their schools, continue to struggle to improve the outcomes of their most disadvantaged students [and] still lag behind the national averages'.

4.18 - Socialisation into which Existing Cultures?

In 1972, psychologist Walter Mischel at Stanford University conducted the Stanford marshmallow experiment to study delayed gratification. Children were given a marshmallow and told they could eat the marshmallow or wait for about 15 minutes on their own, with the marshmallow, and if they could resist eating it, they would receive a second marshmallow. The researchers found that children who could wait for the second reward tended to achieve better in life, as judged by their higher success in later test scores. The conclusion was drawn that self-control leads to success in later life. Frazier describes how three and four year old children in Walden Two (Skinner, 1976, p98) are all given a lollipop dipped in powdered sugar and told they can eat the treat later that day provided no sugar

has been licked off. The children are then trained in how to distract themselves, for example by playing a game. This conditioning is to help them be part of the group that can resist instant gratification and therefore be successful in life. Furthermore, children are taught how to control their emotions by being made to wait to eat their food when they are hungry. Frazier announces 'the assignment is accepted like a problem in arithmetic. Any groaning or complaining is a wrong answer. Instead, the children begin at once to work upon themselves to avoid any unhappiness during the delay' (Skinner, 1976, pp. 99-102). When questioned as to whether this could amount to torture, Frazier 'looked nervously from one of us to the other [...] he was vulnerable' (ibid). Frazier later proposes that this task allows children 'to escape from the petty emotions which eat the heart out of the unprepared' (ibid). Particularly given that later research into the marshmallow test, including in 2020 with Mischel, largely discredited the findings, it may be time to question whether we should be socialising students into a society where their natural instincts, to eat a sweet treat when left alone with it, lead to their failures. Rather than trying to teach children to resist instant gratification in order to achieve success, educators should look at whether delayed gratification, such as working hard for two years to achieve higher in an external qualification such as GCSEs, is the best measure of our young people. Gibbons (2017, p50) considers that such delayed gratification works for students who are not from working class families. For children who live day-to-day or week-to-week in terms of their family income, the thought of working hard now to succeed at some point in the future is incomprehensible. And whilst schools such as Dreamfields claim to be aspirational for students, ultimately the school trains students for jobs that 'require instructions without contestation; to underperform or complain is to risk destitution' (Kulz, 2017, p113). This is reflected in the lives of their teachers, who are pushed to 'either conform and perform - or leave' (ibid).

Whilst Frazier explains (Skinner, 1976, p104) that in Walden Two 'we never administer an unpleasantness in the hope of repressing or eliminating undesirable behaviour' but that 'we have a different objective. We make every man a brave man. They all come over the barriers. Some require more preparation than others, but they all come over. The traditional use of adversity is to select the strong. We control adversity to build strength. And we do it deliberately' (Skinner, 1976, p106), he also admits that (Skinner, 1976, p110) 'we don't

waste time in teaching the unteachable' and that Walden Two has 'no prematurely aged or occupationally disabled, no drunkenness, no criminals, far fewer sick' (Skinner, 1976, p53). In a similar way, when Sir Michael Wilshaw became Headteacher of the Mossbourne Academy (the Dreamfields of Kulz's 2017 work) which had previously been Hackney Downs comprehensive school, it was considered that he had transformed Hackney Downs. In reality, Mossbourne had half the number of students identified as disadvantaged as Hackney Downs did, and £2 million from the academy's sponsor. Without needing to teach the unteachable, the academy can achieve greater successes. Only particular students are socialised into being part of these particular communities.

4.19 - Technology

In the particular community of English schools, students are socialised into the use of technology to support education, for example through educational TV programmes and websites. This was particularly seen during the lockdowns caused by COVID-19, with the creation of Oak Academy (teachers producing video lessons shared online), the BBC creating TV programmes and online content in bitesize chunks for educational purposes, and even celebrity Joe Wicks rebranded as the nation's PE teacher. Whilst voluntary, PE with Joe is reminiscent of Oceania, where Orwell (1987, p34) describes the 'piercing female voice' which calls for those aged 30-40 to exercise as part of the Physical Jerks, and how Winston has to wear 'on his face the look of grim enjoyment which was considered proper'. For Postman (1987, p136) 'we delude ourselves if we believe that most everything a teacher normally does can be replicated' through technology. Furthermore, Postman (ibid) asks us to consider if using technology to replace teachers means 'everything that is significant about education' is lost. And whilst having the technological options may have assisted some groups during lockdowns, the suggestion can then become that programmes such as the long-running American show Sesame Street 'encourage children to love school only if school is like "Sesame Street"' (Postman, 1987, p166). Watching television is a one-way medium, whereas classrooms are based on interactions, and whilst young people will be sanctioned for not attending school or not behaving at school, no such laws exist regarding the watching of TV programmes. As Postman (1987, p167) asserts, '"Sesame Street" does not encourage children to love school or anything about school. It encourages them to love television', and by doing so, television is in competition with school for the attention of young people. And

whilst a great deal of money is spent on educational facilities, a great deal more is spent on television and other media and technological outputs, and education is not about making money in the way that companies producing content such as Sesame Street are fundamentally doing so to generate money. By encouraging children to love watching the programmes (and we can replace watching TV with playing video games or using social media apps), children are interested, but Postman (1987, p170) suggests that no 'significant learning is effectively, durably and truthfully achieved when education is entertainment'. Postman (1987, p116) would argue that the need for teachers to be engaging is linked to the socialisation we have gone through in terms of how we receive our information. The move from print to television has created what Postman describes as the 'Now...This' method, where every eight minutes a programme moves from one segment to another, requiring viewers to only think about 'one parcel of time' without carrying over any thoughts or feelings. Postman (1987, p123) considers that this means that Americans in particular 'are the best entertained and quite likely the least well-informed people in the western world'. The rise of technology has meant that people know lots of little bits of information, but do not know lots about a single little bit of information. Postman (1987, p124) cites the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979, asserting that nearly every American knew about it, but fewer than 1% of Americans could say what language is spoken in Iran or 'what the word "Ayatollah" means'. This links to the true meaning of knowledge, as discussed in the previous chapter. Huxley's Tommy can recite facts about the Nile but has no understanding of what the content of the facts mean. Similarly, students can be taught to pass examinations by producing the required answers, but that does not necessarily mean they know the subject.

During the periods of lockdown in 2020 and 2021, schools were first asked, and then legally obliged, to provide remote education to students using digital resources such as providing work through platforms or live teaching through video conferencing software. Teachers and students had to get used to using technology to replicate the physical classroom. Cline's 2011 novel, *Ready Player One* is set in a dystopian world where children's education is provided as part of the OASIS platform. The OASIS interactive educational platform, much like the platforms created during the periods of lockdown during 2020 and beyond, is free, and allows children to access books, songs, films and artwork, and play interactive games that teach basic literacy and numeracy skills. The platform also allows students, through the

use of avatars, to virtually attend lessons. Unlike the safeguarding put into place to support students being taught through Zoom, Teams or similar platforms, the OASIS platform's avatars mean that teachers and students could be anyone or anywhere. The platform also allowed teachers to concentrate on teaching, rather than 'acting as babysitters and disciplinarians' (Cline, 2011, pp. 47-8) because the OASIS software ensured that students behaved: poor behaviour can lead to restrictions in the OASIS or even to being transferred from the virtual school to a school in the real world. The virtual world also allowed teachers to bring the learning to life, because 'teachers could take their students on a virtual field trip every day, without ever leaving the school grounds' (ibid). And yet for Wade, once the school day is over, he cannot travel beyond the school gate as travelling inside the OASIS requires payment. Whilst Wade's richer classmates were able to 'explore the simulation's endless possibilities', he was 'stranded on Ludus, the most boring planet in the entire OASIS' (ibid). Ludus contained 'thousands of identical school campuses separated by rolling green fields [...] no castles, dungeons or orbiting space fortresses [...] no NPC villains, monsters or aliens' (Cline, 2011, p50). In other words, in the OASIS, just as in England's schools, the students from wealthier backgrounds have far more opportunities than those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.20 - Better…in the absence of best

Atwood (2019, p215) has Aunt Lydia comment: 'I am a great proponent of *better*. In the absence of *best*. Which is how we live now', and when considering education in the twenty-first century, there are often better, or perhaps less worse, choices, rather than best choices. The sweeping changes brought about by COVID-19: examinations being replaced with centre assessed grades which were moderated by an algorithm which was then abandoned; examinations replaced with teacher assessed grades; secondary schools setting up testing centres on site; masks in classrooms being banned, then optional, then mandatory, then optional; seem absurd. And yet school staff dealt with them all whilst being represented by the powerful in the media as not playing their part in the response to the pandemic. In Gilead, the 'other', for the most part, become resigned to their situation and allow the Commanders to rule. In Oceania, Winston writes that the only hope lies with the proles, but that 'until they become conscious they can never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious' (Orwell, 1987, p86). In education, a similar story

can be told. Horan (2018) argues that 'most of us have an innate tendency to embrace totalitarianism, particularly under pressure' as it suggests a kind of freedom. During times of high stress, which has been amplified since COVID-19, schools have embraced the freedom of government rule as it is a freedom from making decisions that can literally affect the lives of the school community. When the UK government brought in the coronavirus laws, the apathy reflected Gilead, 'they suspended the constitution [...] there wasn't even any rioting in the streets [...] there wasn't even an enemy you could put your finger on' (Atwood, 1996, p183). The comparison between the Gilead government's ability to take away civil rights and the conservative government's ability to do the same, including threatening legal action when schools attempted to move to remote learning in December 2020 due to rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, reminds us that the Panoptic surveillance has led to docile bodies in education. Atwood (ibid) reminds us that in Gilead 'they said it would be temporary'.

Atwood (1996, p127) describes Aunt Lydia's words to the Handmaids where she describes that they are 'a transitional generation' and that 'it is the hardest' for them whilst 'for the ones who come after you, it will be easier' because, as Offred considers 'they will have no memories of any other way [...] they won't want things they can't have'. Page (2017, p10) considers that 'teachers who enter the profession now have no experience of practice-privacy, no experience of uninterrupted autonomy in the classroom' because they have only worked in an environment of national curricula, standardisation and Ofsted. Students only experience education once, so their understanding of, for example, qualifications, is only their own. They cannot consider what it would be like to have a different experience from their own as they have no memories of any other way. However, those leading in education do have memories and can therefore either reflect and improve upon what has gone before or conversely may become stuck in the habits that they have been trained into. 'If a bird has been in a cage for a decade and suddenly finds the door open, it should not be surprising if the bird does not wish to leave. The familiar is often more comfortable than the uncertainty of the unknown' (Eisner, 1992, p617). Every time the Department for Education makes a significant change it is met with concern rather than a sense of freedom because living with the status quo is more comfortable. When the use of levels at Key Stage 2 and 3 was removed in 2014 it was left up to schools to consider their

replacement. At the time of writing, nine years later, there are still limited answers from the transitional generation that had to make the adjustments. Whilst there are always the free thinkers, the ones who forge their own path and go against the grain, the bird will not always fly from the cage. The institution of schools and education are so fixed that the thought of freedom can come with uncertainty and even fear. Atwood (1996, p143) reflects this when Offred remembers her friend Moira who joined the Red Centre and refused to conform. Her behaviour was 'frightening' because the other potential Handmaids had begun 'losing the taste for freedom [and] were finding these walls secure'. Moira's attempt to open the cage did not lead to the birds flying away but led to a feeling that 'in the upper reaches of the atmosphere you'd come apart, you'd vaporize, there would be no pressure holding you together' (ibid).

Atwood shows that Aunt Lydia conforms to the regime of Gilead after being worn down. She is taken to speak to the Commander who reinforces the dichotomy inherent in Gilead. Aunt Lydia's previous life included volunteering at a rape crisis centre during her time as a student, but she stopped because 'it wore me down' (Atwood, 2019, p171). The Commander agrees with her ideas, insisting that Gilead leaders 'intend to eliminate that' referring to 'all that needless suffering of women' (ibid). Aunt Lydia agrees to work with the regime but the dichotomy of freedom from...freedom to (Atwood, 1996, p34) is a challenge. She comments that 'women have been told for so long that they can achieve equality in the professional and public spheres. They will not welcome the…[...] the segregation'. The Commander's reasoning is that 'it was always a cruelty to promise [women] equality [...] since by their nature they can never achieve it'. Rather than tackle the root cause of the issue, and consider the perception of gender, the Commander instead celebrates that 'we have already begun the merciful task of lowering their expectations' (Atwood, 2019, p175).

When considering what is valued in education, Biesta (2010, p21) highlights the importance of providing young people with the 'dispositions' that allow students to 'do something' as they become part of the traditions and cultures of their society. When the Commander asks Offred what they may not have considered in their creation of Gilead, she answers 'love' (Atwood, 1996, p231). As the Commanders did not consider the basic human need for the emotion of love, so are basic emotions of humanity often neglected in the discussion of

students in school who, as discussed earlier in the chapter, are referred to as disadvantaged or C grade students. The Commander asks 'was it really worth it, *falling in love*?' (Atwood, 1996, p232) and Aunt Lydia reminds the girls that '*Love* is not the point' (ibid). In the absence of best, what is the point is not happiness but ensuring procreation, creating a crude dichotomy between emotion and efficiency. The Blair government's philosophy that Every Child Matters (2003) was taken by the Conservative government in 2010 and countered with a focus on raising standards and ensuring rigour. The idea of raising standards, of giving students freedom from a falling standard of education and freedom from an unequal education system, 'with poor performance concentrated in disadvantaged areas' (2015, DfE policy paper) was proposed to be solved by giving freedom to headteachers over their curriculum, budget and staff, and freedom to parents to open schools if there was a need in the local community. This was supported with a new framework for school inspection for Ofsted founded on Sir Michael Wilshaw's, the Chief Inspector of Schools from 2012-2016, ideas to 'raise expectations' and to provide 'the best possible education for the nation's children' (Ofsted, 2012). Part of this involved reframing grading of observations so that only the top two grades (that of 1 for 'outstanding' and 2 for 'good') were deemed acceptable. The third grading would be renamed: 'satisfactory' was no longer considered to be appropriate, and all schools not considered good or outstanding would either be 'inadequate' (4) or graded as 'requiring improvement' (3). The ideas from Every Child Matters (2003) which used language including 'enjoying' and 'wellbeing' were replaced with a common inspection framework for schools which included language choices focusing on 'ambitious vision' and 'rigorous' working practices. This led to a focus on ensuring students attained successfully but potentially at the expense of: the integrity of qualifications being attained; the balance of students' knowledge and skills for life and their knowledge and skills for passing qualifications; and the emotional wellbeing of both students and staff.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools became more than just places of education and became childcare for the children of key workers and a place of safety for vulnerable children. In Gilead, food is bought by exchanging tokens. Atwood (1996, p35) describes how Offred sees and desires oranges on a visit to the market but hasn't 'brought any tokens for oranges'. This reflects the gap between those who have and those who have not. Additional

funding is given to schools for all students who are considered disadvantaged, either because their family's income is below a threshold or they have a parent in the armed forces or because the child is or has been in the care of the local authority. This funding - pupil premium funding - is considered to help support students who are likely to be disadvantaged compared with their peers. And yet, just as Offred appears to have all she needs, she does not have full choice. As she does not have the correct token she is not able to have the item she would like. This is the case for students in receipt of free school meals. During the period of school closures in January 2021, the students who typically receive free school meals were sent food parcels organised by individual school's catering companies to the value of £15 per week, which equates to £3 per day per child. However, the quality and quantity of food provided varied considerably, with parents naming and shaming what was received. The reaction from the public varied, with many, including the footballer Marcus Rashford, arguing that children were being further disadvantaged for being poor and the government was again allowing children to go hungry. However, some individuals and groups argued that parents should be grateful to receive anything from the state. The comparison of want and need is reflected in *The Handmaid's Tale*, where Offred has all of her needs catered for in terms of shelter and food and yet cannot satisfy her wants because she has the wrong tokens, symbolic of her powerlessness as she is not one of the dominant gender.

The relationship between the central characters in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred and her Commander, have a similarly dichotomous relationship as the central characters in a number of other dystopian texts, such as Winston Smith and O'Brien in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Bernard and Lenina in *Brave New World.* Towards the end of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood (1996, p231) depicts a conversation between Offred and her Commander where the Commander focuses on the negatives of the life women had when they had freedom to. He describes 'the singles bars, the indignity of high-school blind dates' and 'the terrible gap between the ones who could get a man easily and the ones who couldn't' before recounting how women who were unable to get a man made hideous choices: 'starved themselves thin or pumped their breasts full of silicone, had their noses cut off'. Rather than consider a change in system which addressed the objectification of women as items of beauty to be selected by men, the Commanders created a system where everyone is given what they deserve, 'they all get a man, nobody's left out' (ibid). The Commander's use of pronouns

here, as he details that 'we've given them more than we've taken away' (ibid) proves that no real change to address the system he disparages has occurred. It is still the 'we', the ruling force of men, who have given 'them', the submissive women, what the ruling force want whilst framing the language to suggest that the suppressed have been given what is best for them: 'they're protected, they can fulfil their biological destinies in peace. With full support and encouragement' (ibid). Such is the Commander's entrenched views that he cannot consider what may have been overlooked; he is deciding for the others. For the Commander, the voice of authority, the 'human misery' was created by women being 'left out', or being abandoned by a partner having 'to go on welfare' or perhaps being abused by a partner or getting 'no respect as mothers'. Whisker (2011, p87) argues that the novel represents women as 'both idolised as the only potential source of humanity's future, and divided and ruled, their roles split, and their reproductive abilities their destiny'. And yet instead of acting to change society, to counter the representation of single women and full time mothers as negative and reframe the idea of choice, to provide real financial support to those who require welfare, to support those who are abused by their partners, the Commander and his ruling colleagues instead made women even more reliant on men and more submissive and created a society where women are judged on their ability to reproduce and then set about socialising the inhabitants of Gilead into this new society. This double representation of individuals as idolised and subjugated resonates with the twenty-first century representations of teachers and educators within the media. The clamour for schools to stay open during the COVID-19 pandemic often centred on the rhetoric of ensuring the positive mental health of young people who started to be called the lost generation. And yet, rather than counter the issues in society that lead to concerns about the mental health of young people, or fund specialist provision for mental health such as CAMHS, the onus was on schools to reopen.

4.21 Concluding Thoughts

Taylor (2020, p70), who teaches at Michaela, argues that 'state employed teachers' have 'a responsibility to the people of this country as well as our pupils' to 'embrace moderate patriotism' otherwise 'Englishness [will be pushed] to the fringes of the eccentric and the extreme'. He believes that young people are not connected 'with their cultural heritage' because 'the education system has been geared towards individualism, rather than

community' and calls this 'our brave new world'. This has direct links with Biesta's (2010, p21) concept of socialisation as schools can 'actively promote symbols of unity as the surest way to allow new members of the community to gain access to our way of life quickly and to flourish' (Taylor, 2020, p70). Taylor warns that unless we do this, we risk young people turning elsewhere in order to feel a sense of belonging, and it is clearly in the interest of the powerful to ensure the 'other' clamour to be part of the society of the powerful. Biesta (2010) adds that socialisation can be either deliberate or 'more 'hidden'' and that education 'impacts on the person, either to make students more dependent on existing structures and practices' or 'more independent from such structures and practices'. Having considered the practices that socialise students into particular communities, the next chapter will focus on how students, the other, can become more independent from such communities.

Chapter 5 - How can reading dystopian fiction affect our understanding of the subjectification function of education?

The third function of education identified by Biesta (2010, p21) is the subjectification function, which is 'the process of becoming a subject' and is the opposite of the function of socialisation in that socialisation focuses on becoming part of existing ways of being and doing, whereas subjectification is 'about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders'. Biesta (ibid) admits that the first two functions: qualification and socialisation, may be the limits of education but proposes that 'education always also impacts on the individual' and considers that 'any education worthy of its name should *always* contribute to processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting'. In fact, he proposes that education becomes uneducational if it simply slots young people into the world and the existing social, cultural and political norms without educating young people to gain independence from the status quo, stating that 'education should always entail an orientation towards *freedom'* (Biesta, 2010, p129). This links to Kant's 1982 argument that humans can only begin to think freely and independently when they are educated, and further only truly become human (in the sense of being rational and autonomous) through education, and Roberts (2012), who argues that the purpose of education is to develop reason, 'to enable young people to become thoughtful, inquiring, rational beings'.

In this chapter, I shall consider the difference between subjectification as developing the subjective self, and subjectification as becoming a subject to those more powerful. This second category is more about objectification than subjectification, with the powerful turning the 'other' into people-shaped objects to maintain control, rather than risking hints of freedom. I will consider the conundrum of education for subjectification alongside the desire of the powerful to maintain social order. This manifests in the removal of barriers, rather than the opportunity to overcome barriers, the fallacy of teaching for subjectivity through character education and the dangers (for the powerful) of engaging with literature.

5.1 Subject and Subject

Biesta (2010, p21) states that education has a function in 'the process of [students] becoming a subject' but there are two ways of considering this idea. To become a subject as Biesta is suggesting is to be able to question the existing ways of thinking and to consider these existing ways in order to form a subjective opinion. However, the word subject stems from the Latin *subjectus*, meaning to be brought under, often through force. This consideration of the idea of being a subject suggests that individuals are subject to something, typically the demands of those with power. The tension between those two ideas creates an unfortunate paradox. If subjectification is about creating autonomy, independence and hints of freedom, these are all the enemy of those with power. If the entirety of the 'other' in dystopian societies rose up with independence and hints of freedom, it would be the potential end of the reign of the powerful.

In the dystopian fiction texts, there are clear rulers of state: the Commanders of Gilead, the face of Big Brother and the actual Inner Party of Oceania, the Directors and Alpha class of Huxley's London. These individuals create, promote and ensure the continuation of the ways of being and doing, and are theoretically accountable to all members of society. Although rulers of dystopian states are not routinely democratically elected, the comparison with England would be the government, who are responsible for leading the country and who are accountable to the people in so much as they wish to gain sufficient votes to be re-elected and therefore remain in power. Although there are often figureheads, such as Big Brother and the Prime Minister, these figureheads delegate to other individuals the responsibility for specific areas, such as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning in Huxley's London, who oversees the artificial creation, and 'teaching', of children; O'Brien, who is an Inner Party member and agent provocateur within the Ministry of Truth; and the Secretaries of State for particular areas in England, such as the Secretary of State for Education. These individuals typically lead a team and create, promote and ensure the continuation of the ways of being and doing within their domain. These individuals and groups provide rules and guidance for those responsible for specific areas within these domains, such as a Headteacher who is responsible for a specific school, or Aunt Lydia in Gilead, who is responsible for the Handmaids in the Red Center. These leaders are accountable to their employers and gain

approval by ensuring the success of their establishments, measured against criteria set down by their employers. The success or otherwise is dependent on others, such as teachers, Aunts, members of the Outer Party, students and proles. Within all of these strata, there are both individuals and groups, for example there are individual Headteachers or Aunts, individual students or Handmaids, and individual government ministers or Commanders. It is in the interests of those with power to bring those underneath them into line: to ensure they become subjects. To do so, as discussed in the previous chapter, those below them are socialised into accepting the existing culture. Offred must obey Aunt Lydia and Aunt Lydia must obey the Commanders, just as students must obey their teachers and teachers must obey the rules of the government. To obey means to secure success, albeit success within the parameters of the society, whereas to disobey leads to potential ruin. Within each of these roles, there is the potential for an individual or group to question the structure, to consider their subjective view. Those above therefore must ensure that this threat is reduced or even quashed in order to preserve their place in the power structure.

5.2 - The Threat of the Subjective

The threat of subjectification is clear when John the Savage enters Huxley's London, doing so with thoughts and ideas that relate to independence and autonomy and thus creating a challenge to the status quo. He symbolises the importance of being curious and of having a sense of individual freedom and is therefore a threat to the layers of ruling classes above him. In order to maintain society in its form, the Controller is clear that there is 'no need of nobility and heroism [because] in a properly organised society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble or heroic' (Huxley, 1976, p218) because 'it would upset the social order if men started doing things on their own' (Huxley, 1976, p217). A man who is well known for 'doing things on their own' (ibid) is the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire, who promoted critical pedagogy arguing, similarly to Biesta, that education is not solely about qualification and socialisation but must include subjectification, or the awakening of the critical consciousness, in order to promote social change. Freire (2017, p10) recognises the Controller's view, considering that 'it is better for the victims of injustice not to recognise themselves as such' and to keep their critical consciousness dormant. In Huxley's London, everyone is bred to do what they have to do, and if there is 'anything unpleasant [...] there's always soma to give you a holiday from the facts' (Huxley, 1976, p218) leaving them 'to love

their servitude' (Huxley, 1994, p154) and ensure society functions as the powerful desire. All of the methods employed in Huxley's London to ensure socialisation, as discussed in Chapter 4, are intended to lead to the inhabitants leading lives where they are successful in their field, albeit one they did not choose, and happy. The inhabitants are subject to the ruling powers, rather than being given the chance to develop their own subjective state. The critical consciousness of characters like Lenina is kept dormant but the regime is not foolproof, as characters like Bernard show.

5.3 - Subject v Subjective in English Schools

At schools that subscribe to a traditional, no-excuses model, such as Michaela, there is a belief that 'every child can do it if they are given the right opportunities to practise' (Ashford, 2016, p124). Here, 'it' means students can move up in terms of their place in society, so an Epsilon can become an Alpha, or a student from a disadvantaged background can attend a Russell Group university. On the surface this feels entirely different from Huxley's London, yet the fundamental process is almost identical to hypnopaedic principles. Ashford, Deputy Headteacher at Michaela, writes (ibid) that the school refuses 'to allow prescribed labels [such as special educational needs] to determine how and what we teach [and that this] liberates our pupils from the manacles of mediocrity [...] and [lets students] reach what may at first appear to be an insurmountable goal'. Unfortunately, moving position within society appears insurmountable because it largely is. Artificially-created Epsilons do not have the capacity to become Alphas, just as young people raised in poverty and speaking non-standardised English cannot easily overcome these challenges in order to 'do it' (ibid).

I had the opportunity to visit Michaela School in March 2022 and found the visit oddly unsettling. The school is like none I had seen before and on the surface it is hard to find fault with a school where students are attaining exceptional examination results and are confident, articulate and happy. There is a consistent pedagogical approach at the school; all teachers teach the same way, all use Lemov's SLANT and all lessons are completely silent unless the teacher asks a question or provides a few seconds of 'turn to your partner' discussion time. Timing is military; the student who took me on the tour had a stopwatch to monitor how long we spent in lessons. At lunch time, the students entered the dining room reciting Shelley's *Ozymandias* at top volume four times before sitting in their assigned seats

which create their family lunch. The Year 9 students I spoke to at lunch said they loved the school, they loved learning without distraction and they loved how confident they felt at being able to speak in front of their peers.

After the visit I felt conflicted; how can anyone argue against a system that produces students who are prepared to be successful in their field and who present as being happy? And yet the system is just as enslaving and disempowering as Huxley's. Freire (2017, p34) proposes that those with power 'maintain the oppressive order through manipulation' and those without power 'have no purposes except those their oppressors prescribe for them'. This has to be the case: the alternative would be for those without power to recognise their 'dehumanization [and] seek to regain their humanity [through a] struggle against those who made them so' (Freire, 2017, p18). Those with power recognise this; as mentioned earlier, the Controller in Huxley's London is clear that the 'victims' (Huxley, 1976, p218) should not realise their victimisation. Therefore, the Controller has created a society where there is no need for heroes and where there is no evidence of victimisation as a result of the state. Similarly, schools reduce students' subjective thoughts in order to control them and yet the students are happy because they believe it is for their own good.

5.4 - No Suffering the Slings and Arrows of Outrageous Fortune Here

In Huxley's London, John the Savage rejects such a society which is based on 'getting rid of everything unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them…But you don't do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows. It's too easy.' (Huxley, 1976, p219).

Similarly, in schools like Michaela there are no slings and arrows. Students are not subject to choosing who to sit next to at lunch, or suffering when they find nobody to sit with. At the family lunch, a daily topic of discussion is provided (the day of my visit had house prices as the topic) meaning there are no opportunities for independent thought, in terms of spontaneously deciding what to talk about at social time, or unplanned silence. The silent corridors and lessons mean no unpleasantness for students and the SLANT model means no student has to choose how to sit or where to look in a lesson. The military timing reduces

any thought process or options for independent thought about how to structure time. Such careful planning is in place to reduce the possibility for subjective thought. Blakemore's (2018, p189) research into the teenage brain shows that 'adolescence is a time of increased risk-taking' which is an opportunity denied in circumstances where there are no slings and arrows to contend with. Indeed, Blakemore argues that 'a certain amount of risk-taking is important [...] we need to get used to making our own independent decisions, sometimes through trial and error, in adolescence [...] teenagers should be encouraged to take the right sort of risks'. The rationale for being able to take the appropriate level of risk is because taking risks allows teenagers to develop subjective understanding, and such understanding is potentially threatening to teachers, school leaders and the status quo.

At Michaela, the removal of slings and arrows is overt: students are strongly encouraged to hand in their mobile phones which are stored in a special locked cupboard; the Year 8 student who showed me around proudly told me that she had handed hers in for three weeks during the examination period, which meant that she had more time and energy to revise. Revising for examinations is likely to lead to increased attainment, which would allow students to become like those with power and rise up the power structure.

But there are no opportunities for heroism or nobility because everyone is doing the same. And yet, just like in Huxley's London, the students I spoke to all love their situation, their servitude. They all spoke enthusiastically about what opportunities learning in the school brought them, primarily discussing how well they were performing in assessments and how this gave them increased chances of attaining highly in their GCSEs. There is no awakening of their critical consciousness because the goal is not to promote social change. The goal is to ensure the success of the individual which leads to the success of the school in the accountability system created by those with more power. The wider goal is therefore to promote society in its current form under the guise of effecting change, when the only change is to help the students, who are primarily from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become more like those in power. There is no attempt to create any kind of systematic change because it is simply not in the interest of those with power to do so. When students leave a school like Michaela, they will find themselves in a world that does not reflect their experiences at school. Michaela opened in 2014, so the first intake would only be starting

their adult lives at the time of writing, and schools that reflect such an ethos have started to grow since Michaela opened. It will be interesting to research how successful, or otherwise, students are after they graduate from institutions with such philosophies.

Similarly, in Cline's (2011) novel *Ready Player One* the central character, Wade, finds freedom not from learning how to deal with a difficult situation, but by removing the situation altogether. Inside the OASIS, the online world where the population of the novel spend their time, Wade is able to choose what his avatar looks like, but in the real world, he is a 'painfully shy, awkward kid, with low self-esteem and almost no social skills' (Cline, 2011, p30), largely because he spends so much time online. His lack of money means that his 'bankrupt diet of government-subsidized sugar-and-starch-laden food' (ibid) has left him 'overweight' (ibid) and wearing 'ill-fitting clothes from thrift stores and donation bins' (ibid). His appearance means he feels 'a nervous wreck' (ibid) when talking to other people his age, meaning school becomes 'a Darwinian exercise' (ibid). Wade is delighted when he is given freedom from attending school and is instead allowed to attend the OASIS school system, meaning his entire school experience is online. Online, he no longer has to talk to other students at social time, and 'no one could tell that I was fat, that I had acne, that I wore the same shabby clothes every week. Bullies couldn't pelt me with spitballs, give me atomic wedgies, or pummel me by the bike rack after school. No one could touch me. In here, I was safe' (Cline, 2011, p31). Wade, like the inhabitants of Huxley's London, loves his servitude because it has removed all of the slings and arrows that made life challenging. And the same is true in Bradbury's (1954, pp. 43-4) world, as depicted in *Fahrenheit 451*. Beatty explains that books have to be burnt to make sure that nobody becomes 'upset and stirred [...] coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book.' Beatty's argument is that 'people want to be happy [...] burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean'. And if the people are happy, there are no troubles for them to take arms against or end, so those with power can maintain the power dynamic.

5.5 - How to Teach for Subjectification

In education, there is a clear paradox: those with power are those leading the delivery of the education, with levels rising from the teacher up to the government and its inspection authority. Teachers and school leaders must align with the ideology of the most powerful in order to gain their approval, or avoid their disapproval, and therefore ensure their survival and success. Therefore they cannot allow the 'other' to rise up with freedom because of the threat to the powerful. However, as Biesta (2010, p21) argues, 'education becomes uneducational' if it does not fulfil the subjectification function. The tension is therefore created between maintaining the power structure, and teaching subjectification.

5.6 - Change the Thoughts not the Situation

Freire (2017, p47) proposes that those with power are interested in 'changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppressed them'. This is evident in the removal of slings and arrows discussed in section 5.4, which is cultivated to change the individual's subjective ideas on the existing systems, rather than their situation as being subject to the regime of the powerful. Freire describes a 'paternalistic social action apparatus' (ibid) where 'the oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society, which must therefore adjust [the oppressed] to its own patterns by changing their mentality' rather than changing society. This is seen in Huxley's London through hypnopaedia and soma holidays, and in many schools whose overarching message is that working hard and being kind will lead to academic success. It is the role of the individual to work hard and be kind and, as will be discussed in section 5.11 and 5.12, if the individual is not successful it is not the fault of the state but because they did not play their part; they did not work hard enough or they were not kind enough.

Freire links this ideology to the classroom through the banking model of education, with teachers feeling that the 'task is to "fill" the students with [...] contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance' (Freire, 2017, p44) which links to the language for socialisation discussed in the previous chapter, as students are considered as empty vessels who must be taught the right way to speak and act by teachers, who are the next chain in the power structure.

Freire's banking model is seen in English schools in the use of a knowledge curriculum, as discussed in Chapter 3, and the use of Direct Instruction (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966), a pedagogical approach which advocates teaching through explicit instructions delivered through scripted lessons and, in dystopian fiction, through the use of hypnopaedia in Huxley's London.

5.7 - Educated against Subjectification

But as John the Savage recognises, the 'other' are not pathogens but are oppressed. They do not need to be repeatedly socialised into society, or given options to alienate themselves from it, but to become what Freire (2017, pp. 47-8) considers to be 'beings for themselves'. However, to do so would undermine those with power and therefore the powerful seek ways to alter the consciousness of the 'other'. Freire (ibid) argues that the banking approach to education is used 'to turn women and men into automatons - the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human' and what Biesta (2010, p21) would consider 'uneducational'. Robert Peal, a teacher in English schools and research fellow for the think tank Civitas, argues passionately against Freire's criticism of a banking model. For Peal (2014, p5), the opposition to the banking model equates to stating that 'knowledge is not central to education', one of four tenets he considers to form progressive education. An advocate against such educational models, Peal argues that the transfer of knowledge is the purpose of education, and promotes a knowledge-rich curriculum or knowledge for the sake of knowledge. For Freire, the banking model simply creates automatons, whereas for Peal, it creates students who are rich with knowledge. Interestingly, Freire (2017, pp. 47-8) further argues that the banking approach is flawed as it inevitably leads to students who realise 'the contradiction in which banking education seeks to maintain them and then engage themselves in the struggle for their liberation'. Students who are made knowledge-rich leads to students recognising the inequality in society and therefore the method of preventing liberation may, in some cases, lead to students choosing to liberate themselves.

5.8 - Education as Liberation

Struggling to engage in liberation is not typically seen in Huxley's London, which is full of automatons as the inhabitants have been taught to settle into the world they are prepared for from before birth. And yet few are fighting for their freedom. Perhaps this is because, as the Controller argues, 'actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery' because 'happiness is never grand' (Huxley, 1976, p204). Freire's (2017, p47) 'struggle' for freedom to be subjective, involving overthrowing slings and arrows is not as enticing as the life of servitude and soma their breeding has prepared them for; the non-savages cannot miss what they have never experienced. Huxley (1976, pp. 87-88) shows this when Bernard and Lenina discuss what it means to be free. Bernard questions 'what would it be like if I could, if I were free - not enslaved by my conditioning' and asks Lenina 'Don't you wish you were free' to which she claims 'I am free. Free to have the most wonderful time'. For Lenina, freedom means being happy, happy because you are conditioned to love your slavery and see soma as the answer to any upset. But Bernard asks 'but wouldn't you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else's way'. Lenina suggests he takes soma to help him forget about his 'dreadful ideas'. For John the Savage, who has not been conditioned through the banking model of hypnopaedia, happiness might not be 'grand' (Huxley, 1976, p204) but he likes 'the inconveniences' rather than the comforts, and he asserts that he is 'claiming the right to be unhappy' along with 'the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind' (Huxley, 1976, p197).

5.9 - Illusion of Conformity

Anyone who agrees with John the Savage is, like Bernard, sent away from London in order to maintain the illusion of perfection. For those who have been conditioned into being the subjects of Huxley's London, there is no place for such thoughts, no place for the reminders that to be human is to be unhappy just as much as to be happy, and to become ill and old. When Lenina first sees Linda, she cannot cope with the appearance of someone who has been allowed to age. In order to ensure the continuation of Huxley's society, humans cannot

admit that they get older and their appearance changes as a result. Similarly in schools, those whose appearances, either physically or through their behaviour, do not fit with the image of the school are not allowed to remain. As discussed in section 4.1, the level of control of students' physical appearances means that those who do not conform to the school's expectations are sanctioned by being withdrawn to inclusion rooms or suspended, meaning they do not attend the school. In extreme cases, such students are permanently excluded or sent to alternative provision - education's own version of the reservations.

Similarly, the banking model is not creating those who wish to struggle for their right to be independent subjects in Orwell's Oceania although, whilst the inhabitants of Huxley's London are predominantly happy, that is not the case in Oceania. Here, the Party rules through fear rather than panaceas and the Party members are therefore unable to struggle to promote their subjectivity because they are all too aware of the consequences of being caught. Winston Smith (Orwell, 1987, p85) recognises that 'if there is hope [...] it lies in the proles' but also that the proles are not 'conscious of their own strength'. They are kept subjugated because 'to keep them in control was not difficult' (Orwell, 1987, p87). In many ways, the proles are the frontrunners for the inhabitants of Huxley's London, kept happy with the lottery and beer. Smith considers a prole woman as having 'no mind [...] only strong arms, a warm heart and a fertile belly' (Orwell, 1987, p263). For the Party, 'it was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings' (ibid) because without such strong feelings, when they became unhappy with their situation, 'their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty, specific grievances' (ibid). This is a tactic used by the Party, those with power, to ensure that those without power, the proles, never feel capable of becoming 'more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting' (Biesta, 2010, p21).

Similarly, students focus on petty matters such as uniform rules, rather than rising against true inequalities in the system, such as the use of norm referencing to determine GCSE grades, meaning that around a third of students will never attain a pass. For both students and proles, freedom will not come until they have developed critical consciousness. And for both groups, it is not in the interests of the powerful to develop the critical consciousness of

the 'other' because to do so would promote the freedom of the 'other' and remove the power of the dominant group.

5.10 - Keep the 'Other' Dependent

The proles, the 'other', are educated into existing ways and traditions and therefore do not recognise that their knowledge is valuable. Freire (2017, pp. 37-38) recognises this approach as 'self-depreciation', where the powerful manipulate the 'other' until 'they become convinced of their own unfitness' and are 'emotionally dependent' on the powerful. John the Savage is so desperate for freedom to learn about other places, and to see where his mother grew up, that he considers the world of Huxley's London to be like Shakespeare's 'brave new world that has such people in it' (Huxley, 1976, p130), leading Bernard to ask 'hadn't you better wait till you actually see the new world?' (ibid). And when John does see the new world, he cannot believe anyone can be happy with such ignorance, and asks the inhabitants of the hospital if they 'like being slaves? [...] Do you like being babies? [...] Don't you want to be free and men? Don't you even understand what manhood and freedom are?' (Huxley, 1976, pp. 196-7) before opening a window and throwing out soma tablets. John the Savage demonstrates the tension between the two ways of considering subjectification here: his ability to question the existing ways clash with the inhabitants who have all been brought under the regime of the powerful.

5.11 - Social Mobility

In Huxley's London, hypnopaedia ensures that each individual is conditioned to love their role in society. In English schools, children, particularly those who are not part of the dominant group (white, middle class, male, heterosexual) are conditioned to want to move socially higher in society, although this largely equates to becoming more like those who are part of the dominant group; as Freire (2017, p19) points out, the model of humanity means those without power look to the powerful as their model of what it looks like to be free. This also subliminally undervalues any characteristics they hold which are not reflected in the powerful group: the fundamental problem with the concept of social mobility. Ashford (2016, p125), who works at Michaela where the Headteacher was appointed as Chair of the Social Mobility Commission in October 2021, feels that it is the job of teachers to support

students to move to a higher position in society, arguing 'to say that a child's inability or lack of motivation to work is a result of anything other than their own choice is to condemn them to continue to make that same weak choice. To say that the problem is beyond their control is to remove any ability they might have to change it.' This ideology blames the individual, not the power structure in society. Children who do not develop into successful adults, as in do not rise to the ranks of the powerful, brought that upon themselves. There is no allowance made for any disadvantage a child may have because it does not matter if you are poor or hungry or have a disability. The Michaela motto of 'Work Hard, Be Kind', is adapted from the American schools' Knowledge is Power Programme or KIPP's slogan of 'Work Hard, Be Nice', and suggests that, if you work hard enough and are kind or nice enough, then you can become like those with power. Children who do not become like those with power only have themselves to blame for not working hard enough or not being kind enough, part of the neoliberalism ideology which Birbalsingh (ibid) describes as instilling 'true responsibility and empowerment in every child' and as being 'by far the more caring route to take in the long term' (ibid). We could just as easily argue that a Gamma in Huxley's London should be taught to strive to be an Alpha or a Handmaid in Gilead to be a Commander, and that their failure to do so is simply because of their lack of hard work or because they were not nice enough. Crucially, the argument here is that providing the opportunity to rise to the ranks of the powerful is the kindest way of educating, and those at the top of the power structure are presenting themselves as benevolent rather than entrenching social norms.

5.12 - 'Ingenious Strategy' of the Powerful

Linguist Deborah Cameron (2012, p206) argues that 'it is impossible to believe that systemic problems' could be cured in such a way, proposing that such inventions 'obscure' the true causes of inequality. Interestingly, the KIPP motto was retired in July 2020, because 'working hard and being nice is not going to dismantle systemic racism' and instead 'suggests being compliant and submissive' (KIPP, 2020). In fact, 'in the words of an alum: "asking us to 'be nice' puts the onus on kids to be quiet, be compliant, be controlled. It doesn't actively challenge us to disrupt the systems that are trying to control us'. Hooks (2020, p44) identifies this 'unfair burden' placed on students, where students who asked for diversity of the curriculum were told to make suggestions of material, suggesting 'it is only important to

address a bias if there is someone complaining'. Cameron (2012, pp. 205-206) proposes that this is an 'ingenious strategy' created by those with power. Considering women's rights and the advice for women to speak and act more like their male colleagues if they wish to be treated more fairly in the workplace, Cameron argues that this 'treats inequality as the consequence of women's own inadequate behaviour [...] the culture of the workplace and the behaviour of the men in it can stay exactly as they are; and if the women still don't get promoted [...] then we can only conclude that they are not up to the job'.

5.13 - Meritocracy v Immitocracy

Whilst the systems in England's schools seem to be promoting meritocracy, as in that anyone can aspire to reach the highest level because those with power are there on their own merits, it is truer to say that England's schools promote imitation of those with power: a system that could be termed immitocracy. Students must work hard to imitate those with power so that they can deny their own subjective self and act more like those with power. The KIPP statement announcing the retirement of the 'Work Hard, Be Kind' motto is clear that 'it supports the illusion of meritocracy' (KIPP 2020) and the statement includes a quotation from Orpheus Williams, leader of the Foundation's equity programming, who states that 'the slogan passively supports ongoing efforts to pacify and control Black and Brown bodies in order to better condition them to be compliant and further reproduce current social norms that center whiteness and meritocracy as normal'.

Winston Smith works hard for the Party and is kind in the way KIPP recognises in the sense that he is quiet, compliant and controlled. When he begins to be subjective rather than a subject, he is told by O'Brien, under torture, that this is his fault for not working hard enough. O'Brien reminds Winston that 'who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (Orwell, 1987, p295) and confirms with Winston that the past exists in written records and people's memories, both of which the Party controls. Winston argues 'How can you control memory? You have not controlled mine?' and is told sternly that the one to blame here is Winston himself. O'Brien tells him '*you* have not controlled it [...] You are here because you have failed' (Orwell, 1987, p296). The torture Winston experiences in order to learn that two plus two can equal five is required because 'You are a slow learner, Winston [...] You must try harder. It is not easy' (Orwell, 1987, p298).

The novel ends when Winston 'had won the victory over himself' (Orwell, 1987, p353) and his hard work had allowed him to be like those in power. He is a subject, rather than subjective. KIPP recognised this tension when they retired their motto, announcing that the slogan 'doesn't represent what's possible in our schools. Schools where individual students are seen and supported [...] schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose [...] so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world' (KIPP, 2020). Birbalsingh's (2016, p222) view is 'that environment is everything when it comes to forming a child's hopes for a future' and such a statement can reflect the immitocracy of Michaela or Oceania, or it can reflect schools as KIPP sees them, as environments that can effect societal change by creating students who are educated to make a fairer world. As discussed earlier, it remains to see what happens when students leaving the current wave of schools that follow the ideals of Michaela realise that the world they now inhabit does not resemble the world they were part of in school.

5.14 - Character Education

The 2011 London riots led to a number of policy initiatives; Nijar (2018) notes that these included 'renewed calls for more police on London's streets, tougher police powers, and more funding for law enforcement (rather than social services) to tackle gang violence'. Such initiatives deal with the end result by punishing those who commit violence or riot, as discussed in Chapter 4, often through public displays of these tougher powers, such as Atwood's (1996, p41) description of 'The Wall' where Offred sees 'bodies hanging, by the necks, their hands tied in front of them, their heads in white bags tipped sideways onto their shoulders'. Offred and Ofglen look because 'we're supposed to look: this is what they are there for' (Atwood, 1996, p42) and Offred notes that the 'white coats' and pictures of 'a human foetus' (ibid) around the men's necks suggest that the men were doctors who performed abortions in the time before Gilead. Offred considers that she is supposed to see these men as 'war criminals' (Atwood, 1996, p43) because 'their crimes are retroactive. They have committed atrocities, and must be made into examples, for the rest [...] what we are supposed to feel towards these bodies is hatred and scorn' (ibid).

Following the 2011 London riots, alongside the punitive measure, there was also a focus on character education in schools, with Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury at the

time, blaming the lack of teaching 'virtue, character and citizenship - "civic excellence"' in schools (Brown, 2011). Peal (2014, p229) argues that the lack of character education in schools is due to the absence of traditional teaching methods, meaning that 'instilling good conduct and behaviour in pupils through rewards, sanctions and school ethos is misguided. Instead, [education] seeks to give pupils objective information in decision-making areas [...] so that they can make, independently and in a rational fashion, informed judgements on their life choices. Such a practice means that the lesson content, teacher and school all remain morally neutral [...] teach, don't preach'. Peal (2014, p6) argues that teachers should have 'moral authority' and should be able 'to influence the character formation of the pupil'. Nadhim Zahawi (2022), then Secretary of State for Education, drew guidance for schools to ensure teachers focused on 'education, not indoctrination' making clear that 'As the Secretary of State for Education, I want to make sure that each and every child is given the opportunity to come to their own opinions without being swayed by what others think'. Peal's (2014, p232) argument is that 'children cannot be taught how to be good citizens in a classroom setting: they must be nurtured towards such a goal through a morally assertive school environment'.

5.15 - Being a Good Citizen

Although Zahawi and Peal may appear to be in dispute, the underlying message about being a 'good citizen' (Peal, 2014, p232) and curating 'their own opinions' (Zahawi, 2022) comes from the idea of those in power wanting to maintain the power dynamic that ensures the powerful remain powerful; it is clear that those who rioted due to the racial and class tensions in 2011 are not considered to have come to the right opinion nor to be good citizens. Whilst Zahawi is promoting children forming their own opinions, the opinions have to be the ones that ensure the status quo, much like Winston Smith's indoctrination to believe that two plus two can equal five. Offred (Atwood, 1996, p74) recalls Aunt Lydia teaching the Handmaids to accept that their belongings, including 'clothes and hair' were taken from them by teaching them, in no doubt what Peal (2014, p232) would attest to as being 'a morally assertive school environment', that 'if you have a lot of things [...] you get too attached to this material world and you forget about spiritual values [...] Blessed are the meek.' Offred notes that Aunt Lydia does not 'say anything about inheriting the earth' (Atwood, 1996, p74). This is a further example of the powerful attempting to change the

consciousness of those with less power, rather than attempting to change the power structure.

Those who have been socialised into the existing ways of being, who do not rise up in a way that hints at independence, can be considered to be good citizens. Atwood (1996, p99) describes how Aunt Lydia told the Handmaids at breakfast, 'as we sat in the high-school cafeteria, eating porridge with cream and brown sugar' to remember 'you're getting the best [...] you are spoiled girls'. The seemingly-lucky Handmaids are the good citizens, much as those who have been educated in schools which also seek to maintain the power dynamic: Peal (2014, p221) states that, 'tellingly' despite being 'situated right next to the riot-struck Pembury Estate in Hackney, [...] 'not one of [Mossbourne Academy's] pupils was involved in the disturbance'. Aunt Lydia (Atwood, 1996, p234) proposes that 'what we're aiming for [...] is a spirit of camaraderie among women. We must all pull together.' The spirit of camaraderie refers to the same spirit of following the status quo and maintaining the power dynamic that those in charge of Mossbourne Academy and other government-favoured schools promote.

5.16 - Political Impartiality

The 'Political Impartiality in Schools' guidance was published in February 2022 and aims to help with understanding of legal duties, rather than including any new statutory requirements, and promotes education that ensures 'children can learn about political issues and begin to form their own independent opinions, without being influenced by the personal views of those teaching them'. The guidance states that 'schools should also continue to reinforce important shared principles that underpin our society'. There are a number of case studies included in the guidance, such as 'Following an international diplomatic incident, protests across the country have been organised and the issue has been raised in the classroom. Teachers may support discussion about the issue which might refer to the protests. However, they must not advocate pupils join these protests or promote partisan political views advocated by the protest movement, or its opponents'. Another case study refers to the COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility of students wishing to produce a banner thanking the NHS. 'A message such as 'Thank You NHS' or similar would not present a risk to political impartiality as it is unlikely to be perceived as promoting partisan political

views or compromising the balanced treatment of political issues. However, if the school were to display a banner demanding reform to the NHS or changes to NHS funding levels, this would not be appropriate'. The overarching message is that students should be taught existing ways or traditions, which Biesta (2010, p21) would consider as the socialisation function of education, rather than being taught about how to engage in acts that could promote subjective viewpoints and cause students to question their position in society. It is education for the subject rather than the subjective.

Atwood describes how the Handmaids were taught what hooks (2020, p4) recognised from her own schooling: 'we were to learn obedience to authority'. Aunt Lydia educated the Handmaids about the declining birth rates, declaring 'they made mistakes [...] we don't intend to repeat them' (Atwood, 1996, pp. 123-4). The Handmaids are shown a film of 'a pregnant woman' (ibid) and taught how 'once they drugged women, induced labour, cut them open, sewed them up' which would be considered acceptable under the guidance as 'discussion about the issue' (DfE, 2022). The Handmaids were then informed that women were no longer given pain relief or caesarean sections: 'No anaesthetics, even. Aunt Elizabeth said it was better for the baby, but also: *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children*' (Atwood, 1996, p124), again, acceptable under the 2022 Political Impartiality in Schools guidance as it does not 'promote partisan political views' nor is it 'compromising the balanced treatment of political issues' (DfE, 2022), in the sense that the Aunts are reinforcing the opinions of the status quo in Gilead and teaching the Handmaids obedience to authority. Offred (Atwood, 1996, pp. 153-4) even considers that Aunt Lydia's message was 'men are sex machines [...] and not much more. They only want one thing. You must learn to manipulate them' although 'Aunt Lydia did not actually say this, but it was implicit in everything she did say'. An excellent example of how teachers can educate in a manner that both aligns with Zahawi's (2022) idea of allowing children 'to come to their own opinions without being swayed by what others think' and Peal's (2014, p6) consideration that teachers should use their 'moral authority [...] to influence the character formation' of their students.

5.17 - Character Education for Socialisation

In 2019 the Department for Education published non-statutory guidance for schools promoting the need for schools to 'contribute to forming well-educated and rounded young adults' as part of a framework of Character Education. This sounds as if it would fit into Biesta's (2010, p21) idea of subjectification as to be well-educated and rounded must include an understanding of the world around them, which includes the ability to question the status quo. However, rather than promoting ways that hint at independence from existing ways of being and doing, the guidance is part of schools' work to prepare students to be ready to take their place in the world'. In other words, rather than education for subjectification, this is further education for socialisation.

The guidance identifies the 'four important aspects' (DfE, 2019, p6) of character as: 'the ability to remain motivated by long-term goals [...] the learning and habituation of positive moral attributes, sometimes known as 'virtues' [...] the acquisition of social confidence and the ability to [...] behave with courtesy and good manners [...] an appreciation of the importance of long-term commitments which frame the successful and fulfilled life' (DfE, 2019, p7). Atwood (1996, pp. 104-106) describes Offred taking part in 'The Ceremony' when the Commander attempts to impregnate her as Offred lies adjacent to the Commander's Wife. Atwood's description shows that Offred takes part in this 'Ceremony', which shows her commitment to 'long-term goals' (DfE, 2019, p6), notably the goal of conceiving a child. Offred shows both 'positive moral attributes' and commitment to that 'which frame the successful and fulfilled life' (ibid) as she allows the Commander to do 'his duty' (Atwood, 1996, p105) and Offred behaves 'with courtesy and good manners' (DfE, 2019, p6) as she describes: 'I lie still [...] *Close your eyes and think of England*' (Atwood, 1995, p105). According to the DfE guidance, Offred is displaying all four aspects of character, although as she considers, 'nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't a lot of choice but there was some, and this is what I chose' (ibid).

The guidance further refers to creating a sense of 'belonging and identity' and considering 'the importance of discipline and good behaviour' as well as how to make students 'civic-minded and ready to contribute to society' (DfE, 2019, p5). Hooks (2020, p3) recalls

racial integration and moving from an all-black school to a mixed school. Following the move, which meant hooks was taught by white teachers: 'gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds [...] knowledge was suddenly about information only [...] we soon learned that obedience, and not a zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority [...] we were mainly taught by white teachers whose lessons reinforced racist stereotypes' (ibid). Offred (Atwood, 1996, p128) recalls how Aunt Lydia would show the girls old pornographic films, showing 'women hanging from trees, or upside-down, naked, with their legs held apart, women being raped, beaten up, killed' and tell the girls 'Consider the alternatives [...] you see what things used to be like? That was what they thought of women, then'. She also showed videos of protests, teaching the Handmaids that these women (or 'Unwomen' as they are called), were 'wasting their time [...] when they should have been doing something useful' (ibid). As with hooks' experience, these lessons are there to reinforce the status quo, preparing the Handmaids for their roles as breeders in Gilead. Whilst they are no longer under the threat of rape by unknown men, their roles mean they are essentially raped by their Commander whenever their cycle suggests they are most fertile. But the repeated teaching that life is better now, that the Handmaids are lucky, that to go against the regime would lead to death, ensures that the Handmaids learn the message that their role in Gilead as Handmaids to Commanders is a fortunate one. And, because this is the message of the powerful, this education would be considered giving the Handmaids 'the opportunity to come to their own opinions' (Zahawi, 2022).

Character education could create what Biesta (2010, p21) considers as the subjectification function of education, in that educating young people to develop character could involve teaching how to question the existing ways and create opportunities for independence and freedom. The public school system in England is considered by many to lead the way on character education. In 1864 the headmaster of Rugby School, Dr Thomas Arnold, was praised for 'governing boys mainly through their own sense of what is right and honourable' (Peal, 2014, p233) and the headmaster of Eton in 2013 was asked to support state schools in building character and developing rounded individuals. Peal (2014, p233) argues that such character education 'was accused of fostering obedient pupils who were unable to question authority' and that ''virtues' traditionally promoted by schools were attacked for being,

amongst other things, middle-class, anglocentric and elitist'. And yet that is what the guidance promotes: compliance with the status quo. It is education to ensure students understand their status as subjects, with the students from Rugby and Eton becoming the powerful and the other students becoming their subjects. There is no evidence of promoting what Biesta (2010, p21) would argue was true character education, which would allow students to gain hints of independence from the status quo by developing their subjective self.

5.18 - The Grit to develop Subjective Thought

As discussed in section 4.18, one element considered to show positive character was the self-control not to eat a marshmallow; the children with self-control were typically shown to have greater success in later life. Angela Duckworth's work on what she terms 'grit' relays similar outcomes. Duckworth (2017, p302) defines grit as 'having a passion to accomplish a particular top-level goal and the perseverance to follow through' and Duckworth found that those with both the passion and perseverance to succeed, whether it be not to eat a marshmallow, or to study for academic qualifications, achieve more than those who are prone to giving up. In a truly inclusive society, students who do not have what Duckworth considers to be grit would be supported to ensure that they can be successful. However, this would potentially subvert the power structure, and therefore the aim remains to change consciousness rather than change society. Duckworth considers that schools can support with such character development and references the KIPP movement in America in the 1990s where students were taught to 'work hard, be nice' and given 'chants, mottos, routines and rituals' (Peal, 2014, p238) and sanctioned for minor infringements of rules. However, this character education is not what I believe Biesta (2010, p21) is referring to as subjectification; it is not providing opportunities for students to become more autonomous, independent or free, but it is what Brookes (2011, p289) describes as 'absorbing the rules of the institutions we inhabit [meaning] we become who we are'. It is education to ensure students remain subjects rather than become subjective. Peal (2014, p239) proposes that 'few could argue with a school that seeks to imbue their pupils with diligence, honesty, politeness, tolerance and self-control. However, this can only be achieved by placing pupils in structured environments'. This relates to my thoughts after visiting Michaela School, as discussed in section 5.3.

Interestingly, Steinberg (2015, pp. 152-153) reports that a study of students who attended KIPP schools compared with a control group who had been unsuccessful in gaining a place at a KIPP school, found that 'KIPP children showed no advantage on any of the measures of character strengths. They weren't more effortful or persistent. They didn't have more favourable academic self-conceptions or stronger school engagement [...] In fact, they were more likely to engage in "undesirable behavior," including losing their temper, lying to and arguing with their parents, and giving teachers a hard time [...] Despite the program's emphasis on character development, the KIPP students were no less likely to smoke, drink, get high, or break the law'. When character education is about learning to live with the status quo, the result is often rebellion against the powerful in the relationship, as Atwood makes clear through the character of Offred.

As discussed earlier, these structured environments are reflective of those in Huxley's London and Orwell's Oceania where characters, like Winston and Bernard, are also shown to engage in so-called undesirable behaviours. What is apparent is that those with power are in no way incentivised to promote true education for character and subjectivity as the risks are too great for their own position. Whilst this remains the case, there needs to be alternative ways for students to learn freedom, autonomy and independence.

5.19 - Literature as a Method of Subjectifying

Many dystopian novels present literature as a threat to the power dynamic. In Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*, books are banned both because of readers and writers. Montag realises that 'a man was behind each one of the books. A man had to think them up. A man had to take a long time to put them down on paper.' (Bradbury, 1954, p38). To ban books bans the concept of thinking, of considering your autonomy and expressing it through words. Far better for the ruling powerful to remove literature as this means 'school is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, language dropped, English and spelling gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. [...] Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?' (Bradbury, 1954, p41). This leads Montag to consider 'there must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman

stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing'
(Bradbury, 1954, p37).

Similarly, in Huxley's London, there is no need for literature. Inhabitants are socialised
through the process of hypnopaedia, which reinforces the position of each individual in the
system through repetitions of statements such as 'Epsilons are […] too stupid to be able to
read or write' and 'Alpha children [are] so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta,
because I don't work so hard' (Huxley, 1976, p25) and the effectiveness of the hypnopaedia
is clear when Bernard and Lenina discuss their castes and Lenina repeats the statements
almost verbatim. When John the Savage returns to Huxley's London, he asks 'do they read
Shakespeare?' (Huxley, 1976, p133) and is told that young people are not encouraged to
'indulge in any solitary amusements' but instead take part in 'violent passion surrogate.
Regularly once a month' which has 'all the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being
murdered by Othello, but without any of the inconveniences' (Huxley, 1976, p197); the
biggest inconvenience perhaps being the possibility of orienting the inhabitants towards
freedom. Reading literature creates opportunities for the reader to be exposed to different
ways of thinking, doing and being. This can lead to what Freire (2017, p47) was considering
to be 'changing the consciousness of the oppressed' but not in the way that the powerful
would benefit from. Gibbons (2017, p2) sees literature as allowing young people 'to deepen
understanding of the way they and others live, and pursue fundamental moral, ethical and
political questions'. Such opportunities do not promote obedience to authority, which is why
access to literature must be restricted if the power dynamic is to be maintained: as Gibbons
(ibid) considers, 'schooling in English is powerful, or it is dangerous - or both'.

5.20 - Restricting Literature

Both literature and the language of the other are restricted in Dalcher's *Vox*, as Dalcher
(2019, p2) describes how Sonia, six, should have 'an army of ten thousand lexemes,
individual troops that assemble and come to attention and obey the order her small,
still-plastic brain issues'. However, as part of the regime in the novel, women are only
allowed 100 hundred words a day and this 'simple arithmetic' (Dalcher, 2019, p2) means she
cannot express herself through words. She 'will be expected to shop and run a household, to
be a devoted and dutiful wife. You need math for that, but not spelling. Not literature. Not a

voice'. As the system grows, women are denied information, including television. Some shows are freely available, but they are shows telling the viewer what to do, not promoting autonomous thoughts, such as 'sports, garden shows, cooking demos, home restoration [...] then there are the other channels, but they're all password protected, viewable only by the head of household and males over eighteen' (Dalcher, 2019, p38). Books are also restricted, as Jean describes being told that men would come to 'lock my computer away, and pack up our books, even Sonia's Baby Learns the Alphabet' (Dalcher, 2019, p55).

In 2022, the Office for Students (OfS) published a consultation detailing a minimum acceptable outcome for students undertaking degrees. This included drop-out rates, course completion and graduate employment. Universities and colleges have to pass thresholds for these areas, such as ensuring that 60% or more of graduates went on to work in what the OfS considers to be skilled employment, or be subject to further investigation. In 2022, Rishi Sunak, as part of his campaign for leadership of the Conservative Party, outlined his plans to phase out certain degrees that do not 'improve [students'] earning potential' (Guardian, 2022). As of August 2022, universities have already started to remove certain degrees from their offer, with a significant number including literature and humanities degrees. If education is purely transactional, as in your degree should lead to higher pay, the ability of education to create subjective thought suffers. Studying literature becomes the preserve of those who can do so without support, meaning the powerful, whilst the 'other' remain their subjects without the ability to gain subjectivity. Gibbons (2017, p49) reflects on a similar issue under the system of O Levels (for those who were considered more academically able) and CSEs (for everyone else) and recalls grammar schools 'who would stream students in the final years with those thought to be most able taking English Literature O level and others taking a qualification like Business English which was viewed as more relevant to those who were unlikely to pursue academic futures', ensuring that only those with power had access to the subjectifying power of literature.

In 2008, Pat Schofield, an invigilator at Lutterworth grammar school, complained about the inclusion of the Carol Ann Duffy poem '*Education for Leisure'* on the English literature GCSE specification. This complaint had been preceded by two earlier complaints, the first in 2004 and the second earlier in 2008. The three complainants' concerns were about the knife

crime insinuated in the poem and the reference of the speaker flushing a goldfish down a toilet. The awarding body, AQA, initially removed the illustration of a knife that appeared alongside the poem in the anthology, and then removed the poem from its specification. A spokeswoman for AQA explained that the decision was taken in the context of an increase in knife-related murders. Duffy's literary agent was reported by Polly Curtis (2008) in The Guardian as saying that the poem 'was written as a plea for education' around 'social problems and crime', whilst Schofield welcomed the ban, arguing the poem 'is absolutely horrendous - what sort of message is that to give to kids who are reading it as part of their GCSE syllabus?'. Mrs Schofield's concern appears to be that teenagers, in a historical context of increasing knife crime, should not be reading literature that is about knife crime, and that such literature is likely to orient students towards independence which could mean they involve themselves in such situations. Duffy responded with a poem titled '*Mrs Schofield's GCSE*' which references a number of violent aspects of Shakespeare plays. When literature can create the opportunity for autonomous thought in the reader, it is less threatening when that literature is created by the ruling class (in this instance, an English, straight, white man) rather than those outside the ruling class (Duffy is a Scottish, lesbian woman). Interestingly, dystopian fiction including Huxley, Orwell and Golding have been on the curriculum in English schools, particularly since the Cold War, perhaps as society tried to educate students against the ever-growing threat of communism. Golding's *Lord of the Flies* remains on GCSE specifications and its suggestion that, without the control from orders from elders, children become power hungry and ultimately become killers, resonates with the idea that, without control from those in power, the 'other' lose all semblance of humanity.

5.21 - Replacing Literature with Less-subjectifying Activities

Conversely, in Cline's (2011, p15) OASIS platform, there are opportunities to use literature for subjectification but they are just that: opportunities. Wade describes how he used the programs to learn to 'walk, talk, add, subtract, read, write and share' and that 'the OASIS was also the world's biggest public library, where even a penniless kid like me had access to every book ever written, every song ever recorded, and every movie, television show, videogame, and piece of artwork ever created. The collected knowledge, art, and amusements of all human civilization were there, waiting for me'. Waiting for Wade, although there is no evidence in the novel of him taking the time to immerse himself in the

books or art; instead, he spends his time searching for the clues left by the inventor of OASIS to win the promised reward. There are opportunities for subjectification but, left to his own devices, Wade cannot engage. As Freire (2017, p50) is at pains to point out, 'only through communication can human life hold meaning [...] authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication'. Thinking does not take place through an OASIS library, but through having dialogue. As discussed in Chapter 4, schools are often intent on removing opportunities for dialogue unless the dialogue is tightly controlled and policed.

And conversely, if everyone is to be happy, there is less opportunity for literature. In Walden Two, where everyone is content, Frazier considers that 'a few first-rate sonnets would have remained unwritten had the lady yielded' (Skinner, 1976, p116) but then argues that 'not many works of art can be traced to the lack of satisfaction of the basic needs'. Perhaps, although there is little evidence of great works of literature being produced in Walden Two, Huxley's London or Orwell's Oceania.

5.22 - Subjectification to Create Systematic Change - the need for Passionate Curiosity

One of the principles of dystopia identified in Chapter 2 is the dehumanisation of all involved in the society, as the main cast off their human characteristics in order to coerce the 'other', who become dehumanised through the coercive process. This equates to the idea of subjectification as becoming a subject; to be brought under the control of those with power. As discussed in Chapter 2, in a number of dystopian fiction texts, the central character is a suspicious reader of the dystopian environment, and seeks to find ways to become more autonomous and independent. Often these ways are through education, and almost always in spite of, or in deliberate opposition to, formal schooling, as the powerful are well aware that knowledge can be dangerous. Learning is considered a potentially negative force by those with power because the educated may start to question the authority, and Aunt Vivalda comments that if the young 'stay in school too long, they become disruptive' (Atwood, 2019, p154). Hooks (2020, p2) considers that education is 'fundamentally political [...] learning as revolution' because learning is 'a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization'.

To orient students towards freedom, Freire (2017, p59) proposes a problem-posing education which 'enables teachers and students to become subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism [...] the world - no longer something to be described with deceptive words - becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women which results in their humanization'. By posing problems rather than depositing knowledge, students are allowed to question why, something that 'no oppressive order could permit the oppressed' (ibid). This is clear from dystopian fiction: hypnopaedia ensures that the 'other' in Huxley's London cannot think for themselves, which is the principle behind New Speak in Oceania and the banning of games promoting language or word play, such as Scrabble, in Gilead.

Freire (2017, p48) asks for 'humanist, revolutionary' educators to 'be partners of the students in their relations with them [...] to exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students' in order to promote the liberty of the 'other'. For Freire (2017, p58) we are oppressors if we do not allow students to engage in a process of inquiry, because 'to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects' with none of the autonomy or independence outlined in Biesta's concept of subjectification. Freire's (2017, p81) argument is to ensure students 'rethink their assumptions in action that they can change' to allow 'human beings in communion [to] liberate each other' (Freire, 2017, p100). Such dialogue is, for Freire (2017, p108) 'the essence of revolutionary action'. And those leaders who do not act in dialogue who, as Freire (2017, p151) describes, 'say their word alone' are the oppressors. This links back to the earlier consideration of those with power being those who promote education for the creation of subjects rather than for subjective thought in order to promote their own position as powerful.

Bernard is able to question his own beliefs because he associates his thoughts with the hypnopaedia that they have all experienced. When Lenina parrots her thoughts, he is able to recognise that these are the result of the repetitions rather than her own considerations and begins to question these thoughts. Linda, like Lenina, is happy without any freedom from her conditioning. Even when she finds herself a single parent in the reservation and unable to answer the questions her child asks, she does not wish for more knowledge, just a return

to what she had grown up with. Linda has no desire for any freedom from the existing traditions; if anything she is so desperate to return to being a subject that she only finds real happiness when she returns to her soma and is able to have 'floated away, out of space, out of time' (Huxley, 1976, p219). Linda and Lenina have absorbed everything that they have been taught through hypnopaedia, the ultimate banking model. There is no curiosity, no questioning, and Bernard's attempts to become the student among students leads to confusion from Lenina.

Cormac McCarthy's 2010 novel *The Road* describes the journey of a father and son through an America ruined by an unexplained situation that has left most of life and civilisation destroyed. The father strives to ensure both that his son survives but also retains his humanity, as others have turned to cannibalism as a way of surviving. Much like Huxley's depiction of Linda, the description of the mother, who is only depicted in flashbacks, shows the importance of creating autonomy and allowing for independence. She tells her husband that 'sooner or later they will catch us and they will kill us [...] you'd rather wait for it to happen but I can't. I can't' (McCarthy, 2010, p47). She is unable to socialise into the new culture, and therefore chooses the only hint of independence that she can as she embraces death, describing it as 'a new lover. He can give me what you cannot' (McCarthy, 2010, p48). Linda and the mother have both been turned 'into objects' (Freire, 2017, p58) through their oppression and therefore lack hope or curiosity. It is far easier to become a literal object: a corpse, a soma-coma patient, than to seek out ways of having autonomy.

Huxley's controllers argue that they 'prefer to do things comfortably' but the Savage, like Biesta (2010, p21), questions the effectiveness of an educational policy that denies the right to 'God', 'poetry', 'freedom' and even 'the right to be lousy' (Huxley, 1976, p220). For the Controller, the educational policies are effective for maintaining the status quo but they prove ineffective for the Savage who has not been privy to the socialisation and subjectification domains and who therefore claims 'the right to be unhappy' (Huxley, 1976, p220). Is unhappiness the price for searching beyond what you have been conditioned into - and is it worth it? Hooks (2020, p42) recalls a student who, having learnt to look at the world critically, found he couldn't 'enjoy life anymore' because there is 'pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches'.

5.23 - Subversive Behaviour

And yet there are those in dystopian fiction who are curious and who exhibit subversive behaviour of the kind that promote freedom from oppression. Offred notes in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1996, p24) that 'even now that there is no real money any more, there's still a black market. There's always a black market'. This sense of freedom from, as a dichotomy with freedom to, is proved to be a fallacy; there is no stopping those who wish to push or subvert a system. This is reflected in the action of Offred saving her butter from her food and using it as 'hand lotion or face cream' (Atwood, 1996, p107). Whilst face cream and hand lotion are considered 'vanities' for Handmaids, the trick of using butter to subvert the notion that 'only the inside' of the Handmaid's bodies are important, is passed between Handmaids so that they all do it, believing that 'as long we do this, butter our skin to keep it soft, we can believe that we will some day get out'.

Orwell's novel ends with the sense that there is no hope for anybody who wants freedom or autonomy; O'Brien tells Winston that 'if you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - forever' (Orwell, 1987, p318). But other dystopian novels are more optimistic about the chance of freedom in the future. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* is set in a future One State, where D-503 begins to engage in illegal activities such as using his imagination after falling in love with the revolutionary, E-330. D-530 tells E-330 that there can be no more revolutions because 'our revolution was the last' (Zamyatin, 2007, p153) but E-330 reminds him that, as a mathematician, he knows there is no 'final number [...] the number of numbers is infinite' and similarly 'revolutions are infinite' (ibid).

Winston Smith (Orwell, 1987, p29) realises that freedom must come from within, because 'nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull'. When the Party states that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia, 'he, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness' (Orwell, 1987, p37). And to ensure that had no power, 'the Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command' (Orwell, 1987, p84). For Winston, 'freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows' (ibid). Hooks

(2020, p3) identifies that learning is both 'pleasure and danger' because to learn brings joy but 'to learn ideas that ran counter to values and beliefs learned at home was to place oneself at risk, to enter the danger zone'.

If the answer is that freedom can only take place behind the gaze of those with power, there is a real challenge for schools. How can students be oriented towards freedom when those in control - the government, school leaders - would have their own interests better served in simply slotting young people into the existing norms? Rather than break the norm, Skinner (1976, pp. 99-100) suggests that conditioning can not only socialise young people into a particular community, but can also create opportunities to teach young people how to deal with a situation that could affect the status quo. His 1976 text *Walden Two* is a dystopian fiction novel but also a didactic piece that explains how his theories of operant conditioning would work in society. It is less art and more political message. Young people living in his fictional *Walden Two* are given 'ethical training' (ibid) to learn to deal with upsetting emotions such as jealousy or envy which are likely emotions when one is slotted into an existing norm and finds their position unfavourable.

Frazier describes the ethical training using the example of children who are hungry and tired arriving home expecting their meal. Instead of being allowed to eat, they instead have to stand in front of their food for five minutes. 'The assignment is accepted like a problem in arithmetic. Any groaning or complaining is a wrong answer. Instead, the children begin at once to work upon themselves to avoid any unhappiness during the delay' (Skinner, 1976, p100). Frazier describes how the children make jokes or sing songs to help the time pass. When the others suggest that this resembles a form of torture, Frazier suggests it is taken lightly by the children, who see it as no different from any other form of delay and explains that the teaching is developed over time, as the children are later forbidden any songs or jokes and must stand in silence, meaning 'each child is forced back upon his own resources' (Skinner, 1976, p100). This training develops and a later lesson involves a coin being tossed, with half the group allowed to eat and the other half having to wait an extra five minutes. When questioned about the process, and asked if such a lesson does not create 'feelings of uncertainty, or even anxiety' (Skinner, 1976, p101), Frazier explains that these lessons are treated in the same manner as scientific experiments, as 'a system of gradually increasing

annoyances and frustrations against a background of complete serenity. An easy environment is made more and more difficult as the children acquire the capacity to adjust' (ibid). It is not hard to see why Castle objects to the teaching and questions the 'deliberate unpleasantness', calling Frazier and his team 'subtle sadists' (Skinner, 1976, pp. 101-102) but, unlike Huxley's London or Cline's OASIS, the inhabitants of Walden Two do not just have challenging situations removed but are explicitly taught how to deal with them in what Frazier considers to be 'never very annoying' situations. Frazier defends the training as it means 'we make every man a brave man. They all come over the barriers. Some require more preparation than others, but they all come over.' (Skinner, 1976, p105). Once they have come over, they are able to take their place in society because they can cope with the envy they feel towards the ones who have more than them, and the frustration they feel because they are powerless. Similarly, as discussed in the previous chapter, students are trained into the existing ways as part of the socialisation function of education. This is not education for subjectification.

5.24 - Brave New World

And yet despite the hypnopaedia, the character education and the ethical training, there will always be those who remain passionately curious and overtly different. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which is so closely linked to Huxley's London that it is the source of the title of the novel, clearly demonstrates this through Prospero's thwarted attempts to control his servant Caliban. Prospero is the powerful, and his magic is represented to the audience as good because it derives from nature. He attempts to control Caliban, the 'other', whose monstrous appearance denotes his sorcery as negative. Prospero is able to control Caliban through magic but Caliban continuously fights against his enslavement, refusing to submit to Prospero and be socialised into becoming a subject and surrendering his freedom on the island. Caliban says to Prospero 'I am all the subjects that you have, Which was first mine own king' (Shakespeare, Act 1, Scene 1). Before Prospero arrived on the island, Caliban was his own subject, and had subjectivity. Following Prospero's arrival, Caliban has become a subject, but he refuses to deny his subjectivity throughout the play, plotting against Prospero and belittling him as in the quotation above, where he suggests that Prospero may be the powerful, but he only has one 'other' to rule over, and is therefore not as powerful as he would wish. In Huxley's London, those who refuse to be made subjects are removed from

society in a process similar to permanent exclusion in schools. When Bernard is sent to the reservations as a punishment, the Controller (Huxley, 1976, p209) argues that such a punishment 'is really a reward. He's being sent to an island. That's to say, he's being sent to a place where he'll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community life. All the people who aren't satisfied with orthodoxy, who've got independent ideas of their own. Every one, in a word, who's any one'. Such anyones seem so absurd to the residents of Huxley's London that when students are shown a video of so-called savages confessing their sins and self-flagellating, the students and teachers laugh because, as they say, 'it's so extraordinarily funny' (Huxley, 1932, p149). Ignorance is a great equaliser, just as Bradbury (1954, p42) demonstrates in *Fahrenheit 451* when Mildred reminds Montag that the clever children in school are the ones 'selected for beatings and tortures' and to stop this 'we must all be alike' and, because everyone cannot be 'born free and equal [...] everyone made equal [...] then all are happy' (Bradbury, 1954, p42).

In Huxley's London, the Controller admits that he was given the option of being sent to an island where he could have worked on science, but instead chose to become a Controller, and that 'sometimes [...] I rather regret the science. Happiness is a hard master - particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth'. Huxley's choice of 'conditioned' here resonates with *Walden Two* and Skinner's theories of conditioning for behaviour. The Commander then adds that 'duty's duty. One can't consult one's own preferences. I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history' (Huxley, 1976, p209). For the Controller, scientific discovery and advancement lead to unhappiness as he explains that Our Ford 'did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness [...] universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. [...] Still, in spite of everything [...] people still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. That made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? [...] People were ready to have even their

appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson - paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too. [...] By choosing to serve happiness. Other people's - not mine.' (Huxley, 1976, pp. 209-210).

Whether readers choose to feel sympathy for the Controller is an interesting thought, because to do so is to be sympathetic to the person who controls the power dynamic, in a similar position to O'Brien in Oceania. It is hard to imagine a reader feeling overly sympathetic towards O'Brien but many readers do feel sympathy for the plight of Winston and Julia at the end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Their journey towards freedom together ends with betrayal and finally a complete removal of any autonomy. And yet, after their mutual betrayal, there is no sense of blame that 'I sold you and you sold me' (Orwell, 1987, p349) either towards each other or from us as readers. They tried to create freedom and autonomy and were unsuccessful, but they tried. The infamous end of the novel (Orwell, 1987, p353), where Winston realises that he has had a 'cruel, needless misunderstanding' but that 'the struggle was finished [...] he loved Big Brother' may seem sorrowful, but Gearon and Williams (2018) argue that the subjectification of Winston and Julia is positive because 'we love them more as characters than we do the character of the State'.

5.25 - Concluding Thoughts

Winston and Julia may have lost to the unrelenting power of the Party, but their readers have been oriented towards freedom by following their plight. Their journey raises a number of questions, as does the concept of the subjectification function of education. In schools such as KIPP and Michaela, in the character education and impartiality guidance, in the dystopian novels, the onus is on the individual to conform to the existing ways of being, to be socialised. When a character in a dystopian novel attempts to become more autonomous or more independent, it leads to unhappiness. The Commander, Bernard, and John the Savage are all unhappier than the rest of Huxley's society. Winston and Julia seek independence and it ultimately breaks them. Becoming a subject, denying your subjective self, that is what appears to bring happiness. Children who want to be more powerful can

only do so by becoming more like the powerful, that is by denying the language, thoughts

and beliefs of their subjective selves, including denying that two plus two can never equal

five. As readers we root for the subversive and yet as educators we promote the compliant.

Chapter 6 - Concluding thoughts

6.1 Literature as a resource for educational thought

The starting point of this research was the quote from David Carr (1995, p314) who proposed that student teachers 'may stand to gain far more from a sympathetic reading of Dickens, Orwell and Lawrence in relation to their understanding of education than they are likely to get from studying Skinner, Bruner or Bloom's taxonomy'. This led me to Rita Felski's (2015, p65) argument that 'readers can be touched, troubled, perhaps even transformed by the texts they read' and that reading allows us to gain 'a deeper sense of everyday experiences [...] it can also expand, enlarge, or reorder our sense of how things are' (Felski, 2008, p83). These statements led me to question whether literature can be a resource for educational thought. Carr (1995) was proposing that the relationship between theory and practice in education is problematic, that to learn to be a successful teacher is not about blindly accepting theory; it is more of an apprenticeship-based model than a transmission model. Carr exemplifies his argument by considering that theory shows that brainwashing is effective but that 'it does not follow that it would be appropriate to use such a technology in the context of education'. Carr (1995, p320) argues that 'one can legitimately infer conclusions about what it is morally right to do from descriptive premises' and that the focus on theory in our understanding of education 'seriously underestimates the value of non-theoretical studies' (Carr, 1995, p329). Carr puts forward the suggestion that there should be a focus on other 'kinds of study which may be of just as much, if not more benefit to [an] understanding of education and teaching' (ibid) and in this research I have explored this notion.

At the beginning of the research, in 2019, I had no foresight that the following year would see elements of dystopia within society, and I began the research by considering how education was presented in fiction, to investigate if this could lead to gains in understanding of education. However, in March 2020, I found myself running my school after my Headteacher had to self-isolate with symptoms of COVID-19. Dealing with an ever-changing situation over that week, with school leaders only hearing that examinations were cancelled by watching a press conference on the news, I found myself delivering assemblies to

students in Year 11 and Year 13 to tell them their school experience was essentially finished. I watched Year 11 students quietly signing shirts and taking photos on the day schools closed, and had staff weeping with fear because there was no food in the supermarket. All that came to mind for me was Atwood's (1997, pp. 182-189) description of how the old world ended, where everyone was 'stunned', 'things continued in that state of suspended animation' and everything Offred had taken for granted, including using a credit card, owning a property and having a job, was suddenly gone.

The research developed then to specifically focus on dystopian literature but more broadly, considering more than just the representation of educational spaces in dystopian fiction but whether reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of education. I believe this to be a worthwhile but underrepresented area of educational research and I have shown how using literature as research method can be rigorous and well-informed. As explained in Chapter 2, I outlined seven principles of dystopia to create a framework of the genre, and then added to Carr's ideas by not only using literature to gain an understanding of education, but combining Biesta's educational theory, using Biesta's (2010) three functions of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification, as the framework for considering education. By using Biesta's functions as a lens, it is possible to see how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of different elements of education, namely qualification, socialisation and subjectification and to see how literature can be used as a research method. I utilised Felski's (2015, p70) notion of reading 'with a puzzled or ironic gaze' and being 'passionately curious' as my method of reading.

6.2 Using dystopian fiction to understand the functions of education

Three of the principles of dystopia identified in Chapter 2 are: a vision for society which has positive intentions, a power imbalance between main and 'other', and the need to conform. These are also principles of schools in England. All schools have visions which have positive intentions, all have a power imbalance and all lead to the 'other', the students, being required to conform. At the higher stage of educational hierarchy, the government, which controls England's state schools, has a vision for education which they believe has positive intentions, there is a power imbalance between the government and the staff leading the individual school, and the government ensures school staff conform through both the

inspection regime and the assessment systems. Reading dystopian fiction highlights these issues by, as Gadamer (1987, p60) neatly surmises, allowing the reader 'to view its own world in light of the work' of fiction. Just as Orwell describes how the Party controls the past and therefore the future, the government controls the curriculum and even the methods of teaching within English schools, through methods just as subtle as Winston Smith changing newspaper articles. Ofsted's research reviews and inspection frameworks ensure that the risks of not doing what is being outlined far outweigh any desire to break free from the regimes; few would argue against 'a shared understanding of a high-quality education' (Ofsted, 2021) even when the evidence base for the shared understanding is flawed, because the potential risks are too great.

Fundamentally, using dystopian fiction as a lens has allowed for questions to be raised around the policies and practices within the English educational system. In dystopian fiction, some characters: Winston Smith, Julia, Offred, Bernard, John, raise questions about the society in which they live and, in doing so, begin to critique the practices they live under. Winston becomes frustrated when Julia believes the Party invented aeroplanes and is not the slightest bit interested in this not being the case because she does not question what she has been told and therefore 'the difference between truth and falsehood did not seem important' (Orwell, 1987, p160). By using dystopian fiction as a lens to consider educational policies and practices, this research encourages us to question the narrative of the English educational system, particularly the approach to Biesta's (2010) three functions of qualification, socialisation and subjectification.

Chapter 3 shows how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of the qualification function of education by highlighting the inherent issues with this domain of education. Firstly, the powerful are the ones who decide which knowledge and skills are to be provided to the students and they do this, not through a sense of neutral benevolence, but 'to enhance or preserve the cultural capital of classes or communities [from] the most powerful segments of the population' (Apple, 1980, p61). Reading dystopian fiction therefore raises questions about who decides what knowledge is taught in schools, with the growing realisation that it is the powerful who make that decision. Children in Oceania may learn about fictitious hero-soldiers because it serves the purpose of the Party ('who controls

the past [...] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (Orwell, 1987, p44) whilst those taught in schools which buy into the Hirschean model will learn classical music and visit the theatre as a form of immitocracy, with the 'other' imitating the behaviours of the powerful. But these just reflect the power systems that already exist, rather than developing students into citizens who question why the power systems exist in that way. Just as Gilead changed 'freedom to' into 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34) without solving the issue women needed freedom from, so schools teach knowledge that gives children the 'possibility' (Hirsch, 2016, p2) to learn sufficiently in order to be able to imitate the behaviour of the powerful and thus rise the ranks, without solving the issue of the imbalance inherent within the society. Brilliantly, this approach puts the onus on the 'other', because if they do not imitate the powerful effectively, if they do not rise to be like those with power, it is because they did not 'work hard' enough (KIPP, 2020), not because the powerful sought to 'enhance or preserve' (Apple, 1980, p61) their own ways.

Instead, the powerful focus on creating false dichotomies of knowledge and skills, and urban myths to terrify the public about children with thirty million word gaps. These lead to reductive solutions such as the overzealous promotion of the teaching of standardised English, to further ensure children are able to imitate the ways of the powerful. As Adichie (2019) considered, they also lead to a 'single story' which then becomes considered as truth. These have colonial legacies of promoting the way of the powerful and are therefore steeped in racism. Orwell was himself one of the powerful - a white man educated at Eton albeit with a scholarship, who worked in Burma as an imperial policeman. The idea of the white man saving the 'others' in the colonies resonates with the women being given 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34) or saved, and the Savages in Huxley's London. Huxley was a proponent of eugenics, writing in 1927 that 'we regard as desirable the qualities that make for social success; these qualities must therefore be fostered' (Huxley, 1927), referring to Leonard Darwin's 'scheme for the systematic discouragement of fertility among the ill-paid and its encouragement among the well-paid' (ibid). As Cushing (2023, p15) points out, 'eugenics was one of the foundational structures of the rise of mass schooling in Britain and continues to bear influence as part of the knowledge-rich project [...] under new guises of scientific objectivity and liberatory forms of cognitive psychology'. In dystopian fiction, and in England's schools, the powerful continue to dominate by promoting their 'cultural

capital' (Apple, 1980, p61) and controlling a narrative where those without the knowledge the powerful have are lesser, that this is a gap that must be filled in order for those individuals from the 'other' to be successful.

Huxley's *Brave New World* fits with eugenic arguments of promoting the intellectually capable (Directors, Alphas) whilst allowing those who are less intelligent (Gammas) to have the menial jobs that fundamentally rely on following the orders of the powerful. In England's schools, standardised tests are used, both at the end of key stages, such as the scaled scores used in Key Stage 2 tests, and for individual assessments, such as the standardised psychometric tests used to determine whether a student needs access arrangements for examinations. Such tests have their roots in intelligence quotient tests, or IQ tests, which developed in the early twentieth century. Standardised tests, including IQ tests, have been used to rank individuals against their peers, in order to identify the more intelligent or more academically able, and those who are less so and require further support (Au, 2011). IQ tests were proposed as a method for determining the less intelligent and then preventing this group from reproducing, either through forced sterilisation or institutionalisation. The suggestion was one which Nazis in Germany were keen to explore. The powerful - in dystopian fiction and in history - are at pains to promote their own kind and maintain their power, and the language of gaps becomes a single story, where the solution is knowledge under the guise of social justice, which in reality has its starting points in eugenic principles (Allen, 2016).

Just as the proponents of eugenics try to wipe out the less intelligent, typically poor members of society, or the 'other', so in dystopian fiction there are swathes of the population who are effectively wiped out as they hold no interest for the powerful and therefore the narrative. The Econofamilies in Gilead are barely considered, as are the proles in Oceania. In Huxley's world, the Savage communities are ignored apart from when Alpha-Plus individuals are permitted to visit the Savage Reservation. It does not serve the powerful for the 'other' to see the lowest in society, because it is a constant reminder of what humanity can be. And, of course, because often the 'other' who are not being socialised into believing that they should be imitating the powerful are inherently content. When Winston Smith watches the prole woman pegging out her washing whilst singing, he

considers that she was 'charged with a sort of happy melancholy' (Orwell, 1987, pp. 168-9) and that she was 'perfectly content' (ibid). He reflects on the 'curious fact that he had never heard a member of the Party singing' (ibid). In England's schools, segregation takes place, from the segregation of the powerful into private or grammar schools to the segregation within comprehensive schools who stream or set students according to their prior attainment. When society hinges on those without power striving to become like the powerful through immitocracy, the 'other' must deny who they are and be shielded from the reminder of who they could be. This is particularly the case when those who are hidden are demonstrably more 'content' (ibid) than those striving for power.

If Ofsted's (2019) definition is the one being used to judge education in schools, and learning is simply 'an alteration in long-term memory', then the practice seen in dystopian worlds including Huxley's London and Asimov's America would be considered outstanding by Ofsted. Hypnopaedia changes long-term memory, is simple to carry out and provides students 'with the knowledge, skills and understanding and [...] the dispositions and forms of judgement that allow them to "do something"' (Biesta, 2010, p21). But just because something has been altered in long-term memory does not mean it is truly known. Huxley (1976) describes how hypnopaedia leads to Tommy having his long-term memory changed so he can recite information about the Nile, but he does not know anything about the Nile apart from having learnt the sentence of information by rote. Keyes (2012) shows that Charlie can acquire knowledge and yet still not understand. And in England's schools, students attain GCSE grades but do not necessarily have the knowledge one would expect a person with those grades to have, due to what Kulz (2017, pp. 161-2) describes as 'hot-housing', with an 'immense amount of teacher labour' because the pressure to secure strong GCSE grades and therefore a high position on league tables, encourages schools to cheat the system.

Similarly, Huxley shows how hypnopaedia can be used to affect the 'dispositions' (Biesta, 2010, p21) of young people, so that they are satisfied with their role in society. This reflects the manner in which England's schools promote the knowledge and skills of the powerful in order to affect the dispositions of children of the powerful, who continue to behave in the ways which reinforce their Alpha position, and the dispositions of the children of the 'other'

to recognise their less-powerful status by questioning their vocabularies and behaviours. When only the powerful are welcome in England's schools, there will be no opportunity for change to the structure of society. Just as women in Gilead are given 'freedom from' (Atwood, 1996, p34) male domination by the men who dominate, children in England's schools are taught to imitate the powerful by those powerful who fully intend to maintain their position of power. Anyone who questions the status quo is considered to be questioning social justice and therefore classed as 'deviant' (Cushing, 2023, p4).

Chapter 4 shows how reading dystopian fiction can affect our understanding of the socialisation function of education. Practices used in dystopian societies such as Gilead and Oceania are used in England's schools, including body policing and surveillance. It could be argued that socialisation is required in schools to allow educators to focus on what is important: teaching the knowledge and skills required for the qualification function of education discussed in Chapter 3. But, as discussed in Chapter 3 and earlier in this chapter, the knowledge and skills taught is primarily aimed at ensuring the continuation of the powerful, under the guise of creating social justice. And in dystopian societies it could also be argued that socialisation allows leaders to focus on what is important: the continuation of humanity is the primary focus of Gilead and the wearing of uniforms and public displays of punishment ensures Handmaids can focus on being a vessel for their Commander and his Wife. The power of the Inner Party is the important factor in Oceania, and the surveillance of the Party members and control of the knowledge ensures society remains under control. As Biesta (2015) would argue, just because something is effective does not make it right: 'ineffective torturing is [...] as morally reprehensible as effective torturing'.

By policing the appearance of students, through both what they wear and how they use their bodies, including their posture and language, leaders can both control the behaviour of students and turn students who are not part of the powerful into replicas of the powerful. The 'other' do not even need to understand what they are doing: they simply respond to a signal, such as lining up in silence when hearing a fire alarm or keeping their eyes on the teacher when told to track, and therefore submit to the control of the powerful. This is similar to the promotion of Standard English, the language of the powerful, throughout England's schools. By ensuring that the children of the powerful have an advantage over the

'other' from the outset of their education, the continuation of the powerful is ensured. Rather than trying to solve the structural causes of an issue, be it male behaviour in Gilead or poverty in England, the onus is placed on the 'other' to change, to be more like the powerful, and the blame is solely placed on the 'other' if they are not successful in this cause.

Perhaps the most powerful tool for socialisation used in both dystopian literature and England's schools is the panopticon self-surveillance system. Piro (2008, p15) argues that schools are designed to be tools of surveillance, and that this 'architecture may serve as a visual reminder of potential imbalance in society [but] it also serves to strengthen the notion that it is the power of ideas that is the real force underpinning these structures'. Winston Smith knows he may be being permanently watched through the telescreen, including in his own home. Children in England's schools know they are being permanently watched by school staff, including outside of school, and through CCTV. School staff know they are at risk of being watched with little notice through the threat of Ofsted, and all of these groups begin to self-discipline. Smith maintains the illusion of supporting the Party, children control their behaviour and school staff behave as decreed by the government. To do otherwise, for any group, could be disastrous. In 2014, Lepkowska identified the fear of Headteachers who could be 'disappeared' following a negative Ofsted inspection. In January 2023 Ruth Perry, headteacher of a primary school, died by suicide, with her family linking her death to the stress of her school being downgraded from outstanding to inadequate by Ofsted. Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector (2023), made a statement where she recognised that the inspection process can be 'challenging' but that 'our aim is to raise standards' by looking 'at what children are being taught, assess[ing] how well behaviour is being taught and managed' and giving a grade to schools to 'give parents a simple and accessible summary of a school's strengths and weaknesses' and 'to guide government decisions about when to intervene'. The powerful ensure their dominance by reminding those who dare to deviantly question the status quo that 'any changes to the current system would have to meet the needs both of parents and of government' because 'we all work together in the best interests of children' (Ofsted, 2023). As seen in the focus on qualification, the 'best interests' (ibid) are defined by the powerful.

Socialisation takes many forms. Huxley (1976, p3) describes 'Bokanovsky's Process' where one embryo can divide into up to ninety-six embryos, all clones of the initial perfectly-created one. As discussed earlier, dystopian literature shows how the powerful police the bodies and language of the 'other' to create a similar effect: clones of the powerful. Furthermore, just as Huxley's Hatcheries breed children into their caste, England's schools stream children into theirs. A child is chosen to be an Epsilon and bred for that role, a child in England can only enter certain schools if their family has the required money, address or faith, or if the child can attain a particular score on the 11-plus examination. Skinner's 1948 work *Walden Two* shows his vision of how alterations to the environment can affect people's behaviour. This operant conditioning is used in Huxley's London to condition Delta children not to like flowers or books, important to ensure they are prepared to work rather than to indulge in visits to the countryside or spend time reading. The method of doing so, providing electric shocks when the young children approach books and flowers, is highly effective and contributes to an effective society. Schools in England use forms of operant conditioning to promote positive behaviour, through the use of a variety of reward systems, and to turn children away from negative behaviour, through the use of detentions or removal of privileges. As Atwood (2019, pp. 142-3) reminds us, such sanctions lead to 'giving up' or to a mindset that 'I will get you back for this' (Atwood, 2019, p149). The former ensures the continuation of the powerful group, the latter just leads to further socialisation.

However, reading dystopian literature reminds us that children are socialised into 'particular' (Biesta, 2010, p21) groups. Children who are not part of the powerful are cloned into being more like the powerful, rather than being welcomed as they are and supported to develop. The 1972 marshmallow test suggests that children who can delay gratification achieve higher in tests later in life. The move in England's schools is to promote skills of delayed gratification, to reward children at the end of the week with circle time if they behave, to award certificates and prizes at the end of a term or school year. Whilst Walden Two's practice of teaching children how to distract themselves from eating lollipops seems questionable to the characters who witness it, the practice in England's schools is similarly questionable. Children who want more immediate gratification, largely children from the 'other', whose families live day-to-day or week-to-week rather than having the capacity to wait for a month or a year to receive a reward, are underachieving in school. Rather than

solving the underlying problem of poverty and the ongoing inequality between those with money and power and those without, once again the solution is reductive: create a system where children are trained to wait rather than creating a system where those who require more immediate gratification are enabled to be successful.

And school staff are also conditioned to conform. Those teachers who teach in the prescribed manner, as seen through lesson observations and learning walks, are given promotions and the resultant increased pay. Those who do not perform are disciplined or have their capability questioned, and ultimately can lose their jobs. The reaction of the senior figure involved in the National Literacy Strategy, who expressed disbelief that teachers would take the strategy so literally, is reminiscent of the analogy of birds who will not fly out of an open cage. Education is slow to change because the sense of control becomes welcomed by its inhabitants.

Biesta's (2010, p21) third function of education is subjectification and yet there is little evidence of this in dystopian literature or England's schools in the manner in which Biesta positions this domain. Individuals become more like objects as opposed to developing subjective status, ruled over by those with power and socialised into conforming. This has to be the case in order for the powerful to continue to rule, and therefore creates a paradox.

In dystopian literature and in schools in England, the 'other' are supported to achieve by removing the barriers. In Oceania, there is a continuous employment and ready supply of alcohol and pornography; in Huxley's London, soma and sexual promiscuity; in England's schools, assigned seats, silent corridors and a prescribed curriculum. Bradbury's 1954 novel shows how books that upset people are banned, the actions by the awarding body towards Duffy's poem in 2008 show how poems that upset people are banned. And once all of these areas have been organised, it is clearly the fault of the individual if they are not successful. It is not the fault of the Party that Winston Smith's mind is not under their control, rather O'Brien tells him 'you have failed' (Orwell, 1987, p296), and children who do not succeed in England's schools have only themselves to blame for not working hard enough or being nice enough. As the KIPP alum surmised, their original slogan of 'Work Hard, Be Nice' 'doesn't actively challenge us to disrupt the systems that are trying to control us' (KIPP, 2020). And

why would it? The powerful want to remain powerful and condition the 'other' to recognise the ways of the powerful as aspirational. As Winston Smith recognises at the end of the novel, when he finally submits to the powerful and 'love[s] Big Brother', 'he had won the victory over himself' (Orwell, 1987, p354). Immitocracy is the goal.

Instead of creating opportunities for the current systems to be challenged, the powerful indoctrinate the 'other' into accepting their role in society. Schools are given guidance to ensure that students are taught impartially, with the focus on promoting the current, unequal systems. Handmaids are shown videos of victims from the previous regime, to remind them how lucky they are with their new freedoms. Character education does not serve to develop students' characters beyond ensuring their acquiescence to the current regime. The focus is on changing the consciousness of the oppressed, rather than promoting a change in society.

6.3 How can reading dystopian fiction affect our understanding of education?

My research started with the premise that reading matters because of the effect it has on the reader. Dystopian literature shows the threat this poses in society. In dystopian fictional places, literature is almost universally censored or banned in its entirety: books are burned in *Fahrenheit 451*, reading and writing are banned in Oceania and students in Huxley's London are discouraged from 'solitary amusements' (Huxley, 1976, p197) such as reading. The ability of reading literature to change the consciousness of the 'other' cannot be allowed if society is to continue to function. Reading will affect the reader and make them curious and this is too great a threat to the powerful. In England, universities are seeing the phasing out of degrees that do not lead to highly-paid jobs for graduates. There is no recognition of the power of studying beyond the transactional nature of education. In Oceania, only members of the Inner Party can access 'the book' (Orwell, 1987, p211). In England, only the powerful can access the knowledge previously available to all through grant-assisted higher education.

In 2020, education was seen as the utopian panacea to the dystopian world of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were not only places for children to learn knowledge and skills but also to make use of the socialisation and subjectification functions to support their mental health.

Ruth Hill
1702561

Using dystopian fiction as a lens has identified particular issues, including some less-desirable areas of interest in relation to the English educational system and how it functions. This research has proven relevant to policies and practices that are still emerging, such as the Ofsted subject research reviews released since 2021, and the Political Impartiality in Schools Guidance (2022). Whilst I am not suggesting that the English educational system is intentionally dystopian, through this research, it is clear that literature can act as a resource for educational thought and that literature can be a research method.

Biesta (2010, p22) represents qualification, socialisation and subjectification as a Venn diagram, and makes clear that the important parts are where the three domains intersect. What is most dystopian is that this research shows that, whether the three domains are considered separately and where they intersect, the outcome is the same. It is the powerful who control each domain, both in dystopian literature and in England's schools, and who do so through policies and practices which maintain their power in society whilst propagating the belief that they are benevolently supporting the less powerful. It is the 'other' who have to change to fit into the vision of the powerful in all three domains and who are manipulated into believing that this is for their own good and that, if they cannot succeed, the fault lies with them. I believe that this research has shown that Carr's statement of 1995 holds true: much can be gained from reading literature in terms of our understanding of education. And so, this research 'step[s] up, into the darkness within; or else the light' (Atwood, 1996, p307).

Ruth Hill
1702561

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Appendix 1

Ethics approval

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

www.brunel.ac.uk

22 May 2020

LETTER OF CONFIRMATION

Applicant: Mrs Ruth Hill

Project Title: Dystopian Literature and Education

Reference: 23233-NER-May/2020- 25605-1

Dear Mrs Ruth Hill

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has confirmed that on the basis of the information provided in your application, your project does not require ethical review.

Please note that:

- Approval to proceed with the study is granted providing that you do not carry out any research which concerns a human participant, their tissue and/or their data.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation relevant to the study.
- If during the course of the study, you would like to carry out research activities that concern a human participant, their tissue and/or their data, you must inform the Committee by submitting an appropriate Research Ethics Application. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Good luck with your research!

Kind regards,

Professor David Gallear

Chair of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London