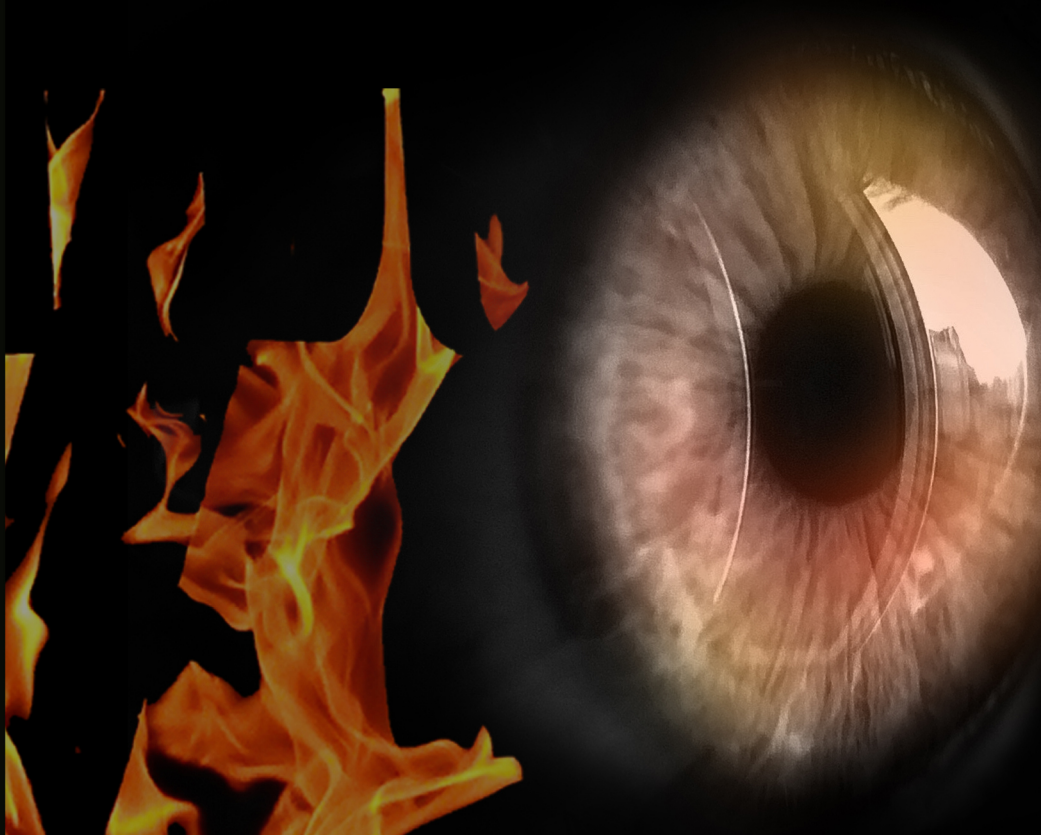

# SELF AND SUBJECTIVITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY DYSTOPIAN FICTION

**Fatih Öztürk**

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TO ZEYNEP AND ÖYKÜ;

my beloved daughters …

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# A Note on the Text

"To everything, there is a season: a time to be born and a time to die."[1] When the literary tendencies throughout history are considered, they are understood to have flourished in due season and lost their effect after a while. The late eighteenth century was a perfect time for Coleridge's romanticism, but the ideal era for John Donne came much earlier. Dickens's literary understanding impeccably corresponded to the conditions of his time, yet the same approach might not have been so influential in the following century. As for a dystopian worldview, there could not be a better period than the twentieth century with its social, cultural, scientific, and religious decadence.

When I heard the word 'dystopia' for the first time years ago, it made me feel a bit out of place. It was difficult to explain what I felt with loud and clear words. It was a little bit of anxiety and a little bit of gloom. It was like a slap in the face; a kind of being waken up in the sweetest time of a dream. I could not understand the reason that made me feel that way at first, but little by little I came to realise. It was related to knowing or maybe feeling the fact that our time is the very season for dystopia. I was to accept this 'neo-reality' if I wanted to collect my wits.

Some of the strongest friendships start with a fight. This is how I met dystopia: the beginning of a lasting friendship. After this moment, I began to meet the authors who must have felt similar things as I did. One day I met Zamiatin, and the other day I was looking Huxley in the eye. I chatted with Orwell about the potential dangers relating individualism and it was Bradbury who convinced me of not losing my hope even in the most hopeless situations possible. Their ideas were appalling, but there was no fiction. What I was listening from them was the reality of modernity, and I wanted to inhale and internalise every single hint that could guide me.

This process resulted in an irresistible yearning for writing and sharing such feelings; and this work is a product of this innocent urge. The book consists of five parts. The introduction part forms the framework of the historical and social context of dystopian fiction. It also covers the philosophical background of the issue. In this part, the related theories of Freud, Lacan, Althusser, and Foucault are explained in detail.

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[1] Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

Chapter One analyses George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with respect to dystopian elements in the novel. Accepted as a benchmark of dystopian fiction, the work comes out as a perfect exemplification of the genre. The fact that it portrays a society oppressed under a totalitarian communistic government makes the novel a successor of the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamiatin. The effect of Zamiatin's *We*, referred to as one of the literary curiosities of the book-burning age by Orwell himself, is obvious because Orwell's plot, characterisation, and idea of using literature as a warning for people seem to be reflections of Zamiatin's work.[2] The warning in question is about the possibility of a totalitarian understanding, which is clarified by Orwell when he argues that what he has written for several years is totally against totalitarianism and for the sake of democratic socialism.

The chapter tries to reflect an image of the bleak worldview that Orwell draws masterfully in his narrative. The physical and psychological oppression of the state is embodied in the character of Big Brother, and the effects of such oppression upon the people are traced over the character of Winston, who ironically works at the Ministry of Truth. The society described in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a group controlled almost exclusively by punishment and the fear of punishment.[3] The idea behind the working functional society is basically the same: Orwell's society is gradually deprived of all forms of expression of individuality, and the system replaces the individual mind with a mind of the crowd, which is much easier to manipulate. For Orwell, the main impulse for writing his dystopian vision is the situation in Europe before and after the Second World War, when totalitarian governments were being formed, whether it was right-wing or left-wing. From this perspective, though it may seem so, the book is not a direct critique of communist Russia: "My recent novel [1984] is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party . . . but as a show-up of the perversions which have already been partly realised in Communism and Fascism."[4] Orwell does not make a difference between the socialist or fascist state. For him, the danger for humanity is not mainly about being socialist or fascist, but rather about being ruled by totalitarian regimes. Having observed the developments in

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[2] William Gordon Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1966), 45-46.

[3] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited* (London: Triad/Panther Books, 1983), 14.

[4] Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, eds., *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Volume 4: In Front of Your Nose, 1945-1950* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd., 1968), 502.

Russia and European countries like Spain, he believes that the possibility of a totalitarian regime for Britain is not as unlikely as generally believed to be, and it may come true sooner than imagined unless the necessary awareness is provided.

Significant as it is for the purpose of this work, the way how history and truth are continuously rewritten in the novel is revealed. Besides, it is emphasized that most people are even not aware of this situation, or at least they are obliged to behave so. The regime's policy of cutting people's connection with history by erasing or changing historical documents plays a central role in the manipulation of the community. In this way, people are left with no option other than believing in whatever they are told, which means the regime can impose anything it wants and can canalise its citizens in accordance with its policy.

In Orwell's world, the state makes use of technology to the point that even the facial expressions of people while they are asleep can be under observation. Accordingly, the idea of being observed all the time and everywhere is handled with reference to Bentham's theory of the Panopticon. Besides, Foucault's idea of discourse and power is openly centralised in the work. The state has control over media, and it creates its own reality and history by using it. Not only what people can do but also what they can think are determined by the state with the help of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses such as media and/or the army. It is not surprising that war has a central role in this context. As a man having personally experienced the Spanish Civil War, Orwell is very well cognizant of the purpose of the wars and the way they can be used by the state to silence its subjects.

Remarkably, pleasure comes out to be another way of keeping people, specifically the proletarians, silent in the novel. They are allowed to go to the pub, drink beer, and gamble, which are all recognised by the state and yet tolerated for the sake of maintaining its power and destroying the tiniest possibility of revolution. However, as it is indicated in the book, pleasure without freedom and happiness without individuality can be nothing but an illusion.

As the characterisation of Winston reveals, the self and individuality of people are totally controlled and shaped by the state in the direction of its aims. At this point, Lacan's theories on language and the construction of identity help to analyse the problem better. As far as individual ways of treatment of language in dystopian novels are concerned, the authors propose several scenarios of how it can be used to limit individual knowledge and freedom. Orwell's fear of misusing the language as a tool of propaganda is evident as he not only places a great focus on the concept

of Newspeak throughout the novel, but also adds a separate, several-pages-long appendix that deals with this issue and clarifies the fundamental purpose of it: "The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible."[5] The mentioned version of the language, which is only in the earlier stages of development in the novel, will in its final form not allow its users to commit a 'thoughtcrime,' since it will not contain words that could express the thoughts that the Party would not approve. Moreover, the meanings of the remaining words will be so narrowed that they will not make it possible to describe forbidden concepts in any way. The work appears to provide a valid warning about the power of language. It demonstrates how language may be used to alter people's perception of reality, to obscure realities, and even to control history: "Language is one of the key instruments of political dominations, the necessary and insidious means of the 'totalitarian' control of reality."[6] In this direction, the state's idea of creating a new language, Newspeak, which contains fewer words, is a manifestation of the idea of using language to control people's ideas and identities. The underlying purpose of such an attempt is to avoid the possibility of sophisticated thinking and the idea of rebellion, and to ensure the uniformity of people as they would behave like robots that have the same range of linguistic data and so the same range of intellectual capacity. Browning draws attention to the issue when he claims that the success of the totalitarian regimes mostly arises from leaders' ability in rewriting history, obscuring facts, and manipulating language in general to fit their own objectives.[7]

The state in the novel maintains such a systematic process of dehumanisation that the citizens lose their sense of identity and become subjectified in an atmosphere where people are under incessant physical and psychological oppression by means of media, army, and language. The work reveals the probable dangers of absolute power in the hands of the minority. The basic and inner weakness of humankind detected by Orwell is the same as the one detected by Huxley, which is an inability of handling power without being corrupted.[8]

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[5] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: The Annotated Edition* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 343.
[6] Alok Rai, *Orwell and the politics of despair: A critical study of the writings of George Orwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 122.
[7] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 108.
[8] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 95.

The main preoccupation of Chapter Two is the repression of intellectualism and the excess of popular culture in *Fahrenheit 451*. The chapter follows the development of the protagonist, Montag, from an ignorant adherent of the state to a fierce critic of it. It could be argued that Bradbury was affected by Aldous Huxley and especially his 1932 work *Brave New World* about the idea of giving the citizens all sorts of pleasure together with a drug, called soma, so that people would not be awake in the real sense, could not access information, and so they would be unable to question the ongoing oppression. From this aspect, the Foucauldian idea of 'knowledge is power' is a prevalent theme in the work. In this futuristic society of Bradbury, people are forbidden not only to read but also to keep books. The reason for this can easily be explained by the fact that literature is often taken as a danger for the state and as something to be kept out for the sake of perfect stability:

> Literature is incompatible with a lot of other local features besides your climate – incompatible with human integrity, incompatible with philosophic truth, incompatible with individual sanity and a decent social system, incompatible with everything except dualism, criminal lunacy, impossible inspiration, and unnecessary guilt.[9]

Because of its characteristics displayed above, literature is almost always taken as a danger for the authority; a danger that cannot be disregarded or tolerated. The fundamental reason for this is generally literature's potential of creating suspicions in the minds of the readers about the existent life standards and imposed ideologies. In this direction, it is not surprising that the regime's main occupation in Bradbury's society is literature itself. Books are burnt, people who keep books are arrested and so any chance of contact with literature is tried to be destroyed. However, the absence of literature must be compensated, because people with no dilatory engagement may be dangerous, as well.

After having guaranteed the decline of literature, the state uses technology to keep its people as occupied and uneducated as possible. In this way, it creates a group of people who are devoid of thinking or questioning. The people under this regime watch TV all the time and their connection with reality and emotions is totally cut with the fictional world of the huge TV screens, which function as a kind of opiate. The television screens in the novel appear to be as much of an opiate as the sleeping pills Mildred uses or the soma in *Brave New World*. Another way the regime employs to keep people away from economic or political issues is the so-

[9] Aldous Huxley, *Island* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 181.

called freedom. Young people are free to do anything, even killing one another, as long as they do not read anything and interrupt the politics of the state. 'Ignorance is bliss' policy is at the core of this kind of understanding as the state believes that destroying literature and philosophy helps the peace of mind of the people since they do not need to question or think anymore. The state has an apparent antipathy for philosophy, thinking, and individualism as these are the qualities that pave the way for questioning the status quo:

> Since the ideal totalitarian state functions most efficiently when there is a lack of personal and philosophical disagreement of any kind, Bradbury's world has almost achieved this political ideal; it is a society totally dominated by its upper echelon to the point where reading has become a state crime and conversation is discouraged.[10]

In the absence of literature and philosophy, such feelings as love, affection, and friendship have long been eradicated, and the people with such feelings, like Clarisse McClellan, are vaporised the moment they are detected. Based on this context, the chapter mostly focalises on the state's struggle to do away with such humane feelings and its use of knowledge as power, of which the majority are kept devoid, to turn the individuals into 'free subjects.'

The third chapter focuses on Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and the internal and external experiences of Offred, the protagonist, in a male-oriented dystopian world. In the novel, the author addresses the implications of undoing women's rights. A party of religiously conservative fundamentalists has seized control in the nightmarish world of Gilead and completely ignored the hard-won sexual liberation: Gilead is a state based on the idea of a return to the conventional values, and thereby it makes the way for the repression of women. The main concentration of the chapter is on the elements of oppression in this dystopic world in which Offred struggles to survive as an individual.

Atwood's is a kind of theocratic state and this state benefits from every type of apparatus from education to religion to keep its 'subjects' under surveillance. Women are educated to obey their masters and to serve their desires, and this is supported by a distorted understanding of religion. Importantly, the ones who help the silencing of women are women again, who are called 'Aunts' in the novel. Offred, like other Handmaids, is given to different patriarchs with the only function of giving birth to a child, and

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[10] Edward Ritter, "The Dystopian Vision: A Study of the Modern Dystopian Novel," (Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1973), 36.

she is subject to whatever the patriarch wants her to do. For this reason, the dystopian elements in the novel and the way they function to create endless surveillance are scrutinised from a feminist perspective: What Offred experiences is as much about her being a woman as its being totalitarianism.

Language has a central function in this work as well. Gilead's official language includes numerous religious terms and biblical allusions because it is a theocracy, a regime wherein state and religion are not distinguished. In this parallel, the state brings language and religion together to control and subjectify people more easily. In this society, domestic servants are called 'Marthas' in reference to a domestic character in the New Testament, the local police are 'Guardians of the Faith,' and soldiers are 'Angels.' All the stores have biblical names such as 'Loaves and Fishes,' 'All Flesh,' and 'Milk and Honey.' Apparently, using religious terminology to describe everything in society helps to whitewash the political intrigues with a pious language. This functions as a constant reminder that the rulers of Gilead rely on the Bible's authority. The state's officialising a religious discourse that ignores and warps reality serves the needs of the new society's elite. Gilead develops a system of titles after making it prohibited for women to have jobs: Women are identified entirely by their gender roles as Wives, Handmaids, or Marthas while males are characterised by their military positions. By taking away women's individual names, the system attacks their individuality. Feminists and defective infants are referred to as 'Unwomen' and 'Unbabies,' respectively. Furthermore, Blacks and Jews are labelled as 'Children of Ham' and 'Sons of Jacob,' and thus are distinguished from the rest of the society.

Within this context, the ways how the state uses religion and language are handled with an Althusserian and Lacanian approach. Religion's becoming a patriarchal ideology and functioning as a promoter of male dominance and female oppression is manifested in this direction. Besides, knowledge once more appears to be an important element in the novel, which is openly shown through the fact that the exercise of reading is allowed only for the ones in power. Accordingly, the chapter makes references to Foucault and his approach to knowledge-power connection. His idea of the importance of discourse in creating reality and rewriting history as a means of power appears to be one of the central points in the work.

The conclusion part of the book provides the final interpretations and deductions on the issues of self and subjectivity in the selected novels. The way people living in these totalitarian regimes experience lifelong surveillance and the fact that it becomes impossible for them to preserve

their ‘real’ identities are disclosed. The malfunction of every single institution within totalitarianisms is proven by showing how these institutions turn into biased apparatuses in time. This necessarily helps such states to impose their ideologies and create free subjects.

I hope the information provided about the historical and social context of this tradition will help you to appreciate why our time is the high time for dystopian fiction. Furthermore, the links between the theories of such groundbreaking figures as Althusser and Foucault and the central issues of the genre are revealed with the intention of framing the arguments in the work. I started to write this work with an eye to making other people get acquainted with this eerie but awesome world. In the course of reading this work, I have no doubt that you will often find yourself comparing what you read with what you experience every day. For better or worse, this is my world, your world, our world…

# INTRODUCTION

The social and cultural factors have always been determinative on literary tendencies. It would not have been possible to witness the unique worlds of Metaphysical poets without the upheavals of the 17th century. People would be deprived of the sublimity of the Romantics if it were not for the dramatic changes of the 18th century. In a similar vein, Victorian literature was a direct reflection of the social conditions of the age. The same approach applies to the 20th century, as well. The world wars and cultural fluctuations of the period had an unprecedented influence over the philosophy and literature of the time.

From the very first years, the 20th century proved itself to be one of the most unstable and chaotic periods in history. The concept of humanity, civilisation, and longstanding values began to be deconstructed. The reflection of the occurrences of the time on literature, as it was on other fields of life, came out to be a highly pessimistic view of the world. Unsurprisingly, this view of the century echoed in the works of the prominent literati: *The Waste Land* (1922) was a product of the Great War and its devastating implications as much as that of Eliot's; the psychological breakdowns in Woolf's narratives were more about the disruption of her time than her imagination; Samuel Beckett's characterisation of his 'characterless' characters was nothing but a requirement of the prevailing feeling of hopelessness at the time. From this point of view, it can be claimed that modernism was a must rather than an intellectual preference.

For a world and humanity that had been unable to recover from the wrecks of the first one yet, the period after World War II was even more turbulent. Anything that had helped people to hold on to life from religion to philosophy until that time began to lose its validity. The dark atmosphere of the period necessitated radical reforms in the understanding of almost every area of life. The intellectuals were once more to face this hopeless vision and find an alternative way of thinking and living. However, this would be much more difficult than the previous occasions because literature had its share of the context and had already started to decline.

Although modernism had been the primary literary understanding for many years, it could not meet the philosophical needs anymore. This situation called for a new perspective and it was a partial return to Victorianism. Nonetheless, the realities of this society and those of the

Victorian period were different from each other as black and white. Therefore, men of letters sought new forms and narratives that could answer the neo-reality of this interregnum. The result of this process was postmodernism that corresponded to the current situation of post-war society. Within this context, it is easy to see the reasons why dystopian fiction, which can be handled within a relatively large span of time covering modernism and postmodernism, found the necessary ground to flourish during this period.

In general terms, dystopia, also known as anti-utopia, can be explained as a futuristic and fictional worldview where repressive social control and the pretence of an ideal society are maintained through an authoritarian understanding. The works of this genre have functioned as mirrors for people because they have shown them the dangers of the kind of society they were personally living in or could live in the future.

On the other hand, dystopian fiction must not be considered as a necessarily pessimistic way of writing or thinking. Although the genre is usually accepted to present a bleak view of the future, Woodcock draws attention to another aspect of such works and claims that dystopian novels are indeed warnings rather than prophecies because they raise awareness of the probable dangers inherent in modern societies.[1]

As to the framework the writers of dystopian fiction mostly adopt, it has a long tradition that precedes the emergence of the genre. Ritter argues this structure as dating back to Plato, who uses a 'three-tiered' society model which consists of a small group of leaders at the top, followed by a larger governing class and finally the common people, its largest but least powerful group.[2] Indeed, it is possible to see a similar social formation in many dystopic works as most of them deal with a totalitarian regime and such regimes usually employ this kind of structure: A few people seize power and oppress the rest of the society as they want. However, dystopian writers believe in the inner power of the common people. Although they mostly lack education and social consciousness, their ability to feel makes them the only hope for a more humane life. Eugen Weber explains the issue as follows:

> Insofar as the anti-utopian allows us a glimmer of hope, it lies in the instincts, in fantasy, in the irrational, in the peculiarly individualistic and egoistical characteristics most likely to shatter any system or order. This accounts for the importance of basic feelings--sex, love, selfishness,

[1] George Woodcock, "Five Who Fear the Future," *New Republic*, Vol. 134 (April 1956): 18.
[2] Ritter, "The Dystopian Vision: A Study of the Modern Dystopian Novel," 8.

> fantasy – which all utopian planners try to control and in which all anti-utopians seem to put their faith, insofar as they have any faith.[3]

At this point, a structuralist approach may help to understand Weber's ideas better. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) puts forward that binary oppositions are crucial to see the dynamics of language and thinking. According to him, such oppositions determine not only linguistic but also intellectual borders of people because the meaning of something is only possible in comparison to its contrast. In the 20th century, the binary system was begun to be questioned and developed. Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) brought a new dimension to the idea of oppositions and tried to deconstruct the binaries to reveal the artificiality and invalidity of this mechanism. He showed that the societies and cultures, especially the Western ones, had been using oppositions in their discourses for centuries and the underlying reason had always been showing themselves as the better side while marginalising the others. In the light of this information, Weber's argument makes more sense as it explains why most regimes need such oppositions first to gain and then maintain their authority. The so-called superiority of reason over emotion and rational over irrational are some of the norms that are continuously injected into people in dystopian regimes. Such regimes otherise anything related to the emotional aspect of people in a systematic way and thus easily oppress them. In this parallel, many dystopian authors put faith in the disadvantaged groups and appreciate their instinctive behaviours.

Dystopian fiction is usually considered as a recent phenomenon because it does not have a long history as a genre. However, it is possible to find works featuring dystopian themes in the distant past. An analysis of the works that can be categorised as 'utopian' reveals that dystopian fiction has its roots from the same origin. This makes the study of utopia the first step of understanding dystopia. As Browning puts forward, ever since Sir Thomas More coined the term 'Utopia' in 1516, it has been assumed to be referring to an imaginary and perfect society.[4] However, a close reading of the work together with the title, which literally means 'nowhere land,' reveals that it is as much about dystopia as utopia. The title is of Greek origin, and it consists of the Greek for 'not' (οὐ) and 'place' (τόπος); therefore, it could be translated as 'nowhere land' or 'no

[3] Eugene Weber, "The Anti-Utopia of the Twentieth Century," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 58 (1959): 446.
[4] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 1.

place.'[5] In this parallel, Bertrand de Jouvenel explains that what the term 'utopia' meant for Thomas More must have been something between 'outopia' (no place) and 'eutopia' (the good place); and the resulting implication might be that the society could become 'eutopian' if ever realised, yet no such place is possible on earth.[6] This point of view supports the argument *Utopia* is about the impossibility of a utopian world in this world, and so an implication of a dystopian world view from a broader perspective.

Although utopia is presented as the opposite of dystopia, the line between the two is often too blurred to make an exact difference. There are almost no distinctive features relating the form or content since both genres have similar approaches in terms of these constituents. For example, many utopian works include socialist elements, just as several dystopian works do. In fact, the connection between socialist elements and utopian works dates back to *The Republic*, which puts the mutual or group needs above those of the individual. Likewise, what Thomas More tries to do in his *Utopia* is to create a society where the citizen comes before the individual:

> More believed in the possibility of constructing a res publica – neither Society nor State but what links the two, the submission of each person to laws, and, above all, the absolute triumph of the citizen over the individual, translated into the holding in common of all goods, according to the principle enunciated by Plato.[7]

Furthermore, there is the problem of how to define a utopia. While the imaginary worlds portrayed in the utopian works may be the ideal worldviews for their authors, they may seem as rather undesirable societies for others. In other words, "what may be utopia to one person might seem its opposite to another, and vice versa."[8] In this context, what separates dystopian from utopian is the tone of the works. Ritter shows Campanella's *City of the Sun* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as examples and claims that both works employ the same means, such as flogging and torture, for the same ends, to force the inhabitants to be good

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[5] Margaret Drabble, ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (5th edition) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1019.

[6] Bertrand de Jouvenel, "Utopia for Practical Purposes," *Daedalus*, Vol. 94/2 (1965): 437.

[7] Schaer, Roland. "Utopia, Space, Time, History". In *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*, eds. Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

[8] Krishan Kumar, "The Ends of Utopia," *New Literary History* Vol. 41, No. 3 (2010): 555.

citizens.[9] In spite of the similarity concerning the authors' literary techniques, the tone of the novels renders Campanella's narrative a utopia of the Renaissance and Orwell's a modern dystopia. From this perspective, it can be argued that dystopia has a much longer history than it is often assumed to have. As Manuel points out, "[a] literary tradition satirizing utopian idealism has existed as long as the tradition picturing ideal societies."[10] He supports this argument with the example of Aristophanes's *A Parliament of Women* (B.C. 391), which he takes as a negative parallel for Plato's *Republic* (B.C. 375). Nevertheless, despite its historical implications, dystopian fiction could not establish itself as a genre until the period between 1920 and 1949: "When one thinks of anti-utopian fiction, though, he ordinarily thinks of the period between 1920, the year when Eugene Zamiatin's *We* was published, and 1949, the publication of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*."[11]

When the social and cultural context is taken into consideration, the period seems to be the brilliant moment for the development of the genre: The wars, economic upheavals, loss of belief in everything from God to science were among the most significant factors of the time, and these made it the perfect time for the outbreak of the genre. However, there was another central parameter: Karl Marx (1818-1883). His ideas began to replace traditional utopian philosophy as a practical and achievable solution to the social problems that arose in the 19th century. Nonetheless, the first realisation of communism, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics turned into a dictatorship in a short time. This led people to question the principles of communism, as well. The authors began to manifest the possible results of such an ideology, and *We* appeared as one of the best products of this process. This was in part the spark that ignited the change from utopian to dystopian futuristic outlooks; and as a result, the dystopian literature became more popular than the traditional forms of utopianism at the turn of the century. In this sense, dystopian fiction was not a simple reaction to the unrealistic ideals of utopia: It was rather an attempt to question the dominant ideology under which it had flourished.

On the other hand, it is a must to consider the philosophical tendencies of the period to understand the underlying meaning and theoretical basis of many themes dystopian authors frequently study in their works. In this regard, the arguments of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault, together with the feminist approach specific to the

[9] Ritter, "The Dystopian Vision: A Study of the Modern Dystopian Novel," 2.
[10] Frank E. Manuel, "Toward s Psychological History of Utopias," *Daedalus* Vol. 94, No. 2 (1965): 295.
[11] Manuel, "Toward s Psychological History of Utopias," 311.

analysis of *The Handmaid's Tale*, are of vital importance. The context of the 19th century had led to a sceptical opinion of the self. Unlike the rationalists such as Kant in the 18th century, who took the conscious mind as the determinative feature of the human's relationship with the world, 19th century fiction frequently portrayed the rational as attracted towards the dark and ambiguous urges it had been previously thought to govern. From this point of view, the appearance of Sigmund Freud's writings at the end of the 19th and in the early years of the 20th century seems to systematise a form of the self that had been developing for a while.

Freud (1856-1939) was interested in various fields from biology to physiology; however, he is best known for the new perspective he brought to the understanding of human personality and the structure of the self. According to Freudian theory, the human mind is divided into three layers. The conscious mind comprises all the things that people are aware of and can quickly bring to consciousness. In this direction, he coins the term 'pre-consciousness,' which refers to the memory of anything that can easily be made conscious: The memories that one is not thinking about at the very moment, but still can quickly recall. The unconscious, on the other hand, refers to the realm that is held outside of consciousness, but still continues to influence people's behaviours. It mostly functions with the principle of repression because it tries to withhold the undesired or unacceptable urges from becoming conscious.[12] It encompasses everything that is not immediately available to awareness, including many elements such as urges or instincts as well as items that are buried there because they are too painful to remember. Whether they are basic impulses for food or sex or the motives of an artist or scientist, the unconscious, according to Freud, is the root of human motivations. However, people are always motivated to deny or avoid being aware of these motivations, and so they are available only in disguised forms.

In almost all of Freud's theories, the idea of the unconscious plays a vital role, and he takes dreams as one of the main ways to see what lies outside people's consciousness. Accordingly, he considers the interpretation of dreams as "the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" and claims that by analysing dreams, one can see both how the unconscious mind functions and what it tries to conceal from consciousness.[13] He divides dream material into two categories, manifest and latent, and claims that it is the latent content which preserves the

[12] Sigmund Freud, *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology* (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 116.
[13] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 604.

dream's hidden and symbolic meanings. Dreams are a form of wish fulfilment. By taking unconscious thoughts, impulses, and desires and transforming them into less damaging ways, people are able to reduce the insecurity of the ego. In this sense, dreams appear as the instances when defence mechanisms are activated. As people attempt to remove the undesired or inappropriate thoughts and memories, they hide behind various defence mechanisms. In order to prevent people from facing unpleasant or disappointing circumstances, these mechanisms operate on the unconscious level and thus echo in dreams. As such, the analysis of the defence mechanisms, which are "a kind of mental shortcuts one uses for the preservation of self-esteem" becomes indispensable for understanding the latent content of the dreams and thus disclosing the mechanisms of the unconscious.[14] For Freud, dreams are the most effective moments that disclose the things hidden in the unconsciousness about people's identities. Offering significant implications for a wide range of areas from psychology to semiotics, Freud's views on the psyche, dreams, and defence mechanisms have proven to be highly influential. His theories challenge the preceding arguments and reveal the importance and dominance of the unconscious over the conscious. With this theory, he suggests that a person's public personality is not reflective of his true self in the literal sense and that everything he masks reveals more about his true character. The effects of his vision and the almost inexhaustibility of his intellectual legacy are largely responsible for the concept of 'psychological man,' which replaced the previous conceptions such as political, religious, or economic man and became the dominant self-image of the 20th century.

It can be alleged that modern psychoanalysis developed as an interpretation of and as a reaction to Freudian psychoanalysis. For Freud, the object of psychoanalysis was simply the unconscious and he mostly tried to observe it through dreams and free association. Importantly, what he studied was not exactly the patients' dreams but the patients' reports of their dreams. It was for this reason that he spent a lot of time analysing linguistic aspects of the patients' accounts of dreams, such as puns and slips of the tongue. However, modern linguistics had not been invented then – Saussure's lectures were not published until 1916, seventeen years after *The Interpretation of Dreams* – and so, he had to "invent his own categories and terminology to describe what he found."[15] Therefore, his ideas have undergone fundamental changes in time, and Jacques Lacan

[14] Phebe Cramer, *Protecting the Self: Defense Mechanisms in Action* (New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 4.
[15] Jan Miel, "Jacques Lacan and the Structure of the Unconscious," *Yale French Studies* Vol. 36/37 (1966): 107.

(1901-1981) reidentified many of his theories: Freud's superego, ego, and id were renamed as the symbolic order, the imaginary order, and the real, respectively.

Lacan became acquainted with the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure and his contemporaries, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He could be accurately described as restructuring Freudian psychoanalysis in the way Louis Althusser did for the Marxist theory. He strongly believed that a Saussurean-assisted reconstruction of the essential nature of language was the secret to the continuation of Freud's groundbreaking approach to psychic subjectivity for both clinical and metapsychological studies.

Like many other theories of Freud, the concept of the unconscious gains a new meaning and dimension with Lacan who claims that most of Freud's adherents misunderstood the idea of the unconscious and reduced it to being merely the seat of the instincts.[16] Against this biologistic mode of thought, he argues that the unconscious is essentially linguistic, not instinctual.[17] The idea behind this argument is that the urge as it informs us through the unconscious is no longer the organic mechanism that can be observed and accounted for by the biologist: It is verbalised and, as a result, its nature is completely different and requires different analytical methods. One of the pioneers of this new linguistic approach, Lacan presents a reworking of Freudian principles with a focus on the human subject and its relationship to language. He demonstrates that Freud's terminology may be directly converted into the line with modern structural linguistics and that there is a very close correspondence between Freud's terms and the concepts found by modern linguistics. In this parallel, 'the unconscious is structured like a language,' as his most renowned maxim has it, is more than a simple aphorism in understanding Lacan's perception of the unconscious and language from a Freudian point of view. In a 1953 article titled "The Function and The Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," he particularises his declaration for the project of psychoanalysis as a return to Freud. When he tries to explain the unconscious, he refers to three qualities, the most significant of which is its depending on language; the other two being its going unnoticed and its validity only for the speaking beings.[18] He emphasises the centrality of language as a constitutive of the unconscious and tries to integrate

[16] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), 147.
[17] Lacan, *Écrits*, 170.
[18] John Gasperoni, "The Unconscious is Structured like a Language," *Qui Parle* Vol. 9, No. 2 (1996): 78.

language analysis into psychoanalytic theory. In this new formulation, the unconscious is not only constructed like a language but it is language itself in the sense that the unconscious is constituted by language. Nonetheless, this necessitates reconsidering what is implied by language. Lacan claims that language appoints not only to verbal speech or written text but to any signifying system that is built on variable relations. As it is a signifying process that involves coding and decoding, the unconscious is structured like a language. By means of the sliding of the signified underneath the signifier and the inability of meaning to be established, the unconscious emerges in the symbolic order in the space between signifier and signified.

The relationship between language and consciousness is also an important issue in the fields of science related to the mind and language. The question of whether language defines thoughts and behaviours, or vice versa, has been studied by psychologists and linguists for a long time. However, it is not possible to give a single and definite answer to this question because the answer is directly related to another question: Does language precede thought or the opposite? Traditionally, the opinion has been in favour of the latter. In this understanding, the idea is that thought, or consciousness, exists before language and so language is shaped and determined by consciousness. From this perspective, language has an expressive function as people use it to express their already existing thoughts.

Lacan, however, has a different theory about the issue. For him, language does not simply express thought; on the contrary, it constitutes thought because consciousness can only begin with language by means of the signifying system. In this view, language exists before consciousness, which means consciousness is shaped and limited by language. He is of the opinion that language is already there when people are born, and in order to take part in the human world, people need to situate themselves in the field of language. As the post-structuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) highlights in his *Of Grammatology* (1967), it is impossible to pinpoint a single moment that may be referred to as the beginning of language.

It is easy to notice a linguistic determinism in Lacan's approach to language-consciousness relevance. Linguistic determinism is the belief that language and its components define and restrict human experience and perception. Although he had lived before 'the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' was formulated as the primal form of linguistic determinism, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) can be argued to show the first signs of this proposition. To explain his conception of language, Nietzsche uses the metaphor of prison. In his opinion, language is like a prison because it sets

borders for people's intellectual sphere. He also uses this argument for cultural studies, showing this aspect of language as the main reason for cultural differences: Since the language is different, the thought process is also and naturally different among different cultures.

One of Lacan's radical contributions to 20th century psychoanalysis is surely his redefining some Freudian theories within the realm of structural linguistics. It was mostly thanks to him that language gained more and more importance and it was understood that language has a more central role in human life than historically thought to have. According to this new perspective on the function of language, nothing can be made present except through language. Or to put it differently, the problems, values, and differences in our everyday experiences are the outcomes of our using language and playing the language game.[19]

When the point in question is the 20th century, it is not possible not to refer to Louis Pierre Althusser (1918-1990). Generally referred to as a structuralist Marxist, he developed theories that posed a new perspective and understanding of Marx's ideas particularly in the second half of the century. Most of his arguments were formed against the dangers he felt about the theoretical foundations of Marxism which fundamentally embodied the problem of ideology. In this direction, his theories on the formation and maintenance of ideology have made a lasting effect on philosophical and literary circles since he first introduced his arguments.

Althusser formed a completely different approach towards the concept of ideology from the previous and traditional Marxist thinkers. He varied from former Marxist understandings of ideology by depending on the theories of Jacques Lacan to explain how ideology operates in a society. In the previous approach, ideology was thought to cause what was referred to as 'false consciousness,' or an erroneous understanding of how the world functioned. Althusser explains that for Marx "ideology is thought as an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream."[20] He indicates this aspect of the Marxist approach to highlight the fact that it was an understanding that embraced the imaginary and moved away from reality. By pointing to the actual world veiled by ideology, the conventional way of thinking about ideology caused Marxists to illustrate how ideologies were false. By contrast, according to Althusser, it is not possible to access the real by unveiling ideology because what it represents is not the real world but the imaginary

[19] Guan-Hua Huang, "Reading Lacan: Structure, Ideology, and Identity," (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2003), 8.
[20] Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 108.

relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, which means the thing ideology stands for is already one step away from the reality. This approach definitely corresponds to Lacan's theories on the Imaginary and the Real, and thus puts forward the link between language and ideology. He refers to Lacanian theory of language-identity connection and reveals the fact that individuals are caught up in ideology because they depend on language to set up reality: Different ideologies are merely different projections of social and invented reality, not the Real itself. This ever-presence and eternality of ideology can also be associated with the Freudian idea of the unconscious.

Althusser also differs from the former conceptions of ideology by claiming that ideology has a material existence and thus, unlike the previous arguments, it is more practical than theoretical. He supports this theory by claiming that ideology is always present in an apparatus and its practice: "Ideology exists in institutions and the practices specific to them. We are even tempted to say, more precisely: ideology exists *in apparatuses* and *the practices specific to them*."[21] He elaborates his conceptualisation of ideology in his 1970 essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation." The essay has a central role in understanding Althusser's approach to the issue in that it brings forth the latent connection between the state and the individual. It investigates the state, its various mechanisms, and the psychological interaction that occurs between the state and the citizen under the veil of ideology. The main idea in the essay is that the regimes, especially the totalitarian ones, use ideology to maintain their control over the citizens by producing subjects, the people who believe in the naturality of their role and position within the social structure. According to Althusser, the fundamental purpose of ideology is, in fact, to develop concrete individuals as subjects. He believes that it is not possible to evade ideology or avoid being subjected to it. As a result, man always lives in a world of 'doxas' (ideologies) and is incapable of understanding the truth, as in Plato's cave metaphor. Furthermore, as he argues, because man is an 'ideological animal' in essence, he is confined to the cave of doxas eternally. Therefore, one can never be a free individual because he is bound to remain a subject of some ideology by his nature.[22] Moving from this understanding, he asserts that all individuals are nothing but subjects, which is the primary purpose

[21] Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. Trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2014), 156.
[22] Aslı Daldal, "Power and Ideology in Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A Comparative Analysis," *Review of History and Political Science* Vol. 2, No. 2 (2014): 159.

of all ideologies: "All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects."[23]

What Althusser means by 'subject' may be confusing as he uses both 'free subjectivity' and 'subjected being' when he refers to the issue, and thus it is important to recognise the difference between the two. He uses the term 'free subjectivity' to refer to an individual who is responsible for his actions. On the other hand, when individuals are exposed to ideology and behave in accordance with its doctrines, they turn into subjected beings, people who submit to an authority and are therefore deprived of all freedom but that of freely accepting submission. In this direction, Althusser claims that all types of ideologies, from religious to political ones, are functional in the full sense since they are necessary to produce and secure the social system.[24] Ideology is the primary source of power for the rulers to control the physical and mental behaviours of the citizens, and hence to subjectify them. He finds the power of ideology mostly in its being 'invisible' in a sense; that is, its ability to hide itself so that people do not realise the direct connection between the dominant ideology and subjectivation of a citizen: "That is why those who are in ideology believe themselves by definition outside ideology: one of the effects of ideology is the practical denegation of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says, 'I am ideological.'"[25]

Althusser's account of ideology is as much about Marxism as psychoanalysis. His arguments have notable implications for not only the theories of Marx but also those of Freud and Lacan, which can be shown as the basic reason for the depth of his intellectual legacy. When the most efficacious theories developed by Althusser are considered, however, Gramsci is worth special mention, as well. A principal scholar in the evolution of Western Marxism, Gramsci's idea of the relative independence of ideology and its determining influences on man's political consciousness had a great effect on Althusser, who later handled and detailed this conception. As Daldal puts forward, "Althusser, in a way, systematized what was implicit in Gramsci: He based ideology on social formations and the dissemination of the particular bourgeois ideology on the Ideological State Apparatuses (a more broadened and massive conception of civil society)."[26]

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[23] Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, 115.
[24] Huang, "Reading Lacan: Structure, Ideology, and Identity," 62.
[25] Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, 118.
[26] Daldal, "Power and Ideology in Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A Comparative Analysis," 158.

Since Althusser believed that the interests, preferences, and judgments of an individual are the results of social practices, he found it important to understand how society creates the person in its own image. The human within capitalist societies is commonly considered as a subject bestowed with the attribute of being a self-conscious and responsible agent whose actions can be explained by his/her beliefs and ideas. For Althusser, though, the ability of a person to evaluate himself/herself in this way is not inherent or granted. Rather, it is obtained within the structure of existing social practices that exercise on individuals the role (forme) of a subject. Individual qualities are determined by social practices, which also offer the individual a notion of the range of characteristics that he or she can acquire; that is, these practices determine the limits of the self and in a way mould the individuals. What Althusser claims is that most people's roles and activities are given to them by social practices. For instance, what the builders do is a part of economic practice while the production of lawyers is part of the legal practice. The problem, however, is that other characteristics of individuals, such as their beliefs and ideas, do not fit into any of these categories. At this point, the concept of ideology intercedes. Our values, desires, and preferences are indoctrinated in us by ideological practice, which has the basic function of turning individuals into subjects.

The ideological practice consists of a set of institutions that are named 'Ideological State Apparatuses' (ISAs), which include such institutions as family, religion, and education system. The point with Ideological State Apparatuses is that they use non-violent methods and they are part of civil society; that is, they are ostensibly apolitical. Rather than asserting and enforcing order by physical repression, they propagate ideas that support the dominant group's authority, and thus people are frequently driven with fear of social disapproval such as marginalisation, humiliation, and seclusion. Althusser's argument here strongly draws from Jacques Lacan's concept of the mirror stage: "We acquire our identities by seeing ourselves somehow mirrored in ideologies."[27] The other side of the coin, the term 'Repressive State Apparatuses' (RSAs) is generally used as a synonym of 'hard power,' which means, unlike the type of power used by Ideological State Apparatuses, a form of power that operates by means of violence and uses force to obtain compliance in the society. The Repressive State Apparatuses fundamentally consist of the army, the police, the judiciary, and the prison system and they function mainly by violence, which does

[27] Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". In *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, ed. Louis Althusser (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 162.

not always take place in the physical form. These apparatuses are designed to punish anybody who rejects the dominant ideology and in this direction, they function predominantly by physical repression. However, the fact that they are almost always ideological in the second place is an important point within this context as it proves that there is no such thing as a purely Repressive Apparatus. For example, the Army is a type of Repressive Apparatus in the first place, yet it is always ideological as it maintains its existence by forcing the subjects to obey the principles of the predominant ideology. Similarly, one may argue that the Ideological State Apparatuses are primarily motivated by ideology, but they are also driven by repression even if this occurs in an attenuated and concealed, even symbolic way. In this sense, every State Apparatus, irrespective of being repressive or ideological, works on the principle of both violence and ideology. The only difference is about priority. While Ideological Apparatuses prioritise ideology and put violence to the second rank, Repressive ones do the opposite and thus, it is not possible to name an apparatus purely as ideological or repressive.

One way or another, apparatuses have a significant place in Althusserian theory as they form the mechanism that, physically and/or psychologically, imposes ideology to people and thereby subjectifies them under the control of the dominant discourse. Thus, they help the powerful group to keep power and control people by creating a world that is surrounded by ideology. Althusser's theories about ideology, subjected beings, and the role of State Apparatuses in this process are of vital importance to understand the working of social practices in the societies. These arguments shed light on the mechanism that first interpellates and then subjectifies the citizens. Within this framework, his conception of 'free subject' as a person who internalises and naturalises ideology under the mask of reality is a principal proposition.

The role and design of ideology have remained unchanged all through history in spite of its numerous institutional forms: Ideology has no history. All ideologies constitute a subject, and furthermore, the transformation of an individual into a subject begins even before birth. At this point, Althusser refers to Spinoza's theory of immanence. To emphasise this, he presents the example of Christianity which instructs a person on what his position in the universe is and what he must do to be reconciled with Christ, and he draws the point that in order for that person to identify himself as a Christian, he has to become a subject first.[28] In this way, the State Apparatuses utilise ideological power to compel individuals

[28] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", 166.

to conform willingly, and this compulsion necessitates the employment of discipline mechanisms in a Foucauldian sense to guarantee people's subservience and obedience.

Corresponding with Althusserian approach, discourse became one of the most central terms in social sciences. The term 'discourse' can be defined in different ways depending on the field of study in which it is handled. A linguistic perspective, for example, defines discourse as an entity that refers to "the speech patterns and usage of language, dialects, and acceptable statements within a community."[29] On the other hand, it is taken as a more general notion that directs and shapes people's beliefs, feelings, and behaviours in terms of sociology. However, there is no doubt that the concept of discourse gains a new meaning, an unprecedented depth and a larger scope together with Foucault's theories which combine the ideas of both a linguist and a sociologist about the issue. In this new formulation, discourse is not only a linguistic phenomenon but rather it is a social construction.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was undoubtedly one of the most influential and controversial scholars during the post-World War II period. Educated at the Lycée Henri-IV where he developed an interest in philosophy and came under the influence of his tutor Louis Althusser, he mainly focalised on the concept of discourse and how it is employed as a form of social control by way of social foundations. He had a critical approach to the idea of ideology because of its implications about universal rationality and objective truth. In this regard, he found it necessary to replace this term with an equally inclusive one, and thus he preferred to use the word 'discourse' to describe a social system that generates knowledge and meaning based on historical circumstances. In this context, discourse refers to a method of organising knowledge that shapes the formation of social interactions through acceptance of discourse as social truth. From a Foucauldian perspective, discourses are formed by means of the impacts of power within a social structure. Because a discourse assigns a fixed meaning to a text, it excludes competing perceptions and connotations. This discursive process is about eliminating text variables in order to minimise deviations that may undermine or unsettle the discourse's meaning and power: "In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off

[29] Victor Pitsoe and Moeketsi Letseka, "Foucault's Discourse and Power: Implications for Instructionist Classroom Management," *Open Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2013): 24.

its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality."[30]

A discourse generates an epistemic reality and becomes a discipline device by establishing the meaning of the text and pre-determining the standards of rationality by which propositions are acknowledged as truth. Anything that does not adhere to the formulated truth of discourse is labelled as deviant, meaning it exists outside of discourse. Discourse, as a social structure, is produced and maintained by those who keep the power. For Foucault, they are about not just what may be said and conceived, but also who can talk, when, and with what status. Therefore, they include meaning and social connections, as well as subjectivity and power dynamics, and are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak."[31] Moreover, discourses are formed by not only inclusions but also exclusions; that is, they are about both what can be said and what cannot. Other discourses, alternative meanings, and assertions are in opposition to these exclusions and inclusions, and this is exactly Foucault's principle of discontinuity: "[d]iscourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy."[32] Considering all these arguments, discourse can be thought as a concept interwoven with power and knowledge to constitute the oppression serving to marginalise, silence and oppress the 'others.' Control of knowledge, in this sense, turns into a form of oppression because only certain groups can have access to specific knowledge. The principles that govern the selection and organisation of knowledge in society are under the responsibility of those with authority and only when the discourse is confirmed by society can it become knowledge.

When Foucault explains knowledge, he neither bases it on a correspondence with objective truth nor considers it as a totally subjective experience: It is the result of common norms and social practices acting within and between discourses, and it is intricately related to an individual's sense-making processes.[33] As to his conceptualisation of

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[30] Foucault, Michel. "The Order of Discourse". In *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 52.

[31] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 49.

[32] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 101.

[33] Olsson, Michael R. "Michel Foucault: Discourse, power/ knowledge, and the battle for truth". In *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science*, eds.

power, it can be interpreted as a dynamic of control and lack of control between discourses and the subjects: "Power is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects."[34] Knowledge, in his opinion, is intrinsically linked to power to the point that they are frequently expressed as power/knowledge. He uses this phrase to emphasise that the two are inextricably connected and that knowledge advances the interests of certain groups while disadvantaging others. In this sense, power is obtained from established forms of knowledge: "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations."[35]

Foucault held a special interest towards the issues of power and social change. According to him, all types of governments, no matter what their names are, have always exercised power on their citizens to control them even though power may have appeared in different shapes. He gives the example of modern states to support his point as he claims that though the new form of government no longer relies on torture and public hangings as punishments, it still tries to control people's bodies by means of a different method, by focusing on their minds. While the strategies used in the past to ensure conformity were often very harsh, power operated in an inconsistent and intermittent way in such a system since much of the social totality was beyond its scope. Modern society, on the other hand, has seen the introduction of increasingly oppressive instruments of power that wield a much more rigorous social and psychological authority than was formerly possible:

> According to Foucault, pre-modern modes of power, which relied on a religious obedience and vicious force, by the late eighteenth century could no longer cope with the mobile and fractured nature of the human population. A new type of power arose, one invested in systems of social administration rather than lodged in individuals and titles – in other words, a power built around institutions (prisons, workhouses, schools, factories, hospitals, barracks) rather than around kings and aristocrats. In order that

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Gloria J. Leckie, Lisa M. Given and John E. Buschman (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2010), 66.

[34] Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1987), 113.

[35] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 27.

> human populations could be better organised, new mechanisms of power needed to be developed.[36]

Moving from this point of view, Foucault argues that in modern societies, effects of power "circulate through progressively finer channels, gaining access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions."[37] Accordingly, he asks for an acknowledgement of the ways in which knowledge and power were often intertwined in historically unique situations, thus shaping the complicated dynamics of what he names 'pouvoir-savoir.' In his perspective, the subject does not exist as a thing that happens naturally but is constructed by the cooperation of power and knowledge. He attributes great importance to the concept of 'power' and explains it as a determinant of individuality as he argues that power precedes the individual and whatever thought to be making up the individuality is indeed the effects of power.[38] From this point of view, power is everywhere and power dynamics are rooted in social life.

Jeremy Bentham's eighteenth-century theory of the Panopticon occupies an important place within Foucauldian philosophy. In this model, there is a tower with large windows in the centre and they open into the inward side of the ring. The structure's peripheral structure is split into cells with two windows, one facing the tower walls while the other facing the outside, and thus producing a backlighting effect to make any figure visible inside the cell: "All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, or a worker or a schoolboy."[39] The design is based on the idea that one can be under observation any time even though he/she may not be watched at that specific moment. This situation of uncertainty makes people think and behave according to certain doctrines all the time. For Bentham, the Panopticon includes two different aspects of power. While it enables to observe and punish people with unacceptable attitudes on the one hand, it also makes the inmates feel the gaze of the watchman, and this results in their exercising power on themselves and becoming self-disciplining subjects: "This effect is precisely what Bentham believed the panoptic prison would produce. Seeing the guard tower or believing the guards were watching, inmates would adjust their behaviour to

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[36] Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway* (NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 58.
[37] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: The Harvester Press, 1980), 151.
[38] Mansfield, *Subjectivity*, 55.
[39] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200.

conform to norms they expected the guards to enforce."[40] Modern societies have employed this model so that they have been able to control masses without much effort in the real sense. According to Foucault, the Panopticon is the embodiment of the institutions pursuing 'discipline.' Jeremy Bentham's design, in this sense, exemplifies the core of disciplinary society. For Foucault, the structure and effects of the Panopticon resonate throughout societies and in this direction, he asks a question: "Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"[41] It is obvious that he does not consider societal institutions like schools or hospitals as different from prisons since they have the same panoptic ideology in the background: They are all designed by the dominant discourse and for the same purpose.

Foucault's theories provide the basis to understand the connection between discourse, knowledge, and power. The role of surveillance in helping the oppressive governments to exert power over the masses can be elaborated by means of these approaches. His idea of 'subject' as the docile and self-disciplining individual is seen to be the inevitable result of these dynamics.

The aim of this book is to examine the issues of self and subjectivity in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), the three pioneering works of 20th century dystopian fiction. With this design, the study provides the social, political, and philosophical background that explains the context leading to the displacement of the utopian worldview by the dystopian one. With an interdisciplinary research and the analyses of the novels, the process of creating 'free subjects' is manifested in depth. In relation to the arguments of Freud, Lacan, Althusser, and Foucault, the work puts forward how the totalitarian regimes suppress human psychology, use language as a means of narrowing the thought system, exploit the State Apparatuses to promote the dominant ideology, and monopolise knowledge to eternise their power. Regarding this, the indispensable role of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon model for the maintenance of totalitarianism is also elaborated.

The book clarifies that the transformation of the individuals into subjected beings is enabled by means of the aforementioned policies which necessarily end up with the privilege of the mass over the individual.

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[40] Deborah G. Johnson and Priscilla M. Regan, eds., *Transparency and Surveillance as Sociotechnical Accountability: A House of Mirrors* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 16.

[41] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 228.

Adopting a comparative study of the three benchmarks of dystopian fiction, this work intends to make a distinctive contribution to the field of literature in terms of the issues of self and subjectivity in the 20th century dystopian fiction.

# CHAPTER ONE

# *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*

"War is peace; Freedom is slavery; Ignorance is strength."[1]

A highly prolific novelist, poet, and essayist, Eric Arthur Blair, mostly known as George Orwell, was born in 1903 in India where his father was working as an Agent of the Indian Civil Service. In a little while, almost one year after his birth, he was taken to England for education and to be taken care of by his mother. He was a studious student and was educated at prestigious boarding schools in England as a scholarship student. However, he did not seem to enjoy life and education since it was really difficult for him to fit in at the schools and the education system in general. The main reason behind this was the strict class system that he witnessed at these schools where the rich and poor students were treated totally differently, Orwell himself being a member of the latter. Therefore, he mostly felt oppressed and enraged by the segregationist and authoritarian control that the schools exerted over students.

For this very reason, together with financial problems, he decided to drop out of college after graduating from Eton and to serve in Burma as a British Imperial Policeman. In 1921, he became a police officer in Burma where he was expected to follow the strict rules of a political system he despised. His first novel, *Burmese Days* (1934), was mostly about his experiences in Burma as a policeman. He started to regard his duties with contempt in a short time, and thus resigned in 1927. After his resignation, he left India and started to live a turbulent life. During this time, he travelled with vagrants and lived among the destitute and homeless in London and Kent to discover if the English poor were mistreated in their land in the same manner that the Burmese poor were in theirs. Inspired by Jack London's 1903 book *The People of the Abyss*, which explored life in London's poor areas, he got ragged clothes from a second-hand store and

[1] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: The Annotated Edition* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 6.

started to live among the very poor to get first-hand experience. Orwell then moved to Paris in 1928 and lived there for about a year and a half, writing novels and short stories which no one would publish. His first full-length work, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), was based on this period. Such experiences helped to shape his literary character as they enabled him to see and criticise the shortcomings of his society such as poverty and strict class system: *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published in 1936, was a documentary account of poverty in Britain and reflected what he witnessed during this process.

He travelled to Spain in 1936 to report on the Spanish Civil War. In this period, he observed the nightmarish massacres committed by fascist political regimes. He realised that all totalitarian regimes would end similarly no matter what the name of the system was. The rise of dictators such as Adolf Hitler in Germany and Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union to power had a great influence on Orwell to get this impression. As a man with leftist views, he was deeply affected to see that Stalin's version of communism as carried out in the Soviet Union had nothing to do with the image of socialism he had envisioned.

Laden with disappointment and frustration with Stalin's communism, he dedicated his attention to writing politically motivated novels to reveal the possible outcomes of all totalitarian regimes, right-wing or left-wing being the same. He would frankly name himself as a socialist, a reality he put forward when he said everything he had written for a number of years had been against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism.[2] In this direction, he wrote *Animal Farm* in 1945 and then *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949 where he prophesied a dark future for humanity and described a nightmare that had already been actualised by Stalin in Russia. He tried to warn the readers about the fact that identifying oneself with seemingly progressive policies like a centralised economy and state-based liberal projects can be potentially harmful if one does not think and act rationally and objectively. Accordingly, he became to be known as a legendary icon of resistance to political hypocrisy and dictatorship.[3]

His democratic socialism shaped the main theme in many of his works after 1936, a reality he did not deny, yet "the betrayal of the Russian Revolution" did not have less influence on his literary views.[4] *Nineteen*

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[2] Richard White, "George Orwell: Socialism and Utopia," *Utopian Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1 (2008): 80.
[3] Gordon B. Beadle, "George Orwell and the Victorian Radical Tradition," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Vol. 7, No. 4 (1975): 287.
[4] Erika Gottlieb, *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 247.

*Eighty-Four* came out as a result of his disappointment and was a direct attack on not only fascist regimes but also Soviet totalitarianism and the dangers inherent in communism. Nevertheless, it is not possible to ignore the impact of the century with all its implications:

> The bleak pessimism of *1984* stems in part from Orwell's early perception of the totalitarian nature of Communism and Fascism. But it is also partly the result of his conviction that the political history of the twentieth century had exposed some of the deepest convictions of the Victorian radicals as illusions. These illusions included the belief in the inevitability of evolutionary progress, the insistence upon the goodness and infinite perfectibility of man, and especially, the belief in the humane, progressive nature of science and technology.[5]

Ultimately, the dark vision of humanity in the novel could be argued to be a result of Orwell's personal contacts with the left and right wings together with his distrust of the earlier beliefs such as the idea of progress and the inner goodness of human.

"The purpose of a writer is to keep civilisation from destroying itself" says Albert Camus (1913-1960) in his speech at The Nobel Prize of 1957. In this way, he gives the writers a vital responsibility for the maintenance of the cultural and intellectual legacy of centuries. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was written before this statement, yet the novel is a perfect embodiment of what a writer is expected to do from a Camusian perspective. As a man who personally witnessed urgent social problems, Orwell wrote one of the most powerful warnings ever issued against the possible dangers of totalitarian regimes 'to keep civilisation from destroying itself.'

The novel differs from most of the other dystopian works in terms of its tangibility. In general, dystopian authors set their stories on remote or imaginary lands and in the distant future. Thus, the readers do not need to get alarmed because the narratives seem quite unlikely to happen in the real life. However, what Orwell relates in the novel is about what may happen in London in the near future if people do not take necessary precautions. This aspect makes the work much scarier as the readers cannot comfort themselves by 'remoteness' or 'artificiality' elements, which are common characteristics of the genre.

Written to demonstrate the dangers of absolute political power in an age of advanced technology, the novel is considered to be one of his best-crafted works. It is also one of the most renowned novels written in the

[5] Beadle, "George Orwell and the Victorian Radical Tradition," 298.

dystopian genre in portraying the worst human society imaginable. The writer attempts to persuade his readers to avoid any direction that could lead to such social degradation. Orwell's vision of a post-atomic dictatorship in which everybody is continually monitored via the telescreen seemed terrifyingly possible in 1949, at the dawn of the nuclear era, when television had not yet become a fixture in the family home. This idea of being observed all the time was a predecessor of a more general fear that would be dominant in the second half of the century.

In 1949, the Cold War had not intensified yet, many intellectuals embraced communism, and there was considerable uncertainty in the state of diplomacy between democratic and communist nations. Orwell, however, was profoundly troubled by the systematic brutality and injustice he encountered in communist countries. In particular, the role of technology in allowing authoritarian regimes to observe and regulate their people bothered him. The title of the novel was meant to convey to its readers the message that the story was a realistic possibility for the near future: Unless totalitarianism were resisted, a version of the world described in the novel might become reality in just within four decades.

Orwell himself was a 'political' man and he followed a political understanding in his works. In the same vein, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a political novel as it was written with the purpose of warning people against the dangers of a probable totalitarian government. After witnessing the lengths to which authoritarian regimes in Spain and Russia would go to maintain and extend their power, the author wrote it to raise consciousness in Western countries that were still uncertain about how to deal with the rise of communism. In this sense, the effect of the worrisome developments in Russia upon Orwell's attitude is undeniable: "The influence of *We* upon *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is obvious and significant. The Russian work, referred to by Orwell as "one of the literary curiosities of this book-burning age," is at least a partial source of the plot, characters, and symbols of Orwell's work."[6] Zamiatin, of course, was writing from personal observation. Orwell, lacking this advantage, was forced to depend upon the observations of others to some extent; his principal source of information being Trotsky, whose resemblance to Orwell's Goldstein seems to be projected by Orwell on purpose.[7]

In the novel, the readers follow the happenings in the outer world through the inner world of the protagonist whose thoughts and feelings are the most important elements to display the dystopic world around. The

[6] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 45.
[7] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 47.

main character, Winston Smith, works in the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth where he rewrites and sometimes destroys the documents so that they fit in with the Party's current policy. The name of the institution, the Ministry of Truth, is ironic just like all other names given to the institutions in the novel, a technique Orwell often consults to highlight the dangers of a political language and the arbitrariness of the language system in general. Lodged in his cubicle, Winston's job is to re-arrange or destroy anything that falls out of the regime's policy, which constantly changes. The fact that the central character of the novel works in a department where truth and history are changed is important to understand Orwell's one of the most primary messages: The success of a totalitarian regime mostly arises from the rulers' ability in rewriting history, disguising the facts, and in general manipulating the language to suit their own purposes.[8] Objective knowledge must be abolished as it has no room within totalitarian understandings, and this shows the vitality and significance of Winston's role in the system, whether willingly or not. For Orwell, lying is one of the defining features of totalitarianisms.

Winston seems to be a rebel at the beginning because he thinks and behaves differently from the other party members. His visits to the poor areas to buy first a diary and then a paperweight together with his discontent with such formalities as 'Two Minutes Hate,' where the citizens frantically try to prove their love and loyalty for Big Brother, render him the most, and the only probable hero for the readers. Furthermore, his rebellious and nonconforming character is strengthened after his intimacy with Julia, a so-called member of the Junior Anti-Sex League and a figure who appears to be the closest to Winston in denying the dogmas of the Party. However, the psychological and physical tortures which they face after having been arrested by the Thought Police ensure the Party's victory once again, which means their giving in and consequent subjectivation. By representing Winston as a typical human consciousness with whom one can readily identify, Orwell makes readers sense, as if in their own skin, what it is like to be living in the worst of all possible worlds in Oceania.[9]

In Orwell's Oceania, the one and only political party is INGSOC, an abbreviation of English Socialism, and its leader is Big Brother. Big Brother is most likely a non-existent figure having been invented for the telescreens only as an ideological myth of the self-sacrificing father-figure

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[8] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 108.
[9] Gottlieb, Erika. "George Orwell's Dystopias: Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four". In *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel: 1945-2000*, ed. Brian W. Shaffer (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 248.

who has everybody's love at heart. However, this love is mostly the result of the repressive ideology of the Party aiming to suppress human nature and individuality. This is a common totalitarian feature in which dehumanisation serves as the foundation for additional restrictions which are based on selfless individuals created by the political system's restrictive and oppressive laws.

As the political order foregrounded in the novel is totalitarianism, the system serves the interests of the rulers and the strong ones alone. The weak ones, like the proletariat, have no room within this understanding even though they form the majority of the society in number. The system is constructed on the desire for absolute power at any cost, and the demand for the individual's absolute, unlimited, unconditional, and unchangeable loyalty is ensured by control and punishment.[10]

In a broad sense, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a satire that criticises 20th century societies. The current government of the Party, indeed the condition Europe was in after World War II, is prophesied and caricatured over the narrative of Goldstein's work, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*. In this context, Oceania is a modern representation of the totalitarian state which exploits its citizens emotionally and physically, and more importantly it constitutes the individuals' minds in such a way that the people act and think in the dictated way. This is, to put it more explicitly, the process of subjectivation of the individuals.

To create the utmost effect, Orwell adopts a pessimistic tone that is dominant all through the novel as of the very beginning. The opening lines of the story remind of Eliot's 1922 poem *Waste Land*, accepted as one of the best representations of the hopelessness of humankind. Though the novel's opening with April seems to indicate a sense of freshness and new beginnings that may create a hopeful atmosphere, the author makes references to such elements as 'vile wind' and 'gritty dust' to imply the hostility of nature and life, an imagery that is detailed soon: "[t]he world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything. . ."[11]

The reflection and impression of nature on Winston clearly show that he does not feel himself a part of it, which foreshadows his perception of society and life in general. A symbol of the ordinary man living under totalitarianism, he is torn out of any emotional connection with life by means of an unceasing process of manipulation, which is promoted by the

[10] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1973), 323.
[11] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 4.

regime's policy of rewriting the truth, controlling the language, and thus compelling the citizens to conformity.

## 1.1 Manipulation via Surveillance, Oppression, and Fear: "We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness."

As most of the works written in the dystopian tradition do, manipulation is one of the core issues in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Adopting a multi-dimensional approach, Orwell analyses the psychological, cultural, and physical dimensions of the issue.

In the novel, the Party barrages its citizens with continuous psychological input to gradually overwhelm the mind's capacity for independent thought. Wherever they go, they are monitored by the telescreens. With the help of the telescreens and hidden microphones, people are unceasingly reminded that the authorities are scrutinising them. Additionally, the regime employs sophisticated strategies to exert large-scale control over the economic production and information sources.

There are posters all over London portraying a man staring down over the words 'BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.' It is important to note that Big Brother functions as the embodiment of the Party. He symbolises the ambiguity with which the Party's upper ranks present themselves. Just as it is difficult to know who really governs Oceania, what their lives are like, or why they act the way they do, even the existence of Big Brother is unknowable. Winston assumes Big Brother first appeared in 1960, but the Party's official documents date Big Brother's existence to the 1930s, long before Winston was born. In this way, the unpredictability of the system echoes on the characterisation of Big Brother. On the other hand, he is also portrayed as the leader and protector of the nation. The figure created, in this sense, is not only comforting (the warmth of his name suggests protection) but also threatening (one cannot avoid his gaze). Orwell explains the effect of Big Brother posters on the citizens at the very beginning of the novel: "On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move."[12]

The effect the poster creates on Winston is apparent. He feels the gaze of the regime in every moment and every move. The feeling of being observed and followed all the time is the first moment of subjectivation, which is the ultimate goal of the process of manipulation. This feeling is soon strengthened by the ever-presence of telescreens. The fact that all

[12] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 3.

public and private places, if there is such a thing as privacy, are equipped with telescreens takes the idea of surveillance to a different dimension. It is the proof of the power of the regime because it instils the feeling that even though one can escape the gaze of the posters outside, it is not possible to avoid being under observation. Besides, as Winston reveals, people are not permitted to turn off these devices: "The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely."[13] The idea of being monitored seems to have already turned into an obsession. It is clear that the telescreens are not only a part of life that the citizens have to accept, but they have become life itself. The people have to put this reality into the centre and shape all their lives around it.

In addition to monitoring, telescreens have another function: propaganda. The regime makes the propaganda of its policies ceaseless by the medium of telescreens. Because they cannot be turned off at any time, one can see the vital role of telescreens within the overall policy of the regime more clearly. The people have to watch, or at least listen to, the telescreens even when they are asleep, and in this way, they are imposed to whatever the Party wants. All kinds of information, from economic data to political victories, are continuously propagandised until every single individual is, consciously or unconsciously, convinced of the reality of the misinformation provided.

The use of telescreens in this manner is substantial in showing that technology is included in the realm of manipulation. This kind of use of technology and media for the ends of the regime has a significant role as it opens the way for the readers to question the idea of technological advancement and human progress in general, which, in any case, leads to disbelief and mistrust. The novel reveals that technology, which is generally thought to be working for the well-being of humanity, can also perform as the most destructive weapon depending on by whom it is used. The main function of the telescreens, and so technology, in the work is to impose fear among the community members through surveillance and to control every aspect of their lives: "Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, . . . he could be seen as well as heard."[14]

The atmosphere of fear created in the novel determines not only the actions but also the ideas of people. As they are always in the opinion of being listened to and followed, they have to control even their facial

[13] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 4.
[14] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 5.

expressions, which may be a reason for being arrested. This obsession with being under constant surveillance leads to a group of people who are afraid of thinking; leave aside the possibility of taking action. When the publishing date of the work is taken into consideration, the effect of this aspect on the society that still carried the ruins of the Second World War can easily be envisioned. For a community that had just witnessed the devastating potential of the so-called human progress and technology, Orwell's was a reminder of what had happened in the past and a warning for what more might happen in the future unless the power is taken from the ones who should not keep it.

By the same token, the regime also uses and orientates people's emotions, and the primary emotion exploited is fear. The whole system is based on instilling terror to the citizens because the regime takes unconditional fear as the milestone of its authority. The people are afraid of Big Brother and the Party to such an extent that they are incapable of thinking anything against the rulers. Through Winston's mind, the readers witness the continuous fear of being arrested and tortured: "You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[15] Obviously, the connotations of the concepts of darkness and light are reversed and distorted. In this dystopic world, darkness becomes a shelter where people can haven while light turns into a spy that reveals the slightest unorthodoxy.

Nevertheless, fear is not the only emotion that the Party targets to direct its public. In the novel, the hatred appears as another feeling that eases the supervision and control of people. Interestingly enough, hatred is almost always followed by love. 'Two Minutes Hate' is the best exemplification of this situation. The author portrays these occasions like a ritual where people canalise all their hatred, no matter who their hatred is for, towards a safe target. The target in question is sometimes Eurasia, and at other times Eastasia: The enemy and ally may change any time as there is no war or alliance in the real sense. Although the enemy and so the target of the hatred can change, there is one thing that never changes during the Two Minutes Hate: Emmanuel Goldstein, the invented ferocious enemy of not only the Party but of all Oceania. Orwell displays the atmosphere of the Two Minutes Hate as follows: "In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two

[15] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 5.

Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in."[16]

The author uses the word 'delirium' when he refers to the Two Minutes Hate, and this description is not an exaggeration at all. It is such a moment that all people behave and think together, and even the few ones that question the dogmas of the Party from time to time find themselves behaving in the same vein. It is an instant of delirium when all of the participants spill out their hatred. The peak point of the ritual is saved for the last moment when the image of Goldstein is seen on the huge screen after his hideous and grinding speech. The intensity of the emotions and the mounting hatred rise to such a level that people cannot endure for another second. However, there is the one who is omnipresent and all-powerful. He is the only figure who has the power to alleviate the fear of his people with his undeterred and assuring looks. Thus, he suddenly appears on the screen like a prophet that embraces every single person with his endless affection and strength. This is the very moment for relief because their saviour is there for them, as he was in the past and will be in the future:

> But in the same moment, drawing a deep sigh of relief from everybody, the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother, black-haired, black-moustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm, and so vast that it almost filled up the screen. Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken.[17]

Suddenly, the hatred of enemies turns into love for Big Brother. The people have emptied all their hatred and now, they are ready to be filled up with love. He is there to protect them against all dangers. He is the one who comes out of the darkness to shed light on his people. Indeed, these occasions are important constituents of the state mechanism. From a Freudian perspective, The Party is understood to be using such instances as a kind of defense mechanism by making the citizens reflect their hatred of their life, their leader, and the regime in general upon a safe harbour, which is Goldstein accompanied with a country no matter which.

In the novel, war comes out to be another central issue relating to the idea of psychological manipulation and control. Orwell himself served in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) as a volunteer on the Republican side,

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[16] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 17.
[17] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 17-18.

and he saw how the facts about the war could be changed and falsified by means of media. Without a doubt, his personal experiences there changed his views about communism. After having seen the reality of the war, he was convinced of the fact that communism was more about Hitler himself and the continuation of the war rather than winning the war and leading to revolution.[18] Although he previously took socialism as the only chance for the unification of the classes, such experiences made him alarmed by some of its implications such as widespread mechanisation, increased governmental control, and a decrease in individualism.[19] Orwell's deduction from such experiences reflected on the novel as the fact that war is generally a way to keep people in poverty without questioning the reasons, and so an apparatus that indirectly helps to maintain manipulation.

As a result of its massive campaign of psychological manipulation, the Party is able to make the citizens embrace the idea of 'doublethink,' which can be simply explained as the ability to hold two absolutely contradictory ideas at the same time without questioning the validity of one over the other. It is the result of this extremism that people in Oceania are always ready to internalise any given data even though it may contrast with the information presented as the reality until a minute ago. This is the desired result of the process on the part of the regime because the Party needs doublethink to create a society the members of which have become completely blind and deaf towards everything around and have turned into subjects who are no more capable of questioning and even understanding the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

Although it may sound like a product of pure imagination at first sight, the image the writer portrays is quite plausible because the things he presents are more about reality than fantasy. For a man having witnessed the growth of fascism and communism, he tries to present a possible scenario to his readers. The idea of perpetual surveillance, creating an artificial enemy, the atmosphere of incessant war and fear, and finally, the forced belief in a leader who is the only one with the power to protect his people against all the enemies are very common phenomena in totalitarian regimes, which naturally echo in dystopian fiction.

In addition to ongoing psychological manipulation, Orwell also localises the cultural dimension of the matter in question. The regime in the totalitarian world of Oceania is well aware of the fact that one of the most effective ways to take control of society is cultural degeneration. In

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[18] Lionel Trilling, *The Opposing Self: Nine Essays in Criticism* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 168.

[19] Richard J. Voorhees, *The Paradox of George Orwell* (Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1961), 106.

this parallel, there is a strict policy that aims to erase the undesirable traces of the previous culture and create a culture of their own. As a clear threat, the family unit is at the core of the degeneration process. The Party tries to make radical changes about the concept of family and targets to acquire a new type of family structure which is devoid of any meanings it is traditionally associated with. As it is almost impossible to abolish the fact of family in the literal sense, they try to change the relationship among the family members. While they let the parents maintain their traditional roles, the situation is not the same on the side of the children. In the new family structure, children often present the biggest danger to their parents. They are trained to spy on their parents and report any signs of disobedience in a methodical manner. In this way, the family in effect has become an extension of the Thought Police. It is, indeed, a really effective device through which everyone can be kept under observation night and day by the ones who are the closest.

The author uses the Parsons family as an example to show how the traditional family values have already been destroyed. Mr. Parsons works at the Ministry of Truth, like Winston, and he is also a neighbour of Winston's. He is a fervent supporter of the Party and an excellent example of the type of person the Party aims to create: A dehumanised subject who accepts every single word of the Party without questioning. The readers are introduced to the occasion at the Ministry of Love where people with especially thoughtcrime are tortured and brainwashed till they accept and internalise the ideology of the Party. Winston, who has been beaten and tortured there for a while because of his love affair with Julia, is surprised to see Mr. Parsons because he knows that Parsons, with his blind allegiance to the regime, is the last person to do anything against the Party's ideology: "Do you know how it got hold of me? In my sleep! . . . never knew I had any bad stuff in my mind at all . . . Do you know what they heard me saying?"[20]

Mr. Parsons explains that the reason why he has said something against the regime is the 'bad stuff' in his mind: He has been caught saying 'down with Big Brother.' What surprises Winston more is that Mr. Parsons is not sad or angry, at all. On the contrary, he seems to be happy with and proud of the situation he is in when he explains that he was denounced by his daughter. He is of the opinion that this is a source of pride as it shows he brought her up in the right spirit.[21] Orwell's using the character of Parsons is significant in that it shows even the most passionate adherents of the

[20] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 267-268.
[21] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 268.

Party are under constant surveillance and thus in danger. The fact that the people are not safe even at their homes and when they are asleep is revealed through this occasion. The regime has created a society devoid of all values that make up a society, and family is not an exception. The family members have turned into spies of one another, and even the meanings of 'family' and 'home' are hollowed: The child may become the murderer of the parent.

On the other hand, the Parsons case can be analysed from a different perspective. For Freud, dreams never come out of nowhere without a back story, and it is for this reason that he refers to dreams as the royal journeys to the unconscious. This approach may lead to the conclusion that every person in the society, even the most fanatic ones like Parsons, has dissatisfaction somewhere in their minds. Everybody, even unconsciously, feels and knows that things must not be the way they are, and there have to be different options for people. If one looks for a hint of hope in the novel, it is interestingly hidden within Mr. Parsons, who is the last character expected to function in this way. However, the society portrayed by Orwell is distorted in every respect, and so what the author does with Parsons is the 'normality' of Oceania.

For totalitarian regimes, literature is not less dangerous than family or familial values. It would be unfair to take literature merely as a means for displaying and conveying the intellectual aspect of the issues. Although it is mostly related to the intellectual territory, that it has always helped cultural elements to survive from generation to generation is hardly disputable. It is especially the latter aspect of literature that turns it into a target of the Party. If they want to create an inorganic culture, they must control and design literature; otherwise, it would be impossible to completely destroy the mother culture. In Orwell's world, literature is under close inspection and the Party only allows the pieces it thinks are safe to be accessed. Besides, it continuously customises literature to fit its policy. The author displays the regime's basic approach to literature through the character of Ampleforth. He is a colleague of Winston, and his job is rewriting literary documents so that they conform to the Party's ideology. Like Mr. Parsons, the reader sees Ampleforth as a visitor of the Ministry of Love. During a conversation with Winston, he explains his 'guilt' in the following way:

> We were producing a definitive edition of the poems of Kipling. I allowed the word "God" to remain at the end of a line. I could not help it! It was impossible to change the line. The rhyme was "rod." Do you realise that

> there are only twelve rhymes to "rod" in the entire language? For days I had racked my brains. There WAS no other rhyme.[22]

In a rewriting of Kipling's poems, Ampleforth uses the word 'God' compulsorily. However, the word carries a religious meaning and so it is against the discourse of the Party. In the process of creating a culture, there is no room for such negligence. Even one single word like 'God' can result in unpredictable dangers for the authority, which is intolerable. Ampleforth must be punished, and so he is.

But then, Winston's encounters with Ampleforth and Parsons have another dimension. When the characterisation of the mentioned figures is examined, they come out as direct opposites. Ampleforth is an intelligent man who can be taken as an intellectual while Parsons is portrayed as a stock character who does not have intellectual depth. In this direction, Orwell's preference of presenting both of them as 'criminals' once more emphasises the fact that this kind of society is a safe harbour for almost nobody since the Party's approach towards the intelligence and foolishness is the same, the only criterion being absolute obedience to every dogma provided.

Another point relating to literature is that writing is forbidden, too. The logic behind this kind of prohibition is surely the same as that of literature in general. If one is to write about the current happenings in the society with a critical approach, this will probably pose a danger in the future, just as Kipling's 'God' is a danger to be eliminated the moment it comes into being. Almost all citizens except the members of the Inner Party and the proletarians are deprived of reading and writing. In this context, Winston's buying a diary, which he can only find in a second-hand shop around the proletarian district, and his attempt to write something is depicted as an act of heroism: "The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp."[23]

Although it seems to be a normal deed in a normal society, writing brings punishment and even death in this regime. Winston has to hide his diary and he must write in the corners where he believes himself to be safe from observation. His desire to write despite such risks may seem implausible, yet for a person who has no other chance of conveying his feelings and the realities of his time to future generations, these risks are worth taking. The Party changes everything from historical documents to

[22] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 265.
[23] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 9.

literature, and as such, keeping a diary means the possibility of awakening the people in the future.

As for the proletarians, the system struggles to create a totally different culture for them. Although it is generally believed that the regimes do not take the proletarians seriously and so provide them with more leisure, the underlying reason may be the exact opposite. They mostly form the majority of the societies, with the least power, though. However, those in power have to give them some 'luxuries' to keep them busy and obedient. The Party in Orwell's work is not different. They provide the proletarians with some comforts the party members are forbidden to have:

> There was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole sub-section--Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak--engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.[24]

The Party has founded a separate department to deal with the issues relating the proletarians, and thus it provides them with what it wants. By providing such liberties, the Party wants to ensure that the proletarians continue to live as they have always done: barely able to make both ends meet, occupied with daily pleasure, and most importantly unaware of and unconcerned with politics. This approach undoubtedly carries the traces of Aldous Huxley, who presents a similar view about the issue in his 1932 masterpiece *Brave New World*: "Every possible means of pleasure is made available to the inhabitants of this world, from movies that can be felt to a marvellous drug called soma that removes all pain and all worry."[25] The idea of amusing people is prevalent in Orwell's work, as well, and thus the inclination of the workers to spend money on minor pleasures is appreciated by the authorities. They even encourage it because they realise the enjoyment of such pleasures will keep the workers ignorant enough to eliminate the possibility of revolution and poor enough to ensure their dependence upon the state.[26] As Orwell puts it, a hierarchical society is

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[24] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 50.
[25] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 51.
[26] Browning, "Anti-Utopian Fiction: Definition and Standards for Evaluation," 106-107.

only possible on a basis of ignorance and poverty.[27] The Party has set 'a few simple rules' to provide the proletarians with some 'luxuries' that can keep them away from financial and political issues. The main reason for keeping them in continuous ignorance, with the motto of 'ignorance is bliss,' and poverty is directly connected to the survival of the regime.

The psychological and cultural manipulation make up the greater part of the regime's policy, yet they need one more piece to make it perfect: physical manipulation. In Althusserian terms, if the psychological and cultural manipulation form the ideological aspect of the State Apparatuses, the physical one is the repressive dimension, which is also necessary for an impeccable subjectivation. In that vein, the citizens' bodies are also under surveillance and subjected to manipulation.

As an example of the physical control, the Party forces its members to undergo mass morning exercises called 'Physical Jerks.' At first sight, there is nothing wrong with these exercises because they seem to be for the benefit of people. However, there are two serious problems with this practice. First of all, the citizens do not participate in these exercises just because they want to. Joining in physical jerks is compulsory, and the opposite certainly brings punishment. This is an open violation of human rights, because only the individual, and no person or institution, should have control over his/her own body. The other problem is the real purpose of the regime in making people exercise every morning: They want the citizens to be healthy and strong so that they can work longer hours for the interest of the Party. In other words, they provide people with the opportunity to exercise so as to exploit their workforce more. It is a seemingly win-win negotiation, the winner of which is solely the regime.

Another and more devastating agenda in this direction is the Ministry of Love. What the name suggests and how this department indeed functions are as different as night and day. As the reader sees through Winston's experiences, it is a place that can be associated with any emotion but love. Anyone who shows the slightest sign of defiance, physical or intellectual, is taken there in order to be 'educated' through systematic and brutal torture, which is called 're-education.' There are three stages of torture. First, there are the standard beatings, which are intended to force the victims to confess crimes that are often made up, and to provide information on other thought-criminals. Next, there is an interrogation process in which the beating is replaced with electric shock in order to weaken the person's mind and force him/her to recognise the Party's ideology. Finally, there is room 101, the most terrifying place

[27] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 219.

possible where the person is subjected to whatever torment he or she most fears. This is intended to remove any remaining traces of individuality. The fundamental purpose is to destroy any emotion but the love for Big Brother, a fact hinted by the name of the Ministry. The Party is able to govern reality by programming the brains of its subjects to accept that 2+2 may occasionally be 5.

After being subjected to weeks of this intense treatment, Winston himself concludes that nothing is more powerful than physical pain, and no emotional loyalty or moral conviction can overcome it. He confesses a lot of things he even has no idea about, some of them being the assassinations of prominent party members, dissemination of traitorous pamphlets, defalcation of public funds, and sale of military secrets. He admits being a spy for the Eastasian government since 1968, that he is a religious believer, a supporter of capitalism, and a sexual pervert. He confirms murdering his wife, despite the fact that he suspects, and his interrogators must know, she is still alive. He tells that he has been in contact with Goldstein for years, and is a member of an underground group that comprises almost anyone he has ever met.[28]

It can be concluded that the mechanism of the regime in ascertaining psychological, cultural, and physical manipulation is simple and difficult at the same time. It is simple because it is simply based on absolute control and conformity in theory, and every single policy it uses is developed in this parallel; it is difficult because they have to be on the watch every single second since the smallest mistake in the mechanism may lead to the collapse of the whole system. In this context, power is everything, and the regime must make the best of it so that people feel the strength of it every second. The power in question is as much about physical as the discursive, of course. In terms of the physical aspect, it is not a recent phenomenon. From the beginning of civilisation and social life, establishing and maintaining order has been almost the most fundamental necessity, and different types of regimes have been shaped to this end. However, as technology improved and became accessible in time, the physical power exercised by the regimes gained a different dimension because this kind of incessant observation and manipulation had never been possible before such advancements. With the help of technology, people could be controlled anytime and anywhere. The society created in the novel experiences exactly this situation:

> Even the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was tolerant by modern standards. Part of the reason for this was that in the past no government

[28] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 278.

> had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further.[29]

As obviously seen, Orwell approaches the issue from two perspectives. The first point he refers to is the 'constant surveillance,' which has been rendered possible with the help of technology. The other point, though, is related to the discursive dimension of the issue, which includes the concept of propaganda. Although propaganda, as an indispensable part of manipulation, had always been existent in societies for the maintenance of control and authority, the emergence of media took the standard of propaganda to the extreme points in the 20th century. Thus, media, and so technology, became a part of the discourse. When considered from this point of view, any means from literature to marketing can be used for propaganda. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* presents one of the best exemplifications of the case: "The Party takes propaganda to totalizing limits in its project of political control over not just everything that people do or say but everything they think or believe."[30]

Such a level of surveillance and repression of every individual necessitates a massive bureaucratic State Apparatus, whose only productive work is to maintain control. The regime must create such an atmosphere that occupants will avoid any 'improper' behaviours in the belief that they are under inspection. Interestingly and significantly, it is not necessary that people are actually under surveillance at any given time for this effect to occur because the ultimate principle is only that "the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection, at least as standing a great chance of being so."[31] As Winston reveals, the system created by the regime functions with the same logic as Bentham's panopticon: "There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment . . . You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and except in darkness, every movement scrutinized."[32]

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[29] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 235.
[30] Michael Yeo, "Propaganda and Surveillance in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Two Sides of the Same Coin," *Global Media Journal* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2010): 51.
[31] Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Bozovic (London: Verso, 1995), 43.
[32] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 5.

Accordingly, The Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* employs "a vast mechanism of social control in a Foucauldian sense through the various panoptic technologies of observation and regulation, from the telescreens to other Party members and children."[33] The panoptic nature of the society by itself prevents any members of it from escaping manipulation and living a life independent of the dominant ideology.

## 1.2 History and Reality Control: "Who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."

Human history is full of mistakes with fatal results and the repetition of them. The rulers have always disregarded the previous mistakes for the sake of their interests. However, literature has always undertaken a task of informing people by mirroring the time it is produced in, a possible reason for its being suppressed for centuries in different geographies. As a highly critical intellectual, Orwell is well aware of the ignorance of historical documents for political reasons and tries to warn people against the possibility of recurrence of repressive regimes in the hope of literature's potential for creating greater awareness than history books.

Using the media, and discourse in a broad sense, to change the historical documents and determine what is real and what is not is of central importance for totalitarian regimes. In this way, such regimes can control the past and the present, which means controlling the future, as well. In Orwell's society, the situation is put to extreme dimensions. The Party in the novel has a special department to this end: The Ministry of Truth. As the ironic name of the place suggests, the people working in this place, Winston being one of them, are constantly engaged in blurring and changing the history and the status quo.

The idea of controlling and rewriting history has a vital role for the Party. In the novel, the historical data and characters are continuously erased or rewritten in accordance with the Party's policy so that the citizens are easily kept under absolute control all the time. The regime controls every source of information, and thus it manages and rewrites the history for its own ends. In this atmosphere, it does not allow individuals to keep any records such as photographs or diaries for the fear that such seemingly trivial pieces may become dangerous documents in the future.

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[33] Lawrence Phillips, "Sex, Violence and Concrete: The Post-war Dystopian Vision of London in Nineteen Eighty-Four," *Critical Survey* Vol. 20, No. 1 (2008): 74.

As a consequence, memories become blurry and inaccurate, and people are inclined to believe anything the Party tells them:

> He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this . . . But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.[34]

The point Winston makes is quite striking in that a person without history is like a tree without roots, which renders life impossible. He is bereft of his history, and so he is not able to make a real and logical comparison between the past and the present. He will never learn what life was like before the Party because there is no such thing as before the Party. However, Winston is not the only one who lacks a clear idea of the past. The problem of being 'historyless' is more than an individual issue. In this direction, the author presents Julia as another example to stress how it has already become a social problem: "She had no memories of anything before the early sixties and the only person she had ever known who talked frequently of the days before the Revolution was a grandfather who had disappeared when she was eight."[35] It is obvious that Julia, like many others, has the same difficulty as Winston in remembering and thus holding onto the past. Having taken their history and so their connections with their past, the Party has turned them into subjects as they have no idea of who they were and who they really are. In this atmosphere, the perception of time is also blurred: "To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date . . . but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two."[36]

The manipulation of the past has direct reflections on the present because the Party can justify all its actions at present by building an artificial history. The fact that there is no history or historical document, except for the artificial pieces, makes it impossible for the citizens to evaluate or judge anything the Party has done and keeps doing. Even the biggest enemy, Goldstein, has no certain historical record. The only thing people know about him is that he was the "renegade and backslider who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother

[34] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 5-6.
[35] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 150.
[36] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 9.

himself and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities."[37] The Party has created an enemy, and the people have believed in that just because they have to. They do not have the chance to find any documents about Goldstein except for the ones the Party has made up.

The same thing happens on the dimension of foreign policy, as well. The countries that have been presented as the ally or enemy change all the time and the historical documents are immediately rearranged accordingly. Interestingly enough, the citizens, who have already been stupefied and familiarised with such absurdities, do not even think of questioning the extremity of the situation:

> The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed--if all records told the same tale--then the lie passed into history and became truth.[38]

History is continuously rewritten in this society. The Ministry of Truth falsifies the past day-to-day, and this is absolutely necessary for the stability of the regime. The mechanism, which Orwell names as 'memory holes,' is the embodiment of the approach towards history in the work. When the Party needs to change or rearrange something about history or the current policy, it uses the memory holes to destroy the unnecessary and dangerous documents. This system is used for everything from economic to political records. For instance, Winston sometimes rectifies the original figures by making them agree with the new ones, and so people believe that the Party's predictions about the state of affairs have been all correct: "It was therefore necessary to rewrite a paragraph of Big Brother's speech, in such a way as to make him predict the thing that had actually happened."[39] In this way, whatever the Party and Big Brother say is automatically true because all documents are rewritten to fit their allegations: "The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth."[40] Nevertheless, the perpetual erasion of the facts and replacement of them with fictional information never pose a problem because by making people obliged to rely on what they are provided with,

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[37] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 14.
[38] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 40.
[39] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 45.
[40] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 86.

the Party easily manipulates them and destroys the possibility of being questioned.

As the regime is engaged in destroying history, the concept of memory gains more and more significance since it appears to be the only link with the past and so with the reality. From this perspective, it is not surprising that Winston is in search of something that can lead him to the pre-revolution era. He feels that the only possibility of survival is finding a connection with the past. In the novel, the proletarians are the only people who keep the possibility of possessing a social memory, and thus Winston makes brief visits to proletarian districts in the hope of finding a piece carrying the traces of the past. In one of such instances, he visits a small pub and notices an old man: "He and a few others like him were the last links that now existed with the vanished world of capitalism."[41] Winston feels an irresistible urge for talking to him since it is like making contact with history in some way. In this sense, the old man is the personification of hope, and he is one of the few who can convey information about the times before Ingsoc. He turns into a kind of social memory and an opportunity to prove the fallacy of the totalitarian regime and its arguments.

Another moment Winston feels alike is the moment he finds a glass paperweight in the junk shop. What appeals to him about it is not so much about its beauty as the air it seems to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one: "That's what I like about it. It's a little chunk of history that they've forgotten to alter. It's a message from a hundred years ago, if one knew how to read it."[42] Memory is the biggest danger for the regime because it is one of the few things that cannot be destroyed physically. It is the reason why such people as Winston, who tries to remember his childhood and so tries to find evidence showing the hypocrisy of the Party, present a danger. The way to ensure absolute control is to 'cure' people like Winston. Torture and brainwashing are the only ways of curing in this understanding, and the Party employs extreme levels of them so much so that one begins to deny his/her memory if it contradicts with the values of the Party: "He pushed the picture out of his mind. It was a false memory. He was troubled by false memories occasionally."[43]

In addition to its control over history and even the social memory, the regime in Orwell's society also has absolute power over the concept of reality. The question of what is real and what is not has no answer but for

[41] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 99.
[42] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 168.
[43] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 341.

what the regime provides through the Ministry of Truth. Under these circumstances, the heroes easily turn into traitors and vice versa, depending on the political requirements of the moment: "In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night . . . You were abolished, annihilated: VAPORIZED was the usual word."[44] The people in this society can disappear any time without a trial at all. Their names are erased from all records and life continues as if they never lived: They are 'vaporized.' The citizens can be charged with crimes of which they have even no idea, and more dramatically they are in most cases forced to confess fictitious deeds. One of the most striking instances showing Winston must be right in his suspicions about the reliability of official documents is the moment when he comes across a newspaper clipping of Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford. The clipping shows that the mentioned figures were in fact in New York in the time when they were accused of treachery in Eurasia. This is the most concrete evidence in the novel in proving the Party's changing and destroying the historical documents and characters. However, as Winston's greatest remorse, he puts the clipping into the memory hole, and thus destroys it forever.

This is what Winston does at the Ministry of Truth: He does the necessary corrections in any particular number of 'The Times,' and then it is reprinted. This process of continuous alteration is applied to every kind of document from newspapers to books that might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. In this way, the factuality is brought up to date day by day, and almost minute by minute. The real problem is not what the Party does, but how people can readily accept whatever happens: "The eyeless creature at the other table swallowed it fanatically . . . Syme, too--in some more complex way, involving doublethink, Syme swallowed it. Was he, then, *alone* in the possession of a memory?"[45]

The acceptance of the made-up information seems to be so general and normal that Winston gets suspicious of himself. He begins to think he may be mistaken and his memory may mislead him; otherwise, how could so many people 'swallow' all this absurdity? The reality of today often contradicts that of the previous day, and even the previous hour. Nonetheless, it has turned into the normality of Oceania, and so everybody embraces the latest issued piece of information and immediately forgets all former data, a blessing of the Party's doublethink policy, also named 'reality control.' Having built a group of people who can believe in

[44] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 22.
[45] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 68.

anything as long as it is a product of the dominant discourse, the regime has no difficulty in making instantaneous alterations in its foreign policy. The issue has reached such extreme levels that the ally and enemy can even change during a meeting organized to protest the so-called enemy: "The speech had been proceeding for perhaps twenty minutes when a messenger hurried on to the platform and a scrap of paper was slipped into the speaker's hand . . . Oceania was at war with Eastasia!"[46]

People have apparently lost their ability to think and reason. Whatever the Party claims, no matter how unreliable and illogical it is, is accepted unquestioned. In a society where all people have been subjectified and deprived of their own will, such insanities become normal. In this parallel, erasing the history, which is taken as the absolute truth a few seconds ago, is a matter of one single sentence: "Oceania was at war with Eastasia: Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia. A large part of the political literature of five years was now completely obsolete."[47] By changing the documents and producing new copies in accordance with the status quo, the control of reality is provided. Furthermore, the Party imposes a wide range of limitations to prevent people's contact with anything it does not approve of:

> War prisoners apart, the average citizen of Oceania never sets eyes on a citizen of either Eurasia or Eastasia, and he is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself and that most of what he has been told about them is lies.[48]

If people cannot access the knowledge of what the other communities are like, what they think and how they live, they cannot question their own society and welfare. Moreover, the moment they see that other people are also humans like themselves, they are likely to understand the idiocy behind the artificial animosity. As Foucault argues, power is based on knowledge and the totalitarian regimes are well aware of the validity of this thesis. In this sense, they try to control all types of knowledge to make it unattainable for ordinary citizens, who are deluded with knowledge invented for them. In the novel, the author displays an impeccable example of this situation. When people are denied the truth, they have to believe in the truth the Party sees fit. The basic purpose behind this is to convince the citizens that what they have is better than the others and what

[46] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 210.
[47] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 211.
[48] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 225-226.

the regime does is the best a regime can do: "Cut off from contact with the outer world, and with the past, the citizen of Oceania is like a man in interstellar space, who has no way of knowing which direction is up and which is down."[49] This is the reason why the Party slogan goes as 'ignorance is strength.' Actually, the ignorance of the citizens is the strength of the Party as the members of the society live in an imaginary world where they take the only way of living as the one given to them. The idea of making people believe in the deception that they have higher standards than their ancestors and other communities is significant for creating the mentioned imaginary world, and therefore the contact with the factual history and other communities must be completely cut off: "He must be cut off from the past, just as he must be cut off from foreign countries, because it is necessary for him to believe that he is better off than his ancestors and that the average level of material comfort is constantly rising."[50]

This is one of the fundamental reasons why literature is almost always considered to be a danger for totalitarian regimes. As it introduces people and cultural elements from different geographies, it becomes a kind of bridge between the past and present as well as between societies, and thus breaks the bars of the system. Therefore, every piece of literature posing danger for the authority and ideology of the Party is either destroyed or adapted. The destruction of books and literature is a very common theme in dystopian literature, Bradbury's 1953 classic *Fahrenheit 451* being among the most outstanding ones. The ultimate aim of burning books and destroying literature, like other types of art, is to create 'hollow' people lacking critical approach. Julia, portrayed as a defiant character, is the inevitable result of this policy, too: "But she was not interested in the finished product. She 'didn't much care for reading,' she said. Books were just a commodity that had to be produced, like jam or bootlaces."[51] As a person who personally witnessed the tension between literature and totalitarian understanding, Orwell believes that literature has a central role in the survival of a community in that it carries the values of one generation to the following generation, and supplies an opportunity for the exchange of values among different cultures. This very function of literature makes it a ferocious enemy for the regime because literature stands for everything the regime wants to destroy.

The Party is in full control of historical and current records, and this brings unconditional control of reality. The regime adopts a policy that

[49] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 228.
[50] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 242.
[51] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 149-150.

denies even the existence of objective truth. In Oceania, the reality exists only in the ideology and memory of the regime, and all other claims of reality are taken as nothing but illusions. In one of his conversations with Winston during his 'treatment' process at the Ministry of Love, O'Brien explains the essence of the Party's conception of reality as follows: "But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else . . . It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party."[52]

## 1.3 A Deterministic Approach to Language: "In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."

The discussions about the correspondence between language and thought have a long tradition. The question of whether thought can exist without language or not has been an object of curiosity for centuries and has been tried to be answered in different ways from various perspectives. While some philosophers and linguists have seen thought as an entity relying on language to exist, others have addressed it as an independent unit.

There have developed two bodies of approach around this debate. One of them is the idea that is generally referred to as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis. The American linguists Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), who gave their names to the hypothesis, claimed that certain thoughts in one language cannot be comprehended by other individuals thinking in a different language because of the linguistic variations. Moreover, the latter took the issue one step further and stated that reality is something relative and subjective since it is shaped by different languages in different ways. Believing in the close link between thought and language, he theorised that different languages impose different conceptions of reality.[53] On the other hand, two versions of this hypothesis have evolved in time. The weak version, known as linguistic relativity, accepts the effect of language on the thought system, yet it takes this effect as quite limited. However, the strong version, linguistic determinism, has a much more severe approach to the topic, and argues that there can be no thought at all without language.

The second party of the debate has been formed around those who believe that language is not essential to private thought. Recognized as the

[52] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 285.
[53] David G. Myers, *Psychology*, 4th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 1986), 352.

language of thought hypothesis (LOTH), it is based on the belief that the language of thought is separate from the language we speak, and it tries to explain how the human mind comprehends idea and how these ideas are processed and represented. The theory argues that mental representations are indeed sentences in a mental language. One of the noted linguists, Stephen Pinker develops the notion of mental language in his 1994 book *The Language Instinct*, and refers to it as 'mentalese.' Mentalese, according to Pinker, is a theoretical language used solely for thinking, and it contains mental interpretations of concepts such as word and sentence meaning.

Orwell is a writer with a special interest in linguistic questions pertaining to the function of language, and his 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language" is a product of this concern. The essay focuses not on language and linguistic issues in general but especially on political language. He believes that the purpose of political language is hiding the lies and more importantly making them sound true by using a specific discourse. The ultimate aim is always to enclose people in an orthodox pseudo-reality and isolate them from the real world. He argues that this kind of language is necessarily blurred and nonsensical as it is designed to camouflage reality rather than revealing it, which must be the primary function of language. He advocates concreteness and precision over ambiguity in a language, as well as individuality over political conformity. Acknowledging the political ability of language to distort the facts and confuse the public, he makes an effort to raise public awareness against this potential power and danger of political language. He formulates his theories of language in line with linguistic determinism and famously claims that if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. When this kind of connection between language and thought is handled from a wider perspective, it can be seen that the dimensions of the issue are not limited to thought alone since the culture, in general, is inevitably to be affected in the long run, as well. As a result, many of Orwell's notions regarding language as a dominating force have been revised by postcolonial authors and critics who have often examined the harm caused to local communities by the loss of language, as well as the loss of cultural and historical link that comes with it.

In the novel, the ruling Party develops an artificial language, Newspeak, to meet the ideological expectations of English Socialism in Oceania. Newspeak is a programmed language with reduced vocabulary and simplified grammar intended to limit people's ability to think and convey 'subversive' concepts like individualism and freedom as such concepts are seen as thoughtcrime on account of contradicting the prevailing Ingsoc

orthodoxy.[54] In "The Principles of Newspeak," the appendix to the novel, Orwell explains that while Newspeak conforms to the majority of English grammar rules, it is a language with a continuously diminishing vocabulary. It mainly employs concepts of basic construction to minimise the language's communicative use, and for this reason, complete thoughts are reduced to uncomplicated terms with simplified meaning. In Newspeak, words serve as both nouns and verbs, restricting the agent's vocabulary for conveying meaning precisely. For instance, the word 'think' is used both as a noun and a verb, and so the word 'thought' is not required anymore.

When it is analysed as a spoken language, Newspeak employs words that are short and easy to pronounce. The underlying reason is that the Party wants to make speech physically automatic and mentally unconscious to reduce the likelihood of critical thinking. The philosophical aim of Newspeak is to render the thoughts approved by the regime as the only expressible ones. In this direction, the available vocabulary communicates the precise meaning that a member of the Party might wish to convey, and it eliminates all secondary denotations and connotations.

The words in Newspeak are divided into three categories as the A, B, and C vocabularies. The functional concepts of everyday life, such as eating and drinking, are defined by the words in the A vocabulary. It is mainly made up of English words, but they are few in number. The terms in the B vocabulary are intentionally formed for political reasons in order to express complicated concepts in a straightforward manner. They are political compound words intended to enforce and instill politically acceptable mental views on people. As Orwell states in the appendix, the B words' very nature carries ideological weight. The fact that there are a large number of contractions in this category, such as the Ministry of Truth being called Minitrue and the Records department being known as Recdep, cannot be explained with an innocent attempt to save time and energy. In consideration of the previous political language examples like the Nazis, the shortened form of Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, the Party obviously holds the idea that abbreviating a name can narrow and alter that word's meaning. The words of the C vocabulary, on the other hand, are scientific and technical terms that support the linguistic operation of the A and B categories. These are the same scientific concepts as in English, but many of them have gained more fixated meanings in order to discourage speakers from expressing

[54] Tom McArthur, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 693.

anti-government opinions. These words are mostly not accessible to ordinary citizens and are taken as technical words specific to technical fields.

This decline and corruption of language is a central theme in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Orwell's major objection to the decline of the English language is not totally based on aesthetic grounds. He believes that the linguistic decline leads to a decline of thought, and this means a strong probability of manipulation of people. One of the author's most significant statements in the novel, in this context, is that language is crucial to human cognition because it shapes and restricts the ideas that humans are capable of developing and expressing. As he suggests, if language management were centralised in a political agency, that agency might change the fundamental structure of language, making it impossible to even think of disobedient or rebellious thoughts since there would be no words with which to express them. In the novel, this idea manifests itself as Newspeak.

Adopting a deterministic understanding of language, the Party is continuously refining and 'perfecting' Newspeak so that no one will be able to comprehend anything that might question the Party's absolute power. The Party's primary occupation is creating a language which only contains words posing no danger for the state's policy and ideology. When the intellectual aspect of the issue is taken into consideration, this means to prevent any kind of thinking that may include the tiniest implication of questioning the authority. Syme, a member of the team only and specifically engaged in the transformation of language, displays the politics of language as follows:

> 'The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,' he said. 'We're getting the language into its final shape--the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words – scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone.'[55]

A reminiscent of Bradbury's firemen, the role of the philologists in Orwell's work seems to be reversed: Instead of enriching language, their main objective is to impoverish it by 'cutting it to the bone.' The linguistic simplification of Oldspeak into Newspeak is accomplished by the use of neologisms, the removal of ideologically undesirable terms, and the

[55] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 59.

elimination of the politically unorthodox meanings. However, the real motive behind this reductive perception of language is the thought system itself: Diminishing the capacity of language means diminishing the intellectual capacity, which has never been favourable with such totalitarian structures. The limited vocabulary of Newspeak allows the Party to successfully control the population's thoughts by narrowing the users' range of spoken and written ideas. Thus, thoughtcrime will become impossible in the end because when language is erased from human consciousness, human consciousness itself will also be erased: "Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."[56]

On the other hand, this intellectual aspect of the issue makes literature included, as well. Literature requires imagination and words to describe the imagination, that is, intellectual power. By creating a deficient language, the system ensures to destroy literature forever as nobody will be able to envisage anything free from the regime's values: "The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron – they'll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be."[57] Concerning the given examples, the regime can be claimed to adopt a holistic policy regarding language. Although the mentioned policy seems to target only and solely language, literature and the whole thought system in general are involved, too. Thinking people and the act of thinking itself are the biggest threats to the survival of the regime. As such, it has to create a community that does not have a language necessary for critical thinking. By narrowing language, it is possible to build a group of people who speak and think the same. When this objective is accomplished, there will be no need to worry about any attempt to undermine the authority of the Party. The whole community will be like a single person, and this means manipulating and controlling will be much easier. Thus, the real attack is against the consciousness: "In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking--not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness."[58] A professor of psychology, David Myers claims that "[t]o expand language is to expand the ability to think."[59] Conversely, to restrict language, as with Newspeak, is to restrict the range of thought. By means of Newspeak,

[56] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 60.
[57] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 61.
[58] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 61.
[59] Myers, *Psychology*, 353.

Orwell shows how language can be used to mislead and manipulate people, leading to a mass who blindly follow their rulers and accept all propaganda as reality. The language is used as a mind-control weapon, and human expressibility is suppressed. Paul Chilton compares this situation to the story of the Tower of Babel, and finds similarities in that people, after being deprived of language, will definitely suffer from the impossibility of expressing themselves in both occasions.[60]

A remarkable consequence of this narrowed perception is that the public memory is effectively reduced, as well: "The Inner Party [deprives] people of their own words and in so doing, deprives them of memory."[61] An outstanding example of this occurs during Winston's imprisonment at the Ministry of Love. After O'Brien forces Winston to accept the doctrines of the Party, his memory fails and he cannot fix his mind on a subject for more than a few seconds. Winston, like the majority of the public, suffers when he is robbed of his words and thoughts. Consequently, "memory, with its attendant richness and variety" wanes since "memories die when they go unrehearsed in words."[62]

## 1.4 Conformity as the Ultimate Goal of the System: "Always yell with the crowd, that's what I say."

When the mentioned policies of the Party such as constant manipulation, distortion of reality, and delimitation of language are considered, the underlying purpose of all these strategies is to establish a group of people who think, believe, and speak in the same way. The moment conformity is guaranteed, there will be no danger for the regime. Accordingly, the Party determines not only people's beliefs and ideas, but their physical appearances, and thus most people can be identified by just looking at the codes of dressing. The readers' acquaintance with Winston at the beginning of the story is one of such instances when he is presented as a smallish, frail figure the meagreness of whose body is "emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party."[63] Making the members of the Party wear uniforms is significant in that no matter where they are, they can be easily detected the moment they are included in an impolitic

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[60] Paul Chilton, *Orwellian Language and the Media* (London: Pluto Press, 1988), 2.

[61] Lewis, Florence and Peter Moss. "The Tyranny of Language". In *Nineteen Eighty-Four in 1984: Autonomy, Control and Communication*, eds. Crispin Aubrey and Paul Chilton (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1983), 51.

[62] Lewis and Moss, "The Tyranny of Language", 51.

[63] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 4.

act. In this way, one of the basic policies of the Party, perpetual surveillance is rendered much more easily.

From another perspective, the uniform comes out as a symbol that indicates the process from 'being' an individual to 'becoming' a subject. When people wear the same, they lose their individuality and become one of the many members who symbolise an institution and/or ideology. Winston and other party members are not distinguishable anymore since they look the same: He turns into a representative of all other party members in a sense. The individual has no room or importance at all, and the idea of oneness is continuously promoted: "It was curious how that beetle-like type proliferated in the Ministries: little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes."[64] The Party has formed a society consisting of not individuals but prototypes. The members of the Party, for example, can easily be described in general terms. They are the subjects that form a body, and there are no distinctive differences among them to individuate one from another. The imposition of uniform is not limited to the party members, of course, and most people in Oceania are categorised into different 'political' sub-identities according to their appearances: "Both of them were dressed in the blue shorts, grey shirts, and red neckerchiefs which were the uniform of the Spies."[65] The people seem to have already lost their individuality, and the only identity they can maintain is the one determined by the Party. They are only members of a specific group rather than individuals. The classification of people by their physical looks is the beginning point of embedding the term 'individuality' in history. In this way, the obligation of uniforms turns out to be a crucial part of the mechanism in ensuring surveillance and subjectivation.

In the novel, the regime strives for erasing any kind of individual differences. An example of this attitude manifests itself as an attempt to do away with distinguishing titles used for men and women. In Oceania, people do not use titles when addressing one another, because they all call each other in the same way. Although it seems to be a positive policy for gender equality, the Party's motive has indeed nothing to do with this. The only underlying aim at this point is to produce more 'subjects' to serve the success of the regime: "'Mrs' was a word somewhat discountenanced by the Party--you were supposed to call everyone 'comrade.'"[66] For a totalitarian understanding like this, there is no individuality in its true sense. The personal qualities are never of importance for the dominant

[64] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 69.
[65] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 27.
[66] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 24.

ideology as there is only one accepted identity, which is the Party itself. The Junior Anti-Sex League, a member of which is Julia herself, is another method used to this end. The organisation advocates complete celibacy for both sexes and serves the idea that all children must be begotten by artificial insemination and brought up in public institutions. The manifest purpose is to remove all pleasure from the sexual act as well as all humane emotions, thus creating robot-like creatures.

In the totalitarian world of Oceania, conformity benefits from and leads to many elements, the most vital ones being dehumanisation and the idea of sameness. As the process of conformity necessitates, the Party has an approach which intends to rob its citizens of every sign of individuality. In this direction, the values that render people as self-sufficient and valuable individuals are destroyed. Among these values, free-thinking and personal differences undoubtedly have an important place, and thus they are under constant oppression. What Winston writes into his diary has special significance in showing the erosion of such qualities in Oceania:

> To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone--to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone: From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink--greetings![67]

Winston is one of the few who is aware of the present situation because Orwell portrays many other characters as not interested in and even pleased with the status quo. However, the regime has a perfectionist attitude towards this issue like all others. Accordingly, emotions, in addition to free-thinking and individual deviations, cannot be disregarded since they form another indispensable aspect of being an individual. It is for this reason that the Party tries to wipe out every kind of emotion except for those on behalf of the system. The domestic policy of the state in Oceania aims to demolish any kind of emotion but hatred of enemies and fear of the Party: "Such things, he saw, could not happen today. Today there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion, no deep or complex sorrows."[68]

That *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is written with a political consciousness and as a warning for the future generations is a commonly accepted argument. The author's primary purpose in writing the novel is more about the socio-cultural and political developments of the time than pure

[67] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 32.
[68] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 35.

aestheticism. He displays the process of subjectivation detailed enough to awake the readers. Furthermore, he presents the possible results of this process, as well. In this regard, he presents the 'Two Minutes Hate' to highlight the inevitable consequence of such process: "In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in."[69]

An objector of the regime, Winston finds himself acting like the others. As it is understood, the reason Winston behaves in this way is not to avoid raising doubt: He just cannot evade behaving so. The mob mentality is the key for the success of the Party, and it is essential for the interpellation of the individual into a free subject. Later on, the author indicates this fact once again when he explains that Winston "could not help sharing in the general delirium."[70]

In the novel, Big Brother is represented as the unquestioned leader of the Party and the all-powerful one who is the provider of all sorts of 'blessings' the people enjoy. However, he has no voice in the work, and so the writer makes O'Brien the spokesman of the Party and Big Brother. This makes O'Brien and every word he utters important enough to be taken into consideration. The later part of the work, where he tries to 'cure' Winston, comes out as the revelation of the Party's dehumanisation policy in this sense: "Things will happen to you from which you could not recover, if you lived a thousand years . . . We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves."[71]

What the regime targets to finalise its policy is producing 'hollow' subjects. As O'Brien explains, the word 'cure' indeed means ripping away any kind of emotion from the citizens, since the creation of a robotic society that think and live the same can only be perfected in this manner. Every kind of love is considered as a potential danger for the Party, and therefore it follows a strict policy to eliminate all sorts of emotions until there is no emotion apart from fear and pain. Humanitarian values among men and women or parent and child must be completely exterminated to realise the impeccable totalitarian system: "We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child or a friend any longer."[72]

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[69] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 17.
[70] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 20.
[71] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 293.
[72] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 306.

The Party has created an almost flawless system which is based on unreliability and scepticism among people. There is not a real and sincere relationship even between the members of the same family. In Orwell's society, a child can easily become the spy of his/her parent. In an atmosphere where every single person is a potential enemy, people seem to have no other way than giving in. As such, conformity is apparently the inevitable, and moreover, the single chance of survival: "How easy it all was! Only surrender, and everything else followed."[73] Now that the process of treatment is over, Winston likens his former experiences to swimming against the current. The moment he decides to stop doing this, he is liberated from his chains. The only thing one must do is giving up his identity and humanism: "But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother."[74]

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the embodiment of a community in which what really matters is only the ideology. The Party enforces absolute conformity by employing Repressive and Ideological Apparatuses, like the Thought Police and family. It performs such a flawless and systematical policy of dehumanisation that the result is a group of people who have abandoned their individuality and free will. The only surviving quality of the 'new' citizen is being blind and deaf to realities, and readily believing in whatever the Party propagates. The new man begs for conformity because it is the only available identity and the ultimate way of survival, for which he has to renounce everything else: "A nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting--three hundred million people all with the same face."[75]

[73] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 319.
[74] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 342.
[75] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 85.

# CHAPTER TWO

# *FAHRENHEIT 451*

> "There must be something in books, something we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing."[1]

One of the most prominent American intellectuals of the 20th century, Ray Bradbury was born in Illinois, in 1920. As a child, he was already into literature, and he had a special interest in adventure and fantasy fiction. His tendency for fantasy fiction was something promoted by his family culture, as well. For the Bradbury family, Halloweens were special occasions celebrated with great enthusiasm and they used to transform their home into a haunted house with grinning pumpkins and ghost-like figures. These memories would turn into invaluable material that fed his literary career in the following years. It was mostly the fantastic and carnivalesque atmosphere of such instances that led him to decide to become a writer at a very early age.

Bradbury began his writing career in 1931, at the age of eleven. When he and his family moved from Illinois to Arizona the following year, he got a typewriter and began to write his first stories. In 1934, when he was fourteen, his family moved from Arizona to Los Angeles, and he took his high school education there. At high school, he was active in both the poetry and the drama clubs, and the things he acquired in these circles affected his future career to a great extent. Three years later, he joined the Los Angeles Science Fiction League, and this membership allowed him to publish four issues of his own science-fiction magazine, *Futuria Fantasia*.

His graduation from high school in 1938 meant the end of his formal education because of the financial problems his family was experiencing then. However, he continued to educate himself in the library, which became a vital part of his life in general as he would often mention in his works afterwards. The same year as he finished high school, he published his first short story. From this point on, his occupation with literature

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[1] Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2012), 48.

intensified day by day, and he began to produce a considerable number of works. In 1942, he wrote "The Lake," which embodied his distinctive writing style.

What gave Bradbury the opportunity to completely centralise literature in his life and become a prolific man of letters was nothing but his health problems. It was the period of World War II, and almost every eligible man was sent to military service. Nevertheless, he had vision problems which rendered him unqualified for the army. This incident provided him with plenty of time to begin writing full time. His short story "The Big Black and White Game" was a product of this period and was selected for *Best American Short Stories* in 1945.

The period during which Bradbury got a literary identity and the utmost attention were the years from 1947 to 1957, often referred to as the post-World War II period. It was at this time that science fiction writers started to take their subject matter more professionally and developed characters with psychological ambivalence and depth. Bradbury penned some of his most famous works throughout this decade. *Dark Carnival*, his first collection of short stories, was released in 1947. The work heralded his changing direction towards philosophical science fiction. The result of this new approach appeared in 1950 with *The Martian Chronicles*, which grew out of his personal worldview and his concern for the future of humankind. Considered as a work of fantasy rather than science fiction by Bradbury himself, it displayed some of the most prevalent anxieties the Americans had in the early 1950s, such as the fear of a nuclear war, the issue of censorship, and the threat of foreign powers. Other works written during this period were *The Illustrated Man* (1951), *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (1953), and *Dandelion Wine* (1957), a coming-of-age novel. "The Fireman," which was expanded into *Fahrenheit 451* in 1953, was also an outcome of this constructive phase.

He mainly focused on short stories during the 1960s and published nine collections together with two novels. In 1962, he published *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, a fantasy horror that was an original narrative like *Fahrenheit 451*. He published his next novel, *The Halloween Tree*, in 1972. These novels were set in non-existent Green Town, which was, in reality, the reflection of Bradbury's hometown of Waukegan. Likewise, the library, an important setting in *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, was indeed the one situated in Waukegan itself.

Beginning with the 1970s, Bradbury started to work on adapting some of his short stories into other types of media, especially television and theatre. In 1972, he published *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit and Other Plays*. It was a collection of three short plays, *The Wonderful Ice Cream*

*Suit*, *The Veldt*, and *To the Chicago Abyss*, and they were all adapted from short stories of the same names. Likewise, *Pillar of Fire and Other Plays* (1975) gathered other three plays which were based on his science fiction short stories: *Pillar of Fire*, *Kaleidoscope*, and *The Foghorn*. Moreover, he turned a number of his most well-known writings into theatrical plays, including *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451* in 1986, and *Dandelion Wine* in 1988.

In the 1980s, the author decided to specialise in detective fiction while organising 'The Ray Bradbury Theater' at the same time. From 1985 to 2002, he published three mystery novels: *Death Is a Lonely Business* (1985), *A Graveyard for Lunatics* (1990), and *Let's All Kill Constance* (2002). Throughout the later years of his career and life, he continued to publish short story collections, which included both previously published ones and new pieces.

Bradbury was and has always been a highly celebrated writer mostly because he had a versatile literary identity producing works in a variety of modes including fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Nonetheless, he is particularly credited with the restoration of science fiction and the elevation of literary standards that had been often disregarded as mere pulp trash.[2] His exceptionally imaginative narratives that fused a poetic style, nostalgia for childhood, social criticism, and an awareness of the dangers of technology were the factors that made him a well-accepted intellectual and rendered his works canonical.

Despite not being a leftist in his political views, he was a firm advocate of civil rights and opposed both overt and implicit censorship. It is worth noting that he wrote concurrently with the Angry Young Generation in England and the Beat Generation in America, two groups of intellectuals who despised the affluence and vacuity of technological advancement in capitalist societies. Having witnessed World War II and the following devastation, he could observe the possible dangers of technology for a society giving no importance to individual, imagination, and art in the broadest sense. As a man who mostly educated himself in libraries, he had the best idea about the probable consequences of a community bereft of books. In this parallel, he developed a dystopian perspective because he wanted to warn people against such perils. His vision of a totalitarian future carried deep influences of Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel *Brave New World*, which envisioned a future in which people were controlled by pleasure, treats, and little indulgences doled out by an invisible,

[2] Harold Bloom, ed., *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2007), 9.

unaccountable government.[3] In this context, he often emphasised the presence of evil as a real force in the world and held the idea that there is a continuous battle between the bad and good, both of which are kept within the individual. The problem, for him, had always been which to feed and which to suppress. Unlike many other authors writing in the dystopian genre, Bradbury put faith in the inner goodness of the individual and took this as the only hope for humanity.

The epitome of this point of view is undoubtedly his 1953 novel *Fahrenheit 451*. In the work, he focalises the problem of censorship and conformity in a futuristic society that has totally dismissed art and literature for the sake of pleasure and ease of mind. The dystopic future of Bradbury is mainly shaped by the idea of alienation of people from one another and nature in general, mostly caused by the over-use of technology. The novel became an instant classic for its exploration of such themes because the things mentioned in the work seemed quite realistic and probable for the people living in post-war America. By presenting literature and the inner goodness of the main character, Montag, as the only ways of salvation from oppression and conformity, the author repeats his faith in art and the individual.

One of Bradbury's most celebrated and influential works, *Fahrenheit 451* is a short novel set in the United States in a distant future. It is the expanded form of the short story "The Fireman," which was finished in 1951. However, it would be appropriate to claim that the underlying material for the characters and events in the work precede "The Fireman." As the author himself reveals in *Pillar of Fire and Other Plays* (1975), the main occupations of the novel are mostly related to the years before and immediately after World War II. "I did not write *Fahrenheit 451* – it wrote me" says Bradbury when he explains the process that gave birth to the work, and indicates the book-burning policies of Hitler and Stalin as his inspiration.[4] In addition to this, the effects of the circumstances in his own country on the book cannot be disregarded as the story is closely linked to the reality of America in the early 1950s, which was primarily shaped by the Cold War, the massive expansion of television as a determinant in the culture industry, the spread of advertising, the misuse of technology inside the military, the discontent and aggression of the younger generation, and the degradation of the populace: "Thus, in *Fahrenheit 451* specific

[3] Bloom, *Bloom's Guides*, 13.
[4] Bradbury, Ray. "Burning Bright". In *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 58.

American problems of the early 1950s are omnipresent and are constantly projected into the future, estranged, negated . . .”[5]

Written in the period of the McCarthy era, the work masterfully reflects the gloomy atmosphere of the time based on fear and anxiety since McCarthy advocated his political position mostly by fostering suspicion and insecurity within the society.[6] Following the notorious policy of Hitler and Stalin, the books thought to promote communism were detected and destroyed during this period. This culture of suppression and censorship was what helped to inspire the book and made the direct and implied problems caused by technology its focal point. Bradbury’s dystopic narrative was the result of all these social and political occurrences.

Although it is never denied to be one of the cornerstones of dystopian fiction, *Fahrenheit 451* is also known for its emphasis on technology more than anything, which often leads it to be labelled as a work of anti-machine tradition. The type of mechanisation the reader encounters in the work is a much more developed form of the technology available at that time. The author portrays a society that is completely dependent on technology. Transportation is faster and more efficient, and it is often an effective way of relief as Mildred states: “I always like to drive fast when I feel that way. You get it up around ninety-five and you feel wonderful.”[7] The houses in this society are equipped with huge TV screens. Multiple screens are employed to create three-dimensional and wholly encompassing televised environments. These screens also function as a state apparatus in the novel because they are part of the state ideology aiming to keep the citizens entertained and content all the time. In this sense, the seemingly human progress has mostly negative implications as the author presents technology as an equivalent of the soma, an opiate used to ease people, in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*.

Technocratic social order is maintained by means of deception and the complete effacement of the individual, and so-called developments have already turned into the destruction of civilisation. This is the manifestation of Bradbury’s general approach towards technology as elaborated in his short story “The Flying Machine,” a narrative of a Chinese man who invents a flying machine, and yet is condemned to death by the emperor on

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[5] Zipes, Jack. “Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury’s Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451”. In *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 4.

[6] Bloom, *Bloom’s Guides*, 12.

[7] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 61.

the grounds that malevolent people may misuse the machine to destroy the Great Wall of China.

In the novel, the author utilises fire as a metaphor that represents technology with its positive and negative connotations. The ultimate message in the work is that technology, like fire, can largely increase man's power, but if it exceeds the capacity of mankind to control it, it can become a destroyer, too.[8] To this end, Bradbury makes references to the Greek myth of Prometheus to clarify the dual nature of fire as the saviour and destroyer, life and death at once: "The festival of fire revives the ancient ambivalence of the death wish, which also sounds like a wish for renewal and rebirth: die, and live again."[9] However, for Bradbury, fire, and so technology, has already got out of control and turned into the destroyer of mankind. The only counter-forces that can tame fire and technology again are books and humane values placed somewhere deep within the individual.

The writer makes book burning the central issue in the work and openly shows his uneasiness with the way literature was approached then. In Bradbury's dystopic world, the 'firemen' no longer put out fires; on the contrary, they now set fires in an Orwellian inversion of the meaning of the word. The repression and disapproval of creative literature in the novel help the promotion of a more oppressive political entity that seeks to eliminate originality and peculiarity. This kind of social organisation sacrifices individual expression for the sake of social harmony, and this is primarily realised through technocratic means. For Bradbury, the foremost implication of this process is related to memory and thinking. He had the foresight to see that the age of technology could destroy the culture of reading. As Bloom explains, if a person cannot read Shakespeare and his contemporaries, he/she will forfeit memory; and if one cannot remember, then that person will not be able to think, as well.[10] On this basis, book burning becomes synonymous with irrationality and anti-intellectualism.

In an atmosphere where technology has begun to control human life and literature has been done away with, the most serious problem appears to be the issue of personal freedom and free-thinking. Having or not having personal freedom is an essential theme in the book, and the author demonstrates what may happen when the individual is denied the ability to communicate his feelings or recollect his history. However, there is always the possibility of a renaissance. One single individual can initiate a great

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[8] Bloom, *Bloom's Guides*, 17.
[9] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 249.
[10] Bloom, *Bloom's Guides*, 7-8.

difference in a society if that individual can comprehend the artificiality of the dominant ideology, significance of literature and memory, and then decides to take action. This kind of awakening with the following campaign against the system is not a rare case in dystopian fiction: "Once the dystopian hero decides to defy the state's philosophy, he searches for ways and means to circumvent the checks which the state places on individual liberty."[11] This is what happens with Guy Montag, the protagonist of the novel, when he decides to defy the dominant ideology in a moment after his encounter with Clarisse, and thus triggers a radical change as to personal and maybe social freedom. For a character who seems to be an almost-villain of the story at the beginning, his transformation into a hero is a striking instance.

In the exposition of the story, Montag is portrayed as a silenced subject unconscious of his own history and the forces acting on him, and thus functions as one of the majority. He works as a fireman, and like other firemen, burns the books that have been outlawed by the system. The censorship of books dealing with socialism, eroticism, and sexuality in the early 1950s makes Montag's actions conceivable for Bradbury and his readers when the present atmosphere in that time is taken into consideration.[12]

He lives in a society where almost no one reads books, enjoys nature, spends time alone, thinks creatively, or engages in meaningful conversations. Because of the technology they are provided, people, with few exceptions like Clarisse and Faber, do not even attempt to comprehend the value of literature for their intellectual development. Instead, they drive fast, listen to the radio on 'Seashell Radio' sets attached to their ears, and watch excessive amounts of television on wall-size sets. Technology, and especially television, has already created an artificial world for the majority of individuals in the novel. This new world is readily accepted as, unlike literature and art in general, it does not present sophisticated issues or cause people to think.

His encounter with Clarisse McClellan functions as a turning point for Montag's character development. The moment Clarisse meets him, she concludes that "his consciousness has been stunted by the two-hundred-foot-long billboards, the parlour walls, races, and fun parks, all of which she avoids because they prevent her from being alone with her own

[11] Ritter, "The Dystopian Vision: A Study of the Modern Dystopian Novel," 55.
[12] Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451", 5.

thoughts."[13] She pushes him to realise, or at least to question, the hollowness of the dominant worldview by asking innocent but penetrating questions about happiness, love, and nature. Henceforth, Montag's dissatisfaction with his job and life increases, and he begins to search for a solution in the books he has stolen from his own fires and hidden inside the air-conditioning vent. His encounter with Clarisse makes a butterfly effect as it reminds him of an English professor named Faber with whom he once met in a park. He remembers Faber hiding a book in his jacket, and thus decides to find him and ask for his help. This leads to the climax of the story as Faber agrees to help Montag with his reading, and they make a risky plan to overthrow the status quo: Faber will contact a printer and begin reproducing the books still available, and Montag will plant books in the homes of firemen to discredit the profession and destroy the machinery of censorship.

The author portrays Mildred and Beatty as the counterparts of Clarisse and Faber. They are both the absolute conformists of the system, yet they are totally opposite in terms of knowledge and power bestowed to them. Mildred almost knows nothing relating to the system she lives in. She is occupied with technology all the time and she, like many others, thinks literature as the biggest danger just because she is told so. On the other hand, Beatty appears to be a man with great knowledge of history and literature. While Mildred is a victim of mass culture, Beatty adores fire and takes it as the power of the state to reduce everything to sameness. As an advocate of mass culture, he is of the opinion that everyone must think and live in the same manner. What he fears most are personal differences and critical thinking, and he longs for people who are crammed with positivist facts that do not change and are not questioned. He has a much more important position for the maintenance of the system because as a man with personal knowledge of the issue, he is the one to prove that literature is really of no use: "Captain Beatty represents Bradbury's satirical target, not Big Brother but the potentially tyrannical small-mindedness of the common man, perverting the most basic community institutions to enforce conformity."[14] He is the ultimate propagandist of the system and tries to 'cure' Montag by showing him the nonsense of his quest, just like Orwell's O'Brien does with Winston. Mildred's denouncing her husband is another reminder of Orwell's work, and

[13] Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451", 6.

[14] Mogen, David. "Fahrenheit 451 as Social Criticism". In *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 63.

similarly is the evidence of the absence of love and trust in such systems. The event initiates the climax of the story and leads to Montag's killing Beatty by means of fire. This, of course, is of special importance as fire suddenly turns out to be the saviour of Montag and destroyer of the oppressive system, represented by Beatty. After killing Beatty, Montag has to deal with the most destructive agent of the system and technology, the Mechanical Hound. At this point, he visits Faber and wears some of his old clothes to mislead the Hound, which symbolises the finalisation of his transformation as he takes on a totally new personality, a literary one like that of Faber. This occasion is also important in that it helps the author to display the idea of immortality: Faber may be old and powerless, yet Montag takes over his role. Literature cannot be destroyed because it is reborn like the Phoenix.

The author's optimism continues throughout the end of the story as Montag drifts downstream into the countryside and pursues a number of deserted tracks until he finds a group of rebel intellectuals called 'the Book People.' They are a part of a nationwide network of book lovers who have memorised great works of literature and philosophy. They hope that they may be of some help to mankind in the aftermath of the war that has just been declared. Enemy jets appear in the sky and demolish the city with bombs. Montag and his new friends move on to look for survivors and rebuild civilisation. The circle is completed and it is high time for a new beginning for the humankind.

Though it has been often compared to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an undoubtedly noteworthy model for Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* actually blends the authoritarian environment of Orwell's totalitarian government with a cultural environment presented by Huxley's *Brave New World*. Given the social and political climate of the time, the work became a popular book in a short time and it was one of the most well-received works in the author's career. It was, among other things, an actual cultural record of the early 1950s as well as being a work of great mastery. After the appearance of the novel, Bradbury was soon categorised as an author who offered a new level of literary and intellectual sophistication to science fiction by applying it to a world where the pace of change was rapidly accelerating due to unparalleled technological advances. He, like many others, considered these advances encouraging but did not ignore their more alarming implications. As a result, he wanted to stress the hazards of a system that controls knowledge and history, suppresses critical and free thinking, and thus creates subjected beings.

## 2.1 Ignorance of the Subjects is Strength of the System: "It was a special pleasure to see things eaten . . ."

Although it is mostly associated with the French critic Michel Foucault, the idea of interconnectedness between knowledge and power has a much longer history. Indeed, the first implications about the issue can be traced back to Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who brought a new dimension to the concept of science, pioneered empirical thinking, and thus had a remarkable influence on the Enlightenment. From then on, knowledge began to have central importance for not only the progress but also the maintenance of the civilisations. Having realised the importance of knowledge for people management, the governments started to employ a new understanding that recognised the significance of knowledge in keeping hold of power. They either let their citizens access knowledge or deprived them of it depending on the polity they adopted. Although the technological advancements in media undeniably made knowledge more accessible to common people in the early 20th century, it also gave the governments the chance to have full control of information flow by means of erasing or changing it in accordance with their political agenda. The totalitarian governments that started to rise in such countries as Russia and Germany utilised every means to prevent their citizens from attaining knowledge, and their success was mostly connected with how well they managed this. In this context, it is not surprising that many dystopian works approached the correspondence between knowledge and power with a special interest, and accepted knowledge as an indispensable contributor of power. This was exactly the message Orwell meant to give when he famously claimed that ignorance was equivalent to strength, because, as it would be elaborated by the following authors, the ignorance of the citizens became the strength of the rulers in the real sense. Living in a period notorious for censorship and book-hunting, Bradbury employs an Orwellian approach towards the link between knowledge and power in his *Fahrenheit 451*. He emphasises the importance of knowledge by creating a government the principal policy of which is controlling all means of information. It is noteworthy that the novel begins with the statement "[i]t was a pleasure to burn," which is followed by a detailed explanation showing the function of fire in destroying everything:

> It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the

> symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history.[15]

The programme of the state is built upon the idea of destroying anything that may contradict its dogmas. Therefore, the firemen are given the most significant role in society: They burn books and in this way demolish every source of information that may pose danger to the authority of the regime. Undoubtedly, the underlying motive behind censorship and book-burning is to prevent the citizens from accessing knowledge. The regime is well aware of the interrelation between knowledge and power, and in this direction, it blocks the ways leading to knowledge so that it guarantees the weakness of its people forever.

In the work, the author portrays some iconic characters who stand by books, which symbolise knowledge and consciousness, and thus appear as a threat against the system. As such, these figures are given a limited number of options. The most prominent character created in this parallel is the old woman who prefers dying with her books to watching the firemen destroy them. The fact that the firemen let the woman burn with the books shows that ordinary people must be debarred from knowledge at all costs because the power of the state is totally based on the ignorance of its subjects. The old woman, who is an advocate of knowledge and consciousness, has no place in this system, and thus she ends up burning alive. The occasion once more highlights the dominant ideology of the state since it proves that the individual has no importance at all in comparison to knowledge, and every person lives under the danger of being destroyed as soon as they stand by knowledge and against the government.

Faber can be shown as another character created with a similar motive. As a former professor of literature, he maintains a life that is not different from imprisonment. He lives in his house in an isolated way and his connection with books has been completely cut off. He does not resist the system unlike the old woman, and so he is allowed to stay alive as long as he does not attempt to re-connect with knowledge. He stands for another option given to the people in this society as his life depends on his keeping away from literature and knowledge.

The last character provided with a similar function in the novel is Granger. He is an intellectual who can escape from the wrath of the state by taking refuge in the wilderness. He is the leader of other intellectuals that accompany him. Having found no room in the society, they seem to have built their own community. Considering Granger as a character who

[15] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 1.

personifies the intellectuals in the broader sense, the message of the author is apparently that people who read and so get knowledge are seen as the enemies of the regime, and thus can have no place within the system. The case of Granger comes out as the last alternative offered. As the examples show, censorship and book-burning underlie the regime's programme and they prove the state's awareness of the significance of knowledge for the continuation of power. The people with a tendency towards reading are totally kept away from knowledge by means of different methods such as death, isolation, and exile, and in this way, the possibility of rebellion is avoided.

However, the state's relentless effort to detach its citizens from knowledge is not the only way Bradbury uses to stress the importance of the issue. In addition, he creates opposing characters to display the direct effect of knowledge upon power. In the work, he shows how the ones provided with knowledge gain an advantage over the ones bereft of it, Captain Beatty and Montag being the best examples. As the story reveals, Captain Beatty has a surprisingly profound knowledge of literature and history. He comes out as a character that reminds of Orwell's O'Brien with his vast knowledge and endless self-confidence. Holding the idea that knowledge is power, the author indicates several implications that the fire chief must have had access to the forbidden texts, but whether it is a cause or a result of his being made chief is not revealed. On the other hand, Montag, an ordinary fireman who is not permitted to access knowledge, comes out as a foil to Beatty. Equipped with knowledge, Beatty easily overcomes Montag and his arguments by presenting specific examples from history and literature, and thus tries to convince him to give up his newly developing interest in literature. Beatty is so knowledgeable and his remarks are based on so powerful grounds that he almost succeeds in persuading Montag into the uselessness of literature. This is a process of 'curing' in fact since any person that tends to question the ordinances of the regime is taken as unfit. Overwhelmed by Beatty, Montag seeks Faber's help to resist. Montag's longing for knowledge is so tempting that he ventures to kill Beatty so as to save Faber, a metaphor for knowledge and thus power.

The dystopian future depicted in the novel is determined by the authoritarian manipulation of knowledge, which is implemented by the use of book-burning devices. Since access to printed knowledge is limited, the government, which provides a misleading and simplified interpretation of reality, is the only source of information. Knowledge is so vital for the continuity of the state that the preservation of it comes before the lives of the individuals most of the time. Like many other examples written in this

genre, the government in the work is always in a struggle to monopolise knowledge, and thus to keep it beyond the reach of its citizens. In this way, it assures the ignorance of the people and this leads to the all-powerful state.

## 2.2 The Reversal of 'Cogito, ergo sum': "Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology . . ."

The notion of thinking as the ultimate evidence of existence has long been among the cornerstones of Western philosophy. Accordingly, many philosophers and intellectuals have been preoccupied with the role of thinking in human history and have tried to solve the way it works. The result of these investigations has been the judgement that thinking is indispensable for being and/or becoming an individual. Nevertheless, this distinctive faculty has not been encouraged by all types of governments. Totalitarianisms have always thought of thinking as the biggest obstacle to the process of subjectivation on the ground that thinking would necessarily mean questioning the arguments of the system, which are built upon absolute submission. In this context, such states have adopted a policy prioritising the elimination of critical thinking. Once this is realised, the individuals could easily be interpellated. Under these circumstances, they would accept every dogma of the regime without resistance, no matter how unrealistic and illogical it is.

The state Bradbury creates in the novel employs a similar approach. People are directly or indirectly discouraged from thinking, and a new way of living has been built to this end. The new life order is shaped around a non-thinking community. People are expected to be occupied with trivial things that do not necessitate critical consideration, and accordingly, the system wants to destroy all types of occasions that may lead to thinking and criticising. As it is revealed through the conversations between Montag and Clarisse, even the porches have been got rid of so that people cannot find the necessary space or time to come together and produce ideas. What Bradbury caricatures through this is the kind of lifestyle oppressive governments have tried to impose especially since the World War II. In the story, the state does away with every possibility of socialising and reflection, and even the architecture has been redesigned correspondingly. Since the ultimate aim is 'sameness,' for which critical thinking is surely a great danger, this kind of understanding has no tolerance for different opinions. Mogen explains this aspect of the novel by referring to it as a "very American satire" that is directed "not at specific government institutions but at anti-intellectualism and cramped

materialism posing as social philosophy, justifying book burning in the service of a degraded democratic idea."[16]

The new world view is based on anti-intellectualism and materialism as Captain Beatty often emphasises throughout the work, and the ones who try to think and criticise despite all the barriers set against are seen as heretics who need to be 'cured.' Such people as Clarisse, who appreciates nature, human relations and critical thinking, have no possibility to survive unless they accept to be cured. The term 'cure' is used in an ironic way, of course, as it means absolute submission to the impositions of the state. On the other hand, the system has to find something to replace people's innate requirement for thinking and artistic creation. In the novel, the regime's alternative is a materialistic lifestyle determined by the popular culture and corruption of literature.

One of the core theses in the work is that enlightenment and increasingly rationalised community have resulted in more fragmentation than salvation. The state in the book maintains an understanding that urges for the elimination of thinking and consciousness, and accordingly, it aims to create a society that has been detracted from these elements. In this context, popular culture, promoted by technology, comes out as a central apparatus. The discourse creates an artificial world for its subjects who are not even aware of the artificiality of the life surrounding them. Popular culture covers so much space that people are left with no other option than living in a mechanical world lacking humane qualities. The new world order is based on the displacement of consciousness with total unconsciousness.

The primary example Bradbury presents in this direction is Montag's wife, Mildred. She lives in a feigned world that imprisons her under the guise of popular culture. Technology has already become an indispensable source of life for her. The new world has even given her a new family she has never met in the real life while it has estranged her from her husband and real family. It would not be wrong to claim that the borders of her life are limited to home, which is a highly technological one. The place she calls home, like the other ones in the work, is an automatic house which cleans and maintains itself, and does everything for its inhabitants so that they often find nothing to do. Although it may seem as an example of human progress at first, this 'nothing to be done' state apparently kills the people's feeling of being useful and so being alive, which is among the most serious problems of the modern man.

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[16] Mogen, "Fahrenheit 451 as Social Criticism", 63.

Another destructive aspect of technology in the novel comes out as the Seashells. Mildred almost always has Seashells in her ears and cuts her connection from the outer world around. In this way, she imprisons herself in a world that is too distant from that of her husband's. This leads to lack of communication between them and results in the disappearance of every kind of emotion expected from a couple. Montag is well aware of the abyss between him and his wife, and he has already realised that the connection between them has irrecoverably been damaged. When he refers to his wife and their bedroom, he uses such words as "cold, invisible, and empty."[17] His description is all about absolute nothingness. There is no emotion, no communication, and indeed no life. Most importantly, consciousness has no space to survive in this environment, either. By pushing Mildred and Montag to live in separate worlds, technology has successfully destroyed most of the humanitarian values as targeted. Nevertheless, Mildred never shows a sign of consciousness or awareness of the hopeless situation she is in. The technology and popular culture have surrounded her so closely that she cannot comprehend her problems, and feels satisfied with her life. She has been given an artificial life, and she has no time to think about anything else, including her husband. She spends all her time and energy for the family the system has supplied and establishes a virtual connection with people by means of large TV screens. These occasions have become the only reality for her. Having cut off her emotional and psychological link with her husband, she clings to the fictitious life offered by technology: "It's really fun. It'll be even more fun when we can afford to have the fourth wall installed."[18]

As it is later revealed, Mildred's neighbours are not different in that they also live in a mechanical world and have lost consciousness of the real life. When they talk about politics, this aspect manifests itself with Mrs. Bowles's shallow approach towards the matter: "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 who ever became president."[19] Mildred and her neighbours are portrayed to represent the majority of the society. Considering this, the gravity of the social problem can be understood much better. As stated, people have become superficial enough to vote by looking at the physical appearance of the candidates alone. Having been occupied with technology and popular culture for a long time, they seem to have totally lost their ability to think and evaluate. They are so used to

[17] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 10.
[18] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 18.
[19] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 93.

living in the world designed for them that they have developed a materialistic and irrational understanding of everything.

In this context, the similarity between these characters and the Mechanical Hound is striking. The Hound is described as a mechanic creature that "doesn't think anything" the system doesn't "want it to think."[20] It is the ultimate product of the system and exists somewhere between life and death, "The Mechanical Hound slept but did not sleep, lived but did not live in its gently humming, gently vibrating, softly illuminated kennel back in a dark corner of the firehouse."[21] Just like the Hound, Mildred and many others cannot be described as living in the full sense because they have no competence of thinking and living with their free will anymore. The Hound, a metaphor for society in a broader sense, is the result of the process of interpellation that ends up with subjected beings who can think and live as much as the system allows them to. Apparently, the government has generally succeeded in its anti-intellectual policy.

On the other hand, another and less remarked aspect of popular culture is revealed via Clarisse. During a conversation with Montag, she stresses the fact that popular culture is indeed based on absolute speed. Everything from cars to TV programmes is fast. This is not a coincidence, of course, as it serves as a vital proponent of the dominant ideology. In accordance with the state politics, life itself has been made so fast that people have no time to stop and think: "Have you ever watched the jet cars racing on the boulevards down that way? I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly."[22]

Thinking seems to be the biggest enemy of popular culture because it leads to duality and confusion. The basic purpose of popular culture is to provide people with ease of mind, which necessitates the absence of critical thinking. By removing anything that may confuse people, the system tries to give them artificial happiness and peace of mind. A community governed by an anti-intellectual policy and thus discouraged from critical approach is doomed to cultural degeneration, and the regime seems to be contented with this. Obviously, the majority of the people in Bradbury's society have replaced their consciousness with the pleasures of technology and popular culture:

> Though the novel's basic mechanics of thought control derive from Orwell, Bradbury's satirical vision does not focus primarily on government itself

[20] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 25.
[21] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 21-22.
[22] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 6.

> but on the potentially poisonous superficiality of mass culture, on whose behalf the firemen work. As in Huxley's satire (itself profoundly influenced by American culture in the twenties), the power of totalitarianism in Fahrenheit 451 derives primarily from pleasure rather than pain, from addiction to mindless sensation rather than from fear of government oppression.[23]

The state's gradual suppression of thinking by imposing technology and popular culture is one part of its anti-intellectual policy. The regime knows well that manipulating the way people believe and live is a big step for the success of its policy, yet not enough by itself. In this direction, it also reflects upon finding a way to reduce the dignity and validity of literature because literature is one of the fundamental disciplines urging people to think and criticise, a quality that renders literature the main obstacle for the absolute realisation of state politics. It is not surprising, then, that literature is not appreciated in this society. The reader learns the exact reason for the prohibition of books by means of the conversations between Montag and Faber. As clarified during such instances, books are the only means left with the power of negation and criticising which may lead people to realise the unnaturalness and fallaciousness of the world they live in. As Faber obviously argues, books reveal the pores in the face of life, its gaps and discontinuities.[24] In order to read, one must develop an attitude of attentive thinking, and this is the last thing the regime would want. Accordingly, the system is based on a group of people who believe that literature is mentally and psychologically harmful as it requires reflection, and reflection is always a painful process. Therefore, the majority of people in this society are in favour of ease of mind against contemplation. Bradbury presents this issue mostly through Beatty, who mostly functions as the spokesman of the regime: "More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun, and you don't have to think, eh? Organize and organize and superorganize super-super sports. More cartoons in books. More pictures. The mind drinks less and less."[25] As Beatty explains, literature has no place in the agenda of the government since the priority is amusing people with the elements of popular culture such as sports and cartoons so that the mind 'drinks less,' and eventually dies. The whole system is constructed upon people who prefer popular culture to literature. The state has maintained such a prevalent propaganda for the popular

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[23] Mogen, "Fahrenheit 451 as Social Criticism", 65-66.
[24] Touponce, William F. "Reverie". In *Bloom's Guides: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007), 60.
[25] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 54.

culture and against literature that the citizens no longer try to access literature as they think it might confuse and upset them. Later on, Beatty emphasises that not to make a person unhappy, one should not "give him two sides to a question to worry him," because duality means confusion, which can be avoided by oneness, or preferably nothingness: "Give him one. Better yet, give him none."[26]

In the novel, the materialistic and pragmatist understanding of the system is continuously propagandised and encouraged by apparatuses like education and media. In this way, people are canalised to an understanding which claims that the total elimination of literature is the indispensable element for happiness. The main principle is deceiving people with an artificial feeling of happiness, and whatever seems to be an impediment to this end is doomed to be destroyed: "Coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it . . . Burn them all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean."[27] By pumping the idea of happiness all the time, the system has created people who are ready to renounce their traditional and intellectual habits, and they are easily occupied with whatever they are given under the illusion of happiness. This illusion must be continued ceaselessly to keep people under absolute control. With this design, the state must provide people with something that can make them feel satisfied and happy all the time.

Later on, Beatty explains to Montag how the situation of the 20th century started to deteriorate intellectually, eventually leading to the banning of books, and how schools began to fill the students with verifiable facts under the guise of education. He reveals that education is now designed to cram students with only facts, to provide them with the idea that they are thinking and growing intellectually. The real purpose, however, is to prevent them from asking questions at all, since questioning means coming up with new ideas, which may be controversial and, therefore, upsetting. All questioners and philosophers have been and will be excluded in time.

Art has no room in society because it is elusive, and thus ruins the so-called happiness of people. It is not surprising that Beatty calls himself and his colleagues 'happiness boys' who "stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought."[28] As he states, "[h]e is no wise man that will quit a certainty for

[26] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 58.
[27] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 57.
[28] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 59.

an uncertainty."[29] Accordingly, he uses the metaphor of Icarus to describe people with a tendency for literature. As the story clarifies, literature, and so uncertainty, are dangerous and must be avoided. If you get too close, you may end up dying, Clarisse and the old woman being the best examples. Therefore, people are to be filled with unchangeable and concrete information, which will make them feel as if they were thinking.

In Bradbury's society, literature is under constant suppression and it can end up in two ways. The first and more prevalent way is totally destroying it: "We burned copies of Dante and Swift and Marcus Aurelius. Wasn't he a European? Something like that. Wasn't he a radical? I never read him. He was a radical."[30] The primary function of firemen is to demolish every piece of literature they can detect. The other option is letting it survive but in a simplified and debased way so that it fits in with the popular culture: "Classics cut to fit fifteen-minute radio shows, then cut again to fill a two-minute book column, winding up at last as a ten- or twelve-line dictionary resume."[31] As a result of the ongoing process, the people have come to readily accept both the elimination and debasement of literature without a necessity for being compelled by the state. A crucial and frequent message in the work is that books have not disappeared or become simplified just because of the government's desire for simple-minded citizens. The other and more substantial reason is that people themselves have rejected sophisticated literature in favour of quicker pleasures: "It didn't come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God."[32] Faber also supports this argument when he admits having been thrown out of university forty years ago when the last liberal arts college was shut for lack of students. In this society, the regime has constructed a new world view. The new understanding draws its strength from the superficiality and negligence of the community. The system is able to maintain itself by imposing an incessant illusion of happiness, and thus provides people with such elements as comic books or sex magazines: "What do we want in this country, above all? People want to be happy, isn't that right? For pleasure, for titillation? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of these."[33]

Art and literature have no chance to find a room in this structure as they include plurality, which is intolerable by a regime that builds itself on

[29] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 103.
[30] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 47.
[31] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 52.
[32] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 55.
[33] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 56.

the principle of oneness. Literature is displaced by linguistically unsophisticated print media. By destroying art and imposing popular culture instead, the system creates people incapable of critical thinking. They are superficial subjects with no intellectual or psychological depth. Happiness is the ultimate aim of life, and every area of life is designed accordingly. However, the problem is that the concept of happiness in the novel is unnatural and unsustainable because it depends on the absolute unconsciousness of people. That the author makes a reference to Matthew Arnold's 1867 poem, "Dover Beach," is significant in order to understand Bradbury's message. The poem relates two lovers looking at what seems to be a happy world, but recognising the essential emptiness that exists. Similarly, the world described in the novel also rests on happiness, psychological comfort, and freedom from controversy, but Montag realises that beneath the exterior is a vast emptiness, a 'darkling plain.' In this context, the exaggerated reaction of Mrs. Phelps, Mildred's friend, to "Dover Beach" is important in showing the reason why people avoid literature in this society and how unfamiliar they have become with thinking: "Mrs. Phelps was crying. The others in the middle of the desert watched her crying grow very loud as her face squeezed itself out of shape. They sat, not touching her, bewildered by her display. She sobbed uncontrollably."[34]

Considering the examples provided, it would not be wrong to claim that the society described in the novel is one declining in every respect. The people have not only lost the ability to think but also forgotten how to feel. As Bloom expresses in his analysis of the book, Bradbury parodies post-war America where uncontrolled "technological development, mindless thrill-seeking in media, and the political anomie of the majority" have resulted in a society with a "drastic vulnerability to a progressive degeneration of its cultural and intellectual capacities."[35]

## 2.3 Systematic Process of Subjectivation: "The crisis is past and all is well, the sheep returns to the fold."

As many previous examples have shown, the power of a government is closely related to the control and manipulation of people. Although it is difficult to completely exclude a certain type of system from this argument, the totalitarian regimes have displayed the farthermost epitomes notably beginning with the 20th century. Thanks to the developing

[34] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 97.
[35] Bloom, *Bloom's Guides*, 29.

technology and mass media, human control, physical and psychological, reached unprecedented levels during this period. The oppression became so extensive and continuous that it was no longer possible for the citizens of such states to live as free individuals. People were deprived of their emotions, the virtue of thinking was discouraged, and individual differences were taken as something intolerable. Besides, this process of interpellation and subjectivation was promoted by every single apparatus from religion to education. Under these circumstances, people could do nothing but serve the full power of the regime.

For many intellectuals, this kind of understanding was unacceptable. Pioneered by those writing in the dystopian tradition, numerous authors have tried to portray the bleak atmosphere of the century in their works. Having a special concern for contemporary occurrences, Bradbury addresses the issue of systematic dehumanisation in relation to the concepts of interpellation and subjectivation in *Fahrenheit 451*. For Bradbury, human and humane values are the ultimate solution for the dilemma created by oppressive regimes. From this perspective, it is quite plausible that the oppressive state he describes in the novel primarily targets human feelings and struggles to destroy all types of emotions that may lead to establishing strong relationships among people. What really matters is the continuation of the regime, and people are to have an emotional link only with the state. Accordingly, many characters he describes in the work seem to have lost their emotions regarding being a human due to the long-standing policy of suppression.

One of the most striking moments in this direction is the scene when two operators come to save Mildred. Although Mildred seems satisfied with her life, hers is a pretended happiness imposed by the mass culture. Having lost her connections with her husband and real life, she can continue her life with the help of drugs that lower her unpleasant emotions and awareness in a sense. After she has poisoned herself with pills, Montag calls for the operators. However, the men are so emotionless and they act so mechanically that Montag almost suspects their being real human beings: “Strangers come and violate you. Strangers come and cut your heart out. Strangers come and take your blood. Good God, who were those men? I never saw them before in my life!”[36] Montag is troubled by the operators’ careless treatment of his wife with a machine that invigorates her by injecting new blood into her body, and he is more troubled when the pill given to his wife by the operators renders her unconscious of her suicide attempt. This occasion affects Montag considerably because he

[36] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 14.

realises the power of technology in creating unfeeling people. He sees how technology is exploited to numb the senses while keeping people alive as machines.

The relationship between Mildred and Montag is the underlying reason for her suicide attempt and has a key role in displaying the level of alienation among people. As the story proceeds, the readers come to realise that there is in fact no real emotional link between the two. They are two strangers who live in the same house but in different worlds because they are too occupied with the artificial and mechanical world created for them. Montag's ideas about their relationship show how successful the system has been in emotionally detaching people from one another: "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 . . ."[37]

The extract provides the most intimate revelation as to the type of marriages and relationships encouraged by the state. As he states, he would not sorrow if his wife died, and it would be the death of an unknown person for him. Actually, Mildred is a person who is not known by Montag in a real sense. The mass media and popular culture have created a chasm between them. What lies in the centre of their relationship is an irrecoverable alienation, and this is what the regime targets. The people must have no connection with anybody or anything except the state. In this context, mutual love and trust are the last emotions one can keep, and the climax of the story functions as a testimonial of this situation: Montag is given in by his wife, and at this point, the fact that one can rely on nobody, including family members, comes to light. This is exactly the moment when being an individual gives way to being a subject: "'Mildred, you didn't put in the alarm!' She shoved the valise in the waiting beetle, climbed in, and sat mumbling, 'Poor family, poor family, oh everything gone, everything, everything gone now'"[38] Mildred appears as the impeccable outcome of the process the state imposes. However, the emotional problems Mildred experiences are indeed social ones. To this end, the author portrays other characters who are equally emotionless and who have been equally subjectified. Mildred's friends are presented to emphasise this aspect of the issue. War is an element that always lurks in the background of the story, and there are frequent references to the Cold War that could lead to an atomic explosion which happens at the end of the book. Nevertheless, the state uses the concept of

[37] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 41.
[38] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 108.

war in two different ways. On the one hand, the regime makes people feel its presence to create fear and convince them to the necessity and vitality of the state to protect them. On the other hand, it systematically destroys the disruptive emotions that may cause discomfort among people. War has become a part of daily life and people can make jokes about the issue even when the ones in question are their husbands. When Montag asks Mrs. Phelps about her husband, who has been called by the Army, she seems irritatingly contented and answers as if the person they mention has no connection with her: "Oh, they come and go, come and go. I'm not worried, I'll let Pete do all the worrying."[39]

Obviously, the traditional relationship between wife and husband, which draws its strength from love and affection, has broken down. The positive emotions have disappeared, and an atmosphere of indifference prevails. The same emotionlessness manifests itself once more when they talk about children. Mrs. Phelps argues that "[n]o one in his right mind" would want to have a child.[40] Cutting the emotional relationship between man-woman and parent-child is one of the basic policies of totalitarianisms. In this way, they create subjects who can serve only for the benefits of the state and do whatever they are asked to, even if it is to sacrifice the closest ones. In Bradbury's society, this seems to have been achieved.

Having shown the examples of Mildred and her friends, the author expands the scope of the issue to show that the problem is not limited to a certain group of people, and it has become a national trouble. The suppression of emotions has created subjects who function as observers of one another. This occupies an important position in the oppressive policy of the regime because people feel the possibility of being observed all the time and this enables a ceaseless control mechanism in accordance with the idea of the panopticon. Every single person has turned into a spy for the state, and this is disclosed during Montag's escape when all people readily collaborate with the government to catch Montag: "Everyone in every house in every street open a front or rear door or look from the windows . . . Ready!"[41]

As the cases show, the state has cut all types of connections between wife-husband, parent-child, and person-person in a systematic way. While this heralds the absolute success of the regime, it also signifies the collapse of humanity. The people are controlled without much effort because a self-discipline mechanism has been successfully established. In a society where

[39] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 91.
[40] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 92.
[41] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 131-132.

a wife can give in her husband for keeping books and people spy on one another, the victory of the regime becomes undeniable.

Once the regime guarantees the absence of emotion among people, it sets nature on its target. In the society described, people do not appreciate nature at all and they do not even try to contact with it. The dialogues between Clarisse and Montag reveal that Montag, a representative of the common citizen then, has no idea of nature or an experience related to it. When Clarisse says the rain feels good and she loves to walk in it, Montag confesses that he has never tried it.[42] Even such simple things as walking in the rain have become unfamiliar and people have begun to see nature only as a part of the universe created to serve humankind.

However, the 'queer' people like Clarisse may still keep their love of nature and have close connections with it. Such people are dangerous for the authority of the state because nature has an eternal potential to evoke the repressed emotions in people, and thus it may endanger the whole struggle made with this design. It is the reason why the state encourages the attitude of people like Montag while it tries to dissuade those with an opposite understanding of nature. Accordingly, Clarisse, who loves and welcomes nature, is viewed and shown as a heretic and abnormal: "The psychiatrist wants to know why I go out and hike around in the forests and watch the birds and collect butterflies. I'll show you my collection someday."[43] It is obvious that the system has been constructed to marginalise the ones who strive for keeping their emotions not only for one another but also for nature. Significantly, Clarisse is soon vaporised, and thus the mechanism can maintain itself.

Later on, it is revealed that people have not only become alienated from nature but also begun to nurture enmity towards it. It is now a means of relaxation for people who claim absolute mastery over it. The way Mildred relaxes when she feels sad is an important manifestation of this: "I always like to drive fast when I feel that way . . . It's fun out in the country. You hit rabbits, sometimes you hit dogs."[44] People kill animals and damage nature when they feel upset. The dominant ideology bestows human beings with full control of nature. One of the most striking examples in this direction is the idea of The Mechanical Hound, a control machine with special detectors enabling it to find out the presence of books. As the name suggests, these machines have been inspired by nature. Nonetheless, they do not think or feel: They simply do what they are ordered to do. This is an obvious proclamation of the mastery of

[42] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 19.
[43] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 20.
[44] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 61.

technology, and so man, over nature. It suggests the power of the system in taking and reshaping nature, and thus the Hounds come out as the epitome of modern distorted science. The idea of human mastery over nature is a long and controversial topic, but Bradbury indicates that the 20th century and the so-called idea of human progress have brought the problem to an extreme point.

State Apparatuses play a vital role in turning individuals into free subjects. The states can control the minds and bodies of people only on the condition that they can abuse every single unit of the society. The regime Bradbury depicts employs several strategies in this direction. As a component of the apparatuses, The Hounds are highly functional in creating an atmosphere of fear within the community. They are terrifying monsters designed to intimidate citizens and frighten them into obedience. The fear that Montag feels towards the Hound clearly shows the way how the state is able to keep people under control mostly with the help of fear. The scene where Montag touches its muzzle and the Hound growls at him is the first moment to manifest the fear the Hounds create. Its growl sets Montag's heart 'pounding' and stirs a great deal of fear. Besides, on the day that Mildred tells him about Clarisse's death, Montag suspects that the Hound is outside of his house. The Hound becomes more and more sceptical of him as his fascination with literature grows and he gets closer to betraying his duty as a fireman. The Hound, in this sense, becomes the symbol of the relentless pursuit of the State. By making people feel the fear of being observed all the time and reminding them of the possibility of being punished at any moment, it has a central position in creating a society governed by fear and paranoia.

In the novel, the propaganda of war appears as another apparatus in creating fear and so making the control of people easier. Although it does not manifest itself physically until the end of the story, it always makes its presence felt in the background of the story. Montag mentions the nuclear wars, and the readers are led to believe that the society in which he lives attributes its intolerance of philosophy, original thought, and individualism to the results of these wars. However, the most critical point in displaying the author's attitude towards war is the reference he makes to Jonathan Swift's 1726 work, *Gulliver's Travels*: "It is computed, that eleven thousand persons have, at several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end."[45] Swift points at a meaningless war fought between the miniature people who inhabit the imaginary nations of

[45] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1992), 34-35.

Lilliput and Blefescu, arising from their debate over how to break eggs. From this point of view, the arbitrariness and absurdity of war, and the underlying purpose of waging wars to frighten people and keep them under constant control become the evident messages given by Bradbury with the help of this reference.

Considering its importance in imposing the dominant ideology and establishing the ground for the future society, it is not surprising that education system has a special place for the policy of the regime. The author refers to this issue over the conversations between Montag and Clarisse, and Montag and Beatty. Via Clarisse's portrayal of school classes that are focused on mass media and sports, and that discourage critical debate, Bradbury openly criticises the American educational system.[46] In the novel, schooling is designed to exhaust the young so that they become tame and controllable. Nevertheless, the children's frustrations are reflected in their after-school activities, which often turn to violence. In this atmosphere, communication gives way to games of beating up people and destroying things: "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."[47] Beatty's arguments about the education system support Clarisse in terms of the decline of education. In a conversation with Montag, he states the education system is formed to cram students with only facts, and to provide them with the phantasy that they are developing intellectually. However, the underlying aim of excluding many disciplines from the education system is producing subjects who do not question anything: "Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy."[48]

The idea of a lurking war and the overwhelming surveillance of the Hound create fear among people. Besides, the misuse of the education system helps to control and direct them. Within this context, people, whose humane emotions have already been ripped off, are inevitably interpellated and subjectified. The result is man's loss of autonomy, and the overall decline of critical forces in the society.[49] The overall message of the novel is the tension between individualism and conformity. When the type of society portrayed in the work is considered, it seems almost impossible for individuality to find a place. As the story progresses, it is understood that the regime has built the whole system on the idea of

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[46] Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451", 7.
[47] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 27.
[48] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 58.
[49] Touponce, "Reverie", 59.

conformity and sameness. The state deals only with the masses and remains indifferent to the individual. Individuality must be suppressed as it means difference, and difference has always been dangerous for totalitarian regimes. The fear of the unknown renders such regimes intolerant of people with different features. The underlying idea is that although all people may not be born equal and same, they can be made so by the dominant system. Accordingly, the state determines its programme to create uniformity. One of the most striking points to this end is the idea of taking and educating babies at an early age to prevent any possibilities of differences: "Heredity and environment are funny things. You can't rid yourselves of all the odd ducks in just a few years. The home environment can undo a lot you try to do at school. That's why we've lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now we're almost snatching them from the cradle."[50]

As Beatty explains, the babies are taken almost from their cradles to be imposed the dominant ideology. This strategy indicates the importance of producing a mass of subjects who live, believe, and think in the same way. As an advocate of mass culture, he thinks that the only way to create a happy society is to provide sameness, and thus he longs for unquestioning subjects crammed with positivist facts that do not change. A person like Clarisse is dangerous since she does not comply with the dogmas of the system; so, she is "better off dead."[51] The ones who do not accept conformism, like Clarisse, Montag, and Granger, are killed or exiled. In this sense, Beatty's reference to the prophecy in Isaiah to stress the idea of the superiority of mass over the individual is important: "The crisis is past and all is well, the sheep returns to the fold. We're all sheep who have strayed at times."[52]

In Bradbury's dystopic society, people are interpellated and subjectified by the misuse of apparatuses and repression of human autonomy. This imprisons people to an artificial world and creates subjects devoid of critical thinking and humane emotions, which leads to sameness and conformity. Obviously, the author wants to get at the roots of American conformity and points a finger at the complicity of the state for using technology to blank out the potential for alternative ways of living which do not conform to fixed national standards.[53] By presenting a society where individualism has been betrayed by the systematic strategies of the

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[50] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 57.
[51] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 58.
[52] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 102.
[53] Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in Fahrenheit 451", 6.

state, he portrays a futuristic ‘dark age’ that can be actualised unless people start to rebuild an intellectual and emotional legacy to make a humane life possible again.

# CHAPTER THREE

# *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

> "A rat in a maze is free to go anywhere, as long as it stays inside the maze."[1]

As with many other social fields throughout history, dystopian fiction was predominated by the male voice for a long time. Having gathered momentum beginning with the early 20th century, the genre was widely established and shaped by male writers such as Zamiatin and Orwell. Nevertheless, women were eventually to have a say in the genre with their increasing power and effect in the second half of the 20th century. Most of the prevalent issues of the genre, such as the disruptive results of totalitarianism, the idea of surveillance, and the systematic subjectivation of individuals, have maintained their central position in the works of female authors. They have differed, however, in one important aspect: Depersonalisation has been basically linked to the patriarchal reduction of women to solely their biological function. Accordingly, woman's reduction to a breeding vessel in these narratives has been presented less as extrapolation and more as a condemnation of existent patriarchal practice.[2]

Born in 1939, in Canada, Margaret Atwood used to spend most of her childhood time in touch with nature due to her father's being an entomologist and her parents' general appreciation of the wilderness. Naturally, these childhood experiences would echo in many of her works. In her 1972 novel *Surfacing*, for example, she concentrates on a woman's return to her childhood home in Quebec's northern wilderness, which is indeed the setting of Atwood's childhood, to explore the relationship between nature and culture. Although she did not attend school full-time until she was twelve years old, she was interested in literature from an early age. Her early acquaintance with different genres such as mysteries,

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[1] Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (London: Vintage Classics, 2017), 164.

[2] Sobia Zaman, "The Feminist Appropriation of Dystopia: A Study of Atwood, Elgin, Fairbairns, and Tepper," (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1994), 6.

fairy tales, animal stories, and comic books has had a significant role in her literary career. Atwood was educated at the University of Toronto. Despite her initial enrolment in the philosophy department, she soon moved to literature due to her preference for ethics and aesthetics over logical positivism. The university's literature curriculum was almost totally British because Canadian literature was not considered worthy of study then. This was determinative in shaping her literature as specifically Canadian. In 1972, she wrote *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* to give Canadian literature a national identity, and thus to help establish it as a proper field.

The author started her career as a poet, and her first book of poetry was *Double Persephone*, which was published in 1961. Her first professionally published collection, *The Circle Game*, came three years later, and it was an immediate success. She finished another collection, *The Animals in That Country*, in 1968. In these collections, she mostly contemplates on human behaviour, appreciates the natural world, and criticises materialism. Her first novel, *The Edible Woman*, published in 1969, studies similar issues. The novel was accepted as a contemporary satire in which a young woman finds herself unable to eat after getting engaged with the wrong person. Many critics have regarded the piece as an early example of the feminist concerns that will appear in many of Atwood's works in the following years.

Atwood continued to publish more poetry collections than novels in the following decade, too. She published six collections of poetry in this period: *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970), *Procedures for Underground* (1970), *Power Politics* (1971), *You Are Happy* (1974), *Selected Poems, 1965-1975* (1976), and *Two-Headed Poems* (1978). The poetry collections were accompanied by three novels: *Surfacing* (1972), *Lady Oracle* (1976), and *Life Before Man* (1979). The novels, like *The Edible Woman*, explore identity and social constructions of gender. Particularly, *Surfacing*, along with *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, served to establish Atwood as a significant figure in Canadian literature. In 1977, she published her first short story collection, *Dancing Girls*.

Her literary reputation went on to rise in the 1980s and 1990s, a period during which she mostly produced novels. She had great success with the publication of *Bodily Harm* (1981), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), and *Cat's Eye* (1988). *The Robber Bride* (1993) and *Alias Grace* (1996), the story of a real-life Canadian girl accused of two murders, were also readily welcomed. By means of the representations of female characters, both works examine good and evil, as well as morality.

In 2000, Atwood released her tenth novel, *The Blind Assassin*, which is an elegantly crafted story based primarily on the narrative of an elderly woman supposedly writing to clarify the misunderstandings about her sister's suicide. She continued to make an impression with the publication of the 2003 novel *Oryx and Crake*, in which she tells the story of a pandemic apocalypse in the immediate future through the perspective and recollections of a protagonist who may be the only survivor. It is the first novel in a series that also includes *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013), which would collectively come to be known as *The MaddAddam Trilogy*. The trilogy's dystopian vision explores genetic mutation, pharmaceutical and industrial control, and man-made calamity. In 2005, she published the novella *The Penelopiad* as part of the *Canongate Myth Series*. The story is a retelling of *The Odyssey* from the viewpoint of Penelope and a chorus of the twelve maids who were slaughtered at the end of the original story. *The Heart Goes Last* (2015), originally published as a serial e-book (2012–13), portrays a dystopian America where a couple is urged to join a society that works like a prison. In 2016, the author issued the novel *Hag-Seed*, a present-day recount of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In 2019, she published *The Testaments*, a sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. The story is told through the eyes of three female characters and takes place fifteen years after Offred's ambiguous closing scene in the original book.

A highly influential novelist, poet, and critic on the literary context of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Margaret Eleanor Atwood has been into the dystopian genre for many decades. She has mostly focused on the intellectual aspect of the issue and having analysed the previous examples of totalitarian regimes, she has come up with the result that the authors have always been a danger, and thus a target for the oppressive governments. For Atwood, the underlying reason for this understanding is quite apparent: "The writer, unless he is a mere word processor, retains three attributes that power-mad regimes cannot tolerate: a human imagination, in the many forms it may take; the power to communicate; and hope."[3] As one of the most popular authors of modern literature, Atwood's ideas about social and political issues have been of great interest. Many critics have tried to understand her tendencies by examining her works. She has attracted many feminist literary critics and has often been labelled as a feminist. Nevertheless, she prefers to explain her approach as social realism rather than feminism. She even claims that

[3] Margaret Atwood, *Second Words: Selected Critical Prose* (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), 397.

her novels should be interpreted in the tradition of Victorian realism, that is, in the light of objective truths rather than subjective perceptions. Her writing conjures up a complex and probable social environment, whether it is a bleak vision of the future, as in *The Handmaid's Tale*, or a vividly depicted past, as in *Alias Grace*. If she is to be classified as a feminist, her feminism is more about human rights than women's rights.

Although she has written many ground-breaking works in different genres, *The Handmaid's Tale* has been taken as the embodiment of her literary views by many authorities since its publication. The novel is constructed around the memoirs of Offred, who lives in a totalitarian Christian theocracy of future America. Having lost most of her fundamental human rights, the protagonist tells her story mostly by means of flashbacks so that the readers can learn not only the present circumstances but also the life before Gilead. Although it is similar to other works of the genre in terms of its tone and main issues handled, *The Handmaid's Tale* differs in being the narrative of a woman, which means that the repression is doubled: What Offred goes through is a result of first being a human, but then being a woman, as well. Accepted as one of the best examples of dystopian fiction, the work impeccably portrays a nightmarish world in which the overwhelming oppression leads to inevitable subjectivation.

Many authors, intentionally or unintentionally, base their works on the social and political context of the time they live in. Even with the works of fiction, it is usually difficult to write independently from the main events and tendencies of the period they belong to. This is exactly valid for *The Handmaid's Tale*, too. The novel was written shortly after the elections of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain. It was a period of conservative revival in the West. This revival was driven by a powerful and well-organised movement of religious fundamentalists who critiqued what they saw as the excesses of the sexual revolution. Written in 1985, the novel has a lot of implications about the decade. The gradually strengthening rightism in America, called the US Christian New Right, constitutes a considerable part of the background, and what Atwood satirises is this movement which meant to imprison women to their traditional roles once again. In the work, the writer envisions the devastating consequences for women presuming this demand were actualised, and in this direction, she portrays a futuristic society where women are strictly confined to domestic and biological tasks.

Although the novel has been categorised as a work of science fiction by many critics, the author insistently prefers to define it as an example of speculative fiction. For Atwood, there is a significant difference between

the two because while the former is mostly about the impossible, the latter is about what has happened before and what is likely to happen in the future. In her introduction to the novel, she emphasises her first-hand experience of World War II, and concludes that "established orders could vanish overnight" and "[c]hange could also be as fast as lightning."[4] She continues to argue that all of the scenarios offered in *The Handmaid's Tale* have actually occurred in real life, and that she did not use any events that had not really happened: "No imaginary gizmos, no imaginary laws, no imaginary atrocities."[5]

Atwood studied the previous oppressive regimes to establish the realistic type of social system depicted in the novel. In this way, she was able to create a fictional world which has many similarities with actual fundamentalist organisations in their methods of oppressing women such as confining them to domestic and reproductive duties, creating a strict gender code, and limiting access to literacy. In this sense, the novel might be interpreted as a social prophecy rather than as a work of science fiction. The narrative is constructed around the regime of Gilead, a totalitarian and theocratic state that has replaced the United States of America. The Gilead regime strives for solving the national problems like dangerously low birth rates by exercising complete control over people's, especially women's, bodies. It benefits from a wide range of apparatuses, from religion to education, to impose its ideology and to actualise its policy.

The main character of the story, Offred is given the role of a Handmaid within the system. Handmaids are young and healthy women appointed to bear children for the privileged couples who cannot make a baby. As the system has eliminated the possibility of infertility of man, the solution is changing the woman. Separated from her family, she is re-educated by the Aunts to accept and internalise her new role for the betterment of the community. The government struggles with infertility, and this makes her services as a Handmaid vital for sustaining the society. It is significant that Offred is not the narrator's real name because handmaid names consist of the word 'of' followed by the name of the Commander, a part of the prevalent discourse which gives men absolute power and control over women.

Offred often lapses into flashbacks as she relates the story of her everyday life, allowing the reader to recreate the events. By means of these flashbacks, a comparison between the life before and after the Gilead regime becomes possible. In the novel, Atwood explores the possible

[4] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, ix.
[5] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, x.

results of a reversal of women's rights and shows the main anxieties of women as to the status quo. The widespread availability of contraception, the legalisation of abortion, and the growing political power of female voters, all of which feminists saw as the major accomplishments of the 1970s, have been undone in the society portrayed in the work. Furthermore, women in Gilead are barred from reading and writing.

As the story unwinds, the reader witnesses the physical and psychological suppression the protagonist goes through. In the new world order, she has almost no control over her own body and she has to accept being objectified so that she can survive. People are easily accused of treachery, and they can be executed even on the grounds that they do not 'think' the way they are wanted to. People have already turned into spies of one another, and they have been subjectified much faster and much more easily in this way. In this context, the silencing of humans, repression of individual differences, and the dehumanisation of people come out as the most frightening yet probable warnings of the author. *The Handmaid's Tale* is still considered as one of the most effective depictions of a totalitarian dictatorship and one of the very few dystopian books that deal with the convergence of politics and sexuality. The dystopian vision of the novel portrays a totalitarian regime that uses discourse to exercise power upon people, creates a panoptic model of surveillance, and thus builds a society where the individual has been surpassed by the subjected being.

## 3.1 There is Nothing Outside the Discourse: "A rat in a maze is free to go anywhere, as long as it stays inside the maze."

It is true that the concept of discourse gained a new dimension after Foucault's theories, and this new conception has been an influential part of literary criticism since then. The works of postmodernity, and particularly dystopian fiction, have often been analysed in terms of the interrelation between discourse and subject. In this context, understanding the scope of discourse and the ways how Althusserian apparatuses help it to subjugate individuals by exercising power upon them is of vital importance.

For Foucault, discourse is a much more comprehensive part of social formations than is traditionally thought to be. It can be observed in every area of life from physical to intellectual practices, and as such, it turns into a perfect maze from which escape is not possible: "Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the

subjects they seek to govern."[6] From this point of view, if one were to change Derrida's famous saying as 'there is nothing outside the *discourse*,' it would not be an exaggeration. As Weedon clarifies, discourse comprises everything used to manipulate and subjectify the individuals. It determines the codes of thinking, behaving, and speaking, and thus it becomes the truth itself. This proposition, in turn, destroys the idea of objective truth since every discourse creates its own truth though the dominant one marginalises and silences the others: "The aim of all suppression is to silence the voice, abolish the word, so that the only voices and words left are those of the ones in power."[7] The ones in power use it in such a way that people begin to think and believe whatever the discourse imposes on them, that is, the individuals become subjects.

Having absolute control and power over the subjects is crucial for the survival of totalitarian regimes, and in this direction, Foucault highlights the connection between power and knowledge. For him, knowledge is the primary source of power, and this is the reason why it must not be accessible to the subjects. Knowledge can turn into a destructive power against the system if it changes hands. This understanding can easily be observed in many dystopian works in which reading and writing are frequently forbidden for the majority of the population, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Fahrenheit 451* being established examples.

The idea of discourse as an overwhelming and all-comprehensive concept is one of the main issues in *The Handmaid's Tale*. From a woman's perspective, Atwood shows how the dominant discourse uses the state apparatuses and thus wields an irresistible power on the psychological, intellectual, and physical spheres of individuals.

Human is a complicated entity and understanding what and why people do has always been one of the primary concerns of the intellectuals. However, the late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed an unprecedented interest in this field. Freud's arguments on human psychology started to form the centre of human studies and the belief that it was not possible to interpret and control human behaviours independent of psychology gained more and more recognition. In this direction, the leaders and governments began to concentrate on the issue in order to find the best ways of understanding and manipulating their communities. As the role of physical punishments became less effective, totalitarianisms began to acknowledge psychological control as an alternative. The new strategy gave priority to the Ideological Apparatuses and in this context, brainwashing became one

[6] Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 108.
[7] Atwood, *Second Words*, 350.

of the most common and effective methods. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood displays how religion, as a sub-branch of the ISAs, can help the dominant discourse to impose its codes through brainwashing. For Atwood, religion is mostly used as a component of the patriarchal discourse. Therefore, she bases her story on a religious occasion as she explains in the introduction part of the novel: "The biblical precedent is the story of Jacob and his two wives, Rachel and Leah, and their two handmaids. One man, four women, twelve sons-but the handmaids could not claim the sons."[8]

In the novel, the Red Center, the official name of which is significantly The Rachel and Leah Center, is portrayed as the embodiment of psychological oppression and brainwashing. The place functions as a school where the healthy and fertile women are re-educated by the teachers called the Aunts, who have lost fertility but accepted to cooperate with the new regime so that they can survive. In the simplest terms, the mission of the Aunts is to brainwash the Handmaids by employing religious references. In principle, they teach them not to rebel, to accept the assigned fate, to conform, and finally to renounce their previous identities. As the name of the place suggests, the psychological oppression begins with the excess of red colour. Almost everything is red and this is undoubtedly a method of psychological manipulation. Considering the connotations of the colour, it subconsciously prepares the Handmaids for their role: "I get up out of the chair, advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes . . . The red gloves are lying on the bed . . . Everything except the wings around my face is red."[9] The role of the Handmaids is only to make babies. They have to accept this and live accordingly. To this end, the religious references about the importance of their role and the ideal function of woman in the society are also benefited whenever possible. The prayer they say at the Red Center is an excellent example of this: "Oh God, King of the universe, thank you for not creating me a man. Oh God, obliterate me. Make me fruitful. Mortify my flesh, that I may be multiplied. Let me be fulfilled."[10] This and similar religious verses are stated not only at the Center but also in every public occasion as well as the reading sessions before the Ceremonies at the Commander's house. In this way, the Handmaids are always exposed to the sayings that normalise and justify their given function and after a time, it becomes inevitable for them to naturalise this situation.

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[8] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, x.
[9] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 8.
[10] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 194.

Another striking aspect of the issue in the work is about naming. The Handmaids are not called with their real names. Instead, they are named according to the name of their Commanders with the prefix 'of.' This is obviously a way to convince them that they are not even in control of their names and that they totally belong to the Commanders: "My name isn't Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it's forbidden. I tell myself it doesn't matter, your name is like your telephone number, useful only to others; but what I tell myself is wrong, it does matter."[11] As Offred clarifies, name is more than a simple word and it really 'matters.' She frequently gets strength by thinking of her original name in her attempt to rebel against both her object and reproductive position. In the meantime, she indicates the relationship between identity and name: "I repeat my former name, remind myself of what I once could do, how others saw me."[12]

The whole discourse is built upon the idea of man's superiority and the system carries out a psychological imposition ceaselessly. One of the most striking moments in this parallel is the occasion where Janine, one of the Handmaids in the Center, tells the story of how she has been raped by many boys. Nevertheless, the Aunts blame her for this. The occasion ends up with all Aunts and Handmaids indicating Janine and saying 'your fault.' Later on, Aunt Lydia refers to religion to legitimise the understanding which accuses women in any case, and she justifies this claim by arguing that God created people in this way: "They can't help it, she said, God made them that way but He did not make you that way. He made you different. It's up to you to set the boundaries."[13] Furthermore, this argument is developed all through the novel by means of allusions to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, which shows the latter as a part of the former. As the examples show, education and religion are used as apparatuses to promote the dominant discourse.

The main objective of brainwashing in the novel is to make women accept their role and even believe in its naturalness. Religion is an important part of this process because the Aunts and Commanders often refer to Bible to support this argument. The silence of woman is promoted, and thus the subjectivation of them is made much easier. It is important that when the Commander reads the Bible to the household, he usually chooses the verses which feature the idea that 'blessed be the meek' and 'blessed are the silent.'

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[11] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 84.
[12] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 98.
[13] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 45.

While one part of the brainwashing is psychologically urging women to accept the doctrines of the regime, the other aspect of it is the strategy of making them fear the system. The media, of course, has a central role at this point. The Handmaids are forbidden to watch television. Hence, the occasions when Serena turns it on while waiting for the Commander are the only moments Offred can get access to visual media. As the readers learn during these periods, the news about ongoing wars covers the biggest part of the programmes, and thus creates awe within the community by suggesting the idea that there is a ceaseless war and people need the government to defend them. The reliability of such news, however, is openly questioned in the novel: "Who knows if any of it is true? It could be old clips, it could be faked . . . They only show us victories, never defeats. Who wants bad news? Possibly he's an actor."[14] A similar policy goes on at the Red Center. The Aunts often show the Handmaids videos to compel them to accept their present state. The movies are generally about the miserable conditions of women before Gilead. The aim is to make the Handmaids believe that their current circumstances are better: "Sometimes the movie she showed would be an old porno film . . . women tied up or chained or with dog collars around their necks . . . women being raped, beaten up, killed."[15] As in the case with the news, the credibility of these videos is doubted. Moira claims that the women in the videos are probably models paid to act. However, the next time Moira appears in the story, she has already given in the oppression. When she meets Offred at the Jezebel's, she tells her how she was arrested after her attempt to escape. As she reveals, they showed her videos about the colonies. The videos are a part of the psychological strategy to create fear upon the subjects, and it seems to work with even Moira, a seeming rebel: "The other Colonies are worse, though, the toxic dumps and the radiation spills. They figure you've got three years maximum, at those, before your nose falls off and your skin pulls away like rubber gloves."[16]

As the examples clarify, the method of brainwashing and psychological oppression are key elements for the imposition of the discourse. The mental manipulation of people is crucial for creating subjects who accept their roles given by the regime and thus do not pose any danger. Using religion to silence women and convince them of the legitimacy of their position is one part of the process, the other being the idea of spreading fear in the minds so that they will not resist the discourse. The result of the process is a mass of subjects who have lost their sense of reality: "I'm

[14] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 82.
[15] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 118.
[16] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 250.

dreaming that I am awake . . . I feel drugged. I consider this: maybe they're drugging me. Maybe the life I think I'm living is a paranoid delusion."[17]

In addition to the aforementioned psychological manipulation, mind control has always been among the ultimate purposes of oppressive governments. Once the minds of people are controlled, their bodies are also in hand. Accordingly, such regimes usually apply two strategies. First of all, they reshape language to determine the limits of mind, and so they can impose what they want and eliminate what they do not. The other way is they try to monopolise knowledge by forbidding reading and writing for the majority. In this manner, they keep the power in their hands with a Foucauldian belief in the knowledge-power equation.

The link between language and thinking has been a controversial topic for a long time. Linguistic determinism has become more and more convincing over the years. This perspective has brought about the opinion that language can be used as one of the most effective tools to control populations because controlling the language means controlling the minds. To this end, totalitarianisms have tried to exploit this aspect of language, and many authors portraying such regimes have handled the issue. Moreover, having written with a patriarchal discourse, women writers have had a particular interest in the topic. Since the outset of the Women's Movement, the way language is structured has been among the most frequently studied matters, and many feminists have argued that there are patriarchal biases in the way language is used and coded. In her pioneering study *Language and Women's Place*, Robin Lakoff refers to power inequities inherent in the English language: "I think, that women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them. Both tend to relegate women to certain subservient functions."[18] In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood suggests a similar idea by showing how language and the range of vocabulary can be reconstructed by the governments to serve their purpose.

In the novel, the regime's strategy of eradicating the Handmaids' identity through changing their names is an obvious example showing the power of language. Considering the author's statements about the Biblical background of the story, this renaming programme can easily be taken as a covert reference to the case where Adam names animals and thereby asserts authority over them by subjecting them to the service of

[17] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 109.
[18] Robin Lakoff, *Language and Women's Place* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 4.

humanity.[19] From this perspective, it is clear that the regime exercises power over women by erasing their original names and providing them with new ones, and in this way, it 'subjects' them to its own service.

In the same vein, the regime categorises people by assigning different titles. While men are defined by their military rank, women are defined according to their gender roles as Wives, Handmaids, or Marthas. Feminists and deformed babies are dehumanised, and they are denoted by the terms Unwomen and Unbabies. The Black people and Jews are called by biblical terms, Children of Ham and Sons of Jacob respectively. By appointing such titles, the system not only guarantees the victory of mass over the individual but also sets the boundaries for their acts: Every person in the society has to live in accordance with the category he/she belongs to.

Furthermore, the Gilead regime creates a specific vocabulary. While it produces new words, it also destroys some others. For instance, there are terms such as Prayvaganzas, Salvagings, and Particicutions to define the rituals of Gilead. Besides, as Offred shows during one of her compulsory medical controls, the use of the word 'sterile' is forbidden: "I almost gasp: he's said a forbidden word. Sterile. There is no such thing as a sterile man anymore, not officially. There are only women who are fruitful and women who are barren, that's the law."[20] With a deterministic approach, the government maintains its control over people by creating new words while eliminating others. Ultimately, if there is no word as sterile, the impotence of man is not even a matter of discussion.

One of the most obvious moments showing Atwood's preoccupation with language is the occasion when the Commander calls for Offred to his room and offers to play Scrabble. The writer describes Offred's feelings during the game in detail. As she holds the wooden letters of the board game, she feels 'voluptuous.' She also uses the word freedom, as if to say that for an instance she is not controlled. To put it another way, she is in charge of language at the very moment, not the other way around. Offred's fascination with language stems from her recognition that the control over language offers her an escape from her current oppression. Her obsession with language is also clarified when she ponders upon the word *chair*: "I sit in the chair and think about the word chair. It can also mean the leader of a meeting. It can also mean a mode of execution. It is the first syllable in charity . . ."[21]

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[19] Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *Words and Women: New Language in New Times* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 19.
[20] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 60-61.
[21] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 110.

Many dystopian novels take the power of language as one of the central issues, and often examine the relationship between a state's subjugation of its citizens and its linguistic degradation. 'Newspeak' in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is one of the first and most famous examples of this, and *The Handmaid's Tale* carries on the same tradition. Atwood dramatises Cixous's notion of 'patriarchal binary thought,' and uses language to display the prevailing sexism in Gilead.[22]

The second strategy used for the intellectual control of people is the regime's manipulation of knowledge. The state has created a system that gives full authority to the ones in power over knowledge while preventing the majority from accessing it. As Foucault puts forward, knowledge and power are interconnected, and as such, the ones who control knowledge also hold power. For this reason, the regimes, especially oppressive ones, employ specific methods to keep people as ignorant as possible so that they will never seize power and pose danger. In the novel, the Gilead regime maintains a policy with the same motivation. Reading is forbidden for the large part of the population, including the Handmaids. In an atmosphere where reading is banned, the only ways of getting information are by means of oral communication and TV programmes. The first way is either limited or manipulated. It is limited because people cannot talk to each other freely lest they are being watched by the spies. Furthermore, the person they are talking to may be a spy, as well, which prevents a secure environment for information exchange. On the other hand, the Aunts and Commanders make speeches from time to time and they allegedly inform the citizens; however, this kind of information has already been designed in accordance with the regime's doctrines, and so it cannot be relied on. As for the latter means, the programmes and news are all state-controlled, and thus unlikely to tell the truth. They never reveal any negative accounts of the wars or they do not mention any resistance. Obviously, the channels leading to knowledge are either totally forbidden or manipulated, and this makes it impossible to distinguish the real from the designed. The people are left with nothing but ambiguousness and ignorance, which makes their subjectivation much faster.

One of the instances that highlight the significance of knowledge is when Offred comments on the Commander's privilege of reading: "He has something we don't have, he has the word."[23] Offred's statement could easily be interpreted as the Commander has power, yet Offred does not. The privilege of reading gives power to the Commander while the absence

[22] Zaman, "The Feminist Appropriation of Dystopia: A Study of Atwood, Elgin, Fairbairns, and Tepper," 25.
[23] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 89.

of it weakens Offred more and more. Later on, she is almost fascinated the moment she sees a lot of books in the Commander's room because she knows that books are the source of knowledge, and so they are the embodiment of power: "But all around the walls there are bookcases. They're filled with books. Books and books and books."[24] Knowledge is forbidden to Offred, just as it was forbidden to Eve in the Garden of Eden; and like Eve, Offred is tempted by knowledge, in her case in the form of magazines and books in the Commander's office. The right of reading and having books has been stolen from her, as she, like the majority of the population, must not access knowledge for the sake of an all-powerful government.

As knowledge leads to power, it is vital for the authority of the regime. For this reason, it must be controlled and manipulated observing the dominant discourse. Otherwise, a possibility of revolt appears, and the established order can be turned upside-down: "Powerful groups have quite specific fears that the ability to read and write, should it spread among the powerless, will facilitate opposition and eventually mass revolt."[25] Keeping people ignorant is a significant instrument for the system since one cannot resist if he/she does not know any other possibilities. With this understanding, the government in the novel employs a strict policy against literacy. It creates its own language and vocabulary to control the minds, and then it keeps hold of knowledge so that the ones who may pose danger can never access it. The system applies such an overwhelming intellectual control that people begin to think not knowing may be really much better than knowing: "Maybe I don't really want to know what's going on. Maybe I'd rather not know. Maybe I couldn't bear to know. The Fall was a fall from innocence to knowledge."[26]

Since reading is prohibited, another possibility to preserve one's individuality comes out to be writing. However, it is also forbidden because writing, that is self-expression, is a version of power, and so it is excluded from the realm of women. Atwood refers to the connection between writing and masculine power in the scene when Offred takes a pen from the Commander to write down the Latin saying she has found in her room: "The pen between my fingers is sensuous, alive almost, I can feel its power, the power of the words it contains. Pen Is Envy, Aunt Lydia would say, quoting another Center motto, warning us away from such

[24] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 137.
[25] Deborah Cameron, *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1990), 5.
[26] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 195.

objects."[27] As Offred's description of her feelings about the pen reflects, writing is shown as something irresistible yet exclusive to masculinity, and thus discouraged by Aunt Lydia. However, the author's reconstruction of Freud's 'penis envy' as 'pen is envy' indicates the fact that writing is a necessity for women. *The Newly Born Woman* points at this aspect of the issue, and emphasises writing as a prerequisite for women's wholeness: "To write--the act that will 'realise' the uncensored relationship of woman to her sexuality, to her woman-being giving her back access to her own forces."[28] Offred's being denied the power of writing results in her producing an oral narrative. As reading and writing are forbidden, the only way of survival for her is telling 'herstory.' In this sense, the so-called writing-man-power triangle is deconstructed with the alternative of telling-woman-power. Offred's drive to tell becomes a subversive act because she intrudes the realm of man. The act of telling gives her control over her story, and this makes it in conflict with the patriarchal discourse: "If it's a story I'm telling, then I have control over the ending . . . Tell, rather than write, because I have nothing to write with and writing is in any case forbidden."[29]

For oppressive regimes, the manipulation of human psychology and mind is an indispensable part of their policy. However, they need to control one more human aspect for the preciseness of the system and it is the human body itself. In the novel, the Gilead regime has absolute power over the bodies of people, especially women, and it uses this power in different and even opposite ways depending on the interests of the state. As a typical totalitarian regime, the government in the work does not consider the emotional aspect of people, and with a utilitarian understanding, it takes the human body as a source to benefit from. In this parallel, it even renders survival obligatory for certain groups, and thus debars such people from the basic right of having control over their own bodies. The Handmaids are at the centre of this policy, and for them, living is not an option but an obligation. Since the birth rates are dangerously low and the number of fertile women is not high enough, the Handmaids are the only ones who can assure the future generations of the society. For the very reason, their health is a priority. To this end, they have to see the doctor once a month to check if everything about their reproductive potential is fine. In addition, they have to take their vitamins regularly so that they will not lose their fertility: "You have to get your vitamins and

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[27] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 186.
[28] Helene Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*. Trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 97.
[29] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 39.

minerals, said Aunt Lydia coyly. You must be a worthy vessel. No coffee or tea though, no alcohol. Studies have been done."[30] As Aunt Lydia clarifies, the aim of keeping them healthy is totally about their biological function. They are to give babies, and so they must be 'worthy vessels.' Furthermore, the system does not let the Handmaids have control over their own lives, and accordingly, it tries to destroy any possibilities of suicide attempts. When Offred describes the Red Center and her room in the Commander's house, she stresses that they have removed anything one could tie a rope to.[31] Similarly, the glass in the window is shatterproof, the windows open only partly, and they are not permitted to use razors. As Gilead has been founded in reaction to a disaster prompted by considerably declining birth rates, the state's whole system is based on controlling reproduction with the strategy of exercising complete control over women's bodies. They are reduced to their fertility, and treated as nothing more than a vessel: "Surrogacy reinforces the patriarchal view that the woman is just a container, an incubator of the man's sperm. She receives it and gives it back as his baby."[32] When Serena understands the reason for Offred's not getting pregnant is her husband, not Offred, she urges her to engage in sexual intercourse with Nick. This occasion is undoubtedly a striking example in supporting Arditti's argument. Offred, like all other Handmaids, is used as an object, and she has meaning only as long as she is fertile. As to their physical appearance, it is not regarded at all. So, they are not given the privilege of self-care because they do not need to look beautiful to produce children: "We are containers, it's only the in-sides of our bodies that are important. The outside can become hard and wrinkled, for all they care, like the shell of a nut."[33]

The Handmaids are treated as two-legged wombs, and every possible attempt is made to reduce them to their biological function. Obviously, the Gilead regime seeks to deprive women of their individuality and make them state-owned property. The ultimate point Atwood makes to prove this approach is that there are numbers on the Handmaids: "I cannot avoid seeing, now, the small tattoo on my ankle. Four digits and an eye, a passport in reverse . . . I am a national resource."[34]

The idea of a standardised and universal beauty that claims absolute control over the bodies of women has been a matter of debate for years.

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[30] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 65.
[31] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 7.
[32] Rita Arditti, "Surrogate Mothering Exploits Women," *Science for the People* Vol. 19, No. 3 (1987): 23.
[33] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 97.
[34] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 65.

Like many intellectuals of the late 20th century, Atwood has stood against the sexist and reductant understanding that a woman has to keep fit and beautiful to win the approval of the patriarchy. In the novel, she reflects her criticism of this male-oriented approach over the place called Jezebel's. The bodies of the women in Jezebel's are controlled just like the Handmaids, with different motives, though. While beauty is not a criterion for the Handmaids, it is the only chance of survival for the women at Jezebel's. They have to look beautiful all the time; otherwise, they are sent to the colonies: "You'd have to watch your weight, that's for sure . . . They're strict about that. Gain ten pounds and they put you in Solitary."[35] When the Commander takes Offred to the place, he explains that the women working there had prestigious jobs before Gilead. Nevertheless, their intellectual capacity has no importance now because they have been objectified. Men have claimed ownership over them, and as such, their only function is to please men. This is specified when Offred asks the Commander what she should say if somebody were to stop her: "Just show them your tag . . . It'll be all right. They'll know you're taken."[36]

No matter how extensive and influential the manipulation is, there have always been people pushing the limits to preserve their individuality. However, since any kind of opposition is seen as intolerable for the impeccable operation of oppressive systems, such people have been depicted as unfit or sick by the discourse. In general, these people are offered only two options: they are either 'cured' by means of overwhelming and systematic torture, or they are wiped out. In the novel, the Gilead regime employs the same strategy, and the Red Center, the centre of mental manipulation, is also portrayed as the focal point of physical torture. The smallest attempt against the doctrines is punished and the Aunts try to discipline the Handmaids. In one of her flashbacks, Offred remembers what they did to Moira when she pretended to be ill to go out of the Center: "Afterwards she could not walk for a week, her feet would not fit into her shoes, they were too swollen . . . Remember, said Aunt Lydia. For our purposes your feet and your hands are not essential."[37]

If physical torture does not serve the purpose, the regime enables the other option: execution. Like many other oppressive systems, there are no certain laws in Gilead. In this way, they can punish and kill whomever they want. They can show a person guilty of some imagined offense, and sometimes they even do not have to show them guilty. They just vaporise people. The first method of eliminating the rebels is sending them to the

[35] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 240.
[36] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 242.
[37] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 92.

Colonies where people are exposed to chemicals and thus killed little by little. The other strategy is hanging them on the Wall. In this context, the Wall, which is meaningfully the main entrance to Harvard Yard, becomes a symbol of the fear of people and the power of the system. As the author clarifies, the dissenters, from lawyers to the ones with 'different' sexual preferences, are hung on the Wall for days so that the citizens understand the power of the state and remove the idea of resistance: "There are three new bodies on the Wall . . . The two others have purple placards hung around their necks: Gender Treachery."[38]

Considering all these methods, the physical subjugation becomes too overwhelming to resist. Moira, who tries to revolt first by not taking the vitamins and then by escaping from the Red Center, ends up with Jezebel's, another way of commodification, because of the tortures she has been exposed to. The result of all this physical oppression is dehumanised people who have been detached from their bodies: "I avoid looking down at my body, not so much because it's shameful or immodest but because I don't want to see it. I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely."[39] A reminiscent of the scene where Winston is appalled when he sees himself in the mirror in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Offred proves that the alienation between self and body is the biggest possible success of the system.

All in all, the regime maintains a policy that is totally based on the interpellation and subjectivation of its people. By manipulating people psychologically, intellectually, and physically, the system creates subjects who internalise the impossibility of escaping from the discourse: "I know this can't be right but I think it anyway. Everything they taught at the Red Center, everything I've resisted, comes flooding in."[40]

## 3.2 The Gaze of the State and Self-Disciplining Subjects: "The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers."

Since Jeremy Bentham came up with the idea of the panopticon in the 18th century, it has been the focal point of numerous discussions not only about applicability but also ethicality. The plan was originally designed for prisons, but it has been practiced in many public areas like hospitals, factories, asylums, and society in the largest sense. In the 20th century, the panopticon became more popular especially due to the developments in

[38] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 43.
[39] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 62-63.
[40] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 288.

technology and the rise of totalitarianisms. In the same vein, literature of the period gave wide coverage to the role of this system in people management.

The word panopticon is derived from the Greek word 'panoptes,' which means 'all-seeing.' As the name suggests, the fundamental idea behind this design is to make people feel that they are being watched all the time by a godlike entity. Many governments have benefited from this theory to create a feeling of constant surveillance and thus they have managed to control large populations, which would otherwise be not possible. As a typical totalitarian understanding, the regime in *The Handmaid's Tale* embraces the concept of panoptic self-discipline as an effective strategy in keeping people under control. In Gilead, the first link of this policy consists of soldiers named the Angels, who function as the embodiment of perpetual surveillance. As the religious connotation of the name demonstrates, they are presented as all-seeing. They can be everywhere, and so people always feel the possibility of being observed. Besides, they have the authority to carry guns and this makes them the source of fear. While narrating one of her recollections about the Red Center, Offred refers to the Angels as follows: "The Angels stood outside it with their backs to us. They were objects of fear to us."[41] It is also understood that they do not communicate with people unless it is really necessary. On the one hand, this situation mystifies them and being unknown increases the fear they create. On the other hand, it destroys a potential likelihood of intimacy, and thus prevents any kind of emotional relationship with people. For this reason, they are portrayed like machines that only observe and do whatever they are told to. They have a vital role in creating an atmosphere where people are afraid to talk with one another or to attempt any kind of disobedience. In this way, the possibility of an organised resistance is almost completely destroyed long before it begins.

Another group with a similar role is the department of the secret police, the Eyes. They are not less frightening than the Angels because one can never be sure if a person is an Eye or not. This results in the idea that everybody can be the spy of one another, and this prevents the possibility of a social movement by creating a lack of confidence among people. Even the Handmaids, who are equally victimised, cannot trust each other: "The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers. If either of us slips through the net because of something that happens on one of our daily walks, the

[41] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 4.

other will be accountable."[42] As Offred explains, she can never completely rely on other Handmaids. When she and Offglen go shopping, for instance, both of them behave as true believers, and they cannot disclose their real opinions for a long time. The fear of being spied by anybody around, no matter how intimate the relationship seems to be, is best exemplified in the final scene when Offred thinks that she has been given in by Nick, the man she is in love with: "I expect a stranger, but it's Nick who pushes open the door, flicks on the light. I can't place that, unless he's one of them. There was always that possibility. Nick, the private Eye."[43] The mechanism of the secret police, in this sense, comes out as one of the indispensable parts of state control which aims to destroy any chance of confidentiality among people. In a society in which nobody is reliable in the real sense, people live on their nerves and avoid revealing their ideas: "I didn't know many of the neighbors, and when we met, outside on the street, we were careful to exchange nothing more than the ordinary greetings. Nobody wanted to be reported, for disloyalty."[44]

Nevertheless, the point Atwood emphasises more than the Angels or the Eyes throughout the story is the feminine dimension of the issue. Although Gilead is a society based on male dominance, there are many women who contribute to the maintenance of the system. By granting some so-called privileges, the patriarchal discourse has created women who victimise other women. As Elizabeth Spelman illustrates in *Inessential Women*, "[t]he unwillingness of women with race or class privileges to give them up is the main obstacle to women's all doing something together to resist the domination of men."[45] This is exactly true for Gilead. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, Gilead's systematic subjugation of women is mostly based on women's policing one another. For example, the Handmaids watch and spy on other Handmaids. Besides, the Aunts play an active role in that vein. They not only impose the patriarchal discourse on the Handmaids but also serve as observers and punish those they catch in disobedience. They function both like the Eyes and the Angels. Symbolically, the place they work, the Red Center, is described like a prison surrounded by 'barbed wire' and watched by the Angels.

Another example of how women exploit each other is evidenced by Serena, the Commander's wife. Like other Wives, she always scrutinises the Handmaid, Offred, to find a sign of unorthodoxy and to exile her.

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[42] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 19.
[43] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 295.
[44] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 179.
[45] Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 63.

Significantly, she is a former gospel singer who encouraged women to stay at home: "Her speeches were about the sanctity of the home, about how women should stay home."[46] She willingly knits scarves for the soldiers. Furthermore, she has a cane, a symbol of masculinity, and she smokes, which is forbidden for the Handmaids. In this direction, she comes out as a character absolutely at the service of the patriarchal discourse. Offred's association between the red tulips in Serena's garden and the blood on the hanged people on the Wall is a clear reference to her serving the regime against her kind: "The red of the smile is the same as the red of the tulips in Serena Joy's garden."[47]

Obviously, what Atwood criticises most is people's, specifically women's, readily acceptance of oppression in return for some privileges. The Wives cooperate with the regime in exchange for certain freedoms, and the Aunts do the same to be saved from the Colonies. While Serena has almost no power in the world of men, she wields power over the women in her own household and appears to enjoy her tyranny over Offred. Similarly, the Aunts serve the Gileadean regime by indoctrinating other women into the dominant ideology and keeping the Handmaids under control. In this way, woman is constantly observed in a panoptic manner.

The work persistently emphasises the omnipresence of a scrutinising gaze by frequently alluding to the word eye. The secret police are called 'the Eyes,' and the farewell phrase 'under his eye' refers to the divine gaze but also affirms the fact that everyone is indeed under the eye of someone else.[48] Although there are no definite rulers in the novel, everybody, from the Commanders to domestic servants; from the doctor who checks Offred to Offred herself, is caught up in a network of surveillance and counter-surveillance. In this manner, the system creates a flawless panoptic self-discipline. It is for this reason that the author likens people to 'free' rats and Gilead to a maze: "A rat in a maze is free to go anywhere, as long as it stays inside the maze."[49]

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[46] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 45.
[47] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 33.
[48] Stephanie B. Hammer, "The World As It Will Be? Female Satire and the Technology of Power in The Handmaid's Tale," *Modern Language Studies* Vol. 20, No. 2 (1990): 8.
[49] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 164.

## 3.3 Depersonalisation as the Inevitable Result of Totalitarianism: "They can do what they like with me. I am abject."

Individuality contradicts the principles of oppressive regimes in many aspects. First of all, individuality means free and critical thinking. The individual does not readily accept the information serviced by the discourse because he/she has not lost the faculty of personal evaluation yet. Therefore, the individual manages to keep ideas distinct from the collective ones, and this is a clear threat for the state authority that draws its strength mostly from sameness. Moreover, there is the emotional aspect of the issue. Whereas totalitarian regimes compel their people to eliminate all types of emotions except the ones in favour of the state, the individual may maintain emotions against the system and for people and nature. This is an absolutely challenging attitude within the frame of state policy since intimacy, whether with people or with nature, cannot be tolerated. All things considered, individuality means having different intellectual and emotional patterns of behaviour, and a glimpse of resistance against commodification and subjectivation. It is the only option other than becoming a subject. Sooner or later, this individual defiance leads to cracks in the seemingly unshakable mechanism, and these cracks increase day by day till they give birth to a communal resistance. From this point of view, it is understandable that all totalitarian regimes employ a policy to suppress individuality and create conformity, by means of which depersonalisation becomes inevitable.

As with many other works written in the genre, the regime in *The Handmaid's Tale* maintains a systematic policy to replace the individual with the subject. One of the most important parts of this policy is categorising people and identifying them within the borders of the group they belong to. In Atwood's work, people, especially women, are divided into many categories such as the Aunts, Wives, Handmaids, Martha's, Econowives, Widows, Unwomen, and the unnamed women, who serve the pleasure of powerful men. The limits of these women are totally determined by the group they are a member of. They have to wear certain colours, and moreover, the colour they wear symbolises their function in the society. For instance, the Handmaids have to wear red clothes that signify fertility as a reference to their role. On the other hand, the Aunts wear brown which refers to power and authority. A reminiscent of military uniforms, the colour indicates the Aunts' role in policing. In this way, the colour of a woman's dress is used to distinguish her from other women and to denote her social status. In this way, Atwood reveals how clothing

may be used to impose fixed identities. She outlines how it might be utilised for restriction and repression of people. What women can and cannot do also depends on their category. A Wife can smoke, for example, while it is not permitted for a Handmaid. Even how they must address a person is determined accordingly. In a dialogue between Serena and Offred, the former reprimands Offred for her inappropriate manner: "'Don't call me ma'am,' she said irritably. 'You're not a Martha.'"[50]

Men are also victimised by means of categorisation although not as violently as women are. To set an example, the Angels have to wear green uniforms showing their military and protective function, and the Commanders wear black as a symbol of power. Besides, the Angels and the Eyes have the privilege of marrying while Nick, a servant of the Commander, is deprived of this luxury. The Commanders, on the other hand, have a much larger realm of authority. As Offred reveals, they can go to Jezebel's and keep forbidden objects like magazines.

As the examples clarify, the status of people determines everything from clothing to marital status. The moment a person is classified under a group, the individual gives way to mass because that person is given a new identity in accordance with the group's identity. Under these circumstances, individuality is repressed and the idea of belonging to a group is prioritised. The inevitable result of this is the erosion of personal differences and establishment of sameness.

Another effective method in the process of commodification is renaming and marking people with numbers. Based on the Biblical story of Adam's naming animals, the regime renames the Handmaids as a manifestation of power. At the beginning of the story, the readers learn that Offred is not the real name of the protagonist, and indeed the Handmaids are all given new names. Assigning a new name is an essential part of stripping them of their real identities and imposing new ones, and thus it turns into a cornerstone of the process of subjectivation: "The reader never knows the narrator's real name because her identity is deracinated by oppressive patriarchy so as to thwart the link to her unique self."[51] Symbolically, the names of the Handmaids are established with the preposition 'of' and the name of the Commander to whom they are to serve. Considering that they usually serve more than one Commander, their names, and so identities, constantly change. In other words, the system not only deprives them of their real selves but also prevents the

[50] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 15.

[51] Gökçenaz Gayret, "Walking Wombs: Loss of Individuality and Selfalienation in The Handmaid's Tale," *Kafkas University Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences*, Additional No. 2 (2019): 107.

possibility of a stable identity. That Offred often refers to the issue shows how important renaming is in blurring a person's original identity. As Woolf states, "[i]t is much more important to be oneself than anything else."[52]

By identifying them with the names of the Commanders together with the prefix 'of,' the regime imposes the Handmaids the idea that they belong to the Commanders. However, they also belong to the state in a broader sense, which is signified with a tattoo on their ankles of four numbers and an eye: "It's supposed to guarantee that I will never be able to fade, finally, into another landscape. I am too important, too scarce, for that. I am a national resource."[53] Offred's tattoo is a reflection of the dictatorial system she lives in. It serves as a constant reminder that her body is public property existing solely for reproduction. As evidenced by the tattoo, Offred and other Handmaids in society have been bereft of their intrinsic individuality, and thus they are reduced to numbers. A reminiscent of the Holocaust, this strategy helps to objectify the Handmaids. Now that they have been given new names and marked with numbers, the Handmaids have lost their individuality and become the property of the patriarchal discourse. Significantly, Offred often refers to herself in the plural, like "our skin" or "we are." This evidences that her individual identity has been replaced by a collective one. For an impeccable subjectivation, it is necessary to eliminate her previous personality and means of self-identification: "I resign my body freely, to the uses of others. They can do what they like with me. I am abject."[54]

The last step of depersonalisation process is actualised by destroying emotional links among people. No matter how strongly the system limits people's intellectual and physical capacity, humane emotions always pose a danger. Every kind of emotion, except the ones in favour of the discourse, must be eradicated for a person to be subjectified in a real sense. For the very reason, oppressive governments employ certain strategies to destroy especially trust and love. Once people cannot trust or love one another, the possibility of a social movement is removed forever. The regime Atwood portrays maintains the same attitude and creates a society where such emotions seem to be bygone fantasies.

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest contributors to this policy is the existence of the secret police, the Eyes. The fact that any person can be an Eye constantly pumps the idea that one should never trust another person because even the closest person can be a member of the secret police. It is

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[52] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, 1929), 94.
[53] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 65.
[54] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 288.

for this reason that nobody really trusts another person in the novel. During their shopping days, the Handmaids do not reveal their feelings and opinions to each other not only because of the possibility of being watched by the Angels but also because the other Handmaid may be a spy. This serves the regime in two ways. First of all, it prevents social resistance, and then it helps the depersonalisation of people. Once people lose their emotions, they begin to perceive everything as normal, even the sudden disappearance of a partner: "This woman has been my partner for two weeks. I don't know what happened to the one before. On a certain day she simply wasn't there anymore, and this one was there in her place."[55]

Another dimension of normalising everything is related to the position of the Handmaids. It must be remembered that the Handmaids have intercourse with the Commanders in front of, and even with the help of, their Wives. The emotions among people, including husband and wife, have been so deformed that everything is naturalised as long as it complies with the policy of the state. The whole discourse is based on pragmatism, and the humanitarian values are totally ignored. The importance of emotions, especially love, is often highlighted by Offred: "It's lack of love we die from."[56] She always thinks of having a real relationship with another person than her commander because the case with the Commander is an obligation, and she longs for an emotional one. Although it is almost impossible to love somebody without trust, she cannot help fantasising about having an emotional relationship with Nick. Her telling Nick her real name is the first and last evidence of trust in the novel: "I tell him my real name, and feel that therefore I am known."[57] Nevertheless, the system has imposed so much distrust that sooner or later it overcomes trust. When two men come to take her at the end of the novel, Offred readily suspects Nick: "I expect a stranger, but it's Nick who pushes open the door . . . There was always that possibility. Nick, the private Eye."[58] In this way, the victory of distrust and suspicion over trust and love is once more guaranteed.

In such a repressive regime as Gilead, the author can come up with only a few suggestions for the survival of the individuality. Janine goes mad and Moira is implied to be a lesbian, a serious threat to male

[55] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 19.
[56] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 103.
[57] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 272.
[58] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 295.

hegemony due to the denial of a traditional family and thus patriarchy.[59] However, neither can escape serving the regime, the former by giving birth and the latter by amusing the high-ranking men in Jezebel's. The only way of resistance appears to be suicide, as with Ofglen, but it is also difficult because there are several precautions. The mechanism established by the system is so comprehensive and overwhelming that every attempt of resistance ends up with failure. After the process of categorising, renaming, and destroying emotional links, the person is surpassed by the unperson. Considering the Gilead regime's overall policy which includes a range of other strategies from psychological, intellectual, and physical manipulation to creating a panoptic self-control mechanism, the only option for people seems to be relinquishing their individuality and accepting sameness and conformity: "The totalitarian regime forces the inhabitants to submit to the power of one (moral) law, one true religion, one language code."[60] Obviously, individuality and thus differences have no room in such communities. The perfect society is a group of people who have turned into unthinking and unfeeling subjects. In a world where individuals are manipulated to the point of losing themselves to the collective whole, subjectivation becomes the inevitable consequence.

[59] Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York: Norton, 1976), 252.
[60] Hilde Staels, "Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale: Resistance through Narrating," *English Studies* Vol. 76, No. 5 (1995): 457.

# CONCLUSION

With its developing technology, global wars, and ever-changing socio-political context, the 20th century was the herald of a new era. This new era witnessed the deconstruction of almost every established system from religion to family structure. Accordingly, the idea of how to govern people had to undergo a transformation, and the atmosphere of the time let oppressive regimes gain unprecedented power. The reflection of the new life order on literature was the necessity for a new genre and the dark vision of humanity would express itself best in dystopian fiction.

This book examines the socio-historical context of dystopian fiction and studies three canonical works of the genre, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, in terms of the suppression of the self and subjectivation of the individual. Despite their differences in terms of time and place, real and fictional, the comparative analysis of these pioneering works reveals that the totalitarian systems portrayed by the authors employ interestingly similar strategies to interpellate and thus to subjectify the individuals.

As it is put forth in the work, the power of language in distorting reality and manipulating people is obviously recognised by the oppressive regimes in the works. In this sense, these regimes take an eager interest in the inner mechanisms of language and employ certain strategies to turn it into an apparatus in favour of the discourse. One of the most well-known and appreciated examples of this manifests itself in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as Newspeak, the new version of standard English. The Party in the novel gives a central role to language in actualising its policies, and so assigns a team of philologists the only responsibility of whom is to study on Newspeak. As the author clarifies through Winston's conservations with Syme, one of the philologists in the team, the main purpose of the Party is "cutting the language down to the bone."[1] Accordingly, they not only simplify the grammatical structures but more importantly narrow the range of vocabulary. By narrowing the capacity of language, they narrow people's intellectual capacity, as well. To set an example, if the word 'rebel' is erased from language, people will not have an idea of it as a concept, and thus rebellion as action will be impossible. In this way, the

[1] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 59.

regime uses language as a tool that marks out the borders of the human intellect, which in turn determines the limits of human action. The author's message is quite clear. If language control were centralised in a political agenda, it could alter the whole structure of language, making it impossible to even conceive disobedient or subversive thoughts because there would be no words to express them.

Another significant example showing the manipulative power of language is related to the names of the Ministries, which signify the exact opposites of their real functions. For instance, the chief role of the Ministry of Truth is to distort reality and rewrite the documents to fit the policies of the Party. Similarly, the Ministry of Love is the place where 'criminals' are tortured until they accept and internalise every dogma of the system. From this point of view, language turns into a tool that no longer expresses "the nature of things, but rather obscures and distorts them."[2] Apparently, the government employs a reductionist and deterministic approach to language, and thus both blurs the line between real and unreal, and controls the thoughts and deeds of people. Furthermore, this strategy cuts the links between the present and the past, and so destroys history, that is the former discourse. Eventually, after some generations, people will not be able to decode the standard English, and so there will be no need to censor history anymore. The novel provides a well-grounded warning about the power of language, and it shows how language can be misused to shape people's sense of reality, manipulate their thoughts, and even rewrite history.

The preoccupation with language in *Fahrenheit 451* appears mostly during the discussions between Montag and Beatty. As a representative of the common man, Montag is portrayed as a superficial character who has welcomed the doctrines of the discourse at the beginning of the narrative. In that vein, he has started to live in compliance with the popular culture and even helped it to be established by becoming a fireman. Like other ordinary people, he has long given up the intellectual dimension. As Clarisse implies, he has lost the ability to think and use language effectively due to the state's long-standing policies of debasing language, which leads to a problem with self-expression. Captain Beatty, on the other hand, is a knowledgeable character and he has full control over language. His mastery of language gives him an undeniable advantage over Montag during their discussions as to the rationality of the system. Beatty's eloquence is so overwhelming that Montag cannot cope with it on his own, and thus seeks Faber's help using a green bullet. Indeed, what

[2] Chilton, *Orwellian Language and the Media*, 2.

Montag asks for is not only Faber's knowledge of literature but also his linguistic performance. As it is manifested, Beatty benefits from his mastery of language at every opportunity to distort reality and manipulate people. For example, when he describes fire, he uses the adjectives 'bright' and 'clean.' Although fire is the destructive force in the story, his diction presents it as a positive element. He uses language effectively, and thus turns it into a manipulative apparatus.

Another significant moment in displaying the power of language is the scene where Montag reads "Dover Beach" in the presence of Mildred and her friends. The emphatic language of the poem makes Mrs. Phelps experience an excess of emotion and she begins to sob uncontrollably.[3] She is so victimised by the reduction of language that she cannot cope with it. In the novel, language and power are presented as two faces of the same coin. Beatty, Matthew Arnold, and Bradbury himself come out as the strongest characters owing to their mastery of language.

As for Atwood, her concern with the issue is equally intense. The government in *The Handmaid's Tale*, too, uses language for manipulation by adopting various strategies. One of the most prominent methods is integrating a religious terminology. For example, domestic servants are called 'Marthas' in reference to a character in the New Testament, and the police are named as the 'Guardians of the Faith.' All the stores have biblical names such as 'Loaves and Fishes,' 'All Flesh,' and 'Milk and Honey.' Blacks are labelled as 'Children of Ham' and Jews are defined as 'Sons of Jacob.' Even the cars have biblical names like Behemoth, Whirlwind, and Chariot. The greetings consist of Biblical terms as well. Handmaids greet each other with 'Blessed be the fruit' and its response is 'May the Lord open.' Undoubtedly, this is one of the systematic policies of the Gilead government with a specific purpose. By using religious terminology in every field of life, the state tries to justify everything it does. This provides a constant reminder that the leaders of Gilead act on the authority of the Bible itself, and thus they should not be questioned in any way: "The official language seeks to reject and repress the previous language and replace it with biblical discourse. Gilead as a fundamental regime attempts to abuse the biblical and religious values as their basic ideology to establish the social norms."[4]

Another strategy in the novel is creating a new vocabulary in an Orwellian sense. The Gilead regime does so either by producing new

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[3] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 97.

[4] Maryam Kouhestani, "Disciplining the Body: Power and Language in Margaret Atwood's Dystopian Novel The Handmaid's Tale," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* Vol. 3, No. 7 (2013): 611.

words or by distorting the meanings of already existing words. The words 'prayvaganzas' and 'particicutions,' for instance, are the portmanteaux of 'pray' and 'extravaganza,' and 'participation' and 'execution' respectively. The regime has also formed the words 'unwoman' and 'unbaby' to describe infertile women and deformed babies. On the other hand, 'salvaging,' which literally means saving, denotes the act of killing in Gilead. It is clear that language distorts reality to serve the needs of the authority. The last and most fundamental example of language as a means of power is Offred's narrative itself. Significantly, she narrates her story in the Pre-Gileadian style, and in this way, she tries to preserve her identity and resists the present discourse. While the authorities abuse language to oppress people, she embraces it to protect her self-integrity. She understands that power is controlled by people who construct context, and context is founded on language. All in all, the author emphasises the capacity of language in misleading people, distorting reality, and creating a discourse for the preservation of the self.

As the examples presented disclose, dystopian novels often address the link between a state's subjectivation of its people and its manipulation of language. Such works reveal how language can be used to control the minds and bodies of people, the reality and the history, and thus turns into an exercise of power: "Language is one of the key instruments of political dominations, the necessary and insidious means of the 'totalitarian' control of reality."[5]

The book unveils the central role of State Apparatuses in the process of interpellation and subjectivation as another common theme handled in the works. With an Althusserian awareness, the regimes in the novels turn the established institutions into apparatuses that distort reality and impose the dominant ideology. Within this context, media comes out as the ultimate apparatus transformed into a means of manipulation. The Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, for example, builds a strong and overwhelming media system to create an illusion of reality while distracting people's attention from what is really happening. In this way, the regime is able to warp the truth and people can access only what the regime wants them to. Accordingly, the telescreens always tell the victories of Oceania against the internal and external enemies, and also they report news about how the welfare level is increasing day by day. Nevertheless, as the author reveals, Winston's life is in sharp contrast to the 'tales' told by the media because, like many others, he cannot find even razors to shave or real coffee to drink. Ironically, both Syme and Parsons ask Winston for a razor while at

[5] Rai, *Orwell and the politics of despair*, 122.

the same time believing in the news about how the standard of living has risen more than twenty percent over the past year. The biggest problem, however, seems to be that no document about the real situation can be found, and thus one begins to suspect his sense of reality after a while: "Was he, then, *alone* in the possession of a memory?"[6]

By means of repetitive input, the minds of people are chocked, and soon, the manipulation leads to the ability to believe in everything: "Day and night the telescreens bruised your ears with statistics proving that people today had more food, more clothes, better houses, better recreations."[7] For instance, they are easily convinced by the reports claiming the production of boots has outnumbered the population while half of the people are in fact barefoot. One of the most interesting examples about the issue is the point where Orwell refers to the change in the chocolate ration. Even though the Ministry of Plenty has issued a promise that there will be no change in the chocolate ration for the whole year before, it turns out that the ration will be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty grammes in a few days. The only thing to do is to change the promise with a warning about a possible reduction in the chocolate ration. This will be readily accepted by people as they have been exposed to so much manipulation that the line between the real and fiction has already been blurred. The report is obviously inaccurate, yet there are even demonstrations to thank Big Brother for raising the ration to twenty grammes a week. With the power of media, the lie becomes the truth.

In Orwell's world, people choose to forget what they believe to be true. Due to the advanced propaganda technics and subtle influence of doublethink, they internalise what the media claims. The enemies and the allies constantly change, and so do the villains and the heroes. However, not a single person doubts the accuracy of such information. Symbolically, Winston and Julia, the only characters portrayed as rebels in the novel, also help the running of this system. On the one hand, Winston works in the Records Department helping to erase and rewrite documents so that they always justify the arguments of the Party: "It was therefore necessary to rewrite a paragraph of Big Brother's speech, in such a way as to make him predict the thing that had actually happened."[8] On the other hand, Julia works in the Fiction Department, which creates 'rubbishy' documents filled with sport, crime, and sex, and thus helps to divert people, especially the proletariat, from the disturbing realities that would necessarily prove the corruptness of the state. It is obvious that the regime

[6] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 68.
[7] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 85.
[8] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 45.

can manipulate its citizens into believing anything it wants by using the compelling power and impact of the media: "If all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed – if all records told the same tale – then the lie passed into history and became truth."[9]

As it is revealed in the book, media functions primarily to blur the realities and create an illusion of truth in Bradbury's novel, too. In his dystopian vision, the written word has been replaced by new forms of media, particularly television, as the primary source of information, and the author's anxiety about this phenomenon is observable throughout the novel. One of the central symbols in the novel, the wall-size TV screens cover an important part of people's cultural and social lives, and thus have a profound share in the state's policy of producing a new type of person wanting intellectual and emotional sophistication. In this context, Mildred has a central role since she is portrayed as the embodiment of the inevitable outcome of the mentioned strategy. She spends a large part of her days in front of the screens, meets new people, participates in various activities with these people, and thus is totally distracted from anything related to her real life. The people on the screens become her family, and the life presented there represents the truth for her. She establishes a new but fictional identity and world by means of these screens. After a while, she completely loses touch with reality and begins to experience an ever-increasing lack of communication with her husband. This ends up with her informing on him for possessing books. She has no idea about literature, art, social and political problems at all because the only thing she is exposed to is the principle of pleasure and happiness.

In a society where books are forbidden, the media becomes the only means of accessing information and developing an understanding of life in the broader sense. Since media incessantly imposes popular culture which is based on the illusion of entertainment and happiness, and thus retains people from thinking and questioning, subjects like Mildred, devoid of depth, are the inevitable products. In this way, the author suggests that the media acts as a mask, obscures genuine experience, and interferes with the characters' ability to think critically about their lives and social problems.

However, the only function of media is not to condemn people to superficiality and ignorance. It also misrepresents the truth following the state's interests. A significant example showing the power of media in distorting reality is the scene that details Montag's escape from the Hound. Even though he manages to survive the Hound's pursuit, the media shows the Hound kill a man and presents him as Montag. People, of course, do

[9] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 40.

not question the reliability of the news and are once more convinced of the unshakeable authority of the state: "The search is over, Montag is dead; a crime against society has been avenged."[10] Bradbury presents mass media as an apparatus that is used both to numb people and pervert reality so that the state can maintain its control over people. Its contribution to the imposition of popular culture that prioritises pleasure and illusion over critical thinking and reality is undeniable.

The vital role of media in the oppression and manipulation of people is also manifest in *The Handmaid's Tale*. As in the other analysed works, reading is forbidden for the majority of the population in Gilead, and the Handmaids are not excluded from this restriction. This renders especially visual media as the only medium of information. Moreover, watching TV, like many other things, is also banned for the Handmaids, and so Offred has scarce access to it. The days of the Ceremony are among these rare opportunities because Serena Joy habitually turns on the news while they are all waiting for the Commander to attend the Ceremony. As the readers learn during these instances, the news about continuing wars takes up the biggest part of the TV programmes. Such news instils fear within the community by suggesting the idea that there is a ceaseless war, and only the all-powerful Gilead regime can protect them from destruction. The reliability of these reports, however, is overtly questioned in the novel: "Such as it is: who knows if any of it is true? It could be old clips, it could be fake . . . They only show us victories, never defeats . . . Possibly he's an actor."[11] The presence of Serena Joy, a former gospel singer who ironically used to struggle for convincing women to stay at home and live in accordance with their traditional roles while she herself was not doing so, masterfully highlights the legitimacy of such suspicions of media.

Another significant example of this manipulative policy is employed at the Red Center where the Aunts often show the Handmaids documentaries about the difficult conditions that women had to endure before the new regime: "Sometimes the movie she showed would be an old porno film . . . women tied up or chained or with dog collars around their necks . . . women being raped, beaten up, killed."[12] The aim is to frighten and compel them to accept their newly assigned roles and identities, and to make them believe that their current circumstances are much better than before: "There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to.

[10] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 142.
[11] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 82-83.
[12] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 118.

Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it."[13] Although Moira, like Offred, does not believe in the authenticity of these movies and claims that the women in the videos are most probably models, it is never possible to prove their artificiality since all channels of media are already state-controlled. As Atwood reveals, the available news and documentaries are all censored. The state uses media to instil fear, create its own reality, and make people give credence to the same fantasy.

Considering the involvement of other Ideological State Apparatuses such as education and religion together with Repressive ones from the Ministry of Love in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to the Mechanical Hound and The Red Center in *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Handmaid's Tale* respectively, the book clarifies how the totalitarian governments deconstruct the established institutions so that they serve to promote the doctrines of the dominant discourse by creating an atmosphere of fear, rewriting reality, and manipulating the masses.

The last subject matter revealed to be a recurrent focal point in the studied novels is the fundamental role of creating panoptic surveillance within the general policy of oppressive systems. The book sets forth how the totalitarian states acknowledge Foucault's conception of disciplinary power and utilise it to subjectify the individuals.

In Orwell's dystopic vision, the telescreens cover a remarkable part of societal control. These devices are equipped with the technology of seeing and hearing at the same time. Furthermore, it is forbidden to turn them off except for the high-ranking Inner Party members. In this way, the Party maintains constant surveillance and keeps people under utter control. The gaze of the state, the motto of which is 'Big Brother is watching you,' is so overwhelming that people feel it independent of time and place. However, the point which perfectly corresponds to the idea of the panopticon is that people never know if they are really observed, but still, they have to live with that supposition: "There was no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment . . . You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard."[14] The possibility of being watched and listened to makes people act by the doctrines of the Party. They need to control not only their consciousness but also their unconscious because even when they sleep, they may be under inspection. The presence of telescreens endows the Party with absolute power while reducing people to mere objects of knowledge.

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[13] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 24.
[14] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 5.

Another contributor of self-discipline in the novel is the existence of the secret police serving under the name of the Thought Police. The fact that any person can be a member of the secret police urges people to control themselves even in places where there are no telescreens. Winston, for instance, always lives on his nerves when he is working in his cubicle, eating lunch in the canteen, or just walking in the street. He habitually suspects almost every person from Syme to Julia. Each person is a potential spy, and so one can never lose control of his/her thoughts or emotions. Moreover, family members are not excluded from this probability. From infancy, children are systematically brainwashed to denounce any criminal suspect, including their parents. Mr. Parsons is turned in by his seven-year-old daughter who catches him saying 'down with big brother' in his sleep, and this is highly welcomed by him.

The Party, under the leadership of Big Brother, can maintain discipline thanks to panoptic surveillance. By planting telescreens in every public and private sphere, and placing spies within the community, the state creates a self-sustaining form of totalitarianism based on the oppression of the individual. The gaze of the regime is omnipresent from coins to cigarette packets. Under these circumstances, privacy, and thus individualism is not a matter of discussion: "Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull."[15] It is clear that the citizens of Oceania are imprisoned in a panoptic system, and the one in the watch-tower is Big Brother, the factuality of whom is already dubious.

Similarly, in *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury portrays a society that is under constant surveillance, the principal agents being the firemen in his case. They are not only the source of fear but also the instrument of surveillance, and this is exemplified through the case of Clarisse McClellan. During a speech with Montag about the sudden disappearance of Clarisse, Captain Beatty verifies that people are under absolute inspection, and the ones who do not fit in with the state ideology are vaporised: "Here or there, that's bound to occur. Clarisse McClellan? We've got a record on her family. We've watched them carefully."[16] Another concrete example of such surveillance is presented at the night when Montag manages to survive the Hound's chase and joins in Granger's camp. As Granger explains, the person who is introduced as Montag and killed to whitewash the state's failure to catch him is, in fact, an intentionally chosen outcast: "Right now, some poor fellow is out for a walk . . . Don't think the police know the habits of queer ducks like that.

[15] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 32.
[16] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 57.

Anyway, the police have had him charted for months, years."[17] In Bradbury's futuristic society, the authorities keep track of people's actions and record every piece of information. This surveillance society is directly intertwined with the novel's general mood of oppression, fear, and uncertainty. Because of these disciplinary techniques, people turn into docile bodies and lose their individuality. Mildred's denouncing her husband, Montag, for keeping books at home is one of the best examples in showing how the system has created self-disciplining subjects who help it maintain its panoptic surveillance.

As for *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Gilead regime has various strategies of surveillance set up throughout the community. The repeated references to 'eye' all over the novel highlight the author's emphasis on the idea of being observed night and day. The symbol of the government is an eye between two angelical wings; and likewise, the tattoo on Offred's ankle consists of four digits and an eye. The Handmaids take leave by the phrase 'Under His Eye.' Furthermore, there are the secret police named the Eyes. They are concealed in society to watch people so as to guarantee that no one neglects their responsibilities for the state. By all means, this makes even the idea of collective resistance almost impossible since every person can be a spy, and thus one can never reveal his/her sincere thoughts: "The truth is that she is my spy, as I am hers. If either of us slips through the net because of something that happens on one of our daily walks, the other will be accountable."[18]

In Atwood's world, the entire society is under constant surveillance, and this provides the regime with full authority over people: "In Gilead, the gaze reigns supreme as an instrument of control."[19] The irresistible gaze of the system leaves no private space for Offred. This leads her to experience periods of hysteria and forces her to lose her sense of self-identity. Hence, surveillance and self-discipline become both the reasons and the results of subjectivation.

As the book discovers, the manner of control utilised by the governments in the novels mirrors Foucault's interpretation of the power of surveillance as a form of discipline. Particularly, the practice of panoptic surveillance in the stories matches up with Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's theory that indicates the gaze of the authority as enforcement of control. In this direction, the fictional worlds portrayed by the authors are governed

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[17] Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 141.
[18] Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, 19.
[19] Kimberley Verwaayen, "Re-Examining the Gaze in The Handmaid's Tale," *Open Letter: A Canadian Journal of Writing and Theory* Vol. 9, No. 4 (1995): 44.

by oppressive regimes that benefit from the idea of panopticon as a means of power and discipline.

The book concludes that the oppressive strategies concerning particularly language, State Apparatuses, and surveillance infallibly serve the same purpose: They suppress the self and subjectify the individuals, which certainly leads to serious identity problems. Winston has difficulty in recognising his own image in the mirror and is frightened of his body; Montag renounces his identity as a fireman and decides on Faber as his alter ego; Offred frequently refers to her former name and identity. Obviously, these characters lack a stable identity and are in search of a new one. Once individuality is suppressed, subjectivation becomes much easier because collective identity overcomes individualism: "The first thing you must realise is that power is collective. The individual only has power in so far as he ceases to be an individual."[20] The ultimate aim of such totalitarian regimes is to create prototypes who have lost their identity, consciousness, history, and thus turned into subjected beings. The perfect society for this reductionist understanding is a group of people who think, talk and feel in the same way. From this perspective, it is possible to see that all three authors draw characters who have internalised subjectivation in similar ways. For instance, Orwell's characterisation of Mr. Parsons as a man of "paralysing stupidity" and "one of those completely unquestioning, devoted drudges"[21] in addition to his portrayal of Katherine, Winston's wife, as a woman who "had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan"[22] perfectly fits in the Party ideology. Similarly, Bradbury describes Mildred as the projected outcome of the discourse. She is the symbol of shallowness and mediocrity, and furthermore, she is completely imprisoned in unconsciousness. In the same vein, Atwood depicts Serena Joy as a conformist who not only accepts but also promotes the dogmas of the system. One way or another, these characters have given up their identities and become a part of the dominant discourse. Accordingly, they have lost the ability to think critically. They represent the orthodox person that totalitarianism needs to maintain its oppression and power: "A nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting – three hundred million people all with the same face."[23]

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[20] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 303.
[21] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 26.
[22] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 76.
[23] Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 85.

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