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Dystopia and Society: George Orwell and Ray Bradbury

Bakalářská práce

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Annotation

KADEČKOVÁ, Tereza. Dystopia and Society: George Orwell and Ray Bradbury. Hradec Králové: Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, 2016, 47 pp. Bachelor Degree Thesis.

Using sufficient secondary literature, the thesis will focus on the concepts of the society in the principal dystopias by George Orwell and Ray Bradbury and their artistic expression. It will also discuss their vision and reality.

Key words: Dystopia, society, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, 1984, Fahrenheit 451

Anotace

KADEČKOVÁ, Tereza. Dystopie a společnost: George Orwell a Ray Bradbury. Hradec Králové: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové, 2016. 47 s. Bakalářská práce.

Práce se s využitím dostatečné sekundární literatury soustředí na pojetí společnosti v základních dystopiích George Orwella a Ray Bradburyho a jejich umělecké vyjádření. Přihlédne i k porovnání jejich vize se skutečností.

Klíčová slova: Dystopie, společnost, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, 1984, 451°
Fahrenheit

Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce komparuje dystopické knihy George Orwella a Raye Braburyho. Po vysvětlení výrazu dystopie a představení autorů porovnává hlavní témata knih mezi sebou. Hlavní témata obou knih jsou postavy, politický systém, přístup k historii, zákony a válka. Tato témata jsou následně porovnávána s uměleckými díly, které se řečenými knihami inspirovaly. Ukazuje tak, jestli jsou témata dystopií z druhé poloviny 20. století stále aktuální.

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1. Introduction

Dystopian novels are supposed to reflect a society and make readers aware of problems that might happen in the future. *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* were written in different times, however, they both were able to show dangers that were topical in their age and are up to date even nowadays.

In *1984* George Orwell brought up dangers of the totalitarian systems. Written shortly after the World War II, *1984* reflects political purges of 1930s in USSR, draws to attention alternating of history that happened in newspapers and even in other media (i.e. retouching photographs, ...) and warns against totalitarian political system of one party.¹

On the other hand, Ray Bradbury in *Fahrenheit 451* warns against simple life, political correctness, and consumerism. *Fahrenheit 451* written during the Cold War, brings up issues of repression of intelligence, forcing people to stay in the grey crowd, technological overwhelm and hidden unhappiness of citizens of the state.

In comparison *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* do not seem to have too much in common. However, both touch similar topics and some of them – i.e. history alternating, oppression of civil rights – are questioned in both novels. Put next to each other in topics of characters, political system, view on history, laws and war can show many issues that was problematic in their time, but might be problematic even now and can reflect many common things people meet every day.

Nowadays fear of these topics is reflected not only in literature but also in many art forms. At art exhibition Brave New World, named after a dystopian novel by Aldous Huxley, art pieces inspired by novels of Huxley, Orwell and Bradbury were exposed. Many of them taking problematic topics from the novels and applying them to late 20th century and 21st century proving that we are still endangered by them.

By comparing the two novels and putting them in reflection to the topics that are current nowadays, it will be shown whether *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* outlived their age and will be topical in near future.

¹ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 113.

2. Dystopia

According to various online dictionaries, dystopia has a few definitions that are very similar, however, with a few small details added in each of them. Thefreedictionary.com describes dystopia as: “*An imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror.*”² And also: “*an imaginary society in which social or technological trends have culminated in a greatly diminished quality of life or degradation of values.*”³

The Cambridge online dictionary affords simpler definition, where dystopia is “*a society in which people do not work well with each other and are not happy*”.⁴ Similar definition is provided by Oxford online dictionary: “*An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one. The opposite of utopia.*”⁵

According to the last definition, the name dystopia could imply that it is the opposite of utopia.⁶ However, while utopia is defined as “*An ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political and moral aspects*”⁷ it is also defined by Michael D. Gordin and collective as a society, which is planned. Therefore, if dystopia was a complete opposite of utopia, it would mean that dystopia is either unplanned or planned to be a bad society.⁸ This, according to definitions from other dictionaries, does not fit. Dystopia then cannot be taken for a simple opposite of utopia but as its own form of society.

Dystopia is many times described as an imaginary place or society, which signifies that dystopia can be met only in a work of fiction. *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451* are taken as dystopian fictions and they also fit the definitions, however, not all of them. *1984* state is a totalitarian state that is under restriction and political terror, much like in Oxford dictionary definition. *Fahrenheit 451*, on the other, hand fit the description of

² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dystopia> (17.1.2016)

³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dystopia> (17.1.2016)

⁴ <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dystopia> (17.1.2016)

⁵ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dystopia> (17.1.2016)

⁶ GORDIN, Michael D. *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 1.

⁷ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Utopia> (17.1.2016)

⁸ GORDIN, Michael D. *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 1.

thefreedictionary.com as its society is dulled by technology and the values of people are degraded.

Even though dystopias are described as an imaginary place, various writers and artists warn about them coming true. More about this in chapter Nowadays.

3. Authors

3.1 Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920, and he always claimed that he had remembered the sensation of being born. This experience and many others – because he remembered “[...] every second and every hour and every day [...]”⁹ of his life – inspired him for writing stories and becoming a writer.¹⁰

In his stories, he often describes his own memories. Things he loved appear in many forms – his hometowns are depicted in *Death Is a Lonely Business* and *A Graveyard for Lunatics*¹¹ and his experience with carnivals can be found in *Something Wicked This Way Comes*.¹²

As for *Fahrenheit 451* the topic of a book burning arose from Bradbury’s love to libraries¹³ and book burning during the World War II.¹⁴ His resentment towards modern technologies was also included.¹⁵ Those are the main topics in the novel; however, the age that Bradbury lived and wrote in had an effect on his writing too.

1952 was a year of a presidential election in the USA. Bradbury openly supported Adlai Stevenson from Democratic Party. Because of the Cold war with the Soviet Union it was easy to blame anyone to be a Communist. Those days any liberal could be labelled as one. Even though Bradbury openly criticised Stalinist Russia many people targeted him – not only with criticism towards him but also with cancelling his lecture at Los Angeles City College.¹⁶

⁹ BRABURY, Ray. *Ray Brabury: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations*. Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2014, p. 5.

¹⁰ ELLER, Jonathan R. *Becoming Ray Bradbury*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2011, p. 9.

¹¹ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 20.

¹² ELLER, Jonathan R. *Becoming Ray Bradbury*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2011, p. 14.

¹³ BRABURY, Ray. *Ray Brabury: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations*. Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2014, p. 43.

¹⁴ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 221.

¹⁵ BRABURY, Ray. *Ray Brabury: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations*. Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2014, p. 5.

¹⁶ ELLER, Jonathan R. *Becoming Ray Bradbury*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2011, p. 268-269.

Cold war also brought a danger of a nuclear war. In October 1952 Americans successfully developed the hydrogen bomb and half a year later the Soviet Union did the same.¹⁷

Although *Fahrenheit 451* includes these topics, the first idea for the novel came to Bradbury one night when he was walking and talking with his friend and policemen stopped them and asked them what they were doing. After this experience, Bradbury wrote the short story *The Pedestrian* in 1949. In this story people can be arrested after using the sidewalks. The story became a base for *Fahrenheit 451*.¹⁸

3.2 George Orwell

George Orwell (pseudonym of Eric Arthur Blair) was born on June 25, 1903, in Bengal. From a very young age he was socially isolated, he thought himself outsider and he soon started to question society in his works.¹⁹ He wrote many essays concerning social topics and totalitarian ideologies – some of them are included in *Politics and the English Language and Other Essays* (i.e. *Politics and the English Language, The Prevention of Literature*).

During his life he worked as a police officer in Burma (1922-1927), essayist and he also joined fights in the Spain during the Civil War.²⁰ His own experience was important for his writing. His book *Homage to Catalonia* describes the Spanish Civil War and his participations in it²¹ and novel *Burmese Days* was inspired by the time he worked at Burma.²²

Soon, he started to criticize political propaganda and how the facts in newspapers differed from the things he experienced himself. This censorship of political matters was on daily basis for any newspapers – be it English ones or ones from Soviet

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 282.

¹⁸ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 3-4.

¹⁹ GLEASON, Abbott. *On Nineteen Eighty-Four: Orwell and Our Future*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 51.

²⁰ HITCHENS, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, p. 35.

²¹ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 98.

²² HITCHENS, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, p. 17.

Russia.²³ He describes this phenomenon in his essay *The Prevention of Literature* where he criticizes censorship and falsification of reality²⁴ (later used as a topic in *1984*).

During the Civil War he also stood face to face with brutality of the Stalinist Communist Party.²⁵ This only strengthened his views on totalitarian ideologies and his goal became to show-up their dangers if not prevented.²⁶ His novel *Animal Farm* written in 1943-44 was a response to these ideologies²⁷ and same applies to *1984* (published 1949)²⁸ in which he used real world events (such as purges, exile of Trotsky or Stalinist system) and recreated them into dystopian fiction.²⁹

²³ ORWELL, George. *Politics and the English Language and Other Essays*. Garsington: Benediction Classics, 2010, p. 60-61.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 70.

²⁵ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 98.

²⁶ HITCHENS, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, p. 85.

²⁷ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 100.

²⁸ BRADEUR, Karen. *George Orwell's "1984"*. Piscataway: Research & Education Association, 1995, p. 2.

²⁹ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 113.

4. Characters

Characters are essential part of any story. In dystopias, they are reflecting the whole society – protagonist being the ones that stands against the oppression or are trying to fight the government and politics, antagonists on the other hand forcing others into this kind of society, or just going with the crowd, where they do not want to stick out. Supporting characters are trying to help protagonist – either to see the truth or to stand against the society.

4.1 Protagonist

Guy Montag and Winston Smith are protagonists in these books. They have both some things in common, but in general they cannot be much different. They both stand against their society, doing something, that may be considered innocent (i.e. keeping books, writing a diary), but it is against the law, and they both are trying to think for themselves. However, the way they choose to follow in order to complete their freedom goals differs.

Protagonist in *Fahrenheit 451* is Guy Montag. He is a regular member of the society. He hardly thinks about what he says, he is happy in his job and he takes pleasure in burning books. Montag is described as someone who has a fiery smile that never goes away³⁰ and that he smells of kerosene.³¹

His character development is subtle. During the whole book, he goes from self-confidence into insecurity and he is forced to make his own moves while he is not sure whether he does that from his own will or he is obeying someone else again (i.e. Faber). In comparison to Winston Smith from *1984*, Montag is trying to balance himself and find his own way while Smith is sure from the very beginning just afraid of the system.

The change starts when Montag meets Clarisse McClellan. She points out some patterns in his behaviour he has not noticed – that he is laughing without a reason and that he does not think before answering. He feels uneasy around her because she talks

³⁰ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, s. 10.

³¹ *Ibid.* s. 13.

small and says obvious things like: “*There’s dew on the grass in the morning*”³² and Montag realizes he is not sure whether he knew it or not.³³ She asks whether he is happy or not, which he sweeps away as a silly question although he had already stolen some books and hidden them behind a ventilator in his house, therefore, act against the norm.³⁴

Talks with Clarisse are the main reason for Montag’s character change; there are some minor influences such as suicide attempt of his wife Mildred, an old lady who burned herself with her books (never named in the book but confirmed to be Mrs. Hudson in the *Fahrenheit 451* play³⁵), and his encounter with Faber. Those are important but it is a conversation with Clarisse that shows the change directly.

In their first conversation, Clarisse says: “*You laugh when I haven’t been funny and you answer right off. You never stop to think what I’ve asked you.*”³⁶ In their second conversations Montag starts to act with more thought while answering: “‘*Yes.*’ *He thought about it. ‘Yes, I have.*”³⁷ In this later conversation Clarisse also points out that Montag is not the same as other people that he actually listens to her and looks at her while she is talking.

This development into insecurity can be found in the conversation with Faber. Montag proposes moves against Firemen and rules which would indicate he is sure about what to do. But his plans are full of holes and later, while talking with Faber through a radio; it is shown he is not sure if he acts on his own will: “*I’m not thinking. I’m just doing like I’m told, like always. [...] When do I start working things on my own?*”³⁸ and then adding: “*I don’t want to change sides and just be told what to do. There’s no reason to change if I do that.*”³⁹ To this Faber answers that Montag is “[...] *wise already!*”⁴⁰ which indicates that he started to act for himself even though he still needs to be ensured about it.

³² Ibid. p. 16.

³³ Ibid. p. 15-17.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 17-18.

³⁵ BRABURY, Ray. *Ray Brabury: The Last Interview: And Other Conversations*. Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2014, p. 45.

³⁶ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 15.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 34.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 119-120.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 120.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Climax of his development can be found at the end of the book, when Montag goes back to city destroyed by bombing with a group of refugees. He is walking ahead of them and when he stops to wait, they let him lead them.⁴¹ This indicates that he finally became a man who can make his own decisions and is able to pass his experience to others.

Winston Smith is a protagonist of *1984*. He is a typical member of society with his chores and flaws. He is thirty-nine years old and he is of poor health – he has a varicose ulcer and respiration problems.⁴² At the first sight he does not deviate from any other member of society – for the story, he is not an important figure. His place could be taken by anyone because Smith is ordinary and *1984* focuses mostly on the Party and political system.⁴³ Unlike Guy Montag who is the pillar of *Fahrenheit 451* and the story could not work without him because it focuses on him.

Smith is a political criminal; he does many things that are forbidden by the Party, he breaks rules even though there are no laws or constitution⁴⁴. He is keeping a diary (which could condemn him to a labour-camp or even death sentence⁴⁵), he is writing entries against the Party and Big Brother and he also falls in love with Julia and they have a forbidden relationship. He tries to merge with a crowd and look and act like everybody else – however in some cases he is acting like everybody not on purpose and he lets himself to be carried away by the crowd⁴⁶. He works for the Ministry of Truth where he alternates history⁴⁷.

His character is constant in the most parts of the book. He is secretly against society, he acts like everybody else and even though he is afraid of the Party he acts and breaks unwritten laws from the very beginning to the near end of the book. Real change in his character appears at the end when he is imprisoned and tortured by O'Brien.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 210.

⁴² ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 3.

⁴³ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 121.

⁴⁴ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 18-19.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 40-41.

There he sets aside his beliefs. At the beginning of his imprisonment he is ready to take his life rather than succumb to the Party⁴⁸ but after a long time of torture and talks with O'Brien he changes his mind. He admits that he wants to believe in the Party but he cannot because the Party contradicts itself in many things. It happens when O'Brien tortures him and tries to learn him doublethink by showing him four fingers while Winston is supposed to see five: "*Which do you wish: to persuade me that you see five, or really to see them?*" to which Winston answers "*Really to see them.*"⁴⁹

With long talks and torture he starts to break and change his mind about the Party, the only thing left is to break him emotionally. O'Brien sends him to Room 101, where Winston is succumbed to his worst fear and he gives up love to Julia, which devastate his mind and finally let him love Big Brother and the Party.⁵⁰

As stated above, the story would work even with anybody else in the place of Smith. Even though O'Brien calls him "*the last man*"⁵¹ which indicates he is the last that ever tried to oppose the Party (which may not be true, because there are many political prisoners introduced before in the cell with Smith and there is still Julia succumbing the same torture as him) he could be replaced by any other political deviant. Abbott Gleason in his essay says that Orwell might have connected himself to Smith because he himself was afraid of changing his mind about the Party⁵² showing that torture is not only allegory for purges in 1930s Soviet Russia but could happen to anyone around the world.

4.2 Support

Support characters are important for the protagonists be able to develop. There are a few supporting characters in both books but only some of them have bigger impact on both main characters. For Montag it is Clarisse and Faber and for Winston it is Julia.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 250.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 263.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 300.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 283.

⁵² GLEASON, Abbott. *On Nineteen Eighty-Four: Orwell and Our Future*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 84.

Clarisse is seventeen years old and considered crazy because she likes to walk, think about random things and she is different from people in her age. She talks about things that her uncle said to her, mostly about how their society differs from the past one (“*Did you know that once billboards were only twenty feet long?*”⁵³) and she showers Montag with many random questions. She is forced to go to a psychiatrist as they try to find out what is wrong with her – why does she walk around, why does she think or collect butterflies.⁵⁴

As stated above, her conversations with Montag pushes his development forward. Her character stays the same – she is curious, sometimes impolite when she asks questions, and she is scared of her peers.⁵⁵

In the book, she acts as a person that is different from normal people in society. She is a synonym for a difference and she and her family is under the government radar for their behaviour. As Beatty explains: “*We’ve a record on her family. [...] The girl? She was a time bomb. [...] She didn’t want to know how a thing was done, but why.*”⁵⁶ Even without knowing many laws it is clear what is taken as inappropriate behaviour in the society.

Faber is a former professor, now living alone scared of society. His life consists mostly of regret that he did not do anything about book burning and degeneration of society when he had a chance. Now as an old man he spends his time reading books hidden in his home and tinkering with new technologies. Montag meets him by chance and Faber is the character that pushes him to action and who is providing real answers. On the other hand, Montag pushes Faber out of passivity and makes him fix his mistakes from the past by helping him.⁵⁷

He brings more information about changes in society than Clarisse because he was part of them when they happened. He does not just retell stories he explains nature of the change and leads Montag to understand them. He also explains that changing

⁵³ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 16.

⁵⁴ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 57.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 79.

⁵⁷ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 57.

society is a silly idea because people were the ones who stopped reading and wanted easier lives at the first place.⁵⁸

He and Montag form some kind of a resistance. They want to reprint Bible and frame firemen by hiding books in their houses. Faber walks Montag through conversation with Beatty and helps him on his run by pointing out the place where Montag should hide. He acts as a fatherly figure and wise man that Montag needed to know his place in the world.⁵⁹

The only supporting character in *1984* worth mentioning is Julia. When Winston first sees her, he considers her his enemy. He also feels attracted to her in a sexual way and he thinks about killing her and raping her. However, when she trips and falls on the floor in front of him, he instinctively helps her out. Since every citizen should never feel sympathy towards the enemy, Winston is shown that he still has it and will help even those who he considers dangerous.⁶⁰

Later Winston and Julia start forbidden relationship. Julia is described as a rebel, she buys things on the black market, she slept with many men from the Party, and she generally enjoys many forbidden activities while playing her part as a good Party member. Winston calls her “*a rebel from the waist downwards*”⁶¹ because she is not interested in anything except their relationship while Winston would like to rebel against Party in more wide manner. While reading the book written by Goldstein, Julia finds it boring and falls asleep. She also does not care about future, only present.

Her function in the story is to show Winston other means of rebellion against the Party. She is his partner in crime, she supports him in his ideas and they both know they are going to pay for them later. However she is really shallow and she is a personification of the freedom for Winston.⁶² She is a stereotype of a woman but her relationship with Winston is the only thing that keeps him sane in the prison later on.

⁵⁸ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 113.

⁵⁹ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 58.

⁶⁰ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 111-112.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 163.

⁶² FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 112.

4.3 Antagonists

Antagonists in dystopia reflect society. Captain Beatty and O'Brien are politics believes and laws incarnated. Montag's wife Mildred, on the other hand, is part of the consumerism and silent crowd that does not want any change and believes that everything going on is just perfect. Antagonists try to stand against protagonists and force them back where they, according to the law, belong.

Captain Beatty is a captain of firemen and supervisor of Montag. He is described as an intelligent and outspoken man who is quoting books on the regular basis yet still hates them and burns them (this is explained in the *Fahrenheit 451* play where Beatty used to read a lot but never found help in the books so he started to despise them⁶³). He does not differ from other firemen – he enjoys cards, violence, and book burning. However his intelligence gives him much more charisma and as he is older than his co-workers he knows the real history and not the one taught in schools. As he himself said “*They don't feed it [history] to rookies like they used to. [...] Only fire chiefs remember it now.*”⁶⁴

In the book, he stands as a man who is opposite to Faber. Like Faber, he gives a lot of information about history, why books are burned, about firemen profession and other things. He is great at persuading people about what is right and as that he personifies the government and laws. Montag is scared of him because he believes that in only one talk Beatty would be able to talk him back into the old ways.⁶⁵

Beatty might seem like an understanding person. When Montag asks him what would happen if a fireman stole a book, Beatty explains that he would let him read the book and if the fireman did not burn it himself, he would do it for him. At this point of conversation Beatty seems like a sympathetic person but later he reveals that after this conversation he let the Hound sniff around Montag's house to scare him off. That shows he is manipulative and really believes that books are contradictory and unnecessary.

⁶³ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 71.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 116.

In the end, he pushes Montag so hard that Montag kills him. At that time, Montag realizes that Beatty maybe wanted to die.⁶⁶ That he pushed him on purpose because he was a broken man who wanted out of life. It is never confirmed but with numerous suicides that happens (*“nine or ten a night”*⁶⁷) it is opened to discussion.

Beatty stands for the government; Montag’s wife Mildred, on the other hand, personifies consumerism in society. She is one of the mass and she spends most of her time watching TV walls and family, which she considers more alive than her or her husband.⁶⁸ Living next to her Montag realizes he is not happy with her, he does not know her and he does not even remember when they first met.

Mildred is in denial. Her first appearance in the book is when Montag finds her nearly dead after her attempted suicide. In the morning, she does not remember anything about it and she denies everything. She believes she would never do something like that and that she is happy. She has also hard time to remember as times flies by her because she is consumed by television. She forgets to tell Montag important things, she does not remember the first meeting with Montag, she wants new wall-TV and she does not realize she got a new one just a few months back. When she socializes with living humans they talk mostly shallow talk ignoring any important subjects as war or politics.

She does not understand many things outside her family. When Montag reads some quotes from books she understands only one that says *“The favourite subject, Myself.”*⁶⁹ She is not happy about books in the house and she is scared that their house will be burned to the ground and she will lose her family. *“[...] my “family” is people. They tell me things; I laugh, they laugh! [...] He might come and burn the house and the “family”. That’s awful!”*⁷⁰ When pushes come to shove and firemen stand before their house, Mildred is leaving and the only thing on her mind is family. *“Poor family, poor family, oh everything gone, everything, everything gone now...”*⁷¹

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 158.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

⁶⁸ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 58.

⁶⁹ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 94.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 95.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 148.

Mildred is a perfect example of the member of society in which Montag lives and tries to run away from. He still feels affection towards her even after she leaves him, but she probably dies after bombing at the end of the book.

In *1984* there is one main antagonist and that is O'Brien. Big Brother would be the second one but since he is only a passive idea, it is not necessary to talk about him. O'Brien, on the other hand, is an active character and he is an important part of breaking Winston down.

O'Brien first appears in the novel at the same time as Julia. Winston reads them both wrong – he thinks that Julia is dangerous and that O'Brien hates the Party too and might think same as Winston.⁷²

O'Brien is an Inner Party member; therefore, he has many privileges. He has his personal servant, he gets the best goods from the market, and he is also allowed to turn his telescreen down for a short time.⁷³ He acts in a very friendly matter towards Winston and his figure even appears in Winston's dreams sometimes, which makes Winston to believe him. In reality, O'Brien is a member of the Thought Police and he is in charge of turning people and forcing them back to society. In this case, he is focused on Winston, monitoring him for seven years and finally making his move to capture him and Julia.⁷⁴

O'Brien then tortures and tries to convince Winston to see the truth that does not make sense to him. At this point O'Brien is very similar to Captain Beatty, he has a sharp tongue, he always knows what to answer and he appears as a supporting person. However, he is fanatical, he often exclaims and his belief in the Party is bullet-proof.⁷⁵ He switches between passive-aggressive and aggressive stance and yet most of the time he admits some sort of fascination towards Winston, who is a flaw of society.⁷⁶

O'Brien knows about the history; however his doublethink is working flawlessly, so he believes what the Party tells him to believe. He is a perfect member of

⁷² ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 12-21.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 175-177.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 230-234.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 265.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 267.

society; he is also a puppeteer who has control over minds of people. He is an allegory for any torture and forced confessions that happened in history.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ FIRCHOW, Peter Edgerly. *Modern Utopian Fictions from H.G. Wells to Iris Murdoch*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007, p. 118-119.

5. Political system

State without a political system or some government would be hard to maintain. Dystopias have political systems as any other state, however, their political system has most of the time a totalitarian form where oppression works on a daily basis. These states are trying to hold together and keep people happy, so they would not revolt against them. Their ways of maintaining themselves differs, but there is one thing still the same – they are there to stay and they do not want to be destroyed under any circumstances.

The political system in *Fahrenheit 451* is not clearly described. Characters talk about politics from time to time, but mostly it includes only information about how the government made changes in the past and how it fights against the criminals.

However, one short dialogue between Montag and friends of Mildred contains information about what kind of political system runs the country. The country Montag lives in is the USA and the political system did not change during the years. It is still a presidential system with direct election. Therefore, it is still democracy.

On the other hand, the election is hugely influenced by media, as showed in pointed dialogue. The media plays the first hand in many things, but from the talk of women, it is clear, that they will vote for whoever appeals to them the most. And the most appealing candidate for them is the one who is appealing for media. *“I voted last election, same as everyone”*⁷⁸ says Mrs. Bowles. Connotation “same as everyone” could mean she voted the same man as her friends, but it can also mean she voted the one that was advertised most in the media. Her statement then arouses discussion about candidates and all women in the room agree on voting for the best looking and behaving man, instead of looking into his political activities.⁷⁹

Lack of interest in politics is also mentioned in Beatty’s speech. His explanation agrees with a theory of advertising in media. *“If you don’t want a man unhappy politically, don’t give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet,*

⁷⁸ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 126.

*give him none.*⁸⁰ Government does not want people to worry about anything and they want them to enjoy their lives and be happy.⁸¹ That means to fill them with entertainment and make sure they will not have any problems with choosing who to vote. Therefore, if one of the candidates is more appealing than the other one, it is so people voted for him.

Even though that political system is a democracy, people are influenced heavily by media so results of elections are theoretically known before the election even starts. Citizens are also not at all interested in politics and they let government rule how they want as long as they can be happy and do not have to worry about anything.

After the Revolution the world changed and Oceania was created. Oceania is a superstate which is divided into provinces. Winston lives in the Airstrip One, former Great Britain, controlled by the Party (Ingsoc.) and Big Brother. It is not only Airstrip One, but whole Oceania which is controlled by a single party that got its power because of the Revolution making it a totalitarian state.⁸² There are no elections and people are being monitored and persecuted by Thought Police if they do not behave properly. There are no written laws.

This state holds itself together by dividing the society into classes, constant war, propaganda and strong leader. It uses people's fear of an inner enemy and enemy of the state to make them obedient. By persecution they ensure that people will not even think about rebelling against the party.

However, most of these things are only a clever propaganda. Division into classes is real and there is no way to climb higher – for example, Proles can never become outer party members. Constant war is also questionable, as the enemy changes from time to time and Winston even brings up a question if Oceania itself does not bomb their own cities.

Big Brother is also part of the propaganda. It is stated, that it is not important whether he really exists or not, but it is certain that he will never die and never disappear because he is the face of Oceania. On the other hand, the class enemy known as the Brotherhood, which is commonly brought up to light and exhibited as someone

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 80.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 80.

⁸² ORWELL, George. 1984. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 5.

people should fight against, might exist. O'Brien explains to Winston that he will never be sure whether they are real or they are only creation of propaganda.⁸³

Similarities to the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Russia are brought up even in the book itself. Oceania is very similar to them, it is totalitarian state, but they moved to different level of persuading people and persuading themselves because they know they are doing things for themselves and not the people. They learned from mistakes of the past and they believe they will last forever, because "*The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake.*"⁸⁴ Therefore they are unstoppable because they know what they are doing. As long as they can control minds of people with clever propaganda and, as in the case of Winston, torture, they control everything else.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 272.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 275.

6. View on History

Both books work with alternating the history. Political systems introduced in each of them have an easier time dealing with people who believe what they are said. Alternating history is then the best way to influence people's thinking and ensuring they don't ask unnecessary questions.

In *Fahrenheit 451* Montag is taught that the Firemen of America were established in 1790 by Benjamin Franklin. Their main goal was to burn English-influenced books in the Colonies.⁸⁵ In reality, in 1736, Benjamin Franklin established the Union Fire Company in Philadelphia, which was a voluntary group of thirty men whose main job was to fight fires.⁸⁶

Captain Beatty then reveals truth to Montag. He introduces him the history of firemen – explains, they were actually founded around the Civil war and that their job wasn't the same as at their times.⁸⁷ This changed because of two reasons – houses became fireproof so firemen weren't necessary anymore, and people started to loath books, so firemen started to burn them.⁸⁸

Captain Beatty is familiar with the beginning of the book burning because in the past firemen were taught the real history of their job. As he noted, only firemen chiefs now remember the truth because rookies are not taught about it.⁸⁹ There is also no way to find out the truth since books are burned and the single source of information is the government and its education system. However, unlike *1984*, the blame is not on the government itself but mostly on the people.⁹⁰

Beatty himself blames the minorities – necessity to burn books was build up by social justice fighters. As he says: "*Coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book.*"⁹¹ Alternating the past and burning of the books, therefore, bring people

⁸⁵ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 48.

⁸⁶ <http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/philadelphia/fire.htm> (2.10.2015)

⁸⁷ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 71.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 77.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 71.

⁹⁰ REID, Robin Anne. *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion*. Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p. 60.

⁹¹ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 78.

happiness. Minorities have nothing to be offended about and the government provides them with different ways of entertainment.⁹²

Fahrenheit 451 presents need to change the history that arose from the people. *1984*, on the other hand, introduces changes of the history that is controlled by the government. George Orwell came up with the idea from his own experience. As he says in *Politics and the English Language and Other Essays*: “From the totalitarian point of view history is something to be created rather than learned.”⁹³

In *1984* Winston works at the Records department where his job is to rewrite old newspapers articles so they fit the created reality. If something is said by the Party and it does not happen, every article is changed so it looks like the Party was right all the time.⁹⁴ People working at the Records department do not see this as forgery or history alternating; they simply see it as “[...] slips, errors, misprints or misquotations which it was necessary to put right in the interest of accuracy.”⁹⁵ The Records department does not focus only on the newspapers or written documents, it also alternate radio programs, tele-programs or photographs.⁹⁶

There are also history books that claim what the Party achieved. Winston recalls that many things written there are not true but he is not sure because there is nowhere to check the information he remembers. For example, the Party claims that it invented aeroplanes, although Winston is sure, he had seen those before the Revolution.⁹⁷ But since all the books printed before 1960 were destroyed he can never find the evidence.⁹⁸

History alternation in this case is used mostly for the political propaganda. The Party claims that before the Revolution people suffered under the reign of capitalists and that they were tyrants. They also warn against bishops or judges.⁹⁹ It is also common that any building that looks new is supposed to be made by the Party, and any old building was built in the Middle Ages. Age of Capitalism is said not to bring

⁹² Ibid. p. 78.

⁹³ ORWELL, George. *Politics and the English Language and Other Essays*. Garsington: Benediction Classics, 2010, p. 59.

⁹⁴ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 41.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 43.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 45.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 38-39.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 101.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 76.

anything good.¹⁰⁰ When Winston tries to clear some of that information by talking to an old Prole, he does not learn anything since the Prole does not give him answers for his questions.¹⁰¹

In both books the history is altered by the government for a reason. *Fahrenheit 451* is trying to keep people happy and outside of the politics, *1984* uses history for the Party propaganda and keeping people in the politics.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 102.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 91-96.

7. Laws

Laws are an essential part of any state. They are made to protect not only a country but also its citizens. Dystopian laws are often twisted and they are focused on protecting a state while restricting citizens, often even taking their civil rights. Sometimes, like in *1984*, there are not even any laws; therefore citizens can be persuaded for anything when the government says so.

There is not much said about laws in *Fahrenheit 451*. Unlike *1984* which focuses on a political system and explains it, *Fahrenheit 451* is focused on characters and the story. So many things that can be said about laws have to be read between the lines.

There are two laws that are exhibited in the book. One of them is about reading and owning books. It is forbidden to own or read books and punishment for doing so is being locked up in an asylum since readers are considered of no wellbeing. As captain Beatty says: “*Any man’s insane who thinks he can fool the Government and us.*”¹⁰² Later in the book he also states many of those people commit suicide in the end, which makes them look as fanatics in the eye of society.¹⁰³

The only books that are allowed are comic books and three-dimensional sex magazines because they are not difficult to read and they do not attack any minorities. Captain Beatty compares book readers to bright kids in the school who were always bullied because of their brightness. He then continues that everyone has to be forced to become equal and that anyone who reads is a danger for society: “*Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?*”¹⁰⁴

The second law is about the lowest car speed in the town. The minimum speed is 55m/h¹⁰⁵ and whoever drives slower than that can be thrown in jail. This is mentioned two times – one time by Clarisse whose uncle was thrown in jail for driving forty miles an hour. The second time it is mentioned when Montag and Mildred are going through the city and because of the speed they cannot hear each other talk.

¹⁰² BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 46.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 53.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ Approx. 88,5 km/h

Other laws are to be read between the lines. It is not explained thoroughly but it is important nonetheless. Citizens can be put in jail for just walking around, because it looks suspicious.¹⁰⁶ It is similar to when houses stopped having porches and gardens because people used to sit there and talk. This all is considered bad social life and therefore is fought against.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, things that are expected to be forbidden by law seem not to be met with any punishment. Violence and road kills are described to be on a daily basis of people's lives. It is not stated that they are not against the law but from the lack of interest from the authorities it seems like they are not punishable by law either. When Clarisse talks about how many of her peers were killed by shooting or in car accidents she seems to be shaken by it but Montag himself is not affected at all.¹⁰⁸

It is stated at the beginning of *1984*: “[...] *nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws*”¹⁰⁹. It is pointed many times, that things that Winston does through the whole story are not considered illegal. However, he can still be punished for them – either to be sent to labour camps, prison or to be killed on the place. Lack of laws does not mean a lack of rules that has to be followed. In this case, they have many names and shapes.

The main rule in Oceania is to do what everyone else is doing. It is important not to stand out in any way possible – doing things like doing what you want in your free time (called *ownlife*)¹¹⁰, not participating in communal recreation, or even looking any other way than happy (*facecrime*)¹¹¹. Any of those can bring unwanted attention and it is not hard for the Thought police to find more activities against the Party and throw culprit in jail.

The worst crime of all is *thoughtcrime* and it can describe everything about laws in *1984*. Thoughtcrime is considered to be a crime against the Party and one can commit it when they think about anything that is dangerous for the Party. Thoughtcrime is dangerous for citizen because there is no running away from it. As stated:

¹⁰⁶ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 83.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 42.

¹⁰⁹ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 85.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 65.

*“Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.”*¹¹²

Therefore, any thought or idea that one can think may turn against them. Since there are no laws, the Party and Thought police can create rules and pick up anything from a behaviour of individual and charge him. It is known that one cannot have a free time, sex outside a marriage is forbidden¹¹³, so is relationship without consulting it with the Party¹¹⁴, questioning anything that is said is forbidden, prostitution, talking to proles and many other things. But since these are not written anywhere, rules can come and go to the liking of the Party and Thought police. However, it is not necessary for them to create more since they regularly force out confessions from political prisoners and make them confess to things they have never done.¹¹⁵

However, these rules do not apply to the whole society. Proles are not under same control as party members. As long as they are not causing any trouble they are free to speak their minds, read books or anything else that is forbidden for party members. They are important only for work. *“So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were without importance.”*¹¹⁶ Since they are thought as inferior they can do whatever they want because they are not dangerous for the Party. At the time when Winston is thrown into a cell for the first time, he sees some minor (not political) criminals that are proles and they act very differently from party member prisoners, some of them even chatting with policeman like old friends. Guards also act differently towards them as they keep all their strange for political prisoners.

In both cases, the government is observing for any kind of strange behaviour but with different outcomes. *Fahrenheit 451* either throws people to jail just to let them out again later or force them to psychiatric care. *1984*, on the other hand, takes inspiration from the purges in 1930’s Soviet Union and imprisoned people have to go through labour camp or torture and there is no insurance they will ever go out again.

¹¹² Ibid. p. 21.

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 68-69.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 140-141.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 267.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 74.

8. War

War is a big connection between these two books. Second World War and Cold War were important historical moments which influenced both authors. Cold War and atomic danger were topics which were transferred into both books.

In *Fahrenheit 451* the war is much more subtle than in *1984*. There are comments about jets flying over city¹¹⁷ and radio transition talking about a danger of war¹¹⁸. Montag also notices that there were two atomic wars since 1960¹¹⁹. However, unlike *1984* where there are many destroyed buildings and bombs are falling on the city on a regular basis, cities in *Fahrenheit 451* prosper and the war is not visible there.

Danger of the war is getting stronger and louder throughout the book. At one point there is a radio transition that informs about mobilization. They say that they have mobilized one million men to go to war, however, Faber comments on this that there is high probability they have mobilized ten times more men and it is only propaganda which should keep people happy.¹²⁰

Although there is no clear reason for wars Montag thinks about it at one point in the book. He talks about how rest of the world is starving and the USA is hated because they have everything and they do not care about anybody else.¹²¹

In the end a war starts with bombing the city Montag lived in.¹²² In the book there is no more said about the war, it only starts and Montag goes his own way. However, in *The Martian Chronicles*, which is very similar to the universe of *Fahrenheit 451* and may be connected¹²³, among the last chapters there is information about a war on Earth. The bombing is visible from Mars and then its citizens catch a message that describes destruction of Earth – destruction of Australia, Los Angeles, London and other big cities.¹²⁴ If those two books happen in the same universe, it shows

¹¹⁷ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 22.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 45.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 96.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 119.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 96.

¹²² Ibid. p. 204.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 218.

¹²⁴ BRADBURY, Ray. *The Martian Chronicles*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990, p. 145.

how devastating the war was in the end, and it also points out that it continued for many years and wiped out the whole planet.¹²⁵

Purpose of the war in *Fahrenheit 451* seems to be mostly to mirror the faint approach of the society towards other states and their needs. People are convinced that war will be quick and nothing bad can happen.¹²⁶ They only care about happy life and their own needs. They are also convinced bad things happen only to others and not themselves, as shown in the conversation with three women in Montag's parlour: "*It's always someone else's husband dies, they say.*"¹²⁷ The war is important in this book to mirror this approach and warn a potential reader about it.

Unlike *Fahrenheit 451* war in *1984* is an important topic and it is discussed in the story many times. London is devastated by bombing, most of the buildings are destroyed and people sometimes live in terrible conditions.¹²⁸ Bombing happens on daily basis, nearly thirty bombs fall every week.¹²⁹ They mostly land on uninhabited places or Prole's parts of town.¹³⁰

The whole world is at war. It divides into three Superstates which are in constant war with each other.¹³¹ This constant war helps to keep people alerted and they depend more on their government because they need protection. It is not important who they are fighting with – it is visible when in the middle of speech the enemy of Oceania changes and nobody takes notice.¹³² War is described not as an attempt to destroy each other but as a condition in which states are able to consume goods and let the economy flow but not get better.¹³³

However, the war hysteria is still a case. This hysteria helps to keep Oceania's political ideology. Because while the war is consuming most of the money, people cannot live in luxury, therefore people cannot raise their standards, become more intelligent and they cannot want change in government.¹³⁴

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 180.

¹²⁶ BRADBURY, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. London: HarperVoyager, 2008, p. 122.

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 123.

¹²⁸ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 28.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 87.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 193.

¹³² Ibid. p. 189.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 196.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 198-199.

The state-of-war has to exist so it keeps people from any change. Fanatics are necessary and labour is necessary. However members of Inner Party supposedly know when war is and is not happening but thanks to doublethink they are the biggest fanatics who ignore the facts. This is an important point because when even a ruling class is fanatical, the circle is closed and the government is working as it should.¹³⁵

The never-ending war in *1984* is an allegory for Orwell's vision of future. He died years before the very highest point of Cold War, however, he saw this conflict as a conflict of superpowers.¹³⁶ In *1984* there is said that world splitting into three superpowers was obvious from the beginning of 20th century.¹³⁷ Winston remembers that there was peace when he was a kid and that the war started when an atomic bomb destroyed Coldchester.¹³⁸ The fear of atomic war is imprinted in this book and even though it does not end with wiping out humanity, it threatens reader with never ending war and fanaticism which never goes away.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 200-201.

¹³⁶ HITCHENS, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, p. 87.

¹³⁷ ORWELL, George. *1984*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2008, p. 192-193.

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 35.

9. Nowadays

Dystopian novels reflect society in which an author lives and they warn about possible problems that may happen when nothing is done about a current situation. Orwell and Bradbury talked about dangers of war, dangers of technology and many others, which endangered their times. However, these dangers are very up-to-date even now. Many artists get inspired by both novels (and not only them) and create arts that warn about the same things that these authors warned us half century ago.

From September 2015 to January 2016 in the cultural centre DOX in Prague, there was an exhibition called *Brave New World* (inspired by the book of A. Huxley) being held. This exhibition interpreted many different arts that warned about totality, oppression, surveillance problems etc. and all those arts were inspired by Huxley's, Orwell's and Bradbury's books. It described the history of these novels and reasons why they were created, but also warned about future that may be very similar to societies their authors created.¹³⁹

9.1 Surveillance

9.1.1 Cameras

One of the things that are considered an issue in nowadays society is surveillance. The surveillance system is installed in many places around the world and it is hard to avoid it. This issue was questioned by few art pieces that were to be seen at the exhibition.

William Betts is one of those artists that warned about surveillance. He created an art piece that looks like surveillance footage. This set of photos is called *15 minutes, 56 seconds* and it depicts people going around, it contains dates and it is supposed to convey the information that we are watched every day.¹⁴⁰

The same message can be found in the short video called *Surveillance Camera Players*. A group of actors recreated *1984* on surveillance cameras in the subway station as an opposition to the violation of the right to privacy. At one point on the record the audience can hear a policeman asking the cameraman what is she doing and that she

¹³⁹ <http://www.dox.cz/cs/vystavy/skvely-novy-svet> (16.1.2016)

¹⁴⁰ Pictures 1-3

should stop recording the surveillance footage. She refuses and she appeals against their decision with that she is not doing anything illegal.¹⁴¹

Surveillance is a topic that is described in *1984*, as everyone is watched through the telescreens and people also watch each other. Arts that warn about this show, that even though it is not the same, we are watched on everyday basis just like people in the novel.

9.1.2 Social media

The issue of surveillance does not include only the surveillance cameras that can be found everywhere, but it takes a notice about the Internet. With social networking now taking a huge part of people's lives, many artists warn about misusing information that users put on the Internet.

A social experiment called *Face to Facebook – Hacking Monopolism Trilogy* showed how easy it is to take personal information and misuse them. In this project one million of Facebook profiles was used, ran through facial recognition program and then 250 000 photos were used on a custom online dating website. The point of this experiment was to prove that anyone can use information that is put on social media and that surveillance can watch this information online.¹⁴²

Social media can be also used as a monitoring tool. Nestlé company is using it to monitor the market and find out what people want and how successful advertisement are. A short document called *Welcome to the Nestlé War Room* described their policy. Nestlé is monitoring many social networks and they have access to information from them. They are monitoring not only key words but also photos or comments left by social media users.¹⁴³

The Internet and social networks are a big source of personal information that can be misused. Performers from *Face to Facebook* social experiment warned against the leak of information, Nestlé, on the other hand, is getting the good use from it. One way or the other it proves that whatever a user put on a social network can be used without him knowing it.

¹⁴¹ Pictures 4-5

¹⁴² Picture 6

¹⁴³ Pictures 7-8

9.1.3 DNA (Stranger Visions)

Stranger Visions is a set of 3D portraits of people. These portraits are created by using DNA samples that Heather Dewey-Hagborg collected on public places – mostly from cigarette butts, gums or hair – and recreated possible appearances of people who left it there. These portraits warn against rapidly growing DNA database which can be used by anyone. *Stranger Visions* was created as a critical art project that warns about genetic profiling and possible misuse in the future.¹⁴⁴

There are many possible types of surveillance and many possible misuses. What we were warned about in *1984* is still up-to-date in nowadays society. Maybe we do not have telescreen that watches us 24/7 but social networks which we use voluntarily can easily replace them.

9.2 Isolation

Another issue of modern society is isolation. We are overwhelmed by information with the television, the radio, and the Internet on daily basis. Getting information is easier than ever; it is enough to turn on the television or google few keywords. However, the flow of information is huge and wide and many people have trouble to keep up with it. In *Fahrenheit 451* the society wanted to only have fun. People did not care about politics, about troubles of others and they stayed isolated within their own kingdom of what they wanted. Even though they had many possibilities to socialize and confront the problems, they never did. This problem endangers us even now.

Krištof Kintera's *Plumbuman* was created in the mid-1990s. It is an art piece which shows the trouble with getting used to world that is surrounded by information, phone calls, and advertisements. Even though this art piece is over twenty years old it is still more than current. Information technology developed in these twenty years with great speed and nowadays we have the Internet, mobile phones and we are more

¹⁴⁴ Picture 9

overwhelmed than before. The need for isolation is still up-to-date and strong in this art piece.¹⁴⁵

Another show of isolation or more likely ignorance is showed in a short video *Burn*. A house is set on fire and family inside continues living their lives as if nothing happened. The visuals of burning newspaper in father's hands, melting fridge etc. do not surprise inhabitants at all. *Burn* is conveying the message of how we are ignorant against disasters that are happening around the world and how we are absorbed in our own existence. The topic of fire is very similar to *Fahrenheit 451* as the acting of the family resembles a behaviour of Mildred who was blind to any problem including her own suicide.¹⁴⁶

Ignorance and isolation towards world outside is a problem that we face even nowadays. Bradbury warned us about it within *Fahrenheit 451* and artists are warning us about it even now. Without an action there cannot be a reaction and as long as people ignore problems of the world, these problems cannot be solved.

¹⁴⁵ Pictures 10-11

¹⁴⁶ Pictures 12-13

10. Conclusion

As stated before, *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984* were both written in different ages and therefore contain different dystopian topics. Although both fit in a different definition of dystopia – society in *1984* is described as totalitarian and society in *Fahrenheit 451* has degraded values due to technology trends – in some manners they are similar and there are themes that can be considered the same.

Both books operate with protagonists who stand against the government and society – they can see something is wrong and they take steps to fight against it. They are opposed by charismatic and somehow likeable antagonists who reflect the society and its rules. While these two sides are fighting each other, there is a grey mass that just wants to go on with their lives.

Protagonists, antagonists, and grey mass are questioned in art pieces from *Brave New World* exhibition. The artists taking a form of protagonists and with their art pieces standing against social issue – that can be considered as antagonists – while showing it to the grey mass or questioning their stand in all of this (the grey mass can be very well seen in *Burn*).

Another topic in which both books find agreement is their view on history. The history is alternated in both dystopias in the way it fits the government and when it can justify the laws and rules they are using. History alternation in *1984* is wider than in *Fahrenheit 451*, while in *Fahrenheit 451* history is alternated less, however, the books and media are censored and cannot be read, watched or listened by people.

Censorship and history alternation are not questioned in *Brave New World* art pieces. However, what they do question is a need for isolation and overwhelming information flow. The censorship and history alternation are not nowadays issues, on the other hand, the ignorance towards history and information is very common. *Plumbuman* is one of the art pieces that showed the need for isolation.

Most of the books' topics are the same with different themes. The danger of war is referred in both books; in *1984* it is part of the propaganda, in *Fahrenheit 451* it is the sword hanging above the society with scary results. Laws are also more questioned in *1984* although there are none, while in *Fahrenheit 451* there are few scattered

throughout the story. The same goes for political system – *1984* explains it widely while *Fahrenheit 451* leaves only few hints.

Part of the everyday life in *1984* is nonstop surveillance by the Party, which is the way their political system tries to catch any possible threat. The surveillance is brought up in *Brave New World* exhibition more than once and it is showed how many different forms it can take. *Surveillance Camera Players* warned about omnipresence of surveillance camera on public places, *Face to Facebook* uses social media to show how easy it is to steal personal information online, and *Stranger Vision* introduce DNA database and possible way to recreate appearance of human with only just few information.

Fahrenheit 451 and *1984* may have been written in different eras with different issues, but many of them last till today. Both books are still up to date with their topics and they warn us about issues we face every day. *Brave New World* artists answered these warnings and recreated them so they fit nowadays society more. But the primal source is still staying the same. *Fahrenheit 451* and *1984* are and will be current for some time.

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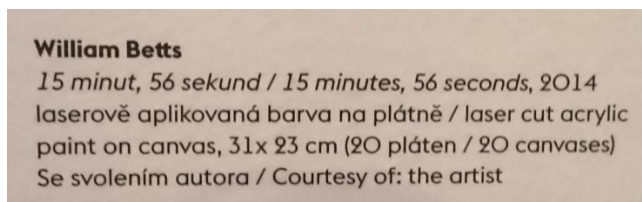
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Appendices



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

Surveillance Camera Players

1984

9. listopadu 1998 uvedli *Surveillance Camera Players* svoji jedinečnou adaptaci románu George Orwella 1984 před městskými bezpečnostními kamerami v metru pod 14. a 7. Avenue na Manhattanu v New Yorku. Performance nafilmovala jedna z kamarádek umělecké skupiny. Veškerá hudba, dialogy a každý, kdo se před kamerou během natáčení mihne, se ve filmu objevují čistě náhodou, a přesto do děje zapadají, jako by bylo vše předem domluveno.

Soubor *Surveillance Camera Players* založili v New Yorku v listopadu 1996 Bill Brown, Susan Hill a několik dalších aktivistů inspirovaných situacionismem. Svými zvláštními adaptacemi různých her uváděnými před městskými bezpečnostními kamerami chtěli členové této umělecko-aktivistické skupiny vyjádřit svůj nesouhlas s porušováním našeho práva na soukromí.

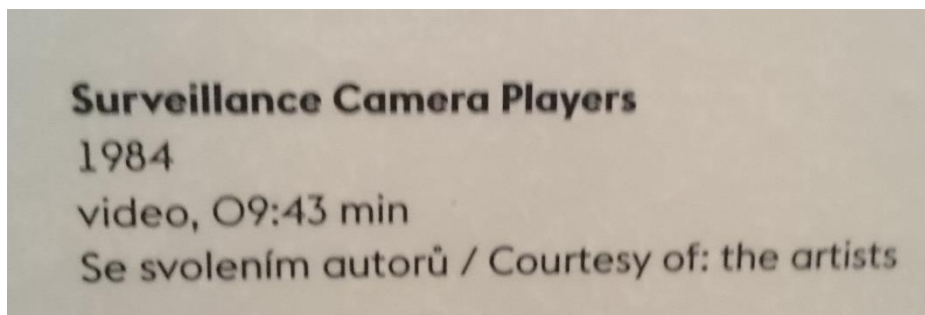
Surveillance Camera Players

1984

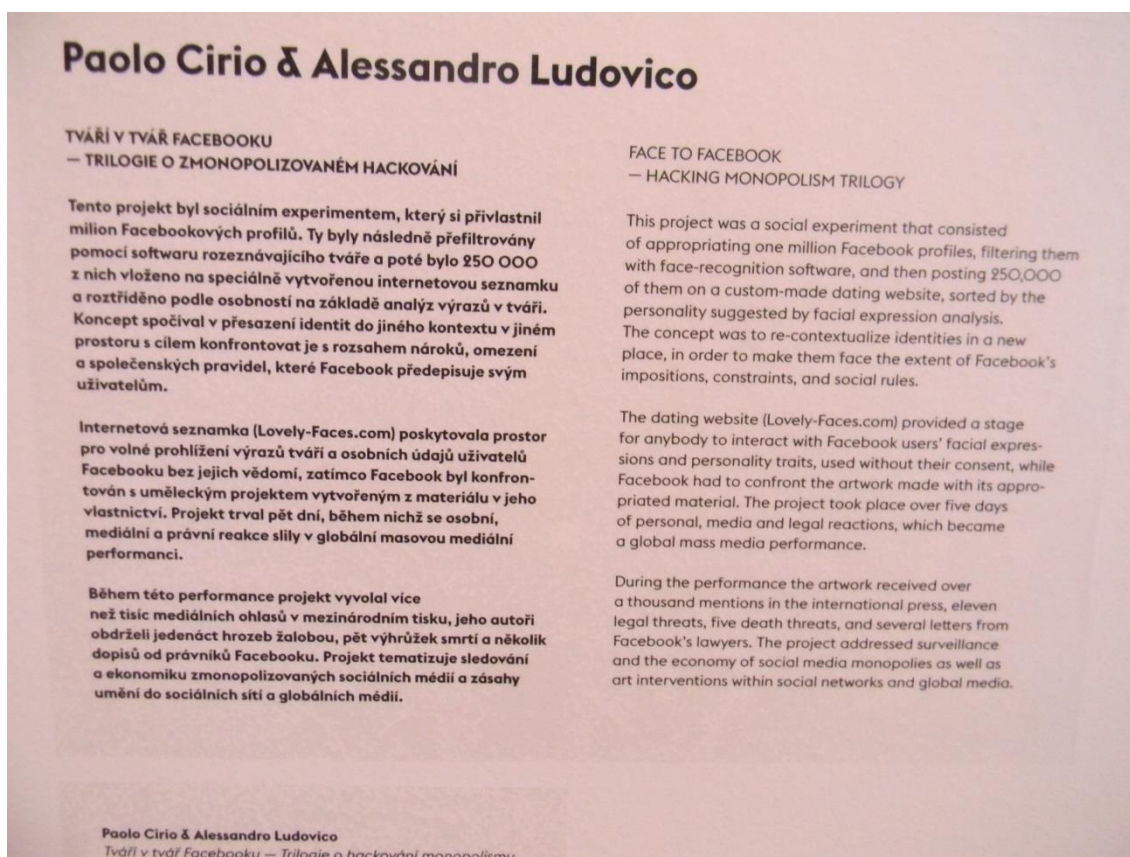
On 9 November 1998, the *Surveillance Camera Players* performed their unique adaptation of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* in front of city-owned surveillance cameras within the subway station located underneath 14th Street and 7th Avenue in Manhattan, NYC, USA. The performance was videotaped by a friend of the group. All of the music, dialogue, and cameo appearances within the videotape occurred by accident, and yet seem to fit as if they were pre-arranged.

The *Surveillance Camera Players* group was founded by Bill Brown, Susan Hull, and various other situationist-inspired activists in New York in November 1996. By performing specially adapted plays in front of city surveillance cameras, the members of the performance-based activist group manifest their opposition to the violation of the right to privacy.

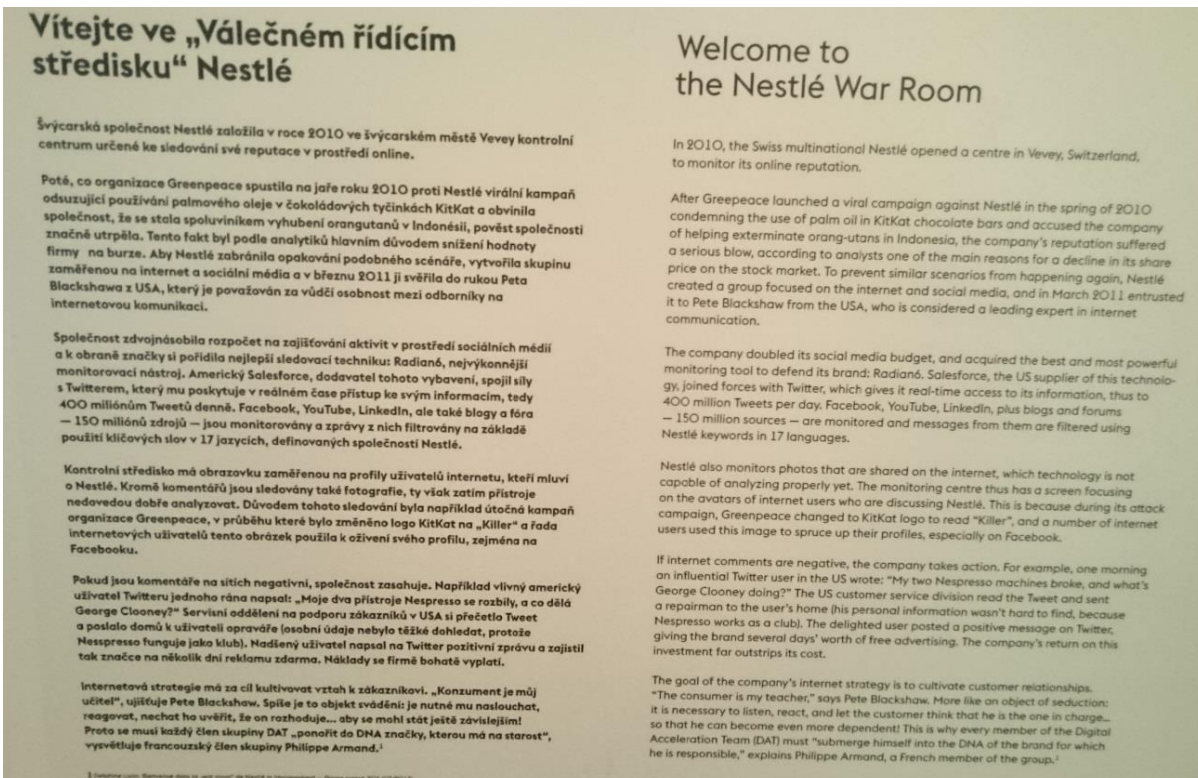
Picture 4



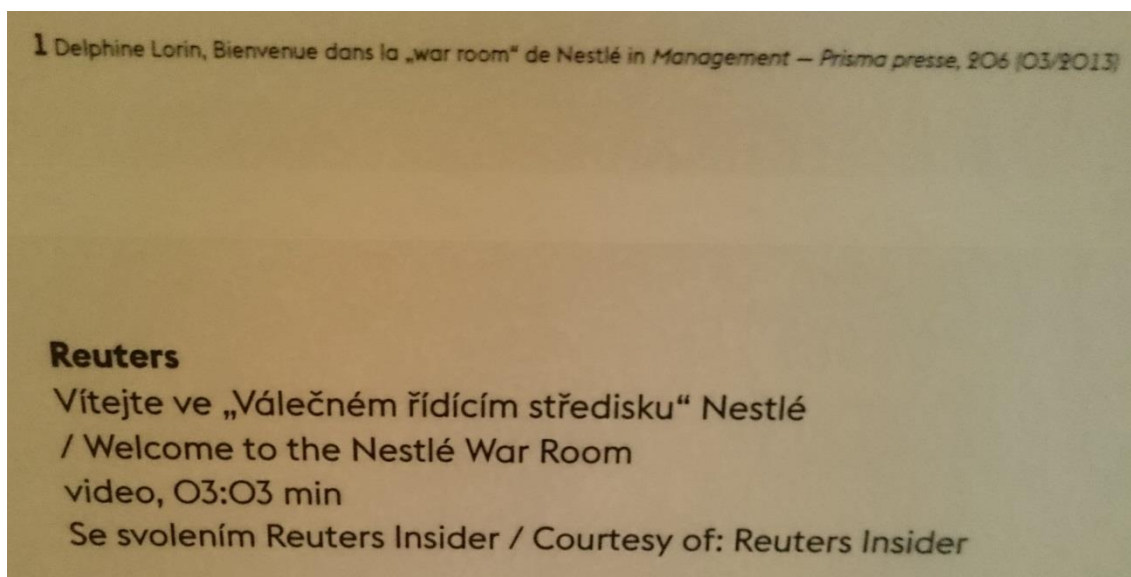
Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8

Heather Dewey-Hagborg

STRANGER VISIONS

V projektu *Stranger Visions* vytváří Heather Dewey-Hagborg 3D portréty z pryskyřice na základě analýzy genetického materiálu, který posbírala na veřejných prostranstvích. Autorka pracuje se stopami, které po sobě nevědomky zanechali neznámí lidé (žvýkačky, nedopalky, vlasy). Z nich získává DNA, podle níž vytváří genetické profily, které se následně zadávají do algoritmů generujících z nich lidské tváře. Výsledkem jsou portréty, které se vyjadřují k současné kultuře biologického sledování.

Databáze DNA se rychle rozšiřuje. Tato technologie se stává stále dostupnější. Otázkou je, kdo bude mít k těmto informacím přístup a kdo bude mít tu moc jich využít proti vám. Projekt *Stranger Visions* kriticky cílí na rozvíjející se vědní obory a jeho předpověď se zřejmě již naplňuje, neboť forenzní vědy se začínají zaměřovat na genetické profilování.

STRANGER VISIONS

In *Stranger Visions*, Heather Dewey-Hagborg creates 3D resin portraits from analyses of genetic material collected in public places. Working with traces strangers unwittingly leave behind (gum, cigarette butt, hair), Dewey-Hagborg extracts DNA to create genetic profiles that are then put through a facial algorithm. The end results are portraits that speak to today's culture of biological surveillance.

The DNA database is expanding rapidly. This technology is becoming more and more accessible. The question is, who will have access to this information and who will have the power to use it against you. Designed as a critical project based on emerging science, *Stranger Visions* has proved prophetic, as forensic science moves towards genetic profiling.

Heather Dewey-Hagborg
Stranger Visions, 2012–2013
portrét – socha / portrait sculptures, 20 x 15 x 15 cm
Se svolením autorky a Catherine Edelman Gallery,
Chicago / Courtesy of: the artist and Catherine
Edelman Gallery, Chicago

Picture 9

Krištof Kintera

PLUMBAŘ

Dílo nazvané *Plumbař* vznikalo v polovině 90. let z pocitu nutnosti se schovat, vytvořit si kvalitní ochrannou vrstvu pro jedince, který se potřebuje izolovat od okolního světa, od přemíry informací, od zbytečných telefonátů, žvástů reklamy a podobné civilizační kontaminace. Vznikalo v době, kdy byl internet ještě v plenkách, telefonovalo se na pevnou linku. Nyní, skoro po dvaceti letech, kdy nástroje komunikace rozehrávají mnohaúrovňový, vícesmyslový nálet na naši mysl, se potřeba vytvoření funkčního ochranného štítu zdá být ještě naléhavější než v době, kdy tato skulptura vznikala...

PLUMBUMAN

The work entitled *Plumbuman* was created in the mid-1990s due to a perceived need to hide, to create an effective protective layer for an individual who needs to isolate himself from the surrounding world, from a surfeit of information, from pointless phone calls, advertising blather, and similar civilizational contamination. It was created at a time when the internet was still in its infancy, and phone calls were placed over land lines. Now, almost twenty years later, when communication devices are launching a multi-level and multi-sensory assault on our minds, the need to create a functional shield seems to be even more urgent than at the time this sculpture was created...

Picture 10

Krištof Kintera

Plumbař / Plumbuman, 1995—1998

instalace, olovo, video / installation, lead, video

261 x 323 x 240 cm

Soukromá sbírka / Private collection

Picture 11

Reynold Reynolds

BURN

Uvnitř domu začíná hořet a jeho obyvatelé, obyčejná rodina — představitelé střední třídy, se dál nevzrušeně věnují každodenním činnostem. V dusivém interiéru se oheň postupně šíří, až k nim — a oni i v tuto chvíli zůstávají v klidu a lhostejní vůči probíhajícímu dramatu. Tato děsivá scéna je obrazem našich domovů obývaných lidmi, kteří jsou pohlčeni svou každodenní všední existencí a zatvrzele si odmítají připustit blížící se katastrofu. Klade otázku, proč přehlízíme, co se děje kolem nás, a nevšímáme si toho, co ohrožuje základ naší existence...

BURN

A house burns slowly from the inside while the inhabitants, an ordinary middle-class family, seem to go about their daily lives performing mundane tasks. In the stifling interior, the fire spreads gradually until it finally reaches the occupants, who even at this point remain entirely undisturbed by and indifferent towards the unfolding drama... This macabre portrait of our interiors, inhabited by people who are absorbed in their dreary little existences and entirely paralyzed by denial of an impending disaster, seems to ask the question why we remain blind to what is going on around us, to that which is threatening the very basis of our existence...

Picture 12

Reynold Reynolds and Patrick Jolley

Burn, 2002

video, 09:58 min

Se svolením autorů / Courtesy of: the artists

Picture 13