Societal structures, class divisions, and class relations in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)

And why the novels continue to hold contemporary relevance.

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Abstract

This MA thesis investigates the portrayal of social division, societal structure, class relations and the suppressors utilization of the oppressed in the Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) when analyzed from a Marxist perspective. This is examined by the use of Fredric Jameson's The Political Unconscious; Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx' class theory; and Michel Foucault's notions of Docility, Panopticism, and Punish. The separate analyses investigate the protagonists' lives in relation to the portrayal of insolvable conflicts, ideological oppositions, and class relations as well as the creation of docile bodies, surveillance societies, and measures of punishment and how these measures are utilized in the class relations. Through the analyses, it is clear that both novels portray oppositional ideological standpoints, which enables an investigation of the portrayal of the class divisions, their interrelations, and power relations. Conclusively, it is evident that they share several thematics, such as surveillance, social inequality, punish and humanity, which are also evident in contemporary, western, society, wherefore it is concluded that the novels continue to be relevant, when read from this Marxist point of view.

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Introduction

> Dystopias are often seen as 'cautionary tales,' but the best dystopias are not didactic screeds, and the best dystopias do not draw their power from whatever political/social point they might be making; the best dystopias speak to the deeper meanings of what it is to be one small part of a teeming civilization. . . and of what it is to be human. (Adams, "Introduction")

Adams' distinction of the best dystopian literature's ability to emphasize the question of humanity, not only brings a refinement to the genre's function of providing its readers with warnings of a potential future (Claeys 501), it also highlights these novels' importance in not only their own publication time, but significantly their everlasting importance. What it means to be human has been a question of research, especially for philosophers, for thousands of years.[1] So, by turning to the question of humanity and the role of the individual in the societal entity, the best dystopian novels can inscribe themselves into an everlasting debate. This has been the case for many of what is considered "the best dystopian novels of all time" ("The best dystopian novels"), like George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), in which the upper class tries to abolish everything that is human; Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006), which dwells on humanity's struggle to survive in a post-apocalyptic world; and *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-10), which questions the capability of humankind ("The best dystopian novels"). However, two significant novels that also question the role of the individual in a societal structure and what it means to be human, are Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

When Canadian author Margaret Atwood published her now canonical novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, it was, mostly, received positively by critics and scholars, which ultimately sedimented her position as "Canada's most famous writer" (Mead). Significantly, the novel became acclaimed for its entrance in the debate regarding the role of the female in a 1980's

[1] Aristotle defined the living being as one who has a goal, but to be a human, one has to belong to a state (Bourke 7). René Decartes suggested that only humans have minds, and in the 18th century Immanuel Kant, defined humanity by its possession of rationality (Bourke 7-8).

western world.[2] Scholars also recognized the novel for its exploration of current trends in the 1980's U.S.: "Gilead is an allegorical description of the cultural system that exists in the United States right now" (Armbruster 148). The acclaim of the novel was further sedimented by the critics, who defined it as a "controversially and critically acclaimed new novel" (Rothstein), while simultaneously comparing it to some of the most recognized dystopias like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Rothstein). However, some reviewers were not convinced by Atwood's cautionary tale. In a review from *New York Times*, it was stated that recognition was missing from the novel, which is necessary for the reader to comprehend the narrative as a possible distorted future (McCarthy). Furthermore, the characterization was criticized, and it was stated "that it lacks imagination" (McCarthy).

The reception of Japanese-British author Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, was also predominantly positive, when released, yet some reviewers saw a slight confusion in its genre characterization. This was for instance the case in a review from *The New Yorker* that criticized the novel for its narrative plot holes, which made it difficult to comprehend the meaning of the novel (Menand), ultimately making the reviewer qualify the novel as "quasi-science fiction" (Menand). On the other hand, a review in *The Atlantic* praised the novel for its dealing with the coming-of-age genre (O'Neil). This positive receival was also sedimented in a review by *The Guardian*, which named it an "extraordinary and, in the end, rather frighteningly clever novel" (Harrison). As such, the reception of the novels came with a mixed view on their ability to narrate a convincing story. However, both novels are, and always have been, acclaimed for their brilliance and importance to the dystopian literary genre and their inclusion of contemporary events from their individual publication time.

In a lecture at West Point, Margaret Atwood said: "Nothing makes me more nervous than people who say, 'It can't happen here,' … Anything can happen anywhere given the right circumstances" (qtd. in Miller). This is a statement which she, in *The Handmaid's Tale* elucidates, by drawing on contemporary events in her warning depiction. In an interview with *The New Yorker* from 2017, Atwood highlighted the many facets and events of the real world, which she implemented in her novel. These were, for instance, the Romanian president Nicolaw Ceausescu's actions, including when he in 1966 "outlawed access to abortion and contraception in a bid to boost the country's population" (Mackinnon); reports

[2] In a review of the novel from 1986, Gayle Green wrote: "[T]he authoritarian society of the future makes us long for the world of the present; and this is the aspect of *The Handmaid's Tale* that will spark argument and disagreement among feminists" (14).

from American congressional hearings regarding "the regulation of toxic industrial emissions" (Mead); and press reports "on a Catholic congregation in New Jersey being taken over by a fundamentalist sect in which wives were called "handmaidens"" (Mead). By incorporating these events, Atwood not only illustrated the novel's importance and her critique of the western world's development, she also demonstrated her belief that anything can happen given the right circumstances, because, in some parts of the world, it already had.

The implementation of contemporary events was also employed by Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go*. Ishiguro's dystopia differentiates itself from other dystopian works of art, as it is set in the past. Thus, *Never Let Me Go* "imagines the near past as [a] speculative future" (Carroll 61) instead of depending on "dire predictions of a dark future" (Booker, "About This Volume" vii), as the genre typically does. Regarding the temporal placement of the novel's setting, Ishiguro commented that *Never Let Me Go* portrays: "a version of Britain that might have existed by the late twentieth century if just one or two things had gone differently on the scientific front" ("An interview with Kazuo Ishiguro"). Moreover, Ishiguro has further argued that since humanity managed to create the horrid situations with "nuclear obliteration" (Butcher 1300) during the 1950s and the 1960s, similar, rapid developments in the field of biotechnology would also have been possible, which could have created a "similar, alternative, history" (Butcher 1300). Ishiguro argued: "In order to take medicine forward, in order to take cures forward, we often do have to take risks and some of them are very profound risks" (qtd. in Butcher 1300). Hence, as the novel is set in the past, Ishiguro was able to draw on contemporary, real occurrences in order to create his dystopian warning of humankind's progression and its technical advancements.

One of these great developments occurred in the mid 1990's with the breakthrough in biotechnology, which resulted in the cloning of the sheep Dolly. This was the first time in history, it had been possible to successfully clone an adult mammal (Fridovich-Keil, et al.), and it was central in the field of bioengineering, as it "proved that specialised cells could be used to create an exact copy of the animal they came from" ("The Life Of Dolly"). The knowledge gained from this "significantly impacted research into therapeutic cloning" (Rugnetta), while also initiating additional processes of animal cloning (Rugnetta). According to Ishiguro, it was the advances in biotechnology that ultimately influenced the framework for the narrative of *Never Let Me Go* ("An interview with Kazuo Ishiguro"), wherefore he evidently was motivated by contemporary occurrences. As such, Atwood's and Ishiguro's novels both draw on their individual contemporary events as a way to create dystopian

warnings of what the world could come to look like, if certain features, events, or inventions had completely influenced society.

Moreover, the development of the western world has also created a growing popularity within the dystopian literary genre. According to Chris Robichaud, there is a simple answer to this: "You look to fiction to see how people are wrestling with serious problems" (qtd. in Locke), which is valuable for the reader "in a politically divided climate like today's" (Locke). As such, when faced with division and problems in the non-literary world, people look to fiction in order to see solutions that might seem impossible. In reference to the two chosen novels, this became evident with, for instance, the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016, "whose campaign trafficked openly in the deprecation of women" (Mead). This resulted in *The Handmaid's Tale*'s rise to the 2017 paperback bestseller list (Andrews) as well as the use of the slogan "Make Atwood fiction again" (Allardice), which started to appear on placards carried by anti-Trump protestors. Furthermore, Atwood's novel has also become a highly successful tv-series, currently airing its 4th season ("The Handmaid's Tale"), which ultimately illustrates the novel's continued popularity. Recognition of Ishiguro's novel was made evident by its filmization in 2010 ("Never Let Me Go"), and its importance was further sedimented by the Guardian, who, in 2019, placed it on a 4th place of the most important novels of the 21st century ("The 100 best books"). As such, both novels have been filmized and recognized for their importance, and both authors have received significant recognition for their work.[3]

Thus, with the authors' incorporation of contemporary events and societal facets in mind, the aim of this MA thesis is to investigate: *How are the societal structures, class divisions, and the superior classes' subjection and utilization of the underclasses evident in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go (2005)? And how do the novels' portrayal of central thematics, which are still present in contemporary society, make them both characteristic of the dystopian genre's literary tendencies as well as relevant in a contemporary, western societal context?*

In order to investigate the thesis statement, this MA thesis will, first, give an account of the methodological reflections, which led to the aforementioned thesis statement. Next, the

[3] Ishiguro won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017 ("The Nobel Prize") and he received a Booker Prize nomination for *Never Let Me Go* ("The Man Booker Prize 2005"). Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1986 ("Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo") and it won her the first Arthur C. Clarke award in 1987 ("About").

central terms and theoretical approaches will be defined and accounted for. These are: The dystopian genre; Fredric Jameson's theory of The Political Unconscious; Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx' class theory; and Michel Foucault's docility-creating disciplines, notion of Panopticism, and historicization of punish. Hereafter, these will be used in two separate analyses of the individual novels, in an effort to examine the underlying conflicts and ideologies. This will lead to an investigation of the class structure embedded in the societies, which will culminate in an examination of the novels' incorporation of the inevitable revolution. This will be followed by an investigation into how the societies maintain their existence, through an analysis of the superior class' utilization of control measurements. Ultimately, a comparison of the two novels will be conducted in order to elucidate their differences and similarities. This will all lead to a discussion of how the novel's dissimilarities and resemblances can be connected to the dystopian, literary genre's tendencies, in reference to their individual publication times. Moreover, it will lead to an account of whether the narratives' inclusion of control measurements, suppression, class division, and question of humanity can be seen as relevant in connection to the events and societal features in the contemporary western society.

Methodological Reflections

The underlying basis for this MA thesis was an interest in the literary genre of dystopia, as well as its usage of contemporary events as possible commentaries. More specifically, it was an interest into the importance of canonic dystopian, literary works in a contemporary connection, which laid the foundation for the two novels chosen. In so, Margaret Atwood's renowned novel *The Handmaid's Tale* was selected, because of its established literary position and its resurgence. Next, it was an interest in selecting a novel, which portrays some of the same thematics as *The Handmaid's Tale*, yet in a different way, which resulted in the choice of the established and highly acclaimed author Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*. This choice would allow for an investigation into the different and similar societal structures and control measurements that the two novels depict. As such, upon reading the two novels, it was clear that they both, though vastly different, present fictional societies, in which control over citizens is exercised by a superior group. Therefore, they were ultimately chosen as the research subjects for this MA thesis.

The original idea was to analyze how the two novels' dystopian societies function as representations of Marxist criticism, as well as how their use of surveillance is utilized to obtain governmental control. It should, furthermore, entail an analysis of the differences and similarities between the two novels' use of the dystopian genre, as a means to investigate how

they function as possible commentaries on societal occurrences in the non-literary world. For this analysis, the original idea was to solely use Engels and Marx' class theory, Foucault's notion of Panopticism, as well as Jameson's notion of the Symbolic Act. However, after having read several scholarly articles that treat the respective novels, the field of interest and approach to the MA thesis changed. This deflection was, additionally, influenced by further research into the chosen theoretics' work, significantly Jameson's and Foucault's.

After having looked into the research area regarding the two novels, it became evident that Atwood's novel typically has been subjected to analyses regarding its portrayal of sexuality and gender, often with a feminist outlook on the novel.[4] By contrast, Ishiguro's novel has typically been subjected to analyses with a focus on ethics in relation to the implementation of scientific developments, significantly cloning, and ethics regarding humanity.[5] However, some scholars have also treated the two novels from the same theoretical outlook, one of which is the appliance of the notion of otherness and race.[6] As such, by researching the many ways that the two novels have been examined, it was evident that this MA thesis should explore notions and aspects of the novel that have not been combined in the way done here.

The interest in utilizing a Marxist theoretical framework, combined with the wish to contribute with a new perspective to the analytical field regarding the two novels, resulted in the formation of a new approach for the MA thesis. The focus became to examine how the novels portray class-based societies and how the superior classes utilize power, by the use of different measurements, as a means to depict the novels' similarities and differences in terms of genre characteristic, literary tendencies, and relevance in regard to societal occurrences in

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[4] See for instance Sandra Tomc's ""The Missionary Position" Feminism and Nationalism in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" (1993) and Aisha Matthews' article "Gender, Ontology, and the Power of the Patriarchy: A Postmodern Analysis of Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" (2018).

[5] See for instance Stephanie Petrillo's "Moral Theories and Cloning in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*" (2014) and Nathan Snaza's article "The Failure of Humanizing Education in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*" (2015).

[6] See for instance Wen Guo's article "Human Cloning as the Other in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*" (2015), and Christabelle Sethna's article ""Not an instruction manual": Environmental degradation, racial erasure, and the politics of abortion in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)" (2020).

a contemporary context. To explore this, the MA thesis will first include a definition of dystopia, in which professor Gregory Claeys' notion of the genre in *Dystopia: A Natural History* (2018) and Professor Keith Booker's work on the genre in *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature Fiction as Social Criticism* (1994) and *Critical Insights Dystopia* (2013), will serve as the main sources. However, both professor Lyman Tower Sargent, and Professor Tom Moylan will also be utilized in order to give a comprehensive clarification of the genre. This genre definition will be used to establish the novels' genre, and will entail an account of two subgenres, the critical dystopia and the classic dystopia, as well as the genre's literary tendencies through time, and its relation to utopia.

Secondly, an account of the Marxist theoretic Jameson's theory of The Political Unconscious in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act* (1983) will be carried out. This will entail a historical background for the development of his theory as well as an account of the three historical horizons that constitutes his theory. This will be done to demonstrate the novels' respective symbolic acts and ultimately depict the class differences by analyzing the oppositional ideological standpoints. Next, an account of the class struggle and the capitalist societal structure, as defined by the socialist theoretics Engels and Marx in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), will be conducted. This will first be done by drawing on the historical account of the socialist ideology. This will lead to an elucidation of the capitalist mode of production, as a means to utilize their notion of class division and the inevitable revolution. Hereafter, an account of the French philosopher Foucault's notion of docility will be conducted, in which a walkthrough of the disciplines that can create docile bodies will be accounted for. Additionally, an account of his notion of Panopticism, and the historical development and usage of punish, will be carried out. This will be done as a means to investigate the ways in which the superior class is, possibly, able to create perfected societies in which they are in constant control.

Since the overall basis for the MA thesis is a Marxist approach, it is relevant to give a short account for the choice of theorists, specifically Engels and Marx, Jameson, and Foucault. Though Engels and Marx serve as the main theorists, in regard to the analyses of the class division and the societal build within the two novels, it is relevant to utilize the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's notion of the *Ideological State Apparatus*, despite its difference from Engels and Marx' understanding of ideology. This will be done to explain why the subjects are unable to liberate themselves from their suppression, and to illustrate how they are indoctrinated with the state ideology. This will, consequently, lead to a

utilization of Engels' term *false consciousness* as a means to understand what effect the indoctrination has on the proletarians self-understanding.

Jameson is, for many, "the world's leading exponent of Marxist ideas writing today" (Roberts 1). Foucault, on the other hand, disagreed vastly with the orthodox view on Marxism (Nealon 56), as he did not believe that "class is … the binary clash that organizes the entirety of the socius" (Nealon 57), which stands in contrast to the Marxians' belief. Nevertheless, despite his disagreements with Marxist theory, Foucault did acknowledge that the class struggle still exists, but he rather suggested that it had "morphed into a new series of forms alongside transversal developments in capitalism" (Nealon 56). Secondly, both theorists agree that "the organization of social space is subject to discontinuous changes" (Tally Jr. 122), however, they disagree as to how these changes come across. Jameson understands the societal shifts as "rooted in the material process and functions of capital itself" (Tally Jr. 122), thus drawing on a highly Marxist comprehension of the importance of history in the formation of societies. This belief leads to his dismissal of what he refers to as "that shadowy and mythical entity Foucault called 'power'" (qtd. in Tally Jr. 122), which Foucault lays as the foundation for the societal shifts. However, even though the two critics are not in agreement, Foucault's work on power intersects Jameson's Marxist critique, as they both agree that social formations are constant, and always have, changed throughout history (Tally Jr. 122). In so, "Foucault's cartography of power is not absolutely inconsistent with the historical mapping of production of space in … Jameson" (Tally Jr. 122), despite the fact that his ultimate goals and methods are vastly different from Jameson's (Tally Jr. 122). As such, it is evident that the two critiques do not agree completely in their understanding of how societal entities change, yet both agree that they do. Hence, it is evident that, despite Foucault's anti-Marxist beliefs, his notions can still be applied alongside Jameson's Marxist critique and thus employed in a Marxist analysis. Therefore, the choice to use the two theorists together have been deemed possible and beneficial for the overall analytical goal of this MA thesis.

Theory

Dystopia

"The task of literary dystopia … is to warn us against and educate us about real-life dystopias" (Claeys 501). Such states Gregory Claeys in *Dystopia A Natural History* (2018), in which he outlines the development of the dystopia, as not only a fictional, literary genre, but also as a phenomenon and thought that originates from the real world.

Dystopia is broadly understood as a juxtaposition to utopia: "[T]he bad place versus what we imagine to be the good place, the secular version of paradise" (Claeys 4). However, as Claeys clearly expounds, such a distinction is not comprehensive to the understanding of either genre. This is primarily due to the sentiment that "what one person considers an ideal dream might to another person seem a nightmare" (Booker, "Introduction" 3). Hence, the comprehension of a world as either utopian or dystopian is always dependent on the one who perceives it: It is a matter of perspective. However, "most of what we associate with 'dystopia' is … a modern phenomenon" (Claeys 4), which derives from a turn from utopian thinking to a dystopian emphasis (Booker, "Introduction" 15).

The thought of the perfected society can be dated back to the Greek philosopher Plato, who proclaimed "the value of the development of specialized skills and divisions of labor in ways that are clearly forerunners of modern technology" (Booker, "Introduction" 5). However, the modern perception of utopia is credited to Thomas More's work *Utopia* (1516), "gave its name to a new genre of fiction devoted to imagining the possibilities of better human societies in which the social, political, and economic problems of the real present have been solved" (Booker, "On dystopia" 4). Here, More also states that the implementation of ""natural science" [is] among the pursuits that bring moral and cultural development to the citizens of his ideal society" (Booker, "Introduction 5). As such, science has always been significant in utopian thinking (Booker, "Introduction" 5). Even though More's perception of science does not correspond entirely to a modern one, modern science became an integral part of utopian thinking in the 17th century, when Francis Bacon saw the potential of scientific developments (Booker, "Introduction" 5). Bacon foresaw the development of and view on science, which would characterize and be realized in the Enlightenment, where the predominant belief was that "unlimited progress … [would] overcome all obstacles set before it" (Booker, "Introduction" 6). However, by the end of the 19th century, a growing skepticism toward utopian thinking and the role of science and technological advances in its creation, were starting to supervene (Booker, "Introduction 6).

The growing skepticism was further elucidated in the beginning of the 20th century, where the thought of "crisis was embodied in the phenomenon of modernism" (Booker, "On dystopia" 2). But as significant events such as "World War I, the Great depression, the Holocaust, World War II and the Cold War" (Booker, "On dystopia" 3) defined the twentieth century, it was made evident to the inhabitants of the western world that "enlightenment modernity was leading not to utopian dreams but to dystopian nightmares" (Booker, "On dystopia" 4). Moreover, the historical developments in society affected the literary genres of

its contemporary present (Booker, “Introduction” 16). What is seen in society is reacted to in literature, and with the events in the real world, it is “little wonder that literature would respond with the dark visions that we have come to know as dystopian” (Booker, “On dystopia” 3). Thus, the growing skepticism in the 20th century directly resulted in a genre shift and the emergence of the dystopian literary genre.

Claeys credits author Michel Houellebecq for stating that the general purpose of the novel is to entertain (448). However, the dystopian genre is chiefly characterized by having a higher purpose than this. This is a fact, which Claeys elaborates on by referring to Margaret Atwood's insistence that “the specific function of dystopias is to warn us of societies we wish not to inhabit” (448). Even though the utopian and dystopian genre both emerged from the same set of societal problems, such as “how to control industrialization, widespread poverty, the concentration of wealth, and an increasing tendency towards collectivist solutions to these issues” (Claeys 274), the events of the 20th century and the rise of individualism made people “more repressive and puritanical of the older utopian tradition as a part of the problem rather than of the solution” (Claeys 274). This resulted in an increase of dystopian literature, whose task it became to envisage these ominous futures, as well as propose alternatives to them (Claeys 270).

The dystopian genre has been defined and redefined through the past century, but can, according to Claeys, be understood as being “primarily concerned to portray societies where a substantial majority suffer slavery and/or oppression *as a result of human action*. Privileged groups may benefit from this. Others may escape it, either to a condition of previous (preferable) normality or to something better” (290). This definition is made on the basis of the work of Lyman Tower Sargent, who is credited for having written “[o]ne of the most widely cited attempts to establish a coherent terminology for utopian and dystopian fiction” (Booker, “On dystopia” 6). It is, furthermore, through the work of Sargent that the ultimate break between what is defined as dystopia and anti-utopia is made, as he elucidates that the “main difference … is that the dystopia comments on one’s own society, while the anti-utopia is a response specifically to utopia, fictional or supposedly real” (Tiess 32).

However, Sargent also offered an additional way to categorize dystopias, in which one is to take their “fundamental relationship with utopian thought” (Booker, “On dystopia” 7) into account. By this, Sargent suggests a division between what he defines as *classic dystopias*, where there is a focus on “critique of whatever social or political practices examined in the text” (Booker, “On dystopia” 7), and *critical dystopias*, which critique “negative practices or institutions” (Booker, “On dystopia” 7), and retain “a strong utopian

dimension, emphasizing that there are alternatives to the dystopian conditions being portrayed" (Booker, "On dystopia" 7). The critical dystopia thus consists of

> a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one … [utopian] enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a … [utopia]. (Sargent qtd. in Rankin 226)

Sargent's term was further developed by Tom Moylan, who added that the genre consists of dystopian texts that ""maintain" [within them] a utopian impulse"" (qtd. in Rankin 226), which allows "both readers and protagonists to hope by resisting closure: the ambiguous open endings of these novels maintain the utopian impulse *within* the work" (qtd. in Hall 210). As such, the open endings create hope for the protagonist, as well as the reader, because a better future is possible.

Several trends have existed since the development of the dystopian genre in the early 20th century. In the early 1900s, where "the impact of machinery upon all aspects of human existence, combined with scientific discovery" (Claeys 494) rose in popularity, a key theme of the genre was established (Claeys 494). With the two World Wars and the "increasing popularity of socialism" (Claeys 355), Bolshevism and fascist totalitarianism became the thematic trend in dystopian fiction between 1917 and 1950 (Claeys 494). However, from 1950 and "to the present" (Claeys 494), there has been a shift in thematics. Whereas the dystopian novels of the early 20th century had focused on political collectivism, they were now characterized by themes such as "nuclear warfare, overpopulation, and the threat of scientific and technological domination of mankind" (Claeys 494). This trend was briefly interrupted by a spike in fears "concerning extreme egalitarianism and collectivism" (Claeys 494), in the 1960s and 1970s, but was then reinstated in the 1980s, from which on the presented scenarios of the dystopian fictional societies was "mostly focused on climate change" (Claeys 494).

Common to these three predominant themes in dystopian fiction since the 1950s, is that they do not create societies defined by a totalitarian dictatorship (Claeys 489). Instead, it is

> centralized states [that] are increasingly depicted as destroyed by neo-liberal ideological assault. They allow the wealthy to retreat into enclaves, leaving most of humanity to their unfortunate fate … Selfishness, viciousness, violence, scarcity for the many, but bare, breadline survival for the few, define the future. The plutocratic dystopia edges ahead of its collectivist counterpart. (Claeys 489)

The "spectre of totalitarian despotism" (Claeys 495), as a key theme, is, predominantly, left behind during the 1980s. This, along with the decline in the depiction of dystopian novels with an anti-utopian element, is what characterize the literary dystopias from the 1980s and forward. Some aspects of the dystopian novels of the early 20th century do, however, remain a part of the novels from the 1980s and into the 21st century. This includes the threat of universal surveillance, the "concern with machines and their increasing domination of humanity" (Claeys 489), and the portrayal of technical and scientific advancements (Claeys 490).

With the entrance of the 21st century, the literary dystopia experienced "an additional explosive growth in popularity" (Booker, "About this volume" vii), which can be seen as evidence of the people's "increasing lack of confidence that governments can deal with our mounting social, economic, and environmental problems, or that the heartless corporations can be prevented from colonizing every aspect of daily life in the new century" (Booker, "About this volume" vii). It is, thus, the increasing skepticism towards the world and the lack of confidence in those who rule, which spiked the interest for the dystopian genre, as well as the increase in authors, who took to create dystopian texts that criticize the decrease in society. Furthermore, the dystopian novel of the 21st century is generally characterized by a lack of "the revolutionary overthrow of the system, for either better or worse" (Claeys 495). As such, the previous revolutions, or hints of revolutions, that occurred in the literary dystopias of the past are now rarely a part of the dystopian novel; a collectivistic solution does rarely rise from the suppressed groups in the societal structure (Claeys 495).

Hence, the development of the dystopia both as a societal thought, but also as a literary genre, has taken place through more than a century. Derived from the utopian thought of how science and technology could play a part in creating perfect societies, skepticism arose in the early 20th century, and the dystopia was born. However, by the genre's rise in popularity in the 21st century, it became evident that the dystopian fictional portrayals still carry great importance. The dystopias portray the societies that are unwanted; they comment on the societies of their contemporary time, and when the real world becomes excessively

cruel or chaotic, the dystopian novels illustrate that it can become much worse if nothing is changed. The fear of science and technology, the lack of trust in the governments' abilities, alongside the fear of an environmental catastrophe, and the consequences that could follow, is what characterize the dystopian novels of the 21st century and has done so since the rise of the critical dystopias in the 1980s. However, "even the darkest dystopian fiction contains certain utopian energies, if only because the very motivation behind dystopian fiction is so often an attempt to provide … cautionary warning that might help us to prevent the undesirable events depicted in the fictions" (Booker, "About this volume" vii). So, even though the thematic trends have shifted through time, the task of the literary dystopia has remained the same: To warn and educate about the real-life dystopias and what can come, if the real society does not change.

The Political Unconscious

"Always historicize!" (Jameson, "Preface" ix), such states Jameson in his work *The Political Unconscious* (1981); a statement, which he proclaims to be the moral of the work ("Preface" ix). Jameson presents a method that enables the unearthing of the underlying political dimension of a literary work of art. It is a method, in which Jameson illustrates distinctive codes and categories that should be used when interpreting a given text; an interpretation that, according to Jameson, never can be made without historizing and thus taking the text's political and historical context into consideration.

Jameson presupposes that

> we never really confront a text immediately, in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself … we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or–if the text is brand-new–through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions. ("Preface", ix-x)

In so, Jameson highlights interpretation as the key to understanding any text. When confronted with a text, it is the previous experiences and interpretations gathered from other texts that is drawn on, as a means to categorize and understand it. With his view, Jameson has created a method, where interpretation is "construed as an essentially allegorical act, which consists of rewriting a given text in terms of a particular interpretive master code" ("Preface" x). Hence, the object of study is not as much the text itself, but rather "the interpretations through which we attempt to confront and to appropriate it" (Jameson, "Preface" x).

Jameson argues that a political interpretation of literary texts must be prioritized ("On interpretation" 1). His method enables the analyst to conceive the political perspective, which he perceives as "the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation" ("On interpretation" 1). However, to Jameson, the problem, in relation to the interpretation of a text, arises when the "epistemological break [of the analyst] begins to displace itself in time according to ... [his/her] own current interests" ("On interpretation" 2). Jameson thus highlights that a text should be considered and interpreted on the basis of the historical time it was created in. A text can, as such, not be perceived to have a modern relevance without taking its contemporary affiliation into consideration. To this, Jameson argues that "only a genuine philosophy of history is capable of respecting the specificity and radical difference of the social and cultural past while disclosing the solidarity of its polemics and passions, its forms, structures, experiences, and struggle, with those of the present day" ("On interpretation" 2). Therefore, according to Jameson, Marxism is the only philosophy that can do so ("On interpretation" 3).

As stated, Jameson argues that his "Marxist method of literary and cultural interpretation" ("On interpretation" 60) is superior to those made by, for instance, Louis Althusser, Sigmund Freud, and Northrup Frye, while simultaneously crediting these theorists for their work and as essential cornerstones in his development of this "ultimate *semantic* precondition for the intelligibility of literary and cultural texts" ("On interpretation" 60). It is, according to Jameson, only Marxism that can comprehend the sum of history itself ("Preface" xiv), which he lays as a foundation for his development of his Marxist interpretive method. Jameson does, however, clearly state that the matters of the historical past and their relation to a contemporary reality can only gain their original urgency if they are understood and retold within

> the unity of a single great collective story; … if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a fundamental theme–for Marxism, the collective to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity; … if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single cast unfinished plot. ("On interpretation" 3-4)

It is, precisely when "detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history" (Jameson,

"On interpretation" 4) that the theory of The Political Unconscious and its interpretative method is explicitly functional and thus finds its necessity ("On interpretation" 4).

In order to carry out his method, Jameson stresses that the "semantic enrichment and enlargement of the inert givens and materials of a particular text" ("On interpretation" 60) are to transpire within three frameworks, which are concentrically linked ("On interpretation" 60). The three concentric frameworks, or "semantic horizons" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 61), are called the political horizon, the social horizon, and the historical horizon, and are all essential when interpreting a text. With these, Jameson offers his Marxist method of how to interpret texts, and the first step in doing so is to comprehend the text and its connecting political history, which takes place within the first horizon; the political horizon.

Within the political horizon, the text is the object of study and it must, at this level, still solely be comprehended within the limits of the narrow political and historical context, in which the text will "tend to coincide with the individual literary work or cultural artifact" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 62). However, the individual text is to be grasped as, borrowing the term from Kenneth Burke (Fry 235), a "*symbolic act*" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 61).

In construing his interpretive method, Jameson makes use of an interpretive model by Lévi-Strauss, which imposes an interpretive principle: "[T]he individual narrative, or the individual formal structure, is to be grasped as the imaginary resolution of a real contradiction" ("On interpretation" 62). This Jameson elaborates on, as a means to illustrate how this interpretive horizon differs from "the traditional notion of "context" familiar in older social or historical criticism" ("On interpretation" 66). Jameson states that the status of the external reality is far greater than in the traditional sense of context, by explicating that this kind of interpretation is to be understood as a "rewriting of the literary text in such a way that the … [text] may itself be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological *subtext*, it being understood that that "subtext" is not immediately present as such … but rather must itself always be (re)constructed after the fact" ("On interpretation" 66). As such, Jameson elucidates that the text is not to be considered by what it signifies, but rather how it functions as a symbolic act, meaning what the subtext, in the form of the symbolic act, conveys to the reader. The emergence of the symbolic act, within the text, "begins by generating and producing its own context in the same moment of emergence in which it steps back from it, taking its measure with a view toward its own projects of transformation" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 67). In essence, by reading the text, it immediately creates its own context, which, through this particular horizon, creates a social commentary. This is a

fact, which Paul Fry comments further on: "[T]he political level is designed to resolve a contradiction in fiction that has no resolution in the real world" (236). Thus, the symbolic act is a fictitious commentary on, and possible solution to, a problem that has not seen a solution in the non-literary world. By clarifying the literary text as such, Jameson moves on to the second semantic horizon: the social horizon.

What was, in the first horizon, regarded as individual texts should, in the social horizon, be considered as ""utterances" in an essentially collective or class discourse" (Jameson "On interpretation" 66). The object of study now moves to the "*ideologeme*" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 61), which is the "smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 61). However, Jameson notes that in accordance with Marxist theory, classes are always defined relationally, meaning that a class' ""values" are always actively in situation with respect to the opposing class, and defined against the latter" ("On interpretation" 69). It is precisely on the basis of this class distinction that Jameson names the class structure as "*dialogical*" ("On interpretation" 69), and more specifically an antagonistic dialogical structure, in which the dialogue of the class struggle "is one in which two opposing discourses fight it out within the general unity of a shared code" ("On interpretation" 70). Nonetheless, in order to conduct an analysis within the social framework, it is necessary to look at the ideologemes that are present within the text. Jameson defines an ideologeme as

> an amphibious formation, whose essential structural characteristic may be described as its possibility to manifest itself either as a pseudoidea–a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice–or as a protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the "collective characters" what are the classes in opposition. ("On interpretation" 73)

The ideologeme should, thus, be understood as a representation of an ideology, either political, social, or historical, but can, however, also represent a larger ideology, for instance, the class-ideology of Marxist theory.

This dual quality of the ideologeme requires that, when identified by the analyst, it must be subjected to both a "conceptual description and a narrative manifestation all at once" ("On interpretation" 73). It is, thus, necessary to first identify the ideologemes, and then further investigate what these ideologemes represent, as a means to accentuate the symbolic

act of the text. Fry states that it is the ideologemes that present the conflict, which has no solution (236). In so, the ideologemes are essential, as it is by these that the opposing conflict of the classes is made evident in the text. Fry further elaborates by stating that within this social horizon "you don't get even a knowingly arbitrary resolution" (237), rather the analyst is presented with "the ideological voices of various classes and perspective [that] are openly in conflict" (237). Hence, at this level there is a sole focus on the ideologemes, which conjure this class conflict and it is as such not achievable to excerpt the solution (Fry 237). What is presented is a "subversion and reaction, a tension of voices that is not meant to resolve anything but is meant, rather, to lay bare the conflicts" (Fry 237). Thus, the ideologemes make the underlying conflict of the text come to light (Fry 237). Having explicated the object of study of the political level and of the social level, Jameson's method moves on to the third horizon, where the "organizing unity will be … *mode of production*" ("On interpretation" 74), thus keeping in line with the Marxian tradition.

Jameson describes the third horizon, the historical horizon, as the "ultimate horizon of human history as a whole" ("On interpretation" 61). In this horizon, the individual text and the ideologeme is put through a final transformation, in which the construction of ideology becomes "the symbolic messages" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 62). As such, Jameson elucidates that the object of study has, once again, shifted and the goal is now to examine how this symbolic act and the engagement with a collective discourse connects to human history in all its entirety ("On interpretation" 61).

The transformation of the text and its appertaining ideologemes are now termed as "*the ideology of form*" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 84), which is "the determinate contradiction of the specific messages emitted by the varied sign systems which coexist in a given artistic process as well as its general social formation" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 84). Hence, the social messages of the text must be read in a relation to the presented dominant mode of production. Jameson emphasizes that, like the social classes, which cannot exist nor be defined without the inclusion of their opposition, the object of study of the final horizon cannot "consist in the concept of an individual mode of production" ("On interpretation" 81). Instead, it must draw on the historical experience and be characterized as "*cultural revolution*" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 81). This, Jameson describes as "that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life" (81).

Bearing this in mind, Jameson clarifies that the task of the analyst, within this final horizon, is "the rewriting of its materials in such a way that this perceptual cultural revolution can be apprehended and read as the deeper and more permanent constitutive structure in which the empirical textual objects know intelligibility" ("On interpretation" 83). This leads to Jameson's claim that within this ultimate horizon, the text "is … restructured as a field of force in which the dynamics of sign systems of several distinct modes of production can be registered and apprehended" ("On interpretation" 84). Ultimately, Jameson arrives at history itself, which then "becomes the ultimate ground as well as the untranscendable limit of our understanding in general and our textual interpretations in particular" ("On interpretation" 86). History is, following Althusser, the 'absent cause', and can, as such only be apprehended through its effects and never as a tangible force in itself (Jameson, "On interpretation" 88); a characteristic, which Jameson ascribes history, as a means to resist reification and thematization ("On interpretation" 86). Thus, Jameson has arrived back at his starting point and the accentuation of his entire work: "Always historicize!" ("Preface" ix), because history itself is the everlasting and ever-present notion that carries the greatest importance.

As such, Jameson's intent is to offer a method of which the analyst can assert a political unconscious reading of any text. By applying the concentric horizons, it is possible for the analyst to uncover The Political Unconscious, and thus the true intention, of any text: "[A]ll literature, no matter how weakly, must be informed by what we have called a political unconscious, … [and] all literature must be read as a symbolic mediation on the destiny of the community" (Jameson, "On interpretation" 56). The Political Unconscious is, as such, present within all texts, and by the appliance of Jameson's theoretical method, a societal political reading of a text and the analysis of, not what the text means, but rather what it does, is made tangible.

Marxism

"The first name likely to be associated with the ideology of socialism or at least with its communist variant, is that of Karl Marx" (Ball & Dagger 118). However, the formation of the socialist ideology cannot be ascribed to Marx, but to the Greek philosopher Plato, who outlined his vision of an "Ideal State" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 42). He describes an ideal state, whose overall goal is, like that of Marx, to build "an egalitarian society that does not discriminate its citizens" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 53). How this is carried out, and how the society should be construed, is vastly different between the two theorists, however, both share a belief "in the municipality of classes in the society" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 53). The main difference, between the two theorists,

is that while Plato perceives "[e]conomic factors … as subservient to political ends" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 52), Marx' modern conception of communism has an emphasis on economics: "Political power is just an instrument in the hands of the economically powerful class" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 52). However, even though the socialistic ideology and its necessity in creating a utopian society can be traced back to Plato, it is Marx "who laid down the principles of modern communism" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Plato" 53) and, as G. Sreedathan states: "No thinker in the 19th-century has had so powerful influence upon mankind as Karl Marx" ("Political Theory of Karl Marx" 223).

Essential for the understanding of Marx' modern communism is his theory of history called "historical materialism" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Karl Marx" 223). With this theory, Engels and Marx state that "[h]istory is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which uses the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations" ("Feuerbach: … II" 58). As such, they comprehend history as revolving around the idea that societies emerge and diminish "as they further and then impede the development of human productive power" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Karl Marx" 223). History and the different shifts within it are, thus, according to Engels and Marx, defined on the basis of material productions through time. So, what is being produced in order to live, conditions everything in society. This is what they define as *mode of production*, which Marx explicates by stating that "[t]he mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life" ("Author's Preface"). Thus, he emphasizes his notion that each historical period of time and its society has been shaped around a certain mode of production.

Society is constructed by two factors called *base* and *superstructure*. Here, the base should be understood as a union between "forces of production and relations of production" (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 62). The forces of production refer to two factors: The means of production, meaning the raw materials as well as the instruments used to produce, and labor power "that is, the productive faculties of producing agents" (Cohen 32). In so, the forces of production should be understood as all that is used to "produce things" (Cohen 32), including the workers and their abilities. The relations of production refer to "definite relations [, which men enter into,] that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production" (Marx, "Author's Preface"). The relations of production should, thus, be understood as the different relations that occur between those who produce. As such, each

mode of production is not only different in terms of what it produces, being for instance agricultural or industrial, but also by how it creates different relations between the producing agents, as for instance a master/slave relation in a slave mode of production or a lord/peasant relation in a feudal mode of production (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 62).

The base or "economic structure of society" (Marx, "Author's Preface") is the foundation on which a distinct superstructure is developed. The superstructure should be understood as the "institutions (political, legal, educational, cultural, etc.)" (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 62) and the "definite forms of social consciousness" (Marx, "Author's Preface") that are brought on by these institutions. Though Marx stated that the base serves as the foundation from which the superstructures rise ("Author's Preface"), Engels later clarified the true meaning of the relationship between base and superstructure. He stated that even though "[t]he economic situation is the basis, … the various elements of the superstructure … also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*" (Engels, "Letter. Engels to J. Bloch"). As such, Engels explicates that the relationship between base and superstructure is not onefold– superstructure being determined by base–but instead it is twofold. On the one hand, it can, as Marx elucidated, be seen as a matter of the base conditioning or determining "the limits of the content and form of the superstructure" (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 62). On the other hand, it can be said that "the superstructure both legitimates and challenges the base" (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 62). Thus, the base does, according to Engels, define the terrain of the superstructure, yet what happens within this terrain is not solely determined by the mere fact that it was shaped and reshaped by the base, but instead by how the participants and the institutions within the superstructure occupies it (Storey, "Classical Marxism" 63). However, even though Engels elucidates this twofold relationship, it is evident that "getting and keeping power is the motive behind all social and political activities" (Tyson 51). Since the base of a society is the economic structure, it is evident that by gaining the economic power, the social and political power is also inevitably obtained.

As mentioned, different modes of production generate different modes of relations. These relations do not only constitute the production, but also divide society into a hierarchy. This division between people elucidates Engels and Marx' claim that even though man, through time, have struggled to stay alive and fed, no struggle has ever been as important as the class struggle:

> The history of all hitherto existing society† is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master‡ and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (*Manifesto* 14)

By this, Engels and Marx clarify that each of the different modes of relations have been succeeded and given "rise to the next step in an inevitable historical process" (Sreedathan, "Political Theory of Karl Marx" 225). But, in relation to Marxist theory, it is specifically the capitalist mode of production, which is the subject for Engels and Marx' class theory. In their work *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), they describe their view on society in a capitalist mode of production, how the classes of society are structured, and how society can, ultimately, change and thus reach a communistic utopia.

In the Manifesto, Engels and Marx remark that the capitalist society of their modern times had "sprouted from the ruins of feudal society" (*Manifesto* 14). As such, with the rise of the industrial revolution, the societal class structure–the lord peasant relations of the feudal mode of production–had been replaced by a capitalist mode of production, which brought a new social relation. This relation did, however, not entail an equal society, as class antagonism was still predominant in this new societal structure: "It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 14), and, as Engels and Marx express, society is in fact more than ever being divided into two antagonistic classes–"Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (*Manifesto* 15).

Engels and Marx define the bourgeoisie as "the class of modern capitalist, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour" (*Manifesto* 14). It is the class consisting of the "haves" (Tyson 52) in society. It controls the means of production and thus the societal economy, which ultimately also includes the power over how the world's institutions are structured and what ideology its citizens must follow. The proletariat, on the other hand, are "the modern working class … a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only as long as their labour increases capital" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 18). The proletarians are thus the "have nots" (Tyson 52) of society, who have no personal ownership, who have no power, and who perform the manual labor of

society. As such, there is a distinctive hierarchical structure between the two opposing classes, but this turn to industrial production does furthermore have predominant influence on the individual laborer:

> [the bourgeois] mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time. (Marx, "Section 4." 645)

The proletarians are thus subjected to the power of the bourgeoisie and they are forced to abide by the hierarchical structure and ideology set by the oppressive class. This leads to them losing all sense of their individual self; it is the control and the "exploitation of the many by the few" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 22).

The capitalist mode of production will, however, fall, as the bourgeois will be overthrown by the proletarians who, eventually, will band together and rise against the oppressive class (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 21). The bourgeoisie's need to continually make production more effective, revolutionizing it, and, as such, alter the conditions under which the laborers work, ultimately led to a distinct centralization of production by contracting the property in a few hands instead of the many (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 17). However, this also created a centralization of politics, thus resulting in a society consisting of "one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier, and one custom-tariff" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 16), and, according to Engels and Marx, the only way to break this centralization is with the rise of a revolution against the suppressive class.

Engels and Marx define the proletariat as "a really revolutionary class" (*Manifesto* 20), as they, unlike previous classes who have overthrown their suppressors, do not wish to continue the class-based society. The proletarians wish to abolish all classes, including themselves and can, as such, not "become master of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 20). This will, according to Engels and Marx, inevitably take place by a forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie: "[W]ar breaks out into open revolution … where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the

foundation for the sway of the proletariat" (*Manifesto* 20). The proletarians will, thus, ultimately unite and attain their ends "by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 34).

So, for the proletarians to create a societal change they must unify, a factor which Engels and Marx pleads for in their manifesto: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. **Working Men of All Countries, Unite!**" (*Manifesto* 34). Only by the proletarians collectively realizing their place in the societal hierarchy and uniting in a violent revolution, will they be able to create a new societal structure, where the classes and class antagonism of the bourgeoisie society will be replaced by "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 27). Hence, even though the bourgeoisie controls the means of production, its constant need to revolutionize "the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 16), not only centralizes the production, but it is, above all, producing "its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 21). So, by continuingly pressuring the working class, the bourgeoisie is creating its own end, by manufacturing the forces of the inevitable revolution, by which the proletariat will create a utopian society according to their beliefs and values.

Docile Bodies

Foucault presents that, in the 18th century, a new interest in projects of creating docility arose; instead of treating the body collectively and as "an indissociable unity" (Foucault 137), the perspective changed and was perceived individually instead. This newfound interest brought new perspectives: First, the extent of the control changed, meaning that subtle acts of coercion was applied to the body, resulting in the control over its "movements, gestures, attitudes, [and] rapidity" (Foucault 137); secondly, the object of control became economy in the form of efficiency in both the body's movement, as well as the correct and most successful organization of it (Foucault 137); and lastly, there was a shift in modality, which included a constant coercion of the body, as well as supervision of the processes that constitutes the performed activity, instead of the result, as it has been previously. This, Foucault states, should be exercised in a way that partitions "time, space, [and] movement" (137) as equally as possible (137).

The abovementioned changes and the methods that appeared with them is what Foucault refers to as "'disciplines'" (137). Hence, a "'mechanics of power'" (Foucault 138)

arose; it established who was in control over others' bodies, in order for the bodies to operate according to an executive's wishes regarding techniques, speed, and efficiency (Foucault 138). Thus, the body, which is increasingly disciplined, is also increasingly dominated. Discipline, therefore, creates bodies that are subjected to external factors, such as the commands of a leader, and practiced by that same command and leader, wherefore they become docile (Foucault 138). Hence, docile bodies are created from a set of techniques of disciplinary power, which are divided into four categories: The Art of Distribution, the Control of Activity, the Organization of Geneses, and lastly, the Composition of Forces.

In the following, the disciplines, and their overall effects, will be listed. However, the relevant, individual disciplines will be explained in more detail in the analysis, whereafter it will be demonstrated how they are present and utilized in both Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.

The Art of Distributions

Discipline through the distribution of bodies–or individuals–is achieved through four techniques: Enclosure, partitioning, functional sites, and rank. In so, this category of disciplines, as Foucault describes, elaborates on "the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault 141). The deliberate distribution of individuals creates important spaces that can be defined as both physical and ideal; physical, as it ascribes specific functions and maneuvers to specific sites and places, and ideal as the spaces allows for "characterizations, assessments, [and] hierarchies" (Foucault 148). Therefore, Foucault argues that, through the distribution of individuals and places, "the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical" (Foucault 148).

The Control of Activity

The control over activities can be induced by the use of five disciplines: By using time-tables, by creating temporal elaborations, by correcting the body and the gesture, by articulating the relation between the body and the object, and, lastly, by "[e]xhausive use" (Foucault 154). Time-tables, Foucault argues, will assist in the creation of "a time without impurities or defects" (Foucault 151), a "*temporal elaboration of the act*" (Foucault 151) will ensure the correct execution (Foucault 151), and the correlation between the body and the gesture establishes "the correct use of the body" (Foucault 152). Moreover, articulating the body-object relation will define the gesture (Foucault 152-153), and lastly, repeating the gesture exhaustively aims at achieving "maximum speed and maximum efficiency" (Foucault 154), as it seeks to "intensify the use of the slightest moment" (Foucault 154). In so, this category is aimed at ensuring the most effective performance of specific exercises. Hence, by

utilizing the activity-controlling disciplines, discipline and docility will be manifested in individuals and their performance of activities. The disciplines subject bodies to certain activities and the correct and most efficient way of performing them, while holding them under supervision. Thus, they ensure that control can be upheld, and activities can be streamlined even further.

The Organization of Geneses

According to Foucault, "disciplines, which analyse space, break up and rearrange activities, must also be understood as machinery for adding up and capitalizing time" (157). This is accomplished in four ways: By creating independent and modified durations of time, which are divided into "successive or parallel segments, each of which must end at a specific time" (Foucault 157); organizing these time-threads according to an analytical plan, so their complexity is gradually increasing (Foucault 158); finalizing the segments of time with an examination (Foucault 158); and, lastly, by drawing up "series of series; lay down for each individual, according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him" (Foucault 158). The creation of consecutive successions enables the possibility of comprehensive control and interventions at any time, while also enabling the characterizing of individuals and the possibility to use them according to their level (Foucault 160).

Associated with this disciplinary method is the key term *exercise*: "[The] technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated" (Foucault 161). Utilizing exercises is contributory to bending the behavior of the subjected individuals towards a definitive and final state. Moreover, exercise also advances the characterization and supervision of individuals, as their activities become predetermined by others, and the performance can, thus, be measured and compared (Foucault 161).

The Composition of Forces

During the classical period, the military unit developed into a machinery, constituted by many parts and individuals that all worked in cooperation with each other to attain the same, specific result (Foucault 162). The determinant factor behind the development was the invention of the rifle, as "it involved … the disappearance of a technique of masses in favour of an art that distributed units and men along extended, relatively flexible, mobile lines" (Foucault 163). Hence, the soldier–and the military unit–transitioned from a mass of men to a build-up of "divisible segments" (Foucault 163).

Additionally, the structure of the working day changed: The new "productive force" (Foucault 163) should have a total effect that was to exceed "the sum of the elementary forces that composed it" (Foucault 163). Thus, the total of the working-time required to produce "a

useful effect" (Foucault 163) should be diminished (Foucault 163). Foucault draws on Marx to arrive at the conclusion that a new demand emerges:

> [A] new demand appears to which discipline must respond: to construct a machine whose effect will be maximized by the concerted articulation of the elementary parts of which it is composed. Discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine. (Foucault 164)

Therefore, the productive force should unite to create a joined force, which will surpass the ability of the individual, and maximize the overall productive power. The demand is explicated in the following ways. First, Foucault says: "The individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others" (164). Hence, the individual body is reduced to a specific function (Foucault 164). Secondly, "[t]he various chronological series that discipline must combine to form a composite time are also pieces of machinery" (Foucault 164). This means that all the individual elements, which are a part of the productive power, must contribute to minimizing the production time, while also maximizing the effect and the result of the work. Lastly, Foucault states that "[t]his carefully measured combination of forces requires a precise system of command" (166), wherefore "the master of discipline" (Foucault 166) must signal to the disciplined bodies what he wishes for them to do (Foucault 166-167). Hence, in discussing the making of docile bodies, Foucault views the body and the individual as components of a machine, in which all must participate to achieve the best possible result.

However, Foucault takes the notion of power through discipline further; he takes it from the image of a militant context into that of a political and societal:

> Politics, as a technique of internal peace and order, sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile useful troop … The classical age saw the birth of the great political and military strategy … but it also saw the birth of meticulous military and political tactics by which the control of bodies and individual forces was exercised within states. (Foucault 168)

Thus, the making of docile bodies is not only relevant in a military or working context; it can be used and seen in states and societies. Hence, this is a strategy, which not only makes

employees, students, etc. behave, but a strategy that can make all of the citizens in a country, state, society, etc. comply with, for instance, the ruling of the government.

Ultimately, docile bodies are the result of thorough disciplinary measures taken from the people in power. The disciplinary techniques work to reinforce the power of the rulers and to sustain the subjection of the laboring individual. Moreover, they are a set of powerful tools in the efficiency improvement of the result and in the overall working power. The different techniques originate from several different places, ranging from the military to factories, monasteries, and schools, but they can also be used in a wider context, as Foucault articulates (168). They are, for instance, also evident and exercised within states (Foucault 168):

> 'Discipline must be made national … The state that I depict will have a simple, reliable, easily controlled administration. It will resemble those huge machines, which by quite uncomplicated means produce great effect; the strength of this state will spring from its own strength, its prosperity from its own prosperity. Time, which destroys all, will increase its power. It will disprove that vulgar prejudice by which we are made to imagine that empires are subjected to an imperious law of decline and ruin'. (Guibert, qtd. in Foucault 169)

In so, the disciplinary techniques can also be effective in the construction of a society. In this context, the use of spatial distribution, activity control, learning and implementation of exercise, and composing the society's forces can create a society, which functions as an efficient and powerful machinery.

Panopticism

In his work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Foucault presents his notion of Panopticism, which he composes on the basis of Jeremy Bentham's architectural structure of the Panopticon. Bentham's structure is an annular construction; in the center is a tower that is occupied by the inspector and in the periphery are the prisoners' cells. The cells are designed to ensure that the prisoners are secluded from one another, thus precluding them from communicating (Bentham, "Letter 2." 40). Moreover, each cell has two windows; one, which faces the inspector, and one on the opposite side of the cell, which allows light to enter from the outside. Hence, by the use of backlight, the inspector is able to observe the prisoner in his cell (Bentham, "Letter 2." 40-41). Thus, the panoptic structure facilitates the supervision of great multitudes; it enables the observation of the many by a single individual,

wherefore the structure mirrors the general development in the penal system: The immediate focus has shifted from the spectacle to that of the private individual, who no longer should be punished, but rather, disciplined.

A central aspect of Bentham's Panopticon is that the inspector is undisclosed and at all times unseen from the perspective of the cell; "the inspector's lodge" (Bentham, "Letter 2." 40) is equipped with blinds and partitioned into quarters by right angles, wherefore the inspector is shielded from the prisoners (Bentham, "Letter 2." 41). In so, it is impossible for the individuals in the cells to know when or if they are being watched and they must, therefore, behave as if they are under constant surveillance. Hence, the panoptic structure, according to Foucault, creates a "dissociating [of] the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (202). Foucault imputes great significance to this, as it creates a power that is automatized and disindividualized: It renders unimportant who fulfills the role of the inspector, as this individual is completely unknown for the occupants in the cells, wherefore it could be any individual occupying the inspector's lodge. Moreover, the power is automatized, as the panoptic structure creates a "concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, light, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (Foucault 202). Thus, the panoptic structure creates an automatic and disindividualized power, as the constant uncertainty regarding surveillance creates a constant disciplined behavior, while it also ensures that power is not controlled by one specific person. In fact, Foucault–and Bentham himself–argues that if the number of individuals, who take on the role of the inspector, is as numerous, temporal, and anonymous as possible, the cell occupants will experience a greater "anxious awareness of being watched" (Foucault 202) and thus the disciplined behavior is further reinforced (Foucault 202; Bentham, "Letter 1." 40).

Moreover, the automatization of power entails that the use of force is unneeded. Hence, the Panopticon renders measures such as bars, chains, and locks superfluous; by knowingly being exposed to constant visibility, the subjected individual "assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault 202-203). Therefore, the external power, which is exercised on the body, does not need to be corporal; if instead the power is incorporeal, Foucault argues that its effect will be more "constant, profound and permanent" (203). In so, the panoptic structure can obtain a continuous success that refrains from corporal

confrontations and which is always predestined (Foucault 203). Consequently, the discipline is reinforced in a non-corporal way that also aligns with the general development in the penal system, in which punishment no longer strikes the body, but instead seeks to affect and improve the soul (Foucault 16).

Moreover, Foucault emphasizes that the Panopticon should be accessible to the general public, meaning that individuals from outside the panoptic institution should be allowed in to observe the structure and its functions (Foucault 207). This works as a precautionary measure: "There is no risk, therefore, that the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible 'to the great tribunal committee of the world'" (Foucault 207). This measure not only regard the treatment of the individuals occupying the cells, it also applies to the observer from outside the structure, who is under the supervision of the other observers. In this way, the Panopticon becomes transparent and a place in which "the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole" (Foucault 207).

Additionally, the Panopticon is also able to supervise its own functions and mechanisms: From the tower in the center of the structure, the inspector is able to observe prisoners as well as the employees, who are governed by his orders. Thus, the inspector can "judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best" (Foucault 204). Moreover, the inspector is also under a possible constant surveillance; at any time, another inspector can arrive at the tower, and he is, as such, able to observe the functioning inspector, his actions and behavior, and how the structure is functioning, while being concealed (Foucault 204). In so, the Panopticon is constructed to prevent any abuse and misuse of power; the public is able to observe the cell occupants, their state, and conditions, while the inspector is also under supervision. Thus, it is not only the prisoners who come to regulate their behavior; the inspectors are also subjected to disciplinary measures and must act according to regulations and norms, as any deviations can be uncovered. In so, precautionary measures are taken, in order to secure the panoptic structure from any one individual or small group of people seizing control over the many.

In his outline of the Panopticon, Bentham uses the image of a prison as his prime example. However, he is explicitly aware that the construction is applicable and suitable to other kinds of establishments and contexts, in which inspection and supervision is necessary (Bentham, "Letter 1." 40). Foucault also comments on the structure's versatility and states that apart from the necessary modifications, the structure can be used "[w]henever one is

dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed" (205). Thus, the panoptic structure is polyvalent; it serves as a powerful instrument in locating and distributing bodies in space, according to their common relations and mutual hierarchy, while also administering the center of the power and its channels (Foucault 205). In so, it is possible to expose power relations, as well as enhancing the level of discipline in all sorts of establishments. Moreover, as the structure is applicable to a grand selection of establishments and institutions throughout society, Andrew Hope, referring to the unpredictability in the surveillance, argues: "Thus, Bentham's innovation was not just to inspect or ensure an asymmetrical gaze, but also to use uncertainty as a means of social control" (36). Hence, as David Lyon also concludes, the uncertainty embedded in the structure works to ensure subordination ("From Big Brother" 65).

As mentioned, Foucault bases his notion of Panopticism on Bentham's Panopticon, and although many other theorists have discussed the structure, it is not until Foucault takes interest in it that it receives a more widespread interest (Lyon, "From Big Brother" 62). According to Foucault, the vital effect of the Panopticon is:

> [T]o induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers. (201)

And it is this understanding, which he builds on to construct his notion of *Panopticism*.

Foucault views the panoptic structure as a method to reinforce and expand discipline and describes Panopticism as a "functional mechanism" (209) that works to improve the execution of power "by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, [and] a design of subtle coercion for a society to come" (209). Hence, Foucault expands on Bentham's architectural structure and applies it to society as a schema "of a generalized surveillance" (Foucault 209). This new form of discipline, Foucault ascribes to the historical transformation of society during the 17th and 18th centuries, in which disciplinary mechanisms spread throughout society, resulting in the formation of what Foucault calls "the disciplined society" (209). In

so, as a "disciplinary modality of power" (Foucault 216), Panopticism has infiltrated–and in some places even undermined–the other modalities of power (Foucault 216).

Foucault's notion of Panopticism can, therefore, be encapsulated as the "extension of … [Panopticon's] system of surveillance to society as a whole" (Storey, "The panoptic machine" 137), wherefore it comes to function as another disciplinary mechanism. Foucault states: "The chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train' … Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (170). Hence, Panopticism improves conformity and docility in individuals; it reinforces the preferred and normalized behavior in individuals, while it also moves the composed body of individuals, which constitutes the combined population in a state, workforce, etc., into position. On the basis of this, Andrew Hope explicitates Foucault's Panopticism as:

> [The way in which] a small number of people can exercise control over a large group of individuals not merely through 'the few watching the many' (both physically and through records) but via self-surveillance and the observed accepting the normalising discourse embedded in the monitoring process, which suggests the 'appropriate' way to behave. (37)

In so, Panopticism is an extension of Bentham's architectural structure, which is applied to society and everyday life; Panopticism produces an internalized authority, power, and feeling of being watched and judged, which makes individuals conform to the behavior that is preferred by the executors and normalized. Hence, it reinforces docility and enhances discipline as well as efficiency, productivity, and the subjection of the exposed individuals.

Punish

"By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the gloomy festival of punishment was dying out" (Foucault 8), Foucault narrates and thus punishment as a spectacle gradually disappeared (8). However, prior to this, penalties had had a strong hold on the body (Foucault 10), and physical pain was a frequent element in punishment (Foucault 11). Foucault exemplifies the use of torture as a penalty with the public torture of Robert-François Damiens in 1757. He was sentenced to the "*amende honorable*" (Foucault 3), meaning he had to, barefoot and wearing only a shirt, undergo an extreme self-abasement (Descheemaeker 923) and beg for forgiveness in front of the church (Descheemaeker 294). Thereupon, Damiens was led to a public scaffold, on which he had to undergo extreme

physical torture: His flesh was torn off, he had "molten lead, burning oil, burning resin, wax and sulphur" (*Pièces originales* … qtd. in Foucault 3) poured over him, and lastly, his body was "quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds" (*Pièces originales* … qtd. in Foucault 3). Foucault also mentions examples of torture in the form of dismembering, amputation, and symbolic brandings (8). In so, embedded in punishment as a spectacle were "theatrical representations of pain" (Foucault 14).

However, there was a development in the way one perceived the public, physical punishment:

> It was as if the punishment was thought to equal, if not exceed, in savagery the crime itself, to accustom the spectators to a ferocity from which one wished to divert them, to show them the frequency of crime, to make the executioner resemble a criminal, judge murderers, to reverse roles at the last moment, to make the tortured criminal an object of pity or admiration. (Foucault 9)

Thus, it should no longer be possible to compare the penalty with the crime itself; instead, the spectacle and pain should be eliminated (Foucault 11). Additionally, there was a shift in the penal system: The penalty no longer touched the body, but if it did, it was as little as possible, and as a means to reach something other than the actual body: "The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property." (Foucault 11). Accordingly, a more modern penal system emerged (Foucault 11). Punishment, thus, no longer directed itself towards the body of the condemned, but it maintained power by striking "the soul rather than the body" (Mably qtd. in Foucault 16). In so, the new penal system and outlook on punishment allowed for a more complex approach to penalties: By focusing on the soul and rehabilitation of the offender, it was possible to contemplate aspects such as 'why did the offence happen?', 'why did the offender commit the crime?', and 'how can we ensure rehabilitation?' (Foucault 19). Hence, it became possible to supervise and investigate the offender.

In the second half of the 18th century, protest against the public execution intensified (Foucault 73). Protesters wanted to break with the "physical confrontation" (Foucault 73) in punishment; they believed that criminal justice should seek to punish, not revenge. In doing so, the humanity of the criminal became a focal point: "In the worst of murderers, there is one

thing, at least, to be respected when one punishes: 'his humanity'" (Foucault 74). This belief led to a change in punishment; instead of obtaining revenge over the crime by exposing the criminal to, for instance, corporal torture, the 'man' inside of the criminal was now the target in the penal intervention. Hence, it was humanity, the system of criminal justice was to reach, and this was "the object that it claimed to correct and transform" (Foucault 74).

Ultimately, the protesters succeeded and the way, in which society and the legal system punished, changed. Embedded in the penalty became the element of calculation as a way to ensure the desired effect of the punishment (Foucault 91-92). One meant that for punishment to have the most effect, it should consider the possible disorders that the crime could initiate. Moreover, drawing on Gaetano Filangieri, Foucault adds that the extent of the punishment must be determined by how the offence affects the social order (92). Thus, an offence should not be punished "in direct proportion to its horror" (Foucault 93); instead, "[o]ne must calculate a penalty in terms … of its possible repetition. One must take into account not the past offence, but the future disorder" (Foucault 93). Hence, a new belief emerged that one should punish only to the extent that ensures that an offence will not be imitated or repeated.

The new form of punishment preserves its power by the use of six techniques: First, is the rule of "*minimum quantity"* (Foucault 94), meaning that the disadvantages of committing a crime must be greater than the advantages (Foucault 94). Secondly, punishment should create a "sufficient ideality" (Foucault 94): "If the motive of a crime is the advantage of it, the effectiveness of the penalty is the disadvantage expected of it" (Foucault 94). Hence, the image of the pain following an offence will keep people from committing or repeating a crime. Moreover, the punishment should have lateral effects, whereby it will ensure that punishment also will affect non-offenders; thus, if one can ensure that the criminal will never repeat his actions, it is–in theory–not necessary to punish him, one must just let others believe that he has been punished (Foucault 95). Punishment must be a "perfect certainty" (Foucault 95), wherefore one cannot think of committing a crime without also thinking of the punishment that is certain to follow. This also presupposes that no crime can go unnoticed (Foucault 95-96). Furthermore, there must be a "rule of common truth" (Foucault 96), meaning that establishing the crime "in all evidence, and according to the means valid for all, becomes a task of first importance" (Foucault 97). Lastly, all offences and their penalties must be clearly defined, otherwise they cannot be eliminated (Foucault 98), and since the punishment should prevent any recurrence, it must also take into consideration the offender's character, his mental state, motives, etc. (Foucault 98).

Therefore, the object of punishment and intervention gradually became criminality rather than crime (Foucault 100), wherefore punishment became a mechanism in the process of eliminating criminality and acts of illegalities. Hence, there has been a change in the object of punishment: "[I]t is no longer the body, with the ritual play of excessive pains, spectacular brandings in the ritual of the public execution; it is the mind" (Foucault 101). Consequently, a more modern penal system was developed, in which elements such as calculation is used to ensure the elimination of offences and the rehabilitation of offenders.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)

A Description of the Society

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is set in the Republic of Gilead (Atwood 33), which has replaced what was formerly the United States. Gilead, as it is referred to colloquially, is a highly patriarchal and "effective totalitarian system" (Atwood 320); it arose after a fertility crisis, which resulted in birth rates declining "down past the zero line of replacement, and down and down" (Atwood 123). This caused a revival of religiousness, and the extremist group Sons of Jacob grew popular. They seized societal and governmental power and created the social structure, philosophy, and ideology on which Gilead was based (Atwood 318). Hence, they implemented extreme Christian beliefs throughout the societal and political structure and thereupon emphasized virtues such as modesty and purity, which are thus omnipresent in Gilead and expressed in aspects of daily life ranging from clothing to teaching (Atwood 35; 38-39). The citizens of Gilead are divided into classes according to their place in the societal hierarchy and their gender, wherefore the societal structure is characterized by gender segregation; males can be Commanders, Angles or Professionals, Guardians, or a member of the Eyes of God, and the women are labelled either a Wife, Aunt, Handmaid, Martha, Econowife, or Jezebel. Below these groupings are the people who have been sent to the Colonies and who thus no longer are a part of society.

The Political Unconscious

In order to examine the underlying ideologies present in *The Handmaid's Tale,* it is relevant to apply Jameson's theory of The Political Unconscious to depict how these represent social contradictions. As previously described, in order to conduct such an analysis, it is pertinent to examine the text through his horizons; the first of these being the political horizon, where an analysis of the novel's symbolic act is undertaken.

The Symbolic Act

According to Barbara Foley, the premise of the symbolic act is:

> Because this nightmarish History can be known only in textual form, … it constitutes a kind of "absent cause" that must be inferred from the "symbolic acts" that make up the text's narrative. These symbolic acts at once gesture toward and suture over social contradictions that are inaccessible to direct representation. (657)

As such, Foley elucidates that the intent of the text is implicated through the textual narrative, which constitutes the symbolic act. In the novel, the symbolic act is situated around the discrepancy in the balance of power between the citizens, drawing on the differences between the old society and the new society. To exemplify this contradiction, it is relevant to examine two characters: Offred, who represents the old society, and the Commander, Fred, who represents the new society.

The old society is expressed through Offred's skepticism toward the new society and her place within it. Offred remembers how the old society was structured and what power and control she had over herself and her actions. This is, for instance, evident when she thinks back on her previous life: "I think about laundromats. What I wore to them: shorts, jeans, jogging pants. What I put into them: my own clothes, my own soap, my own money, money I had earned myself. I think about having such control" (Atwood 34). In the new social order, women like Offred have no right to own private property (Atwood 187) and no right to work (Atwood 185-186), so when reminiscing about the old society, it is control and free choice, which Offred misses and thus, indirectly critiques the new society for taking from her.

In the new society, women, here exemplified with the Handmaids, have been reduced to a commodity that must fulfill their purpose, and there have been implemented several laws regulating how they must act and engage in relations with other citizens, especially, the Commander of the house. Offred's skepticism toward this hierarchical structure is exemplified by her description of her first private visit to the Commander:

> My presence here is illegal. It's forbidden for us to be alone with the Commanders. We are for breeding purposes: we aren't concubines, geisha girls, courtesans. On the contrary: everything possible has been done to remove us from that category. There is supposed to be nothing entertaining about us … We are two-legged wombs, that's all. (Atwood 146)

Offred is visiting the Commander on his request, but she is aware that it is against the law. As such, Offred expresses that she is aware of the role she has been assigned, but she is also

aware that she has no choice in the matter. She cannot refuse him, as he is the one who holds the power (Atwood 146),[7] thus indicating that society maintains a forcible control over the citizens, who are lower in the hierarchical structure. Therefore, Offred's descriptions of her societal role, her lack of power, and her longing for the old society and the control she once had, indicates her skepticism toward the Commander as well as the entire hierarchical structure.

Moreover, Offred's skepticism is further clarified through her unwavering belief in an inevitable revolution: "I believe in the resistance as I believe there can be no light without shadow; or rather, no shadow unless there is also light" (Atwood 115). This belief is further accentuated by her belief that she will escape her societal role.[8] To Offred, this new society is doomed to fall, and she will not remain in her role forever. As such, through her skepticism toward the new society, the Commander, and all who hold societal power, Offred manifests her belief that a second revolution is inevitable, but also necessary in order to create a new society that is more like the former. Thus, through Offred's skepticism, one side of the symbolic act, the old society, of the text is unraveled and elucidated through Offred's narrative.

The contradiction in the symbolic act is found opposite the old society, here represented through the Commander, who becomes a manifestation of the new society, in which the Eyes of God and him and his fellow Commanders are the people with power. Despite the fact that the Commander's actions, at times, contradicts the regulations, he is indisputably an advocate for the new social order. However, the Commander is not only an adherent, he is also one of the founders and thus he acts from a higher hierarchical place, where he has certain advantages that others are denied. This is emphasized by his gender, seeing as the society is highly patriarchal. Hence, his influence and gender induce prosperity and benefits, which also elucidates his stance and attitude toward the new societal structure.

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[7] Though Offred states that it is dangerous if Serena Joy finds out about her visits, it is more dangerous for Offred to refuse him, as "[t]here's no doubt about who holds the real power" (Atwood 146).

[8] Deduced from Offred's utterance: "I intend to get out of here. It can't last forever (Atwood 144).

However, it is not just the Commander's co-founding role[9] that illustrates his belief, it is also underlined by his actions and utterances. His sentiment and role of dominance is, for instance, established when he and Offred visit Jezebel's, a club exclusively for male officers and officials, where they can "meet people … [and] do business" (Atwood 249), while being entertained by "quite a collection" (Atwood 249) of women, as he says, ranging from "real pros" (Atwood 249) to women with different educational backgrounds (Atwood 249). The club's existence, despite such things being "strictly forbidden" (Atwood 248), combined with the fact that it is directed toward officials, also illustrate the disproportionate, hierarchical societal structure; if one is situated in a superior position, one is granted more freedom and more advantages than others. Hence, the Commander's advantageous position within Gilead is manifested yet again.

The Commander is openly aware of his beneficial position. During their visit at Jezebel's, Offred and the Commander has the following conversation:

> "I thought this sort of thing was strictly forbidden," I say.
> "Well officially," he says. "But everyone's human, after all."
> … "What does that mean?"
> "It means you can't cheat Nature," he says. "Nature demands variety, for men. It stands to reason, it's part of the procreational strategy. It's Nature's plan … Women know that instinctively. Why did they buy so many different clothes, in the old days? To trick the men into thinking they were several different women. A new one each day." … "So now that we don't have different clothes," I say, "you merely have different women." This is irony, but he doesn't acknowledge it.
> "It solves a lot of problems," he says, without a twitch. (Atwood 248-249)

Although he knows that Jezebel's is forbidden, the Commander believes that it is acceptable for him and other males of higher status to have the benefit of these things, seeing as they are "human, after all" (Atwood 248). Moreover, the intent of the place as well as the way in which he discusses the women at Jezebel's reflects his, and his fellow officials', view on the remaining societal roles' humanity: They do not have a club, thus they are not human in the

[9] Deduced from the Historical Notes, in which it is mentioned that Frederick R. Waterford is the possible Commander Fred, which Offred served at. He is credited for designing "the female costumes" (Atwood 319) and the terms *Particicution* and *Salvaging* (Atwood 319).

same way, as these men are. Additionally, the way in which he discusses the women at Jezebel's displays a sense of supremacy: He refers to them as beings who are there to please his kind, meaning men of high rank. Seeing as he does not use his position of power to try to change the state of things, but instead solely exploits it, his positive attitude toward the new societal structure is accentuated. In so, it is evident that the Commander believes in the societal structure, including its political aspect, wherefore he stands as a representation of the new society. Accordingly, the Commander adopts the form of a contradiction to Offred, and what she represents, thus manifesting the juxtapositional standpoint between the two characters.

Hence, the discrepancy of the novel's symbolic act is found in the contradiction between the old society and the new society, as represented through Offred and the Commander. It is in the struggle between these two opposites that the unsolvable conflict, which defines the political horizon (Jameson, "On interpretation" 64), is evident and thus the symbolic act is manifested. However, the narrative of the text does offer a possible solution to this symbolic act and, as such, how the conflict can be solved. This is expressed through Offred's continuous attempts to regain some of the power that has been taken from her, which ultimately takes the form of subtle revolts against the new society.

Through the narrative, Offred's actions move from small acts of defiance to larger acts of revolt. One of the small acts is her disobedience against the law, which states that Handmaid's are not allowed to read (Atwood 129). In her room, there is a small cushion with the word "FAITH" (Atwood 67) embroidered on it, and when she reads the word, she regains some power: "Every once in a while I would take it out and look at it. It would make me feel that I have power" (Atwood 90).[10] The mere act of reading this is illegal. Therefore, simply by reading the text, Offred's beginning revolt against the system emerges. A larger act of defiance is her involvement with the Commander. Though she is aware that she cannot deny his advantages, she does gain some power over herself from her relation to him. At the end of each visit, he asks her to kiss him (Atwood 149), thus forcing her to do something she neither wants to but also knows is illegal. But what he cannot control is her emotions in this relation and, therefore, she always shuts her eyes when kissing him (Atwood 281) and, as such, gains some power over herself and her involvement.

[10] However, this is not the only time she conducts this illegal act. In her room, she finds a Latin text "*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*" (Atwood 62), which means "Don't let the bastards grind you down" (Atwood 197). Thus, she once again defies the law.

However, the largest act of revolt is her relationship with Nick. Though her first sexual relation with him is initiated by Serena Joy (Atwood 216), Offred continues to have a sexual relationship with him (Atwood 280). As such, through her relation to Nick, she makes a choice about what she wants and needs, wherefore she regains some power over her actions. Her voluntary involvement with Nick is also sedimented by the fact that, when she is with him, she always looks him in the eyes when kissing him (Atwood 281).[11] Thus, maintaining eye contact manifests her personal involvement and free choice in her relation to Nick and the power she gains over herself from being with him. Her relation to Nick is also what serves as the solution to the symbolic act, and therefore the contraction in her relation to the Commander. Ultimately, Offred's disobedience and acts of revolt are what makes her escape her role. As such, the solution is that one must revolt against the oppressive regime and by doing so, escape the contradictory relationship. Since Offred manages to perform these acts of revolts, it is evident that the system is flawed; Offred can win and the Commander, and all he stands for, will be the losing party in their interaction.

Ideologemes

The second horizon, the social horizon, can also be applied to Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Here, Offred serves as the embodiment of one side, here an ideology, and the Commander as an embodiment of her opposite. Offred and the Commander will thus be the focal point for this ideological analysis from the perspective of the horizons pivotal notion, ideologemes. The two characters express juxtapositional political ideologies, while simultaneously depicting social contradictions, which, alongside their interactions and relationship, facilitates the reader's comprehension of The Political Unconscious of the novel. Hence, both Offred and the Commander are to be understood as ideologemes in the narrative, which illustrates contradictory ideologies in the novel and are used as devices to uncover the social oppositions of specific societal problematics in the Gileadean society.

Throughout the novel, the narrative is presented from Offred's point of view. It is through her that the reader learns what has become of the United States and how the Gileadean society emerged. But it is also from Offred's narrative that the reader gains insight into the different class divisions in the societal structure. A lot is unknown about Offred, but most significant, in this societal structure, are her "viable ovaries" (Atwood 153). As she

[11] This emphasizes the difference in her relations with the two men: "With the Commander I close my eyes, even when I am only kissing him goodnight. I do not want to see him up close. But now, here, [with Nick] each time, I keep my eyes open" (Atwood 281).

gave birth in the pre-Gileadean society,[12] she is considered of value in the new society, wherefore she has been forced to be a Handmaid.

Gilead is characterized by the excessive force by which the oppressors control the oppressed; especially the control over the Handmaids' language. The Handmaids are not allowed to speak freely and have been indoctrinated to use certain phrases as communication. They must greet each other by saying "Blessed be the fruit" (Atwood 29) to which the response is "May the Lord open" (Atwood 29). If they are in agreement, they are to say, "Praise be" (Atwood 29) and when departing they must say "Under His Eye" (Atwood 54). However, from the beginning of Offred's narration, the reader is confronted with her budding anti-Gileadean sentiment. This is evident in her longing to talk freely from the indoctrinated phrases; a yearning she acts on, on multiple occasions. As such, even in the beginning, at the Red Centre, Offred says: "We learned to whisper almost without sound … We learned to lip-read, our heads flat on the beds, turned sideways, watching each other's mouths" (Atwood 14). Hence, already from her first days as a Handmaid, Offred acts in a way that she knows is illegal and by doing so her sentiment against the oppressive rule is elucidated.

This is further evident during her walks with Ofglen. Initially, Offred fears that Ofglen might be "a real believer" (Atwood 29),[13] but when she learns that Ofglen is not, they start to talk freely, as much as they can. Once again, Offred's use of non-indoctrinated language illustrates her sentiments against the oppressive rule. Furthermore, her use of a freer language is exemplified during her private meetings with the Commander. With him, she talks about whatever he wishes, while simultaneously playing board games, involving spelling and writing. Offred describes these small ventures: "This is freedom, an eyeblink of it" (Atwood 149). As such, Offred's use of language, the ability to talk free from her indoctrinated phrases, and the small instances where she can write, grants her a sense of freedom, which depicts her strong negative feelings about the Gileadean ideology. She is against the rules of the regime, and when given the chance she takes power over her own mind and uses her free speech, at least to a certain degree. Hence, Offred can be seen as a symbol of the anti-Gileadean element of the novel, as she breaks the rules and laws set by the regime.

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[12] Through her reminiscence of her previous life, the reader learns that Offred had a daughter with her husband Luke (Atwood 33).

[13] This also illustrates Offred's characteristic of herself as not being a believer of the oppressive rule.

Moreover, Offred embodies the anti-Gileadean ideologeme by committing more acts of revolt, as a means to assert her personal control over a homogenizing organization like the oppressive regime of Gilead. This is exemplified with her search for a voluntary touch. The Handmaids have been stripped of their free will and must only talk and act in a specific way. There are strict rules about who can touch them and what they are allowed to do, touch, and say. Therefore, the need to touch a fellow human being becomes a pivotal missing element in Offred's existence: "I hunger to touch something, other than cloth or wood. I hunger to commit the act of touch" (Atwood 21). Her use of the word 'hunger' suggests that the need to touch someone is a carnal urge she has to please in order for her to survive. As such, Offred expresses that to touch a fellow human being, of her own free will, is a longing and a crucial element of her existence; an act that she has been robbed of. In so, when Offred expresses that she craves to 'commit the act of touch' it becomes evident that her carnal need is against the laws of society. However, the reader experiences that Offred acts on this illegal hunger.

Already at the Red Centre, Offred narrates that at night, when in bed, the Handmaids "could stretch out … [their] arms, when the Aunts weren't looking, and touch each other's hands across space" (Atwood 14). As such Offred would act on her need to touch a fellow Handmaid. However, after more time at the Red Centre, the attitude about the oppressive rule changed among the Handmaids, and the Red Centre became a place of alliances (Atwood 139). In this connection, Moira and Offred became close friends and would sneak to the washroom, so they could talk through the stalls (Atwood 100). At one instance, when Moira had mentioned her plan to escape: "Two of Moira's fingers appeared, through the hole in the wall. It was only large enough for two fingers. I touched my own fingers to them, quickly, held on. Let go" (Atwood 100-101). Again, though it is against the law, Moira and Offred's touch becomes a symbol of their anti-Gileadean sentiment, as it not only depicts the strong connection between them, but also becomes a sign of Offred's growing defiance.

However, it is during her time with the Commander and Serena Joy that Offred's most significant act of revolt occurs, thus further highlighting her anti-Gileadean sentiment. During a time in the sitting room, Nick's and Offred's feet touch. Whether it is by accident or a deliberate action on the behalf of Nick, Offred is unaware of, but her feelings regarding this touch is evident: "[Nick is] so close that the tip of his boot is touching my foot. Is this on purpose? Whether it is or not we are touching, two shapes of leather. I feel my shoe soften, blood flows into it, it grows warm, it becomes a skin" (Atwood 91). As such, even through the soles of their shoes, the touch rushes her blood and gains as much importance to her, as

had it been their skin touching. This is strictly against the law, as Nick is not allowed to interact with a Handmaid (Atwood 55). However, this touch develops into a series of touches between the two, culminating with them engaging in a sexual relation. Offred returns to Nick's chambers multiple times (Atwood 280), thus repeatedly committing the act of touch, but in the end, she concludes that being with him is what she wants; Nick's touch becomes a necessity for her existence, and she is, as such, willing to risk everything, as long as she can satisfy her longing for a touch of her own volition.

In this way, by Offred's usage of free speech, and by her committing the act of touch, it is evident that she can be perceived as the manifestation of the anti-Gileadean ideologeme, as she represents a specific discourse of a social class that commits acts of revolt against the upper class in the societal structure.

The Commander, Fred, is the contradictory ideologeme, as he is an advocate for the Gileadean society and has no intention of changing the current societal order. The Commander is, due to his participation in creating Gilead and, especially, due to his role as head of the household, the immediate agent of Offred's oppression. As previously stated, the Commander is a founding member of Gilead and it is thus possible to consider him as a clear advocate of the oppressive regime. However, through his interactions with Offred, it becomes unclear whether or not the Commander is a true believer of the society or if he is also a victim of it. When alone with Offred, the Commander seems 'human' toward her, as he grants her luxuries and more freedom than she is normally allowed.[14] In this way, he seems almost sympathetic toward her; he is the one who grants her small escapes from her restrictive role and gives her intermissions from her duty. Therefore, his clear need for real companionship accentuates his seemingly unhappiness, to which Offred at times finds herself feeling some sympathy (Atwood 306).[15]

However, although the Commander might, at times, seem a fellow prisoner of the regime, it is a prison that he himself has helped create, and the prison he has created for the women are far more restricted than his. As such, throughout the novel it becomes evident that what might seem like small acts of kindness toward Offred are actually more a matter of selfishness. The reader learns that the previous Handmaid of the household hung herself after Serena Joy found out that she and the Commander had a private arrangement, like the one he

[14] For instance, he grants her magazines and novels to read (Atwood 194), and he has given her hand lotion (Atwood 166).

[15] Deduced from her utterance: "I still have it in me to feel sorry for him" (Atwood 306).

now has with Offred (Atwood 197). Hence, even though the Commander knows that he is putting Offred at risk, by demanding her companionship, he does not care; he is the one in power and he intends to use the power to its fullest, no matter the cost, thus demonstrating his belief in the societal structure. This is further accentuated when he brings Offred to Jezebel's. It is a highly illegal club, and Offred is forced to hide in the bottom of the car (Atwood 244), when going in, an action, which would most likely cost her her life if caught. However, the Commander does not seem to care, thus demonstrating that what could be perceived as acts of kindness are truly acts of greed.

The Commander's role as a true believer and an advocate of the Gileadean society is moreover illustrated during his private encounters with Offred. Here, he, on multiple occasions, tries to explain the beneficial attributes of Gilead. He says that women always used to complain; they were never happy, and they left their husband and children for a job outside the home: "Money was the only measure of worth, for everyone, they got no respect as mothers. No wonder they were giving up on the whole business" (Atwood 231). As a response, the theocracy was implemented. Here, the women have been stripped from all work that does not have to do with managing the home, birthing children, or taking care of them. The Commander justifies this by stating that "[t]his way they all get a man, nobody's left out … This way they're protected, they can fulfill their biological destinies in peace. With full support and encouragement" (Atwood 231). As such, the Commander accentuates that women are to perform in accordance with their domestic duties, responding to the role they have been given, whether that being housekeeping, as Marthas; childbearing, as Handmaids; or being a spouse and carer, as Wives. In this way, the Commander, through his attempt to justify the rules of Gilead, stands as a clear advocate for the Gileadean ideology.

The Commander's role and responsibility in the societal structure becomes further evident through a situation, where Offred thinks back on a documentary she has seen, regarding the Holocaust, about a mistress of a guard from a concentration camp. The mistress had pleaded for her lover's life saying that he was not a monster (Atwood 155). To this, Offred thinks: "How easy it is to invent a humanity, for anyone at all" (Atwood 155). As such, Offred draws a line to her own life, and thus the Commander, stating that anybody can appear human; you can indeed feel sorry for them, and they might even seem affable, if seen in the right situations. However, even if the Commander seems charming and unselfish toward Offred, it is his actions that helped create Gilead and which keeps it in its current state. It is his selfish need for companionship, which constantly brings Offred in danger, and therefore he is, like the Nazi in the documentary, a monster in disguise, according to Offred.

As such, with the Commander's role in the creation of Gilead, his attempts to justify the Gileadean rules, and his carelessness with Offred's life and security in order to secure his own gratification, it is evident that he can be perceived as a manifestation of the pro-Gileadean ideologeme. By this, he epitomizes a specific discourse of social class that advocates the importance and righteousness of the societal structure, in which the lower class is oppressed, surveyed, and thus controlled by the upper class. In this way, Offred and the Commander embody two oppositional ideologemes, where Offred is the embodiment of the anti-Gileadean ideologeme and the Commander the embodiment of the pro-Gileadean ideologeme. This relationship between the two further correlates with Jameson's depiction of the ideologemes as a means to express The Political Unconscious of a text: "[P]eople reflexively express not just "themselves" but views and opinions that reflect their economic and social class … they will hold certain views, speaking as mouthpieces for ideologemes that Jameson considers to be at least in part unconscious" (Fry 240). Therefore, unaware of doing so themselves, Offred and the Commander portray opposing aspects of the narrative. It is through their behavior, their actions, and their opinions that they assert their oppositional ideological standpoints, and it is through the interaction between the contradictory ideologemes that the symbolic act is expressed.

The Mode of Production

Lastly, Jameson's historical horizon, and his notion of modes of production, can be applied to *The Handmaid's Tale*. In his theory, Jameson clarifies that multiple modes of production coexist, meaning that one cannot determine that a text only portrays one mode of production. This is evident in the novel, where several modes of production appear, among others the patriarchal mode of production. However, as the object of study in this analysis takes its point of departure within Marxist theory and as the goal is to investigate the societal structure based on an oppressor vs. oppressed relation, it is relevant to attribute a more classical Marxist comprehension of modes of production. This will allow an in-depth interpretation of one the dominant modes of production present within Atwood's novel.

According to Engels and Marx, all implementations in society are, as mentioned, determined by the dominant mode of production that is present, which is to be comprehended through the relationship between the base and superstructure. In accordance with Marxist theory, where the focal point is the emergence of capitalism, it is essential to perceive one of the modes of production, which dominates *The Handmaid's Tale*, namely the capitalist mode of production. In order to illustrate this, an investigation of the base and superstructure, represented in the novel, will firstly be conducted, as this will provide an understanding of

how the society of Gilead is structured and based upon the relationship between the social classes in the society.

As mentioned, the base of the capitalist mode of production entails a combination between the relations of production and forces of production. In a capitalist mode of production, it is a bourgeoisie/proletariat mode of relation that follows, a division, which can be applied to *The Handmaid's Tale*. In the novel, the leaders of the bourgeoisie are the unseen government as well as the Commanders and their Wives. However, a large number of other societal roles can also be perceived as belonging to the bourgeoisie, these include the Eyes, the guards, the Aunts, the Angels and the Econowives. However, it should be made clear that they do not all hold the same level of importance or power in the societal structure. As such, within the bourgeoisie there is also a distinct hierarchy, but common for them all is their denotation as advocates for the Gileadean ideology. Some of these are agents of different "Ideological State Apparatuses" (Althusser 135), which Althusser defines as institutions that "function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, … [and] secondarily by repression" (138), and are implemented as means to make individuals, unconsciously, behave in accordance with the state ideology, by which they are being indoctrinated (138-139). In the novel, these agents serve to convey the worth of the theocratic, Gileadean ideology to the proletariat, thus making sure that the oppressed class understands the society's importance and values. This consequently implements a "false consciousness" (Engels, "Engels to Franz Mehring"), a term coined by Engels to describe how an inferior class willfully accepts and epitomizes the superior class' ideology ("Engels to Franz Mehring"), within the proletarians, which ultimately ensures the continued existence of the bourgeoisie/proletariat mode of relation. Opposite is the oppressed class, the proletariat, who includes the Marthas and, most predominantly, the Handmaids, who here alone will serve as the symbol of this class.

One institution, which can be regarded as an Ideological State Apparatus is the Red Centre, in which the Aunts are the acting agents, as they are granted power and control over the Handmaids. At the Red Centre, they repeatedly indoctrinate the Handmaids with the theocratic ideology, either through declarations about the society, the satisfaction their role brings to it, or by explaining to them how content they should be with their given duty: "You're getting the best, you know, said Aunt Lydia. There's a war on, things are rationed. You are spoiled girls, she twinkled, as if rebuking a kitten" (Atwood 99). The aim of this indoctrination is to install a false consciousness within the Handmaids, as a means to keep them from revolting. By doing so, the proletariat accept societal desires, which they misleadingly believe to be beneficial for them, but ultimately only secures the societal

structure's continuation. As such, Aunt Lydia is a clear advocate for the ideology in society; a moral advisor, who the leaders of Gilead use as an agent of the bourgeoisie to indoctrinate, manipulate, and control the proletariat.

The forces of production should be perceived in relation to the Handmaids. They are the workers of society who must produce the vital necessities for the society, the babies, in order to ensure the continuation of the societal structure. The distinction of them as commodities, who must fulfil their duty, and thus produce the necessities to the society, is evident through Offred: "She has a small tattoo on her ankle: "Four digits and an eye, a passport in reverse. It's supposed to guarantee that I will never be able to fade, finally, into another landscape. I am too important, too scarce, for that. I am a national resource" (Atwood 75). As such, in the bourgeoisie-ruled society, the Handmaids are the suppressed class, they are the workers in the forces of production, but it is also with them that the raw materials of society are created. Furthermore, they are branded like cattle, in order to ensure that they never forget that they are not human beings like the bourgeoisie; they are property of the oppressive class, specifically the Commander to whom they serve. Moreover, this is made explicit through the abolishment of their 'personal' name, and the implementation of their 'Of-' constructed name. Thus, Offred's name expresses her belonging to the Commander, Fred, and her tattoo marks that she is the property of the state. The relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is further made evident through Serena Joy's first encounter with Offred:

> I want to see as little of you as possible, she said. I expect you feel the same way about me … I know you aren't stupid, she went on. She inhaled, blew out the smoke. I've read your file. As far as I'm concerned, this is like a business transaction. But if I get trouble, I'll give trouble back. You understand? (Atwood 25).

This interaction demonstrates the bourgeoisie's view of the proletariat. They are, as Engels and Marx describe it, "slaves of the bourgeoisie" (*Manifesto* 28), and thus treated, spoken to, and regarded as such.

By the implementation of the ideological state apparatus, as well as the societal structure, including surveillance and other measures to ensure control, the bourgeoisie manages to keep the Handmaids restrained. Moreover, by the law, which states that a Handmaid must always be accompanied with a fellow Handmaid when in public (Atwood

29), the bourgeoisie has also managed to create a self-regulating class.[16] In so, with, especially, the control of their language, the enslavement of them, and the self-regulation, the oppressors are confident in the success of the society. Hence, by not giving the Handmaids any freedom, the oppressors ensure a society, where a revolution seems impossible, as one can never be sure that a fellow member of the proletariat is not really a true believer, and thus a spy for the bourgeoisie.

The construction of the Gileadean society in terms of how the societal, cultural, and political aspect is constructed, is, as Marx has stated, created on the foundation of the base ("Author's Preface"). As such, how the entire society functions is a reflection of the ruling class' ideology; an ideology that is based on religion. Gilead is characterized by its use of God and biblical allusions and references, as a means to justify their control over the proletariat. These references are omnipresent in society, where a separation between state and religion no longer exists. It can, thus, be stated that the bourgeoisie uses religion as a means to gain a societal, cultural, economic, and, as such, political control over the proletariat. This is, for instance, evident by the bourgeoisie's use of the Bible in the indoctrination of the Handmaids. The Commander is the only one, who is allowed to read from the Bible, and before each Ceremony, he reads to the entire household: "*Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her*" (Atwood 99). This text is meant to justify not only why society has created the Handmaids, but also the Ceremony itself; it is said in the Bible that the servants can carry the children of their masters, so therefore it is justified that Handmaids do so. However, it becomes evident that many of the biblical quotes, of which the bourgeoisie justifies its rule, are manipulated. This is for instance evident with the indoctrinated slogan of the Handmaids that says: "*From each … according to her ability; to each according to his needs*" (Atwood 127). The Handmaids have been told that it is from the Bible, but in reality, it is a quote by Marx: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" ("I"). As such, it is evident that Gilead is a theocracy, which controls the proletarians, and uses religion to justify their actions. However, if the present hierarchical division of the theocracy was to alter, all aspects of the superstructure would automatically also change.

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[16] Deduced from Offred's utterance: "The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers. If either of us slips through the net because of something that happens on one of our daily walks, the other will be accountable" (Atwood 29).

A main claim of Engels and Marx' theory is that this bourgeoisie/proletariat relation is destined to fall to a violent revolution, in which the proletariat will rip the bourgeoisie of its power (*Manifesto* 34). But as Engels and Marx also states, this revolution can only take place if all of the proletarians unite, which would result in a change of the modes of relation within society, thus the entire premise of the base and ultimately the superstructure; society as a whole will change. As such, it can be argued that though Offred conducts several acts of revolt, the mere fact that some Handmaids are true believers and thus follows the bourgeoisie ideology, serves as reason for why such a revolution does not take place within Offred's narrative.

However, even though Offred's acts of revolt in themselves cannot create a revolution, they serve as indications of a flawed society and that a revolution could possibly take place. This fact, alongside the notion that an organization like Mayday exists, suggest the possibility of the Communist revolution and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. This is further manifested with the Historical Notes. With these, the reader learns that the Gileadean rule is a period of the past (Atwood 312). As such, it can be concluded that an overthrow of the theocracy has been carried out, and that society has undergone a radical change. How this change came about is unknown to the reader, but seen from a Marxist perspective, it must have been a unification of the proletariat and a violent revolution, which cleared the way for the new world order.

Docility

As demonstrated, Gilead is divided into the haves and have nots, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie holds total power and thus controls every aspect of society. They effectively do so by employing several techniques that work to ensure docility and discipline, which consequently results in their governing of power and influence on society. The techniques utilized by the bourgeoisie are some of the same techniques, which Foucault describes in his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. They are techniques of disciplinary power, which enable a "meticulous control of the operations of the body" (Foucault 137), while also ensuring a "constant subjection of … forces" (Foucault 137), and an imposed "relation of docility-utility" (Foucault 137). Hence, they are powerful tools in making the individual body more efficient and obedient. As mentioned, Foucault organizes these disciplines into four categories: The Art of Distributions, The Control of Activity, The Organization of Geneses, and The Composition of Forces.

The Art of Distributions

The disciplines, which constitute Foucault's first category, are evident throughout the Gileadean society. The first disciplinary mechanism, enclosure, is apparent in the way Gilead is constructed; it is a closed society, meaning that the citizens cannot escape, they can only be sent to the Colonies. Moreover, the Gileadean authorities have not taken over the whole world.[17] Hence, the Gilead can be said to be an enclosure, in which its population is confined. The enclosed place will, according to Foucault, create a place that is secluded, protected from the surroundings, and can function as a site for "disciplinary monotony" (171). Thus, the bourgeoisie has created a place that is secluded from the outside world; indeed, it is open to tourists (Atwood 38),[18] but its citizens have no way of escaping it. They have no, or only a limited knowledge, of the events in the surrounding world, wherefore they are receptive to the disciplinary techniques of the regime; they do not know of any alternative societal structures.

Additionally, the Gileadean population is partitioned: They are assigned a specific role, which has a specific function and place within the enclosure. Partitioning is "a procedure … aimed at knowing, mastering and using" (Foucault 143), as it enables the supervision of absences and presences, lines of communication, and work processes (Foucault 143). Hence, partitioning can be used to supervise and control the body, making it an effective tool in disciplining individuals. In Gilead, partitioning is represented through the citizens' assigned roles. Thus, it is Offred's role as a Handmaid, which determines her "disciplinary space" (Foucault 143) within Gilead. In so, Offred has her own room that separates her from all other societal groups and their assigned spaces.

The third discipline is the creation of functional sites. This entails that each site within the enclosure has a clear and well-defined function (Foucault 143), which ensures the necessary supervision and the preclusion of "dangerous communications" (Foucault 143-

[17] Central America has been lost to the Libertheos (Atwood 35), Romania has another government (Atwood 317), and in the Historical Notes, it is mentioned that the Gileadean society was constituted by only a few elements that were "truly original" (Atwood 319).

[18] The tourists observe the Handmaids as if they are encaged animals in a zoo: They ask to take their picture and are curious about their wellbeing (Atwood 38-39). Offred says: "[W]e excite them" (Atwood 39).

144). The functional sites are scattered around Gilead,[19] and on the roads connecting them are checkpoints and other citizens, who also function as observers. Thus, constant supervision is ensured. Moreover, the homes also have functional sites. As mentioned, Offred has her own room, but there is also a sitting room (Atwood 89), where the monthly Ceremony takes place; the whole household gathers in the sitting room (Atwood 91), the Commander reads from the Bible (Atwood 98-99), and then the Ceremony commences. Hence, the sitting room is also a functional site. Additionally, it is evident that the constant supervision is also present in the homes of the Gileadean population. Offred narrates that the Commander's home is decorated with images of an Eye (Atwood 43; 89). This, ultimately, functions as a reminder of the bourgeoisie's extensive supervision, as they come to represent "His Eye" (Atwood 54) under which they live.

Lastly, Foucault argues that rank is an important aspect in the act of disciplining, as it defines the individual's place in a classification (145). Additionally, rank "individualizes bodies by a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations" (Foucault 146). In Gilead, rank is a central disciplinary technique. As mentioned, people, and especially men, of higher rank have more freedom and advantages than people who are positioned lower in the societal hierarchy, thus demonstrating the importance of rank. Moreover, it is also evident that the population are positioned according to their rank; the Commander and his Wife live in a grand house, seeing as they are members of the upper-bourgeoisie, whereas the people, whom the Gileadean regime has rendered worthless, are sent to the Colonies. In so, the citizens are organized according to their rank and social class.

Furthermore, an important aspect of this disciplinary method is that rank does not grant the individual a fixed position, instead it is interchangeable (Foucault 145-146). Therefore, rank serves as a discipline, as it instigates obedient behavior in people of higher rank, since they can be deprived of their social status and thus advantages. Consequently, the Commander's status and rank is not secure and anchored. As it is revealed in the Historical Notes, the Commander "met his end" (Atwood 321) after being accused of "liberal tendencies" (Atwood 322) and being in possession of prohibited items (Atwood 322). Accordingly, Offred's societal status is also precarious; she is aware that she could be sent to the Colonies, if her revolts are discovered. Hence, the bourgeoisie uses rank as a disciplinary

[19] An example of this is the Wall, at which condemned criminals are hanged and serves as examples to warn others of the consequences of defiance.

technique precisely because it is interchangeable and precarious; the citizens know that they must act according to regulations, otherwise they are in danger of descending in the social hierarchy.

Consequently, by distributing the individuals strategically within Gilead, the bourgeoisie initiates the progress of creating disciplined and docile bodies. As the Gileadean population is enclosed, partitioned, granted functional sites, and segregated according to a hierarchy, the bourgeoisie is able to control and supervise them, since their presence and absence can be monitored and registered. Moreover, on the basis of the distribution of bodies, their person and performances can also be characterized and evaluated; because they are assigned specific places, where they must live, stay, work, etc., the people in power are always aware of their whereabouts. Additionally, as the bourgeoisie knows their place, they can monitor their performances, treat them accordingly, and degrade them and ultimately punish them for not behaving.

The Control of Activity

Foucault's second category of disciplines is centralized around the control over the individual's activities. Hence, these disciplines are focused on controlling and regulating the activities performed by the disciplined bodies. As mentioned, Foucault introduces the following disciplines in the act of controlling activities: Timetables, a "temporal elaboration of the act" (151), "the correlation of the body and the gesture" (152), an articulation of the relation between the body and the object, and, lastly, exhaustive use. To illustrate the bourgeoisie's exploitation of these disciplines, the prime example here will be that of the monthly Ceremony.

Timetables have three advantages: They "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, [and] regulate the cycles of repetition" (Foucault 149). Moreover, they improve efficiency, as they assist in creating what Foucault calls "a totally useful time" (150), which can be upheld by the employment of continuous supervision and the pressure it subjects the individual to, as well as the exclusion of any disturbances and distractions (Foucault 150). Hence, timetables reinforce Ben Franklin's aphorism that "Time is Money" (381). In relation to the Ceremony, the timetable is central: Once a month, prior to the Ceremony, Handmaids are obligated to visit the doctor and have several tests taken (Atwood 69). Then, during their ovulation, the Ceremony takes place. In so, the timetabled Ceremony displays two of the three advantages of timetables: It establishes a rhythm in the Handmaids' lives, as it is a scheduled occurrence. Additionally, it controls, or regulates, the repetition cycles, as the Ceremony is timetabled according to the Handmaids' cycle. Thus, by orchestrating

timetables, the regime successfully distributes the citizens according to a specific timeframe, which allows them to control, monitor, and regulate them.

The second discipline is "[t]he temporal elaboration of the act" (Foucault 151). This discipline is "a collective and obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside" (Foucault 151-152) that is aimed at controlling the performed activity, as it is "broken down into its elements" (Foucault 152). In relation to the Ceremony, this discipline is relatively absent. The only immediate temporal requirements are that the Ceremony must last until the Commander ejaculates and that Offred must rest for ten minutes afterwards to enhance the chances of her conceiving (Atwood 106).

By contrast, the following two disciplines play a more prominent part in the Ceremony. First, the correlation of the body and the gesture ensures the most advantageous relation between the body and the gesture it is performing. Foucault states: "In the correct use of the body, which makes possible a correct use of time, nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required" (152). Hence, a correct correlation between the body and the activity it is performing is a way of attaining a higher level of efficiency (Foucault 152). Moreover, the fourth discipline, which is that of "*body-object articulation*" (Foucault 152), regard "the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates" (Foucault 152-153). By directly connecting the body and the object, the total gesture is defined: It is specified how the body should be used and which part of the object the body must manipulate; the body and the object is correlated in gestures; and lastly, the articulation establishes the total succession, in which the gestures are performed (Foucault 153). Thus, this discipline gives description to how the activity must be conducted. This is also the case with the Ceremony; although the reader never witnesses these instructions, it is evident that the Handmaids and the other participating individuals have received instructions as to how the Ceremony must take place. With reference to the first Ceremony, Offred describes that it went "as usual" (Atwood 104): She laid on her back, "fully clothed except for the healthy white cotton underdrawers" (Atwood 104). Offred proceeds:

> Above me, towards the head of the bed, Serena Joy is arranged, outspread. Her legs are apart, I lie between them, my head on her stomach, her pubic bone under the base of my skull, her thighs on either side of me. She too is fully clothed.
>
> My arms are raised; she holds my hands, each of mine is in each of hers. This is supposed to signify that we are one flesh, one being. What it really means is that she

> is in control, of the process and thus of the product. If any …
>
> My red skirt is hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it the Commander is fucking. What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say make love, because this is not what he's doing. (Atwood 104)

Thus, Offred, Serena, and the Commander have their individual position and gesture that they must perform, during the Ceremony. Hence, prior to the Ceremony, there has been an articulation of how the relation between the body and object should be. In this instance, however, the object is another body. In so, the Ceremony has a clearly defined structure, and the involved individuals are aware of their duty. Additionally, the third discipline is also evident; they have been taught how to conduct the ritual in relation to one another and their bodies. Moreover, there is a sense of efficiency: During the Ceremony, they are only to do as instructed, wherefore the activity they are performing, which was once one of love and affection, is conducted clinically, as a duty. As Offred verbalizes, it is not an act of love (Atwood 104), instead, it is a production, and they are attempting to produce a child. The efficiency induced by the body-gesture correlation hinders any forbidden interaction between the involved individuals, wherefore the partitioning and segregation within the societal structure is maintained.

Lastly, Foucault introduces exhaustive use to control activities (154). Embedded in this discipline is the idea of "a theoretically ever-growing use of time" (Foucault 154), as time is perceived as containing a limitless number of accessible moments (Foucault 154). Thus, the exhaustive use of an activity will improve efficiency (Foucault 154). The Ceremony must be conducted every month Offred resides at the house and in so, it can be argued that their performance is subjected to exhaustive use. This is done in the hopes of improving efficiency; the more times the Ceremony is performed successfully, the better the chances are of conceiving a child.

As such, the bourgeoisie controls the proletarians' activities. This is an effective tool, as it allows them to improve societal efficiency, while subjecting the proletariat to strict supervision and control. Moreover, it is the control over activities, which implies that the bourgeoisie can subject the proletariat to any kind of activity; if they have improved efficiency and obtained the limitless amount of moments within time, they can force even more activities on the individuals, who then must work even harder. Thus, they achieve a similar goal, as they did with the distribution of individuals: If a proletarian is subjected to an

increasing amount of activities and rituals, the possibility of committing any acts of deviance is rendered impossible, or at least complicated.

The Organization of Geneses

Foucault constitutes the Organization of Geneses from four disciplines, which works to take "charge of the time of individual existences" (Foucault 157) and "organize profitable durations" (Foucault 157). The first discipline suggests that durations of time should be divided into segments with a predetermined end (Foucault 157). Such time-threads are also evident in Gilead, for instance with the Handmaid's lives; they must stay at their assigned household for a two-year period, unless they are sent away (Atwood 63) or have a baby, in which case they are allowed to stay for a few months to nurse the baby, before they are transferred to a new house (Atwood 137). In so, Gilead has control over the Handmaids' lives and can organize their existences in durations that are as profitable as possible. In this case, however, profit is not understood in terms of money and earnings, but in terms of breeding; Gilead's population figure is inadequate, and the Handmaids must be transferred from house to house, because there are not enough fertile women (Atwood 171). Hence, births are important in society, as it assures its continuation. Therefore, the bourgeoisie has created the Handmaids' duration from a perspective of profit in terms of pregnancy and birth and, ultimately, they have created durations with what they believe to be the best conditions for conception. Hence, the bourgeoisie has seized total control over the lives of the proletariat and utilizes its members to realize their own agenda.

Secondly, Foucault argues that these segments of time should be organized "according to an analytical plan" (158) with gradually increasing complexity (158). In relation to the Handmaids, the plan, on which their stays are organized, is only analytical to a minor degree. They are transferred in the hopes of conceiving at the new household, however, if they are considered unfit, they are sent away. In so, their residents are organized, but perhaps not as much according to an analytical plan, as on the basis of their behavior and bodily functions.

The third disciplinary mechanism is the finalization of these time-threads. Each should have a determined duration and be concluded with an examination (Foucault 158). The examination should have three functions: It should demonstrate that the subject has reached the necessary level; it should guarantee that all subjects are met with the same apprenticeship; and, lastly, it should distinguish each of the individuals' abilities (Foucault 158). This finalization is evident among the proletariat in two ways. First, their stay can be finalized by the course of time or by the birth of a child. Embedded in the finalization is the

examination of their bodily functions; if they are judged unfit to produce a baby, they will not be granted residency at another household. Thus, the examination assesses whether or not the Handmaids are still at the level required for their position in society. Moreover, as these are the conditions for all Handmaids, they are all subjected to the same apprenticeship. Lastly, the examination also determines the Handmaids' abilities: It is not enough for a Handmaid to birth a child, the child must also live up to the bourgeoisie's standards, otherwise it will be declared an "Unbaby" (Atwood 123) and sent away (Atwood 123). Hence, pregnancy does not necessarily liberate the Handmaids from their precarious conditions; they are constantly exposed to the risk of being rejected by the powerful bourgeoisie.

Lastly, the time-threads should be included in "series of series" (Foucault 158). As each series concludes, others will start, develop, or be subdivided. This ensures that "each individual is caught up in temporal series which specifically defines his level or his rank" (Foucault 159). These series of series are also exemplified by the lives of the Handmaids; they are restrained in temporal series, which are repeated until they no longer can fulfill their duties. Additionally, these series define their function. Therefore, the series, in which the proletarians find themselves, define their societal role and place in the societal hierarchy. In so, as with the creation of these segments of time, the bourgeoisie is capable of defining the proletarians' lives and existences; they hold total control over their identities and destinies, wherefore they are also the decision-makers in regard to how their lives are valued and lived.

Hence, these disciplines create "disciplinary time" (Foucault 159) and create individuals that are qualified "according to the way in which they progress through these series" (Foucault 159). Thus, in Offred's example, it is her performance in the role of a Handmaid that determines her quality and future within the state of Gilead; if she, for instance, fails her examination, she is destined to the unknown. However, if she conforms, she has a sense of security in that she can stay within these series of series and know her future and societal status. In so, the bourgeoisie offers a sense of security; by conforming to their regulations and standards, the proletarians are offered a foreseeable life, but if they refuse or simply cannot, they are left without this sense of security.

In their employment of disciplinary time, it is also evident that the bourgeoisie uses specific exercises to obtain their demanded level of discipline. As mentioned, Foucault understands the notion of an exercise as the technique used to impose graduated tasks that are repetitive and different (161). By doing so, the bourgeoisie can adjust the behavior of each proletarian according to their preferred physical and mental state (Foucault 161). As exemplified with Offred, she is subjected to specific exercises based on her role and societal

status. She is governed by regulations determining how she must conduct these exercises; for instance, she is taught how to greet people, how to perform the Ceremony, and what to do when another Handmaid gives birth.[20] Hence, she has repetitive and graduated exercises imposed on her. The imposed exercises facilitate a further supervision of the individual, as the action performed is imposed by external factors (Foucault 161). Therefore, the authorities of Gilead use Offred's role as a way to monitor her behavior and characterize her person; because she is subjected to specific exercises and a specific way of conducting them, the bourgeoisie can easily detect any deviance. Additionally, this also ensures that her performances and behavior can be measured and compared to the other Handmaids and the standards set by the regime. In so, as Foucault also states, the imposed exercises assure continuity and constraint (161).

The Composition of Forces

To obtain the desired society–the most efficient machinery–with the highest level of disciplined behavior, the rulers must compose its forces, as the united productive forces will surpass the abilities of the individual (Foucault 164). To do so, Foucault argues, the individual body must be perceived as an element, which can be placed and moved according to the demands of those in power; the individual is thus reduced to a function (164). Therefore, if each individual body performs its assigned exercise effectively and according to regulations, the overall machinery achieves the highest possible level of efficiency and disciplined behavior. As demonstrated, this is evident with the lives of the Handmaids. However, all other social groupings have also been reduced to a function: The Marthas are "under the jurisdiction of the Wives" (Atwood 170) and perform housework; the Aunts work and teaches at the Red Centre; and members of the Guardians of the Faith perform "routine policing" (Atwood 30) and "other menial functions" (Atwood 30).[21] Combined, all these functions constitute the total societal functions and thus, as every individual body performs their assigned exercise successfully, the regime has, by employing this and all of the aforementioned disciplines, created an effective, disciplined society, in which each body lifts their burden.

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[20] In chapters 19 and 20, Offred describes the birth of a baby and how the participants must behave (Atwood 119-132).

[21] However, there is one exception. The Econowives are "not divided into functions. They have to do everything; if they can" (Atwood 34).

The filling-in of all the societal functions also illustrates how the regime utilizes the second mechanism within Foucault's category of a composed force. Foucault states: "The time of each must be adjusted to the time of the others in such a way that the maximum quantity of forces may be extracted from each and combined with the optimum result" (164-165). In so, because the bourgeoisie uses specific individuals to fulfill specific functional sites and equivalent exercises, it makes the optimum use of its capacities and the theocratic republic, thus, becomes a machine for creating power. Every citizen, regardless of social status, role in hierarchy, class, etc., has an assigned site, exercises, etc. that work to ensure the bourgeoisie's continued position of power. Moreover, as the proletariat is instructed on how to conduct their lives in any given situation, the bourgeoisie utilizes their existence to sustain power; they know what everyone should be doing at any given moment, and also how they do it. Therefore, they are able to detect any acts of deviance and they can thus punish any mishaps. Hence, the proletarians' existence is governed by external factors and they have no power left for themselves. The only way they can gain power is by opposing the regulations and rules set by the bourgeoisie, but by doing so, they are risking their lives. Hence, the ruling class also uses threats of the Colonies to reinforce disciplined behavior and to maintain their hold over the proletariat.

In so, through the use of disciplines, the bourgeoisie has seized control over the proletariat. Therefore, they can also exercise this last mechanism in composing their forces. This mechanism is, as mentioned, based on signaling: By the use of signals, "the master of discipline" (Foucault 166) controls the gestures and acts of the disciplined bodies; he is in control and they act according to his demands (Foucault 166). Throughout the novel, it is evident how the bourgeoisie uses signals to commence an action, as for instance the signaling of a birth: "While I'm eating … I hear the siren, at a great distance at first, winding its way towards me … A proclamation, this siren … I go to the window again: will it be blue and not for me? … it's red … I leave the second egg half eaten, hurry to the closet for my cloak" (Atwood 121). When Offred hears a siren, she knows she must check if it is intended for her, and if it is, she must react immediately. Hence, this example illustrates the extent of the bourgeoisie's power over the proletariat: As demonstrated, Offred has a deep skepticism toward the regime, but she nevertheless reacts to their "system of command" (Foucault 166). Therefore, the bourgeoisie has, by the extensive use of threats and disciplines, reached a level of docility, which consequently have made individuals enter into the efficient machinery. Thus, the bourgeoisie has, by the employment of disciplinary mechanisms, successfully created a composed force, by which they have reached a high level of docility. Ultimately, all

members of the proletariat, even those who try to revolt, enter into, participate in, and thus conform to, the societal structure.

Consequently, it is evident that the bourgeoisie utilizes the same disciplines as Foucault outlines. They do so to create docile bodies that will fulfill whatever function they find appropriate. By deliberately distributing the bodies of the proletariat according to a strict plan, the bourgeoisie initiates the process of quelling any rioting; the bodies are distributed in a way that prevents any unwanted encounters and communications, wherefore the conditions for any uprisings are complicated. Moreover, this is reinforced by their extensive control over the individual bodies through the control over activities. As each citizen within Gilead is subjected to timetables, instructions, and repetitions, they are positioned in a society, which is perfect for constant supervision. Hence, the exercisers of power inflict upon the proletarians a consistent demand for efficiency and as their activities are regulated and enforced by the ruling class, the bourgeoisie can monitor the results and the performances. Additionally, the constant utilization and efficiency improvement of time imposes on the body an even higher degree of docility. The bourgeoisie puts forward the mantra ‘meet our demands or be eradicated’ and thus they present two alternatives: The known, in which you obey, conform, and make yourself docile; or the unknown, in which you are condemned to a life outside society in either the Colonies, or somewhere else that is completely undisclosed for the citizens of Gilead. The uncertainty connected to the latter alternative is also a triggering factor, as the unknown can be a far worse alternative than Gilead. However, there is also the possibility that it could be more accommodating. Hence, the uncertainty can permit a sense of hope for the proletariat. Consequently, as the ruling powers utilize these disciplines to create a correlation between the places, exercises, and existences of the proletarians, they create a docile society that functions as an efficient and powerful machinery. In this way, the bourgeoisie uses the disciplinary mechanisms to maintain and reinforce their power.

Defying docility

Although Gilead has, successively, extended their power and regulations to reach all aspects of the proletariat’s life, there is one aspect in which they are unsuccessful. At the Red Centre, Aunt Lydia is distinct about the transitional period’s problematics: “You are a transitional generation … It is the hardest for you. We know the sacrifices you are being expected to make. It is hard when men revile you. For the ones who come after you, it will be easier. They will accept their duties with willing hearts” (Atwood 127). This is where the societal structure has a rupture. Since this ‘transitional generation’ is able to remember the life prior to Gilead, they know an alternative to the one Gilead presents. Therefore, they

arguably are more prepared to take a risk, compared to the new generation, which will follow and know nothing of the past. In so, although the Historical Notes narrates that the overthrow arises in a distant future, this generation creates a sense of hope; a hope of summoning up courage to oppose the authoritarian and omnipresent bourgeoisie, their strict disciplines, and the "relation of docility-utility" (Foucault 137) they have created.

Panopticism

In addition to Foucault disciplines, it is also possible to detect the effects of the panoptic structure and Foucault's notion of Panopticism in the Gileadean societal structure. By employing Panopticism, the bourgeoisie is able to create a self-surveilling and self-regulating proletariat, wherefore they are able to maintain their position of power within society.

A significant manifestation of the panoptic structure is embodied by the Eyes, the innumerable Guardians, and the checkpoints that are scattered throughout Gilead. In so, these are clear manifestations of the constant surveillance, which characterize the panoptic structure and Foucault's notion of Panopticism. The regime's surveillance is, however, more extensive. As Foucault mentions, Panopticism creates an uncertainty concerning whether one is being watched incessantly, which consequently makes the observed alter their behavior according to normalizations and regulations. Hence, Panopticism creates an internalized feeling of inspection. This is, for instance, evident, as the citizens of Gilead can report each other (Atwood 28; 76; 81; 189) if they observe any individual misbehaving, or displaying signs of disloyalty (Atwood 189), etc. Therefore, all citizens, regardless of their societal status or assigned role, essentially, function as an Eye. By implementing this mechanism, the bourgeoisie creates a strong, societal control that reinforces the behavior they wish to produce in proletariat. This is also evident in Offred's behavior: Although she is not a "true believer" (Atwood 139), she still performs indoctrinated behavior. Offred experiences flashbacks to her life previous to the rise of Gilead, which she calls "attacks of the past" (Atwood 62), suggesting that they are something unwanted and something she is trying to suppress. The fact that she experiences these flashbacks might indicate that she has not internalized the deep conformity that the regime wishes her to. Moreover, Offred says that she tries "not to think too much" (Atwood 17), which arguably demonstrates an adjustment in behavior toward the state of being only a container, as the bourgeoisie perceives her (Atwood 107).[22] In so, Offred

[22] Offred explicitly states: "We are containers, it's only the insides of our bodies that are important" (Atwood 107).

tries to conform to the ideal of the ruling class; she knows such conducts can be dangerous, seeing that she must assume that she is always "[u]nder His Eye" (Atwood 54), wherefore she must seek conformity to protect herself.

As mentioned, Offred describes how the image of an eye is used as decorations both inside the home of the Commander and throughout society: There is a plaster eye in the ceiling of her room, on the folding screen in the doctor's room, a glass eye on the downstairs wall, and on the side of the Eye's vehicles (Atwood 14; 69; 89; 178). Ultimately, it is an omnipresent image, which all of Gilead's population encounters daily. This is another element of the panoptic structure that pervades the Gileadean society. The inhabitants are constantly reminded that they are being watched and of the regime's omnipresence. Thus, the regime has created a surveillance system, which is utilized to reinforce docility: The population is constantly subjected to a conformity toward the bourgeoisie's beliefs. Moreover, they are continually imitated, through physical representation of the bourgeoisie, civil surveillance, and the symbolic image of an eye, in the attempt to enhance their level of discipline and docility.

The self-surveillance, self-correction, and internalized authority consequently means that the bourgeoisie forces their way inside the individual proletarian's body and mind, as they affect their behavioral pattern and thoughts. This creates within the subject the state in which they constantly feel observed (Foucault 201). Katarina Gregersdotter elaborates:

> The issue here is, thus, not actually *being* seen, but the *conviction* that one is being seen … That the watcher is perceived as being invisible equals the understanding that the watcher is present everywhere. The presence of an actual watcher is not as important as the *sense* of the presence of a watcher … the result is immobility. (19)

The immobility, which Gregersdotter argues stems from the continual sense of surveillance, is also a relevant aspect in relation to the Gileadean society. The invading and omnipresent watching within Gilead has more advantages for the regime than just docility and power preservation, as it also ensures a stagnant state. This is, for instance, evident in Offred's relation to Ofglen. Ofglen has informed Offred about the acts of revolt that secretly takes place and has thus fueled the small hope that she had prior to obtaining this new knowledge. However, Ofglen's role as an opponent to the regime is revealed and she commits suicide to avoid being captured by the authorities (Atwood 297). This sends Offred back to her prior position; granted, she now knows that a resistance movement is in place, but she has no

secure way of coming into contact with it. Moreover, she has no way of obtaining more knowledge about it, either. If she were to attempt, she would oppose the bourgeoisie's regulations and thus be the object of both the official and civilian surveillance mechanisms, wherefore she would expose herself to danger. In so, the widely diffused panoptic structure and Panopticism ensure her immobility in relation to this matter; she must keep to her assigned functional sites and exercises and thus refrain from any acts of deviance.

However, the way in which the Gileadean regime utilizes Panopticism differentiates from Foucault's disclosure of the term. Foucault stresses that the panoptic structure must be open to the public (207). This is essential, as the panoptic machine creates an "increase of power" (Foucault 207), but by offering transparency, "the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole" (Foucault 207), and the structure will, as mentioned, be "democratically controlled" (Foucault 207). Therefore, this will prevent the panoptic institution from developing into a tyranny (Foucault 207). This is, however, not representative of the way in which the ruling class employs the structure in Gilead. Instead, they utilize it with the intent to increase their power. Thus, the Inspector's Lodge of the Gileadean society is isolated from the public. Moreover, it is opaque, because the number of inspectors, who have access to it, is limited. Hence, all societal power is confined to a small group of people, who ruthlessly works to ensure that the panoptic machine is as segregated from the public as possible.

In so, Panopticism is exploited to exercise, gain, and maintain power. It has successfully been distributed to all aspects of society and the everyday life of its inhabitants. Additionally, since the power is confined to the bourgeoisie, they are able to use it as another suppressive and disciplinary mechanism.

Punish

A last mechanism the regime utilizes to maintain power and disseminate docility is their form of punish. In Gilead, there are two forms of punishment: Corporal and noncorporal, of which the first is the most apparent. Gilead has not seen the same reformation of the penal system, as the one Foucault describes, wherefore they still use the body as the object of punishment. The dominant role of corporal punishment is, for instance, manifested with the Wall; once a "plain but handsome" (Atwood 41) architectonical feature, which has been turned into a symbol of authority and power. Offred describes one of her and Ofglen's visits to the site:

> We stop, together as if on signal, and stand and look at the bodies. It doesn't matter if we look. We're supposed to look: this is what they are there for, hanging on the Wall. Sometimes they'll be there for days, until there's a new batch, so as many people as possible will have the chance to see them. (Atwood 42)

The people hanging on the Wall have been convicted by the regime and now they "must be made into examples, for the rest" (Atwood 43); the bodies hang there, with bags over their heads, making them "look like dolls on which faces have not yet been painted; like scarecrows, which in a way that are, since they are meant to scare" (Atwood 42). Hence, the bourgeoisie uses corporal punishment for two reasons: First, it is used to punish any individual who displays any signs of disobedience. Secondly, it is used to send a signal; it serves as a public reminder to all Gileadeans of what their faith will be if they disobey. Therefore, the Wall becomes a manifestation of the totalitarian nature of the ruling class and illustrates the extent of their power.

Evidently, Gilead exercises punish as a spectacle. This is incarnated by the image of the Wall, but it is also evident in the everyday life of the Gileadeans. This is exemplified with Moira's return to the Red Center following her attempted escape. Offred narrates:

> They took her into the room that used to be the Science Lab. It was a room where none of us ever went willingly. Afterwards she could not walk for a week, her feet would not fit into her shoes, they were too swollen. It was the feet they'd do, for a first offense. They used steel cables, frayed at the ends. After that the hands. They didn't care what they did to your feet or your hands, even if it was permanent. Remember, said Aunt Lydia. For our purposes your feet and your hands are not essential. (Atwood 102).

This demonstrates how the bourgeoisie uses the body as the object of punishment in order to reprimand. In so, the Gileadean penal system evidently has a strong hold on the body. Moreover, it is evident that, contrary to the development Foucault describes, in which "[p]hysical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty" (11), punishment in Gilead still relates around the body and the infliction of pain.

Additionally, corporal punish is also an element in everyday obligations, as exemplified with the Salvaging. During the Salvaging, offenders are executed on a stage in the middle of a lawn (Atwood 284). Normally, the offenders' crimes are read aloud, but this

custom has been discontinued, as it previously has caused "an outbreak … of exactly similar crimes" (Atwood 287). At this particular Salvaging, there is also a Particicution: A former Guardian has been convicted of rape and the penalty is death (Atwood 290), but prior to this, he is the victim of this Particicution, so the Handmaids are allowed to punish him corporally.[23] In so, the physical punishment and torture is not only something the Gileadeans must witness and possibly endure, it is also something they must take part in. Consequently, it becomes yet another image of the totalitarian power of the regime; although Offred does not enjoy these happenings, she herself feels the rush of adrenalin and freedom (Atwood 291).[24] Moreover, she is not able to avoid participating; if she refuses, she will be noticed and, thus, the panoptic structure in the society will execute its power; she will risk being reported and suffer the same fate as the victims of the Salvaging.

Although corporal punishment is the most overt in the society, they also exercise noncorporal punish. For instance, this is evident in one of the disciplines the regime utilizes to create docility, namely that of partitioning. Offred is assigned a room, in which she must stay, when she has no other obligations. Here, she is isolated from the rest of the household. Foucault argues that the isolation of subjects "guarantees that it is possible to exercise over them, with maximum intensity, a power that will not be overthrown by any other influence; solitude is the primary condition of total submission" (237). Therefore, by isolating Offred, the regime punishes her without laying a hand on her body, while they ensure her total submission to their control and rob her of her privacy. As mentioned, the image of an eye is everywhere, also in the ceiling of her room (Atwood 43). Moreover, Foucault further states that "[i]solation provides an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him" (237), meaning that the people who hold power over the isolated subject can reach it undisturbed and intervene in the silence and solitude (Foucault 237). Therefore, although Offred is completely isolated in her room, she is not free from the indoctrination of the bourgeoisie; she is constantly reminded of the ruling class and disciplined by it through the symbolic image of the eye, looking down on her, observing.

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[23] Not only are they allowed to punish him, Offred narrates the following: "[W]e are permitted anything … 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" (Atwood 291-292).

[24] Offred describes the air as being "bright with adrenaline" (Atwood 291), but she also feels "shock, outrage, nausea" (Atwood 292): She sees it as "[b]arbarism" (Atwood 292).

Hence, the Gileadean penal system, although it takes measures to prevent crimes from happening, does not seek to transform the criminal; it seeks to set an example. Foucault relates that the new, modern penal system, indeed, did seek to prevent imitations and recurrences of crimes, but it did so by calculating the extent of the penalty (93). By contrast, the Gileadean penal system tries to achieve the same result through secrecy and cover-up. Moreover, they still frequently utilize "the spectacle of the scaffold" (Foucault 32) as a way to scare the proletariat into conformity and docility. Therefore, the form of punish points to a totalitarian and old-fashioned view on humanity.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)

A Description of the Society

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* follows the life of Kathy H., a clone who has been brought up at Hailsham. Set in an alternative version of England, Kathy narrates, through flashbacks of interactions with her friends, and fellow clones, Tommy and Ruth, how the life of a clone is structured, controlled, and predestined. At the point of narration, Kathy is a carer, who takes care of the donors, but she is soon to start her own donations. In this society, the "donations programme" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256) has been implemented as a result of a revolutionary war that changed the previous England (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256). Here, clones have been created "to supply medical science" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256). Just after the war, the clones were merely seen as subjects in test tubes, but through a small vocal movement, places like Hailsham were created, where the guardians made the clones create works of art, as they saw these works "as means to prove that students, the clones were fully human" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256-257). However, after a scandal concerning the creation of superior designer babies, this belief became unfavorable by the plenty, and Hailsham, and institutions like it, were closed. With the war came one breakthrough in science after another, wherefore the donation program was implemented as a means to heal the rest of society from previously untreatable illnesses.

The Political Unconscious

In order to elucidate the novel's portrayal of social contradictions, it is pertinent to investigate the underlying ideologies in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. To demonstrate the classes and the interactions between them, it is relevant to, firstly, investigate the novel on the basis of Jameson's three horizons, initiating with the analysis of the novel's symbolic act.

The Symbolic Act

In the novel, the symbolic act is found in the contradiction of power between the different citizens, made evident through the differences between the sentiments regarding the

societal structure. To exemplify this contradiction, representations of the two groups have been selected. Kathy H. will serve as a representation of the adversaries of society, and Miss Emily as a representation of its advocates.

Kathy's description of the societal structure and her role demonstrates her negative view on the society. This is an opinion, which, for instance, comes across through subtle, negative comments regarding her role as a carer. Kathy describes herself and her current role as a carer: "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3). By describing herself as a 'carer', Kathy illustrates the euphemistic neologism and jargon which characterizes the language of the novel regarding the role of the clones and the donation program. The words 'carer' and 'donation' connotes value, help and unselfishness, but through the novel it becomes evident that Kathy's use of the words suggest her unwillingness and discontent with the entire program, and thus the societal structure.

In her description of her role it, initially, seems like work she values and honors: "I'm not trying to boast … they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too … it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3). However, this satisfactory description is also accompanied with contradictory comments regarding her function as a carer: "You try and do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 4). This subtle complaint of how taxing it is to be a carer, is narrated in a subdued manner that it becomes almost unimportant or at least something that does not take much attention. It is merely registered as another description and Kathy's acceptance of her status quo. In so, Kathy's preceding claim that "[c]arers aren't machines" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 4), also becomes inconsequential, thus not given the importance it denotes. By stating that carers are not machines, Kathy implies that they are in fact human, a fact that the societal system disagrees with. The clones have been created as commodities and are, as a result, not deemed human (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256).[25] So, by Kathy stating that carers, thus clones, are not machines, she suggests that they are human, hence going against the societal belief; her sentiment does, as such, serve as a subtle revolt.

[25] Miss Emily says that "all clones … existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that's largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256), thus demonstrating the general belief in society that clones are not human beings.

Another example of Kathy's subtle acts of revolt is demonstrated by her break with the language and its euphemistic neologisms. In most cases, Kathy conforms to the neologisms that have been created in relation to the donation program, using the positive words selected for it like 'carer' and 'donor', but at one instance she deviates from this and thus illustrates her oppressed feelings regarding the society. When facing Madame and Miss Emily, Kathy and Tommy are told that the deferral system does not exist (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 253). Frustrated by the fact that she cannot have a few years with Tommy, her true feelings come to light, resulting in her asking a question regarding their art production and upbringing: "Why did we do all that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then **die**, why all those lessons?" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 254, emphasis added).[26] As with the words 'donor' and 'carer', the fatal end that is the result from the clones' donations have been given the word "completed" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 99), suggesting the clones have carried out and finalized a task. However, in this instance, Kathy calls it what it truly is, namely, to die. As with her subtle inclusion of her sentiment about carers not being machines, Kathy also, here, states it in a nonchalant manner, wherefore it, at first, is not given any importance. Neither Madame nor Miss Emily remarks her use of the word and simply carries on their explanations, but once again Kathy voices her claim that clones are humans and not machines and that the system is not making them complete a task but killing them for their vital organs.

As such, though Kathy never explicitly comments on her dissatisfaction with the donation program, nor openly speaks against the societal structure, her narrative and significantly her disobedience in using the euphemistic language, can be perceived as an act of defiance and a subdued critique of the society. In this way, Kathy's subtle revolts illustrate her underlying feelings regarding the societal structure, hence demonstrating how she can be perceived as a critic of the society, wherefore she functions as a representation of the one side of the symbolic act.

The contradiction within the symbolic act is located opposite the adversaries of the societal structure, here represented by Miss Emily. Even though it is elucidated that Miss Emily, alongside Madame, differentiated her leading style and school creation, she is

[26] This is the only time Kathy or any clone or other member of society openly and verbally uses the word 'die' about the clones' fated destiny, thus highlighting its importance and relevance in the understanding of Kathy's underlying sentiment.

undoubtedly an advocate of the societal structure and the power hierarchy it entails, wherefore she serves as a representation of this opposing site in the symbolic act.

A significant illustration of the power of which Miss Emily has in the societal structure can be seen by the way, in which the clones are gradually informed of the true nature of their existence through subtle mentionings during, for instance, the lectures on health and sex. In Miss Emily's lectures on sex, she highlights how the people in "the outside world" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 82) assign sex great importance and that they take great consideration into who they have sex with, as "the people out there … [can] have babies from sex" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 82). With these lectures, Miss Emily illustrates the power and influence she and the entire system has on the creation of the clones' bodily life. However, even though Miss Emily informs the clones of how to conduct their future sexual encounters, she once again highlights how they differentiate, and she makes it clear that they must adapt to this world view: "[E]ven though … it was completely impossible for any of us to have babies, we had to behave like them. We had to respect the rules and treat sex as something pretty special" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 82). As such, Miss Emily uses her power and role in the societal hierarchy to form the minds of the clones by implementing rules that they must follow. Thus, they are indoctrinated to undertake a role, responsibility, and personal identity that matches the societal expectations of them. Simultaneously, she informs the clones, who at the time are unaware of it, more and more about their creation and predestined role. Had Miss Emily not been a true advocate of the societal structure and the power it grants her, she could have informed the clones of their impending fate,[27] but she rather drizzles the information gradually, and makes the other guardians do so too, creating this unconscious knowledge to the clones, where they have been "told and not told" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 79).[28]

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[27] Not all members of the bourgeoisie are true advocates of the societal structure. This can, for instance, be seen through Miss Lucy, who does not believe that the clones are being informed enough about their destined future: "She said we weren't being taught enough … What she was talking about was, you know, about *us*. What's going to happen to us one day. Donations and all that" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 29).

[28] By doing so, the guardians, and Miss Emily in particular, ensures that the clones, when leaving Hailsham, are aware of their destiny even though they are never directly told. As such, she ensures that they never question her authority, thus ensuring her power over them.

However, when Tommy and Kathy confronts Miss Emily and Madame in their quest for a delay of their inevitable donations, she appears almost humane when explaining the true goal of Hailsham: "I did all the worrying and questioning for the lot of you … [w]hatever else, we at least saw to it that all of you in our care, you grew up in wonderful surroundings … [but] my dears, they wanted you back in the shadows" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 255-256; 259). By referring to Tommy and Kathy as 'my dears' as well as describing their upbringing, as them being cared for in 'wonderful surroundings', Miss Emily paints a picture-perfect image of their childhood. In reality, the clones were brought up in a highly guarded, regulated, and rule-filled environment, in which they were forced to undertake art lessons they did not understand the meaning of; learn about the importance of their health; and learn the outside's view on sex, which they were told to follow. As such, Miss Emily's description of life at Hailsham illustrates her clear advocacy of the donation program. Additionally, she sees Hailsham as a wonderful place and tells Tommy and Kathy to appreciate the life they were given there: "I can see … that it might look as though you were simply pawns in a game. It can be looked at like that. But think of it. You were lucky pawns" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 261). Although Miss Emily attempts to convey that the life at Hailsham was good, she still made them grow up in the donation program. Hence, even though Miss Emily seems more humane toward the clones, and although she sought to reform the entire program, she is still an advocate of the societal structure. Despite her disagreement with the way these institutions function, she still partakes in it, and she never questions the existence of it. Instead, she tells the clones: "Your life must now run the course that's been set for it" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 261).[29] Hence, it is evident that Miss Emily firmly believes in the implementation of the donation program and the societal structure, as she never questions the existence of it or tries to counteract it. Therefore, she stands as a representation of the advocates of the society. Accordingly, Miss Emily is the contradictory element to Kathy, and what she represents, wherefore the juxtapositional perspective between the two of them is elucidated.

The discrepancy of *Never Let Me Go*'s symbolic act is found in the contradiction between the views on the societal structure, as represented through the adversary, Kathy, and the advocate, Miss Emily, and it is in the struggle between the two counterparts that the

[29] This quote further highlights the distance Miss Emily makes to the fated lives of the clones. She firmly believes that she gave them a better life, but does not admit to the fact that she is the one who is responsible for the clones' life having the fated outcome.

insoluble conflict of the political horizon (Jameson, “On Interpretation” 64) is displayed. Nevertheless, through the narrative, a possible solution to this contradiction is demonstrated, thus presenting an answer to how the conflict can be unraveled. This is made evident through Kathy's last actions in the novel, where she relinquishes all attempts of revolt and accepts her destined fate.

Miss Emily accentuates that places like Hailsham have been closed and that there is no hope for Tommy and Kathy to delay their donations (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 253); their faith is decided, and they must live the life that has been set out for them. To Kathy and her fellow clones, although fearing Miss Emily at Hailsham, they also respect her and feel a great amount of comfort being under her wings: “[H]er presence, intimidating thought it was, … made us feel so safe at Hailsham” (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 39). Miss Emily and the other guardians were the oppressors, the people with power, but they were also all the clones knew of; the guardians were the ones that raised them, but they were also the ones that secluded them from the outside world. As such, the clones are subjected to oppression of which they are more or less unaware of. They have been indoctrinated to adore the guardians and respect the rules set by Miss Emily. In this way, there is no clear enemy to the clones, solely the people they grew up with.

Even though Kathy is surprised by the reveal of the true nature of Hailsham and all the facets of her impending, fatal fate, she never wavers, questions it, or rises in anger against it, she merely accepts the word of Miss Emily. Tommy questions Kathy’s continuation as a carer, but Kathy firmly believes in the importance of her job: “[I]t’s important. A good carer makes a big difference to what a donor’s life’s actually like” (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 276). In this way, even after knowing the truth, Kathy’s indoctrination is rooted so deep within her that she never questions her further engagement with it. Ultimately, it is evident that although Kathy commits subtle acts of revolt, the indoctrination she has undergone never makes her question whether she can change her fatal outcome. The societal structure is omnipresent and the utilization of the clones so extensive that there is no possible outcome in which Kathy, and the other clones, can become the victor and Miss Emily, and the societal structure, the losing part in the interaction. Therefore, the solution to the contradiction in the symbolic act is simply to give in to the oppressors and the oppressive society. The indoctrination and the rules set by them are such an integrated part of the clones that they will never question their authority. Kathy cannot win in this seemingly unflawed society, but must merely accept her fatale predestined fate.

Ideologemes

Next, the social horizon, in which the ideological analysis takes place, can be implemented on Ishiguro's in the novel. Here, Kathy will serve as the main representative of one ideology, and Miss Emily will function as a representation of the opposing ideology. While the characters represent the societal contractions within the novel, they also express juxtapositional ideologemes, which, ultimately, assist the reader in the comprehension of The Political Unconscious of the novel. As such, Kathy and Miss Emily should be understood as ideologemes that are implemented in the novel in order to convey the opposing ideologies, used as means to illustrate not only the oppositional social groups, but also the societal inequalities.

The narrative of the novel is conveyed from the perspective of Kathy, and it is through her interactions with the other clones, and through her memories that the reader is given an insight into the distinct differences between the clones, or non-humans, and the humans, or "normals" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 94). Additionally, it is through Kathy's interactions with the other non-humans and Miss Emily that the two opposing groups' view on each other is illustrated. As demonstrated, Kathy's view on society and her role in it is negative, despite her indoctrination. However, her subtle negative sentiment is further illustrated by her actions and utterances through which it becomes evident that the societal ideology, which states that clones are commodities and non-humans, is not one she shares. By so, Kathy functions as an ideologeme for an anti-societal ideology, in which the clones are considered real human beings.

Kathy's view on the clones as human beings is demonstrated by her emphasis on the description of how they live their lives: The clones' lives are characterized by friendships, love, excitements, and disappointments; all features which one could argue to be characteristics of real human experiences. This emphasis is evident in Kathy's narrative, where she maintains a focus on her relationship with her best friends Ruth and Tommy. She describes the pavilion at Hailsham as a sanctuary for being with your friends: "There was a kind of conversation that could only happen when you were hidden away in the pavilion; we might discuss something that was worrying us, or we might end up screaming with laughter, or in a furious row. Mostly, it was a way to unwind for a while with your closest friends" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 7). This description not only demonstrates the school-like, adolescent relationship between the non-humans at Hailsham, but it also depicts their actions as corresponding to 'real' children's actions with their friends.

Furthermore, Kathy's description of her relationship with Tommy and their quest for a deferral, illustrates how love is a part of the non-humans' life. When informed that deferrals are a mere fantasy and that they should appreciate how good they have been treated, Kathy utters: "'It might be just some trend that came and went,' … 'But for us, it's our life.'" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 261). For the non-humans, what to others may have been an experiment has been their lives and everything they know, wherefore it is devastating for Tommy and Kathy to realize that they cannot have more time together. The excitement of Tommy having produced art that could prove to Madame that he and Kathy are truly in love becomes redundant, but their love is still a pivotal part of their life. This is also accentuated by Tommy, when they part for the last time: "It's a shame, Kath, because we've loved each other all our lives. But in the end, we can't stay together forever" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 277). In so, Kathy's progression in life, here a transition from student, to carer, to clone as well as her seemingly normal romantic life and her deep friendships, all serve as indicators of a 'normal' life span, which evidently illustrates Kathy's sentiment regarding the humanity of the non-humans. As such, it is illustrated that the non-humans' lives and progress is characterized by human qualities and events, thus demonstrating Kathy's sentiment that they are not machines, but actual human beings.

Moreover, a significant example of the non-humans' humanity is found in their confrontation with death. The normals have implemented a society, in which it is possible to cure all diseases by the exploitation of the clones: "After the war, in the early fifties, when the great breakthroughs in science followed one after the other so rapidly, there wasn't time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions. Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previous incurable conditions" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 257). Death is no longer a fact that the normals have to actively relate to, whereas the non-humans have been forced to accept and relate to their impending deaths. Kathy narrates that around the age of thirteen, the non-humans began to joke about the donations: "We still didn't discuss the donations and all that went with them; we still found the whole area awkward enough. But it became something we made jokes about, in much the way we joked about sex" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 83). However, after Miss Lucy informs the non-humans of the nature of their fate and unavoidable death, the jokes stop: "It was after that day, jokes about donations faded away, and we started to think properly about things. If anything, the donations went back to being a subject to be avoided, but not in the way it had been when we were younger. This time round it wasn't awkward or embarrassing anymore; just sombre and serious" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 87). As they grow older it is evident

that the non-humans gain a greater understanding of what it means to donate, as they now see it as something that is serious and somber, which further illustrates their conceptualization of the notion of dying.

The conceptualization of dying is, according to Martin Heidegger, an attribute and a reaction to mortality, which only human beings possess. He explains: “Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do this. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between death and language flashes up before us, but remains still unthought” (Heidegger 107). By stating the difference between humans and animals, Heidegger accentuates that the awareness of the unavoidable death is a quality that solely humankind is privileged to. As such, Kathy’s description of the somber and serious tone regarding donations supports her sentiment that the clones truly are human beings. Hence, when Kathy and Tommy are informed of the true meaning of their art classes, it being a way to prove that the clones have souls, Kathy is perplexed: “Why did you have to prove a thing like that, Miss Emily? Did someone think we didn’t have souls?” (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 255). With this question, Kathy’s belief in the clones’ humanity is verbally narrated. By questioning whether others believe the clones are soulless, she simultaneously accentuates that she believes that they have a soul. Hence, she demonstrates her belief that she is a human being.

In this way, Kathy’s description of the clones’ life, her reflection on her mortality, as well as her belief in the clones’ possession of a soul, illustrate that Kathy can be perceived as an anti-societal ideologeme, as she stands as an example of the disbelief in the societal ideology, which defines the clones as non-humans. This is evident, as she represents a distinct discourse of a social class, which commits an act of revolt against the upper class in the societal structure, with its contradictory view on the clones as human beings.

Miss Emily and Madame stand as the juxtapositional ideologeme, as they are advocates of the surmise that clones are non-humans. As previously illustrated, Miss Emily and Madame’s contribution to the continuation of the donation program manifests their advocacy for the societal structure. However, this understanding of their advocacy could be questioned by Miss Emily’s narration regarding the purpose of Hailsham, and significantly the true meaning of the art classes. When Kathy and Tommy discover that the clones’ theory

regarding the meaning of their art works[30] is untrue, Miss Emily explains why they took some of the works: "We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your soul. Or put it more finely, we did it to *prove you had souls at all*" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 255). In so, Miss Emily and Madame could be perceived as critiques of the societal structure, as they tried to prove the clones' possession of a soul. However, they ultimately give up on their quest to prove the clones' humanity, which ultimately renders their alleged persuasion redundant.

Moreover, through the language of their utterances, it becomes evident that Miss Emily and Madame might not believe so profoundly in their cause regarding the clones' humanity. This can, for instance, be seen by the alleged benevolent Madame's mentioning of the clones. Neither she nor Miss Emily refer to Kathy or any of the other clones as humans, people or persons. Instead, Madame continues to refer to them as creatures: "Poor creatures. What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans? … You poor creatures" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 249; 267). In using the word 'creature', Madame accentuates her underlying belief that the clones are truly non-humans. This is further illustrated by Miss Emily saying: "Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256). Miss Emily believes that by raising the clones in humane conditions they can learn to act like human beings, thus emphasizing her belief that they are not actual human beings. Additionally, the use of the word 'creature' not only illustrates the underlying disbelief in the clones' humanity, though Miss Emily verbally claims the opposite, it also further depicts Madame's fear of the clones, which was already evident to the clones when they were at Hailsham.[31] This fear is also one that Miss Emily possesses, to which she informs Kathy and Tommy: "We're *all* afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day I was at Hailsham. There were times I'd look at you all from my study window and I'd feel such revulsion" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 264).

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[30] The Hailsham students believe that their art would "reveal what you were like" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 255) and that Madame, from the artwork, could tell if a couple really was truly in love, and thus deserving of a deferral (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 248).

[31] Kathy and her schoolmates seek to prove if Madame is truly afraid of them by making a trap. Ultimately Kathy concludes: "Madame *was* afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 35).

In so, by the use of the word ‘creature’ when referring to the non-humans, as well as their immense fear of them, it is evident that although Miss Emily and Madame’s project had been to prove the clones’ humanity, they themselves do not actually believe in the sentiment. Furthermore, Miss Emily and Madame never openly admit to opposing the societal structure and its donation program, they merely aimed to support the program with a method that had a “more human and better way of doing things" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 253). Hence, even though Hailsham, allegedly, is a better alternative within the donation program, it is still a part of the societal structure and its ideology.

As such, by Miss Emily and Madame’s role in the continuation of the donation program as well as their view on the clones as non-humans, it is evident that they can be perceived as a manifestation of a pro-societal ideologeme. Through their opinions and utterances, they reflect not only their underlying view on the non-humans, but also their own class and place within the societal structure. As characters, they stand as a pro-societal ideologeme that illustrates the societal ideology, which believes in the clones’ lack of humanity and thus the utilization of the oppressed. By functioning so, they embody a distinct discourse of a social class that advocates the significance of the societal structure, in which the oppressed are utilized, controlled, and surveyed by the upper class.

Consequently, Kathy and Miss Emily, alongside Madame, embody two juxtapositional ideologemes; Kathy is the embodiment of the anti-societal ideologeme, whereas Miss Emily and Madame are the embodiment of the pro-societal ideologeme. Unconsciously, the two opposing sides portray contradictory positions of the narrative. However, it is through their actions and utterances including their choice of language that they express their contradictory, ideological viewpoints, and it is in the interaction between the anti- and pro-societal ideologemes that the symbolic act of the novel is expressed.

The Mode of Production

Finally, Jameson’s third horizon can be applied to *Never Let Me Go*. However, a more classical Marxist understanding of modes of production will be applied to examine the portrayal of the oppressed vs. oppressor relation of the novel. Nevertheless, in line with Jameson’s perception of modes of production, several modes of production are at play in the novel, it can, for instance, be read as entailing a slavery mode of production. However, this analysis will focus on an interpretation of the novel based on Marx’ statement that all societies are to be understood through the society’s dominant mode of production (“Author’s Preface”). As so, in accordance with a classical Marxist comprehension of society, this analysis will focus on one of the novel’s dominant modes of productions, namely the

capitalist mode of production, in order to further understand the power structures and social division.

As mentioned, the classification of the capitalist mode of production entails a bourgeoisie/proletariat mode of relation (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 14-15), which resides within the base of the societal structure. In the novel, the bourgeoisie is constituted by the normals–the human beings. However, it should be emphasized that a hierarchy within the bourgeoisie is also present. As such, not all within the class hold the same level of authority or power in the societal structure. The top of the class is the unmentioned and unseen corporation or government, who has implemented the system. The reader is never given a backstory to how the society came to exist, but it must be assumed that some people designed this structure and now controls it. Next are the leaders of the different institutions, which, based on Miss Emily's narration regarding her and Madame's movement (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256), also can be seen to entail a distinct hierarchy between them. Hailsham, alongside a few other institutions,[32] were alternative and, ultimately, unpopular institutions within the societal structure, thus did not hold the same societal status as the conventional institutions. Nevertheless, the leaders of these unconventional institutions are still human beings, who hold power and partake in the continuation of the societal build.

Furthermore, there is a large group of normals, who are 'regular' people that hold jobs and live their everyday lives. It is between these normals that the clones go to seek for their "possibles" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 136), which is "the person … [a clone was] modelled after" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 137). Through Kathy's description of the work environment of the woman they believe to be Ruth's 'possible', she and her colleagues come across as quite normal, and not the holders of great power or oppression (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 156). Though these 'regular' people do not seem to hold great societal power, they do, like all other normals, belong to the bourgeoisie. As such, it is evident that a distinct hierarchy exist within the bourgeoisie, but despite their positional differences, they can all be classified within the same class, as they are all advocates of the societal ideology, since they are able to utilize the organs of the oppositional class, the proletariat, who are embodied by the clones.

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[32] The existence of schools like Hailsham is made clear by Miss Emily, who states: "When [we] … started out, there were no places like Hailsham in existence. We were the first, along with Glenmorgan House. Then a few years later came the Saunders Trust. Together, we became a small but very vocal movement" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256).

Yet, some of these bourgeoisie members can be characterized as agents of different Ideological State Apparatuses, implemented in society in order to indoctrinate the proletariat with the state ideology. This is done as a means to ensure the proletariats' understanding of the societal values, as well as to ensure that they do not revolt, which ultimately assures the societal mode of relation. One institution that can be seen as an Ideological State Apparatus is Hailsham, in which the guardians are the agents, who are granted the power and control over the clones. At Hailsham, the guardians', as demonstrated, indoctrinate the clones with the suppressive state ideology through the lessons, speeches, and the general upbringing of them. A consequence of this indoctrination is the false consciousness regarding their existence, which the clones are ultimately equipped with. This is, for instance, evident by the mentioned examples of euphemistic neologisms and the pride Kathy feels in her job.[33] In so, it is evident that the clones have been assigned a false consciousness and ultimately accept a societal desire, which they have been indoctrinated to believe is beneficial for them, but which essentially only ensures the continued existence of the bourgeoisie. Consequently, this not only ensures the proletarians' conformity, but it also makes them accept their roles as societal commodities that are disposable to the bourgeoisie.

The second component of the base, the forces of production, should be considered in relation to the novel's proletarians. They are the ones who produce the necessities for the production in society (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 18). This is evident in the novel, where the clones produce their organs. It is the clones' bodies that are the raw material of society, which will ensure the continuation of the superior class. As such, in this bourgeoisie-ruled society, the clones are, as stated, the oppressed class; they are the workers in the forces of production, as they, by maintaining a good health, ensure that the raw material, their organs, can be utilized in order for the society and its 'normals' to maintain its existence.

The definition of the clones as proletarians is evident through the relationship between the two classes. The clones are unable to question their societal role and, ultimately, the societal ideology. It is this inability that enables the qualification of the clones as proletarians, equivalent to Engels and Marx' definition of the class: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force" ("Feuerbach: … III" 67). The normals, the ruling material force, are the ones that created the clones as well as maintain control over their

[33] This is evident when Kathy states: "It means a lot to me, being able to do my work well" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3).

destiny, upbringing, and death: "Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do … You were brought up into this world for a purpose" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 80). In this way, the clones can be classified as proletarians, the struggling working class, in the most literal way. They are the oppressed class who is exploited, dehumanized, and only considered as the means of production, serving as both the raw material as well as the forces of production, all in order for the ruling class of the capitalistic power structure to harvest their organs. This view on the proletarians is, as mentioned, exemplified through Miss Emily and Madame, who, as demonstrated, do not consider the clones human.

However, the clones' indoctrination has not only created a complaint proletariat, but also a class that is self-regulating. At Hailsham, the clones are aware that there are topics that the guardians do not wish to discuss, specifically regarding the donations: "We hated the way our guardians … became so awkward whenever we came near this territory … that's why we never asked that one further question" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 69). As such, there are unspoken rules, at Hailsham, stating that one should not question the sentiments of the guardians, the rules, nor anything regarding their future. Nevertheless, one of the clones, Marge K., breaks this convention when asking Miss Lucy about smoking. Though Miss Lucy does not take great notice of the unorthodox questioning, the other clones are aware of the unconventional question and, as a result, they react: "[W]e punished Marge K. so cruelly for bringing it all up that day after the rounders match" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 69). In so, it is never necessary for the guardians to take action if a clone is to break the conventions; the clones themselves punish those who do. This is further accentuated with the clones' awareness of being constantly under surveillance: They can never be alone or talk in peace, wherefore they always act accordingly. Even after leaving Hailsham, the clones never waver from the indoctrination; their self-regulation withstands to their end.[34]

The construction of the fictional English society in terms of how the societal, cultural, and political dimensions are determined by the construction of the base (Marx, "Author's

[34] The indoctrination's eternal influence is made evident by Kathy's last action in the novel, where she does not let her feelings regarding Tommy's death get out of control. She simply returns to her duties (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 282). As such, it is evident that the self-regulation of the class is eternal and that the indoctrination of the clones have secured the bourgeoisie's control, even when they appear to be out of reach from the oppression.

Preface"). In accordance, how the societal structure functions and operates is a reflection of the ideology of the ruling class; an ideology, which in *Never Let Me Go* is based on biotechnology and the sacrifice of the few to save the many. However, if the belief in this societal ideology, where the control and exploitation of the proletarians is justified on the basis of science and biotechnology, were to change, not only would the hierarchical division be altered, but all aspects of the superstructure would change automatically.

This societal change is, according to Engels and Marx, bound to happen in a violent revolution that will result in the fall of the current mode of relation and thus the capitalist mode of production (*Manifesto* 34). However, this will only happen if the proletarians become aware of their exploited position and realize that they have "nothing to lose but their chains" (Engels & Marx, *Manifesto* 34). If so, the entire superstructure will fall. As such, it is, on the basis of Marxist theory, inevitable that the normals will be forcibly overthrown by the clones, who will alter the entire societal structure.

Nevertheless, in the novel, this revolution seems to be predominantly theoretical. The indoctrination of the clones has shaped their view on their fate to such an extent that they feel pride in their role. Furthermore, they have been indoctrinated to become not only an obedient class but also a self-regulating class, as seen with Marge K. By the punishment of Marge K., it becomes evident that the clones fear the act of rebelling, which is why they seek to control and punish the ones who question the safe space that they consider Hailsham to be (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 39). The indoctrination has, thus, created a class that perceives its circumstances as normal, since it has never seen or been subjected to any alternative. The proletarians have never known anything else and Kathy's last act, her stating that she now must return to her duty and where she is supposed to go (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 282), indicates not only Kathy's lack of hope for a different life, but also the lack of hope for a general revolution. As such, a violent overthrow of the normals and their oppressive rule seems merely to be a possibility on a theoretical level. The society seems unflawed, as the bourgeoisie never shows the proletarians an alternative to their life, and as they have made sure to indoctrinate a sense of responsibility and duty within the clones. Ultimately, this creates a class that never have known and never will know a society, where they are not subjected to the oppression of the ruling class.

Docility

Moreover, in addition to Jameson's horizons, Foucault's disciplinary mechanisms are evident in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Here, the disciplines are also utilized by the governing bourgeoisie, who uses them to manifest and maintain their control over the

proletariat. However, a central point in relation to this is that the bourgeoisie does not utilize all of Foucault's disciplines. Therefore, the following will only consider the prominent disciplines that are present in the novel. The disciplines will be explored in relation to the proletariat's life stages, in an attempt to demonstrate how the bourgeoisie influences them throughout their lives and not just in isolated periods of time.

The Art of Distributions

Firstly, enclosure is represented by Hailsham, as it contains the proletariat and separates them from the rest of society. This is favorable for the bourgeoisie because the surrounding society thus avoids the confrontation of the consequences that the scientific development has given rise to.[35] This has a segregating effect. Looking back to when they first arrived at the Cottages, Kathy narrates: "Because somewhere underneath, a part of us stayed like that: fearful of the world around us" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 118). Hence, Hailsham creates an 'us' and a 'them', which is intensified by its secludedness. Therefore, the discipline works to ensure ignorance among the remainder of the society; they need not consider the cost of their scientific advancement and what sacrifices others must make in order for them to live longer.

Additionally, the enclosure retains the proletariat and ensures immobility, in the sense that they are secluded from obtaining full transparency about their destinies and their societal role, wherefore they lack the conditions and joint basis necessary for uniting and revolting. There is a fear of the outside world, which adds to this and creates an uncertainty. Kathy narrates "horrible stories about the woods" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 50), which is located outside the enclosure. She relates the story of a boy, who went "beyond the Hailsham boundaries" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 50), whereupon "his body had been found two days later" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 50).[36] In this story, the world outside Hailsham is

[35] It is evident that the society surrounding Hailsham wishes to avoid confrontation with the consequences of the scientific development, as Miss Emily explains that there has been a belief that the organs "appeared from nowhere" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 257). Moreover, she explicitates that by the time they became aware of the extent of the consequences, "[t]here was no way to reverse the process" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 257), because the development had created too many advantages.

[36] There is an additional story regarding the dangers of the outside world, in which a girl, who wishes to explore the world outside, ultimately ends up dying (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 50).

represented by the mysterious woods, depicting the outside as dangerous and Hailsham as a safe place and therefore they have a strong incentive to stay. This belief creates a sense of willingness and approval; when the clones feel protected at Hailsham, they have no incitement to break with the bourgeoisie's societal structure, and thus, they feel content, if not gratified, with their position in society, wherefore they refrain from deviance.

Moreover, partitioning is evident within Hailsham. During their time at the institution, the clones are partitioned into year groups and according to grade (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 15; 33). In relation to partitioning, Foucault states that each individual must be assigned their own place to ensure docility and constant supervision (143). Although the clones at Hailsham do not have their own personal space, but, instead, are partitioned into smaller groups, the discipline has a somewhat similar effect: They are under the guardians' constant supervision; they are assigned specific dormitories, wherefore they can be located when they are not at class; and they are separated from the other year groups, for which reason it is challenging to gather in large groups. Thus, the partitioning-discipline is in effect, as the whereabouts, presences, and absences of the clones are known, mastered, and used by the bourgeoisie.

The use of functional sites is represented by the classrooms at Hailsham, here exemplified by the art classroom. The clones' art is of importance and therefore this classroom has a certain significance to them. This significance is embedded in the activity by the guardians. Miss Emily relates:

> "Why did we take your artwork? Why did we do that? You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy … You said it was because your art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside … Well, you weren't far wrong about that. We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to *prove you had souls at all.*" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 255)

Hence, the guardians were dependent on the clones' art to expand their belief in their humanity. Although the clones did not know this, they sensed that their artwork was of significance. This is further intensified by Madame's art gallery: The guardians emphasized that having your art chosen for the gallery was "a 'most distinguished honour'" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 39), wherefore this became something that had a sense of prestige

connected to it (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 38).[37] Therefore, by creating functional sites, the bourgeoisie achieves a high level of discipline; when the clones find themselves in the classroom, they know that they must do their best to perform, as it could lead to their work being chosen. Hence, they are encouraged to conduct a specific behavior. Moreover, they obtain, as Foucault states, sites with well-defined functions that ensure supervision, while also excluding unwanted communication (143-144). Thus, the idealization of the activity at this specific functional site ensures a high level of discipline and docility among the clones, as they are engaged in their assigned activity, which they strive to perform perfectly, they ultimately refrain from any acts of misconduct.

Thus, the bourgeoisie has managed to create an isolated enclosure, in which they have complete control over the proletariat. As they also utilize the disciplines of partition and functional sites that have cultivated the behavior, Hailsham functions not only as a place in which the bourgeoisie can produce organs, it is also an institution, in which normalized behavior and specific values are taught in the attempt to prevent revolutionizing behavior. Therefore, Hailsham ultimately also works to maintain the bourgeoisie's power.

The Control of Activity

As demonstrated, these disciplines aim to create a body that is "susceptible to specified operations, which have their order, their stages, their internal conditions, their constituent elements" (Foucault 155). Hence, in relation to the proletarians' life at Hailsham, the disciplines that control activities are rather absent. Indeed, as students, the clones are subjected to timetables in the sense that they must attend courses, which follow a particular schedule. However, these disciplines grow more distinguished, as the lives of the proletarians proceed. When the clones leave the Cottages, they become carers, and are subjected to a larger sense of control over their activity, as they are assigned a specific exercise, which they must repeat until they themselves become donors. Thus, the disciplinary mechanisms that control, regulate, and supervise activities are mainly represented by the disciplines of timetables and exhaustive use, wherefore these will be the object of focus in relation to the novel.

The bourgeoisie subjects the proletariat to timetables, while they are carers. This has the same effects, as Foucault also mentions: The timetables establish a rhythm, while it also subjects the individual to a specific occupation that is regulated by courses of repetition

[37] Deduced from Kathy's utterance: "[I]t was a great honour to have something taken by Madame" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 38-39).

(149). This is evident with Kathy: She is governed by the rhythm of the course she and the donor enter into; following the operation, she nurses the donor back to health and hereafter she leaves to take care of the next donor. Hence, she also has a "particular occupations [sic.]" (Foucault 149) imposed on her. Repeatedly, she must care for the donors to ensure that they can undergo another donation. Lastly, this occupation is a repetition: Kathy narrates that she has been a carer "for over eleven years" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3), thus suggesting that her occupation has been constituted by courses, which have been repeated for over a decade.

The repetitiveness of Kathy's life as a carer also illustrates how the bourgeoisie subjects the proletariat to the discipline of exhaustive use. Kathy is relieved of her duties as a carer because she must become a donor (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3). This is not her own choice; it is the bourgeoisie that decides when it is time for the carers "to become donors" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 204). According to Foucault, exhaustive use seeks to "intensify the use of the slightest moment" (154) and this is evident in Kathy's life as a carer:

> Then there's the solitude. You grow up surrounded by crowds of people, that's all you've ever known, and suddenly you're a carer. You spend hour after hour, on your own, driving across the country, centre to centre, hospital to hospital, sleeping in overnights, no one to talk to about your worries, no one to laugh with. Just now and again you run into a student you know – a carer or donor you recognise from the old days – but there's never much time. You're always in a rush, or else you're too exhausted to have a proper conversation. (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 203)

In so, Kathy's use of each moment has been intensified to the extent where she has no free moments. However, she has been indoctrinated to do so: Tommy introduces the belief that carers become donors earlier in life, if they do not perform their duties successfully (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 223). Hence, she has a strong encouragement to live up to the standards set by the bourgeoisie and this, as she says, creates a solitude. As mentioned, Foucault states that solitude serves as a condition in which one is assigned to a state of total submission, wherefore solitude ensures the possibility of exercising an intense power over the subjected individual (237). Therefore, exhaustive use not only creates an effective system, in which vital organs are created, it also ensures immobility, and thus disciplined behavior and docility. Thus, the bourgeoisie is dependent on the best possible and most efficient carers, as these will reduce the time between the donor's donations. Moreover, the immobility ensures

that the carers have absolutely no time for themselves or any surplus of mental resources. Therefore, the discipline also protects the bourgeoisie from any dangerous acts of misconduct and misbehavior.

As such, although not all of Foucault's disciplines are relevant in relation to the proletarians' life, their activities are, nevertheless, still controlled. They are subjected to rhythms, which they cannot themselves control or alter. Additionally, they are assigned specific and repetitive activities, of which the aim is to facilitate and assist the overall agenda of the bourgeoisie. This is accomplished in a way that allows the bourgeoisie to supervise the proletariat.[38] Therefore, the incentive to perform well is strong; if you do not perform well, ultimately, you risk receiving an early notice (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 223). Hence, the proletariat's lives under constant pressure: They are supervised, their performances are characterized, and they are punished, if they do not live up to the bourgeoisie's standards.

The Organization of Geneses

The first discipline, which entails that durations of time are divided into segments (Foucault 157), manifests itself in all the donations: Each donation can be perceived as a duration, which begins when the donors receive their notice and ends when they receive the next. Foucault states that the durations must have a predetermined end (157). However, in relation to the donors, the end is not predetermined on the basis of a temporal framework, instead, the end is constituted by the donor regaining strength for another donation. In so, the bourgeoisie has seized control over the proletariat's time and has acquired full determination over the course of their lives. Moreover, the proletariat has been subjected to time durations that only focus on efficiency, as the bourgeoisie has created these durations from the perspective of creating as many organs as possible. Thus, their position of power is manifested and maintained: They have created a system, which ensures that the proletariat cannot dispose of their own lives and futures, instead they are forced to enter into a structure, which only works to realize the bourgeoisie's agenda.

The bourgeoisie also utilizes the discipline that entails successive series. The donors are moderated within the temporal segments and they have their lives decided for them. The

[38] One of the ways the bourgeoisie is able to supervise the carers is through characterization and documentation. Kathy states: "My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as 'agitated', even before fourth donation" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3). Thus, her performance is monitored.

proletarians have only come into existence–and are only of value–because of their vital organs, wherefore the bourgeoisie has reduced them to exactly that: They only live, so the bourgeoisie can live. Hence, the bourgeoisie have also robbed them of their individual autonomy. Moreover, as Foucault states, the successive series work to define the individual's rank (159). Thus, one's role as a donor establishes one's position within the overall societal hierarchy; if one is a donor, one serves the controlling bourgeoisie and therefore has no autonomy.

The effect of the repeating series is evident in Kathy and Tommy's pursuit of a deferral. After they decide to seek out the deferral, a sense of intimidation unfolds between the two: "Tommy gave a sigh and put his head deeper into my shoulder. Someone watching might have thought he was being unenthusiastic, but I knew what he was feeling. We'd been thinking about the deferrals, the theory about the Gallery, all of it, for so long – and now, suddenly, here we were. It was definitely a bit scary" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 240). Additionally, a sense of hope unfolds. This, however, is quelled when they visit Madame and Miss Emily, who informs them that the rumor is a lie (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 252-253). About the rumor, Miss Emily says: "I began to think, well, perhaps I shouldn't worry. It's not my doing, after all. And for the few couples who get disappointed, the rest will never put it to the test anyway. It's something for them to dream about, a little fantasy. What harm is there? But for the two of you … [y]ou've *hoped* carefully" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 253). In so, it is evident that the bourgeoisie is aware of this rumor and that they deliberately utilize it to execute their agenda: Miss Emily explicitly states that she has used the hope, the rumor induces; a hope, which the members of the proletariat, who found it hard to comply with the bourgeoisie's disciplines, could cling on to. And that is what Kathy and Tommy did; they hoped that they could have a few years of freedom and thus stop the repeating series of series briefly. However, their hope is crushed, and they are forced to conform. The only "indulgent thing" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 281) Kathy does is driving to Norfolk after Tommy "had completed" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 281), where she pictures Tommy waving (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 282): "The fantasy never got beyond that – I didn't let it – and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn't sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 282). Here, Kathy evidently voices her conformity; her hopes have been drained and instead of protesting, she accepts her future as a cog in the bourgeoisie's vast machine.

Hence, the bourgeoisie's control over the proletariat's activities is extensive. Although they do not utilize all of Foucault's disciplines, the disciplines they do employ

successfully manage to create docility and reinforce their power. Therefore, by creating successive segments of time, the bourgeoisie obtains "series of series" (Foucault 158) and thus manifests their omnipresence and power.

Moreover, the proletariat is subjected to specific, repetitive, and graduated exercises. In relation to the donors, the exercise they must perform is that of donating. Since it advances the supervision of the proletariat, it aligns with Foucault's definition of exercise (Foucault 161). The supervision of the donors is secured through the preceding checks (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 273) and in so, the performance of the individual donor can be measured and compared to others. As such, continuity, constraint, and observation are ensured. Additionally, "the donations programme" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256) is all the proletarians know and since they have been strictly segregated from the bourgeoisie, they are convinced that they have no chance of attaining an alternative future. Thus, they are more willing to accept their "terminal state" (Foucault 161), as Foucault calls it; the proletarians simply accept that they must comply with the bourgeoisie and the societal structure, as they– like their originals convey–cannot achieve anything else.[39] Hence, by the use of exercises and indoctrination, the bourgeoisie successfully creates discipline and docility.

The Composition of Forces

To compose the most efficient machinery, the complete forces of society must be united (Foucault 164). Therefore, to create the strongest, most efficient, and beneficial society, the bourgeoisie must utilize the abilities of each individual proletarian. As Foucault states, the individual is reduced to a function (164), and this is also evident in the novel: The carers have been reduced to exactly that: carers. As stated by Kathy, they are surrounded by solitude and if the chance to socialize should present itself, they do not have the time nor the energy (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 203). Thus, they are reduced to the mere function of caring for the donors. Moreover, this is evident in the lives of the donors: They have been reduced to their organs and ability to donate. The fact that the donations constitute the basis for their existence is evident in the notion of 'completing': It manifests the bourgeoisie's practical outlook on the clones; that they are only brought into existence because they have a function to fill and once they have done so, they have "completed" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me*

[39] This belief is deduced from Ruth's statement: "We're modelled from *trash*" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 164). She articulates that because their originals are "[j]unkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps … [and] [c]onvicts" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 164) they cannot amount to more than them.

Go 99). Hence, they have, as the definition of 'complete' entails, "finished making" ("Complete.") the organs, which the bourgeoisie needs, and they have performed their duty "to make … [something] whole or perfect" ("Complete."). As such, they have performed their duty of attributing to perfecting society and the bourgeoisie's living conditions. Therefore, by reducing the proletariat to specific and delimited functions, the bourgeoisie can place, move, and allocate the proletariat new sites and enclosures, exercises, etc. as they please and thus compose a united machinery, which works to affirm and enforce their societal power.

As mentioned, the second mechanism is the combination of "[t]he various chronological series" (Foucault 164), meaning that the individual's time must be tailored to accommodate the time of others, whereby the best possible result is obtained (Foucault 164). The bourgeoisie has created a societal structure, in which the proletariat gradually progress through the enclosures, durations of time, and exercises. Thus, there is a constant flow of students becoming carers and carers becoming donors, which ensures the continual production of the organs. Hence, the bourgeoisie can use their power to increase their power. As the carers and donors have been assigned specific activities, which should take place in specific places, they observe their actions and performances. Therefore, they know which carers should receive their notice at the earliest and which carers, like Kathy, can continue their role for longer, as they achieve positive results. In so, the power relations are exposed: If the proletariat does not operate satisfactorily, it will ultimately lead to their death.

Lastly, Foucault argues that the activity of the composed machinery should be triggered by a command (166). Generally speaking, there is no set command to which the proletariat responds. There is the donation notice, which they receive prior to a donation (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 223), but there is no mention of signals such as bells, gestures, or the like, which initiates the motion of the total, united workforce, as Foucault otherwise exemplifies (166). However, there is, in a sense, an internal command, which is exemplified with Kathy's decision to leave the Cottages: "I made my decision, and once I'd made it, I never wavered. I just got up one morning and told Keffers I wanted to start my training to become a carer. It was surprisingly easy" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 199). Hence, the decision to leave and initiate the next phase of her life is her own. However, it is based on the bourgeoisie's indoctrination of her. Kathy knows her life has been planned for her[40] and,

[40] This is, for instance, evident in the example, where Miss Lucy explains to them why they were created and when and how they become donors (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 80).

therefore, she does not need the signaling of a bell, or the like, to initiate her exercise, instead she knows what her existence entails and thus she acts accordingly, exhibiting the level of docility and discipline that the proletariat embody.

Thus, the bourgeoisie manages to compose and consolidate the result of the disciplines they utilize. In doing so, they successfully create the highest possible level of docility, which ultimately manifests itself in Kathy's actions; she willingly becomes a carer, and thus, accepts her role in the bourgeoisie's "donations programme" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 256); and she chooses conformity, although she knows the bourgeoisie has manipulated and exploited her. Hence, by successfully composing a joint societal force, the bourgeoisie demonstrates how deep-rooted their power over the proletariat is; they have successfully deployed the aforementioned disciplines, which ultimately have ensured the creation of a societal structure, in which they are the rulers.

Panopticism

Another way in which the bourgeoisie is able to maintain and practice their power is by distributing and employing Panopticism throughout society. As mentioned, Hailsham functions as an enclosure and thus it also facilitates the establishment of the panoptic structure: The clones' dormitories represent the cells, and the guardians represent the inspectors. As with the panoptic structure, when the clones are in their dormitories, they are subjected to surveillance: "[I]t was a sort of rule we couldn't close dorm doors completely except for when we were sleeping" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 71). Hence, they are governed by the gaze of the inspectors continuously throughout the day. Moreover, Kathy relates how Miss Emily is omniscient; Kathy describes how she always knows where the clones are, even if they try to hide: "It was like she had some extra sense. You could go into a cupboard, close the door tight and not move a muscle, you just knew Miss Emily's footsteps would stop outside and her voice would say: 'All right. Out you come.'" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 43-44). Thus, Miss Emily and the guardians function as the inspectors; their field of vision has access into all of the cells, wherefore they can monitor and control the proletariat. Accordingly, the way in which Hailsham is constructed resembles that of the Panopticon and therefore the institution facilitates the opportunity to create what Foucault calls "a disciplined society" (216) within itself.

The constant exposure to the bourgeoisie's supervision creates an internalized feeling of being observed among the proletariat. This is apparent in the following example: "The song was almost over when something made me realise I wasn't alone, and I opened my eyes to find myself staring at Madame framed in the doorway" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 71).

Hence, Kathy, although her eyes are closed, becomes conscious of the fact that she is being watched and she immediately brings her dancing, which she fears is a forbidden action (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 71), to a halt. In other words, as a direct consequence of the supervision, Kathy claims responsibility for her behavior and adjusts it to accommodate the wishes of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the internalization is evident in Kathy's consciousness of the fact that others can overhear her conversations:

> "[The pond] wasn't … a good place for a secret discreet conversation – not nearly as good as the lunch queue. For a start you could clearly be seen from the house. And the way that sound travelled across the water was hard to predict; if people wanted to eavesdrop, it was the easiest thing to walk down the outer path and crouch in the bushes on the other side of the pond." (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 25)

Hence, the proletariat is aware of the extensive surveillance. However, this example also illustrates how members of the proletariat supervise each other. In so, it is not only the bourgeoisie's actions that ensure the maintenance of power, the proletariat also participates in the preservation of the unequal power relations. This ensures the bourgeoisie's strong control over the proletariat, since the presence of another proletarian–or just the knowledge of one potentially being nearby–can induce disciplined behavior.

Thus, the proletarians have not just internalized the power of Panopticism, they constitute a fundamental element of its continuation. Indirectly, the clones have been taught that after they leave Hailsham, they must continue the panoptic structure: "[T]his was one thing we'd been told over and over: that after Hailsham there'd be no more guardians, so we'd have to look after each other" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 115). Indeed, this could be understood as a suggestion of the caring characteristics incited in the clones, which are needed in their future role as carers. However, embedded in this statement is also a suggestion of supervision; since the clones have observed each other closely at Hailsham and have eavesdropped and spied on each other, this could also be seen as a request to continue to do so. This would ensure the continuation of the bourgeoisie's strong power over the proletariat; when the clones leave Hailsham and the Cottages, they are not subjected to the same level of supervision and control as they have been previously, seeing as there will be no guardians. Therefore, it would be of value to the bourgeoisie if the proletariat continues to supervise each other. This would prolong their strict control, wherefore the same level of docility and discipline among the proletariat would be assured.

As Foucault describes, the effects of the supervision within the panoptic structure should create permanent effects, even if the supervision is discontinuous (201). This, along with the internalized feeling of surveillance, is exemplified as Kathy relates back to one of her and Tommy's talks. She describes: "Two women were passing by with dogs on leads, and although it was completely stupid we both stopped talking until they'd gone further up the slope and out of earshot" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 172). Thus, the behavior embedded in them during their time as students has evidently continued to live; although it is not guardians who pass them, Kathy and Tommy alter their behavior according to the internalization. Hence, the effects of Panopticism are deep-rooted and longstanding and thus it accentuates the power of the bourgeoisie: They have successfully created a societal class that, regardless of their view on the societal structure, displays docility.

In so, the societal system's incorporation of the panoptic structure and the effects of Panopticism support and underpin the results of the additional disciplinary mechanism. The bourgeoisie, thus, utilizes Panopticism to create a societal structure, which the proletariat cannot escape. Therefore, the bourgeoisie evidently manages to exploit Panopticism in a way that works to ensure and exercise their power and control. It has been distributed throughout the institutions, at which the proletariat lives and work, and thus it is a constant element in their lives, which ensures their continued disciplined and docile behavior.

Punish

Although Kathy never relates any detailed statement of how the bourgeoisie punishes the proletariat, it is arguable that punishment is one of the mechanisms used to create docility and discipline. In an overall perspective, the proletariat lives under an apparent death sentence. This is a viewpoint, which James Tink also emphasizes: "[T]he characters live under a kind of death sentence, condemned to death by their early thirties not through criminal code, but through the workings of a scientific and political regime that designates their lives as expendable" (24). Hence, the clones have been sentenced already by the time they come into existence. As Tink also articulates, this sentence is not based on a crime they have committed (24), but solely because the bourgeoisie believes that their lives are of more value than the proletariat's. Yet, the death sentence can also be perceived as a form of punishment: The clones are, as Tink states, deprived "of their freedom" (28). Hence, the body of the clones serves as "an instrument or intermediary" (Foucault 11): The body of the clones is intervened upon as it is imprisoned–or enclosed–within institutions such as Hailsham, wherefore they are deprived of their freedom. Moreover, their bodies are under the control of the bourgeoisie; they must perform certain activities, stay in a specific place, and conduct a

specific work. However, the bourgeoisie does not lay a hand on the body of the proletariat, instead, they utilize what Foucault relates as a more developed punishment, "an economy of suspended rights" (11), as the basis of their punishment. Foucault states: "If it is still necessary for the law to reach and manipulate the body … it will be at a distance … according to strict rules, and with a much 'higher' aim" (11). Thus, the bourgeoisie uses the proletarians' bodies to obtain their 'higher' aim; they utilize the clones' bodies to create the most efficient and most advantageous society, in which they have a steady supply of vital organs, which ensures the best possible living conditions for their own societal class.

Moreover, an evident manifestation of how the bourgeoisie punishes the proletariat to reinforce discipline and docility is the arrival of their donation notice. As mentioned, Tommy introduces the idea that if a clone does not perform successfully as a carer, they will receive their notice for their first donation early (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 223).[41] However, Tommy also explicates that it does not upset him, his reason being: "I'm a pretty good donor, but I was a lousy carer" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 223). Ultimately, this could stand as an indication of the extent and success of the disciplinary mechanisms utilized by the bourgeoisie; Tommy willingly accepts the change of societal roles imposed on him, although it ultimately shortens the length of his life. All their lives, the proletarians have been told that they are brought into existence with one specific end in view: "You'll become adults, then before you're old … you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do … You were brought into the world for a purpose" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 80). Hence, Tommy's willingness portrays the extent of the bourgeoisie's indoctrination: He believes that this is his destiny and in the image put forward by the bourgeoisie, in which this is the societal function he must fulfill.[42] As such, the bourgeoisie uses the notice as a way of evaluating and characterizing the activity of the proletarian; if they do not perform according to the bourgeoisie's standards, they are forwarded in the system. However, the proletarians do not necessarily regard this action as a punish. Thus, the penal system in the novel does not, as a contrast to what Foucault describes as "modern justice" (Foucault 10), contain a sense of

[41] This is, however, not a belief that Kathy necessarily shares: "There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 3).

[42] Again, it is evident how the proletariat's false consciousness, regarding their societal role, affects them.

"shame in punishing" (Foucault 10). Moreover, this ultimately serves as a reinforcer of the disciplinary mechanisms considered above; since the subjected individuals do not perceive the punish as an actual punishment, they are more likely to refrain from any insurrections and revolts. Hence, by disguising the punishment as something the proletarians might even believe has a sense of pride to it, as it lets them fulfill their predetermined destiny, the proletariat are retained, controlled, and disciplined.

The fact that the regime does not punish the body points, according to Foucault, to a more developed penal system, as this has a focus on the criminal's "'humanity'" (Foucault 74). However, the majority of the bourgeoisie do not ascribe any kind of humanity to the clones. Thus, they cannot seek to "correct and transform" (Foucault 74) the "'man' … in the criminal" (Foucault 74), as Foucault otherwise states that the reformed penal system aims to do. Therefore, as the bourgeoisie perceives the clones as non-humans, they can punish without considering the notion of humanity. Hence, there is a discrepancy: While the view they openly put forward displays no sense of humanity, their actions indicate otherwise. The bourgeoisie does conduct "'physical' penalties" (Foucault 11), in that they confine and force labor on the proletariat, however, a central point, which Foucault also mentions, is that "the punishment-body relation is not the same as it was in the torture during public executions" (11). Therefore, there is an inconsistency between the bourgeoisie's statements and their actions; their ideology states that the proletarians are non-human, yet they punish them humanely.

Thus, the bourgeoisie do not penalize to correct the actions of criminals; they punish as a way to maintain the high levels of discipline and docility. This reinforces the additional disciplines utilized by the bourgeoisie to create a societal structure, in which they hold control and autonomy over the proletariat. The disciplines create confined institutions that segregate the bourgeoisie and proletariat, which ultimately ensures indoctrination; as they live isolated from the rest of society, the proletariat never comes to know of any alternative future. Moreover, the strict, repeating exercises they are subjected to, ensures that the proletariat cannot engage in any actions of misconduct. This is further underlined by the widely distributed system of Panopticism, which ensures the preservation of discipline. Thus, by utilizing punishment, disciplines, and Panopticism, the bourgeoisie has created a societal structure in which the proletariat is confined to their assigned sites, exercises, and roles, which all contribute to the creation of the established societal structure. Hence, the bourgeoisie has successfully created a society, in which they hold power, while simultaneously creating more.

Preliminary Conclusion

In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the symbolic act is found in the dualism between the old and new society as represented by Offred and the Commander, respectively, which is made evident through an analysis of Offred's expressed skepticism and the Commander's clear advocacy. The symbolic act is moreover supported by the analysis of the ideologemes, in which Offred serves as the embodiment of an anti-Gileadean ideologeme, and the Commander as a pro-Gileadean ideologeme, which define their ideological standpoints while simultaneously depicting their societal connections. The appliance of the Marxist mode of production, facilitated the analysis of the base and superstructure. Through this analysis, the social division and societal construction of the theocratic regime became clear, which, based on Offred's narrative and actions, ultimately led to the conclusion that Gilead is flawed. Offred commits small acts of revolt, which ultimately creates hope for a revolution, thus illustrating that the destined violent revolution of Marxist theory is feasible.[43]

The analysis of the bourgeoisie's oppressive methods illustrated the class' successful use of Foucault's disciplines with which they are able to characterize, supervise, and control the proletariat, who is, thus, made docile. However, the bourgeoisie is not able to gain a complete level of docility. The remembrance of the previous society creates the proletariat's desire for an alternative, which aligns with Engels and Marx' theory of the inevitable revolution. Yet, the bourgeoisie manages to create a highly controlled society, significantly, through their creation of an omnipresent panoptic structure, in which the proletarians are not only supervised, but also made self-regulating through the internalization of the authority's all-seeing eye. However, the Gileadean Panopticism differs from Foucault's, as there is a lack of supervision of the top of the bourgeoisie, wherefore the bourgeoisie is able to exploit, gain, and exert power and control, thus creating a more totalitarian societal structure. Lastly, the use of punishment aids in the creation of docile proletarians, whether that being the threat of punish in the form of physical punishment or the utilization of psychological punishment. In both cases, the use of punishment is not meant to regulate or improve the individual, but to create a disciplined and docile class. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of punish is an expression of a totalitarian state with an old-fashioned view on humanity.

The discrepancy of the symbolic act in *Never Let Me Go*, is found in the oppositional views on the societal structure as represented by Kathy, an adversary, and Miss Emily, an advocate. The symbolic act is further supported by the analysis of the oppositional

[43] This is possibly the cause of the societal change, which is described in the Historical Notes.

ideologemes; the anti-societal as embodied by Kathy, and the pro-societal, as embodied by Miss Emily and Madame. In so, through an analysis of their oppositional views on the clones' humanity, their contradictory ideological standpoints and societal connections are made evident. Furthermore, the appliance of the capitalist mode of production, hereunder the analysis of the base/superstructure, brought the societal division and structure of the fictitious English society to light. Through this analysis, it became evident that the society is complete, due to the accomplished indoctrination of the clones, which essentially renders a revolution impossible. As such, it can be concluded that Engels and Marx' notion of the inevitable revolution is merely theoretical, since there is no hope for societal change.

Through the analysis of the bourgeoisie's methods of oppression, it became evident that they do not utilize all of Foucault's disciplines, yet the ones applied have been used convincingly, resulting in a highly indoctrinated and self-regulating proletariat, and a high level of docility. This can be seen through Kathy's engagement in her work and by the fact that no clone has ever known of an alternative life, wherefore they never express aspiration to leave the program. This ensures their lack of questioning, but it also suggests that there is no ground for hope. The proletarians' docility is further ensured by the implementation of Panopticism, which has secured a self-regulating behavior that is initiated through their upbringing and resulted in an eternal internalized feeling of being observed. Lastly, the bourgeoisie's use of punishment also ensures the proletarians' docility. However, the employment of punish is never physical, instead the clones are punished through their existence. They live unfree lives with an unavoidable death sentence, which functions as an indirect punishment of the body. By taking the proletarians' freedom, the bourgeoisie are able to carry out their own agenda, which ultimately ensures the avoidance of their own mortality. Secondly, they use the notice as a punish, as it indicates that the clones will die earlier if they do not conform. Accordingly, there is a discrepancy, as the choice of not physically punishing the body illustrates a modern conception of the human, but since the bourgeoisie believes the clones are non-human, their modern methods of punish creates a paradox.

As such it is evident that the novels have several similarities. Both novels portray contradictory characters, who depict the unresolvable conflict between two sides. However, unlike Atwood's novel, Ishiguro's solution to the conflict is not for the protagonist to revolt, but rather for her to relinquish any attempt of avoiding her destined, fatale fate. Moreover, the novels' contradictory characters demonstrate the juxtapositional, ideological views between the oppositional classes. These classes can be seen in both societal structures and further analyzed from an incorporation of the base and superstructure within the capitalist mode of

production, thus qualifying both societies as capitalistically driven. Additionally, both novels utilize a complete panoptic structure, which, alongside their extensive use of Foucault's disciplines, ensure docile proletariats.

However, the novels also differ. Firstly, their utilization of punishment is vastly different. Whereas the bourgeoisie of *The Handmaid's Tale* exercises physical punishment, the bourgeoisie of *Never Let Me Go* never does. As such, *The Handmaid's Tale* demonstrates a more archaic view on punish, where it is the body that is punished, and *Never Let Me Go* depicts a more modern view on punish, in which modern justice is exercised; it is the human being and not the body that is punished. Another significant difference is the bourgeoisies' ability to create docility and a perfect indoctrination. Whereas *Never Let Me Go* portrays a society, in which the indoctrination is complete and there is no hope for a revolution, *The Handmaid's Tale* portrays a hopeful ending. Through Offred's actions and sentiments, her revolting nature becomes evident, and the reader is ultimately left with hope for an alternative societal structure and a different destiny for Offred. So, whereas *Never Let Me Go* leaves no hope for an alternative for the clones, *The Handmaid's Tale* suggests the possibility of a societal change; there is hope for a revolution.

The Novels' Continued Relevance

As demonstrated, although the two novels appear different, they undeniably share several central aspects and thematics in for instance their portrayal of class relations, societal structures, and employment of control measurements. Moreover, as it has also been established in the introduction, both Atwood's and Ishiguro's novel addresses thematics that are relevant in relation to the societies of their individual publication times as well as contemporary. For this reason, the novels not only contribute to any possible societal discourses, they also inscribe themselves into a specific genre, a variety of tendencies in literature, and an ongoing debate and relevance.

Genre

The genre of both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go* has been discussed. David Ketterer states that Atwood's novel is a piece of literary science fiction and argues that the novel is the best science fiction "novel written by a Canadian" (209). Additionally, Dominick M. Grace argues that Atwood uses the Historical Notes as a form of "pseudo-documentary" (482). This feature typically works to "enhance narrative verisimilitude" (Grace 482) and has "a long history" (Grace 482) within the genre of science fiction (482). Ketterer also comments on the Historical Notes and their effect: "[T]he "Notes" strongly imply that Atwood cannot have intended *The Handmaid's Tale* only as the typical dire

dystopian warning or call to rebellion if she envisages Gilead either passing away naturally in the fullness of time or being dramatically overthrown" (212).[44] Thus, he is critical of the novel's genre classification. Moreover, Grace also takes a critical stance: He argues that 'pseudo-documentary' features are not limited to the genre of science fiction (491), wherefore it can also be found elsewhere in the literary world. Additionally, he believes that Atwood, instead of using this element to create verisimilitude and "to validate the tale as real or true" (Grace 481), she uses the Historical Notes to "validate, or support, the authority of the work" (Grace 481). Thus, the Historical Notes opposes Ketterer's notion that "[t]he different realities of science fiction are generally located in what purports to be the real future" (Ketterer, qtd. in Grace 482), and, therefore, it can be concluded that the novel does not pose as a work of true science fiction.

Similarly, the genre of Ishiguro's novel has been subjected to debate. According to Kai Yan, the novel has been labelled as a piece of literary science fiction by most critics, because it addresses "matters like genetic duplication, biological engineering, and prospects of future medical practice" (594). Additionally, Gabriele Griffin labels the novel a "critical science fiction" (653), as it functions "not to actualize science in quasimimetic fashion but to comment critically on the history of the present" (653). Moreover, J.H. de Villiers and M. Slabbert arrives at the conclusion that, based on the "legal reality" (87), Ishiguro's novel must necessarily present as a work of science fiction, as the events and scenarios presented cannot repeat itself in the non-literary world (87).

However, there is one aspect missing if the novels are classified as works of science fiction. Drawing on the Atwood Principle, a term coined by Claeys over Atwood's own insistence that "science fiction is 'fiction in which things happen that are not possible today' including the portrayal of 'technologies we have not yet developed'" (Claeys 287), it is evident that the novels are, in fact, not works of science fictions. Hence, as Atwood only portrays events that had already happened and technology that was available at the time of publication (White), *The Handmaid's Tale* cannot be categorized as science fiction. Similarly, as stated previously, since the scientific advancement, in which the processes that led to successful cloning techniques, had occurred prior to the publication of *Never Let Me Go*, the novel cannot be classified as a work of science fiction either.

[44] In stating that Atwood's novel could not have been intended "as the typical dire dystopian novel" (Ketterer 212), Ketterer grants that some perceive the novel as a dystopia.

Instead, both novels fall under the genre of dystopia. This genre contains several subgenres, however, in relation to *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go*, it is the subgenres of critical dystopia and classic dystopia, respectively, that are pertinent. Atwood's novel portrays a society, in which the protagonist opposes those who hold power, wherefore it could be categorized as a classical dystopia, as the characteristic for these are that they criticize the social or political governance present in the text (Booker, "On dystopia" 7). However, this argumentation is not adequate; Atwood's novel, as stated, also contains an element of hope. Hence, *The Handmaid's Tale* aligns with Booker's definition of the critical dystopia: It portrays a critique of the present, negative societal structure, while simultaneously containing an "utopian dimension" (Booker, "On dystopia" 7) in that it, as is characteristic for this genre, portrays a hope and longing for an alternative societal structure (Booker, "On dystopia" 7).

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the novel's open ending, combined with Offred's memory of the past, and hope for an alternative future, constitutes the 'utopian dimension' or "utopian impulse" (Sargent qtd. in Rankin 226): Atwood's open ending rejects "the traditional subjugation of the individual at the end" (Baccolini 520) and thus allows both the reader and the protagonist to hope (Baccolini 520). In so, another characteristic of the critical dystopia is present in Atwood's novel. Therefore, although the novel portrays a protagonist, who opposes the political and societal structure present, it also includes an open ending, which allows for hope and a utopian element. Hence, *The Handmaid's Tale* is evidently a critical dystopia.

Contrary to Atwood's novel, it is possible to classify Ishiguro's novel as a classical dystopia, as it contains none of the elements, which constitutes the critical dystopia. Ultimately, both the protagonist's and the reader's hope are annihilated, when Kathy choses total conformity after she and Tommy learns that there is no opportunity for them to escape the rigid, controlling system. Thus, the novel also has a closed ending in that, because of this knowledge, Kathy's quest has come to an end. The utopian element is, therefore, absent in Ishiguro's story. Contrary to Offred, Kathy has no knowledge of any alternative to the existing societal structure, and she also does not share Offred's hope of overcoming the dystopian society. As such, *Never Let Me Go* does not match the characteristics of the critical dystopia. Instead, it focuses on the critique of the social and leading practices present, wherefore it can be classified as a classic dystopia (Booker, "On dystopia" 7).

Moreover, the novels' genre is manifested through the thematics they portray. In this way, the novels both inscribe themselves in literary, genre tendencies and become

characteristic of their publication times. *Never Let Me Go* is typical of its time, because it is a classical dystopia. Claeys states that from the 1990s and onwards, there is a shift away from the critical dystopia: The genre shifts from focusing on "how plutocratic or collectivist regimes emerge and function" (489) to displaying an increasing interest in "post-apocalyptic despair and away from 'critical dystopia'" (489). Therefore, since it is a critical dystopia that portrays a plutocratic regime, *The Handmaid's Tale* also functions as a manifestation of the dystopian genre's tendencies, as it was published prior to this shift.

Furthermore, the way in which Atwood's and Ishiguro's novels differentiate themselves from one another also illustrate how they represent the dystopian genre's literary tradition. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood portrays a class that challenges the oppressive bourgeoisie and a societal structure, which is eventually overthrown. Hence, it, as previously stated, contains a revolutionary element, although the actual revolution lies outside of Offred's narrative. In contrast, *Never Let Me Go* does not portray any direct images of a rebellion. However, this is only possible on a theoretical level, seeing as the proletariat is unable to unite. The difference in how the novels portray a revolutionary societal overthrow correlates with the trends within the field of dystopias: Claeys describes how "the revolutionary overthrow of the system, for either better or worse" (495) is gradually omitted and replaced by a "paler and less reassuring hope" (Claeys 495) and a "scarcity of collectivist solutions" (Claeys 495). Hence, Atwood's novel is characteristic of the genre at the time of its publication date: Released in 1985, it coincides with the tradition of including a revolutionary element, whereas Ishiguro's novel, which was published in 2005, reflects the genre's development at this time in history.

Although the two novels are dissimilar in many ways, they also have several similarities. Generally, they share the characteristics of the dystopia genre, wherefore they both represent an "authorial quest to suggest a new moral course" (Sambell 163) and serve as a warning, which readers can use to escape a similar "dark future" (Baccolini 520). Moreover, they also share a central thematic, namely that of humanity and what it means to be human. This thematic Claeys also comments on: He describes that "[t]he concern with machines and their increasing domination of humanity … results in a growing focus on the human/machine identity spectrum" (489) within the genre. This is central, as there is a shared belief among critics that if one attempts to mirror machines, it will result in "enforced efficiency, power worship … and the loss of or alienation from some fundamental human essence as well as freedom" (Claeys 490). This is evident in relation to both novels: Both bourgeoisies force efficiency upon the proletariats, who must constantly perform according to

standards and regulations. This ultimately results in the proletariats being robbed of their freedom, as they must utilize all of their personal time to accommodate the bourgeoisies' agendas. In so, the proletariats enter into societal structures, in which they must perform like machinery. Therefore, the proletarians essentially lose a sense of their humanity.[45] Thus, both novels, although they are published 20 years apart, consider a thematic that is central for the dystopian genre.

Moreover, Claeys relates that the most important trend within the dystopian literary tradition is that of "scientific and technical advancement" (490). Ishiguro's novel illustrates this genre feature thoroughly in more than one way. First, he presents a society, in which science can successfully create clones. The prosperity of the 21st century regarding scientific developments, longevity, and health is something many authors are unequivocally wary about (Claeys 490): "We come to see the machine as the ideal, perfected human, and anything less as inferior" (Claeys 490). This is a second way, in which the advancement is illustrated in Ishiguro's novel: The bourgeoisie controls and regulates the proletariat by subjecting them to strict disciplines, which ultimately works to ensure efficiency and a successful composed force of labor power within the societal structure. In so, the scientific advancement, as it permits the cloning of humans, which is then further utilized to create human organ-producing machines, ultimately creates a "blurring of human-machine boundaries" (Claeys 490), which Claeys also states is characteristic for the dystopian genre (490-491). Thus, the proletariat becomes a class composed of machines. Although the portrayed society has not undergone the same scientific developments as the one in Ishiguro's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* nevertheless depicts the same blurring: The proletariat is subjected to the same sense of control and regulation, wherefore they come to function as individual, birthing machines. Hence, the proletarians in both novels come to resemble the human machines that are portrayed in dystopian literature: "Robots don't chat, don't socialize, don't express emotional warmth and mutual sustenance. They don't 'think'. (Do they?) They cannot love, or hate, or mate … (Yet.) They are surprisingly like totalitarian citizens … isolated, mute, obedient. As automatons they do not freely choose their behavior. They do what they are programmed to do" (Claeys 491).

[45] In relation to this, Kathy's utterance that "[c]arers aren't machines" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 4) seems fitting.

The Portrayal of Non-Fictitious Thematics

The novels not only illustrate dystopian, literary tendencies, they also revolve around elements and tendencies, which are present in the non-literary and non-fictitious world. As demonstrated, they portray thematics regarding surveillance, power, and control over individuals, which are evidently still present in a contemporary, western societal context. Therefore, the novels' continued relevance and importance is further underlined.

As it is the case in both novels, individuals are also being supervised and controlled in contemporary societal structures. This is evident in several instances. First, extensive surveillance has become apparent alongside technological advancements with, for instance, the use of personal data. According to David Lyon, "systematic surveillance … [has become] a routine and inescapable part of everyday life" ("Surveillance, Power, and Everyday Life" 107) to the extent where organizational surveillance has created "surveillance societies" ("Surveillance, Power, and Everyday Life" 107). Moreover, the explosive expansion within personal data has led some people "to proclaim the "end of privacy"" (Lyon, "Surveillance, Power, and Everyday Life" 107). Lyon argues that "[t]he notion of a surveillance society is given credence by that fact that in everyday life people are not only constantly being watched, but also willing … to use technical devices to watch others" ("Surveillance, Power, and Everyday Life" 109), thus, the constant and extensive surveillance becomes an accepted element in everyday life and something the individual is both subjected to, but also participates in.

However, the surveillance in contemporary societies surpasses the online sphere and the utilization of personal data. A cornerstone in today's surveillance is the usage of surveillance cameras and, according to an estimate, there will be a total of one billion surveillance cameras globally in 2021 (Cosgrove). The extensive surveillance functions as "a cost effective mechanism to fight severe threats to public safety" (Rajpoot & Jensen 74). However, these technologies also pose a risk, as the surveillance data can be misused and/or abused (Rajpoot & Jensen 74), wherefore the extensive use of surveillance cameras is causing concerns among civilians. Moreover, critics view it "as a threat to privacy … not only for the risk of abuse, but also for the risk of self-censorship and behavior" (Rajpoot & Jensen 74).[46]

[46] In the novels, the characters alter their behavior to accommodate the controlling bourgeoisie, because they are under supervision, and with the extensive use of surveillance cameras, individuals outside the literary world are at risk of doing the same. Thus, the novels

Furthermore, a similar sense of control over individuals, as those portrayed in the novels, is also still present in contemporary, western societal structures. With her novel, Atwood focuses attention on women's rights, which is a subject that has continued to be on debate in recent years: In 2020, Poland's abortion law was tightened and vehement protests arose, in which some women wore the characteristic Handmaid uniform (Vlamis); in 2019, the state of Alabama implemented the strict abortion legislation, which made "performing an abortion a felony in nearly all cases" ("Alabama Gov. Kay Ives"); and lastly, it was not until October 2019, abortion, and thus women's complete autonomy over their bodies, were decriminalized in Northern Ireland (McCormack).[47] Hence, women's rights, here exemplified with the autonomy over their own bodies, is still a subject that is under debate.[48]

Similarly, Ishiguro's focus on reproductive cloning has also retained its relevance. Today, reproductive cloning has been disapproved of and banned globally, but in 2001, therapeutic cloning, "where cloned human embryos are created for the sole purpose of producing embryonic stem cells for clinical research or use" ("Cloning FAQs"), was legalized (Deech 7). Moreover, in 2021, scientists have successfully created embryos made from part human cells and part monkey cells in the attempt "to try to find new ways to produce organs for people who need transplants" (Stein). In so, the novel relates a thematic that still manifests itself in contemporary, scientific developments. As it is the case in Ishiguro's novel, the non-literary world has also seen examples of how the capabilities and

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portray a development, which Rajpoot and Jensen fear could also happen in the non-literary world.

[47] Additionally, in May 2021, Governor Greg Abbott has signed a law, which abortion rights advocates "consider one of the most extreme nationwide" (Najmabadi), prohibiting abortions in Texas "as early as six weeks" (Najmabadi). The law is in effect from September 2021 (Najmabadi).

[48] Moreover, in Poland, the Catholic Church have played an important role in the restriction of terminations (Trifonova); Kay Ivey, the functioning Governor in Alabama at the time of the law's commencement, called the law "a "powerful testament" (Burke) to the believe that "every life is a sacred gift from God" (Burke); and Northern Ireland's decriminalization has been said to put "an end to years of persecution of women by a monstrous religious culture" (Cafolla). In so, it is evident, as is the case in Atwood's novel, that religion is still a highly relevant thematic.

competences that the scientific advancements bring with it are exploited.[49] Thus, the ethics regarding these developments are still under debate several years after the invention of the technologies and the novel's publication. Hence, it is evident that the thematics considered in the novels, are still relevant in a contemporary, western societal context, wherefore the novels can be said to still be highly relevant in a contemporary discussion of their thematics.

The novels' focus on societal control and surveillance seems as relevant and important as ever in the non-literary, contemporary, western society, when seen in the light of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused escalations of societal control and surveillance. The pandemic has led "to billions of people around the world facing enhanced monitoring" (Roth et. al.): When the pandemic spread, governments around the world introduced "surveillance programs of unprecedented scale and intrusiveness" (Brown & Toh).[50] Moreover, the steps taken in trying to confine the virus has shown how citizens have been under a larger amount of governmental control. Globally, extensive restrictions have been implemented in the attempt to retain the virus and "[t]hose that acted fastest and adopted more stringent measures have been most successful" (Crabtree, et al.). Additionally, it is also assessed that the new normal will be that of "[p]olitical opportunism and fear of a new pandemic" (Crabtree, et al.), wherefore many governments will maintain some of the powers they have attained during the pandemic (Crabtree, et al.). In so, governments have carried out restrictions that affect "economic and civil freedom" (Lau). Thus, they have inserted something that resembles Foucault's disciplines into the lives of their citizens, who have had their freedoms and activities controlled and supervised (as with for instance tracing apps), wherefore they have performed a specific behavior, which had a specific aim. In *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go* that aim is producing babies and producing organs, but in the non-literary world, the aim has been to stop the transmission of the virus. But nevertheless, citizens have had "coercive measures" (Skolnik 146) imposed on them.

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[49] This was, for instance, the case when Dr. He Jiankui created "the world's first gene-edited human babies" (Rana) in 2018. Jiankui had ignored warnings from his peers (Rana), "forged ethical review documents" (Normile), and had misled doctors into implanting embryos that had been gene-edited unknowingly into two women (Normile).

[50] An example of one of the new surveillance-measurements is the Danish government's "COVID-19 infection tracing app *Smitte|stop*" ("Danish COVID-19 infection"), which informs people if they have been in close proximity to someone, who has been infected with the virus ("Danish COVID-19 infection"). The app, thus, traces the movement of individuals.

Furthermore, the pandemic has also exposed the social barriers in society. In the United States, the pandemic and their response to it has unmasked "class divides that are often camouflaged — in access to health care, child care, education, living space, even internet bandwidth" (Scheiber, et al.). Scheiber, et al. exemplifies how wealthy city-dwellers take refuge in second homes and how affluent residents in the countryside can afford to build safety rooms and bunkers, while "[a]verage working people are bagging and delivering goods, driving trucks, working for local governments" (Howard Barbanel qtd. in Scheiber et al.). In so, "a kind of pandemic caste system is rapidly developing" (Scheiber, et al.). This is, for instance, evident as many Americans live out of reach of the "telemedicine services" (Scheiber, et al.) provided through Medicare, as their internet broadband is too ill-equipped to facilitate the necessary connection. This is not only happening in the United States, in England, experts fear that Covid-19 can "become a disease of the poor" (Davis), as there are currently large variations in the uptake of vaccines between low- and high-income areas (Davis).

Moreover, the virus has also marked the criminal justice system and how it punishes. As stated, punish has evolved through time and has been developed into a system, in which the punishment is calculated and well-considered (Foucault 93). During the pandemic, however, the length and severity of punishment has changed. In Denmark, for instance, the Parliament has adopted amendments to the penal code, entailing "much stricter punishment for criminal offences arising out of or connected with COVID-19" (Folker & Sørensen). This means that the punishment for committing certain offences can be doubled, and in some cases even quadrupled, if the offence is related to the pandemic (Folker & Sørensen). Thus, the pandemic has, as Terry Skolnik also states, changed the criminal law (146) and since the stricter punishment is related to offences connected to the pandemic, it serves as an incitement to behave in a certain way, specifically during this pandemic. In so, punishment in relation to Covid-19 can be seen as a way of inducing a certain behavior among individuals.[51]

Consequently, the global Covid-19 pandemic highlights why Atwood's and Ishiguro's novels continue to be of relevance. When read in this context, they evidently can function as

[51] As mentioned, the more modern form of punishment should be calculated (Foucault 93), however, Skolnik argues that because of restrictions, the current punishment risks being too harsh on the offender, who risks receiving a disproportionate punishment (Skolnik 175). Thus, the punish system risks not living up to the standards of the more modern legal system, as described by Foucault.

commentaries on the present, contemporary, western society: Despite their age, the novels still raise questions regarding surveillance, governmental control, social inequality, punishment, and what the extent of these measures should be. In so, the contemporary reader might not understand the thematics in terms of the social events, which influenced the respective novels' in their publication times, but rather understand their utilization of the aforementioned thematics in relation to contemporary social events and occurrences. As so, a contemporary reader of Atwood's and Ishiguro's novel might relate the thematics to the Covid-19 pandemic rather than the events of 1985 and 2005, wherefore it is evident that the novels' inclusion of thematics depict the novels' continued relevance.

An Eternal Voice and Relevance

Combined, the thematics addressed in the novels ultimately lead to questions regarding humanity. If the image of the world painted above is the current setting for inhabitants in the contemporary, western societies, what does it mean, then, to be human? This is a question, which has been examined for centuries. Moreover, Atwood and Ishiguro raise questions regarding how we, as humans, are treated, and whether we have any autonomy left. In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro portrays individuals, who, although they are perceived otherwise, live lives with "human" qualities; they love, hurt, and must cope with the notion of their own death. In an article, Ishiguro has explained how the novel, to him, is a story about what it means to be human:

> Paradoxically, I found that having clones as central characters made it very easy to allude to some of the oldest questions in literature; questions which in recent years have become a little awkward to raise in fiction. "What does it mean to be human?" "What is the soul?" "What is the purpose for which we've been created, and should we try to fulfil it?" ("Future imperfect")

Ishiguro has further elaborated on how he wished to explore the human being: "My subject matter wasn't going to be the triumph of the human spirit. I was interested in the human capacity to accept what must seem like a limited and cruel fate" (qtd. in Moore & Sontheimer). In so, Ishiguro is conscious of the thematics he highlights and the questions he raises with the novel. Thus, although the novel might not provide a complete and comprehensive answer to the question of what it means to be human and what humans can and must endure, it can be argued that *Never Let Me Go* is Ishiguro's encouragement to the reader to consider these questions.

In relation to *The Handmaid's Tale* and what Atwood believes is the cause for its resurgence, she answers: "When people are scared, they tend to become willing to give up civil rights in favor of somebody telling them that everything is going to be okay, 'just do what I say.' So, the population as a whole becomes more authoritarian and xenophobic" (Nicole-Williams 00:00:39-00:00:59). Hence, with her novel, Atwood explores the question of what humanity, and the individual human being, can endure. Her portrayal of Offred can thus be seen as her way of giving the readers her answer to that question. The question Atwood most frequently hears is: "'Is there hope?'" (Nicole-Williams 00:13:06-00:13:10) and her answer is yes: ""I think we're a hopeful species. I think we as people are hopeful generally, because if you weren't hopeful, you don't get out of bed in the morning and you don't accomplish anything, or you say: 'Why bother?' So, yes there's hope, because without hope, there is not gonna be more hope"" (Nicole-Williams 00:13:12-00:13:32). Therefore, it is possible to read *The Handmaid's Tale* as Atwood's commentary on humanity and its endurance; as long as there is hope, humanity will overcome.

Thus, an additional reason for the novels' relevance in the contemporary, western world is their respective subject matter regarding the question of humanity. By portraying and dealing with these thematics, both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go* inscribe themselves in the everlasting debate of what it means to be human, and they are thus ensured an eternal voice and relevance. Moreover, because several of the problematics and critiques raised by Atwood and Ishiguro are still factors in the contemporary, non-literary, western world, the novels' relevance and importance is further emphasized.

Conclusion

Through the analyses of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, by the implementation of respectively Jameson, Engels and Marx, and Foucault's theories and notions, it is evident that the novels portray distinctive dystopian societies, which are saturated with class division, societal control and suppression. As seen through the analyses, the novels portray societal structures that induce opposing societal ideologies, which ultimately renders it possible to apply Engels and Marx' class theory, its bourgeoisie/proletariat relation, and the inevitable revolution. However, the element of revolution is also what sets the novels apart. Whereas Atwood portrays a narrative with hope for the future and the protagonist, Ishiguro depicts a society, in which change is only theoretical: There is no hope for the revolution and no hope for societal alterations. The element of hope is further sedimented in the bourgeoisie's utilization and suppression of the proletariat, as seen from Foucault's notions of docility, Panopticism, and punish. Whereas

Atwood's presence of revolutionary actions implies a flawed societal structure, the prevalence of Foucault's disciplines, in *Never Let Me Go*, is so omnipresent that it enables a state of total conformity in the proletariat, wherefore the societal structure presents itself as perfected, thus further setting the novels apart. The novels' heterogeneity is further accentuated by their utilization of punish, which displays two diverging views on humanity. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, punish is, mostly, practiced on the body and by the use of violence. By contrast, in *Never Let Me Go,* punish is solely non-corporal. However, the suppressive class' accentuated view on the clones' humanity creates a juxtaposition between their utterances and actions. So, even though the two novels, on the surface, seem to be vastly different, it is, by the use of Jameson's, Engels and Marx', and Foucault's theories and notions, evident that they incorporate several of the same thematics.

The discovery of the novels' dissimilarities, specifically the implementation of hope and revolution, or lack thereof, illustrate that the novels belong to different sub-genres of the dystopian literary genre. By the presence of revolting acts and the establishment of hope, it is possible to classify *The Handmaid's Tale* as a critical dystopia. By contrast, *Never Let Me Go* can be read as a classic dystopia, as there is no utopian impulse. This difference not only sets the novels apart, but it also outlines their placement in the temporal development of the literary genre. It was further made evident, through the investigation of the literary genres that both novels implement many of the same thematics, including; the implementation of a dark and distorted world, as a future warning; humanity, in the form of an investigation of the interplay between humans and machines; and exploration of the consequences that follow advancements within the fields of science and technology.

The exploration of the shared underlying thematics, like surveillance, power, scientific developments, and suppression through control, was exerted to illustrate the novels' continued relevance in relation to contemporary, western, societal occurrences and communities. These thematics can, for instance, be seen in contemporary examples of online and offline surveillance of individuals, the diminution of women's' rights and autonomy, and the scientific developments. A recent example of the presence of the aforementioned thematics is evident with the Covid-19 pandemic. This is, for instance, exemplified through the monitoring of citizens, as a means to retain the virus. Furthermore, the pandemic has highlighted the presence of social inequality, in some western countries, exemplified through lack of internet availability and differences in access to healthcare, suggesting that the virus' spread is determined by class. Lastly, exemplified by the Danish legal system, it is evident that the implementation of more severe punishments, in regard to Covid-19 has created

methods of control by threat, as also seen in both novels. Ultimately, these explored thematics raises questions of humanity.

Therefore, by incorporating these thematics, which mirrors not only occurrences from their individual contemporary times, but also circumstances in present, western societies, it is evident that the novels hold contemporary relevance. Furthermore, by inscribing *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Never Let Me Go* in the lengthy debate regarding what it means to be human, Atwood and Ishiguro ensure their novels' infinite relevance.

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