

# **Two Classic Dystopias: George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451**

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Bachelor Thesis  
2008



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
Faculty of Humanities

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Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav jazyků

akademický rok: 2007/2008

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Michal NAVRÁTIL**

Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Dvě klasické dystopie: Romány 1984 George  
Orwella a 451 stupňů Fahrenheita Raye Bradburyho**

### Zásady pro vypracování:

**Krátký přehled románového zpracování dystopie v anglické a americké literatuře.**

**Literární a historický kontext analyzovaných románů.**

**Srovnání dystopie zobrazené v obou románech.**

**Zhodnocení predikční schopnosti autorů – míra naplnění předložených vizí od vydání románů po současnost.**

Rozsah práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bradbury, Ray. Fahrenheit 451. New York: Ballantine Books, 1953.

Carter, Ronald, and John McRae. The Routledge History of Literature in English. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2001.

Orwell, George. Nineteen Eighty-Four. London: Secker and Warburg, 1948.

Ruland, Richard, and Malcolm Bradbury. From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature. New York: Viking, 1991.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Roman Trušník, Ph.D.**

Vyšší odborná škola ekonomická

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **29. ledna 2008**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. května 2008**

Ve Zlíně dne 29. ledna 2008



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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato práce analyzuje a navzájem porovnává dystopie zobrazené v románech *1984*(1949) a *451 stupňů Fahrenheita*(1953) od spisovatelů George Orwella a Raye Bradburyho a dva hlavní hrdiny těchto románů, Winstona Smithe a Guye Montaga. Rovněž popisuje smyšlené skutečnosti, které autoři ve svém díle použili a srovnává je s jejich dnes již existujícími ekvivalenty.

Klíčová slova:

Britská literatura, americká literatura, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, 1984, 451 stupňů Fahrenheita, dystopie, sci-fi, science fiction, budoucnost, cenzura.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyses the dystopias and the main characters depicted in the novels *Nineteen Eighty-Four*(1949) and *Fahrenheit 451*(1953) by George Orwell and Ray Bradbury, respectively, and compares them with one another. It also describes the fictive facts used in these novels and compares them with their equivalents from today's real world.

Keywords:

British Literature, American Literature, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Fahrenheit 451, dystopia, sci-fi, science fiction, future, censorship.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank George Orwell and Ray Bradbury for writing these amazing novels.

I would like to thank Roman Trušník for lots of valuable advice on writing this thesis.

I would like to thank my family for supporting me during my studies.

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## INTRODUCTION

The genre of science fiction is a great subject for studying and examining. Especially when the authors try to satirize the society and also give the readers a warning by showing them what can happen to the world if the people let certain things go too far.

George Orwell and Ray Bradbury, the authors of the two novels that are the subjects of this thesis, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*(1949) and *Fahrenheit 451*(1953), respectively, made the picture of a dystopian totalitarian country and a dissatisfied revolting hero who tries to fight the system. Although both authors were from another part of the world and there is a gap of almost five years between the publications, the two novels share a number of similar topics.

This thesis attempts to analyze the dystopias and the main characters and find out the similar features they share. It also attempts to match some of the authors' made up inventions to their equivalents of today's real world.

## 1 BRIEF SUMMARY OF DYSTOPIAS IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN CULTURE

Utopia is a term for “the idea of a perfect society in which everyone works well with each other and is happy.”<sup>1</sup> This term was coined by Sir Thomas More in his novel *Utopia* in 1516 and since then, this idea became very popular and a great number of writers and philosophers tried to describe various utopian forms of societies, where people would live in peace.

Dystopia is the grim opposite to the perfect utopian society. The term dystopia is of Greek origin and it is defined as “an imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression or terror.”<sup>2</sup> The term was first used by John Stuart Mill, a British philosopher and Member of Parliament, during one of his parliamentary speeches in 1868.<sup>3</sup> However, this newly created term did not catch on immediately only to be re-coined a few decades later, when the first dystopian novels started to appear<sup>4</sup> and ultimately popularised in 1952, with the publication of Glenn Negley's and J. Max Patrick's *Quest For Utopia*.

In 1899, more than thirty years after the term was first used, *The Story Of The Days To Come* and *When The Sleeper Wakes*, the first dystopian novella and dystopian novel, respectively, were published by H. G. Wells, an English science fiction writer.

The first American dystopian novel is considered to be Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, published in 1909. The novel also consolidated “ideological thematics in dystopian fiction.”<sup>5</sup>

The authors of dystopias, as well as the authors of utopias, very often “express original and innovative ideas, thus forming a heterogenous genre.”<sup>6</sup> Despite this fact, there is a

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<sup>1</sup> “Utopia,” Cambridge Dictionaries Online.

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=87562&dict=CALD>.

<sup>2</sup> “Dystopia,” Online Dictionary, Encyclopedia and Thesaurus.

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dystopia>.

<sup>3</sup> See “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.

[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).

<sup>4</sup> See “Dystopia,” The Maven's Word of the Day.

<http://www.randomhouse.com/wotd/index.pperl?date=19980528>.

<sup>5</sup> “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.

[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).



number of common characteristics for all dystopian literature. The dystopias are usually set in the future and they borrow some of the features of the present societies and its main characters usually deal with their fear and the oppression from the side of the government and at some point in the story, they start a rebellion against the system.<sup>7</sup>

One of the finest examples of dystopian literature is Aldous Huxley's best-known novel *Brave New World*, first published in 1932. In this work, Huxley “depicts a scientifically perfect society based on a caste system in which human beings are conditioned to occupy a place on a social scale.”<sup>8</sup> In this work, Huxley “introduces the themes of mass culture and technology abuse in dystopian fiction, as well as scientific concepts.”<sup>9</sup> *Brave New World* can be compared with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published seventeen years later, in 1949, as both works deal with the topic of social classes and the control of human behaviour.

In 1953, Ray Bradbury published one of his most famous works, *Fahrenheit 451*, which became “possibly the most intellectually advanced dystopian satire, together with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.”<sup>10</sup>

The dystopian fiction had its premiere outside the printed word in 1954, when *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was adopted for television. Since then, many other dystopian motion pictures were made, either adaptations of novels and stories, or based on original scripts. The dystopia also became the subject of many works of popular culture, such as animated motion pictures, comic books and videogames.

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<sup>6</sup> “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.  
[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).

<sup>7</sup> “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.  
[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Carter and John McRae, *The Routledge History of Literature in English*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 397.

<sup>9</sup> “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.  
[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).

<sup>10</sup> “Dystopia: timeline,” Exploring Dystopia: Dystopian timeline.  
[http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia\\_timeline.htm](http://hem.passagen.se/replikant/dystopia_timeline.htm).

## 2 THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ANALYSED NOVELS

### 2.1 Nineteen Eighty-Four

George Orwell was a British novelist, essayist and political satirist. Probably the biggest influence on his writings were his experiences from the Spanish Civil War, where he fought together with the Republicans in 1936. In 1937, Orwell was wounded “and returned to England, convinced of the decency of the ordinary Spanish people, a hater of all forms of totalitarianism, and disillusioned with Communism.”<sup>11</sup> Orwell expressed his hatred and fear of totalitarianism in his two most famous works, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

After the World War II, Orwell focused on the social problems of the postwar Britain, as many other writers of this era but he still kept focusing on the political problems and he based his works on the European postwar situation and the prevailing tendencies which seemed to be very disturbing and dangerous to him, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* became “a vision of the ways in which totalitarian governments, whether right-wing or left-wing, can destroy individual thought and feeling.”<sup>12</sup>

In 1949, when *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published, one of the sources of inspiration for the character of Big Brother, Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was in office of the Soviet Union and in the United Kingdom, the left-wing Labour Party was in charge of the administration.

### 2.2 Fahrenheit 451

Ray Bradbury is an American writer of many genres, most notably science fiction. He started writing his works during the early period of the Cold War, a conflict between the United States of America, and the Soviet Union. The Cold War “was an age of materialism, military expansion, ideological anxiety and a sense of the rapid transformation of

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<sup>11</sup> Carter and McRae, *The Routledge History*, 464.

<sup>12</sup> Carter and McRae, *The Routledge History*, 464.

consciousness.”<sup>13</sup> Media also became very important part of the everyday lives, and writers had to try hard to keep face with the quick world of media.<sup>14</sup>

Media and their dominance over literature, along with a conflict between two countries with a threat of an atomic war are among the main elements of one of Bradbury's most famous works, *Fahrenheit 451*.

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. (New York: Viking, 1991), 371.

<sup>14</sup> See Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 371.

### 3 COMPARISON OF THE DYSTOPIAS AND THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS

#### 3.1 The Dystopias

The two worlds, where the stories of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Fahrenheit 451* take place, share many similar elements of a dystopian society. However, the two authors, George Orwell and Ray Bradbury, take a different approach to the story and to the whole topic.

Probably the biggest difference between these two books is in the depiction of the whole world order. The reader can find out that the world of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is divided into four parts, three of which are the super-states: Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia, and the rest of the world is a neutral area the super-states are fighting over.<sup>15</sup>

Orwell also gives the reader a very detailed description of the society the main character lives in. The main character's home country is called Oceania, and it consists of the North and South America, the British Isles, the Australasia and the southern part of Africa.<sup>16</sup> As the governments of all three super-states are based on a totalitarian philosophy prevailing in their area, Oceania's main philosophy is called Ingsoc, which is a Newspeak expression for English Socialism.<sup>17</sup> Newspeak is the official language of Oceania, designed to fit the needs of the Ingsoc ideology. Newspeak is used mainly by the Party members and its vocabulary and grammar differs from those of Standard English, or Oldspeak, as they call it.<sup>18</sup> The inhabitants of Oceania do not know anything about the situation in the other states and they are forbidden to learn foreign languages or anything about the foreign countries at all.<sup>19</sup> The people of Oceania are always told that either they are at war with Eastasia and Eurasia is their ally, or that Oceania is at war with Eurasia and Eastasia is their ally. It is the task of the employees of the Ministry of Truth to alter the data and articles to match the current situation of the war.

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<sup>15</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949; New York: Signet Classics, 1950), 185. Citations are to the Signet Classics edition.

<sup>16</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 185.

<sup>17</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 298.

<sup>19</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 196.

The society of Oceania is divided into four categories and it can be compared to a pyramid. At the top of the imaginary pyramid is the “infallible and all-powerful” Big Brother.<sup>20</sup> Below Big Brother, there is the Inner Party, which consists of six-million people, that is almost two per cent of the population of Oceania and the people of the Inner Party serve as the State's brains.<sup>21</sup> The Outer Party, which comes below the Inner Party, has executive functions and represents approximately thirteen per cent of the population, which is about thirty nine million people.<sup>22</sup> At the bottom of the pyramid comes the lowest class of people, who are called the proles (short for Proletarians). The proles are “dumb masses”<sup>23</sup> of people, but in contrast to the Party members, they are given a sort of intellectual liberty, because of their not so significant intellect. There is a number of whole separate departments and their sub-sections at the Ministry of Truth that deal with the production of proletarian entertainment such as literature and music.<sup>24</sup> The proles are considered to be eternally inferior to the members of both Inner and Outer Party, they are seen more like animals than humans, who do what they are told to and when they are told to.<sup>25</sup> Winston Smith sees the proles as an opportunity to take down the Party, because they largely outnumber the members of the Party.<sup>26</sup> However, this will probably never happen, as the proles do not have a strong political feeling and they do not even care much about the war.

The leader of the society is called Big Brother, the last remaining original leader of the Revolution.<sup>27</sup> In Oceania's historical texts, Big Brother figures as the leader of Oceania since the beginning, and of course, this also cannot be proved neither true nor false. He is depicted as a man with black hair and black moustache,<sup>28</sup> his appearance bears a striking resemblance to Joseph Stalin who was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the time when George Orwell was writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The

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<sup>20</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>21</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>22</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>23</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>24</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 71.

<sup>26</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 69.

<sup>27</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 75.

<sup>28</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 15.

face of Big Brother is visible on coins, on many posters all over Oceania, and on the telescreens.<sup>29</sup> The eyes of Big Brother are described as being hypnotic because it looks like they are following people around according to Big Brother's motto: Big Brother is watching you.<sup>30</sup> When Big Brother appears on the telescreens, he gives speeches about the war, gives orders and the people of Oceania hail to his face during the Two Minutes Hate, celebrating his majesty and wisdom.<sup>31</sup> This act is similar to the public speeches of Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Germany. Big Brother's style of speech is said to be "at once military and pedantic, and, because of a trick of asking questions and then promptly answering them, easy to imitate"<sup>32</sup> by the employees of the Ministry of Truth when altering Big Brother's recorded speeches to match the actual situation. Emmanuel Goldstein, a former member of the Party who later "engaged in counter-revolutionary activities"<sup>33</sup> and probably became involved in the mythical Brotherhood, states in his book that nobody has ever seen Big Brother in person and that the figure of Big Brother is only a disguise the Party chose "to exhibit itself to the world."<sup>34</sup> According to Goldstein, the function of Big Brother is to be the object of people's emotions such as love and fear, because it is easier to feel emotions towards a person than towards an abstract thing, such as a political party.<sup>35</sup> In addition, O'Brien, a Party member who will be the subject of interest later on in this essay, indirectly implies that Big Brother is not a real person, when he tells Winston that Big Brother does exist as an embodiment of the Party and that Big Brother will never die.<sup>36</sup>

Contrary to the large amount of details about *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* world, it is not directly stated where and when the story of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* takes place. It seems that the story of this book is probably set in a grim future version of today's (United States of) America, which can be deduced from the fact that the characters have English names and from the presence of some character's rulebooks that contain "brief histories of

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<sup>29</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 16.

<sup>32</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 46.

<sup>33</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>35</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 208.

<sup>36</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 260.

the Firemen of America.”<sup>37</sup> No specific information is known about the situation in the rest of the world.

Bradbury also does not give any further details about the type of government in *Fahrenheit 451*. It might appear that the government is very similar to the real world's government, only the powers of the state in the field of media control are exaggerated and it can be said that Bradbury caricatured the concerns about the contents of media. The omnipresent censorship and the obsession with political correctness exist because the government does not let any minority's feelings to be hurt by books and therefore the books are being banned and burned by the firemen, and only the shallow, and therefore harmless and innocent literature such as comic books and sex magazines can still exist.<sup>38</sup>

The group whose members have some kind of ruling power and are depicted as something more than the common people is the organization of the book-burning firemen. The organization is said to have been established by Benjamin Franklin, the real world's political figure who was also responsible for establishing the real world firemen, which is a proof that both organizations are in fact one and the same.<sup>39</sup> The firemen no longer put fires out, because all the houses in this world are fireproof, and their job is to start fires and burn houses and the books inside. The firemen are the “official censors, judges, and executors,”<sup>40</sup> as Captain Beaty said. However, Captain Beaty also states that the censorship was not started by the government, but it was started from below, by the consumers, who simply lost interest in the books and they prefer other passive and therefore not so challenging possibilities to spend their free time instead, most notably the parlour walls.<sup>41</sup>

Although both dystopias appear to be completely different, both works deal with similar topics such as censorship, intellectual decline, concerns about the future generations, aspiration to fight the system, and war.

Censorship is one of the most significant themes of the two novels and both authors take a different approach to this topic. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the newspaper articles are

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<sup>37</sup> Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953; London: Voyager, 2004), 42. Citations are to the Voyager edition.

<sup>38</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 66.

<sup>41</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 65.

mainly rewritten to suit the situation and to strengthen people's trust in the Party and Big Brother, although some inappropriate documents are being discarded using the memory holes.<sup>42</sup> Literature, together with other art forms such as movies and music, is made artificially, by mechanical means and only for the lowest class of people, the proles. In *Fahrenheit 451*, all books except for the harmless ones, are being burned and only their much shortened versions are available through various digests or adapted to the form of very short radio shows.<sup>43</sup> This is connected with the intellectual decline, which is more apparent in *Fahrenheit 451*, where people want everything to be quick and simple, and they do not want to bother themselves with thinking and these shortened, quickened, and simplified versions of everything suit their needs and only in this form can classical stories compete with the parlour walls.

Hand in hand with the intellectual decline come the concerns about the future generations. Children and their bringing up are not amongst the strongest motifs, but it is quite remarkable how similar the authors' looks at this topic were. The children in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are depicted as very violent and bloodthirsty and they are feared by their parents, because the children are taught to be some sort of spies and encouraged to report any marks of illegal or even unorthodox behaviour, so they are not shy of accusing their own parents of committing crimes and reporting it to the Thought Police.<sup>44</sup> The children in *Fahrenheit 451* are not so brainwashed as the youth of Oceania, but it can be said that they are even more bloodthirsty than them. They enjoy speed driving in the empty night streets and sometimes they hit and kill animals or even people.<sup>45</sup> Clarisse even states that the children kill other children, for example using guns.<sup>46</sup> The bringing up of the children is also not the same as in the real world. Some women choose voluntarily to have the Caesarian Section instead of the normal way to deliver babies.<sup>47</sup> It is usual for the parents to put the

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<sup>42</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 38.

<sup>43</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 62.

<sup>44</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 24.

<sup>45</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 136.

<sup>46</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 37.

<sup>47</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 104.



children to school for most of the time and when they are at home, for a few days a month, they put the children in front of the parlour walls, not to interact with them too much.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the general lack of interest, there are organizations or groups of people in both books, whose members want to fight the system and change the order of the world. These two groups are very different, but their original idea is quite the same – to take down the system. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, this group is called The Brotherhood and it is presumed that its leader is Big Brother's main enemy, Emmanuel Goldstein. In the beginning of the story, it is assumed that the whole Brotherhood is just an urban legend and Winston Smith still questions its existence throughout the whole book.<sup>49</sup> When Winston thinks he finally got very close to the Brotherhood, it is revealed to be just O'Brien's trap and neither Winston nor the reader will ever know whether is the Brotherhood real and led by Emmanuel Goldstein himself, or if it is just another lie of Big Brother, or if the Brotherhood is just an urban legend, completely made up by common people. The resistance group in *Fahrenheit 451* has no name, it is just a company of refugees, mainly educated people, such as university professors, who live in the woods, learn books by heart and they hope there will come a day when they finally come out and rewrite all the books they memorized.<sup>50</sup> It is implied that the refugees are the only people that survived the atomic bombing in the end of the book.

The war is another important topic of both books. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell operates with political themes and therefore it is clearly stated with whom, where and why the protagonist's home country participates in the war. It is known that the three super-states are permanently at war and “the frontiers between the three super-states are in some places arbitrary and in others they fluctuate according to the fortunes of war, but in general they follow geographical lines.”<sup>51</sup> Orwell also gives the reason why the war still continues: The conditions of the individual super-states appear to be quite the same, or very similar, as all of them are almost equally strong and in addition, they are protected by their natural defences. However, it is interesting that even if two of them joined strengths, they

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<sup>48</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 104.

<sup>49</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 13.

<sup>50</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 157.

<sup>51</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 185.

could not defeat the third one.<sup>52</sup> This could mean that the war might not be real but only some twisted sort of a chess game between the leaders of the super-states. The reader is also given all the information needed to understand Big Brother's motivation to participate in the war. The reason why the three super-states are at war is the fourth part of the world. It is the area located between the frontiers of the super-states. The area is in the shape of a quadrilateral with the corners in Tangier (a city in the northern Morocco), Brazzaville (today's capital of the Republic of Congo), Darwin (the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory) and Hong Kong and all the super-states want to have this area in their possession for economic reasons, as the area contains not only a number of valuable minerals and vegetable products, but also about a fifth of the Earth's population, which represents great source of cheap labour power.<sup>53</sup> However, the cheap labour provided by the hundreds of millions of the disputed area's inhabitants is used only for paying the expenses of the war and speeding up the tempo of the war, and not for the enrichment of the super-state that currently possesses parts of the disputed area.<sup>54</sup> The fightings take place only in the disputed area and never anywhere else.<sup>55</sup> None of the super-states had ever taken control over the whole area, although in the end of the book, Oceania is said to conquer the whole of Africa by a surprise attack.<sup>56</sup> Once again, the reader does not know whether this achievement is true, or only another false information given to the people of Oceania to manipulate their feelings toward Oceania, Ingsoc, and Big Brother.

As well as the lack of general background information, in *Fahrenheit 451*, there is also a lack of hardly any details about the war. It is only stated that there have been two wars since 1960, prior to the events of the book, and that they were atomic wars.<sup>57</sup> A few jet planes cross the sky now and then throughout the book and the characters express their fears about the possibility of an upcoming war. When the war is finally declared, the whole city, and it probably is not the only one, is destroyed very quickly.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 186.

<sup>53</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 187.

<sup>54</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 188.

<sup>55</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 188.

<sup>56</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 296.

<sup>57</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 81.

<sup>58</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 170.

These differences in depiction of the war might be given by the period during which the two authors wrote their books. During the World War II, London was just occasionally bombed and the main battlefields were somewhere else, while in the 1950's there was the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union and the citizen of the USA lived in a constant fear that an atomic bomb will be dropped on the country and everything will be destroyed in a second.

### 3.2 The Protagonists

Winston Smith and Guy Montag, the main characters of both books have surprisingly lots of things in common. They share similar characteristics, they take some similar actions during their stories, and some of the most important characters in their lives share some very similar characteristics, too.

Starting from the basics, both Winston Smith and Guy Montag are white males in their middle ages, they are members of the middle class, or the individual books' equivalent of the real world middle class.

Winston Smith, the protagonist of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is a middle-aged man. The reader is not given much of a description of Winston's appearance, it is only known that Winston's figure is smallish and frail, the colour of his hair is fair, his face seems to be naturally sanguine and his skin is roughened, which is caused by soap of a poor quality and by using the same blunt razor blades, which he had to use over and over again, as there was a shortage of razor blades in Oceania, the country where Winston lives.<sup>59</sup> He has a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, which itches from time to time and because of which Winston has to rest during long walks.<sup>60</sup> This varicose ulcer might be representing Winston's lack of happiness and his fragility, as it subsides when Winston begins dating Julia<sup>61</sup> and reappears and worsens when he is arrested.<sup>62</sup> Winston Smith is a member of Oceania's Outer Party. He lives in "London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania."<sup>63</sup> Winston works in the Records Department of the

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<sup>59</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1.

<sup>61</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 150.

<sup>62</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 271.

<sup>63</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 3.

Ministry of Truth and his job is “to alter, or, as the official phrase had it, to rectify,”<sup>64</sup> articles and news items to making them agree with what happened in reality.

Guy Montag is the main character in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Guy Montag works as a fireman, and his job is to burn books. The reader is not given much of a description of Montag's appearance, it is only implied that he looks like the most of the firemen. They are said to have “black hair, black brows, a fiery face, and a blue-steel shaved but unshaved look.”<sup>65</sup> They are all so similar that Montag is wondering whether the firemen are picked for their physical appearance.<sup>66</sup>

Both men are married and their marriage is far from being perfect. There is a point in both men's lives when they are alienated both from their spouses and the world. Winston's situation is a bit worse, as he does not even know anything about the whereabouts of his wife from the very beginning of the book, while Mr. and Mrs. Montag have only communication issues in the beginning and the reader witnesses Mildred and Montag's break-up as the story progresses.

Winston Smith lives alone in a very small flat, because his wife, Katharine, left him more than ten years before the events of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.<sup>67</sup> Their marriage was not a happy one as Katharine seemed to be the exact opposite of Winston, because she lived according to the rules and slogans of the Party and Winston hated her for that and almost tried to murder her on a trip to the countryside.<sup>68</sup> The strongest reason why Winston loathed Katharine was their sexual relationship. When Winston touched Katharine, she seemed to stiffen, because sexual intercourse was viewed by the society as something completely unacceptable.<sup>69</sup> Winston and Katharine were unable to have children, but as Katharine had seen it as their duty to the Party, they were trying to conceive one, regularly once a week. No further information are known about the fate of Katharine.

Guy Montag lives in a house, probably in the suburbs, together with his wife, Mildred. The couple is having some marital problems, the relationship seems to suffer from the lack

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<sup>64</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 38.

<sup>65</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 40.

<sup>66</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 40.

<sup>67</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 66.

<sup>68</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 134.

<sup>69</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 67.

of communication. But Guy clearly cares for Mildred, as he cries for her in the end of the story, when the bombing of the city begins.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, Mildred does not seem to share her husband's feelings. Practically all she does is sitting in front of the television screens (or parlour walls, as they are called) and when she does not do so, she listens to her seashell radio, even during her sleep.<sup>71</sup> In the beginning of the story, Mildred tries to commit suicide by overdosing with sleeping tablets.<sup>72</sup> This might mean that she is unhappy with her life. However, it cannot be told whether Mildred spends so much time in front of the television because she is unhappy with her life, or if it is the other way round, that she is unhappy, because all her life consists of sitting in front of the television. In the end, Mildred ultimately ends the relationship with Montag, as she calls in the firemen by setting on the alarm and after that, she drives off in her beetle.<sup>73</sup> Nothing is known about her fate after the bombing.

It can be said that both Winston and Montag are in their midlife crisis. They are not happy with the situation of their lives and the situation of the whole world they live in. Both men also meet their femme fatale, a younger girl who is the right opposite of the main protagonist's wife. The girl changes the protagonist's view of the world and more or less directly pushes him to revolt against the society. However, neither of the two relationships has a happy ending, as the men are left by the girl at some point in the story.

Winston Smith is dissatisfied with his life from the very beginning of the story and he is trying to figure out what the world was like before Big Brother. His rebellion against the Party includes writing anti-Big Brother slogans into his diary, occasional sexual intercourses with prostitutes and committing thoughtcrimes, thinking about something which is disapproved by the Party. Every day, all members of the Party must take part in the Two Minutes Hate, where there is shown a short movie for them to watch featuring the Party's enemies, most notably Emmanuel Goldstein. The Party members usually get into some sort of frenzy and shout rude expressions at the top of their lungs at the picture of Goldstein and

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<sup>70</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 166.

<sup>71</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 20.

<sup>72</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 21.

<sup>73</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 122.

hail to Big Brother. During one of the Two Minutes Hate, Winston notices a young girl with thick dark hair, freckled face and athletic movements.<sup>74</sup>

Her name is Julia and she works at the Ministry of Truth in the Fiction Department. When they first meet, Winston thinks that Julia is an agent of the Thought Police. Julia acts as an exemplary Party member, she cries rude expressions at the Two Minute Hate, she wears a narrow scarlet sash, the emblem of the Anti-Sex League. This symbol of asexuality was one of the reasons why Winston hated Julia at first. He disliked all women, especially the young, beautiful ones, such as Julia.<sup>75</sup> Winston desired to go to bed with Julia but realized that this would never happen and he hated her immensely and imagined how brutally he would kill her.<sup>76</sup>

When they meet again some time later, Julia slips Winston a note that says that she loves him.<sup>77</sup> Judging by Julia's "unmistakable agitation when she handed him the note,"<sup>78</sup> Winston knew immediately that this was not a trap. After a few unsuccessful tries in the canteen, Winston and Julia finally manage to arrange a meeting at Victory Square.<sup>79</sup> During the following months, they become romantically involved and have secret meetings in various places outside London, in the countryside, where they talk about the Party (and thus committing thoughtcrimes) and make love.

Julia seems to be the exact opposite of Winston's wife, Katharine. Julia hates the Party, she is quite intelligent, and enjoys having physical relationship with Winston, just for the sake of the act itself. Both Winston and Julia know that their relationship will not last long and that the best thing for them would be to part their ways and never see each other again. However, they refuse to break up and they continue with their meetings.

During one of their conversations, Julia mentions the topic of confessing to the Party under severe torturing.<sup>80</sup> They both agree that their feelings cannot be altered and during the

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<sup>74</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 10.

<sup>75</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 10.

<sup>76</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 15.

<sup>77</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 108.

<sup>78</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 109.

<sup>79</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 113.

<sup>80</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 166.

secret meeting with O'Brien, both of them confirm that they will not separate at any cost.<sup>81</sup> However, this is proved false a few times, as the story progresses and the two lovers are captured by the Thought Police.

The first proof is made by O'Brien (who is in fact a member of the Thought Police), when he states that Julia betrayed Winston "immediately - unreservedly"<sup>82</sup> after their capturing by the Thought Police. However, the reader never knows whether O'Brien is telling the truth, as the book follows only the story of Winston Smith. Julia later admits that she betrayed Winston but she does not speak about any further circumstances, she only confirms that she really meant it. And finally, in the end of the story, there is the ultimate proof that the Party can do anything, even altering the Party members' emotions. Winston feels love towards Julia no more, he loves Big Brother instead.<sup>83</sup>

Guy Montag becomes aware of his feelings only after meeting with Clarisse McClellan, a girl from the neighbourhood. Although the two of them never become romantically involved, and it was not stated if they even wanted to, Clarisse means to Montag maybe as much as Julia means to Winston. Clarisse is seventeen years old and she describes herself as being crazy.<sup>84</sup> This craziness means that she is a nonconformist. In fact, all of her family (parents and uncle) acts differently than the rest of the people (mainly represented by Mildred Montag) and her uncle has been arrested for driving too slow on the highway and even for being a pedestrian.<sup>85</sup> Clarisse states that her family enjoys social contact and does not participate much in the same activities other people of this world do, such as watching television, or visiting races and so-called Fun Parks.<sup>86</sup> Meeting with Clarisse seems to open Montag's eyes and he starts to see that some people are not lonely and unhappy and differ from the vast majority. Also their conversations cause Montag to be more interested in the past situation of the world. She was the first person in many years that Montag really liked, because she "looked straight at [him] as if [he] counted."<sup>87</sup> After Clarisse's disappearance

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<sup>81</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 173.

<sup>82</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 259.

<sup>83</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 297.

<sup>84</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 14.

<sup>85</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 17.

<sup>86</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 16.

<sup>87</sup> Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 80.

and presumably her death, Montag becomes even more unhappy than before and he still recalls bits of Clarisse's uncle's wisdom about the happier old times throughout the book.

Clarisse's departure is unseen by the reader but it can be said that it is more violent, because neither the reader nor Montag know, what really happened to her. It is not clearly stated whether Clarisse was killed in an accident, or murdered because of her different behaviour or if she simply left the city with her family. Julia's departure, on the other hand, is preceded by dramatic events at the Ministry of Truth, and in the end, both Winston and Julia agree to part their ways and never see each other again.

Because Clarisse disappears from the story quite early, Montag gets another ally and that is an old man named Faber, “a retired English professor who had been thrown out upon the world forty years ago when the last liberal arts college shut for lack of students and patronage.”<sup>88</sup> Montag met Faber about a year before the events of *Fahrenheit 451*, when Montag during a visit to the park noticed that Faber was reading a book.<sup>89</sup> As Faber is the only person Montag can talk about books without any fear, he contacts him and Faber tells Montag about the books and explains him why the books are “hated and feared.”<sup>90</sup> Later on, the two of them come up with a plan to destroy the firemen by arranging books in the homes of firemen and thus starting a suspicion inside their circles.<sup>91</sup> After the events following Mildred's betrayal, Montag has to escape from the city and Faber helps him to “kill the trail.”<sup>92</sup> Then the two part their ways and there are no details about what happened to Faber after the bombing of the city.

As both Montag and Winston are dissatisfied, they try to do something to fight the system and change the world. Only Montag does something actively, he comes up with a plan to take down the organization of the firemen, while Smith only commits so-called thoughtcrimes and other minor illegal actions. Further in both stories, their actions are revealed and they come to a conflict with their antagonists who represent the system – O'Brien and Captain Beatty.

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<sup>88</sup> Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 82.

<sup>89</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 82.

<sup>90</sup> Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 91.

<sup>91</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 94.

<sup>92</sup> Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 142.



O'Brien and Captain Beatty have a lot in common. In the beginning of the stories, they serve as some sort of mentors to Winston Smith and Guy Montag, respectively, and the protagonists even assume that they are their allies and have the same feelings as them only to their disillusionment during the final confrontation, when the true face of the two men is revealed.

O'Brien is depicted as "a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face."<sup>93</sup> Contrary to his physique, O'Brien is also described as having charming manners. Winston feels "drawn"<sup>94</sup> himself to O'Brien and hopes that O'Brien is secretly not perfectly politically orthodox as he appears to be. Winston even thinks O'Brien is giving him signals that he feels the same about the Party as Winston and suggests himself that O'Brien is a member of the mythical Brotherhood. In the beginning, Winston is not sure whether O'Brien is a friend or an enemy, but consequently, Winston decides that "O'Brien is on his side."<sup>95</sup> The character of O'Brien serves as some sort of Winston's imaginary partner in (thought)crime, before Winston gets a real partner, Julia.

Captain Beatty is the leader of the firemen and he gives Montag as well as the reader some background information about the books the firemen burn and the whole system.<sup>96</sup> Because of his knowledge, Faber and Montag think that Captain Beatty could be like them.<sup>97</sup> However, Beatty might have felt the same towards the world as Montag and Faber, but he seemed that he did not want to do anything to change it, as it appeared to Montag that Beatty let Montag kill him during their fight, because he wanted to die.<sup>98</sup> However, this fact is never confirmed in the book.

During the climax of the novels, O'Brien and Captain Beatty are revealed to be their adversaries and fights follow. Winston's fight with O'Brien is on a psychological basis and Winston does not win, as he becomes assimilated by the system. On the contrary, Montag's fight with Beatty is a physical struggle and it ends with Montag killing Beatty, which represents Montag's symbolic winning over the system.

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<sup>93</sup> Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 10.

<sup>94</sup> Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 11.

<sup>95</sup> Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 81.

<sup>96</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 61.

<sup>97</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 99.

<sup>98</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 130.

## 4 FULFILMENT OF THE AUTHORS' PREDICTIVE VISIONS

The two novels, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Fahrenheit 451*, can be categorized as a sci-fi genre and this genre is usually connected with predications of the future. In these two novels, George Orwell and Ray Bradbury indeed described some inventions and actions that are part of today's world, more than half a century after the two novels were published. The predicted things that really came to exist can be divided into four groups, according to the area they are connected with: television and the loss of privacy, censorship, the Internet, and other inventions.

### 4.1 Television and the loss of privacy

Television screens might not have a great significance in the plots, but they are one of the most distinctive elements of these two stories, especially of *Fahrenheit 451* where they are called parlour walls.

People of the world of *Fahrenheit 451* spend a lot of time sitting in front of the parlour walls, watching the shows. They even install these huge television screens on more of their regular walls in their living rooms to feel that they are a part of the shows they are watching, for example, the Montags have got three parlour walls at their home and Mildred wants to buy a fourth one to be completely surrounded by them so Mildred would have the feeling that she is in the middle of the events depicted in the show she is watching.<sup>99</sup> This feeling of some kind of virtual reality is further encouraged by the possibility to participate in the shows by loud reading of a script and the following reactions of the actors of the show, so it really looks like it is not something staged but something that is really happening.<sup>100</sup>

These large parlour walls are very similar to today's huge plasma television screens or LCDs, which are not only at people's homes but even in public places such as malls, bars, restaurants and sometimes even in schools, where they serve to inform the passers-by about the current affairs, to indirectly force the viewers to see commercials or just to keep their visitors entertained until their meal is served, and so on. This habit can be compared with Oceania's omnipresent television screens (or telescreens as they were called) which was

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<sup>99</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 28.

<sup>100</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 27.

used by the Party to glorify their success and the people of Oceania could not turn the telescreens off.<sup>101</sup> The telescreens were also used to watch the inhabitants of Oceania and look for signs of suspicious behaviour. In the real world, television is not able to do that, but almost every bigger city of the developed countries has a camera system, which is used to watch the public places that have the potential of becoming crime scenes. In 2006, there were 4.2 million CCTV (close circuit television cameras) in Great Britain, which is twenty per cent of the surveillance cameras of the whole world and according to the calculations, every British person “is caught on camera an average of three hundred times daily,”<sup>102</sup> which is a huge loss of privacy. Even if these cameras serve a good purpose, it could be said that it is a step closer to the dystopian totalitarian world described by Orwell.

A great phenomenon of the last decade, connected to the work of George Orwell is the reality show called *Big Brother*, clearly named after the leader of Oceania. The participants of this show are closed in a house where they are constantly watched by television cameras and showed to the television viewers. The point of the show is to get rid of the other housemates and become the last person remaining in the house. In addition to the name of the show, there are a few other elements borrowed from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The contestants are given instructions through the voice of the Big Brother, who uses microphones and a big television screen to communicate with them. The contestants also have to secretly vote which one of their competitors they want out of the house, which is very similar to the way how Oceania's inhabitants would turn in somebody whose behaviour was considered as being suspicious to the Thought Police. There is also some participation from the side of the viewers who can decide what will happen in the show, using their mobile phones or the Internet.

This participation of the viewer is sometimes very similar to the special scripts from *Fahrenheit 451*. Today, people can not only vote in the reality shows, but it is common for the creators of some of the most viewed television series to prepare many various activities, especially using their websites, which enable the viewers to indirectly join the events of the

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<sup>101</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 2.

<sup>102</sup> “George Orwell, Big Brother is watching your house,” London Entertainment Guide from The Evening Standard. <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23391081-details/George+Orwell,+Big+Brother+is+watching+your+house/article.do>.

show. For instance, in January 2008, the creators of the hit television show *Lost*, prepared an online game, which lasted four weeks and the viewers could investigate a mystery connected with the mythology of the television series and later see the results, or the solution of the mystery, in the television show.<sup>103</sup>

## 4.2 Censorship

Censorship is a topic which was very significant in both novels. Being writers, Orwell and Bradbury expressed their fear of the increasing alterations of literature, which is a big problem nowadays, especially connected with the so called political correctness.

In the developed parts of the western world, the censorship is most visible in the media. The authors of books and movies are forced to rewrite or remake parts of their works which are not suitable for being published or broadcasted. In the movie industry, the reason for the censorship is most often to fit the movie in the special movie rating categories according to The Motion Picture Association of America. These categories serve as a warning for the potential viewers that the movie can contain profanities, scenes of violence or sexual behaviour, which might be offensive for the audience.

But of course, all the movie censorship seems to be quite innocent compared to the very harsh political, religious and cultural censorship in some of the countries in the eastern part of the world such as the Islamic countries, North Korea, or the communist China, where it is very usual for the government to prevent the country's inhabitants from seeing anything that is even remotely connected to the different cultures of the western world. This is very similar to the situation described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the people of Oceania were not allowed to know anything about the other two super-states and their inhabitants, because the Party did not want the people of Oceania to discover that the inhabitants of the enemy super-states and their behaviour and habits are not so different from themselves and all they know about their enemies are lies told by the Party.<sup>104</sup>

The diversity is connected with the topic of Political Correctness, which is still a recent subject in today's world. In *Fahrenheit 451* it was stated by Captain Beaty that the books cannot be allowed to cause controversy by hurting the feelings of some of the numerous

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<sup>103</sup> "Find 815," Lostpedia. <http://www.lostpedia.com/wiki/Find815>.

<sup>104</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 196.

minorities, such as members of various religions, inhabitants of various states, people with various hobbies or even cigarette smokers.<sup>105</sup> In the real world, especially in the United States of America, the situation is nearly as bizarre as in *Fahrenheit 451*. Political Correctness is applied mainly in the areas of religion, ethnicity, and sexuality and it is sometimes even compared to the marxistic totalitarian ideology.<sup>106</sup>

### 4.3 The Internet

None of the two authors mentioned anything that could be compared to today's world wide web, but there are three things mentioned in the books that are indirectly related to the Internet. The first thing is the shortened versions of classic works, the second thing is the Newspeak, and the third thing is the alteration of the Internet news items.

In the world of *Fahrenheit 451*, the classical works of literature and drama are condensed to be retold as very short radio shows, then again shortened and cut to become very brief summaries in digest books and dictionaries.<sup>107</sup> This is very similar to the existence of the real world's online encyclopedias, most notably Wikipedia, and a large number of various study guides, such as SparkNotes, where it is possible to find summaries and analyses of almost every piece of literature, movie or musical works. Also it is usual for many famous and well known books and short stories to be adapted into motion pictures. The content of the books is often shortened and/or changed during this process and the final image of the motion picture is sometimes not even remotely related to the original image or even the basic idea of the book.

The users of the Internet use a specific kind of slang that has got one feature common with the artificial language of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Newspeak, and that is the tendency to shorten words. Although the regular English tends to shorten words, too, the English used on the Internet is more extreme. As the Internet communication gets quicker and quicker, there is the need to express one's ideas and feelings in the quickest and easiest way possible and as the Internet became widely available, people of all levels of education use it, which also has an effect on the forming of the language used on the web. There are lots of

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<sup>105</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 64.

<sup>106</sup> See "The Origins of Political Correctness," Accuracy in Academia.

<http://www.academia.org/lectures/lind1.html>.

simplified versions of the regular expressions of the English language that are widely used and recognized. Generally, these special expressions can be sorted into three groups: shortened words, acronyms and emoticons.

The group that bears the biggest resemblance to the Newspeak is the group of the shortened words. The shortened words of the Internet slang do not have to be modified according to the general rules of the English language, sometimes deliberately very strange word forms from the grammatical point of view are used (for example “leet” is used instead of the word “elite”), some letter may be replaced by homophonic numbers (“tomorrow” becomes “2morrow”). There is also an extreme form of the Internet jargon, called 1337 speak (“1337” stands for “leet”) which uses numbers and other signs or group of signs as a replacement for letters, according to the similarity of both signs graphic appearance (“Z” can be replaced by “2,” “U” can be written as “( )”). This form of slang is most often used by hardcore Internet users and videogame professionals, the so-called pro-gamers.<sup>108</sup>

Although some Internet users use some of these specific phrases and expressions in their real life communication, there is a very small probability that these newly created words will replace the ordinary phrases and expressions for good in the nearest future, contrary to the expected Newspeak's superseding of the Old Speak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.<sup>109</sup>

The third similar thing connected to the Internet is the alteration of the Internet new items. Big Internet sites that specialise in showing news are being altered according to the progression of the current events. The webmasters are constantly changing the articles with new information from their sources and the content of the news items may vary from site to site. Of course, the ideology of these alterations and the ideology of the subsequent rectifying depicted in *Nineteen Eight-Four*, are not the same, as the owners of Internet news sites only want to have the most recent and accurate details about current events, while Oceania's Party wants to match Big Brother's predictions with what really happened.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 62.

<sup>108</sup> See “Leet,” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leet>.

<sup>109</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 298.

<sup>110</sup> See Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 39.

#### 4.4 Other Inventions

The last category of the predicted things that came to exist, are the mechanical inventions that bear smaller or bigger resemblance of the real world's devices. As George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* deals more with the political issues and the issue of freedom, he did not concentrate much on the area of technology and he did not come up with any newly invented special mechanical devices. On the other hand, Bradbury made up a number of mechanical devices in *Fahrenheit 451*. Two of these devices can be compared to two similar inventions that are used in the real world: the Seashell radio and the Mechanical Hound.

The Seashell radios are little thimble-like device capable of receiving radio signal that the characters put into their ears.<sup>111</sup> This little portable radio and a headphone in one works very similarly as today's portable music players, especially the mp3 players and iPods. However, the Seashell radios are not capable of storing data and playing music by request (or maybe they are but the characters are not mentioned to use them that way), they only play the usual content of radio broadcasts such as music, soothing sounds of ocean or discussions and news. The common people, represented by Mildred Montag, use the Seashell radios constantly and Mildred even does not listen to what her husband is saying and only reads his lips instead.<sup>112</sup> It is interesting that the cars of the world of *Fahrenheit 451* do not have car audios, or the characters do not use them to listen to the music when driving cars as the Seashell radios work just fine for them.

The second machines that have an equivalent in the real world are surprisingly the Mechanical Hounds. The Mechanical Hounds are programmable killing machines in the shape of dogs, and they also share some similarities with dogs as they can find a person by following the person's scent. The Hounds are used by the firemen to hunt down criminals. Although the real world's robotics is not yet on a level so high that such a robot could be built that would be capable of all the actions the Mechanical Hounds can do, there are some machines that share some similarities with these robotic Hounds. They are the remote controlled robots the real world's firemen and rescue workers sometimes use in case of

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<sup>111</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 20.

<sup>112</sup> See Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 26.

dangerous and life-threatening situations such as bombs deactivating or an exploration of some places that cannot be approached by human beings, such as debris of fallen buildings.



## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the two novels showed that although the two authors, George Orwell and Ray Bradbury came from different cultural and political backgrounds, the dystopias they described in their novels share a number of similar characteristics. These similarities are probably caused by the authors' experience with the totalitarian Soviet Russia and the Cold War. Similarly, the main protagonists of the two novels can also be compared as they share common characteristics and there is a number of common features in their stories and the development of their characters.

The two authors described worlds of the future and a few of their predictions came to exist in today's real world. Although the existing facts and inventions and the facts and inventions portrayed in the two novels are not precisely alike, there are some real world's equivalents which roughly correspond to the predicted things.

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