

Literature Village: Literature and Speaking Education Combined

*Ideas to enhance literature and speaking education in the
subject of English at Dutch secondary schools.*

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Foreword

Writing this master thesis has been my greatest academic challenge so far, though I think that will probably be true for most master students. I began this academic year not exactly knowing what would have to become my thesis topic. I had decided on one thing; it should be as practical as possible and it should be on literature. After meeting with my thesis supervisor dr Ewout van der Knaap for the first time, he suggested that if I wanted to I could try to find a topic that concerns both literature and speaking skills at Dutch secondary schools. A couple of weeks later, dr Van der Knaap sent a general email which was directed to multiple students, asking them whether they would be interested in participating in a language village that was organised at a secondary school. When I saw this email, the idea came to my mind that language village was often organised for 3 HGSE (Higher General Secondary Education, 'havo') and 3 PUE (Pre University Education, 'vwo') pupils. A language village for 5 HGSE and 6 PUE pupils, as far as I knew, does not exist. I started doing research to find out whether this was true, and it was, as dr Van der Knaap confirmed as well. I sent him an email asking whether it would be too ambitious to try to design a literature village for 5 HGSE and 6 PUE pupils. His reply was something along the lines of 'Sure, why not? Sounds like a great thesis topic; let's get started!' I was both happy and surprised to find that my first suggestion for a topic was accepted. Once we did get started, the first plan was to design the literature village itself. However, as dr Van der Knaap suggested, I could choose to either focus on literature village alone, or I could try to design an altered curriculum on literary competence and speaking skills for 4 and 5 HGSE and 5 and 6 PUE pupils as well. I decided that if I wished to do this properly, I should go all the way and do both.

My first word of thanks goes to dr Ewout van der Knaap. Thank you so much for your kind advice, your constructive feedback, and for guiding me in the right direction when needed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my parents, Theo and Els Krijger, for their amazing love and support throughout my life. Another big thank you goes to my sweet friends, Bianca, Nuria, Margaretha, Ruud, Roland, and Jochem for bearing with me when I could once again not attend a social event or dinner date due to thesis writing. Thank you so much for your love, friendship, support, and your kind words of encouragement. My biggest thank you needs to be awarded to Rien. I largely wrote my thesis during a period of time in which many things were changing in my life at the same time. All in all, the insecurity of these circumstances created quite a stressful time for me and I think it is safe to say that Rien has had to deal with every single one of my mood swings. Therefore, the biggest thank

you is for you. Thank you for your love, your much needed hugs and words of encouragement; for pulling me back into reality when necessary; for making a planning on how many words I should write each week and checking that I actually had; for suggesting that I should use colours to enliven the literary game of goose; for making dinner practically every night and for all those glasses of water. Thank you for being you.

Mariëlle Krijger

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Introduction

We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself. ~ Lloyd Alexander.

If one merely casts a quick look at the developments concerning literary and speaking education in Dutch secondary schools of the last twenty years, it already seems evident that pupils do not nearly get enough training in these areas as they should. Upon closer examination, the situation appears to be even more serious. In the current curriculum, literature lessons are hardly taught and speaking skills are trained through practising prefabricated dialogues from books only.

The discussion on how foreign languages could best be taught has been going on in The Netherlands for quite a few years. After the introduction of the Law of Secondary Education in the 1960's, foreign language learning was still primarily focused on understanding texts. Pupils were required to read a lot more books than the three or four per school year, which is the case nowadays. Literature education mainly consisted of examining the historical period during which a literary work was written and the life of the author. The main purpose was to show students the grandness of a country's history. In the 1990's, the so called 'Tweede Fase' ('Second Phase') was introduced to Dutch secondary schools, with the 'Study Hall' ('Studiehuis') as its main feature. The school system became focused on teaching students how to 'learn to learn', and was provided with the opportunity to offer differentiated education. While the intentions behind this system are good, literary education and speaking skills training seem to have been lost somewhere along the way. Personally, I always felt it was a pity that so little attention is given to literature these days, and I have found that many teachers agree. As literary education is no longer embedded in Dutch secondary school curricula, the projects that are conducted remain 'loose ends', which causes both teachers and pupils to not be very enthusiastic about them since it is unclear what they are working towards. This topic concerns me greatly, as I believe that literary education should be a solid part of pupils' education. For me, to learn about a novel and its context is to learn a bit more about how the world works.

Speaking education is a second area of language learning in English that does not receive the attention it deserves. I think this is mainly due to a lack of inspiring, easy to use materials. Teachers are, more often than not, not provided with the time to develop such materials. As most schools work with set examination programmes (PTA's), it simply becomes a matter of

not having time or space available to be creative in the type of practise that is offered to pupils. A couple of months ago, I started thinking about literature education and the fact that so little attention is paid to it nowadays. Plus, pupils' level of speaking skills has been my concern for a longer period of time as I taught PUE 4 pupils for a couple of months and realised how little speaking practise they had received until then. I was looking for a thesis topic, and my supervisor suggested that I might be able to do something to combine literature and speaking education in English. The concept of Language Village is familiar to me, as my old secondary school Minkema College in Woerden used to organise that event while I was a pupil there. I felt it was strange that such an event was created for 3 HGSE ('havo') and PUE ('vwo') pupils, and yet nothing like it exists for pupils in their final years of secondary school. Since Language Village is a well approved method of speaking skills assessment, I realised that a Literature Village for 5 HGSE and 6 PUE pupils might just be a way to combine literature and speaking education. The concept of Literature Village is quite similar to that of Language Village; a scene setting and context is created in which pupils perform in conversation assignments which are as authentic as possible. The Literature Village tasks are focused on literature, though they still have a clear link to everyday life and the general speaking skills pupils need. However, if such an event were organised without embedding a preparation towards it into the HGSE and PUE curriculum, that would create the exact same problem as was described earlier; it would become a 'loose end'.

This thesis will therefore be concerned with an attempt to answer the following research question: Can Literature Village and an altered curriculum for 4/5 HGSE and 5/6 PUE pupils together be an appropriate manner to combine literature and speaking education in English within the Dutch secondary school system? In order to attempt to answer this question, the thesis consists of five chapters apart from this introduction. In chapter one, I will display my view on literature and speaking education in English within the Dutch school system. In chapter two, a theoretical framework will be sketched. This chapter will contain an examination of why I have or have not chosen to use certain teaching methods. In chapter three, some methodology will be discussed. Here, I will discuss the concept of Language Village and why and, more importantly, how I feel this should be turned into Literature Village. Chapter four will be a description of the change of curriculum for 4/5 Higher General Secondary Education students ('havo', hereafter to be called HGSE) and 5/6 Pre University Education students ('vwo', hereafter to be called PUE) that is needed in order to make Literature Village successful. Chapter five will be a suggestion on what Literature Village

could look like, and finally, this thesis will be summarised and some recommendations will be provided.

Chapter 1: My View on Literary and Speaking Education

“Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

In this chapter, I will discuss my view on both literary and speaking education and why I believe these two areas should join forces. I will begin through explaining my view on literary education. After that, I will set out my ideas on speaking education, and lastly, I will examine why and how literature and speaking should and/or could be combined.

Literary education has become what the Dutch would call an ‘*ondergeschoven kindje*’, which loosely translates into ‘to be underappreciated’. Ever since the ‘*Tweede Fase*’ (‘Second Phase’) system was introduced in Dutch secondary schools in 1998, literary education appears to have received less and less attention. These days, students have to read only three or four books for English, as opposed to twelve during the 80’s. It is unclear whether this is due to students’ reading attitude, or whether students’ reading attitude has changed because the amount of books decreased. The development of a positive reading attitude starts at a very young age. Research has shown that if children are read to by their parents from early on, most of them develop a naturally positive reading attitude (Kraaykamp 2002; Garbe 2002). To stimulate reading in children does not merely lead to reading more literary works; it also enhances students’ appreciation for high quality literary works, and positively influences their cultural development. A practical factor that aids in this process is whether children see their parents read for themselves. As Marc Verboord argues in his 1998 dissertation, “In the case of the parent-child relationship this does not so much mean that children are stimulated to imitate their parents’ behaviour. They do copy the underlying motivations, based on which they can make the ‘right’ decisions independently” (Verboord 13). Therefore, it can be concluded that if reading is considered to be a wonderful, relaxing way to spend time in a household, children enjoy reading significantly more. I believe it is important that young children are offered a wide variety of books in order for them to develop their own personal taste in this matter. It may sound strange to offer children poetry for example; however, there is a high diversity of children’s poetry available which allows them to become familiar with it in an easy way.

For secondary school students, a number of factors determine what their attitude towards reading is, and what it will become. When students start to read the type of texts offered at secondary school in 7th grade (in Dutch: *brugklas*), they are at a level at which they

often choose to read a certain text/ book/ novel because the main character and the story line appeal to them. As Theo Witte states in his 2008 research,

A student on level 1 has a very limited literary competence, and cannot say much about the book s/he has read or his/her reading experience. To him, a literary novel is strange and difficult en he has trouble understanding a simple literary text. He is capable of summarising a fragment, and of recognising basic structure elements, such as chapters or time and/or place shifts. His response is not reflective, but subjective, and mainly focused on the characters and their experiences. His appreciation abilities are limited to emotional criteria (the book was exciting or moving) and he cannot yet support his judgment by arguments. He is not capable of putting his reading experiences into words, and through this, cannot actively participate in a conversation about the book or his reading experience. Students that have a very limited literary competence are not able to put their preference into words or to make an adequate choice of books. (Witte 177)

In this purely experiencing manner of reading, the student allows his mind to be ‘taken over’ by the story without paying attention to its structure or noticing certain styles in writing. It is up to schools, teachers, and parents to ensure that students read texts that are suitable to their level, as Staatsen argues that research has shown that students achieve a higher learning effect when reading many texts that are relatively easy for them than a few texts that are actually too difficult (48). However, students must also be challenged to arrive at the next level of reading proficiency. I believe Krashen’s I plus 1 theory should play a major part in this development. Teachers should not only have lists of literary works prepared for students who are at a certain level but also for students who are in between two levels, so they can easily choose to read something that is not too challenging, as this is known to decrease students’ motivation, and encourage them to take that next step at the same time. In addition, I think it is important for schools and teachers to become more flexible when it comes to the choice of works for the reading list. It may add to the students’ enthusiasm for reading if they are allowed to suggest new books themselves. Naturally, the teacher must decide whether a suggested work is suitable as a part of the reading list.

By the age students arrive at secondary school, their literary development is stimulated not merely by their families and primary school, but also through their friends and secondary school itself (Witte 2008; Van Lierop-Debrauwer 1990; Kraaykamp 2002; Verboord 2003).

The development of this process and the extent of these influential factors has not yet been examined in full in The Netherlands. However, it was by German researchers Graf and Schön in 1995. In 2002, Garbe showed in her research that a difference exists between internal and external development factors, and that two phases of development occur during a child's life. The first is the *primary literary initiation*, which takes place within the family during the pre-school period. As was explained before, this primary initiation is the foundation for children's motivation when it comes to reading. According to Garbe, an important result of primary literary initiation should be that children are able to enjoy children's books on their own around the age of six. The years between ages six and twelve are mostly focused on reading for pleasure. The *secondary literary initiation* occurs in the 'Second Phase' of secondary education, when students are between 15 and 19 years old. In between these two phases is the time when a teenager starts secondary school. It is a period of time during which many changes take place in their lives; from physical to emotional, and from detaching oneself from one's parents to having to cope with doing homework for a large number of school subjects. Garbe states that, in addition to these psycho-sociological factors, literary factors also play a part in teenagers' development. Children's books that they used to love are now considered boring as their structure is too predictable. This creates somewhat of a 'reading crisis' as Garbe calls it, due to the fact that these adolescents do have new interests and wish to discover new books and genres, and still they do not yet have the ability to understand adult novels. According to research conducted by Van Woerkom (1990) and De Moor (1992), this 'reading crisis' is the result of secondary school's reading 'duties' students have to fulfil. In 2005, Van Schooten concluded that literary education in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade (pupils of ages 12 to 14) has quite a positive effect on students' reading attitude when it is focused on personal reading experiences, and most of all, reading enjoyment. I believe these first three years to be the building blocks for a positive attitude during the *second literary initiation*. These last years of secondary school (pupils of ages 15 to 18) signify the formation of students' literary identity. Many students, however, would not read a book, let alone a literary novel, if school did not require them to do so. In my view, it is therefore crucial for students to have a teacher who guides them towards a world of new literary tastes and perspectives. Most students maintain the attitude towards literature that is established during these years throughout their lives.

In the previous paragraph, students' development in literary socialisation was discussed. Here, I will explain what approach I feel should be used in order to capture students' interests and to help them properly develop their literary taste. Literature can be

taught through several different approaches. The historical-biographical approach used to dominate literature lessons in the 1960's, when it was believed that literature must be taught through explaining its historical context and the author's background. The idea was that teaching students about literary history, and showing that literature mirrors the ideologies of that time would automatically trigger an appreciation for literary works (Bolscher 160). The focus was on presenting the grandness of one's country's past. Even though the structural analysis, or text-immanent approach, was on the rise, the historical-biographical approach remained the most widely used until the 1980's. It was then that the reader-focused or reception-aesthetic approach was coined. Today, this focus is still commonly used in modern literary education.

Personally, I feel that an eclectic approach would be most suitable within modern secondary schools. I do agree with the historical-biographical approach to some extent, in the sense that in my view, students cannot fully appreciate certain works unless they know their historical context. To know why a literary work was for instance controversial or revolutionary for its time is to provide a different view on the work itself. I believe that explaining the historical context of a novel enhances students' understanding of how the world works. However, students' knowledge of certain structures and literary terms is of vital importance as well. Furthermore, a student-focused literary approach is essential to creating a positive reading attitude, and therefore, cannot be neglected. Janssen shows four prototypical methods, using Jakobson's communication model from 1960 in her 1998 research. These are a) cultural education, b) literary-aesthetic education, c) social education, and d) individual development. Janssen's study contains a description of content and design for each type, based on a questionnaire, interviews and lesson observations. According to her, these four types differ gradually, and teachers often tend to work in an eclectic manner. It is not merely the teachers who prefer this style of literary education; students are in favour of an eclectic approach as well. Verboord explains in his 1998 dissertation that "the use of a student focused approach in literature education clearly has a positive effect on students' frequency in reading, as opposed to a cultural focus, which leads to a decrease in reading" (110). This type of approach could be combined with *differentiated literature education*. According to Tomlinson (2000), this term entails that

all students learn in a variety of ways and have different interests. Some students excel in some areas but not in others. Hence, the best school instruction is fitted to a diverse student population which is called "differentiated." Research has shown that there is

ample evidence that students experience greater school success (i.e. personally satisfying) if teaching is responsive to their learning needs.

In practise, this means that students can choose from a list of books. After, or sometimes while, reading the student has the opportunity to choose from several possible assignments. These could for example involve writing a review on a certain feature of the novel, or writing a letter to the author explaining what they thought of the novel, why, and maybe even what the author could have or should have done differently. This approach appeals to me greatly, for through this, students can choose each time which assignment suits them best, and therefore have more of a sense of control of their own learning process.

It is, however, important to make a distinction between students' individual levels; if the school works with the levels of Witte, level 1 assignments should be provided, level 2 assignments, and so forth. In order to ensure that students not only choose assignments that are the easiest to them, the teacher could provide some sort of circuit form; students are allowed to choose their assignment. However, by the end of the circuit they must have done each assignment at least once. Its downside is that it involves a lot more work for the teacher, although this might be covered by creating these assignments in cooperation with other colleagues who teach the same subject. If the assignments, criteria, and grade scheme are created together, then the assignments can be divided for grading as well.

Another solution I believe can be quite effective is to have students write a first version of their assignment, and have it graded by their classmate through a simple exchange. This grading by peer judgment happens by means of a grading scheme, which is of course developed prior to the start of the literature lessons. Students are then provided with the chance to revise their assignment before handing in the final version. This grading scheme can be found in appendix four.

A feature I find should always be the start of literary education in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade is the reading autobiography. Several researchers, such as Witte (2008) and Burke (2000) have claimed that a reading autobiography is a wonderful opportunity to raise students' consciousness about what they have done and learned thus far. It provides a teacher with quite detailed information on students' literary socialisation, and that can differ greatly even between students within the same class. Based on the reading autobiography, and perhaps a diagnostic test, students could be/ divided into Witte's reading competence levels and be qualified for the proper CEFR level. I believe that if a school's team of literary teachers (of English) joins forces in order to create such a programme and have students

develop their literary competence by means of following these clear steps, both students' and teachers' motivation will grow alike.

When reading the research I found on speaking education, I was amazed how little time is invested in this utterly important part of learning English. The reason only a few students receive grades such as an 8 or higher is due to a lack of speech and/or fluency training. Students that already have a high language aptitude will achieve a proper level without much support from a teacher; however, students that do have trouble speaking mostly are not able to achieve more than a 6. This is often due to students' insecurity and speaking anxiety, which is understandable as this can only be solved through allowing students to practise their speech on many more occasions than what happens at the moment. I believe a larger time investment is definitely needed, and in many shapes and sizes. Rather than focusing mainly on the acquisition of grammar, schools need to emphasise communication skills; students must be taught compensating strategies in order for them to keep a conversation going if they do not understand everything that is said. As Staatsen rightfully explains by this example, "helpful strategies and techniques that allow students to compensate for their lack of knowledge concerning the foreign language are to use descriptions. Through describing something, for instance by using the word 'fruit' when the student means to say 'orange', or by describing physical characteristics of a certain object" (105).

Whenever possible, schools should arrange contact with native speakers. I am not suggesting that grammar books should be discarded, though I do feel that teaching grammar cannot be considered useful if students are not taught from the beginning how to use this knowledge in real situations. Students should be exposed to rich input as much as possible. Many teachers believe that students' fluency and pronunciation are trained when students are required to read aloud. However, as students' minds process words that are read in silence significantly faster than when read aloud, the reading pace of fellow students is mostly too slow. Furthermore, it is often quite hard for students to read aloud with the correct intonation that belongs to a language such as English. In my opinion, it is therefore better to have either the teacher read aloud, or to use an audio book. In addition to the previously mentioned compensating strategies, "the speech training programme should invest regular attention in training students to describe, paraphrase, and reproduce" (Staatsen 106). This ability is perhaps even more important than being able to produce a grammatically correct sentence, as it allows students to describe a word or an object when they cannot think of the proper word. It enables them to paraphrase their conversation partner's utterance so they can verify that they have understood what the other person said. Finally, to be able to reproduce what was said allows the student

to show that s/he not only understands what was said but also that s/he knows how to use utterance in a new context. This all the more underlines the significance of reproduction practice. As Kwakernaak remarks, while speaking the student will have very little support of words and grammar, which have only been taught in receptive manner, or that have not been repeated in reproductive exercises (2009b 4). Unlike what most teachers believe, grammar is not the most important factor when learning a language. Staatsen explains this by mentioning that

when conducting certain speech acts, students must be able to express themselves in a manner that is appropriate to a specific situation. They must be able to do so in such a way that it is relatively easy for their conversation partner to understand them. This implies a certain degree of correctness in their expressions and use of words. Grammatical correctness does not play such a large role here, unless the grammatical errors actually disturb the conversation. (109)

As was mentioned before, it is often found hard to increase students' motivation to speak. One vitally important option to decrease speaking anxiety is to use the target language as a means of communication during lessons. A teacher should speak the target language as much as possible, as s/he comes closest to providing the students with native speaker input. In addition, a constant small information gap is created this way, and it is up to the students to bridge it (Staatsen). I do believe that if the teacher's utterance is clearly not understood by students, the teacher should, if needed, switch to Dutch to explain what was said. However, such a moment should be used to teach students the new utterance, so they will be able to understand it in future situations. In order for students to be able to decrease their speaking anxiety, a safe learning environment must be created. I feel it is a teacher's job to explain to students, especially in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade, that it is okay to make mistakes. Students should not be allowed to make fun of fellow students when mistakes are made. Students should be taught how to use *negotiation of meaning*. In real life conversations, *negotiation of meaning* is often used automatically. It is quite simply a process that speakers go through to reach mutual comprehension. It involves asking for clarification, paraphrasing, and verifying what the student believes to have understood. Another important factor that should be taken into account is students' knowledge about the target country's culture. As the CEFR requires students to be able to have a conversation that is appropriate for its context, this feature of language learning is not to be neglected. Cultural awareness is not merely concerned with

knowing what the appropriate choice of words is. “In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner’s whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture” (CEFR 1). To be able to communicate in different languages is to be able to enhance mobility within Europe, to increase cooperation, and even to overcome prejudice and discrimination.

At the moment, both speaking and literature are assessed in a rather passive manner. Speaking is usually assessed during an oral exam; a conversation between student and teacher on a topic that is chosen and prepared by the students. The advantage of such an assessment is that the student has the opportunity to prepare a certain utterance and look up words if needed. It is, however, not an entirely realistic situation. In real life, more often than not, the student will not have time to prepare a conversation and will certainly not know how his/her conversation partner will respond. Naturally, when assessing pupils it is hard to avoid a prepared conversation. However, I do believe a test situation should be created which is as authentic and spontaneous as possible. This entails that students have to know how and when to use compensating strategies and how to *negotiate meaning*. Quite a lot of schools have already created what is called *Language Village*; a ‘village’ built inside school in which students have to conduct several assignments. They are forced to speak English to the ‘villagers’ and have to be creative in order to achieve what they want. Some schools have become quite creative and even organised native speakers or university students to act as villagers. *Language Village* is a wonderful way of assessing students’ speaking skills. However, at the moment it merely exists for the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade.

Literature education is often assumed not to be that lively. As was previously explained, many teachers still teach literature from the historical-biographical perspective and do not do much more than lecture. Literature projects are conducted, though not as widespread as they should be. I believe there is a possibility of providing 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students with a type of assessment that creates a speaking situation that is as authentic as possible. It would require students to be creative in their speech, and they would be asked to perform at CEFR B2 level. This type of assessment would combine speaking and literature education. It would appeal to students’ acting skills, their fluency, and their knowledge of literature. It would be called *Literature Village*, and I propose that schools should implement this in their curricula, as the next step for students to work toward after *Language Village*.

Literature Village would, in my view, consist of ten tasks; all of which aim to combine speaking skills and literary competence. Naturally, these types of assessment cannot be

implemented without providing students with the opportunity to practise the skills that are needed. Therefore, the school curriculum should be adapted in order to not merely prepare students for Literature Village, but to enhance their speaking skills and enliven literature lessons.

In sum, the conclusion can be drawn that literature education has received less and less attention since the 1990's. Many teachers no longer believe that students can become more motivated to read than they are at the moment. This is partly due to a lack of time, and yet I believe it is a matter of attitude as well. I feel that students must be offered a wide variety of literature in order for them to 'try their wings' and have a proper chance to develop their own taste in reading. In my view, this would involve more reading; I think students should be required to read six books per school year rather than four. However, that could be compensated for by allowing students to have more influence on the reading list. As was explained earlier, the foundation for a positive reading attitude is laid at the very beginning of a human life. In this literary socialisation process, small children unconsciously take over their parents' attitude towards reading and literature, i.e. if parents present reading as a wonderful, enjoyable activity, children will often grow up to feel the same way. When determining how students can be taught about literature and reading best, a number of factors should be taken into account. First, students are required to meet the reading level described in CEFR level B2 by the time they graduate at secondary school at Higher General Secondary Education level, or at Pre University Education level. These levels must be taken into account when designing the school's curriculum. Second, as Staatsen argues, students learn more when reading several texts that are suitable to their level or maybe slightly over, than few texts that are actually too difficult. Krashen claims about the same in his I plus one theory, which entails that students should be challenged to bring themselves to a higher level by offering them materials that are familiar to them, but that have an unfamiliar feature within them as well. Finally, students should be offered differentiated literature education. This is a type of education in which Witte's literary level system could come in quite useful. If students are provided with assignments on their own level, while also taking into account Krashen's I plus one principle, then it might just become easier for teachers to guide students to their next level of ability. To combine literature and speaking education entails that the CEFR levels for both literature and speaking must be met within one programme. This may sound daunting; however, I believe it to be possible. The speaking programme would contain realistic, authentic situations, especially for students who plan to enrol in Higher Vocational Education or university. As the programme is mostly based on group activities, this will enhance

students' willingness to participate, and it will make the assignments less scary compared to when the students are to perform completely individually. To work with a *Literature Village* based curriculum is to enliven the school's literature programme to such an extent that students become enthusiastic about literature again, and to challenge students to reach a level of fluency and creativity in their speech that, in a regular programme, would be quite hard to achieve.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

“We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.” ~ Lloyd Alexander

After displaying my own view on literature and speaking education, this chapter will be concerned with an examination of ideas and theories of several researchers. In his book *Moderne Vreemde Talen in de Onderbouw*, Staatsen states that in order to regulate a foreign conversation, after three years of foreign language education, a student must be able to start and end a conversation; ask their conversation partner to speak more slowly; ask for repetition or explanation; repeat what someone has just said (either to buy time or to verify what was perceived); say that they do not understand a certain utterance, and make hand gestures and use certain facial mimicry (104). These points appear to be quite obvious, and yet, at least three of the above mentioned skills are not practised regularly in modern day secondary speaking education. As was discussed in the previous chapter, compensating strategies such as negotiation of meaning are not the vital feature of speech training that they should be. According to Staatsen, the main purpose of conversational speech training is

[T]o teach students how to express themselves as freely and correctly as possible in a foreign language. In order to do so, students must learn how conversations can develop in certain situations. They have to understand what their conversation partner is saying, and learn how to respond appropriately and adequately. A number of ‘tricks’ can be used to achieve this purpose. One example is to ensure that there is a certain information gap in the exercise. Through this gap, students must talk and ask questions in order to acquire the information they need. (116)

Staatsen makes some suggestions on how these requirements can be transformed into a useful speech training programme for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. He suggests that students should be taught to reproduce already familiar materials, while paying attention to pronunciation and stress and/or intonation patterns. Furthermore, he believes that students should be able to create small variations to already familiar materials, which should be done independently. After that, students should be guided towards producing language while strongly supported by clues and language aids until the final stage in which they are able to produce language while supported through clues limitedly (111). The following order of these suggestions shows what several researchers, such as Neuner, believe to be a logical order for

foreign speech training, i.e. from concrete to abstract; from topics close to students' environment to ones they will not be so familiar with; from exchange of information and facts to learning to express their own opinion; from focusing on the exchange of information to a focus on interaction, and from functional to orientation in value (114). Neuner (1981) endorses this theory with a typology of exercises which consists of phases A, B, C, and D. The typology advocates the principle of building from receptive to productive assignments, while moving from reproduction to free production. During phase A, no productive language is expected of students; exercises are focused on understanding spoken and written texts. Reading, listening and viewing skills are the main priority. Phase B requires students to use their reproductive skills. Grammar structures, useful words, and phrases are offered and practised. The exercises that are used for both speaking and writing are still highly controlled, i.e. students are mainly asked to repeat and reproduce; they do not need to focus on improving their skills yet. Exercises suitable for phase C allow students to use what was learnt reproductively during phase B in a manner that displays their own ideas, either in speaking or writing. Finally, phase D aims to bring about actual communication, while offering students little to no help in doing so. Students are offered the opportunity to use everything that was learnt in previous stages freely in a conversational situation or a writing activity. These types of stages in language learning fit within the theory of integrated foreign language learning, which is mostly the focus of communication based foreign language education. Integrated language learning entails that the four language 'skills', i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening are not seen as four separate fields. The sequence of these types of exercises in Neuner's theory is quite logical, as students need to have some receptive skills before being able to produce language. The question is, however, how long a school's programme should remain concentrated on receptive skills, and therefore at what stage students should be asked to work on their speaking abilities. I do believe it to be best to have students start speaking as early as possible, although, as research by Doughty and Long (2003) suggests, to start production too soon may impede the language acquisition process. In *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, these researchers argue that

[T]he notion of transfer appropriateness may help to illustrate the difference between incidental and intentional learning. For example, as participants in an intentional vocabulary learning task are told in advance that they will be tested after the learning phase, they will try to store the word information that is to be learned in a form perceived as transferable to the test situation; and processing instructions during the

learning phase in an incidental learning setting may or may not be conducive to successful transfer to the test situation. (357)

In other words, as the learning setting influences the manner in which students' brains handle the input they are offered, it might be important to carefully choose the setting in which students are required to start developing their speaking skills. If this is not taken into consideration, students might not create the proper transfer, which makes the switch from for instance listening to speaking skills more difficult while this is not necessary.

When examining the end terms for English on HGSE ('havo') and PUE ('vwo') level, the first thing that comes to my mind is that the descriptions of these end terms are quite vague. The English language is divided into six domains, and for speaking, students are merely required to have dealt with a real conversation 'a couple of times'. The same applies to presenting in front of a group. Students' conversational skills are described as 'can do'-statements, though there is no mention of the extent of depth a student should be able to handle in a conversation. Fortunately, the level descriptions of the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) differ in this respect, as they explain specifically which areas and abilities the levels are concerned with. The 'Can Do' statements that are used in this framework were developed by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). As the official CEFR document describes, "The ALTE 'Can Do' statements constitute a central part of a long-term research programme set by ALTE, the aim of which is to establish a framework of 'key levels' of language performance, within which exams can be objectively described" (244). Naturally, assessment is never entirely objective as it depends on the perception of the assessor. However, research has shown that CEFR levels do provide teachers across Europe with a common framework, which results in more equal assessment of the same assignment. In addition, it allows teachers from different countries to communicate with one another about language levels, as it is now possible to measure language skills using the same tool. Another positive feature of the CEFR is that language learners are able to also judge their own abilities, which creates a better sense of responsibility for their own learning process. Van den Bergh and Klein Gunnewiek (2009) for instance explain in their research that assessments based on CEFR level descriptions show an extremely high validity. Their article displays a description of research conducted to answer the question whether a high level of agreement between teachers from different European countries also means that they would actually award the same grade to one assignment. They used writing products of Dutch students for the subjects of English and German. The writing products for English were then

assessed by Dutch and British teachers of English, and the products for German were assessed by Dutch and German teachers of German. The teachers were asked to grade the writing products by means of a grade scale from 1 to 6 and through using the CEFR levels. Results show that different judgments are awarded when using the CEFR levels than by means of the grade scale. When assessing products through a grade scale, the foreign teachers clearly look at different features in writing skills than the Dutch teachers do; the grades awarded are quite dissimilar. However, when using the CEFR level descriptions, there is more coherence to be seen between these two groups. As Van den Berg and Klein Gunnewiek state “when both groups judge on the basis of the CEFR descriptions, their judgment is more built upon the same characteristics” (2009, 11). Results of their research also illustrate that judgments of writing products largely depend on the assessor’s mother tongue. Both the English and German teachers turn out to be quite a bit more lenient towards the Dutch students’ writing products than their Dutch colleagues. Based on this research, the conclusion could be drawn that secondary schools should be cautious to have teachers who are native speakers of English and Dutch teachers of English assessing pupils’ products at the same school, as this may create a discrepancy between the teachers’ manner of assessment. However, although these kinds of results should be born in mind, discrepancies between teachers’ ways of judging students’ products cannot be avoided as teachers often assess slightly differently due to other factors. It may be a reason for a school to create even more specifically described requirements as to what skills students’ products should display if the difference between teachers becomes too great.

Research conducted by Koet (2007) shows that this finding is applicable to the assessment of speaking skills as well. Assessment by teachers is not merely influenced by their mother tongue. In her 2007 dissertation, Ubels explains that teachers are often subconsciously influenced by five ‘effects’; the significant effect, the halo effect, the effect of sequencing, personal characteristics, and the contamination effect. The significant effect (Wesdorp 1981) entails that not every teacher has the same ideas on what a good speaking or writing product should look like. The CEFR is likely to be a decent solution to this problem, as a significant effect can be minimised when teachers assess students’ product by means of the same ‘Can Do’ statement. The halo effect means that teachers assess students with previous performances in mind, which can overshadow the features that should be judged. The higher the teacher’s expectations of a certain student, the higher the judgment will be. If a teacher knows more about a student’s living environment and/or background, age, sex, or if a teacher has sympathy for the student, all of these factors can come into play when assessing that

student's product. In order to reduce the halo effect, a teacher should know as little as possible about the writer of the assignment that is to be judged. Handwritten texts should be typed, and the teacher should not know who wrote the assignment until after it has been graded. The CEFR level could provide support here as well; it might be easier to not think about the student's circumstances if the teacher assesses purely based upon the level descriptions. The effect of sequencing comes up when a teacher assesses several products in a short period of time. If the teacher has come across a large number of badly written products and then encounters an averagely written one, the average product is likely to receive a higher grade than it would have in other circumstances. The same applies to finding an averagely written product after grading several excellent ones; the average product then might receive a lower grade. To base this type of assessment on level descriptions, and perhaps even create standard products of a certain level to compare students' products with might help to minimise this situation. A teacher's personal characteristics will determine whether or not s/he is strict in his/her judgment. If a certain group of students treats a teacher with respect, that teacher will probably be a bit more lenient towards them than if the group makes teaching quite difficult. A description in words of exactly what students should be displaying may, again, make it easier to form a more objective judgment than a rough scale from 1 to 10 (McNamara 1996). Finally, a contamination effect might occur. This indicates that the teacher has a certain interest in the assessment. S/he might have the desire to create a good impression with the school board, and will therefore award assignments with grades that do not match the level of writing that is displayed. Considering the factors mentioned above, it can be argued that the use of a framework such as the CEFR may have quite a positive effect on the assessment of students. Yet, criticism concerning the CEFR is to be heard as well. Ubels explains that, communication wise, problems with assessment cannot be abolished completely, as native speakers of a foreign language remain more lenient in their judgment of non native speakers (10). Another problem that occurs concerns the fact that outside of Europe, grade scales other than CEFR are used. The United States for example use ACTFL guidelines, which are quite different in the sense that their top level description matches that of level B2 of CEFR. For levels C1 and C2 however, no matching description is available. Furthermore, it appears to be quite a challenge to fit a student's product into the proper level. If the product displays certain features of level A2, and some of level B1 as well, at which level should it be placed? According to Lumley (2002), this may result in teachers awarding levels through their emotions; categorising a 'terrible' product at level A1, and an 'excellent' product at level C2. To conclude with some positive aspects, Ubels (2007, 12) describes research conducted by

Slagter (2003) that was executed to see whether it is beneficial to assess according to certain descriptors as opposed to using a holistic scale of assessment. CEFR levels were compared to the ACTFL guidelines used in the United States, and it was found that the validity of assessment using descriptors, also known as the holistic manner of assessment, was significantly higher than when not using them. Both CEFR levels and ACTFL guidelines have incorporated judgment through the use of descriptors into their systems of assessment.

After discussing the benefits and disadvantages of the CEFR, I will now discuss some views on literature education throughout the past century. When looking back into history, the twentieth century has known several different approaches concerning literary education. Literary education started out with a focus on the author, which entailed that the meaning of a text could be found if one could discover the author's intention. This approach was the main focus of literary studies until around 1910. It is still applied in contemporary literary studies, but it has received a lot of criticism as it does no justice to either the characteristics of a certain text, or to the fact that different readers give a text meanings which the author might not even have intended, but that do give a text more 'layers' than was initially expected. From circa 1915, Russian formalists already signalled the problems that occurred when using this approach and the American *New Critics* soon published their notion of the *intentional fallacy*. This term indicates the mistake that is made when the meaning of text is considered equal to what the author's intention might have been. Roland Barthes demonstrates a similar idea with his notion of the "Death of the Author". This is when, due to the proposal of literary scientists such as Shklovski, Tinjanov, and Mukarovski, a text became the main focus in literary studies. Through an isolated close-reading, the text was studied, assuming that its meaning could be found in the text itself. Again, this is a method which is still used today, although it has come in for a considerable amount of criticism as well. The reason for these criticisms is twofold; the method ignores the idea of intertextuality, which can have a considerable influence on a text's meaning, and it does not take into account that different readers will not interpret a text in the same way.

Around the 1970s, a new literary approach was suggested by a number of German researchers of the School of Konstanz. It was called the Reception Aesthetics and Reception Theory, and it was proposed as an alternative for existing literary methods. This approach is special in the sense that it does not just consider a text, but also its historical aspects, and more importantly, the main focus of this approach is the reader. Other than in methods previously described, the meaning of a text is not fixed; it changes during the interaction between text and reader. Therefore, there is no need to be searching for a fixed meaning of a

text or the author's intention, for it is not until interaction between reader and text takes place that its meaning really comes forth (Hendrix 2006; 145-170).

Empirical literary research has shown that readers indeed give different interpretations of the same text (Andringa 2006; 243). Furthermore, apparently when trained readers read a text which is easily accessible to them, their minds automatically integrate meanings on several different levels (234). This illustrates that it is all the more important for students to develop their reading abilities, for it allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the texts they read.

Both Hans Robert Jauss and Metka Kordigel argue that students' horizon of expectation should be one of the main points of focus when creating a stimulating literary curriculum (Kordigel 12). Jauss was the one who first thought of the term 'horizon of expectation', with which he meant the sum of knowledge, values, and expectations which a reader possesses before even laying one eye on a text. This horizon of expectation is particularly significant as it influences the reading experience (Hendrix 150). Considering all theories discussed, it can be said recent research indicates that the reader should be the key focus in literary education.

These recent theories on literary teaching have had a clear effect on contemporary secondary schools. As it has become evident that students need positive reading experiences in order them to change their reading attitudes if necessary (Stokmans 2007), and Bolscher et al explain that a reader-focused approach leads to a more positive reading experience and a higher frequency of reading after finishing secondary school (161), most secondary schools nowadays teach literature through the reader approach. As this thesis is concerned with HGSE ('havo'; Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs) and PUE ('vwo'; Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs) classes, I will elaborate more on these levels. Dutch final attainment levels on literature are described in domain E of the rules and regulations concerning secondary school examinations on foreign languages. The final attainment levels on literature consider three sub domains; literary development, literary terms, and literary history. The domain of literary development applies to both HAVO and VWO students, who have to develop their literary skills by writing an argumentative report on at least three literary texts. The areas of literary terms and literary history mostly apply to VWO students only. This entails that VWO students are expected to be able to use literary terms when interpreting literary texts, to explain what the main historical periods are, and to place specific literary works in the appropriate historical contexts.

In addition to these final attainment levels, the Dutch educational system needs to take into account the standards the Common European Framework of Reference constructed for foreign language education, as was explained before. These standards state that a HAVO student should attain level B2. A VWO student should reach level C1.1 or an average between levels B2 and C1. According to Bolscher et al, the development of literary competence entails the ability to communicate with and about literature. Literary competence is defined as the capacity to create significant reading experiences with literary texts of a variety of levels, and the ability to respond to these literary texts in an articulate manner (175). In other words, the development of literary competence is what teachers should aim for when teaching their students.

This development of literary competence is harder than it sounds, for how should each level be defined? The recently formed system of literary competence levels by Theo Witte may well be an answer to this question. He has defined six different levels which can be described as six manners of reading. These levels are experience, recognition, reflection, interpretation, literature, and academic (504). The unique aspect of this system is that it is applicable to almost every feature of literary teaching, although it does require a lot of work from the teacher to determine what level each student finds him/herself at. According to both Witte and Kordigel, it is the responsibility of the school to lead students to higher levels; more effort should be put into getting the students' knowledge and that of the school to correspond.

Naturally, speaking education has to take Dutch final attainment levels and CEFR levels into account as well. The CEFR describes that HAVO students should obtain B1+ level, and VWO students should acquire level B2. In other words, a HAVO student should be able to

understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. S/he can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. S/he can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. (CEFR, 24)

A VWO student, on the other hand, can

understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. S/he can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (ibid)

These CEFR requirements have now been largely absorbed into the Dutch final attainment levels, which makes them easier to follow.

These are some of the aspects I bore in mind while creating this thesis project. Before demonstrating what this curriculum scheme should look like, I will elaborate on the concepts of *Language Village* and *Literature Village*, and which methodology I feel should be used in order to reach literary and speaking competence as well as taking into account the Dutch final attainment levels, the Common European Framework of Reference, Witte's research of literary competence levels, and the achievement of a positive reading and speaking experience among students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

“You don't understand anything until you learn it more than one way.” ~ Marvin Minsky

After having displayed my view on literary and speaking education and discussing a theoretical framework in previous chapters, this chapter will be concerned with an explanation of the concept of *Language Village*. Furthermore, the transformation from *Language Village* for 9th grade pupils to *Literature Village* for 11th and 12th grade pupils will be discussed.

The concept of a language village has proven to be a stimulating, rewarding and valid instrument to assess pupils' conversation skills. Several users praise the fact that “a language village is an authentic, communicative situation. A language village is a way in which language skills can be evaluated and tested in a realistic manner. In a language village, pupils execute language assignments at certain (rebuilt) locations, preferably ones in which native speakers talk to them and assess their language skills” (Visser et al 16, see also Eisberg 2010). Language villages focus on speaking skills. It has been argued that

[E]verything pupils learn during lessons can be applied within language village. This way, situations that would normally appear as fiction can come alive in language village. (Visser et al 23)

The authenticity both Eisberg and Visser point at is the key factor in the creation of a proper language village. The concept of language village is a Dutch invention and was first coined by Bob Driessen. The desire to create a test situation for pupils that is as realistic and authentic as possible caused him to design a mini language village inside his own classroom. The idea is that a ‘stage’ is created which could for instance represent a bank, a grocery shop, or a hotel. Pupils are given assignments which must be fulfilled, e.g. they have to be able to book a hotel room for the night or to cash a traveller's cheque. In order to do so, they are obliged to talk to a ‘(near) native speaker’ in English or whichever language is the target language. This type of exercise forces pupils to speak English in such a way that their conversation partner is able to understand them. These mini language villages became the basis for what is now fairly well known as language village for 9th grade pupils of HGSE (‘havo’) and PUE (‘vwo’). It can be used as a test setting in which pupils can try their wings in speaking to see what it is like to engage in a conversation that is, of course, prepared and yet can require the pupil to negotiate for meaning, or use other compensating strategies.

Another purpose can be to not so much test, but evaluate pupils' CEFR levels. It is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to feel what it is like to have a conversation which comes close to what they might experience in real life. However, a language village is not easy to organise. Here, I will discuss the matters that need to be taken into account.

Possibly the most essential factor in the creation of a language village is to not only have teachers agree on the direction in which they wish to go, but the school board as well. Often, teachers are quite enthusiastic about the concept of language village. However, they are not given the time to organise it. Also, it can be difficult enough to make sure that working colleagues are in agreement with each other, especially in a working climate in which jobs are changed quite often. As Holleman explains in an interview: "When working colleagues are new to the school, organising the language village again requires more effort. What complicates the situation is that all teachers need to be on the same page, or language village cannot be anchored into the continuous learning line (Caspers et al 9). She expresses other concerns when it comes to the time investment that is needed and the embedding of language village in the schools' curriculum. I do wonder whether language village as it is now justifies the time investment of teachers. At our school, we developed our own learning materials and made sure the practical preparation was embedded into our lessons. Essentially, what happened is that our school board told us to organise a language village; however, that did not really fit into the existing learning line (Caspers 10). According to Holleman, due to language village's not being part of the existing learning line and curriculum, pupils did not view it as something beneficial, but rather as annoying; it was merely something extra for them to take into account, e.g. they had to remember to bring the extra book that was created for language village preparation. She says that it should be the other way around; teachers decide to work on speaking skills more, and through that the need for a language village arises (idem 10). So, in order for language village to be beneficial to both the pupils and the school, the school's curriculum needs to be altered so pupils are aware of what goal they are working towards and a greater learning effect can be achieved.

Furthermore, enough staff needs to be available in order to be able to assess pupils' performance. I believe it to be easier if the staff that assesses the pupils is not required to have conversations with them. That way they will be able to focus on judging the pupils only. In Caspers's publication *Een Taaldorp Spreekt Niet Vanzelf*, Ho Sam Sooi explains that it is important to assess in a holistic manner.

The assessor/native also guards the time. Each student must stay in a certain situation for five minutes. We do not use a bell to indicate that it is time to switch, so each conversation can have a natural ending. [...] The conversations are quite free. If the situations were described beforehand to a larger extent, for instance if the school wishes to assess whether pupils are at level A1 or A2, then one should work with a native and an assessor. Furthermore, specifically written assignments should be used in order to be able to differentiate between level A1 and A2. (2008, 7)

So, when designing a language village, it is essential to decide beforehand what role language village should play in students' overall assessment. Should it be used as a mere tool to divide pupils into different CEFR levels or should it be employed as a test? I believe that if designed properly, it can act as both.

In addition, the school will need to decide whom they wish to act as 'native speakers'. When it comes to language village for 9th grade pupils, it is mostly convenient to have a mixture of staff and 11th and 12th grade pupils to act as 'native speakers'. For those students, it is a wonderful opportunity to practise for their own oral exams. Ho Sam Sooi argues that "[T]he advantage of not working with previously set assignments is that neither of the conversation partners are obliged to use structured sentences; they are in the same situation as the 'native' does not know exactly what the pupil wants. Through this, the conversation will develop in a much more relaxed manner" (Caspers 6). As 11th and 12th grade pupils will have to respond spontaneously to the utterances of the 9th grade pupils, this provides them with a chance to practise speaking skills as well.

In their 2008 publishing *Een Taaldorp Spreekt Niet Vanzelf*, Caspers et al explain that "in Dutch modern foreign language education, language village is becoming quite a popular tool to evaluate language learners' conversation skills. [...] School gyms are transformed into a foreign village that is as realistic as possible" (3). Sadly, finding assignments for pupils to perform appears to be a somewhat heavier task. As Caspers states, "however, assignments teachers can provide their pupils with and examples that could possibly help in preparation of language village are quite thin on the ground on the world wide web. Many schools organise a language village for it is a wonderful event which places languages at the centre of attention of the school. Yet, schools mostly do not use it as a final aim of a well built continuous curriculum for speaking skills" (3). Language village is mostly used as a detached evaluation tool, and in some cases it appears to merely be a way of promoting the school. Furthermore, it appears that in a number of cases the situations and assignments that are offered to students

are often quite closed in nature. This entails that dialogues are literally memorised during a short series of lessons that directly precede the event of language village, and are then reproduced during language village. However, language villages that have more open assignments are also created, and it is in these villages that pupils are required to show creativity in their conversation skills. Still, a wide variety exists in pupils' preparation and the manner in which a language village is organised. Ho Sam Hooi explains in what way he started the organisation of language village:

At first, I began using well described assignments, but now I find that I rather work with free ones. We now have ten situations, for which twenty speakers are required. Thirty pupils can 'live' in the village at the same time. We also have four people who arrange certain things, who act as a source of information. Naturally, they only speak the target language. Our natives/assessors all have a language background, so they are capable of judging whether a pupil needs quite a lot of help, or whether they can be spontaneous in their utterances. (Caspers 6)

This development from tasks and assignments that are structured beforehand to more open and free assignments is also to be seen in Holleman's story. "For the 8th graders, language village is much more structured; several dialogues are available per situation. Many of these pupils memorise the dialogues and hardly deviate from their preparation. Actual spontaneous conversations do not really take place. At the evaluation, pupils did express that they had fun, and that they were glad that they were able to order something in Germany, for they had successfully tried" (Caspers 10). So, even if dialogues are more structured for beginning speakers, language village does provide the opportunity to decrease pupils' speaking anxiety. However, in order to achieve this, schools do need to focus on offering pupils more guidance in developing their speaking skills. Holleman explains why she is content with the development of language village at her school

"language village has really helped to make clear what needs to be done about speaking skills, which is a comment I have heard from many schools I had contact with. At the moment, we are working on the construction of a continuous learning line for speaking skills, from the 8th grade to the 12th. We record conversations on video and analyse pupils' levels by means of the CEFR levels. We also use the CEFR to determine what level pupils should achieve by the end of each year, and what learning

activities are needed to do so. Once we have developed a complete learning line for speaking skills, language village will automatically become different; then, it will be a real, constructive initiative of language teachers” (idem 12).

If implemented properly and with enthusiasm, language village can be a wonderful basis for other projects that enhance speaking skills. Daniela Fasoglio is a teacher of Italian who was also interviewed by Caspers (2008). Before her experience with language village, her school did execute projects that were quite similar; one of those projects was about the Italian kitchen. Pupils had to conduct an interview with an owner of an Italian restaurant. Attention was paid to vocabulary (pupils were stimulated to come up with those themselves), to grammatical constructions, and to certain behaviours that should be kept in mind around Italians. The end product was to cook an Italian meal for school, using Italian instructions and recipes. Italian was also the target language during the cooking process. Fasoglio explains that

pupils were very motivated. I think that was because they had a clear purpose in this project; a concrete end product. Furthermore, the context was quite realistic. Pupils had to be active, both mentally and physically, and make use of authentic materials. They had to talk to actual Italians. The target language naturally became the spoken language. The focus was on speaking and conversation skills, among pupils as well. Finally, the project required pupils to work as teams. This strengthens their motivation even more. (13)

Similar to the other teachers, and to research in speaking education, Fasoglio’s school started out with a structured version of language village exercises. She and her colleagues found the creation of assignments quite hard; the instructions must be clear, but short. The instructions were also to be a guide for the assessment. The second time language village was organised, the assignments were designed in a proper context and left much more open. This is in line with Nuener and Staatsen’s ideas on working from closed to open assignments.

These points of interest that were mentioned so far have quite a few commonalities with the things that should be born in mind when designing and organising a literature village. First, I will explain what the concept of literature village entails. Then, I will discuss what could be the stumbling blocks of this concept, and finally, I will demonstrate what literature village should look like.

The idea of literature village first came to my mind about three months ago. I was thinking of a suitable topic for my thesis and I wished to do something with literature and speaking skills. I thought about my own secondary school years and the language village that I participated in myself when I was in 3 HGSE ('havo'), which is 9th grade. At my old school, language village was actually designed as a test situation, and I started wondering why such an event is not available for 11th and 12th grade pupils. As I wished to enhance both pupils' speaking skills and their literary competence, the idea of literature village was born. It is meant for 5 HGSE ('havo') and 6 PUE ('vwo') pupils. Since the total number of pupils in these two years in most schools are as many as to 200 teenagers (four groups for 25 to 30 pupils for each level), it is best to have a separate literature village for HGSE ('havo') and one for PUE ('vwo'). This, however, does not automatically entail that literature village should be designed and executed on two different levels, but that feature will be discussed later on. When using this current setup, a little over 50 students can be inside literature village at the same time. A description of what literature village could look like can be found in chapter six; in total, it should roughly take twice two hours to conduct literature village for HGSE ('havo') and PUE ('vwo') pupils. Pupils will enter an English village, just as they do in language village. However, its setup will be quite different. The assignments pupils have to perform are mostly individual assignments, arranged in a circuit form in order to prevent them from having to queue for their next assignment. A large projected computer screen will tell the pupils when they are expected at which location. Before I explain the type of assignments pupils will conduct, I will now discuss which critical aspects schools and teachers need to bear in mind if they are planning to implement literature village into their curriculum.

When it comes to critical organisational aspects, the organisation of literature village shows quite a few commonalities with language village. Naturally, a school board and teachers must be in agreement with one another on what they wish pupils and themselves to achieve within and through literature village. It is probably a good idea to have two literature village coordinators; one for the HGSE ('havo') and for the PUE ('vwo') department. There should, however, be one joint team of staff members who are assigned to the organisation of this event. Then the question arises what is the school's budget for literature village. If the village needs to be a low budget production, the easiest thing to do is probably to have pupils build the village décor themselves, as an additional assignment within the curriculum. Another, probably more expensive, option could be to have engineering or architecture students from an HVE ('HBO') institution build it. Another concern is that the school will have to arrange assessors and 'natives' who are able to act as village inhabitants. For one of

the assignments, it may be useful to ask 4 HGSE ('havo') and 5 PUE ('vwo') pupils who have drama as a subject to perform as literary figures. A helpful addition might be to ask acting academy students to perform as well. The assessing group should consist of the English teaching staff, pupils' parents who have a language background, and university students of English. The latter two, and if needed the staff as well, should receive training prior to the event in order to make sure they know what exactly the pupils must do and what should be paid attention to. If the school wishes to grade pupils as well as assess which CEFR level pupils are at, I do not think it is a good idea to let the same person who is the pupil's conversation partner assess his/her level. This level assessment should be thorough, and therefore the assessor should not have to focus on anything other than judging the pupil. I have designed an assessment form which can be used to judge the pupil's performance, which can be found in appendix five.

Feedback and evaluation should certainly not be forgotten. I have specifically chosen not to create new levels by mixing Witte's literary competence levels and CEFR levels, as I believe that when these levels are mixed, their specific description may be lost, which might not add to their quality. I have designed assessment forms for each task within Literature Village, which can be found in appendix five. Providing pupils with feedback is of vital importance as that is the only way for them to correct any mistakes they have made. Immediately after their participation in Literature Village, pupils should be asked to write down two things they felt went well and one that did not. This way, the positive aspect of their performance is emphasised. In a normal lesson after Literature Village, pupils should be allowed to talk to the teachers and assessors about their assessment forms to see what could be improved.

In the following chapter, I will display what the altered curriculum for 4/5 HGSE and 5/6 PUE pupils could look like.

Chapter 4: Curriculum

Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.” ~ Plato

After displaying my view on literary and speaking education in chapter one, discussing a theoretical framework in chapter two, and clarifying the methodology for this thesis in chapter three, I will now illustrate in what way the 4/5 HGSE (‘havo’) and 5/6 PUE (‘vwo’) curriculum could be altered in order for pupils to be properly prepared for literature village, as well as for their educational careers beyond secondary school. I have created a scheme which shows what I believe the new curriculum should look like. I should note that, although in my view, speaking skills education should ideally be imbedded within the literature curriculum it is by no means my intention to suggest that it should be implemented exactly the way I display in this chapter. However, it could certainly be done thus, which is why I mention this idea as a recommendation in the Summary and Recommendations part of this thesis. The literature lessons will take up one lesson of English per week. Multiple literature projects will be planned, divided over two years. Through this, pupils will be able to not merely gain knowledge concerning literary terms, styles, and theories, but also on different periods of time and genres. Due to the combination of literary education and speaking skills, more much needed time can be spent on both topics. It should be noted that this curriculum description is merely a suggestion of what schools could do to alter their curriculum. In order to activate already existing knowledge of pupils, the starting activities should always be connected to what pupils have already learned. By doing so, a framework of reference is created in which room is available for new knowledge. Pupils should be shown the use of an assignment; whether it is for later in life, for other subjects, for society, or for themselves. Pupils should be stimulated by offering them types of assignments that are both pleasurable and challenging. Lastly, it should be quite clear to pupils what concrete final product or goal they should achieve, so they know what they are working towards.

In order to create a clear overview of the speaking skills and literary competences that pupils are required to achieve, the descriptions of CEFR levels B1+ and B2 and Witte’s literary competence level four are united in the table below. I have provided each description with its own code which can be seen between brackets. These codes will be used in the curriculum description to indicate which exercises focuses on which ability. The CEFR levels have received the letter ‘A’ from the alphabet plus a number (e.g. “A01”), while Witte’s

literary competence levels are to be recognised by Roman numbers. It should be noted that these codes are used to indicate which skills are practised through a certain exercise. I will explicitly state when pupils need to have already mastered a certain skill for an exercise.

CEFR level B1+ (HGSE/'havo')	Witte level 4 Pupils' features
Pupils are able to: - generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect (A01)	Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)
- give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends (A02)	They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)
- express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)	Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)
- exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)	They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)
- maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)	These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)
- keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)	Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)
- cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)	They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)
- cope with less routine situations on public transport (A08)	They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)
- deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling (A09)	Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)
- enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)	Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main character as well as responding critically to characters' behaviour from a distance (X)
- make a complaint (A11)	They are able to reflect on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)
- take some initiatives in an	They are able to analyse and compare

interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)	storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)
- ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)	Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and views of others. (XIII)
- take messages communicating enquiries, explaining problems (A14)	They are able to critically assess their peers' summaries and interpretations (XIV)
- provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)	Text features
- explain why something is a problem (A16)	Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)
- summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)	The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)
- carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended (A18)	Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)
- describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions (A19)	Many well-known works by notable authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)
- exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)	
CEFR level B2 (PUE/'vwo')	
Pupils should be able to: - account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)	
- display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)	
- explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)	
- take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting, putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to	

hypotheses (A24)	
- understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)	
- initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate to take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)	
- use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn in speaking whilst formulating what to say (A27)	
- interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)	
- correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)	
- plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)	

Table 1: CEFR levels B1+ and B2 and Witte's level four descriptions

The CEFR describes what levels should be attained by HGSE and PUE pupils when it comes to speaking skills and conversation skills. For HGSE pupils both of these skills should be at B1+ level by the time they perform their final exam. PUE pupils are expected to achieve B2 level in speaking and conversation. Concerning Witte's literary competence levels, both HGSE and PUE pupils should arrive at level four or above.

When executing this kind of curriculum, cooperation with subjects such as History, Culture & Art, and Drama is not just necessary; it would provide the curriculum with an extremely positive extra dimension. While taking the speaking skills and literary competence levels described above into account, I will first display what the prefinal years of Dutch HGSE and PUE should look like in my view, and after that the same will be done for the final years of those levels. It is my intention to provide HGSE and PUE pupils with somewhat the same programmes, as this creates easier circumstances for teachers to cooperate and join forces if needed. Some assignments are created for PUE pupils; however, I think that if HGSE pupils are capable of conducting such an assignment, they should be given the chance to do so. Therefore, I will indicate when a certain activity is required for PUE pupils and optional for HGSE pupils.

I will now illustrate what, in my belief, the prefinal years of HGSE and PUE education should look like. The school year is mostly divided into four blocks of about ten weeks, and my curriculum description will thus be divided in the same manner. My plan is to create a literature project for each of these blocks. Block one starts in September and ends around the beginning of November. In accordance with Neuner, Staatsen and Witte, the first block will be concerned with works that are quite close to home to pupils. Next blocks will be concerned with topics that gradually go further back in time, i.e. literature from older periods will be examined. The assignments will be chosen in sequence from closed to open assignments. First and foremost, I believe it is important to ask pupils to write a reading autobiography (**I, VI, X**). Through such an exercise, pupils are invited to think back about their reading experiences throughout their lives. They may have childhood memories of their parents or grandparents reading to them, or whether they really liked or disliked a certain book and why. To think about such experiences activates pupils' minds when it comes to literature, and it may even increase their motivation to start reading again. In order to get pupils started, it might be good to show them some examples of reading autobiographies and to give them a list of reading autobiography features to bear in mind while writing. Questions could be asked such as what was the pupils' first experience with reading books that they can remember. They should be stimulated to ask their parents what they used to read to them, and how pupils responded to that. These reading autobiographies should be used to determine which of Witte's literary competence levels pupils are at. At the beginning of 4 HGSE and 5 PUE, most pupils will probably be somewhere around level 2, or in between levels 2 and 3. Concerning their speaking skills, most pupils will probably be somewhere around CEFR level A2+ or maybe growing towards B1. During the lessons, pupils must always speak English.

The first literary project will be concerned with a relatively light topic: crime novels. Pupils are to choose two novels to read. The list consists of titles such as *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown, *Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, *Catch Me When I Fall*, *Complicit* and *Secret Smile* by Nicci French, and *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie. When discussing the features of crime novels, the distinction should be made between the 'whodunnit' genre and literary thrillers. Within a topic such as this one, numerous opportunities are available to enliven lessons. Many of the novels have been made into a film, and film clips of interviews with writers are also available online. In this block, at least three assignments can be offered to pupils in order to have them practise their speaking skills and their literary competence. The first is to ask pupils to watch the film version of either *The Da Vinci Code* or *Angels and Demons* after they have read the book. For pupils

who do not own the dvd at home the teacher can arrange a room outside lesson hours so they can sit and watch the film in one go. Afterwards, pupils are asked to write a comparison between the book and the film based on a number of questions, such as: which parts of the story are shown differently in the film? Do you agree? Why (not)? What do you think of the use of camera angles and lighting? What would you have done differently and why? These reports should be discussed in class, during which pupils are encouraged to discuss or debate with each other on their opinions about the way the book was made into a film. Through this exercise, pupils are given the chance to practise **A01 to A07, A13, A15 to A17, A19 to A21, A24 to A30** when it comes to their speaking skills and **I to III, V to XIV, XVII, and XVIII** when Witte's literary competence level four is concerned. A second exercise is to have pupils watch two Youtube clips of an interview with Nicci French on their book *Complicit* in class: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb8pPMIirm4> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibfB7PHXerw>. While watching, pupils have to answer a number of questions, such as 'What are the main points Nicci Gerard and Sean French mention about the storyline of this novel?' and 'Describe how these two writers usually come to writing a new novel?' Afterwards, the answers are discussed in class, and therefore pupils are able to practise **A01 to A07, A10, A13, A17 and A18, A20 to A22, A26 to A30** and **I to VII, X to XI, XIII to XVIII**. Finally, pupils should be asked to phone a pen pal or a friend they met on holiday and explain to that person why book X is so exciting, or has such a great plot, etcetera. It could be considered as some sort of book commercial. The easiest way to arrange this is probably to arrange a computer room to let pupils use Skype, or pupils could perform the assignment at home and record it with a camera. Through this exercise, pupils practise CEFR skills **A01 to A07, A10 to A13, A15 to A18, A20 to A30**. Furthermore, pupils apply **I to VII, X, XIII, XV, XVI, and XVIII** of Witte's literary competence skills.

Block two is focused on texts about the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001. As pupils are expected not to be very familiar with literary texts, shorter texts and poems will be used in this project. A book that can be used for this purpose is *September 11, 2001: American Writers Respond*, edited by William Heyen. This anthology contains the collected poems, essays, fictional stories, non-fictional stories, and letters by John Updike, W.S. Mervin, Wendell Berry and many others, all on the attacks at the World Trade Centre. Other possibilities are Dennis Loy Johnston's *Poetry After 9-11: An Anthology of New York Poets*, published in 2002, and *110 Stories: New York Writes after September 11*, edited by Ulrich Baer. When introducing a new theme, it might be wise to examine the first texts in class in order to familiarise pupils with the topic. As this is quite a heavy theme to

discuss, it is all the more important to present the topic in its proper context. Pupils may have personal memories about that day, so it is good to start by talking about those personal memories. Assuming that ten lessons of 50 minutes each are available per block, it is probably safe to say that this provides room to discuss twelve poems plus three or four short stories. Of course, the division can also be made differently; however, I think it is necessary to gradually increase the length of works pupils have to read. As to the assignments pupils could conduct, it is vital that pupils learn about literary terms such as irony, sarcasm, allegory, allusion, anachronism, antihero, Bildungsroman, blank verse, free verse, heroic couplet, (dead) metaphor, simile, epic, different types of rhyme, stanza, surrealism, flashback/flashforward, alliteration, Shakespearian and Petrarchan sonnet, iambic pentameter, oxymoron, so therefore a great exercise can be to have pupils play “Who am I” with literary terms (**III, V, VII, XII, XVII/ A01, A03, A04, A07, A10, A13, A15, A20, A26-30**). The game is conducted as follows: each pupil has a sticker on his/her back with a literary term on it. Through asking their classmates yes/no questions, they have to find out which term is written on their backs. They may ask one question per person. In order to make sure that pupils have understood each term and are able to apply it, they could be asked to write a report on which literary terms are reflected in two poems. They must provide examples that show that they have understood. The assignments must always be handed in the next lesson and the teacher picks some good and not so good features which are discussed in class. For short texts, the teacher may want to give pupils a head start by discussing some of the terms that occur during class and allow pupils to start working from there. Pupils should also be taught about the types of argumentation that can occur during a discussion. A great in-class exercise to practise literary terms and types of argumentation is to let pupils listen to a poem about 9/11 read out loud, preferably one that has been discussed in class; a possible example is “I Saw You Empire State Building”, as follows

<http://lyrikline.org/index.php?id=162&L=1&author=et01&show=Poems&poemId=6075&Hash=330e6c4cfc>>, recited by Edwin Torres. Pupils are then asked to find out, write down

and discuss what style elements are being used. This way, pupils are able to practise CEFR skills **A01 to A07, A10, A13, A15, A17, A21 and A22, A24 to A30** and Witte’s level four skills **I to XI, XIII**. It is probably best to have pupils conduct this exercise after four or five lessons, so the teacher has the time to explain the theory necessary. An exercise that can be conducted by the end of the second block is to have pupils write their own poem on 11 September 2001. The teacher can collect the poems, bind them together and put them on display in the classroom. Pupils will be more motivated knowing that others will be able to

read what they have written. The teacher chooses the five best poems according to CEFR writing standards, and those pupils perform their poems for the rest of the group (**V-VIII, X, XI, XIII-XV**). A final assignment that is required of PUE pupils, but optional for HGSE is to divide the group into dyads that are to present a poem of choice. The pupils must illustrate what the poem is about and which literary terms can be applied to it. They must provide examples of these literary terms that occur in the text (**A01-A06, A12, A13, A15, A17, A21, A24, A25-A27, A29, A30/ I-VI, VIII, IX**).

In block three, which lasts from the beginning of November to the end of January, we travel further back in time to the First and Second World War. In this block, pupils will work more with novels rather than short texts. They are allowed to choose two novels (more if they wish) from a list that consists of works about the First and Second World War. Examples are *Empire of the Sun* by J.G. Ballard, *The Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West, *Three Soldiers* by John Dos Passos, *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway, and *Atonement* by Ian McEwan. With the teacher's consent, pupils may also propose works themselves. Possible exercises for this block could be to have pupils play literary quartet in groups (**A01, A03-A07, A10, A13, A15, A19, A20, A25/ I, III, VI, IX to XI, XV to XVIII**). The pupils are for example to find four characters from the same novel, or four distinct features that appear in war novels. Pupils can very well be divided into groups so each group can be asked to create a literary quartet themselves, and have the next group use that set of cards. Literary terms should be repeated as otherwise pupils will have a harder time remembering them, which can be done by playing the Dutch game of goose ('ganzenbord') in literary form. The game can be played in groups, or with the entire class (in teams of two or three). In this board game, pupils have to answer questions correctly or they are not allowed to take a step further towards the board's finish. If these questions are focused on literary terms and their application, this is a great way to combine speaking skills and literary competence. Pupils are offered an opportunity to practise **A01 to A07, A10 to A15, A20 to A30** of the CEFR skills and **II to IX, XV to XVIII**. An example of what this game could look like can be found in appendix one. In order to make sure that pupils' speaking skills are practised, another opportunity is to organise some sort of 'Questions & Answers'- setting. First, a pupil or a teacher takes up the role of a certain character and it is up to the rest of the group to find out who s/he is through asking 'yes or no' questions. If this goes well, a good final assignment could be to let pupils interview a person who grew up during World War II (**A01-A03, A06, A12-A13, A15, A17, A18, A20, A25-A30/I-VII, X-XVIII**). The interviewed should be asked about his/her experiences and about one of the literary works; does s/he feel that the novel represents the

situation back then accurately, and why (not)? The assignment and possible interview questions can be found in appendix two. The interview should of course be conducted in English and, if possible, be recorded so it can be shown to the rest of the group. The idea is that fellow pupils are often quite good at telling what went well during the interview when it comes to speaking skills, and what aspects could be done better next time (XIV).

The last block of this year should be about apartheid and slave novels. Possible novels of choice are *The Age of Iron*, *Disgrace* and *Life and Times of Michael K.* by J.M. Coetzee, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, and *The Lying Days* by Nadine Gordimer. As both *Disgrace* and *Beloved* have been made into films, it could be good to repeat the comparison assignment, using either one of these films. This time, however, the task will be a bit more difficult. Pupils will have to answer the following two questions in dyads; ‘let’s say you wish to press charges against one of the characters in book X. Describe what the charges would be and how the defendant could defend him/herself? Together, come to a verdict and explain what you have chosen’ (Witte 166). The next question is ‘[b]ooks often involve social issues of a society, people and circumstances that you are not familiar with. Describe how this book has changed your knowledge and/or opinion on these topics’ (idem). This report should be handed in and the questions ought to be discussed in class. In order to conduct this task properly, by this time, pupils should have mastered CEFR skills **A01 to A07**, **A10 to A17** and be able to practise **A20 to A30**. Of Witte’s skills, pupils ought to have mastered **I to XII** and have a chance to practise **XIII to XVIII**. Now that pupils are expected to have improved their speaking skills, a good task to repeat literary terms could be to play the Dutch game of ‘hints’. The class should be divided into two teams. The first member of team one comes towards the teacher and is shown a card by the teacher which has for instance a literary term, a phrase from a novel pupils have read, or a film/book title on it. The team member then has to allow his/her team to guess what was on the card within 90 seconds by making gestures of which one part is previously set and another part should consist of his/her own creativity. After the team has guessed right (within 90 seconds), the first member of team two takes his/her turn, and so on. Several rounds can be arranged and for each round, the same rule applies; whichever team guesses right most and fastest, wins. For this exercise, pupils need to have mastered skills **A01 to A10**, **A13 to A15**, **A19 to A21**, **A24 to A30**. Witte’s level four skills **I to VII**, **X** and **XI**, **XV to XVIII** are to be applied here. The final assignment will be a debate in junior house of parliament style. It aims to teach pupils to use proper arguments to sustain their opinion and let them think deeper about other points of view. As this curriculum is designed to move from closed to more open assignments, pupils are allowed to use speech

cards during this debate. These are allowed to have full sentences on them and while their layout is devised by the teacher, students fill them in themselves. The debate statement will be on all novels; “Having read the novels on colonialism, it could be argued that colonialism brought positive change, too.” The teacher chooses four groups; two debating teams, a team of judges and two chairmen/women. The debate participants prepare themselves through creating their own arguments, and thinking what arguments the other team might use. Furthermore, they should ask themselves what could be their response to certain arguments, and who is going to say what. Finally, they should decide which argument should be named first and which should be saved for last. The judges will focus on the quality of the arguments, such as power, number, and originality. In addition, they pay attention to the team’s strategy (opening, timing, interruptions, playing with the audience, strong closing speech), and presentation skills such as body language, voice and the use of emotions. The debate lasts 15 minutes. The chairmen/women open the debate by introducing the debate statement and the participants. They explain the rules and start the debate. It will be completed in three rounds. In round 1 one speaker from each team provides the starter argument in a maximum of two minutes. Round 2 consists of an eight minute debate through arguments. The chairmen/women decide who of the participants speaks. In round three, one speaker from each team provides a closing argument of two minutes maximum. After that, the judges deliberate which team has won on the basis of the criteria mentioned before. While the judges deliberate, the teacher evaluates the debate with the participants. After five minutes, the judges explain who has won and why. This type of test is more focused on speaking skills, though by choosing a literary topic that still applies to everyday life, the two can be combined easily. Pupils practise speaking skills **A01 to A07, A10 to A30** and literary competence skills **I to XVIII**.

After the apartheid and slave novels project, pupils arrive in their last year of secondary school. As the Dutch final exams take place in May, only the first two blocks of this year are available to do literature projects. From February onwards, pupils will prepare for their exams, and in this curriculum, for Literature Village as well. This year, pupils are expected to have grown towards a new level in literary competence; they should be capable of performing between levels three and four of Witte’s literary competence levels. HGSE pupils’ literary competence and speaking level when looking at the CEFR should be just below or at level B1, and PUE pupils are expected to have achieved an overall level of B1 or above. In the final year of HGSE (‘havo’) and PUE (‘vwo’), an attempt will be made to create inspiring and stimulating circumstances for pupils to grow towards Witte’s level four or higher. When

it comes to literary competence and speaking within the CEFR levels, HGSE pupils are expected to attain level B1 or higher, while PUE pupils should achieve at least level B2.

During the first block of the final year, literature lessons will be about 19th century British and American literature. As by this time, pupils are expected to have reached a new level of literary competence, they have to choose two novels and one long text per block. This block, pupils will be allowed to choose two novels and one long text from the following options: *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. The long texts will consist of some letters written by Jane Austen to her friend Fanny from the Pemberley website (<http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/brablets.html>). The lessons will contain a part on literary history where, if necessary, passages from audio books will be used in order to read a certain passage collectively. This way, pupils are exposed to rich input. They learn what kind of difference it makes to tell a story, or to read a story aloud with the proper intonation. I realise that HGSE pupils are not required to receive literary history; however, I believe that in order to properly understand a literary work a certain amount of historical context is necessary. It should not be the teacher's main focus, yet pupils should learn why a certain novel was for instance controversial or revolutionary for its time. Pupils' knowledge on this historical context can be tested by creating an in-class quiz competition. The teacher shows quiz questions on a smartboard one by one. Pupils are divided into groups of four and the group that provides the right answer to a question the fastest receives one point. The group that has scored the most points when all questions have been answered wins (**A01 to A07, A10, A13 to A15, A17, A20 to A30 and I to XIII, XV to XVIII**). This type of test may not be that suitable for awarding grades. However, it is a good way to combine pupils' historical knowledge with their speaking skills. If necessary, the teacher can decide to award one point extra to the grade of the winning group's next written test. In addition, speech cards will be used to practise the uttering of one's opinion on a literary work during class discussions (**A01 to A17, A19 to A30 and I to XVIII**). An example of such speech cards can be found in appendix three. Furthermore, if possible, pupils should be taken to see the play *Tom Sawyer* at a theatre. They should be told beforehand to pay attention to differences between the play and the novel. Afterwards, pupils will be asked to once again pick a scene from a list, and give part of the script their own creative twist. A part of the script will be set, but the pupils will be allowed to change the second part. The scene is enacted on stage during Drama lessons. The group will receive a collective grade from the Drama teacher (**A03-A06, A25-A30/I-XVIII**). During the literature lessons, not merely the works by Twain, Wilde, and Austen will be

discussed, but also shorter texts and poems. Again, the purpose of these discussions is to teach pupils how to express their opinion, and to debate that opinion while making use of the appropriate literary terms. Through this, speech and literature education are connected. If possible, the history part can be elaborated on during History lessons as well. As a final assignment, pupils will be asked to give a presentation in groups of three or four. The presentations must be given in English and concern a topic that appears in one of the literary works that was discussed in further detail. Pupils are allowed to use speech cards, though by this time, they are only allowed to have written keywords on them. The presentations should be no longer than ten minutes, and if they wish, pupils may use media such as a short YouTube clip. Such a clip should not take up longer than one minute. The rest of the class is present at the presentation and will be divided into pairs. Each pair has to assess one presenter on the basis of a form that has been designed prior to the lessons. This form can be found in appendix four. This way, several pairs will judge one fellow pupil, and provide that person with feedback on what went well and what could be improved. It is much less threatening for pupils to receive this kind of feedback from their peers, and it teaches the assessing pupils how to provide someone with feedback in a respectful manner. The peer judgment grade will be 30% of the debate grade, and the teacher's grade will make up 70% (**A01, A03 to A06, A10, A13, A17, A21, A24 to A30 and I to XVIII**).

During the last regular block of the final year, the literature lessons will focus on Renaissance literature. With respect to literary works, the list should at least consist of the following works; *Midsummernight's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, poems by Edmund Spenser, *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, and *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe. Pupils will be asked to choose two of these works to read. One of the tasks that are conducted this block is that pupils have to answer the following question; 'You wish to make the first 25 pages of this novel/play into a film. Which problems would you encounter? Make sure you use literary technical terms in your discussion.' They may use a work of their own choice (from the list, this can be the work they chose to read) for this purpose. Pupils ought to be asked to enact their film script on stage, similar to what they did during the previous block (**A03-A06, A25-A30/I-XVIII**). Another task is to repeat the Questions & Answers-setting that was created during the previous school year. The teacher could ask either a pupil to perform the role of the interviewed, or s/he could invite a university (theatre) student to enact a literary character. Pupils should try to find out who the interviewed is through asking yes/no questions. Once pupils have found out, they are

asked to conduct an interview that is specifically focused on the character (**A01-A03, A06, A12-A13, A15, A17, A18, A20, A25-A30/I-VII, X-XVIII**).

In this chapter, I displayed what an altered curriculum for 4/5 HGSE and 5/6 PUE pupils could look like when an attempt is made to combine literature and speaking education. The next chapter will be concerned with a description of Literature Village itself.

Chapter 5: Literature Village

“Children have to be educated, but they have also to be left to educate themselves.” ~ Abbé Dimnet

We have arrived at the final chapter of this thesis, in which I will illustrate what Literature Village should look like where the tasks that are to be conducted are concerned. First, I will explain some general points of importance. After that, twelve different test situations or contexts will be described. Significant points of attention when it comes to the organisation of Literature Village can be found in chapter four, *Methodology*.

I will discuss some general conditions that are of importance for Literature Village. Literary Village is probably best conducted in some sort of circuit form. A good possibility would be to use a smartboard or a computer screen projected on a white wall to indicate which groups of pupils are supposed to go to which task/assignment at what time. In addition, it is advisable to reserve three rooms outside the Literature Village area; one for pupils to wait in until it is their turn to go into the village, one where pupils are to go once they are finished. Here, pupils can be offered a drink and asked to fill in a short evaluation form, which asks of them to say what they felt went well and what did not. A third room should be available for staff and volunteers who act as characters or assessors in the village, so they have a chance to relax and clear their heads during their break. Logistically, it is best not to have 5 HGSE and 6 PUE pupils perform Literature Village at the same time. This is not merely due to the fact that there are some differences in these pupils' level of performance and ability. If 5 HGSE and 6 PUE were to perform together, the group would probably consist of about 200 students, which is simply too much for an event such as Literary Village. It is therefore easiest for teachers and other assessors not to deal with two different levels at once. Most of the tasks that will occur in Literature Village will be conducted within the context of a literary congress. It should be noted that the level of some of the tasks can be quite challenging. Some tasks may need alteration in order to fit pupils' skills level. I have made sure that most tasks involve activities which pupils have already encountered at least once during the 4/5 HGSE and 5/6 PUE curriculum, as I feel that pupils cannot be asked to perform a task in a test if they have not had the chance to practise a certain skill. The actual assignments that would be given to the pupils and the assessment forms that would be used can be found in appendix five.

The first task builds towards the actual Literature Village and allows pupils to grow towards the given context. They are told that they are to visit a literary congress, which is held in a business hotel. At the congress, they will be asked to perform several assignments, which

work towards a final goal; writing an article on all the aspects of their experience at this congress. Upon entering the hotel, they have no idea in which room the congress takes place, so they have to ask the doorman. This doorman is quite a grumpy elderly man who has worked at this hotel for such a long time that he is fed up with the job and he is not very fond of secondary school pupils. He does, however, love crime novels such as Dan Brown and Nicci French. The pupils are asked to use all their knowledge on crime novels and their charm to gather the information they need from the doorman. They must end the conversation politely. This task requires pupils to use CEFR speaking skills **A01, A04, A06 and A07, A10, A12 and A13, A17, A20, A23, A25 and A26 to A30** and **I to III, V to VII, X to XIII** of Witte's literary competence skills.

Once the pupil has entered the 'congress room', there are several tasks to be performed, involving a literary game of goose (task two), a conversation with a literary critic (task three; **A01 to A07, A10 to A13, A15 to A18, A20 to A30/ I to XIII, XV to XVIII**), and a promotion task with a film director (task four; **A01 to A07, A10 to A13, A15 to A18, A20 to A30/ I to XIII, XV to XVIII**). The game of goose works with the actual board game, which allows for about six pupils to be assessed on their literary knowledge at the same time. In order to prevent pupils from staying at this game for too long, they have to move on to the next assignment once they have answered six questions correctly. This way, other pupils will not have to await their turn. During this game, CEFR speaking skills **A01, A03 to A07, A10 and A11, A13, A15, A20, A22, A25 to A30** are assessed and Witte's literary competence skills **I to IX, XI to XVIII**. Example questions for this task and an example board can be found in appendix one, along with the assessment form that will be used.

As was stated earlier, task three entails a conversation with a literary critic. Pupils are told that they need this critic's opinion on a certain work as they are writing an article on it. However, this critic does wish to make sure that the journalist s/he is talking to knows what s/he is talking about. Pupils will therefore be asked for their opinion on several works. They are allowed to choose which work they would like the critic's view on beforehand. This critic can either be a native speaker, or a near native speaker.

In task four, the pupil is required to promote his/her idea to make a literary work of choice into a film. This task is a repetition of an assignment pupils have encountered during their final year, in which they had to answer the following question; 'You wish to make the first 25 pages of a novel into a film. Which possible problems would you then encounter and what do you think the story line should look like? Explain your plans while using literary technical terms' (Witte 167). This task offers pupils the exact same question. If necessary,

examples of literary technical terms may be given, as pupils will probably be quite nervous and may have a blackout on which terms can be considered. The goal is to convince the film director that s/he takes their idea into account when writing a new film script.

Task five consists of a ‘Questions and Answers’- setting, for which ideally a real English writer should be invited. If this is not possible, then a university theatre student should be asked to perform this role. The sixth task follows immediately after, and can be seen as some sort of press conference. About ten pupils can be tested at the same time. First, they have to find out who they are talking to through asking yes/no questions. After that, they should ask the writer at least five general questions, which they have prepared beforehand. The ‘Questions and Answers’ task (**task five**) lasts for about 10 minutes and the ‘Press Conference’ task (**task six**) lasts for 10 minutes as well. Two assessors are present and they judge pupils based on CEFR skills **A01**, **A03** to **A07**, **A10** to **A15**, **A17** to **A30** and Witte’s skills **I** to **XVIII**.

For task seven, the pupil has to participate in a group discussion, answering questions based on a YouTube clip which shows an interview with Dan Brown on *The Lost Symbol*. These are the links to the interview in question: part one can be found through this link <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZL0bp5yWni4&NR=1>>, part two via this one <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8UCoEOhZA8&feature=related>>, and part three through this one <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyWL9rvgmpY&NR=1>>. In the discussion, the pupils must show that they are able to understand what has been said in the clip and express how they feel about a certain topic themselves. CEFR skills **A01** to **A07**, **A10** to **A17**, **A20** to **A30** and Witte’s literary competence skills **I** to **XVIII** are assessed.

Task eight is somewhat similar to task seven; pupils participate in a group discussion as well. However, in this task a fragment of film is shown. It is a fragment from a book that was made into a film, such as *Empire of the Sun* by J.G. Ballard. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02BBtN-P0lc&feature=related> Pupils are asked to draw a comparison between the book and the film. At least one of the questions to be answered should be as follows: ‘Books often involved social issues of a society, people and circumstances that you are not familiar with. Describe how this book has changed your knowledge and/or opinion on these topics.’ In this task, CEFR skills **A01** to **A07**, **A10** to **A17**, **A20** to **A30** and Witte’s literary competence skills **I** to **XVIII** are assessed.

To conduct task nine, pupils are to read two reviews about *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee. Several reviews will be available and their conversation partner chooses which ones the pupils should read. Afterwards, they have to explain in a maximum of five minutes why they agree

or disagree with these reviews. Through this task, CEFR skills **A01 to A07, A10 to A13, A15 to A17, A20 to A30** and Witte's literary competence skills **I to XVIII** are assessed.

Finally, pupils are to conduct task ten, which entails providing a group of people with a mini lesson on a poem of choice. In this mini-lesson, pupils should display their knowledge of literary terms and show that they know how to identify multiple layers in a poem. CEFR skills **A01 to A07, A10 to A13, A15 to A18, A20 to A30** and Witte's literary competence skills **I to XVIII** are assessed in this task.

I have created assessment forms for each task that focus on the CEFR level descriptions and on Witte's literary competence descriptions. These assessment forms can be found in appendix five, together with more detailed assignment descriptions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.” ~ Henry Ford

In this master thesis, I have made an attempt to illustrate what can be done to create more lesson time for both literature and speaking skills in teaching English at Dutch secondary schools. In order to research this topic, I have illustrated my own view on speaking and literature education in chapter one. In chapter two I discussed the theoretical framework for this thesis. Chapter three contained an examination of the methodology that was needed. In chapter four, I described what a curriculum for speaking and literature education could look like when altered for the purpose of preparing for Literature Village. Finally, in chapter five I illustrated what the event of Literature Village itself could look like.

In chapter one, I advocated the importance of an early literary socialisation process; if children are read to by their parents from quite early on and shown that reading is a wonderful pastime, they will mostly grow up with an appreciation for literature (Witte 2008, Kraaykamp 2002; Garbe 2002). Verboord states something similar in saying that children subconsciously copy their parents’ motivation for reading (Verboord 2003). When pupils arrive at secondary school, it is of vital importance that literary competence is enhanced through working with Krashen’s I plus 1 theory and, as Staatsen (48) states, pupils achieve a higher learning effect when they are told to read many texts that are relatively easy than a few texts that are too difficult for them.

Many pupils find themselves to be in somewhat of a ‘reading crisis’ once they reach puberty. Children’s books that they used to love are now considered boring as their structure is too predictable. This ‘reading crisis’ (Garbe 2002) is caused by the fact that these adolescents have new interests and wish to discover new books and genres, and still they do not yet have the ability to understand adult novels.

In 2005, Van Schooten concluded that literary education in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade has quite a positive effect on pupils’ reading attitude when it is focused on personal reading experiences, and most of all, reading enjoyment. In my view, it is therefore crucial for pupils to have a teacher who guides them towards a world of new literary tastes and perspectives. Out of the many literary teaching approaches, I find that not one of them provides every aspect of literature that a pupil should learn. Personally, I feel that an eclectic approach would be most suitable within modern secondary schools. I do agree with the historical-biographical approach to some extent, in the sense that in my view, pupils cannot fully appreciate certain

works unless they know their historical context. To know why a literary work was for instance controversial or revolutionary for its time is to provide a different view about the work itself. It is my belief that explaining the historical context of a novel enhances pupils' understanding of how the world works. However, pupils' knowledge of certain structures and literary terms is of vital importance as well. Furthermore, a student-focused literary approach is essential to creating a positive reading attitude, and therefore, should not be neglected. In his 1998 dissertation, Verboord explains that "the use of a student focused approach in literature education clearly has a positive effect on pupils' frequency in reading, as opposed to a cultural focus, which leads to a decrease in reading" (110). An approach which appeals to me greatly and that can be combined with a student-focused approach is *differentiated literature education*. Through this approach, pupils can choose each time which assignment suits them best, and therefore have more of a sense of control of their own learning process. A feature I find should always be the start of literary education in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade is the reading autobiography, which can be a great diagnostic tool to divide pupils into Witte's reading competence levels and to place them into the proper CEFR levels.

Considering all the theories that were discussed in this thesis, it can be said that recent research indicates that the reader should be the key focus in literary education. As it has become evident that students need positive reading experiences in order for them to change their reading attitudes if necessary (Stokmans 2007), and Bolscher et al explain that a reader-focused approach leads to a more positive reading experience and a higher frequency of reading after finishing secondary school (161), most secondary schools nowadays teach literature through the reader approach.

When reading the research I found on speaking education, I was baffled how little time is invested in this utterly important part of learning English. Pupils that already have a high language aptitude will achieve a proper level without much support of a teacher; however, pupils that do have trouble speaking mostly are not able to achieve more than a 6. This is often due to pupils' insecurity and speaking anxiety, which is understandable as this can only be solved through allowing pupils to practise their speech on many more occasions than what happens at the moment. As was stated in previous chapters, I believe a larger time investment is definitely needed, and in many shapes and sizes. Rather than focusing merely on the acquisition of grammar, schools need to emphasise communication skills; pupils must be taught compensating strategies in order for them to keep a conversation going if they do not understand everything that is said. I am not suggesting that grammar books should be discarded, though I do feel that teaching grammar cannot be considered useful if pupils are

not taught from the beginning how to use this knowledge in real situations. Pupils should be exposed to rich input as much as possible. A vitally important option to decrease speaking anxiety is to use the target language as a means of communication during lessons. A teacher should speak the target language as much as possible, as s/he comes closest to providing the students with native speaker input.

According to Staatsen, pupils should be taught to reproduce already familiar materials, while paying attention to pronunciation and stress and/or intonation patterns. Furthermore, she believes that students should be able to create small variations to already familiar materials, which should be done independently. After that, students should be guided towards producing language while strongly supported by clues and language aids until the final stage in which they are able to produce language while supported through fewer clues than before (111). As could be seen in chapter one, the following order of these suggestions shows what several researchers, such as Neuner, believe to be a logical order for foreign speech training, i.e. from concrete to abstract; from topics close to the students' environment to ones they will not be so familiar with (114). These types of stages in language learning fit within the theory of integrated foreign language learning, which is mostly the focus of communication-based foreign language education. Integrated language learning entails that the four language 'skills', i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening, are not seen as four separate fields. The sequence of Neuner's theory is quite logical, as students need to have some receptive skills before being able to produce language. The question is, however, how long a school's programme should remain concentrated on receptive skills, and therefore at what stage students should be asked to work on their speaking abilities. I do believe it to be best to have students start speaking as early as possible, although, as research by Doughty and Long (2003) suggests, to start production too soon may impede the language acquisition process.

A Language Village can be used as a test setting in which pupils can try their wings in speaking to see what it is like to engage in a conversation that is, of course, prepared and yet can require the pupil to negotiate for meaning, or use other compensating strategies. Another purpose can be to not so much test, but evaluate pupils' CEFR levels. It is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to feel what it is like to have a conversation which comes close to what they might experience in real life. Possibly the most essential factor in the creation of a language village is to not only have teachers in agreement with each other, but the school board as well. Furthermore, when designing a Language Village, it is essential to decide beforehand what role language village should have in students' overall assessment. Should it be used as a mere tool to divide pupils into different CEFR levels or should it be employed as

a test? I believe that if designed properly, it can act as both. If implemented properly and with enthusiasm, language village can be a wonderful basis for other projects that enhance speaking skills.

To implement Literature Village into a school's curriculum means that, as for Language Village, a school board and teachers must be in agreement with one another on what they wish pupils and themselves to achieve within and through Literature Village. As was explained in chapter three, it is probably a good idea to have two literature village coordinators; one for the HGSE ('havo') and for the PUE ('vwo') department. There should, however, be one joint team of staff members who are assigned to organise this event. If the school wishes to grade pupils as well as assess which CEFR level pupils are at, I do not think it is a good idea to let the same person who is the pupil's conversation partner assess his/her level. This level assessment should be thorough, and therefore the assessor should not have to focus on anything other than judging the pupil. I have designed assessment forms which can be used to judge the pupil's performance, which can be found in appendix five. The literature lessons as designed for this thesis would take up one lesson of English per week. Multiple literature projects would be planned, divided over two years. Through this, pupils should be able to not merely gain knowledge about literary terms, styles, and theories, but also on different periods of time and genres. Due to the combination of literary education and speaking skills, more much needed time can be spent on both topics. Pupils should be stimulated by offering them types of assignments that are both pleasurable and challenging. It should be quite clear to pupils what concrete final product or goal they should achieve, so they know what they are working towards.

In this thesis, I have made a proposition for the creation of Literature Village and an alteration of the literature and speaking education curriculum in order to answer my research question: Can Literature Village and an altered curriculum for 4/5 HGSE and 5/6 PUE pupils together be an appropriate manner to combine literature and speaking education in English within the Dutch secondary school system? To combine literature and speaking education entails that the CEFR levels on both literature and speaking must be met within one programme. As I have shown, it is quite a challenge to change the curriculum in such a way that there is a balance between the literary and the speaking aspect. Challenging, though I believe it is quite possible. I do wish to note again that by no means do I wish to imply that there should be no focus on speaking other than through a programme such as the one illustrated in this thesis. It merely offers an opportunity to enliven the literature programme and enhance pupils' speaking skills while doing so. If properly designed with CEFR levels in

mind and in combination with literature, a speaking programme would contain realistic, authentic situations, especially for students who plan to enrol in Higher Vocational Education or university.

A first recommendation concerns a possible expansion of the possibilities within Literature Village and its curriculum. I was given the opportunity to participate in the NIFLAR project, which aims to facilitate projects that allow language learners to talk to native speakers via a medium such as Adobe Connect. The project I participated in involved teaching Dutch to Czech students of Dutch. In a group of four students, we created tasks for these Czech students based on the Task Based Learning system that were executed before, during and after these video web communication sessions. Implementing such an activity into the curriculum it would be an exciting possibility to enhance the Literature Village curriculum, as this is highly interactive and allows pupils to speak directly to native speakers of English (of their own age). The literature based tasks that would have to be created for this purpose could be designed together with the pupils. Additionally, as was mentioned earlier in this thesis, I believe that in order to ensure a proper organisation of Literature Village, one or two coordinators should be appointed. I think it is essential for school boards to provide teachers with the time and space to conduct such a task, and that might just be the most difficult issue when realising this type of event.

As an opportunity for further research, I would like to suggest that, if possible, some sort of pilot could be created to test whether the plan presented in this thesis creates the learning circumstances and results it is supposed to. This might offer a chance to discover whether speaking skills education could and/or should be completely embedded in the literature curriculum. Unfortunately, I have not been able to test any of my ideas as there was no space for that in a master thesis. Since I hope to become a teacher, it would be a dream coming true if this proposal actually found its way into reality. To implement Literature Village in Dutch secondary school curricula means to provide HGSE and PUE pupils with a stimulating, wonderful, and challenging learning experience when it comes to enhancing their speaking skills and literary competence that prepares them for their school careers that lie ahead.

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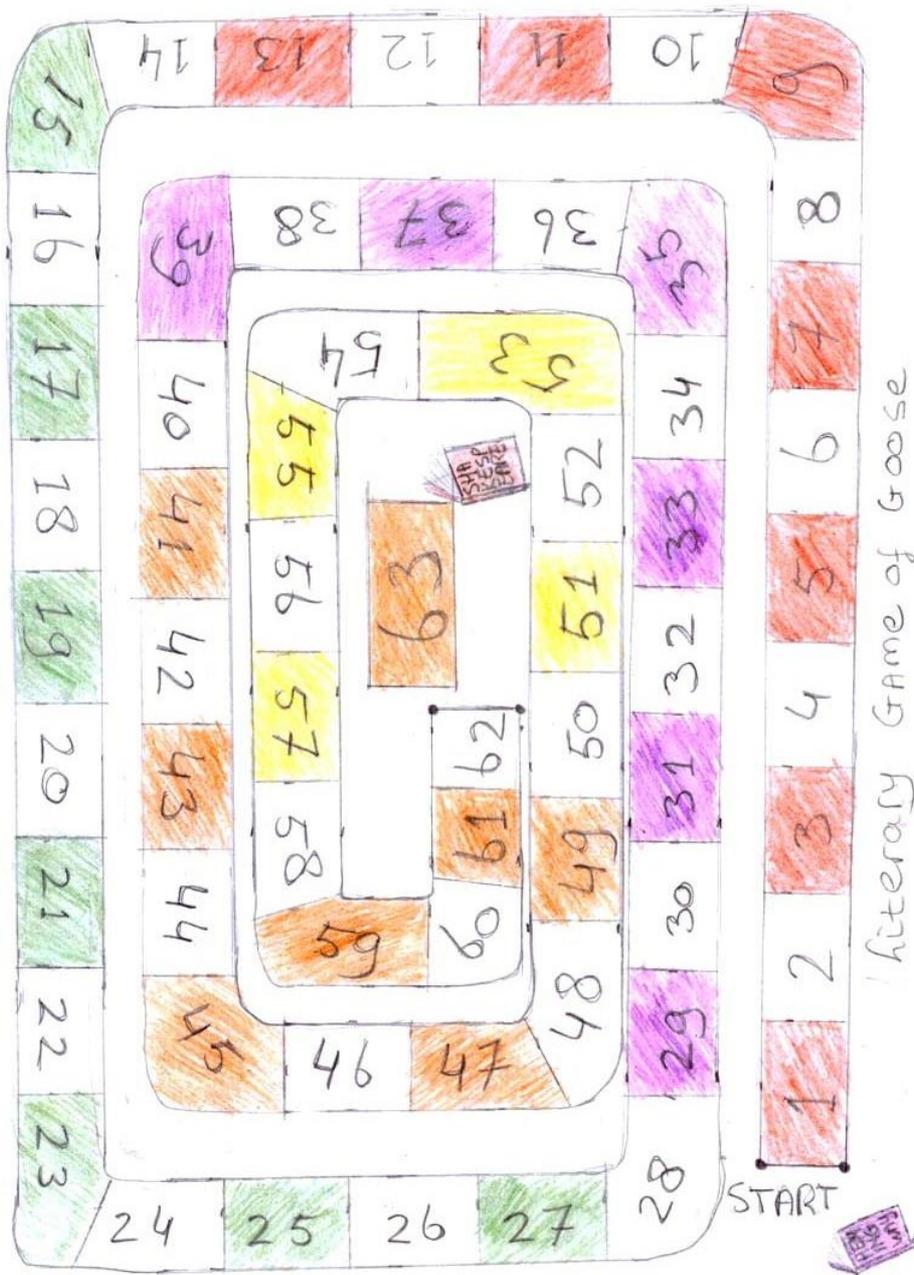
Appendix

Appendix 1: A Literary Game of Goose

For this game, the group is either divided into groups of five, so about five to six boards are required (one for each group), or the game can be played in teams so the class can play as a whole. Each position on the board is attached to a question; therefore 63 questions in total can be answered. Pupils use a die to determine how many steps they are allowed to take next. If they answer the question correctly, they may roll the die again and move forward. If their answer is incorrect, the turn goes to the next player(s). Below are 20 example questions that could be used for this game. The number of the question corresponds with the position number on the board. In order to enhance the playful character the game should have, these questions ought to be mixed with simple trivia questions. Through this game, pupils are offered an opportunity to practise **A01** to **A07**, **A10** to **A15**, **A20** to **A30** of the CEFR skills and **II** to **IX**, **XV** to **XVIII**.

1. What religion is the main focus of the novel *The Da Vinci Code*?
2. Can Robert Langdon be considered a hero or an anti hero?
3. Which group of people is researched in *The Lost Symbol*?
4. Who wrote *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises*?
5. Who is the main character in *Empire of the Sun*?
6. Name three features that appear in most WO II novels.
7. Where does the title of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* come from?
8. What is the name of the village the Bennett family lives nearby?
9. Explain what a Bildungsroman is.
10. Provide an example of an allegorical novel.
11. What is the difference between a Shakespearian and a Petrarchan sonnet?
12. Name two examples of a simile of your own making.
13. What does an iambic pentameter look like?
14. Name three features of an epic novel and provide an example of such a novel.
15. What exactly does Briony in *Atonement* need to atone for?
16. What is meant by the title of Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Lying Days*? What are the lying days?
17. Which two moments of disgrace occur in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*?
18. What exactly does Dorian wish for in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
19. What message does Oscar Wilde mean to explain to readers through the story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* when it comes to physical appearance?
20. What was dr. Faustus' crucial mistake in *The Tragical History of dr. Faustus*?

A Literary Game of Goose



Appendix 2: Interview with WO II survivor

Assignment:

This block, you have read novels on the First and Second World War. You have conducted several assignments that will help you to gain more knowledge on this topic. As a final task, you are asked to find a person who grew up during the Second World War. As you know, this war lasted from 1940 to 1945, so you need to find someone who was about your own age at that moment. You may work in groups of two or three and you should create the questions you wish to ask this person yourselves. If you are insecure about the questions, you may of course consult your teacher. You need to select a chapter from a novel about the Second World War, and ask the interviewee to read it beforehand. It is very important that you contact this person fast, so s/he has enough time to read the chapter. **NOTE:** Make sure you record the interview with a video camera, so it can be shown in class. You can borrow a video camera at the multi media desk.

The interview needs to contain the following topics:

- The interviewee's life during the Second World War; what was his/her experience, what was it like?
- You have selected a novel about the Second World War; what does the interviewee think of the novel? Does it show an accurate image of life during the war?

This task allows pupils to practise CEFR speaking skills **A01-A03, A06, A12-A13, A15, A17, A18, A20, and A25-A30** and Witte's literary competence skills **I-VII, X-XVIII**.

Appendix 3: Speech cards for class discussions

Through using these cards, pupils can practise expressing their opinion during class discussions. First, they are allowed to write full sentences on them and once they have had more practice, the speech cards should be reduced to key words. Pupils can exercise CEFR speaking competences **A01 to A17, A19 to A30** and Witte's literary competence **I to XVIII**. Pupils are allowed to fill in the speech cards themselves at first, however, once they can only use keywords, the teacher should check whether they do not have full sentences on them.

Examples of speech cards with full sentences

Speaker 1

Your speech partner asks what you **find/believe/feel/think** is the genre of this novel and why. Explain your view and describe two scenes from the novel that have a characteristic feature of this genre in them. Explain why these scenes show these features.

Speaker 2

Ask your speech partner what s/he **finds/believes/feels/thinks** is the genre of this novel and why.

Make sure s/he gives you a detailed answer, ask for examples.

Speaker 1

Explain to your speech partner the difference between a simile and a metaphor. Point out where they can be found in this Shakespearian sonnet and how they can be used. Explain until you are sure your partner understands and is able to tell the difference him/herself.

Speaker 2

Ask your speech partner whether s/he can explain to you what the difference is between a simile and a metaphor, using this Shakespearian sonnet. Make sure you ask for more information so you fully understand what s/he says.

Examples of speech cards with key words

Speaker 1

Explain which genre novel belongs to.

Describe two scenes that show characteristic feature; explain.

Speaker 2

Ask your partner about this novel's genre.
Answer should be detailed and provide examples.

Appendix 4: Assessment Form Peer Judgment

A	<p>Fluency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaks rather slowly, many pauses (annoying), often lost for words - speaks a bit slowly, sometimes pauses, sometimes lost for words - tempo is okay, sometimes pause, quickly regains when lost for words - good tempo, hardly pauses, hardly lost for words 	<p>0 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>1,5 points</p> <p>2 points</p>
B	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - often uses wrong tense (annoying), often wrong verbs or wrong subject (e.g. 'he walk' vs 'he walks') - uses wrong tense sometimes, sometimes wrong verbs or subject - uses wrong tense sometimes, no wrong verbs or subject - hardly uses wrong tense, no wrong verbs or subject 	<p>0 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>1,5 points</p> <p>2 points</p>
C	<p>Pronunciation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear Dutch pronunciation of English (annoying) - Often Dutch pronunciation of English, but also English at times - Dutch and English pronunciation about 50-50 - More English pronunciation than Dutch (good 'th', 't', 'd', 'i', 'u', and 'ash') 	<p>0 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>1,5 points</p> <p>2 points</p>
D	<p>Level of Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses simple sentences and words ('like', 'want', 'and stuff') - uses relatively simple sentences and words, but more difficult constructions as well ('I would like', 'Could you please..?', 'I believe that..') - uses more difficult constructions, hardly any simple ones - uses more difficult constructions with ease and sometimes phrases such as ('This ought to be..' or 'Considering this,...') 	<p>0 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>1,5 points</p> <p>2 points</p>
E	<p>Contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appears to know very little about topic, unclear structure - knowledge about topic is OK, but not that extensive, structure is OK but unclear at some points - good knowledge about topic and quite clear structure - extensive knowledge about topic and very clear structure 	<p>0 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>1,5 points</p> <p>2 points</p>
	Total number of points	
	Grade	
	Comments:	

Appendix 5: Tasks Literature Village and Assessment Forms

Task 1: The Doorman (and Assessment Form)

You are a literary journalist and have arrived at a literary congress in London. After having stepped into a taxi to the hotel where the congress takes place, you step inside. You have no idea in which room the congress is held, so you need the doorman to tell you this. However, the doorman is a quite old, cranky man who is completely fed up with this job after all these years and on top of that he hates secondary school pupils like you. He does love crime novels such as Agatha Christie and Dan Brown, though. Use your knowledge about this type of novels and all your charm to get the information you need from him. Make sure you end the conversation politely. You have 5 to 10 minutes to complete the assignment.

Below, the assessment form that is to be used for this task is to be seen. As teachers/assessors need to be able to work quickly when judging pupils, they need only to check the box if they believe the pupils has met that requirement. If a pupil meets a certain requirement only in part, the assessor can write down '+/-' and use keywords to indicate what did not go so well. If a pupil does better than required, the assessor can write down an exclamation mark and again, use keywords to clarify. Depending on how many requirements are on the assessment form, the pupils' grades will be determined after the event is over.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident in longer stretches of free production(A06)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		These pupils display that they are discovering that a literary novel is	

		'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		They are willing to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
summarise and give opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate			

take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Task 2; A Game of Goose Assessment Form

As appendix one already contains a game of goose, only the assessment form for Literature Village is displayed here. **A01, A03 to A07, A10 and A11, A13, A15, A20, A22, A25 to A30** are assessed and Witte's literary competence skills **I to IX, XI to XVIII**

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her (A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)		They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday		Their attitude to reading is	

life (A07)		characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
make a complaint (A11)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
understand in detail what is said to		They are able to critically assess their	

him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)		peers' summaries and interpretations (XIV)	
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)		Many well-known works by notable authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)	
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Task 3; Conversation Literary Critic and Assessment Form

Assignment:

As a literary journalist, you wish to use the opinion of people who have some knowledge about what you are writing, so you will have some useful quotes for your article. Your task is to engage in a conversation with a literary critic in order to find out what s/he thinks of a literary work of your choice. However, before s/he is prepared to tell you that, the critic wishes to know if you are really a literary journalist. To find out, s/he will ask you some questions about other works you have encountered. Be polite; show that you know what you are talking about and try to gain as much information on this person's opinion about your book of choice as possible. You have 5 to 10 minutes to complete this assignment.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her(A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends (A02)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	

keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
make a complaint (A11)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
explain why something is a problem (A16)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation	

		and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended (A18)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)		Many well-known works by notable authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)	
display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)			
explain a problem and			

make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)			
take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting, putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses (A24)			
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)			
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In			

other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Task 4; Promotion Film Idea

Assignment:

You have worked as a literary journalist for quite some time now, but have always had the dream of pitching your idea to turn a literary work of choice into film. At this congress, a film director happens to be present! You have to 5 to 10 minutes to engage in a conversation with the director and convince him/her that your idea should be used for a film. Make sure you use technical literary terms when telling the story (sarcasm, allegory, etc?) and show that you have thought this idea through by explaining what issues might be encountered when making, say, the first 25 pages of the novel into a film.

I have not included an assessment form here, for it is the same as the one for task 3.

Task 5; Q and A setting and Assessment Form

Assignment:

Your editor has asked you to attend a Questions and Answers meeting of a writer. However, you do not know what his/her name is as s/he rarely shows him/herself in public. Your task is to find out who s/he is, however, you may only use yes/no questions to do so. You have 5 minutes to complete this task.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her (A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)		They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	

cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
make a complaint (A11)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	

answer further questions of detail (A17)			
carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended (A18)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)		Many well-known works by notable authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)	
take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting,			

putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses (A24)			
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)			
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering			

the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			
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Task 6; Press Conference and Assessment Form

Assignment:

Now that you have found out who is the writer at the Questions and Answers setting, a press conference follows. You have had to create at least five questions that you would like to ask any writer before Literature Village started. Ask your questions and try to let the writer elaborate on your questions as much as possible through asking additional ones. You have 10 to 15 minutes to complete this task.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her(A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends (A02)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and	

(A05)		not a 'trick' (V)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
make a complaint (A11)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
explain why something is a problem (A16)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their	

		own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended (A18)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)		Many well-known works by notable authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)	
display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)			

explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)			
take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting, putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses (A24)			
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)			
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to			

misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Task 7; Group Discussion interview Dan Brown on *The Lost Symbol* and Assessment Form

Assignment:

At most literary congresses, group discussions on a certain literary theme take place. You have been assigned to participate in a group discussion on an interview with Dan Brown on *The Lost Symbol*. You are shown a YouTube clip of part one, two, or three of the interview, after which you are to discuss the main points that Brown explains in his answers for about five minutes. Then, a 15 minute group discussion follows on *The Lost Symbol* itself. Make sure to show that you have read the novel and explain how you feel about it; use literary terms while doing so.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her(A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends (A02)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors,	

		provided these are not too complex (III)	
exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		They are clearly willing to invest in literature (IV)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
make a complaint (A11)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
ask someone to		They can apply	

clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		reflection on a work's significance and identify different themes (XI)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
explain why something is a problem (A16)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
display their viewpoint on a certain		Many well-known works by notable	

issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)		authors are encountered at this level (XVIII)	
explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)			
take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting, putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses (A24)			
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)			
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			
interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers			

possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Task 8; Group Discussion film fragment *Empire of the Sun*

Assignment:

At this literary congress, literature is discussed and examined not merely on its own, but also in other forms, such as film and theatre. You have been assigned to a group discussion that will compare the novel *Empire of the Sun* by J.G. Ballard to its film version by director Steven Spielberg. You are shown a film fragment of a well known scene from the novel. Participate in the 15 minute discussion about whether this is an accurate representation of the novel and the situation at that time, and why. Explain what you would have done differently and why. Make sure to use literary terms (sarcasm, allegory, etc) and/or film technical terms (camera-angle, lighting) wherever necessary.

As the assessment form for this task is similar to that of task 7, I have chosen not to enclose it with this task.

Task 9; Reviews on *Disgrace* and Assessment Form

Assignment:

As a literary journalist, you need to show that you are able to explain why you agree or disagree with a certain writer or reviewer. For this assignment, you are to read two reviews on J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and discuss with a fellow journalist (your assessor) for 10 minutes whether you agree or disagree with these reviews and why.

The reviews that pupils can choose from can be found in appendix six.

As the assessment form for this task is similar to the one in task 7, I have chosen not to include it in this task.

Task 10; Mini-lesson on Poem and Assessment Form

Assignment:

As a participant at this literary congress, you are expected to share your expertise with others. Therefore, you are to provide a group of participants with a mini-lesson on a poem of your choice. You have created this mini-lesson of 5 to 10 minutes before this event and you have a powerpoint presentation with you. Examine the poem in your mini-lesson; explain what you think it means, which style elements can be seen (rhyme scheme, etc) and make sure to provide examples.

CEFR level B1+/B2	Check?	Witte level 4	Check?
Pupils are able to: generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her (A01)		Pupils have fairly broad experience of reading simple literary novels for adults (I)	
give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends (A02)		They are capable of reading, understanding, interpreting, and appreciating literature that is not too complex and they can communicate effectively about their interpretations and tastes (II)	
express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly (A03)		Their general and literary development is sufficient to allow them to understand the novels of notable literary authors, provided these are not too complex (III)	
exploit a wide range		They are clearly	

of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to (A04)		willing to invest in literature (IV)	
maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to (A05)		These pupils display a budding aesthetic awareness; they are discovering that a literary novel is 'created' and that writing is an 'art' and not a 'trick' (V)	
keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (A06)		Their attitude to reading is characterised by a willingness to immerse themselves in complex events and adult emotions that are far removed from their own experience (VI)	
cope flexibly with problems in everyday life (A07)		They are interested in narrative technique and novel structure, and perhaps also in the author's intent (VII)	
enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics (A10)		They should be able to distinguish the different layers of meaning that may occur (VIII)	
make a complaint (A11)		Motifs and other significant elements of meaning should be identified and interpreted (IX)	
take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction (A12)		Pupils are able to both emphatically identify with a main characters as well as responding critically on characters' behaviour from a distance (X)	
ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (A13)		They can apply reflection on a work's significance and identify different	

		themes (XI)	
provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision (A15)		They are able to analyse and compare storytelling techniques in films and books (XII)	
explain why something is a problem (A16)		Pupils are well equipped to substantiate their own interpretation and evaluation and are open to interpretations and view of others. (XIII)	
summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (A17)		Texts that can be used by or offered to these pupils are written in a 'literary' style and are not immediately related to their own world when it comes to content and characters (XV)	
carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended (A18)		The story line and character development can be less predictable (XVI)	
Exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence (A20)		Literary techniques can be more complex; unreliable perspective, implicit time shifts, metaphorical style and multiple layers of meaning are some of the techniques that may occur (XVII)	
account for and sustain their opinion in discussion by		Many well-known works by notable authors are	

providing explanations, arguments, and comments (A21)		encountered at this level (XVIII)	
display their viewpoint on a certain issue through explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options (A22)			
explain a problem and make clear that their conversation partner must make a concession (A23)			
take an active part in an informal discussion in familiar contexts, which entails commenting, putting their point of view across clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses (A24)			
understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment (A25)			
initiate discourse. They have to know when it is appropriate take their turn and end conversation when they need to, though this may not always be done elegantly (A26)			
use stock phrases (e.g. 'That is a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say (A27)			

interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without imposing strain on either party (A28)			
correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings. In other words, they can correct themselves, and generally correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them (A29)			
plan what is to be said and the means to say it, while considering the effect on the recipient/s (A30)			

Appendix 6: Reviews *Disgrace*

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/11/books/books-of-the-times-caught-in-shifting-values-and-plot.html>

BOOKS OF THE TIMES; Caught in Shifting Values (and Plot)

By CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

Published: November 11, 1999

DISGRACE

By J. M. Coetzee

220 pages. Viking. \$23.95.

"Disgrace," the new novel by the South African writer J. M. Coetzee, which recently won him his second Booker Prize in Britain -- his "Life and Times of Michael K" won it in 1983 -- gets off to an irresistibly strong start.

David Lurie, a 52-year-old twice-divorced adjunct professor of communications at Cape Technical University (formerly Cape Town University College), is at loose ends sexually after having had to end an affectionate relationship with a paid escort. One evening he runs into Melanie Isaacs, an attractive student in his class on the Romantic poets. Conversation leads to intimacy, and although he knows he is making a mistake, he begins an affair with her.

Things quickly go off the track. Melanie's boyfriend begins to threaten him. She withdraws from his class and then from school. Her father shows up at his office, denouncing him. An official complaint is lodged. He is called before a committee composed in part of unsympathetic women. He at once pleads guilty to sexual harassment, infuriating the committee by his unwillingness to explain or express sincere apology. The committee recommends his termination without benefits. The community denounces his behavior. He packs up and leaves, accepting his exile in a state of disgrace.

You read this first quarter of the novel by Mr. Coetzee (pronounced cught-SEE-uh) with deeply mixed feelings. You know that David has transgressed by abusing his power as a teacher. But you also smell a whiff of thought-policing in the air. As David later reflects: "Scapegoating worked in practice while it still had religious power behind it. . . . Then the gods died, and all of a sudden you had to cleanse the city without divine help. Real actions were demanded instead of symbolism. The censor was born, in the Roman sense. Watchfulness became the watchword: the watchfulness of all over all. Purgation was replaced by the purge."

You think the issue of David's transgression is going to be further explored, but now the scene shifts radically and you see that his experience at the college is only the beginning of his education on the new realities of South Africa near the end of the millennium.

After giving up his teaching job, he drives east to the smallholding of his daughter, Lucy, in the Eastern Cape. He is skeptical of her life as a farmer of flowers and produce and as a kennel keeper for neighboring dogs, but he settles in and lends a hand, determined to work in his spare time on a opera he has been meaning to write about Lord Byron in Italy.

But then one day three black strangers show up asking to use Lucy's telephone. When she lets them into her house, they throw David into the bathroom, try to set him on fire and gang-rape Lucy. David, humiliated and outraged, wants justice, but Lucy, while evidently broken in spirit, asks him not to tell anyone what has happened to her.

At once you see a parallel between David's position as a father and that of Mr. Isaacs, the father of David's student. You think that maybe David is being punished for his sexual arrogance, but once again Mr. Coetzee pulls the rug from under his plot. Nothing is what David expects it to be. All values are shifting in post-apartheid South Africa. The atmosphere is a little like the composition of David's Byron opera, which begins as a classical work and ends up grotesquely distorted, a comic solo sung by Byron's abandoned lover to the accompaniment of a seven-string banjo.

The effect of the novel's plot is deeply disturbing, in part because of what happens to David and Lucy, but equally because of the disintegrating context of their experiences. Not even language can be trusted. "What is to be done?" David wonders. "Nothing that he, the onetime teacher of communications, can see. Nothing short of starting all over again with the ABC. By the time the big words come back reconstructed, purified, fit to be trusted once more, he will be long dead."

The only meaning David can find is in the act of helping a neighbor euthanize and incinerate the sick and superfluous dogs in the community, a bitter acknowledgment, perhaps, of what his life has been reduced to, and a tribute to the final line of Kafka's "Trial," which follows Joseph K.'s stabbing and reads: "'Like a dog!' he said; it was as if he meant the shame of it to outlive him." (Earlier in "Disgrace," David has used the same words to describe his and Lucy's humiliation: "Like a dog.")

But if David is bitter, Lucy is accepting. When David asks her if she loves the child she is carrying because of her rape, she responds: "The child? No. How could I? But I will. Love will grow -- one can trust Mother Nature for that. I am determined to be a good mother, David. A good mother and a good person. You should try to be a good person too."

Against the background of the disintegration that pervades "Disgrace," Lucy's trust in nature is a faint beacon of hope. But in the shattering world that Mr. Coetzee has created, you reach for any glimmer of light.

TIME Magazine

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,992700,00.html>

Books: Cries of the Displaced

By ELIZABETH GLEICK

Monday, Nov. 29, 1999

At the heart of South African author J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (Viking; 220 pages; \$23.95) lie two rapes--or rather, two scenes of violence, domination and utter disregard for humanity. And although rape is not the true subject of this book, with these parallel violations Coetzee has devised a subtly brilliant commentary on the nature and balance of power in his homeland.

In the opening pages of *Disgrace*, which has just won Britain's prestigious Booker Prize, David Lurie, a white professor of communications, assesses his life: "He is in good health, his mind is clear... He lives within his income, within his temperament, within his emotional means. Is he happy? By most measurements, yes, he believes he is." And then comes the first crack in the wall of his self-satisfaction: "However, he has not forgotten the last chorus of Oedipus: Call no man happy until he is dead."

Soon Lurie has begun his own tragic fall, becoming obsessed with a student and forcing himself on her. Is it rape? He quickly decides not, but the young woman reports him to the university, and Lurie, fired and discredited, closes up his house and goes to visit his daughter Lucy, who lives on a farm in the Eastern Cape.

During his stay, in a taut and almost unreadable scene, three black men attack Lucy, ransacking her home, shooting her dogs and taking turns with her. "Too many people, too few things," Lurie thinks afterward. "What there is must go into circulation ... Not human evil, just a vast circulatory system, to whose workings pity and terror are irrelevant. That is how one must see life in this country: in its schematic aspect. Otherwise one could go mad."

This may help him preserve his sanity, but Lurie--resolutely blind, like Oedipus, to the less schematic aspects of life--loses everything else. "One gets used to things getting harder," he realizes. "One ceases to be surprised that what used to be as hard as hard can be grows harder yet." *Disgrace* is a mini-opera without music by a writer at the top of his form. Its bleak vision lingers, shattering any hope of a redemptive state of grace.

--By Elizabeth Gleick

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/28/books/after-the-fall.html?pagewanted=1>

After the Fall

By Michael Gorra

Published: November 28, 1999

DISGRACE

By J. M. Coetzee.

220 pp. New York:

Viking. \$23.95.

Among the major South African writers J. M. Coetzee has perhaps been unique in his unwillingness to write directly about life under apartheid. Of his earlier books, only the 1990 novel "Age of Iron" was set in a recognizable national present; and even there he concentrated less on politics than on his cancer-stricken heroine's preparations for death. He has experimented with historical fiction and postmodern pastiche and has even, in the 1983 novel "Life & Times of Michael K," written something like a fable. His country's disgrace has always figured in his work, but, as you might expect from someone who wrote a dissertation on Beckett, it has most often figured obliquely.

In this, Coetzee is very different from the other great South African novelist of our day, the Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer. Literary history is full of pairs -- think, say, of Whitman and Dickinson -- whose names seem to complement each other. But sometimes two names can stand as alternatives: Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, as George Steiner observed long ago. I suspect that with these two it will indeed be "or." Gordimer is expansive where Coetzee is spare, and if her sentences are often knotty and elliptical, she nevertheless remains committed to a kind of social realism. Coetzee's prose has, in contrast, an accessible ease that belies the slippery nature of his work as a whole. Each is a gambler, but they've staked their careers on different games: Gordimer so timely that she risks obsolescence, Coetzee so determined to avoid a fiction based on what he has called "the procedures of history" as to chance his own irrelevance.

They have been among each other's most powerful critics. It is therefore curious that their most recent books seem so oddly similar, as if the end of apartheid has brought them closer together. Both Gordimer's 1998 novel "The House Gun" and Coetzee's "Disgrace" -- winner of this year's Booker Prize -- develop out of judicial procedures: a murder trial in Gordimer's work, and in Coetzee's the charge of sexual harassment that separates his protagonist, David Lurie, from his profession. Neither of these books sits easily as anything like an allegory of the fact-finding commission headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu; still, the judicial connection can be no accident. Yet neither book stops with such procedures. Though most of Gordimer's novel does in fact deal with the trial, she ends by exploring the mystery of the transition from life to death. "Disgrace" finishes quickly with the question of judgment; its real interest lies in what comes after, when all one's days are stamped with the word of its

title. And the way the novel develops suggests that it is perhaps Coetzee, despite his resistance to a historically conditioned realism, who has the more deeply political mind.

A Cape Town literature professor, Coetzee's central character believes that "for a man of his age, 52, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well." That's the novel's first sentence, and it tells us that David Lurie hasn't solved the problem at all. This is simply the status quo whose rupture will produce a story. The commas are lovely in the way that they parse out his situation, bracketing off "to his mind" in order to suggest the limits of his solution, his regular Thursday afternoons with Soraya of Discreet Escorts.

Lurie is an ironic man, but Coetzee's own irony has a surgical precision that slices through and beyond and around the character's own. One night he invites a student home for a drink, then dinner, then asks her "to do something reckless." And though he believes, or says he believes, that "a woman's beauty does not belong to her alone," eventually there comes a moment that even he knows is wrong: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core." The young woman remains passive, "as though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck. So that everything done to her might be done, as it were, far away."

She goes slack but not silent, and so comes Lurie's disgrace. After the uproar of faculty committees and reporters' flashbulbs has passed, he takes refuge with his daughter, Lucy, on her smallholding in the countryside of the eastern Cape. Lucy runs a kennel and grows and sells produce and flowers at a weekly market; she is, he concludes, "no longer a child playing at farming but a solid countrywoman, a boervrou." Lucy lives alone, helped only by a man named Petrus: once her employee but now, in the new South Africa, simply -- that is, not at all simply -- her neighbor and "co-proprietor." "I feel anxious about my daughter all alone here," Lurie tells him. But although Petrus says that "everything is dangerous today," he adds that "here it is all right, I think." Until the day that three strangers come along the path and ask to use the telephone.

Once inside, they ransack the house, sprinkle Lurie with alcohol and set him aflame, shoot the dogs and gang rape his daughter. His burns soon heal, but Lucy does not. Not in his eyes, anyway. She slips into a profound depression and refuses, at first unaccountably, to report the rape to the police. Then Lurie realizes that their attackers aren't unknown, that one of them is even related to Petrus's wife; that the police may be the only ones who don't know what happened. Yet does he know himself?

Lucy's friend Bev Shaw, who runs the animal shelter where, to his own surprise, Lurie soon begins to work, tells him that he can't understand; he wasn't in the room with Lucy when the rape took place. Still, he finds that "he can, if he concentrates, if he loses himself, be there, be the men, inhabit them, fill them with the ghost of himself. The question is, does he have it in him to be the woman?"

In trying to think his way into Lucy's skin, Lurie comes to learn one of parenthood's most difficult lessons, learns to accept his child's fully autonomous existence even -- or especially -- when he thinks she is wrong. "Sell up," he urges her, believing that her rapists will return. But Lucy refuses, and though she says she cannot get over "the shock of being hated," she nevertheless insists that living with such danger is the price that whites must now pay for their right to remain on the land.

There is much one could say about this brief but oddly expansive novel, about the range of concerns that Coetzee has woven seamlessly together. There is Lurie's attempt, as a specialist in Romantic poetry, to write a long-planned work on Byron, in which he finds himself adopting the voice of the poet's discarded mistress. There is a profound meditation on another kind of otherness, on the lives and the rights of animals, a topic Coetzee has explored in a recent volume of essays -- only here that meditation takes the form of the punishment and salvation that Lurie finds at Bev's animal shelter, helping her to put down abandoned dogs, holding them "as the needle finds the vein and the drug hits the heart and the legs buckle and the eyes dim." I could note the way Coetzee makes us understand but not sympathize with Lurie's intellectual arrogance and incorrigible desire, and could then compare him to his child: each is beyond stubborn, but the daughter is marked by an integrity that her father knows he cannot claim for himself. And I could point to the stark and even schematic armature of the plot that links them, a plot in which what Lurie has in some sense done to another man's daughter is trebly visited on his own.

There is more in "Disgrace" than I can manage to describe here. But let me end by suggesting Coetzee's most impressive achievement, one that grows from the very bones of the novel's grammar. Lurie thinks of himself as having spent his career "explaining to the bored youth of the country the distinction between drink and drunk up, burned and burnt. The perfective, signifying an action carried through to its conclusion." "Disgrace" is, however, written in the present tense, and its title denotes a continuing condition. Disgrace continues. And so do the characters' lives, which at the end of the book remain unresolved and unfinished, their problems and possibilities still open.

This novel stands as one of the few I know in which the writer's use of the present tense is in itself enough to shape the structure and form of the book as a whole. Even though it presents an almost unrelieved series of grim moments, "Disgrace" isn't claustrophobic or depressing, as some of Coetzee's earlier work has been. Its grammar allows for the sublime exhilaration of accident and surprise, and so the fate of its characters -- and perhaps indeed of their country -- seems not determined but improvised. Improvised in the way that our own lives are; improvised in a way that recalls the subject of Coetzee's 1994 novel, "The Master of Petersburg," the novelist whom we know as Dostoyevsky.

Coetzee won an earlier Booker Prize for "Life & Times of Michael K." Last month's award made him the only writer ever to win it twice. "Disgrace" surely deserves such recognition. But that may, in time, come to seem among the least of this extraordinary novel's distinctions.

Salon

<http://www.salon.com/books/review/1999/11/05/coetzee/>

Friday, Nov 5, 1999 11:00 ET

"Disgrace" by J.M. Coetzee

The winner of the 1999 Booker Prize is a bleak tale of human and animal misery in post-apartheid South Africa.

By Andrew O'Hehir

In his sober, searing and even cynical little book "Disgrace," J.M. Coetzee tells us something we all suspect and fear -- that political change can do almost nothing to eliminate human misery. What it can do, he suggests, is reorder it a little and half-accidentally introduce a few new varieties. This view should not surprise any of the great South African novelist's readers. In his early-1980s masterpieces "Waiting for the Barbarians" and "Life & Times of Michael K" -- indeed, in all of his work -- political and historical forces blow through the lives of individuals like nasty weather systems, bringing with them a destruction that is all the more cruel for being impersonal. "Disgrace" is Coetzee's first book to deal explicitly with post-apartheid South Africa, and the picture it paints is a cheerless one that will comfort no one, no matter what race, nationality or viewpoint.

Last month "Disgrace" was awarded the Booker Prize, and it has undeniable echoes of "Michael K," Coetzee's 1983 Booker winner. In both books a man is broken down almost to nothing before he finds some tiny measure of redemption in his forced acceptance of the realities of life and death. But Professor David Lurie, the protagonist of "Disgrace," has farther to fall than Michael K, an unsophisticated Cape Town gardener. And the clarity David comes to at the end grows largely from his accepting an ever-increasing portion of pain. "One gets used to things getting harder; one ceases to be surprised that what used to be as hard as hard can be grows harder yet," he reflects. That sentence also describes Coetzee's notion of life in the new South Africa, where, as he portrays it, brutal tyranny has been replaced by brutal anarchy.

A middle-aged, divorced scholar of Romantic poetry, David would have undoubtedly been a pathetic figure under the old regime -- one imagines an ineffectual white liberal teaching Wordsworth to bored Afrikaners while largely ignoring the atrocities perpetrated in his name. But in the Mandela era, David has become a victim of "the great rationalization": His university has been remade into a technical college, and he teaches courses in "communication skills" that he finds nonsensical. He is such a nonentity that the prostitute he patronizes weekly -- and for whom he has begun buying gifts -- stops receiving him. He imagines her and her colleagues shuddering over him "as one shudders at a cockroach in a washbasin in the middle of the night" and wonders if he can ask his doctor to castrate him as one neuters a domestic animal.

This is the first of the many comparisons of human and animal existence in "Disgrace." Coetzee has always situated his characters in extreme situations that compel them to explore what it means to be human, and before this novel is over, David must endure both psychological abasement and physical torment. But Coetzee has never before asked so clearly what it is *not* to be human. Later in the novel, after David has fallen into disgrace and fled Cape Town for his daughter Lucy's remote farm, she tells him, "This is the only life there is. Which we share with animals."

If David is reduced at times almost to an animal existence and finally to becoming a caretaker for dying animals, it is the mendacity of language that leads him there. Toward the end of the story, he reflects that the language he and others use has become "tired, friable, eaten from the inside as if by termites" and that he, an expert practitioner, is also hollow, "like a fly-casing in a spiderweb." When he is hauled before an academic tribunal after a misbegotten affair with a student, he refuses to defend himself against charges of sexual harassment. At first he resists the spectacle of public "prurience and sentiment" the committee expects. When he finally blurts out an apology, members of the tribunal refuse to be satisfied, demanding to know whether it reflects his sincere feelings and comes from his heart.

Coetzee seems to be attacking the New Age tyranny of therapeutic discourse here, but David's own language doesn't seem much more trustworthy. He rashly tells his judges that his liaison with the pretty and almost totally passive Melanie transformed him, if only briefly: "I was no longer a fifty-year-old divorcé at a loose end. I became a servant of Eros." Readers may well be repelled by David's arrogance, and his conduct with Melanie has fallen only a little short of rape. But judging him is not a simple matter. He is a student of Romanticism whose unrealized ambition is to write a chamber opera about Byron's life in Italy. No matter how little of our sympathy David may command, he has a point: If he genuinely believed his passion for Melanie was the real thing, the flame he had been waiting his whole life to feel, then how could he not pursue her avidly?

There is something fundamentally cryptic and unsummarizable about "Disgrace," but I read it as an almost metaphysical journey from this Romantic variety of love to the harsher, leaner strain David eventually learns from life on and around Lucy's farm. In Coetzee's fiction the stark and beautiful South African countryside has always played a half-allegorical role as both a destructive and a regenerative environment. He certainly can't be accused of sentimentalizing rural life; shortly after David goes to live with Lucy, a stolid lesbian who, like him, seems to have been abandoned by the world, they become victims of a vicious criminal assault that may not be as random as it first appears. Their relations with Petrus, the African farmer who is their nearest neighbor, become increasingly troubled and ambiguous. David volunteers to work for Bev, a friend of Lucy's who runs the local veterinary clinic, and comes to realize that Bev's primary role, in this impoverished land, is not to heal animals but to kill them with as much love and mercy as she can summon.

In the wake of the outrages committed against him and his daughter, David still struggles with language. His angry demands for justice get no response from the overstretched police, and his attempts to confront one of the assailants -- whom Petrus is apparently protecting -- produce only stony silences and baldfaced lies. Lucy seems to understand what David cannot: that to live where she lives she must tolerate brutalization and humiliation and simply keep going. "Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept," she tells her father. "To start at ground level. With nothing ... No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity ... Like a dog." If David actually reclaims some dignity by the end of "Disgrace," it is only because he gives up everything, gives up more than a dog ever could -- his daughter, his ideas about justice and language, his dream of the opera on Byron and even the dying animals he has learned to love without reservation, without thought for himself.

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Hard Truths in a New South Africa

Reviewed by Oscar C. Villalon

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Disgrace

By J.M. Coetzee Viking; 220 pages; \$23.95

These are grim times for David Lurie.

His face, which seduced so many women, is on the wane. The meters of his beloved Byron turn to dust in his students' minds. And an uneasiness is seeping into his comfortable life as a communications professor at a South African university.

In J.M. Coetzee's novel "Disgrace," this year's winner of the Booker Prize, Lurie is a man from another time living in modern, unclear circumstances. And though Coetzee's protagonist serves as an impeccable guide into the new South Africa that lies outside the squalor of the townships, that is the least of Coetzee's achievement here.

What "Disgrace" has on its mind is more urgent, more pitiless. In stark, wintry prose, Coetzee unflinchingly examines the absence of consolation; he finds that words are incapable of hiding our common solitude, of fill(ing) out . . . the overlarge and rather empty human soul." That he keeps the reader from cowering at such an unhappy subject is testament to the smoothness of his writing, his clinical yet exquisite tone and his unexpected hiccups of humour.

When we meet Lurie, he's rhapsodizing about the "exotic" woman from an escort agency with whom he has sex at an anonymous apartment. Divorced and 52, he's satisfied with their weekly arrangement. Then he spots her on the street having lunch with her two boys. A breach is opened, and they stop seeing each other.

Still enslaved to "the game" of sexual pursuit, and critical of, yet helpless toward his desire, Lurie finds himself picking up his student Melanie Isaacs ("wide, almost Chinese cheek bones, large, dark eyes") as he walks past her on campus. He invites her back to his place. He cooks her a meal. He puts on classical music and pours wine. He is succeeding in getting a new mistress.

And succeed he does, though miserably. Soon, Melanie appears at class less frequently -- Lurie teaches a course on the Romantic poets -- and the professor is confronted by a wiry young man, who may be her boyfriend, who warns him off her.

When Melanie disappears from class (and his bedroom) altogether, Lurie "is not surprised: if he has been shamed, she is shamed too." But she reappears at his lecture with the young man. Lurie takes her to his office after class and, knowing that whatever was between them is over,

resigns himself to at least making sure she goes through the motions of taking a missed exam so he may pass her.

“Don't make the situation any more complicated than it need be,” he tells her. Instead, she drops out of school, her father brings their affair to the administration's attention and an unapologetic Lurie finds himself out of a job. That's when “Disgrace,” at this point an occasionally sardonic look at the deep misunderstanding between the generations and a white academic's romantic self-deception, strides toward the grief it has only hinted at.

Lurie, shunned by his former colleagues and disgusted by the stubborn stain of his picayune scandal, leaves his home to spend time with his “heavy” young daughter, Lucy, who lives a rustic, independent life in South Africa's Eastern Cape. Like so many of the people around Lurie, Lucy is an unknown quantity. She may or may not be gay. She may or may not be happy. She may or may not be as strong as she appears, rising at dawn to sell her food at a local market, taking in packs of dogs for her kennel, living amicably in the black African community.

And perhaps most disturbing to such a cosmopolitan man, Lucy is free of irony.

The longer Lurie stays with his daughter, in her world of few distractions, the more time he has to feel out his soul, gingerly locating the flaws of his personality. As he reluctantly assists in filling the kennel's dog bowls, cradling mongrels as they're put down or laboring with Petrus, Lucy's self-possessed black employee and neighbor, the ugliness of his intractability bubbles up.

There may be no hope for him, and if there were, he would not embrace it. As he tells Lucy in his frank manner, “One can punish a dog, it seems to me, for an offence like chewing a slipper. A dog will accept the justice of that. . . . But desire is another story. No animal will accept the justice of being punished for following its instincts.”

These “instincts” -- selfishness, self-importance -- are his tools for filling the emptiness of his soul, for connecting with the world as best he can. But one day he and his daughter are visited by three young black men, a series of crimes ensue in Lucy's house and Lurie is bereft of his smug justification.

What follows is daring, as Coetzee burns the clouds from Lurie's eyes, leaving him literally raw, vulnerable to this life and so more engaged with it. Lurie seeks justice for himself and his daughter and is baffled by her refusal to help him, unsure whether she's too terrified to acknowledge what happened to them or capable of a resolve he can't conceive of.

Throughout “Disgrace,” Coetzee slyly plays with irony, as words and attitudes are revealed to be superficial at best, perverted at worst. And the optimistic endeavor of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission looms silently over the story, as Lurie grapples with the impossibility of ever finding the right words -- or the grace -- for forgiveness. We are left wondering if it can possibly be enough to own up to one's life and expect redemption.

As Lurie comes to an uneasy peace with his existence, it is not incautious to say that Coetzee holds out hope for a better way of understanding our lives. That Coetzee doesn't exactly know how that will be makes “Disgrace” a bracing end note for the millennium.