

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-V (September-October) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



Technological Power and Its Abuse: A Technocritical Analysis of *Fahrenheit 451*.

N'Télam OULAM

Assistant Professor, Department of Anglophone Studies, University of Kara, Togo.

| **Received:** 29.09.2024 | **Accepted:** 03.10.2024 | **Published:** 05.10.2024

***Corresponding author:** N'Télam OULAM

Assistant Professor, Department of Anglophone Studies, University of Kara, Togo.

Abstract

Technology refers to the practical application of scientific knowledge for specific purposes. It has long been considered as the ultimate means that human beings use to create new things. So, human beings make use of the new technological inventions mainly to master and then dominate nature in order to change their living conditions. Yet, the excessive use of these technological devices has created more problems for human beings than it has solved. What is technology? What power does it wield on human beings? What impacts does its excessive usage have on humans? This paper uses the technocritical approach to discuss these questions in order to propose possible solutions for a more ethical usage of technology and a positive change in society.

Keywords: *Technology, power, abuse, Technocriticism, Fahrenheit 451.*

Résumé

La technologie désigne l'application effective des connaissances scientifiques à des fins spécifiques. Elle a longtemps été considérée comme le moyen ultime utilisé par les êtres humains pour créer de nouvelles choses. Ainsi, les êtres humains utilisent les nouvelles inventions technologiques principalement pour maîtriser et ensuite dominer la nature dans le but de changer leurs conditions de vie. Cependant, l'utilisation excessive de ces dispositifs technologiques a créé plus de problèmes pour les êtres humains qu'elle n'en a résolu. Qu'est-ce que la technologie ? Quel pouvoir exerce-t-elle sur les êtres humains ? Quels sont les impacts de son utilisation excessive sur les êtres humains ? Cet article utilise l'approche technocritique pour discuter de ces questions en vue d'envisager des solutions idoines pour une utilisation plus éthique de la technologie et un changement positif dans la société.

Mots-clés : *Technologie, pouvoir, abus, technocritique, Fahrenheit 451.*

Introduction

The issues of technology and the abuse of its power have been of great interest to many writers and scholars for ages. Novelists like Mary Shelley (1797-1851), Charles Dickens (1812-1870), Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) and Ray Bradbury (1920-2012) have depicted technological wonders as well as its dangers in their respective creative works. For L. Winner (1989, 3), the “story that exemplifies what is most fascinating about the human encounter with modern technology” comes from the early days of manned space travel. As “technological objects and processes have a promiscuous utility, they are taken to be fundamentally neutral as regards their moral standing” (Winner, 1989, 6). According to Leo Marx and Merritt Roe Smith, whenever a technological invention is introduced into society, it takes on “a life of its own” (1994, xi). This “technological determinism” (Hess, 2015, 121) makes of technology the basis of social life for, the “changes in technology are the single most important basis of change in society” (Winner, 1977, 65).

Science is about understanding the natural and physical world and is based on facts that can be proved by experiments whereas technology is the branch of knowledge dealing with engineering or applied sciences. When scientific knowledge is implemented for practical purposes, it results in technology, that is, the development of machinery and equipment. So, whenever scientific knowledge is applied to the practical aims of human life, it provokes changes and manipulations of the human environment. Although technology has paved the way to other new discoveries that have helped humans make incredible progress in society, the results of its excessive use in *Fahrenheit 451* demands that further analyses be conducted for a successful management of its devices.

The technological world has progressively and constantly known an unstoppable metamorphosis in different domains. In fact, the new technological inventions have mainly been used to master and dominate nature in order to improve human beings' living conditions. Yet, the greed of humans pushes them to use technological devices in an excessive way. As a result, this excessive use of technological devices has created more problems for human beings than it has solved. These innovations have also rendered inefficient and obsolete the time-honoured ethical prescriptions. It, therefore, becomes imperative to be constantly on the lookout for new ideas that will generate updating prescriptions to comply with the intensive technological transformations. It has also become a necessity to work out adaptive ethical prescriptions that will help reduce the impacts of technology on human beings.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the concept of technology and show the impacts that the abuse of its power can have on humans in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The paper also discusses technology as being a catalyst to political control and oppression. It proposes a committed intellectual activism for a more ethical and beneficial usage of technological innovations.

Technocriticism is used in this paper for the analysis of technological power and its abuse. The descriptive form of Technocriticism studies technological changes. Techno-critics go through science-fiction to make the readers think and discover “possible futures, and ponder their consequences” (Easton & Dial, 2010, xviii). They denounce dehumanizing eugenic practices (Black, 2012) and show how bias and negligence undermine the search for truth (Ritchie, 2020). Technocriticism also helps show how authoritarian political regimes use technological devices to

control and deprive citizens of their rights and freedom (Berenson, 2021).

Technoethics, the prescriptive form, focuses on the different problems engendered by the users of technology and prescribes ethical values. For G. José Maria (2003, 1), Technoethics is a set of “ideas that bring into evidence a system of ethical reference that justifies the profound dimensions of technology.” So, “the technologist must be held not only technically but morally responsible for whatever he designs or executes” (Rocci, 2009, 2). G. Jessica (2010, 1) calls the present people to preserve the “physical conditions that constitute a livable environment”. Technocriticism is not opposing the use of technology as it is no more possible to do without it today (Terlizzese, 2020, 12). So, its use in this paper helps analyse the text to remind technologists and other users to work for citizens' liberation rather than their enslavement.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section defines technology and shows how its excessive use has alienated the population. The second section discusses technology as being a catalyst to political ends. The last section analyses how the actions of committed book-reading-characters serve as a rebellious shield against technological indoctrination.

1. Technology and Its Impacts on Citizens

Defined in the context of this paper as the practical application of scientific knowledge for specific purposes, technology has had a negative impact on the average citizen in *Fahrenheit 451*. Technology refers to the “scientific knowledge used in practical ways [...] in designing new machines” (Hornby, 2010, 1534). Therefore, it has long been considered as the ultimate means that human beings use to create new things. For A. Augustyn et. al (2024), technology is “the application of scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life” and this leads to the change and manipulation of the human environment. This “practical application of knowledge [...] in a particular area” (M. Webster, 2024), is done through the use of technical processes, either knowledge or methods. While examining Winner's vision of a theory of technological politics, Schraube argues: “It asks not just what people do with technology, but also what technology is doing with us and our world. It engages to reconnect the maker with the making, to turn toward the things themselves and to examine critically the nature and significance of technological artifacts in human and more-than-human life on planet Earth” (Schraube, 2021, 113).

This section explores how technological devices have affected citizens' mind turning them into ignorant and addicted brutes. The technological advancement has significantly transformed society with its negative influence on humans. Indeed, it is the social and political consequences of scientific innovation that have been exposed in *Fahrenheit 451*. Ray Bradbury's technological innovations concern the electronic media. One of the technologically advanced media is the wall-sized television which is installed in every household and known as “parlor”. The main role of this three-dimensional television is not to offer credible information to citizens but it is rather designed to make the experience extremely immersive.

The parlor in Montag's residence has three walls installed and Mildred, his wife, spends nearly all her time watching television. It

can be noted that television and other forms of media, such as the thimble radios that constantly pump music and advertisements into everyone's ears, are meant solely to keep the viewer entertained and prevent critical thinking. Once there is no critical thinking, there is evidence that citizens are almost kept under the control of the State. As Captain Beatty explains, innovations in media technology create a loophole which has simplified information and increased the desire for uncomplicated happiness. As a result of this curtailing of critical thinking, citizens grow more and more hollow and callous in society. As J. Li (2017, 12) posits: "people's ability for critical thought may wither away under the influence of [...] values presented by mass media". Nobody thinks for themselves and individuals grow shallower and more self-involved lacking empathy for others. In Bradbury's created world, technological innovation transforms society for the worse.

Technological innovation represents the central source of problems to society in *Fahrenheit 451*. First of all, technology is depicted as inherently a destructive device. The advent of technology and other forms of media like television and in-ear radios have contributed to the social decline of reading. A few people are interested in reading books because of the rise of these innovations which shorten the access to information. Instead of giving the constructive information to citizens, they are rather presented pointless and violent programmes that serve as entertainments.

The televisions in Bradbury's technological world are entertainment spaces with mesmerizing effects. They give a summarized content to the viewers. Mildred, Montag's wife, is known for watching pointless and violent programmes on television. Whenever Mildred is not watching television, she's listening to a constant stream of music and advertisements that play through her in-ear radio. Mildred remains "plugged in" at all times, and Montag ascribes her emotional vacancy and lack of empathy to her addiction to these forms of technology. It can be understood that she could no more do without these media. As a result, this everyday addiction to entertainment leads to a collective shallowness and heartlessness of Montag's society.

Televisions and radios are not the only new media technologies with bad effects on people; there are other forms of technology like the automobiles, which have a more materially destructive force on citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*. These "beetles" are almost everywhere in the city and can easily reach more than one hundred miles per hour. These top speeds encourage fast and reckless driving which most of time have resulted in fatal accidents. Clarisse is reported to have been killed by a speeding beetle, showing how dangerous beetles are to the population.

Citizens' indifference to the past and to relationships is one of the most striking impacts that technology has on their lives. The indifference to the past is shown when the ten-year-married couple of Montag and Mildred has failed to remember when or where they first met. This also shows how negatively technology has affected the brain of the couple. When they try to remember their past together, Mildred avoids the stress and pain of the topic by stating, "It doesn't matter" and then going into the bathroom to swallow several pills. It is only when Montag sees the city destroyed and he pictures Mildred's death that he remembers they have met in Chicago. Montag and his wife are not the only characters who are mentally affected; Mrs. Phelps and Bowles along with Mildred's companions and other citizens have experienced the consequences of technology in *Fahrenheit 451*.

The indifference to relationships is another inherent consequence that the excessive use of technology has wrought. With the improvement of television, radio and beetles, most people in *Fahrenheit 451* have less time for one another and have, therefore, become indifferent to relationships. As everybody is busy with telescreens, nobody cares about bearing and bringing up children in such an individualistic society. The fact that books are banned does not even allow citizens to get knowledge and be aware of the presence of others. So, with this ignorance, the society seems to be preparing its citizens to have superficial bonds. This, in turn, prevents deep relationships among individuals as they are not allowed to devote too much time on marriage. In addition, Mildred is more concerned with being constantly entertained and keeping up with her television than thinking about her own husband.

It can be further argued that technology has severed interpersonal relationships. The fact that no character is interested in having a child marks the death of interpersonal relationships and the level of people's vanity and self-centeredness. Mrs. Phelps describes children as "ruinous," and Mrs. Bowles says she would only have her children by Caesarean section, claiming that a baby is not worth "going through all that agony" (Bradbury, 2013). Taking care of children would take away from the vapid activities with which people fill their days. This view of children's uselessness contradicts that of Koninck and Parizeau (1991, 24) who think that "Children are important for the survival of a society". It can be said that a society without children is a society without tomorrow.

It can be noted that technological devices have not helped citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*; they have rather deepen their ignorance. As a symbol of knowledge, the book, in Bradbury's dystopian society, is devalued and censored by the advent of television. Far from keeping people happy and entertained, every citizen remains dissatisfied due to the constant entertainment. Technology has failed to ensure people's peace of mind because even Mildred has sought relaxation through her moment of driving. Mildred's taking of an over-dose of sleeping pills shows that she is not really happy, though she always pretends to be. Her attempted suicide corroborates this unhappy mind of hers. Mildred's eventual death in the bombing of the city constitutes the climax of the negative impact of technology in her life. The less satisfied people are with their lives, the more violent they become. As many citizens have died of shootings, this violent behaviour, unfortunately, turns out to be the only way for the living ones to express their anger, frustration, and unhappiness. Technology has not only had a nefarious impact on people but it has also served as a catalyst to reach political ends.

2. Technology as a Catalyst to Political Ends

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Captain Beatty represents the political apparatus which has caused more troubles than necessary to the population. Beatty has used various techniques to instore political supremacy on others. These elements vary from censorship through the ban of books to the oppression of firemen, the Mechanical Hound and the atomic bomb destruction. The media technology is used to keep the people alienated while book reading is banned to keep them ignorant. The State has also created a unit of firemen to burn books and houses. These firemen are helped by another technological device known as the Mechanical Hound which plays the role of severe policemen and is used to oppress

lawbreakers. The atomic bomb comes as the last means of repression used by the state to destroy its citizens.

Concerning the censorship through the use of the media technology in *Fahrenheit 451*, citizens live in an oppressive society that attempts to eliminate all sources of complexity, contradiction and confusion. This censorship is imposed in order to make sure that all the citizens are enjoying life happily. When the narrative unfolds, it can be read from the empty-minded citizens that they are not so happy as expected. Indeed, Montag's fellow citizens are constantly bombarded with advertisements and shallow entertainments, leaving them no space to think for themselves or assess their own emotional states. As a result, their society grows increasingly violent, selfish, pleasure-seeking and disconnected from factual information.

Unlike the utopian fiction in which the author envisions a future that aligns with their social and political ideals, *Fahrenheit 451* is a dystopian novel that depicts a negative vision of the future. Indeed, it focuses on problematic aspects of society that do not align with the author's ideals, and which prevent the development of a better version of the world. As such, *Fahrenheit 451* focuses on life under totalitarian governments and police states, where surveillance and suppression of public opinion lead to mass fear and suffering.

Fahrenheit 451 lays emphasis on how innovations in media technology have negatively affected society. As Bradbury predicts, the negative effects of technology will eventually be reflected in the law leading to a police state in which firemen actively repress reading, learning, and critical thinking through violent acts of destruction. Firemen like Captain Beatty see book burning as necessary for maintaining people's peace of mind. Bradbury depicts a dystopian future world where no one is truly happy because of the oppressive ways used by the State to keep its population ignorant of current issues.

The ban of books has no clear explanation as such in *Fahrenheit 451*. Yet, according to Beatty's account, books are banned because of the ever-quickening pace of technological advancement. As the speed of life accelerated, people increasingly opted for simplified forms of entertainment, like television. Fast-paced living and shallow entertainment worked together to erode people's attention spans. As nobody has time for books, people prefer very short ones or else they indulge in the mindless pleasures of sex magazines. Happiness is privileged above all else in society.

The popularity of competing forms of entertainment such as television and radio can be mentioned as an important factor that leads to a general lack of interest in reading. The analysis has shown that the presence of fast cars, loud music, and advertisements creates a lifestyle with too much stimulation in which no one has the time to concentrate and read. Besides, the huge mass of published material is too overwhelming to think about, leading to a society that prefers condensed media to voluminous books. Another reason which makes people actively hostile toward books involves envy as many people don't like to feel inferior to those who have read more than they have.

On the political standpoint, the most important reason which leads to censorship is the objections of special-interest groups to the content of books. The hidden agenda of Beatty, who represents the State, is to fool other citizens with shallow information so as to keep them ignorant. The firemen who are defending the interests of the State feel offended by knowledge that is contained in books

and which could be a source of awareness for the masses. As a result, books are feared because they bring confusion and discontent among the masses. For these firemen, books represent a threat that undermines the ideal of happiness. Books can also introduce unnecessary complexity and contradiction into people's lives, this is the reason why they must be banned or burned to avoid any suspicion. As if joining the act to the word, the government has eventually codified this social evolution into a law. It has also proceeded to ban books altogether and enforce the ban through firemen who start fires rather than putting them out.

The ban of books process has led to the extension of the firemen's oppression. Captain Beatty, one of the firemen, has used technological tools to inflict pain to many lawbreakers including Montag, his co-worker. The sudden metamorphosis of Montag from book-burning fireman to a book-reading rebel arouses Beatty's suspicion. Beatty's visit to Montag ends with a violent menace that if a fireman has possession of a book and refuses to burn it, he, Beatty, has a duty to come and burn this book by himself. This shows Beatty's determination in the burning of books. He goes further in his oppressive ways to vainly force Montag, his co-fireman, to burn his own house.

Montag is not the only character who has undergone Beatty's oppression. Mildred, Montag's wife, who attempts suicide with an overdose of sleeping pills, ends up dying in the bombing of the city. Clarisse, an innocent and curious woman also disappears and is reported to have been run over and killed by a car. In addition, there is an unnamed woman who refuses to abandon reading books and has preferred committing suicide by burning herself alive. All these deaths, along with many other ones, are the dreadful results of Beatty's oppression. Beatty's death in the novel marks also the end of political repression and Montag, his murderer, embodies the hopeful knowledge that is to be used for the rebirth of a new generation.

Another element of the destructive aspect of technology is found in the Mechanical Hound, a metal which is designed to track down and kill lawbreakers. The Mechanical Hound is a robotic animal that firemen deploy to hunt and catch fugitives. It is trained and programmed to hunt its prey very quickly by smell. Once it catches people, the Hound injects the person with a sedative; unable to run, the drugged fugitive is easily captured. The Hound is normally programmed to attack only lawbreakers. The fact that the Hound acts aggressively toward Montag shows that this technology makes mistakes and can, therefore, be easily manipulated for nefarious ends.

However, the most destructive technology of all is the atomic bomb. Nuclear wars have occurred twice in the novel, and the story ends again with an atomic bomb falling on the city. This entails that nuclear technology makes war both easier and more destructive. That is why the recurring threat of atomic war maintains an atmosphere of anxiety among the citizens favouring thus the dictatorial ambitions of the government.

3. The Intellectual Shield Against Indoctrination

Indoctrination is the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically. In *Fahrenheit 451*, many citizens are subjected to brainwashing, indoctrination and punishment. The firemen's exaggerated political repression has created a book-reading-phobia among citizens. The fact that Beatty

tracks down all book readers has created an illogical fear in some intellectuals like Prof. Faber. In contrast to this inexplicable fear, the political censorship has raised the awareness of some intellectuals to fight against indoctrination and conformism. Characters like Clarisse, Montag, the unnamed woman and Faber, have formed a shielded group of intellectuals to combat indoctrination and give hope to the rise of a new nation.

While referring to Clarisse's education, Beatty says: "she was a time bomb. The family had been feeding her subconscious, I'm sure, from what I saw of her school record. She didn't want to know how a thing was done, but why" (Bradbury, 2013, 75). This shows that Clarisse, with her knowledge and understanding, constitutes a permanent danger to Beatty's policy of indoctrination. Konstantinos & Melpomeni (2011, 22) approve the crucial role of school education when they argue: "school is a privileged place for cultural development. The scientific knowledge is built at school and is grounded on the training of cultural mind and the structuration of knowledge. It can only be acquired through effort. It requires time and energy, and this must be done at school." Clarisse's unchallengeable fighting spirit of questioning everything and making inquiries to understand the meaning of things makes of her a direct danger to technological indoctrination. Clarisse is considered as an "antisocial" (Bradbury, 42) because her philosophy contradicts the ideologies of the State.

Thanks to her education, Clarisse believes that living in a society where people are not granted their right constitutes a totalitarian State. Indeed, knowledge contained in books is very important for "the management of individual's life, acquisitions of values, the ways to use them for the current need without compromising the future" (Pewissi, 2017, 82). The fact that Clarisse is educated has enabled her to control certain things and manage in life. Clarisse's awareness of various tricks gives her power to fight for the preservation of a prospective future society. To Captain Beatty, Clarisse represents a powerful weapon ready to overthrow the government ideology of indoctrination.

Clarisse embodies the responsible intellectual citizen with freedom of thought and who fights for the integrity of human beings. Referring to conformism, Clarisse says:

But I don't think it's social to get a bunch of people together and then not let them talk, do you? An hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, a more sports, but do you know, we never ask questions, or at least most don't; they just run the answers at you, bing, bing, bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film-teacher. That's not social to me at all. It's a lot of funnels and a lot of water poured down the spot and out the button, and them telling us it's wine when it's not. 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 (Bradbury, 42).

Clarisse's position against indoctrination is clear; she is a true patriot fighting the excessive use of technological to suppress social interactions. Yet, only these exchanges can "empower people to make sense out of their society reaching out to a consensus" (Pewissi, 79). The vaporization of Clarisse shows the negative impact of an abuse of media technologies. Humans are really manipulated and subjugated through the excessive use of technology and its innovations.

Technology constitutes a driving force through which individuals do different activities. With the aim of contributing to the well-being of citizens, technological inventions have been used intentionally in *Fahrenheit 451* to destroy human knowledge. These inadvertent ways of using technological inventions is what Ray Bradbury shows through the depiction of such a manipulated society. This depiction which acts as a warning against the effects of technological inventions has provoked an intellectual response. Considering how Beatty makes use of technological power against other intellectuals, one can infer that technological inventions are there to help power holders manipulate everybody and deprive them of knowledge. This very situation is presented when Clarisse asks Montag the reason why firemen do not read books. Montag's answer, "that's against the law!" (Bradbury, 19) of the State shows that the ideology incorporated in people's mind against book reading is indoctrinated.

The State tries to create a conformist society devoid of knowledge. Indeed, Beatty tries to instore a homogenizing regime where the State can produce people with uniform desires, tastes and behaviour. This is certainly what D. Kellner (2007, 2-3) corroborates when he argues: "it was an era of mass production and consumption characterized by uniformity and homogeneity of needs, thoughts, and behaviour producing a 'mass society'". For Kellner, the society under construction does not respect people's privacy. As neither knowledge nor reading is promoted, citizens are subjected to a mental degradation. Montag's submissive behaviour before his encounter with Clarisse symbolises the naivety of all the characters, who are not allowed to think before answering questions. Clarisse, Montag's eye opener, refers to this state of Montag's mind when she narrates: "you laugh when I haven't been funny and [...] You never stop to think about what I've asked" (Bradbury, 20). This shows the importance of reasoning which comes through reading and mind exercise.

Before meeting Clarisse, "It was a pleasure to burn" (Bradbury, 3) for Montag. Working for the destruction of books – knowledge, Montag enjoys his job so deeply that he "grinned the fierce grin of all men singed and driven back by flame" (Bradbury, 4). Like the other firemen, Montag's greatest pleasure in life is burning books. He also believes to be happy with his job, marriage, and day-to-day routine. However, after Clarisse asks him if he is really happy, Montag feels "his smile slide away, melt, fold over and down on itself . . . [he] was not happy. He was not happy. He said the words to himself. He recognized this as the true state of affairs" (Bradbury, 69). Clarisse raises thus Montag's awareness and the latter becomes aware of his emptiness and, therefore, becomes hungry for knowledge. The curious questions of Clarisse awaken something in Montag which leads to his longing for something real and meaningful. Clarisse's meeting has served as a crucial turning point for Montag's mental metamorphosis. He changes from a powerful but ignorant fireman to an unhappy rebel.

This sudden transformation of Montag from a book-burning fireman to a book-reading rebel has raised much suspicion in his behaviour. As a result, Montag realises the true role of a fireman's duty is not to destroy knowledge and promote ignorance. Instead of bearing an unquestioning ignorance forever, Montag's encounters with Clarisse, the old woman, and Faber ignite in him the spark of doubt and he resolves to wage a fight against indoctrination which constitutes the basic beliefs of his society. As such, Montag becomes straightforwardly the enemy to be killed by Beatty.

Montag nourishes the desire to read books because he believes they can provide him with enough knowledge to understand by himself the issues of his society. Montag becomes curious about books after having discovered the aspects of his social and personal life that contribute to his unhappiness. Montag's answer to Mildred his wife: "Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave" (Bradbury, 70), shows his conviction to get out of ignorance. While enumerating a number of troubling recent events such as: Mildred's sleeping pill overdose, the accident that killed Clarisse, the suicide of the woman who refused to part with her books and the ongoing threat of nuclear war, Montag displays the source of his overwhelming sense of unhappiness. As a result, he must read books to gain knowledge and understanding which can help alleviate his pain and overcome his ignorance.

Montag has also encountered Faber, a retired English professor in a park and recalls the incident whereby the professor tries to hide something suspicious in his coat pocket. Although Faber is scared of Montag at first sight, he eventually arms himself with enough courage to admit that he is a professor. His resolution to change from a mere coward citizen to a courageous and responsible professor is an indirect call of the author for intellectuals to react as far the negative consequences of technology are concerned.

Faber displays this responsibility when he says: "I don't talk things, sir, I talk the meaning of things. I sit here and know I'm alive" (Bradbury, 86). Montag's final resolution not to check Faber becomes a crucial moment when a fireman decides to renounce his job of burning books. As Montag describes it: "His hands stayed on his knees, numb and useless" (Bradbury, 48) This encounter has also reinforced Faber's commitment to carry out common actions to avoid indoctrination.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that technology has had a real negative impact on the average citizen in *Fahrenheit 451*. Although technology has served Captain Beatty and other power-hungry firemen to extend their domination, this mechanized knowledge has caused serious problems to the common citizens as well as intellectual characters in Bradbury's created world. As a result, the woman who refuses to abandon reading books, is compelled to commit suicide by burning herself alive. Mildred shifts from taking an overdose of sleeping pills to die in the bombing of the city. The innocent and curious Clarisse has vaporized in a so-called car accident. Professor Faber becomes a conditioned coward and Guy Montag changes from a book-burning fireman to a book-reading rebel.

The analysis has also underscored that citizens are trained to become ignorant in order to make their control easy for the State. As a result of this paradoxical situation, books, which are supposed to provide knowledge to fuel intellectual activity, are rather banned by the State and burned by the firemen if ever they bump into any. Intellectuals and other readers of books pose a problem to the State, and for this reason, they are targeted as rebels to be daily tracked down and killed. This mental subjugation is done through the excessive use of the new technological devices such as telescreens, radios and newspapers by the holders of power.

The paper has, furthermore, shown that the central role played by technology in our lives today makes it difficult, if not, impossible to do without it. Besides, it shows that scientific discoveries which comply with ethics immensely contribute to the development of society. It therefore, advocates that, the unethical use of

technological devices must be condemned. The paper proposes that the awareness of people using technology, especially scientists, must be raised. There must also be a systematic updating of ethical prescriptions to promote a good and responsible management of technological discoveries.

All in all, in a highly technological world like that of *Fahrenheit 451*, the adoption of a phoenix-like behaviour is highly recommended to enable individual citizens to preserve their dignity and privacy. This mental transformation needs to be coupled with a strong commitment of citizens to learn and understand the functioning of their community before acting accordingly.

References

1. Augustyn Adam et. Al. 2024. "Technology". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., retrieved on <https://www.britannica.com/technology/technology>. Accessed 1 September 2024.
2. Berenson, A. 2021. *Pandemia: How Coronavirus Hysteria Took Over Our Government, Rights, and Lives*. Regnery Publishing.
3. Black, E. 2012. *War against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*. Dialog Press.
4. Bradbury, R. 2013. *Fahrenheit 451*. (Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, Ed.) 60th Anniversary Edition, New York, London, Sydney, New Delhi. Vancouver, BC. From eBookNews.SimonandSchuster.com. ISBN: 978-1-4391-4267-7 (e-book).
5. Easton, T. A. & Dial, J. K., eds. 2010. *Visions of Tomorrow: Science Fiction Predictions That Came True*. Skyhorse Publishing.
6. Galvan, J. M. 2003. "On Technoethics", in *IEEE-RAS Magazine*, pp. 58-63
7. Godofsky, J. 2010. "Future Generations and the Right to Survival: A Deontological Analysis of the Moral Obligations of Present to Future People", in *TCNJ: Journal of StudentScholarship, Volume XII*. pp. 1-9.
8. Hess, D. J. 2015. "Engaging Science, Technology, and Society". In *Power, Ideology, and Technological Determinism*. pp. 121-125, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17351/ests2015.010> Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
9. Kellner, D. 2007. "Critical Perspectives on Television from the Frankfurt School to Postmodernism". Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Retrieved from <http://w.w.w.gseis.ucla.edu>, ISBN: 9780470997130
10. Konstantinos, V. & Melpomeni, T. 2011. "Technologie, Culture et Education". *Université Aristote de Thessalonique*(n°3), PP 15-34. Retrieved from tsitouri@ured.auth.gr.
11. Li, J. 2017. "Adorno and Marcuse's Critical Analysis of Media Culture and its Implications for Media Education in China". Vancouver: *The University of British Columbia*.
12. Luppardini, R. 2009. "The Emerging Field of Technoethics", University of Ottawa: IGI Global, pp. 1-3
13. Marx, L. and M. R. Smith. 1994. "Introduction." In Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx (eds.), *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of*

Technological Determinism. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. pp. ix-xv.

14. Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). "Technology". In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved September 1, 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/technology>
15. Parizeau, M. H. & de Koninck M. 1991. Reflexions sur les techno-sciences et l'instrumentalisation dans la procréation humaine. *Ethique et Intervention sociale*, Vol. 40.
16. Pewissi, A. 2017. *RETHINKING WOMANISM: When Difference Maps Chaos*. Accra North- Ghana: Yamens Press Limited.
17. Ritchie, S. 2020. *Science Fictions: How Fraud, Bias, Negligence, and Hype Undermine the Search for Truth*. Metropolitan Books.
18. Schraube, E. 2021. "Langdon Winner's Theory of Technological Politics: Rethinking Science and Technology for Future Society". *Engaging Science, Technology, & Society*. Vol. 7, n°1 pp. 113-117, <https://doi.org/10.17351/ests2021.811>.
19. Terlizese, L. J. 2020. *Techno Critical Manifesto: Resistance Is Freedom*. Christian Publishing House.
20. Winner, L. 1977. *Autonomous Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
21. Winner, L. 1989. "A Philosophy of Technology". In *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*. pp. 1-58, Jawaharlal Nehru: EBSCO Publishing.