

Boy in the stripped pyjamas and book their

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Whether power comes in the form of an individual or en mass, those in power exert their influence by holding a position of authority. This control can be exerted though regulation and constraint of an individual's freedom resulting in a loss of identity and individuality. In using their dominance those in power use different means to control and subjugate those beneath them. They can exercise their dominance though fear violence or even propaganda.

These concepts are demonstrated throughout out Atwood's text *The Handmaid's Tale* and *V for Vendetta* directed by James Mc Teigue. Those in power sometimes exercise their authority through repression and corruption as a means of gaining dominance and control. In *The Handmaid's Tale* Atwood creates the very rigid theocratic controlled society of Gilead, a society controlled by mean where women are subjugated and marginalised through the manipulation of language.

This becomes evident when Offred tells of how her communication with Ofglen does not extend further than "blessed be the fruit... the accepted greeting between [them]" . Atwood's use of dialogue shows the reader how women are restricted in what they can say through compulsory use of formulated phrases and an extensive list of proscribed subjects between the Handmaids. The patriarchy is further enforced by the fact that women are legally classified as male property, apparent from the formation of the Handmaid's names, deeming them as property of their Commander.

This denudation of the Handmaid's names not only strips them of their individuality and identity but also objectifies them through personification as "two legged ambulatory chalices" - simply there to bear children. Gilead

retains its control over women by retaining control over names and it is through this subordination that men are able to gain dominance and power in the patriarchal society. Similarly an excessive use of authority is present in the futuristic-dystopia *V for Vendetta* leading to an abuse of power.

Yet unlike *The Handmaid's Tale*, *V for Vendetta* is a clear allegory set in what can only be described as a parallelism to life in George Bush's America where the warped vision of a secure homeland was to be enforced through a totalitarian regime that declared Bush supreme ruler and stripped all citizens of basic Constitutional rights. This repression is once again enforced through the manipulation of language alongside propaganda, evident when V tells us that " there are of course those who do not want us to speak... Why? Because while the truncheon may be used in lieu of conversation, words will always retain their power.

Words offer the means to meaning, and for those who will listen, the enunciation of truth". V's use of uncensored dialogue contrasts the restriction on the expression of free thought within the totalitarian society. Language is further manipulated by the censorship of all news reports such as when the murder of controversial TV presenter Lewis Prothero was said to be the cause of a heart attack. The de-emphasising of Prothero's murder was used to make High Chancellor Adam Sutler seem as though he meant it when " He promised you order... promised you peace, and all he demanded in return was your silent, obedient consent. "

This idolisation of the High Chancellor is drilled into England's citizens in a similar fashion to the *Handmaid's Tale*; through the prescribed use of formulated phrases and it is these phrases that are used as reasoning behind

the control of the country.....? Concluding linking sentence? The government retains control over its people by retaining control of the media and it is this censorship that sustains support for the ruthless totalitarian government ruling London.