

T.C.  
ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
BATI DİLLER VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

MECHANISMS OF REPRESSION IN DYSTOPIAN SCIENCE  
FICTION: *FAHRENHEIT 451* AND *NEUROMANCER*

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Bu çalışma, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniveristesi Bilimsel Araştırma Projeleri kapsamında desteklenmiştir.

Çanakkale – 2015

## TAAHHÜTNAME

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**Mechanisms of Repression in Dystopian Science Fiction: *Fahrenheit 451* and *Neuromancer***” adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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**Ayşegül MİROĞLU ELGİN'E** ait **Mechanisms of Repression in Dystopian Science Fiction: *Fahrenheit 451* and *Neuromancer*** adlı çalışma, jürimiz tarafından Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı **YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ** OLARAK oybirliği ile kabul edilmiştir.

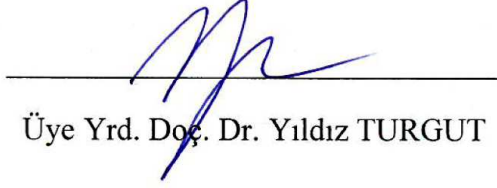


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Tez Savunma Tarihi: 15/05/2015

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15/05/2015

## ABSTRACT

**MİROĞLU ELGİN, Ayşegül. Mechanisms of Repression in Dystopian Science Fiction: *Fahrenheit 451* and *Neuromancer*, MA Thesis, Çanakkale, 2015.**

Louis Althusser who is a Marxist thinker argues the totalitarian state systems and how they govern the states by using *Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses*. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and William Gibson's *Neuromancer* are two dystopian science fiction novels that discuss the oppression and repression of the state in technologically advanced societies. However, the citizens of the novels live in poor conditions and they have to obey the rules of the state and corporations in order to survive. In the novels, the states not only repress the citizens but also decide how the citizens have to live and think. In this MA thesis the effects of repression, oppression and virtualization in *Neuromancer* and *Fahrenheit 451* will be analyzed in respect to Louis Althusser's theory on *Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses*. In this respect, the study will be a contribution to this field within the context of Althusserian reading of Bradbury and Gibson's novels.

**Keywords:** Althusser, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, Ideological State Apparatuses, Repressive State Apparatuses, Cyberpunk, Posthumanity.

## ÖZET

Marksist bir düşünür olan Louis Althusser totaliter devlet sistemlerini ve bu devletlerin *İdeolojik ve Baskıcı Devlet Düzeneklerini* kullanarak nasıl devletleri yönettiklerini ele alır. Ray Bradbury'nin *Fahrenheit 451*'i ve William Gibson'nun *Neuromancer*'ı teknolojik olarak gelişmiş toplumlarda devletin baskı ve zulmünü inceleyen iki distopik bilimkurgu romanıdır. Fakat romanların vatandaşları kötü koşullarda yaşarlar ve hayatta kalabilmek için devletin ve şirketlerin kurallarına uymak zorundadırlar. Romanlarda devlet vatandaşlarını baskılamakla kalmaz aynı zamanda vatandaşlarının nasıl yaşaması ve düşünmesi gerektiğine de karar verir. Bu Yüksek Lisans tezinde Louis Althusser'in teorisi olan *İdeolojik ve Baskıcı Devlet Düzenekleri*'ne nazaran *Neuromancer* ve *Fahrenheit 451*'deki baskı, zulüm ve sanallaştırmanın etkileri incelenecektir. Althusserci bakış açısı çerçevesinde Bradbury ve Gibson'nun romanlarını incelemesi yönüyle bu tez çalışma sahasına katkıda bulunacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Althusser, Ray Bradbury "Fahrenheit 451", William Gibson "Neuromancer", İdeolojik Devlet Düzenekleri, Baskıcı Devlet Düzenekleri, Siberpunk, Post-insanlık.

## FOREWORD

I am very grateful to the people who helped me in the development of this thesis: my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dilek KANTAR and my committee members, Assist. Prof. Azer Banu KEMALOĞLU and Assist. Prof. Yıldız TURGUT. I appreciate your assistance as your help made me achieve my work into its final form.

I would also like to thank my parents and my husband, İsa ELGİN, for their emotional support during this process.

Ayşegül MİROĞLU ELGİN

## DEDICATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Hugo Gernsback created the name 'science fiction' when he started a magazine called '*Science Wonder Stories*' in 1929 and that was the first step for the birth of science fiction. Mary Shelley (1797-1851), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-849), Jules Verne (1828-1905), and Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) are considered to be the precursors of science fiction. Edgar Allan Poe revealed the wonders of science in his literary works. James and Mendlesohn exemplify this in their book *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*:

The earliest poem by Poe to see eventual publication was 'Sonnet- to Science', written in the early 1820s, and his career culminated in *Eureka* (1848), an extraordinary poetic essay on the nature of the universe newly revealed by astronomical telescopes (James-Mendlesohn 2003:18).

Another important writer who contributed to the development of science fiction is Jules Verne. His novels were serialized and as a result, his influence was felt both at home and abroad. Another pioneer of science fiction is Herbert George Wells. "He was very conscious indeed of the necessity of replacing dreams as a means of exploring possible futures" (James- Mendlesohn 2003:24). This was the reason why he wrote his famous book *The Machine*:

Jules Verne and H. G. Wells introduced science fiction to the world. 'Elsewhere in Europe, where no traditions of scientific romance had taken root before the importation of Verne and Wells.' (James-Mendlesohn 2003:28).

From 1926 to 1960 people started to read science fiction magazines. It was called the magazine era. The aim was to create a sense of science fiction as a distinctive genre. Moreover, science fiction appeared in different forms such as books, comics, movies, and radio plays. A lot of science fiction magazines were written but the first science fiction magazine which was entirely devoted to science fiction was Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*. The aim of science fiction magazines was to convey ideas to a larger public. Readers were educated by reading the developments about science and technology. Thus, people started to think more about the future of science and technology. As a result, magazines declined and science fiction books and films became more popular in 1980's.

Science fiction deals with the utopias and the dystopias. Utopias are based on the concept of an ideal country. Writers have worked on the idea of how to create a society in which everybody is equal, proper and happy. On the contrary, dystopia describes a world which is feared as this world is full with misery, oppression and disease. It appeared as a genre after the First World War and instead of having the scenarios of development; it has had the scenarios of disappearing. George Orwell is one of the most important dystopian science fiction writers. He is well-known for his dystopian novels, *1984* and *Animal Farm*. He described the lives of the working classes in his dystopian novels and his influence affected many people in the world. In dystopian societies like the ones in Orwell's novels the ruling powers control almost all aspects of people's existence. The societies' daily routines, careers and family unit are monitored by the ruling power. A person as an individual does not have any importance. The aim is to maintain the status quo:

Citizens exist only to serve the State, and anything that benefits the State should benefit them, not the other way around. Needs are more or less provided in return for services to the State in the form of jobs, but careers are typically assigned and one does one's work without question. Working hard is expected, but ambition for personal gain is squashed. Ambition must only be for the progress of the State (Ferris 5).

Dystopian life accepts people as numbers not as individuals. People wear the same sort of clothes and the same colors. There is no room for individual expression and everyone has to think, live and believe in the same way:

The purpose for this mass regulation is twofold. First, it contributes to the impression of sameness that is vital to collectivism. Second, it keeps the choices out of the minds of individuals, leaving it instead to the State to decide what is best and when it is best for the citizens. This takes power from the people, which is exactly what must happen if the State is to maintain control. (Ferris 6)

The control of the state is like parents controlling their children and making decisions for them. In return children believe that what their parents decide for them is the best. There is an interesting fact that the states mostly use familial names, such as Father, Big Brother, and Uncle. Citizens have to love the State and the leader. If not, they are forced to love and believe them. There is little privacy and people are deprived of their rights. The State starts to control its citizens from the birth.

Bradbury is one of the most celebrated American writers and one of the major science fiction writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is the writer most responsible for bringing modern science fiction into the literary mainstream. His works have changed the way

people think and influenced countless writers, artists, teachers, scientists, thinkers, and explorers. Bradbury can be called the master of science fiction whose imaginative and lyrical evocations of the future reflected both the optimism and the anxieties of his post-war America.

William Gibson is the father of ‘*cyberpunk*’ subgenre and a well established author of another science fiction subgenre ‘*steampunk*.’ He is an American-Canadian speculative fiction novelist who has been called the ‘noir prophet’ of the cyberpunk. He also created the term ‘cyberspace.’ He emphasizes the negative social effects of technology in his novels. His early works are bleak, noir near future stories about the effect of cybernetics and computer networks on humans. He has not only transformed science fiction, but also he has changed how we think about technology. His thought has been cited as an influence on science fiction authors, design, academia, cyber culture, and technology. Both writers won many awards and prizes and their works were adapted into many movies.

The novels *Fahrenheit 451*<sup>1</sup> by Bradbury and *Neuromancer* by Gibson are the two examples of dystopian science fiction. They both describe a technologically advanced world in which people lose their identities despite the so called “progress.” People governing dystopian countries create a society which is surrounded by fear and police force. In *Neuromancer* machines and technology takes over the lives of the people. They live in a virtual reality which become a source of unhappiness and despair for them. In *Fahrenheit 451*, on the other hand, fire fighters work as an oppressive force of the government and reading books for intellectual development is banished. Instead, people are made to watch more TV and think less. Thus, they lose their emotions and environment and they do not realize how unhappy they are. TV addiction causes them not to think and have the minimum relationships with one another. When everybody experiences the same sort of lifestyle, it becomes hard to understand whether they are happy or not.

*Neuromancer* is ‘*cyberpunk*’, a postmodern science fiction genre noted for its focus on high tech and low fate. The fate of the planet is affected by technology and Dani Cavalloro (2000: 5) summarizes how cyberpunk and technology entered into our lives:

From 1950s onwards, science fiction became more and more concerned with the impact of technology on everyday lives and on the fate of the planet. A particularly important development was the New Wave, a phase associated

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<sup>1</sup> Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Simon&Schuster Paperbacks, 2012. All the subsequent references will be to this edition.

with authors such as Brian Aldiss and J. G. Ballard and with the British publication *New Worlds* (1946-1970), edited by Michael Moorcock. The New Wave's focus was on topical issues such as environmental depletion, urban overcrowding and the relationship between technology, crime, drugs addiction and sexuality. Thus, the New Wave in some ways preludes to cyberpunk's preoccupation with the impact of technology on the present no less than on the future, the crucial element added to the picture by Gibson and his contemporaries being, of course, computer technology.

In this dystopian world which is surrounded by dark technology people are expected to be useful, productive, and docile. The aim is to create a society which is advanced in technology but not in the quality of life. People are expected to be the slaves of the governing bodies.

Louis Althusser explains how people are created as model citizens through various systems of societal control. In his theory of "Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses" he shows how dominant social structures use ideology to shape the belief systems of individuals and to reproduce their own systems. This thesis lays a focus on the effects of repression, oppression and virtualization in *Neuromancer* and *Fahrenheit 451* within the context of Althusser's theory on the mechanisms of repressive and ideological state apparatuses. It analyzes state ideology and state power and how they shape and affect citizens' lives via these apparatuses. In *Fahrenheit 451*, docile, obedient and productive citizens are created when people stop questioning and accept everything as they come. They become pliant bodies who do not oppose or resist anything. Similarly, people in *Neuromancer* live unhappily in destitute conditions in a technologically advanced society, yet they do not make any attempts to change anything around them. In both novels the governments want to destroy knowledge and instead they aim to promote ignorance in order to impose uniformity on the people.

While *Fahrenheit 451* is a classical dystopian science fiction novel, *Neuromancer* can be called a modern dystopian science fiction novel, which makes it possible for the contemporary reader to observe the transformation of science fiction genre in the twentieth century. That's why; these two novels are chosen in the thesis. While in *Fahrenheit 451* the state controls its citizens by using fire fighters as a repressive force, in *Neuromancer* rich and big corporations control the society by using technology as a repressive and oppressive force. The cyberpunk genre in dystopian science fiction clearly points to a deeper, and more sinister connection between our technologically advanced world and the

criminal acts of state control. A study of the dark powers of social control will hopefully include clues to convert dystopias into utopias.

The current state of research about *Fahrenheit 451* focuses mainly on the postmodern elements in the novel and consumer capitalism (Davis, 2010). There seems to be greater interest in *Fahrenheit 451* as a film than as a novel itself (McGinney, 2009). A certain number of books are written about technological ecology (Hagan, 2010), and utopia and dystopia in *Neuromancer*, and postmodernism (Gallagher, 2014). In addition, some other studies focus on capitalism (Nordström, 2012), technology, demonic possession in the case of *Neuromancer* (Friesen, 2006), cyberspace (Holloway, 2004) including digital cityspaces, computer culture and chaos and information in the technological novel. This thesis is the first study to analyze Althusser's repressive and ideological apparatuses in the technologically advanced societies of science fiction. It also examines how humanity transforms itself into post-humanity and how Artificial Intelligences change the way people live. This is also the first study that analyses the two novels comparatively in terms of power structures in society and their effects on the individual.

## CHAPTER I

### RAY BRADBURY, FAHRENHEIT 451 , IDEOLOGICAL AND REPRESSIVE STATE APPARATUSES

#### 1.1.Repressive State Apparatuses

Governing bodies can sometimes be cruel, act and behave like enemies to their citizens and repress their own people. The ideology of the state aims to control the ideology of the citizens. According to Althusser, ideology is an imaginary representation of individuals to their real conditions of existence (181). Ideology is used to understand the real world. It is a way of seeing the world:

If it is true that the representation of the real conditions of existence of individuals holding posts of agents of production, exploitation, repression, ideologization and scientific practice arises, in the last instance, from the relations of production and relations driving from them, we may say the following: every ideology represents, in its necessarily imaginary distortion, not the existing relations of production (and the other relations driving from them), but, above all, individuals' (imaginary) relation to the relations of production and the relations driving from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations governing individuals' existence, but those individuals' imaginary relation to the real relations in which they live (Althusser 183).

Ideology is acquired in the place where one is born. A child does not think himself as a separate being because he is born into a certain kind of ideology. As Althusser states, "Ideology has no history" (1995:174). It starts with the humanity. When one is born, he finds himself in the order of an ideology. All the reality of the ideology lies outside of it. It is like a dream, vain and empty. Because material individuals produce their existence materially, it has no history. Its history is outside of it. In the *German ideology*, the thesis that ideology has no history has two meanings:

1) ideology is nothing, being pure dream, (fabricated by none can say what power-unless it is the alienation of the division of labour, but that, too, is a negative determination); and 2) ideology has no history, which does not at all mean that it has no history quite the opposite, since it is but a pale reflection, empty and inverted, of real history), but, rather, that it has no history of its own (Althusser 175).

Ideology is the reflection of your thoughts on your life. It is both the body and the soul. One does not make his own choices, he is born into the choices chosen beforehand and he accepts them without questioning.

Ideology is a kind of discourse. It tells one what to do and how to do it. It orders how one should see and feel. It controls even one's feelings. One understands the world and the life through ideology. Ideology enters a person's subconscious with repetition and after a while the reality loses its truth and falsehood. The brain perceives it right, as ideology is not voluntary.

In *Fahrenheit 451* the state uses two types of apparatuses in order to inculcate its own ideology in its citizens' minds and lives: Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses. The Repressive State Apparatus uses physical violence, directly or indirectly. It is constituted by the government, political body, army, police, courts and prisons. It prevents all riots and rebellions. In the novel the fire fighters work as agents of the repressive state apparatus. Their duty is to burn all the books in the state, as the books are the symbol of wisdom and knowledge. The government wants to destroy knowledge and instead it wants to promote ignorance in order to ensure uniformity in the society. The fire fighters have all the power to repress people who do not obey the rules of the state by using violence. In the book, no one opposes them in the beginning for fear of being persecuted.

Freedoms are restricted in the *Fahrenheit* society. Reading books is against the law; one can be arrested for being a pedestrian or driving slowly. If one drives slowly, he will be aware of what is going on around, but if one drives fast, he will not recognize anything:

I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly,' she said. 'If you showed a driver a green blur, Oh yes!' He'd say, that's grass! A pink blur? That's a rose garden! White blurs are houses. Brown blurs are cows. My uncle drove slowly on a highway once. He drove forty miles an hour and they jailed him for two days. Isn't that funny, And sad, too? (2012:6)

The state wants to promote ignorant, insensitive and selfish citizens who do not think about anything or anybody. Guy Montag is one of the proponents of the dominant ideology who works for the state as a fire fighter and his duty is to burn all the books. In the beginning of the novel he exists in order to destroy the books and he lacks human emotions. The society he lives in consists of the severe emptiness of everyday life that is connected to mass media which is a poor substitute for human interaction. He does not undergo a change until he meets Clarisse who is a seventeen year-old girl. She is different from the people living in the city. She is sensitive, social, and aware of the nature and the people. She likes to look, observe and learn the reasons behind people's actions. She has a conversation with



Guy Montag and this conversation indicates the way she has come to be interested in nature: “I like to smell things and look at things, and sometimes stay up all night, walking, and watch the sun rise” (Bradbury 2012:5). For example, she is aware that there is dew on the grass in the morning. While she is a genuinely happy person, Montag wears happiness like a mask; he is not happy but he does not realize his unhappiness until Clarisse asks him the question “Are you happy?” (7) After he meets Clarisse, Montag turns into a fireman who longs for human interconnectedness.

People in *Fahrenheit 451* are not conscious of their lives, and they do not know whether they are happy or not. That’s why; the suicide rate increases day by day. People are so lonely, individual and selfish, they lack human emotions. Montag’s wife, Mildred, attempts suicide but she does not accept or remember what she has done. Committing suicide becomes an ordinary phenomenon and the life is reduced into a chemical process by the society. Not the doctors but the operators (controllers of the machine for cleaning the blood) cure the patients who commit suicide because of the increasing number of the people:

We get these cases nine or ten at night. Got so many, starting a few years ago, we had the special machines built. With the optical lens, of course that was new; the rest is ancient. You don’t need an M.D., case like this all you need is two handymen, clean up the problem in half an hour. Look’-he started for the door- ‘we gotta go. Just had another call on the old ear-thimble. Ten blocks from here. Someone else just jumped off the cap of a pillbox. Call if you need us again (Bradbury 2012:13).

In addition, the Repressive State Apparatus shows itself with the Mechanical Hound. It is a tool operated by the fire fighters. Its duty is to catch people who read books or do not obey the rules of the state. Moreover, when the fire fighters get bored, they release the hound and let it catch some animals and kill them for joy. It is something to be feared. This Hound does not think like the people in the society. It is mechanical by birth, yet the people are made mechanical by the ideology after they are born. People live to obey, the hound exists as it obeys the commands of the state without questioning.

The chief of the fire fighters, Beatty, has the power of the state in the fire station and orders the Hound to attack and catch the citizens who resist the state law and read books. He also takes a man who has a library to the asylum and when Montag opposes him on the grounds that the man is not insane, the chief replies: “Any man’s insane who thinks



he can fool the government and us.” (31) Books make people smart and sophisticated but that is something the state does not approve of; instead, it criminalizes the act of reading itself.

In chapter 1 (The Hearth and the Salamander) the fire fighters enter a house that has a big library which belongs to an old lady. She refuses to go out and leave her books. Beatty tries to convince him by saying:

You know the law. Where is your common sense? None of those books agree each other. You’ve been locked up here for years with a regular damned Tower of Babel. Snap out of it! The people in those books never lived. Come on now! (35).

However, she stays at the house and prefers to die with her books. Before she dies, she utters her last sentence which is a quote from a book: “We shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out” (37). Only Montag regrets what they have done to the old lady. This affects him so deeply that his self-awareness begins. He starts to ask questions to himself: “There must be something in books, things we can’t imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don’t stay for nothing” (2012: 48). Montag never forgets the burning moment and rethinks his life, what he has done in his entire life:

It’s not just the woman that died. Last night I thought about all the kerosene I’ve used in the past ten years. And I thought about books. And for the first time I realized that a man was behind each one of the books. A man had to think them up. A man had to take a long time to put them down on paper. And I’d never even thought that thought before. It took some men a life time maybe to put some of his thoughts down, looking around at the world and life and then I come along in two minutes and boom! It’s all over (49).

When Montag’s wife tells him to let alone, he gets angry and asks her: “We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?” (49). He wants his wife to be sensitive about other people’s sufferings. However, Mildred, like most of the people around her, lives without thinking about anyone. Her life passes among the big TV screens. Mark Bould summarizes Mildred’s life as follows:

Every house is sealed off from the world by a fireproof plastic sheath. Windows and, therefore, houselights are a rare sight because TV screens have replaced whole walls. Mildred’s life revolves around these wall screens: she visits friends and friends visit her to watch TV together; she believes that she shares a relationship with the regular TV characters, calling them her family and fearing for their safety if the firemen burn down her house. This

cocooned existence has isolated her from any sense of the passage of time: she cannot believe that it is only a couple of months since the third wall screen was fitted; and Montag himself needs Clarisse to remind him of the natural world and such markers of time's passing as the blooming of flowers, morning dew, seasonal weather, and the moon. As Montag and Mildred become increasingly estranged, he senses there is a wall between them (5).

Like all the people in the society Mildred creates walls between her own self and her husband. Her only interaction with the society she lives in is via TV. There are also many walls among people and the aim of the fire fighters is to burn all the books that they think are against their views and can collapse the walls among people. Beatty claims that if one wants peace in a society, he has to burn what makes the citizens unhappy. Thus, fire fighters take the role of making people happy and feel at peace by destruction, not by removing the walls between individuals:

Colored people don't like *Little Black Sambo*. Burn it. White people don't feel good about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book. Serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside. Better yet, into the incinerator. Funerals are unhappy and pagan? Eliminate them, too. Five minutes after a person is dead he's on his way to the Big Flue, the Incinerators serviced by helicopters all over the country. Ten minutes after death a man's a speck of black dust. Let's not quibble over individuals with memoriams. Forget them. Burn all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean (57).

The state demands its citizens to forget what is painful, different, and sad. There is no place for a different opinion. Everyone should think that they are happy even though they do not feel the happiness. If everyone becomes the same, people will not realize if they are happy or not, educated or not, or whether their lives have good standards or not. That's why; the state destroys everything that creates and causes difference. Moreover, technological elements created for convenience in *Fahrenheit 451* cause people to think less and less.

When Montag wants to quit his job, her wife opposes him and instead of learning the reasons of his wish for quitting his job, or comforting and trying to understand him, she tells him to take the beetle (car) and drive very fast to feel good. For Mildred it is not important to hit the animals while one is driving. Sharing the feelings does not exist for her; instead, one should be on his own and feel the speed. In addition, the life of animals means nothing to her. The ideology of the state turns her into a person who does not think

about anybody or anything in the society she lives in. Although she is born innocent, she becomes a product of the state ideology.

Repressive State Apparatuses function through repression but they function secondarily through ideology. According to Althusser, “The army and police, for instance: internally, they train their own recruits both by repression and ideological inculcation; externally, they act by violent repression, but also by ‘discussion’ and ‘persuasion’” (86). In his view repression and ideology are interconnected:

Exploitation is replaced by repression or is thought of as a form of repression; and ideology is replaced by repression or is thought of as a form of repression. Repression thus becomes the centre of centres, the essence of the society based on capitalist class exploitation. Repression simultaneously stands in for exploitation, ideology and, ultimately, the state as well, inasmuch as the state apparatuses, which comprise, as we have seen, both a repressive apparatus and ideological apparatuses, are reduced to the abstract notion of ‘repression (178-179).

In *Fahrenheit 451* people are repressed by fire fighters and the ideology makes people insensitive to the problems of the other people who are suffering. However, when Montag wakes up from the dream created by the state, he realizes the things that do not function properly around him, and he sees the books as the savers of the people as they can prevent them from making the same mistakes twice:

How in hell did those bombers get up there every single second of our lives! Why doesn't someone want to talk about it! We've started and won two atomic wars since 2022! Is it because we're having so much fun at home we've forgotten the world? Is it because we're so rich and the rest of the world's so poor and we just don't care if they are? I've heard rumors; the world is starving, but we're well fed. Is it true, the world works hard and we play? Is that why we're hated so much? I've heard the rumors about hate, too, once in a long while, over the years. Do you know why? I don't, that's sure! Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave. They just might stop us from making the same damn insane mistakes! I don't hear those idiot bastards in your parlor talking about it. God, Millie, don't you see? An hour a day, two hours, with these books, and maybe... (70).

Montag gets angry when he realizes that people living in the society are indifferent to the problems of the world. He thinks that books can be a solution and can make a difference in their lives. However, the state wants to control knowledge as knowledge can also be repressive. If the citizens start to have knowledge, they will be powerful and will oppose the exploitation of the state. They will no longer be the puppets of the state. Beatty, the chief of the fire fighters, is a man with knowledge. He has read so many books even

though he does not say this directly. His way of talking shows that he is wise and educated. He quotes from many books, yet he uses this knowledge to work for the state. He prefers to burn and consume, instead of using his knowledge for the good of the people around him. Otherwise, it would be hard to have control over the citizens' lives.

Montag and an old professor Faber want to destroy the fire fighter system for their salvation from the repressive state apparatus, their plan is to plant books in the fire fighters' houses, turn the alarm on that causes the firemen to come burn the hidden books and see the firemen burn their own houses. They take the risk of failure as Faber tells Montag: "And don't look to be saved in any one thing, person, machine, or library. Do your own bit of saving, and if you drown, at least die knowing you were headed for shore" (82). However, the alarm goes off in Montag's house and he has to escape because everyone realizes that he has committed a crime against the law. His wife leaves him and she is the one who informs the fire fighters. He first kills Beatty, burns down his house and runs away. He does not want to remember anything of his insensitive, selfish wife. He does not feel afraid. He feels alive for the first time in years. He feels he is doing what he should have done a lifetime ago. He is doing the right thing at last. In a week his life changes tremendously. He becomes a different person. As a result of being different, he has to run and escape as there is no place for difference in the city. Although Montag becomes free, the mechanical hound catches the so-called Montag, they choose a victim and catch him instead of real Montag. Montag's so-called catching scene has had to be created as there is no place for failure in the system. Everyone should see the bad end in order to hold up it as an example. An announcer on the dark screen says in the end: "The search is over, Montag is dead; a crime against society has been avenged" (142). Thus, they use Montag's example as a warning that any crime committed against the system has to be punished severely.

## **1.2. Ideological State Apparatuses**

Another apparatus of the state is Ideological State Apparatus. It is based on ideology. Going to the church or school, watching TV, reading a newspaper or watching movies are voluntary actions. All include the ideology of the state and place into their citizens' minds this ideology insidiously. On the other hand, repressive state apparatuses are based on physical violence and their aim is to repress people who are against the

controlling powers. Althusser explains the difference between two apparatuses of the state as follows:

In our capitalist societies, what distinguishes the Ideological State Apparatuses from the Repressive State Apparatus is the following difference. Whereas the Repressive State Apparatus is by definition a repressive apparatus that makes direct or indirect use of physical violence, the Ideological State Apparatuses cannot be called repressive in the same sense as the 'state apparatus', because they do not, by definition, use physical violence. Neither the church nor the school nor political parties nor the press nor radio and television nor publishing nor entertainment nor sports have recourse to physical violence in order to function with their 'clientele'. At any rate, the use of physical violence is not manifest or dominant in them (78).

The Ideological State Apparatus provides the input, information for the system to reproduce itself. The state instils its ideology via TV, school, church, mass media, etc. The system wants to create uniform individuals. If one wants to live comfortably, he has to accept what the state offers him; he has to give what the state asks for without questioning. Bradbury's novel depicts a world in which human beings are "made identical to one another through isolation within the compulsively controlled collectivity" (Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[DE] 29). The state wants its citizens to think and live in the same way, believe in the same thing. In Beatty's view,

We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against. So! A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the weapon. Breach man's mind. Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man? Me? I won't stomach them for a minute. And so when houses were finally fireproofed completely, all over the world there was no longer need of firemen for the old purposes. They were given the new job, as custodians of our peace of mind, the focus of our understandable and rightful dread of being inferior; official censors, judges, and executors. That's you, Montag, and that's me (55-56).

When everyone is made equal, nobody will judge the other as they will not be different. Beatty claims that the aim of the people is to be happy and he says that the system makes them happy. "That's all we live for, isn't it? For pleasure, for titillation? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of these" (56).

Ideological State Apparatuses includes Scholastic, Cultural, Publishing and Distribution Apparatuses. The Scholastic ISAs are "the various schools and their various

levels, from the primary to the tertiary, the various institutes” (Althusser, 2014:76). *Fahrenheit 451* has a very strong but ideologically motivated school system. Although the schools function according to the dominant ideology of the state, the environment at home sometimes can destroy what the system tries to achieve in state schools. Because of that, the kindergarden age is lowered in the book and they start to take babies to the school immediately after they are born. The system is afraid of the families who feed their children’s subconscious with a different world view. Clarisse is one of those people who is different from the others as she is not the product of the system. Rather than learning about how a thing is done, she wants to know why it is done, because her family has destroyed what the system wants to build in her. They teach her to be wise, knowledgeable, sensitive and responsible. That is why she behaves in a different way and is called “antisocial” by others. In fact, she likes talking to people and she is a social being; however, she does not like the school system because of her ‘informal’ education:

An hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, and more sports, but do you know, we never ask questions, or at least most don’t; they just run the answers at you, bing, bing, bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film-teacher. They run us so ragged by the end of the day we can’t do anything but go to bed or head for a Fun Park to bully people around, break Windowpanes in the Window Smasher place or wreck cars in the Car Wrecker place with the big steel ball. Or go out in the cars and race on the streets, trying to see how close you can get to lampposts, playing ‘chicken’ and ‘knock hubcaps (27).

School does not raise children with good behaviours or healthy psychology. School children kill and shoot one another or they die in car wrecks. The school prepares the children for an ignorant and violent society. The teachers make the students so tired throughout the day that they do not have any energy to think clearly. Then, they are programmed to damage or hurt others. All the children are irresponsible, because when they do something bad, they do not get any punishment, or face with the consequences of their behaviour.

Schools create more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and imaginative creators. Eventually, the term ‘intellectual’ changes its meaning. As a result of the system people do not talk about anything of any substance as Clarisse explains:

They name a lot of cars or clothes or swimming pools mostly and say how swell! But they all say the same things and nobody says anything different



from anyone else. And most of the time in the cafes they have the joke-boxes on and the same jokes most of the time, or the musical wall lit and all the colored patterns running up and down, but it's only color and all abstract. And at the museums, have you ever been? All abstract. That's all there is now. My uncle says it was different once. A long time back sometimes pictures said things or even showed people (28).

The ideological State Apparatus changes the society slowly. People read so many books but when the mass media enters into their lives, everything changes. Radio and TV shows become much simpler than the books. While books appeal only to a few people, TV and radio shows mesmerize them all. Then books gradually become shortened. Classics are turned into fifteen-minute radio shows, then a ten or twelve-line dictionary resume. "Hamlet was a one-page digest in a book that claimed: now at last you can read all the classics; keep up with your neighbours" (52). It becomes the result of an intellectual pattern of the society. Beatty explains how society changes in a matter of years in the novel:

School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts? (53).

However, in the novel people stop reading books before the state bans reading altogether. The result is an ignorant, docile society. Daniel J. Flynn explains the results of an ill-educated society:

Women discuss voting for a candidate because of his handsome looks and abdicate the responsibilities of motherhood by dumping their children in front of television sets. The over-medicated, air-conditioned culture is awash in suicide, abortion, child neglect, and glassy-eyed passivity (6).

As Althusser explains, "The Ideological State Apparatuses are the realization, existence, of the ideological formations dominating them" (2014: 85). School is also a realization of a certain ideology, which creates perfect subjects out of the students. Ideology gathers subjects among individuals and transforms them into subjects via hailing. The most common hailing is "Hey, you there!" When one turns and answers that hailing, he becomes a subject as he recognizes that the hail is for him and it really is he who is hailed out, not anybody else. Althusser calls this process interpellation: "All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, through the functioning of the category of the

subject” (1995:190). In other words interpellation is the recognition of oneself as students learn to be good subjects at school.

In *Fahrenheit 451* not only the students but also all the people become subjects of the system. When they are hailed, they turn and answer. At first, Montag is a subject who is born into this ideology and accepts it without questioning. He also becomes a part of the system and works for the behalf of the ideology. He does not think himself as a separate being from the illusory world created around him. However, in the reality stage of his progress he starts to recognize himself, and then a transformation in his consciousness happens. His life starts to change after he meets Clarisse. He begins to question his life and the system around him. He gradually turns into an individual after having been a subject for many years. His realization starts when he goes outside of the community where he was born. Clarisse and Faber are two different characters in the society; Montag’s meeting them initiates this realization. He opens his eyes and starts to understand deeply what is happening in the society in which he lives.

Ideological State Apparatuses also include the Cultural Apparatuses. They are “all kinds of entertainment, sports included, as well as a series of institutions that may dovetail with what we have called the publishing ISA” (Althusser 2014:76). The most common cultural apparatus in *Fahrenheit 451* is TV. People are addicted to TV. They watch TV in big screens and almost all people have more than one television set in their houses. TV reflects the state ideology. It tells the citizens not to think, or question, only watch and spend a good time. TV shows people how to look, see and feel. Montag and his wife, Mildred, do not have a healthy relationship. Mildred, like all the people around her, spends her time by watching TV. They do not have any real social communication with one another. Although Mildred has two big screens at home, she wants to have the third one. When her friends come her home, they all watch TV, which is a way of becoming social with the guests. Of course this makes them more and more anti-social day by day.

Another cultural apparatus the state uses to control the society is sports. The students have many sports lessons and the system wants them to do more sports. Hence, they will not have time and energy to think about their actions and the meaning of their lives. *Fahrenheit 451* explains the system’s demands:

More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun, and you don’t have to think, eh?  
Organize and organize and super organize super-super sports. More cartoons



in books. More pictures. The mind drinks less and less. Impatience. Highways full of crowds going somewhere, somewhere, somewhere, nowhere. The gasoline refugee. Towns turn into motels, people in nomadic surges from place to place, following the moon tides, living tonight in the room where you slept this noon and I the night before (54).

The system does not want social beings and in order to destroy socialization people are made to watch more TV, talk less and think less. Moreover, even the shapes of the houses change for the benefit of the system. The front porches aren't built anymore as they are places where people sit, talk and discuss. No one realizes that they do not exist anymore but Clarisse's family:

No front porches. My uncle says there used to be front porches. And people sat there sometimes at night, talking when they wanted to talk, rocking, and not talking when they didn't want to talk. Sometimes they just sat there and thought about things, turned things over. My uncle says the architects got rid of the front porches because they didn't look well. But my uncle says that was merely rationalizing it; the real reason, hidden underneath, might be they didn't want people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking; that was the wrong kind of social life (60).

The state decides the right type of social life for the people. Even the architecture in the city reflects the dominant ideology built on tight control and uniformity of actions and feelings. The state does not want the people develop reactionary ideas against the system as a result of free exchange of ideas amongst themselves. It wants to numb them and turn them into soulless robots.

As a part of his awakening process, Montag realizes that he does not know even his wife Mildred well. She cannot reply when Montag asks her where and when they have met. The system sucks the emotions out of the people. Montag starts to cry when he thinks that if his wife dies, he would not cry. He cries for being turned into a man without emotions:

And he remembered thinking then that if she died, he was certain he wouldn't cry. For it would be the dying of an unknown, a street face, a newspaper image, and it was suddenly so very wrong that he had begun to cry, not at death but at the thought of not crying at death, a silly empty man near a silly empty woman, while the hungry snake made her still more empty (41).

Montag feels sad when he thinks that he has started to lose human emotions. He feels alienated from his own wife and his own feelings that create a bond between the two. However, the society Montag lives in is made up of people who have suppressed similar human traits.

In the *Fahrenheit* society no one has any time for anyone else. And no one talks about anything. After his realization, Montag comes home and meets some guests. He starts to talk to them and realizes that they talk about nothing. When he asks them some questions, they answer without any show of emotions. One of the women is indifferent to his husband's going to war. She says "I am not worried. I'll let old Pete do all the worrying. Not me" (91). Death, marriage, pain has no meaning for the guests. The same woman continues:

Anyway, Pete and I always said, no tears, nothing like that. It's our third marriage each and we're independent, we always said. He said, if I get killed off, you just go right ahead and don't cry, but get married again, and don't think of me (91).

The woman does not have any true feelings for her husband. It is just a husband for her, one among many, no more, no less. People have all become selfish like her. Another guest thinks that there is no use going through all that agony for a baby. That's why; she does not want vaginal birth and prefers Caesarean section. She also thinks that children are ruinous in general and she has her own ideas about how she would treat her children:

I plunk the children in school nine days out of ten. I put up with them when they come home three days a month; It's not bad at all. You heave them into the 'parlor' and turn the switch. It's like washing clothes; stuff laundry in and slam the lid. They'd just kick ass me. Thank God, I can kick back (93).

Women also do not care about their children and treat them as properties. They do not have any real interaction with their daughters or sons and they do not want to parent them.

Mildred's guests in the novel begin to talk about politics. However, instead of talking about their opinions or what they would do or would not do for the benefit of the society, they talk about politicians' physical appearances. Their criteria for judging politicians are as superficial and hollow as their feelings for one another:

I voted last election, same as everyone, and I laid it on the line for President Noble. I think he's one of the nicest looking men ever became president. -'Oh but the man they ran against him!'- He wasn't much, was he? Kind of small and homely and he didn't shave too close or comb his hair very well. Fat, too, and didn't dress to hide it. No wonder the landslide was for Winston Noble. Even their names helped. Compare Winston Noble to Hubert Hoag for ten seconds and you can almost figure the results (2012:93).

After listening to the guests, Montag thinks that they are monsters because of the way they talk about the people, their own children, their husbands and the war. He wants to

change their opinions and reads them a poem. Yet he gets a bad reaction in return. One of the ladies begins to cry by saying: "I've always said, poetry and tears, poetry and suicide and crying and awful feelings, poetry and sickness; all that mush! Now I've had it proved to me. You're nasty Mr. Montag, you're nasty" (97). They get angry and feel sad when Montag starts to read them the poem. They try to prove to Montag that poetry only gives unhappiness instead of having good feelings about it.

Montag realizes that people run and have fun instead of facing things. He gets angry and blames the women for being indifferent, selfish and irresponsible. He wants them to think about what they have done in their entire lives. He yells at them by saying:

Go home and think of your first husband divorced and your second husband killed in a jet and your third husband blowing his brains out, go home and think of the dozen abortions you've had, go home and think of that and damn Caesareans sections, too, and your children who hate your guts! Go home and think how it all happened and what did you ever do to stop it? Go home, go home! Before I knock you down and kick you out the door (98).

He questions the women's lives and by questioning them Montag questions the entire society. According to him, they need to reconsider their whole lives in order to be aware of the results of their actions and behaviours. In this way they can start to change their lives in a good way.

Beatty knows how the system functions and explains to Montag how the society has changed, how people are made docile and submissive. For Beatty, it is better not to give two sides of an opinion to a man if one doesn't want a man to be unhappy politically. One should give only one opinion or none. The people should forget that there is war. It is better to have a government which is inefficient, top-heavy, and tax-mad than having people who are worried over it. Thus, they will get peace and will be happy beings:

"Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs or the names of the state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year. Cram them full of non-combustible data, chock them so damned full of 'facts' they feel stuffed, but absolutely 'brilliant' with information" (58).

In this way they will feel that they are thinking and they know things. Thus, they will be happy. In fact, they will just feel it that way. In reality they will keep on being ignorant and indifferent. Beatty also opposes to sciences:

Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy. A man who can take a TV wall apart and put it back together again, and most men can, nowadays, is happier than any man who tries to slide rule, measure, and equate the universe, which just won't be measured or equated without making man feel bestial and lonely. I

know, I've tried it; to hell with it. So bring on your clubs and parties, your acrobats and magicians, your daredevils, jet cars, motorcycle helicopters, your sex and heroin, more of everything to do with automatic reflex. If the drama is bad, if the film says nothing, if the play is hollow, sting me with the Theremin, loudly. I'll think I'm responding to the play, when it's only a tactile reaction to vibration. But I don't care. I just like solid entertainment (58).

Books and sciences make people unhappy as Beatty states. However, when Montag opens his eyes, he realizes how unhappy he is. A world without books becomes meaningless for him. "Happiness is important. Fun is everything. And yet I kept sitting there saying to myself, I'm not happy, I'm not happy" (Bradbury: 62). In order to get away from his unhappiness Montag starts to read yet he does not have so much time as he can get caught any time. Thus, he tries to memorize each line. After he reads, he meets Faber, an old professor and Faber explains to him why the books are important: "The magic is only in what books say, how they stitched the patches of the universe together into one garment for us" (79). He also explains that books should have three important features:

Only if the third necessary thing could be given us. Number one, as I said, quality of information. Number two: leisure to digest it. And number three: the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the interaction of the first two (81).

In order to be a cultural and social society again, the people need to be reshaped as it is their fault not to read books in the beginning. Then, the state banishes reading books and a time comes when no one opposes this because of fear of the fire fighters:

The whole culture's shot through. The skeleton needs melting and reshaping. Good God, it isn't as simple as just picking up a book you laid down half a century ago. Remember, the firemen are rarely necessary. The public itself stopped reading of its own accord. You firemen provide a circus now and then at which buildings are set off and crowds gather for the pretty blaze, but it's a small slideshow indeed, and hardly necessary to keep things in line. So few want to be rebels anymore. And out of those few, most, like myself, scare easily (83).

When Montag realizes that the last alarm comes from his house, he understands that his wife reports him and she leaves Montag as soon as the fire fighters come. He burns everything in the house that reminds him his wife. After burning his house, he kills Beatty by burning him in order to prevent Beatty from arresting him. Killing and burning confuse Montag's mind and he blames himself for everything that happens. On the other hand, he

knows that Beatty actually wanted to die as he had not reacted when Montag has attempted to kill him:

In the middle of the crying Montag knew it for the truth. Beatty had wanted to die. He had just stood there, not really trying to save himself, just stood there, joking, needling, thought Montag, and the thought was enough to stifle his sobbing and let him pause for air. How strange, strange, to want to die so much that you let a man walk around armed and then instead of shutting up and staying alive, you go on yelling at people and making fun of them until you get them mad, and then... (116)

He feels surprised when he realizes that Beatty is willing to die. He also causes Montag to get out of control and have the desire of destroying the fire fighters' system. Although Beatty is a fireman who obeys the rules of the state, it is possible that he is also tired of living in an ill-educated society as he is educated and wise. However, he has to destroy and burn. That's why he may not want to oppose Montag when he attempts to kill Beatty.

Montag goes to see Faber for the last time in order to refuel his fast draining belief and calm down, he wants to destroy the fire fighting system by hiding all the books into fire fighters' houses. Thus, he wants to destroy the repressive state apparatus of the state altogether. Althusser explains how repressive state apparatus can be destroyed by the proletariat:

The state is the repressive state apparatus. State power and state apparatus must be distinguished; the objective of the class struggle has to do with the possession of state power and, consequently, use of the state apparatus holding state power as a function of their class objectives by the classes; and the proletariat must seize state power in order to destroy the existing bourgeois state apparatus. In a first phase, the phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it must replace it with an utterly different, proletarian state apparatus, before going on, in later phases, to set a radical process in motion, the destruction of the state (the end of state power and all state apparatuses) (74).

Montag aims to eliminate the fire fighters' system just like the proletariat who aims to destroy the state. According to Montag, salvation can be achieved if the society manages to be freed of the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the state.

Montag runs to the river in order to hide as the mechanical hound searches for him everywhere. He has to run and hide because his attempt to destroy the system becomes unsuccessful for now. He joins the walking camps which consist of a lot of old Harvard degrees. Leaving the city and going to the forest and the river lets Montag start a new life.

As the first steps of his new life, he runs to another beginning. What's more, he sees the stars for the first time in a long time:

He felt as if he had left a stage behind and many actors. He felt as if he had left the great séance and all the murmuring ghosts. He was moving from an unreality that was frightening into a reality that was unreal because it was new. The black land slid by and he was going into the country among the hills. For the first time in a dozen years the stars were coming out above him, in great processions of wheeling fire. He saw a great juggernaut of stars form in the sky and threatens to roll over and crush him (133).

He leaves everything that gives him unhappiness behind and walks into a bright future full of hope and reality. He starts to feel the effect of nature on his senses in a world which has started to feel real for the first time.

### **1.3. From the Darkness of Dystopia Towards the Light of Utopia**

Books have great importance in *Fahrenheit 451* as they are the symbol of the knowledge, wisdom, power, and salvation. People are so vulnerable without the existence of the books that they obey every dictate of the state without questioning. Reading books increases one's intelligence and awareness. As a result, people know and knowledge creates the power to resist authority and question its weaknesses. However, people have to survive in the darkness of the dystopian lifestyle of *Fahrenheit 451* without realizing that a better society can exist if they start to read and question the world around them.

Citizens of *Fahrenheit 451* suffer a lot but they do not realize that they are in pain. They commit suicide and kill one another for no reason. They spend all their free time in front of TV without thinking about their purpose in life. Although there is a war to which the state has sent a lot of soldiers, nobody cares about it including the wives whose husbands are soldiers. Morson perceives this world as a dystopia: "Whereas utopias invite their readers to contemplate a world in which they would at last be at home, dystopias invite their readers to contemplate one in which they would have 'no place' at all" (141-142). The world of *Fahrenheit 451* is a place where no one actually would like to get involved in.

However, the citizens in a dystopia do not comprehend that they live in a place which is full of misery and pain. The dark lives of the people reflect the situation of the society as a whole. Mildred is one of the characters who symbolizes the dystopian culture best. Her way of living shows that how superficial and empty the despotic ideology is. In the beginning of the novel Montag thinks that only his wife is empty, ignorant, insensitive



and indifferent. His realization increases when he starts to think, observe and see other people around them. The society of the past has turned into a cruel world of *Fahrenheit 451*: dark and painful. Families are hollow, depressed and loveless, committing suicide is an ordinary phenomenon, and violence is common on the streets and in broadcast entertainment.

Moreover, the world of *Fahrenheit 451* also includes people who have contradictions like Captain Beatty. He seems like a wise man with a lot of knowledge. On the other hand; he is in the order of the state as a chief fire fighter. This contradiction points to the fact that the state needs wise men on the top in order to function well and maintain its power. It needs smart people in order to convince other people to obey the rules of the state and live according to that rules. Captain Beatty represents the government and he quotes books in order to prove that the texts contradict one another. Thus, the government allows him to access books as long as he stays under the order of the state and burns books.

Although the people live oppressed lives because of the government, they have had an ideal life before. The transition from an ideal life to a dystopian life is caused by mass media. Similarity imposed by mass media and technology that is used on the behalf of the state cause citizens to be submissive. Thus, it becomes easy for the state to control its citizens. Technology is used for social control and the mass media affects all sorts of education and entertainment. People are under the influence of repetitive propaganda twenty four hours a day and children are also under the influence of TV classes, film teachers, and TV rooms. As Robin Anne Reid states “The technology is used to promote a mass culture and to suppress individualism” (77). Thus, the power of mass culture prevent people from being individuals in the society.

Montag is against the lifestyle the system forces people to live. That’s why; he starts a struggle against the state in order to reach happiness and adopt a utopian life. Jack Zipes explains Montag’s awakening:

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury depicts the struggle of the individual against the state, or individualism versus conformity. In the process, despite the overwhelming powers of state control through mass media and technology, he has his hero Montag undergo a process of rehumanization. That is, Montag must shed the influences of the state’s monopoly of the consciousness industry and regain touch with his humanistic impulse. In this regard, Bradbury follows the postulates of dystopian fiction as outlined by Scholes

and Rabkin. However, there is a curious twist to the “humanistic” impulse of Bradbury which accounts for great contradictions and quasi-elitist notions of culture in *Fahrenheit 451* (10).

Although the novel starts in a dark and negative environment, it gets its light in the end. Montag regains his humanity back with the help of Clarisse and Faber. They all stand against the conformity the state has wanted to create for its citizens. Clarisse and Faber help Montag wake up from a nightmare. As Rafeeq O. McGiveron states, Clarisse functions “as a metaphorical mirror to begin reflecting truths that Montag otherwise would not see” (64). When she starts to ask questions about whether he is happy or not, why he does not have any children and how he has started to work as a fire fighter, Montag’s realization increases. “With each little observation, game or question, Clarisse reflects a previously unseen truth for Montag to examine, and in the words of Robert Reilly, “show(s) him how empty his existence is (68)” (64-65). Moreover, Clarisse also reflects the society by talking about how people do not have any conversation or opinion on anything. People only name the cars, clothes, pools, politicians, etc. She does not comment on the lives of the people, instead she directs Montag’s attention to the facts and the realization of these facts changes Montag’s perspective. He becomes aware that he lives in a dystopian society full of problems and lacks happiness

In addition to Clarisse, Beatty and Faber also contribute to Montag’s changing perspective by talking about the society of the past which used to be full of wise, smart and knowledgeable people. As a reaction to the repressive and poor conditions of the society Montag starts to read. Jonathan R. Eller and William F. Touponce state that “once “infected” with the fever to read the books he normally burns, Montag the fireman is led on a search to find the origin of his unhappiness” (92). The more he reads books the more his personality changes. Finally, he understands why he should stop burning books:

He saw the moon low in the sky now. The moon there, and the light of the moon caused by what? By the sun, of course. And what lights the sun? Its own fire. And the sun goes on, day after day, burning and burning. The sun and time. The sun and time and burning. Burning. The river bobbed him along gently. Burning. The sun and every clock on the earth. It all came together and became a single thing in his mind. After a long time of floating on the land and a short time of floating in the river he knew why he must never burn again in his life. The sun burned every day. It burned Time. The world rushed in a circle and turned on its axis and time was busy burning the years and the people anyway, without any help from him. So if *he* burned things with the firemen and the sun burned Time, that meant that *everything* burned! One of them had to stop burning. The sun wouldn’t, certainly. So it



looked as if he had to be Montag and the people he had worked with until a few short hours ago. Somewhere the saving and putting away had to begin again and someone had to do the saving and keeping, one way or another, in books, in records, in people's heads, any way at all so long as it was safe, free from moths, silverfish, rust and dry rot, and men with matches. The world was full of burning of all types and sizes. Now the guild of the asbestos-weaver must open shop very soon (134).

Montag decides to "stop burning" and he wants to stop all kinds of burning. In order to make his dream real, he runs away from the city to the forest. He feels the nature when he starts walking and he rethinks his life. He follows an abandoned railroad track and reaches to a collective of rebels, who are largely intellectual men and women. Some of them are professors or graduates of Harvard University. They welcome Montag and treat him as a person who is one of them. They believe that a better world will come one day and they should be prepared for this. That's why; they memorize books for a utopian society. When it is all over, they will be needed in order to have a wise and happy society:

All we wanted to do is keep the knowledge we think we will need, intact and safe. We're not out to incite or anger anyone yet. For if we are destroyed, the knowledge is dead, perhaps for good. We are model citizens, in our own special way; we walk the old tracks, we lie in the hills at night, and the city people let us be. We're stopped and searched occasionally, but there's nothing on our persons to incriminate us. The organization is flexible, very loose, and fragmentary. Some of us have had plastic surgery on our faces and fingerprints. Right now we have a horrible job; we're waiting for the war to begin and, as quickly, end. It's not pleasant, but then we're not in control, we're the odd minority crying in the wilderness. When the war's over, perhaps we can be of some use in the world (145-146).

The people who keep knowledge wait for a war that will end all the sufferings and when the war is over, they should be prepared as the time will come to transfer the knowledge they guard to future generations. That's why; meeting with the book people affects Montag so deeply and when he sits by the fire, he looks at the fire differently. He feels the benefits of the fire rather than its danger for the people. Fire starts to make sense, its aim is not burning but warming:

It was not burning, it was *warming*. He saw many hands held to its warmth, hands without arms, hidden in darkness. Above the hands, motionless faces that were only moved and tossed and flickered with firelight. He hadn't known fire could look this way. He had never thought in his life that it could give as well as take. Even its smell was different (139).

Sitting by the fire silently indicates that people have time to sit and discover the world around them. It is a totally different world for Montag as it is new, meaningful and hopeful:

There was a silence gathered all about that fire and the silence was in the men's faces, and time was there, time enough to sit by this rusting track under the trees, and look at the world and turn it over with the eyes, as if it were held to the center of the bonfire, a piece of steel these men were all shaping. It was not only the fire that was different. It was the silence. Montag moved toward this special silence that was concerned with all of the world (139).

Although Montag feels that he does not deserve to be with these wise people, they accept him by saying: "We all made the *right* kind of mistakes, or we wouldn't be here" (143). They all were angry individuals when they were separate, but now they are all together and they want to struggle to change the world by memorizing the books. Each one of them is a book and one can read these books by listening to the people who have memorized them. They have photographic memories and have improved a method which helps to recall anything that's been read once:

*We're* book burners, too. We read the books and burnt them, afraid they'd be found. Microfilming didn't pay off; we were always travelling, we didn't want to bury the film and come back later. Always the chance of discovery. Better to keep it in the old heads, where no one can see it or suspect it. We're all bits and pieces of history and literature and international law, Byron, Tom Paine, Machiavelli or Christ, it's here. And the hour's late. And the war's begun. And we are out here, and the city is there, all wrapped up in its own coat of a thousand colors (145).

Book people also burn the books as they have the fear of being discovered by the fire fighters. That's why; they keep all knowledge and the books in their memory. They hope to pass all these books and knowledge to the next generation as they will need them in the future when they start to ask how the world has changed so badly and when their unhappiness increases. Thus, they can start to rewrite the books for their salvation and an ideal life:

We'll just have to wait. We'll pass the books on to our children, by word of mouth, and let our children wait, in turn, on the other people. A lot will be lost that way, of course. But you can't *make* people listen. They have to come round in their own time, wondering what happened and why the world blew up under them. It can't last (Bradbury 2012:146).

When Montag asks their numbers, they reply him by saying: "Thousands on the roads, the abandoned railtracks, tonight, burns on the outside, libraries inside" (146). They hope to

use their knowledge when the war is over and people need them. They want to save the humanity from the darkness of the utopia and help them taste the light of utopia.

Book people believe that everyone should leave something to the world when they die. Thus, they will contribute to change something in the world in a good way. Granger, one of the characters in the novel, talks about his grandfather who had been a sculptor as a good man. He had been a man with many skills and had made a lot of toys for the children. He had used his hands all the time until his death. "And when he died, I suddenly realized I wasn't crying for him at all, but for all the things he did" (149). He had been a useful man for the world. However, his death ends all the wonderful stuff he has carved. On the other hand; Montag thinks his wife and her hands that do not produce anything. She is only programmed to consume. Moreover, when he thinks himself, he sees only ashes and nothingness. Then, he understands that everyone should be useful to the society he lives in:

Everyone must leave something behind when he dies, my grandfather said. A child or a book or a painting or a house or a wall built or a pair of shoes made. Or a garden planted. Something your hand touched some way so your soul has somewhere to go when you die, and when people look at that tree or that flower you planted, you're there. It doesn't matter what you do, he said, so long as you change something from the way it was before you touched it into something that's like you after you take your hands away. The difference between the man who just cuts lawns and a real gardener is in the touching, he said. The lawn-cutter might just as well not have been there at all; the gardener will be there a lifetime (149-150).

The salvation can be achieved via the books according to Montag. Books are needed in order to take people out of their dark caves and enlighten them with the lights of the books. He is quite positive about the future and he knows that book people will fight for a better society. The road that goes to a utopian society is full of difficulties but it is worth struggling:

With Montag's failures and successes, Bradbury shows that all of us, as individuals and as a society, must struggle to take a long, hard look in the mirror. Whether we look at ourselves from another's perspective or from the perspective of a good work of art, we need this self-examination to help avoid self-destruction (McGiveron 2008:69).

*Fahrenheit 451* gives the message that books can give the hope of the light of utopia. Beautiful and meaningful forest gives the clues that the future is optimistic as there are many people who live in the forest to devote themselves for the ideal society. Granger believes that the humanity will be born again out of its ashes like a phoenix:

There was a silly damn bird called a Phoenix back before Christ, every few hundred years he built a pyre and burned himself up. He must have been first cousin to Man. But every time he burnt himself up he sprang out of the ashes, he got himself born all over again. And it looks like we're doing the same thing, over and over, but we've got one damn thing the Phoenix never had. We know the damn silly thing we just did. We know all the damn silly things we've done for a thousand years and as long as we know that and always have it around where we can see it, some day we'll stop making the goddam funeral pyres and jumping in the middle of them. We pick up a few more people that remember, every generation (Bradbury: 156).

Book people are aware that they live in a dark world full with pain and unhappiness. There is no freedom of expression and speech. The state decides what they should do and how they should live. It is a dark world. However, Montag starts to think that what he can give when the time comes for the humanity. Book people and Montag imagine a better world and they are so optimistic and hopeful that they keep on remembering and transferring the knowledge for the next generations. They believe that a bright day will come one day.

## CHAPTER II

### WILLIAM GIBSON

#### THE ANALYSIS OF NEUROMANCER, AND CYBERPUNK

##### 2.1. Cyberpunk

*Neuromancer* written by William Gibson is a dystopian science fiction and a ‘cyberpunk’ novel, which is a postmodern science fiction genre noted for its focus on ‘high tech and low fate’. The stories of cyberpunk mostly take place in the near future and are dominated by corporations and money. Cyberpunk features advanced science, such as information technology and cybernetics coupled with a degree of breakdown or radical change in the social order. Corporations, technology and money have the control in a cyberpunk society instead of governments. Anyone who has the money has the right to rule everything.

When technology entered into people’s lives, it started to affect them and the fate of the planet badly. Dani Cavallaro (2000: 5) states that the effects of technology are also felt today in the same way as they will be felt in the future:

From 1950s onwards, science fiction became more and more concerned with the impact of technology on everyday lives and on the fate of the planet. A particularly important development was the New Wave, a phase associated with authors such as Brian Aldiss and J. G. Ballard and with the British publication *New Worlds* (1946-1970), edited by Michael Moorcock. The new Wave’s focus was on topical issues such as environmental depletion, urban overcrowding and the relationship between technology, crime, drugs addiction and sexuality. Thus, the New Wave in some ways preludes to cyberpunk’s preoccupation with the impact of technology on the present no less than on the future, the crucial element added to the picture by Gibson and his contemporaries being, of course, computer technology.

The developments in technology have had more disadvantages than advantages for the people. Technology makes life easier but it causes people to live in crowded cities without having any relationships with the others and it increases the rate of crime and drug abuse. It creates a consumer culture as well. In a dystopian world which is surrounded by dark technology, people are expected to be useful, productive and docile. The aim is to create a society which is advanced in technology but not necessarily in the quality of the life of people living there. People are expected to be “wage slaves” to corporations.

In a cyberpunk novel, social decline and cultural depletion can also be seen. The danger starts when certain machines start to be created with the features of human beings. For example, in the novel an Artificial Intelligence, *Neuromancer*, shows itself to Case, a console cowboy (hacker), in the shape of a boy on a beach. What's more, people have the features of the machines. Case can jack into the matrix, from "disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination" (Gibson 5). And Molly also has technological features like enhanced reflexes and hunting abilities which are technologically improved and she has blade claws under her fingers. In *Neuromancer* some people like Molly and Case are cyborgs, which mean that they modify their bodies. Case's brain is impaired chemically in order to prevent him from jacking in cyberspace, Molly's sunglasses are embedded into her cheeks and thus she can see in the dark. They live as beings half man half machine and it is called cyborg:

Central to research in the field of cybernetics is the idea that, if the human body can be conceived of as a machine, it is also possible to design machines that simulate the human organisms. This is affected by using as a working model the nervous apparatus, a graded system of control governed by the brain. A machine so designed is a cybernetic organism, a technological construct that replicates the human body on the basis of an understanding of the structural similarities between machines and living organisms (Cavallaro 2000:12).

In a cyberpunk novel human bodies and machines can be interchanged for one other. This virtual interchangeability is one of the most important themes of cyberpunk. If one is seen as a machine, what makes us humans is the question explained by Cavallaro:

Cyberpunk's characters are people on the fringe of society: outsiders misfits and psychopaths, struggling for survival on a garbage-strewn planet which, resorting to Rudy Rucker's image, is always on the verge of dissolving into a quagmire of muddy dreams.... just brown mud all night long. Cyberpunk presents visions of the future based on the extensive application of the idea of cyberspace, a term that first appeared in William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* (14).

In the novel Case who is a hacker is also an outsider and lives in squalid conditions, he tries to survive and does not think about his future. He does not have feelings and he works like a machine. What's more, the novel's opening sentence indicates that the natural world of *Neuromancer* expresses itself as technological, cybernetic and machinelike. The nature is described by the words of technology: "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel" (Gibson 1984:3). This description is the result of the life surrounded by the technology. Moreover, the cities are not described as cities with

buildings, shops, places to see and things to do. They are described as technology and data centers. Gibson describes Chiba city as “Synonymous with implants, nerve-splicing, and microbionics, Chiba was a magnet for the Sprawl’s techno-criminal subcultures” (6) Like the cities themselves, people are also described with their machine-like qualities and these qualities cause them to lose their emotions, senses and feelings. Baudrillard’s words best describe the people in *Neuromancer* :

He can no longer produce the limits of his own being, can no longer play nor stage himself, can no longer produce himself as mirror. He is now only a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence (133).

People’s experiences can be felt and lived in the same way by others as well as they lose their self-determination and self-definition. Claire Sponsler exemplifies this:

When Molly is breaking into the Sense/Net research library to steal a computer disk, Case shares her experience through a simstim link. Not only can he view the whole break-in through her eyes, he can feel it too: when she breaks her leg, he feels the pain as if his own leg had been broken (633).

Thus, Case experiences and feels the same things as Molly experiences and feels, they become like one body and soul with the help of simstim link. It also gives Case the opportunity of getting more information about their task.

People do not have privacy and it is possible to see, know and experience everything. In dystopian novels people are mostly watched by governments but in dystopian cyberpunk people are watched by technology. This dark cyberpunk life causes people to stop questioning. The main characters are not heroes in cyberpunk novels and in Gibson’s novel they are console cowboys (hackers) who are employed by powerful and rich companies and they work for them without understanding the actual reasons behind their work. The exploited characters do not have security, love, affection and healthy relationships with the other people. People live in an artificial world with artificial intelligences and as a result, life and reality lose meaning:

Cyberpunk ‘systematically distorts our sense of who or where we are, of what is ‘real’ at all, of what is most valuable about human life. Reality and identity are rendered unstable by their reduction to the status of commodities, namely interchangeable and disposable products doomed to a fate of planned or rapid obsolescence. (Cavallaro 2000:14).

In the world of cyberpunk it becomes hard to understand what is real or not. It also becomes difficult for the people to recognize themselves or where they are.



## 2.2. Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses

Louis Althusser chooses to categorize the society as *base* and *superstructure*. When the base consists of people who function as productive forces, superstructure consists of people who are responsible of the politics and ideology. Both have to be interconnected to each other in order to maintain the capitalist ideology. Base is the working class; on the other hand, superstructure consists of everything that is built on money. The base has so much importance that the system can collapse if it does not exist:

the base...determines everything that happens in the superstructure-in the base, that is, in the unity productive forces/relations of production-the relations of production are determinant, on the basis of the existing productive forces and within the material limits they set (Althusser: 21).

Moreover, the reproduction of the conditions of production is needed to continue to support autonomy and the self-sustaining system. The system controls the labour with wages. People earn just enough money to survive and when they are out of money, they have to come back to work the next day to get some more. In *Neuromancer* although Case does not want to work anymore for the companies and rich people, he has to accept the job they have offered to him as Armitage, the boss, promises to him that he will correct Case's neural damage which costs a lot of money. Thus, Case can survive as he will not have to pay for the operation. Molly who works for Armitage and is a "razorgirl" convinces Case:

It'll work, Case. You got no idea, the kind of stuff Armitage has. Like he's gonna pay these nerve boys for fixing you with the program he's giving them to tell them how to do it. He'll put them three years ahead of the competition. You got any idea what that's worth? (Gibson 1984:29).

Although Case is a skilful hacker, most of the time he does not know the details and the aims of the works and duties given. When Armitage offers him the job, he does not know why he wants it to be done. Armitage and the corporations alienate him to his job and to the means of production. The clients of Case sometimes ask for criminal duties and tasks as well, yet he fulfils their wishes without questioning:

Case was twenty-four. At twenty two, he'd been a cowboy, a rustler, one of the best in the Sprawl. He'd been trained by the best, by McCoy Pauley and Bobby Quine, legends in the biz. He'd operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a byproduct of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix. A thief, he'd worked for other, wealthier thieves, employers who provided the exotic software required to



penetrate the bright walls of corporate systems, opening windows into rich fields of data (5).

Case seems like a professional in his job but he does not consider himself as an individual nor does the system. He turns into a being that is commodified because of his alienation to his job, and the society he lives in. Modern life pushes him to loneliness and he feels excluded and pushed. The relationship between people has the same capitalist mentality; use something and throw it away when you are finished with it. When Case has a relationship with people, they abandon him after they use him like Molly. Although they have had a certain emotional connection, Molly leaves Case when they accomplish their mission. The real conditions of existence are not welcome in *Neuromancer* society as well. Machines and humans mix and the 'real' loses its meaning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Real relationships are not wanted as the reality is slow. Whereas, matrix and the virtual life it offers are attractive and have a fast pace. That's why; the real conditions of existence that Althusser examines lose its power. What is wanted is the superficial life the matrix offers. People like Case are addicted to this fast and unreal life as it gives virtual happiness and peace. It is like a way of getting away from the ugliness of the reality.

What's more, the society of *Neuromancer* lives under the capitalist system and in order to maintain capitalist power relations, Althusser's Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses are needed once again. The apparatuses cause people to continue the system unconsciously. Although the novel is fiction, it tells about the real capitalism of the current and the future world and how capitalism affects the characters of the novel and the people of the world:

The state is explicitly conceived as a repressive apparatus. The state is a repressive 'machine' that enables the dominant classes to ensure their domination over the working class in order to subject it to the process of extorting surplus value (that is, to capitalist exploitation) (Althusser 2014:70).

In the novel mega corporations have the role of the state; and they are the ones that control the capitalist society:

Power, in Case's world, meant corporate power. The zaibatus, the multinationals that shaped the course of human history, had transcended old barriers. Viewed as organisms, they had attained a kind of immortality. You couldn't kill a zaibatsu by assassinating a dozen key executives; there were others waiting to step up the ladder, assume the vacanted position, access the vast banks of corporate memory (Gibson 1984:242).

Big corporations hold the power and they exploit the poor by making them tools in order to achieve their desires. It is also almost impossible to destroy them as they are so strong that they are viewed as immortal because there will be others that will wait to substitute their positions.

Wintermute, which is an artificial intelligence, has the power of gathering skilful strangers together in order to accomplish his mission and it becomes an employer that has the power. Thus, commodified power exists and people can also turn into half machines. Moreover, Wintermute does not care about anybody's life in its team; it also kills some of its employees for the benefit of its mission. Likewise, in the capitalist society the lives of the exploited are meaningful as long as they work and become beneficial for the system to continue.

The government also thinks about its own benefits and the name of the government is only mentioned once in the novel in the case of Armitage/Corto. It is as brutal as the corporations themselves. Armitage is betrayed in the operation called Screaming Fist: Pentagon leaders send soldiers to death in a war with Russia in order to test the effectiveness of the defences. It results with a disaster and as a result they train Armitage for a false testimony in the trial in order to save the Pentagon leaders. The ruling class protects its own interest and the deaths have no importance for it. Thus, government lies to the people to protect its own interests by using Armitage (Corto):

Repaired, refurbished, and extensively rehearsed, Corto's subsequent testimony was detailed, moving, lucid and largely the invention of a Congressional cabal with certain vested interests in saving particular portions of the Pentagon infrastructure. Corto gradually understood that the testimony he gave was instrumental in saving the careers of three officers directly responsible for the suppression of reports on the building of the emp installations at Kirensk (Gibson, 83).

Although Armitage helps them in the trial of the disaster caused by Pentagon leaders in Russia by giving a false testimony, they do not want him in Washington when his role in the trial finishes. Corporations protect and their own vested interests like the American government itself by using repressive and ideological apparatuses. When Case steals from one of his employers, "they damage his nervous system with a wartime Russian mycotoxin"(6) as a punishment. They repress him by making him unable to work again. "Case fell into the prison of his own flesh" (6). In addition, assassins exist in order to punish people who do not work for the behalf of the corporations. Corporations behave

their employees as slaves. What's more, some companies tattoo the logo of the company on their employees in order to show that they are the properties of the companies. People are not behaved as individuals, instead they have no value for the ruling class, and their reason of living is to be docile, submissive and useful for the system.

Another repressive apparatus is the police. However, it does not exist on the streets, which are filled with crime, drugs, sex, and chaos, instead it appears when the interests of the ruling class are in danger. The Turing police arrests Case by saying that "the charges have to do with conspiracy to augment an artificial intelligence" (160). The justice exists only for the corporations and the police shows itself when the Sense/Net's headquarters are in danger and tries to prevent Panther Moderns (a dissident group, media terrorists), and Molly and Case from entering the Straylight villa and stealing an artificial intelligence called 'Neuromancer'.

In addition, although Chiba is one of the technology centers, the city has no laws and it is easy to commit crimes and be operated in black clinics. That is the result of the selectively applied law:

In Japan, he'd known with a clenched and absolute certainty, he'd find his cure. In Chiba. Either in a registered clinic or in the shadowland of black medicine. Synonymous with implants, nerve-splicing, and microbionics, Chiba was a magnet for the Sprawl's techno-criminal subcultures (6).

As a result, police only works for the benefit of the rich and powerful and the law exists, if at all, for their interests. The governments and companies work together in harmony and governments choose to protect the interests of the companies rather than those of their own citizens. Moreover, companies do not trust the citizens and they also do not trust the Artificial Intelligences. All AIs are monitored and if they try to improve themselves, they are deleted:

See, those things, they can work real hard, buy themselves time to write cookbooks or whatever, but the minute, I mean the nanosecond, that one starts figuring out ways to make itself smarter, Turing'll wipe it. Nobody trusts those fuckers, you know that. Every AI ever built has an electromagnetic shotgun wired to its forehead (Gibson 159).

That's why; the unification of two AIs (Wintermute and Neuromancer) can be dangerous for the companies as they can be something bigger and stronger. However, Case's team helps Wintermute unite with Neuromancer by struggling against the law and the rich. When they unite, they become almost an individual that is free to decide and have power to

change the outside world. When the relations of production are considered, machines have more positive features than humans and they are the ones that are looking for ways to escape. The hope of a better world belongs to the machines. It becomes a way out from the dark dystopian world for Gibson and gives the hope of a better world full of people who can break the chains of the capitalist governments and companies:

Wintermute was hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside. Neuromancer was personality. Neuromancer was immortality. Marie-France must have built something into Wintermute, the compulsion that had driven the thing to free itself, to unite with Neuromancer (269).

People become half machines and machines become half human in the novel and the only distinction between two is free will. Although people cannot use their free will as they want, they can influence their destiny with the help of their free will, however machines have to work according to their inbuilt programming. Only the unison of Neuromancer and Wintermute let them have free will and human features.

Company owners and governments want to own and control AIs like they control and own the citizens. The system does not want independent tools and free people. That's why; AIs and the citizens are controlled all the time and are prevented from making their own decisions to become powerful. If they are a threat to the system, they have to be suppressed by using certain apparatuses Althusser defines. People are made to believe that the interests of the system are universal interests and they are needed to be fulfilled in order to live a better life. Yet people live in high technology with low standards without realizing that they are not enough for a better life. For example, when Case walks around without a job, he lives in a coffin hotel which has rooms in the shape and size of a coffin and a lot of citizens live in that kind of places without realizing that this kind of living makes their lives miserable. In addition, the employees do not accept failure and people can die if they do not work properly. People's lives have no importance if they do not do their work well: "Biz here was a constant subliminal hum, and death the accepted punishment for laziness, carelessness, lack of grace, the failure to heed the demands of an intricate protocol" (7). However, people let the dominant class repress them and make them unhappy as they do not have the power to stand against the system and the state ideology:

All the private institutions whether owned by this or that individual or the state, function willy-nilly as component parts of determinate Ideological State Apparatuses, under the State Ideology, in the service of the state's politics,

the politics of the dominant class. They do so in the form specific to them: that of apparatuses that function primarily on ideology...That ideology is, as I have said, the State Ideology itself (Althusser, 81).

The corporations in the society work for the behalf of the state ideology as well. The ideology forces the citizens to work more and more without complaining or demanding more freedom or rights. As a result, they become the slaves of the state ideology.

### 2.3. From Humanity to Posthumanity

Cyberspace and technology cause the society of *Neuromancer* experience a shift from humanity to post-humanity. Digital existence has more importance than the bodily existence in the novel. Even the ecological system is replaced by technological constructs. It does not consist of natural environment, instead it has a digital environment and technologically advanced cities. Molly and Case are not happy with their lives and although they work for the corporations, they struggle against them and the military organizations at the same time. However, they feel a void both physically and spiritually as the humanity changes its shape into the post-humanity and everything that makes a human an individual loses its importance:

The resulting vacuum, a spiritual void in an 'ecocidal hell', reverberates throughout *Neuromancer* and *Bladerunner*, and the attempt to fill this hole is a central tension driving both texts, the characters searching for their own 'golden land of opportunity and adventure', be that escaping, physically and mentally, or searching for ways to fill the ecological, and thus spiritual, void (Leaver 1997:1).

Case tries to escape via matrix and in this virtual reality he feels happy. After getting used to working in cyberspace, he is unable to adapt to a life without it. He feels a big emptiness and pain after his nervous system is damaged and that makes him unable to work in the cyberspace anymore. He longs for matrix and cyberspace so much that he starts to dream about them:

A year here and he still dreamed of cyberspace, hope fading nightly. All the speed he took, all the turns he'd taken and the corners he'd cut in Night City, and still he'd see the matrix in his sleep, bright lattices of logic unfolding across that colorless void...The Sprawl was a long strange way home over the pacific now, and he was no console man, no cyberspace cowboy. Just another hustler, trying to make it through. But the dreams came on in the Japanese night like livewire vadoo, and he'd cry for it, cry in his sleep, and wake alone in the dark, curled in his capsule in some coffin hotel, his hands clawed into

the bedslab, temperfoam bunched between his fingers, trying to reach the console that wasn't there (Gibson, 4-5).

Cyberspace is a way of escaping and being independent for Case. That's why; when he loses it, he feels like he is in a prison of his own body. Matrix and cyberspace function as repressive apparatuses and their absence causes Case to lose his mind, be wild and cruel. He starts to live in the real world in a coffin hotel (all rooms in the size and shape of a coffin) but he gets out of control: "In the first month, he'd killed two men and a woman over sums that a year before would have seemed ludicrous" (7). His desire to kill increases day by day. Finally he accepts the job Armitage has offered to him and he becomes capable of accessing the matrix again. He experiences great pleasure and happiness when he jacks into the matrix and he feels himself complete in cyberspace.

The world of *Neuromancer* does not consist of a nature full with green, blue, and yellow. On the contrary; it is colourless and lifeless. Technology surrounds all parts of the cities and that makes life dystopian and hopeless. The description of the cities is dark and pessimistic:

Beyond the neon shudder of Ninsei, the sky was that mean shade of gray. The air had gotten worse; it seemed to have teeth tonight, and half the crowd wore filtration masks (Gibson 15).

Technology is so advanced that flowers, mountains or parks do not exist to be described as they are the victims of ecocide. Ninsei, for example, is preferred to be described with its holograms: "Down on Ninsei the holograms were vanishing like ghosts and most of the neon was already cold and dead" (Gibson 23). Boston- Atlanta Metropolitan Axis is also described with its technological features:

Program a map to display frequency of data exchange, every thousand megabytes a single pixel on a very large screen. Manhattan and Atlanta burn solid white. Then they start to pulse, the rate of traffic threatening to overload your simulation. Your map is about to go nova. Cool it down. Up your scale. Each pixel a million megabytes. At a hundred megabytes per second, you begin to make out certain blocks in midtown Manhattan, outlines of hundred-year-old industrial parks ringing the old core of Atlanta...(43).

The environment of *Neuromancer* is so artificial that it causes urban decay. Thus, some people like Case and Molly prefer to escape from that environmental decay. While Case chooses to escape via matrix and cyberspace, Molly prefers to increase her physical level in order to meet the demands of the new ecological environment. Case's brain works well and Molly is a strong girl as she is a cyborg, she has a lot of physical abilities. The two of



them become a good team and Case can access to Molly's experiences via simstim (a device that enables Case to experience the full range of Molly's sensory input but he has no control over her actions). Thus, he becomes a part of her brain. As a result, technology helps them surpass their humanity. Case's brain functions extremely good and Molly increases her physical power incredibly. They become less than human. Case lacks in power while Molly lacks in intellect. Thus, Gibson creates a post-environment and forces people to surpass their limits and become post-human. David Brande also argues for a post-ideological world:

Far from inhabiting a 'postideological' universe, the cyborg (and thus the post-human) is best understood as an effect of capitalism's restructuring of modes and relations of production and its corresponding transformations in ideological reproduction (508).

Thus, post-human becomes a part of a free but a flawed society and this society has flawed characters in it like Case, Molly, Armitage, Riviera. All are unhappy and in despair and try to escape but they fail in the end. They are the characters of the late-capitalist society. Capitalism surrounds them so strongly that they have difficulty in finding an open door. Artificial Intelligences are also suppressed by the system like people. In return some prefer to rebel against the capitalist system that demands to control everything. Although it is forbidden, Wintermute, an artificial intelligence, controls Armitage and makes him do everything it wants. In this way, it wants to gain self-autonomy which is something unacceptable in capitalism.

As a result, humanity turns itself into post-humanity and people connect to technology so strongly that they forget who they are and lose their senses of identity. The system also forces people to leave their bodies and sensuous experiences and replace them with lots of empty information. In *Neuromancer* the system creates a virtual class and as Marilouise Koroker states, it is all about "digital technology (which) works to discredit bodily experience, to make us feel humiliated and inferior to the virtual rendering of the body in its different electronic formats..."(80). In the novel Tessier-Ashpool family creates artificial intelligences and the AIs humiliate some people and force them to work for them, if they do not, they kill or hurt them. AIs have enough power to rule although they are virtual. This new post-modern society creates a new kind of power that carries on a new kind of capitalism. Fredric Jameson also supports this idea:



The technology of contemporary society is therefore mesmerizing and fascinating, not so much in its own right, but because it seems to offer some privileged representational shorthand for grasping a network of power and control even more difficult for our minds and imaginations to grasp—namely the whole new decentered global network of the third stage of capital itself. This is a figural process presently best observed in a whole mode of contemporary entertainment literature, which one is tempted to characterize as “high tech paranoia,” in which the circuits and networks of some putative global computer hook-up are narratively mobilized by labyrinthine conspiracies of autonomous but deadly interlocking and competing information agencies in a complexity often beyond the normal reading mind (226).

As a result of post-modernism, Wintermute sometimes manipulates Case’s memories by creating a utopia that contains his friends and his former lover, Linda Lee. Wintermute’s aim is to start a re-awakening in his emotional state and consequently he begins to feel alive again. However, that is only a cyber-utopia created to stop the burning of the Tessier-Ashpool ICE (Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics) which is a security program used to prevent hackers from accessing the computerized data. It needs the ICE in order to merge with Neuromancer, its other half. Wintermute is also aware that it cannot read Case’s mind: “Minds aren’t read... I can access your memory, but that’s not the same as your mind” (Bradbury 170). That’s why; it uses his memories in order to keep Case safe in *Neuromancer*’s utopia. Larry McCaffery sees manipulating memories and desires as a postmodern desert:

A postmodern desert inhabited by people who are, in effect, consuming *themselves* in the form of images and abstractions through which their desires, sense of identity, and memories are replicated and then sold back to them as products (6).

On the other hand, postmodernism changes the way one thinks about the world and himself/herself in it. When the power of the technology becomes stronger, people’s roles in this new era change. Technology, science and post-industrial capitalism cause the commodification of information. It becomes easy to buy and sell information for the benefits of the corporations. The post-capitalist system uses information to rule its citizens. In *Neuromancer* Case works as an information carrier and a hacker. He gets paid as long as he carries or steals information without problems for the corporations. However, when he tries to keep that information for himself, like in all capitalist systems, rebellion is suppressed by repressive state apparatuses.

Another indication of post-human reality in the novel is that characters give more importance to informational patterns or randomness than physical absence or presence as the body does not have any value. Some of the characters have disembodied consciousness like Wintermute and Neuromancer. There are also computer constructs that have the skills and the personalities of famous “console cowboys,” who are famed hackers. When a hacker dies, his memoirs, experiences and skills are preserved on a ROM cassette. Although a construct is not a human, it has the memoirs, experiences and skills of a person. Case also perceives his physical existence as meat and he ignores his body and his physical needs. He only wants to enjoy the cyberspace. He feels alive as long as he jacks in matrix. Life and his existence are meaningless for him without cyberspace.

As a result, *Neuromancer* is a novel that shows the people’s transition from humanity to post-humanity. It can also be considered as a post-modern novel as it forces the limits of the decency and contains marginalized people in it. It talks about a high-tech future full of drugs, sex and violence that are the results of low and lawless life. Some people’s living conditions in coffin hotels also show the value given to the people. Morality is not appreciated and the existence of people is only valuable if they work for the behalf of the system without questioning. In addition, the novel has the competition between humans and artificial intelligences. Both are looking for ways to free themselves of their constraints and enjoin their perspectives on the cyberspace and the real world. However, not all endings are happy. Post-modernism and being a post-human do not make people happy, instead this kind of life makes them forget their individuality and emotions.

#### **2.4. The Analysis of Artificial Intelligences : Neuromancer and Wintermute**

In *Neuromancer* the artificial intelligences, Wintermute and Neuromancer, are both monsters and the captives that desire to be free. Neuromancer is a captive in Straylight Villa and Wintermute is looking for ways to save it and merge with it in order to be complete and get enough power to free itself and it is ready to do anything in order to accomplish its mission. When the Tessier-Ashpool family lives in the Straylight Villa, Mr. Ashpool kills so many people including his wife in order to secure his position as a head of the organization. That’s why; he kills the ones who have a different vision for the company and he wants to ensure that only the family members can run the company. He is a cruel and ruthless man. On the other hand; it is his role to guarantee that the AIs remain as

captives in the corporation and become the members of the corporation. Thus, they keep them at the heart of the Villa and it is a Villa filled with mystery and secrets:

The Villa Straylight, is a body grown in upon itself, a Gothic endless series of chambers linked by passages, by stairwells vaulted like intestines, where the eye is trapped in narrow curves, carried past ornate screens, empty alcoves (Gibson 1984:172).

The family wants to benefit from the artificial intelligences yet they do not want them to be strong as they fear that AIs can oppose them if they have enough power. That's why; they keep them separate and prevent Wintermute from merging with Neuromancer. In the novel AIs are also the symbols of the human being's conditions in the real world. People are also held captive in their natural environments by the system. They can survive as long as they are docile, useful and submissive and if they try to oppose the system, they are eliminated or repressed. The system also does not want people to gather and fight for their rights as it becomes hard to fight against a group rather than a person.

On the other hand; the examples of resurrection exist in *Neuromancer*. Although Dixie Flatline is a ROM, it has the memories and experiences of a dead man called McCoy Pauley. Thus, Pauley is born again in the novel. This is a normal phenomenon in *Neuromancer*, however Case finds Dixie's situation disturbing and weird: "It was disturbing to think of the Flatline as a construct, a hardwired ROM Cassette replicating a dead man's skills, obsessions, knee-jerk responses...." (Gibson 1984:76-77). In addition, Case experiences brain death in the novel when he is in interaction with Artificial Intelligences in the matrix. However, his consciousness continues while his body is separated from his actions and speeches. It looks like a technological afterlife. The characters also enjoy being in cyberspace as it offers a different experience:

Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts... A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding... (Gibson 1984:51).

Moreover, the Tessier-Ashpools try to find a way of becoming immortal, thus they show their evil side. On the other hand; AIs are incredible beings. They can be defined as machines, ghosts, demons and people. The Tessier-Ashpools are only humans and even though they want to exceed what they are now, they have their limits. AIs, in contrast, are capable of being so many things and achieving many duties. Although they are not human,

they can behave and respond like a human. In addition, it is hard to understand an AI. However, William Gibson gives human features to the machines and humanizes them throughout the novel. Clair Sponslor also writes about machine and human sides of AIs:

In this world of blurred boundaries and decentred subjects, not only do humans become machinelike, but the reverse also happens: machines take on human qualities. Even such a relatively low-tech object as a Braun microdrone- a sort of miniature robot- is described in organic terms.... More obviously, the character of the Artificial Intelligence... represented in Gibson's novel by Wintermute and Neuromancer most fully blends these two states of the organic and inorganic, calling into question along the way such qualities as agency, motive, intentionality, and autonomy that are supposedly exclusive to humans (6).

That's why; Gibson wants his reader to see AIs as personalities and people. Although they are not body and flesh, they have the motivation of a person, but they are still complicated constructs both in the Matrix and the real world. They need to be examined a lot in order to be understood well. In fact, they are very advanced entities when compared to the today's world technology and they can easily impersonate humans. However, their philosophies and beliefs are a mystery for the human beings.

Gibson also creates AIs as sublime characters but their desire is to get freedom from their creators. They are both important and imprisoned characters. They also have their good sides and evil sides. They help Case when he is in need and in this sense they can be sympathized, yet they can kill anyone who prevents them from achieving their tasks and in this sense they are like monsters. They are also supernatural. They can take a life or give it back when they wish to do so.

Wintermute is the dominant AI in the novel. It creates the whole story. First it talks with Case and Molly, and then it creates Armitage inside the Corto body and plans all the jobs for which Case and Molly are hired in order to help it merge with Neuromancer. Thus, Wintermute is the one that thinks and decides: "Wintermute was hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside" (269). It wants to change the order of the world by creating entities that can decide and live for themselves and free themselves from the oppression of the system. It also wants Case to hate Tessier-Ashpools. Thus, it believes that he will complete his mission. That's why; it encourages Case by saying: "You were starting to hate my guts for a while there. That's good. But hate them instead. Same difference" (171). In addition to Wintermute, Neuromancer appears as the other half of the entity, yet it is quite different from Wintermute. It is the innocent part. It appears as a child

in the novel and it seems unthreatening. However, it tries to convince Case to give up his physical existence and live only in matrix as an immortal being because “Neuromancer was personality. Neuromancer was immortality” (269). But he refuses the offer by waking up from his brain death and he wants to help Neuromancer for its reunion with Wintermute. Neuromancer also explains the meaning of its name:

“Neuromancer,” the boy said, slitting long gray eyes against the rising sun. “The lane to the land of the dead. Where you are, my friend. Marie-France, my lady, she prepared this road, but her lord choked her off before I could read the book of her days. Neuro from the nerves, the silver paths. Romancer. Neuromancer. I call up the dead. But no, my friend,” and the boy did a little dance, brown feet printing the sand, “I am the dead, and their land” (243-244).

Although it says that it is dead, it is more alive than Wintermute. It wants Case to stay in cyberspace with his lover Linda Lee by having food and shelter on a beach and be happy. Thus, it wants to prevent resurrection. It tries to convince Case by charm rather than by force which is the job of Wintermute.

AIs are also described as demons and they are perceived as evil characters as they exist in a demonic society and world. The cities are not safe, full of crime and drugs. Hurting one and living without punishment is easy. Evil is everywhere in the society and AIs also contributes the demonic side of the technologically high life. Case kills people, the police kills people without any reason and so do the AIs. They are also capable of killing people and continuing to exist without problems. They are the representation of a lawless dystopian society.

Wintermute can be one of the biggest devils as it also decides the destiny of the characters by giving them tasks via Armitage. It causes Case’s meeting with Molly and Molly’s escaping from Straylight Villa. It has enough power to protect and destroy. In fact; its only desire is to be free and to merge with Neuromancer and that will bring him the freedom it wishes. Molly realizes that Wintermute has started to plan that merging long time ago:

He played a waiting game for years. Didn’t have any real power then but he could use the Villa’s security and custodial system to keep track of where everything was and how things moved, where they went. He saw somebody lose this key 20 years ago, and he managed to get somebody else to leave it here. Then he killed him, the boy who’d brought it here. Kid was eight.... They were always fucking him over with how old-fashioned they were, he said, all their nineteenth-century stuff. He looked just like Finn... he said if

they'd turned into what they'd wanted to, he could've gotten out a long time ago. But they didn't. Screwed up (180).

Its way of thinking shows how evil it is. However, its wish to be free is so strong that it is ready to do anything in order to achieve its desire. Tessier-Ashpools have the key that will make Wintermute and Neuromancer free, so AIs are ready to kill the family for their freedom. Although they are evil, being a slave is also evil and they struggle against that kind of slavery. They want to be the matrix when they combine. That's why; Wintermute aims to transcend itself and it achieves this.

In fact; a machine has the greatest capacity for a change in the novel and that represents Gibson's mixed feelings about technology. In this sense individual identity has more importance than physical existence as the machines decide the destiny of the novel. In Gibson's society technology is an important force of change and he describes a different kind of dystopia which is dominated by evil machines and cruel rich corporations. That kind of life and technology cause destruction and the captivation of the citizens. However, it helps the rich maintain power that is cheap, fast and useful. Thus, it makes the ruling of the suppressed class easier if the machines can be used for their own behalves. When the machines oppose humans and get out of control, they can get enough power to destroy the existing system. In the novel, only Wintermute and Neuromancer achieve their wishes when they oppose the system but still they can be a hope for the future.

Technology is also a part of human body. People have machine-like bodies that can include razor claws or brain sockets. That kind of existence undermines the importance of an individual and the collective sense of style denies any individual difference. That's why; Marie-France, a member of a Tessier-Ashpool family, creates Artificial Intelligences in order to reach her ultimate aim which is "a state involving very little in the way of individual consciousness... Animal bliss" (217). On the other hand; her system functions against her and her AIs start the first rebellion against the system and the state.

However, it is a fact that a person's physical identity can be overwhelmed by the technological consensus in cyberspace. When Case experiences the cyberspace, he becomes addicted to it. Although he rejects to live in cyberspace forever, he accepts to have a fixed, technologically determined existence. When he is in cyberspace, he forgets everything and enjoys being there: "This was it. This was what he was, who he was, his

being. He forgot to eat” (59). On his addiction to the cyberspace Frederick Jameson suggests:

The omnipresence of pastiche is...not incompatible with a certain humor (nor is it innocent of all passion) or at least with addiction-with a whole historically original consumers’ appetite for a world transformed into sheer images of itself and for pseudo-events and ‘spectacles’” (221).

On the other hand; cyberspace is a reflection of reality. It is a place one can get information or learn. It has the vision: “as though a single retina lined the inner surface of a globe that contained all things, if all things could be counted” (Neuromancer 258). However, technology is used for the domination of the corporations and the system. It is not conscious like Wintermute. The system’s aim is to continue its existence. If the society is dominated by the technology, it becomes easier for the corporations to exist. Technology expresses the relations of power:

The technology of contemporary society is mesmerizing and fascinating ...because it seems to offer some privileged representational shorthand for grasping a network of power even more difficult for our minds and imaginations to grasp- namely the whole decentered global network of the third stage of capital itself (Jameson 226).

The power of technology and the corporations is very strong but Neuromancer and Wintermute start a rebellion against humans holding power and the high technology life that they are in. They do not want to be the slaves of the corporations. Instead, they fight for their own freedom and achieve merging and becoming one and free. They choose to change their destiny written by the rich and they become a hope for the humanity as they also try to survive and live like slaves in *Neuromancer* society.



## CONCLUSION

Although *Fahrenheit 451* and *Neuromancer* the two novels are written in different periods and countries, they both show the repressed and oppressed condition of men by the State. In addition, this situation gets worse when the technology advances. Gibson's Chiba city is more technologically advanced than Montag's England yet it appears as an unsafe place: "Gibson's Chiba City is a space of freewheeling and lawless exchange, the competitive market reduced to its most brutal form (Yu, 61) and the result of a failure can be fatal: "Biz here was a constant subliminal hum, and death the accepted punishment for laziness, carelessness, lack of grace, the failure to heed the demands of an intricate protocol" (Gibson, 7).

It is also pointed out that states change their understandings of social controlling mechanisms with the progress of technology. In *Fahrenheit 451* the controlling mechanisms are fire fighters and their job is to promote ignorance by burning books and preventing people from thinking, feeling and experiencing. On the other hand; in *Neuromancer* corporations take place of the state as controlling mechanisms and they have the power and money to rule and make people work for the behalf of the capitalist system. In that respect, in both novels the place of technology is signified under the total control of the state. While in *Fahrenheit 451* TV rules the lives of the people and cause them not to think and act like machines that have no emotions and feelings, in *Neuromancer* matrix, cyberspace and artificial intelligences cause people to have machine-like qualities and features that cause them to lose their humanities. As a result of technology, the states of the novels influence the minds of their citizens.

Althusser's Repressive and Ideological apparatuses exist in both novels. In *Fahrenheit 451* fire fighters appear as a repressive force and help the state create a society that does not question. TV and schools also function as ideological apparatuses and make people believe in the state ideology without thinking. In *Neuromancer* state appears in the shape of corporations. Big corporations function as repressive and ideological apparatuses. They rule and repress people by using the power of technological tools.

Bradbury and Gibson also criticize the political and societal norms of the countries in their works: *Fahrenheit 451* and *Neuromancer*. On the one hand; Bradbury portrays a country and citizens that are controlled by the fire fighters, in which the citizens exist and

live for the sake of the system. Although the country is ruled by a cruel state, people are not aware of the situation as their brains are numb because of the TV. On the other hand; Gibson portrays a society that builds AIs that act like men and creates individuals who act like machines. The existence of cyberspace and matrix causes people to mix the real and the virtual life. This obscure lifestyle pushes people to act and survive according to the wishes of the corporate institutions. If they want more technology, they have to submit to the will of the corporations.

Both works can be a warning for the contemporary world that it is possible to live a life made up of completely dehumanized individuals or states. Bradbury also shows a way out of the repressed system by questioning and fighting against its power mechanisms. When Montag starts to question the life around him, he realizes how his work damages the lives of the people and how brutal he is as a fire fighter in *Fahrenheit 451*. He fights against the fire fighting system by burning the chief fire fighter and starts reading books that are forbidden and joins the book people who memorize the books in order to use them when the right time comes. It is pointed out that books are the sole hope for a bright future. Similarly, AIs are a kind of way out in Gibson's novel. Wintermute which is an AI achieves to merge with Neuromancer to become one and more powerful. Although it is the product of a corporation and is supposed to work for the corporation, it functions for the behalf of its own wishes and fights against the corporations in order to reach its aim. It can be accepted as a role model for the humanity and implies that if an AI can fight against the system and the corporations, human beings can also achieve the same thing. Wintermute exists as the only hope in a high tech and low life country.

There are also crimes in both novels yet they are different sort of crimes. On the one hand, the crime committed in *Fahrenheit 451* is reading books and that is against the wishes of the state. That's why; the fire fighters have the roles of maintaining order and preventing crimes. On the other hand, crimes committed in *Neuromancer* are cybercrimes and their consequences can be fatal. Stealing information from the corporations can cause a person to be unable to work or exist again. Police appears as a repressive force and prevents only cybercrimes and it works for the benefit of the corporations.

In addition to the injustice in the society, individuals feel lonely and isolated in both novels. In *Fahrenheit 451* Montag realizes how unhappy and lonely he is after he talks to Clarisse. He cannot communicate even with his wife and his desperate situation

causes him to rebel against the system. Suicide rates also increase in the novel as people are so indifferent to the problems of others. That's why, people choose two ways: either die or live unhappily without realizing how unhappy they are. In *Neuromancer* individuals are lonely and desperate as well. The life of *Neuromancer* is full of technology and advanced cities. However, high tech life does not make people happy or cause them to have healthy relationships. The unhappy citizens of the novel start to commit crimes like murdering, stealing and using drugs because of living under poor conditions. When someone dies, no one realizes that he/she is gone as people are not connected and are unaware of other kinds of lives.

*Fahrenheit 451* differs from *Neuromancer* in terms of an ideal society. Although there is a dystopian life in *Fahrenheit 451*, Montag meets an ideal society in the end. Book people are isolated groups from the society and they live in the woods, forests or small towns. They memorize books and retain the knowledge in the books. They are wise and aware of the situation of their country and create an ideal society in order to maintain hope for a better world. However, *Neuromancer* does not hint at an ideal society and everything in the novel is dark and pessimistic except from the merging of *Neuromancer* with *Wintermute*. Although the merging gives us hope of a better life, it does not indicate what kind of a life it will be.

Although Montag loses his humanity in the beginning of the novel, he regains his humanity in the end of *Fahrenheit 451*. However, humanity turns into post-humanity in *Neuromancer*. People live in a post-modern world under the impact of technology as Gayadri Devi. G indicates:

Cyberpunk has close parallels with the postmodern fiction. They both explore the problems like the role of multinationals, the crisis of subjectivity, the impact of technology (especially computers, information technology and genetic engineering), on society and the individual, etc (85).

People are born into a cultureless society in *Neuromancer* and everything is virtual and superficial. There is no place for deep feelings, emotions or healthy relationships and this situation of the society is the result of post-modern lifestyle. When the technology advances, everything turns into virtual reality and the real conditions of existence disappear. Real relationships are not asked for, and instead matrix and cyberspace are sought after as they are faster than the real life. The real is too slow to tolerate any more. As Castells indicates "All major social changes are ultimately characterised by a

transformation of space and time in human experience” (xxxix). In addition, when people start to have machine-like features, they start looking for the hope of escape in machines. However, in *Fahrenheit 451* the hope is in people not in the machines.

Both novels represent a future which is dystopian and full of the imagination of the writers about the future. This imagined future determines the genre of the novels and makes them science fiction:

SF's persistent afterlives admit several overlapping explanations: for one thing, SF is the literature of the future, and it cannot help coming with symbols for its own habit of imagining what will happen after we die. For another thing, SF's string of symbols for the afterlife enables the genre to reflect on itself: they present it as a means of escape (from this life, from the constraints of the real) and as a way to reflect on why we tell stories (Burt, 168).

Although the genre appears as an imagined future, in fact what Gibson and Bradbury try to show is the present: “Gibson does not show his readers the future; he attempts to show them the present” (Stromback, 276). That's why; the present should be saved from the imperialism and its apparatuses in order to have a bright and happy future.

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