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**Dystopian Literature as a Tribune for  
Social Therapy:  
Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)**

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## **Abstract**

This project represents a closer examination on the relationship between literature and society. It investigates the role of literature in society. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of literature, particularly dystopian literature, on society's development. Furthermore, this study, which adopts an analytical approach, sheds light on the importance of books and literature in individual's life in particular, and in society in general. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) portrays the suffering of characters because of the lack of books. Characters, as the protagonist, seek the real happiness, freedom, and peace. The struggle of these characters lies in the fact of finding answers to their doubts under a totalitarian authority. By the end, literature seems to be the only solution for Montag, the protagonist, to get rid of such authoritative regime. Hence, literature, dystopian genre, as a social therapy is been proved by Bradbury's novel. Correspondingly, with literature, society will be remediated.

**Key words:** dystopian literature, social therapy, happiness, struggle, freedom, totalitarian regime.

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# **General Introduction**

For decades, literature was seen as only a type of art. It was used to express and reflect the beauty found in the world outside and inside persons. Writers varied in reflecting such beauty. Each movement, since the classical period until postmodernism, highlighted the world's experiences and events. In order to reflect these ideas, writers experimented in techniques, which would help them tackling the different themes. Nonetheless, the fact that literature is a piece of art, that is used just for art's sake has been diminished. Literature now, with its different genres, has a sacred role in human's life.

In recent times, a huge attention has been directed toward the genre of dystopian literature. Writers adopting such genre are trying to highlight the decline occurs at the level of society. They are actually transmitting an apocalyptic vision through their significance practice of language. Thus, their works are going to rebuild society's collective consciousness. This creates a second chance for people to be rehumanized; and, eventually, society will be almost treated from its illness. Healing at first place comes because of spotting light on the kind of the illness, and this is the role of literature.

Moreover, the importance of this project lays in the fact that literature and society have a tied relationship. The first is considered as the mirror to the other. The dystopian genre, however, is always perceived and conceived to be an omen that always suspects the end, and highlights the dark side of society. Literature, in fact, is considered as a social experience. Correspondingly, a couple of researches concerned with such relationship between literature and society, especially, the dystopian genre; nonetheless, none of these studies highlights the role of literature in society. In addition, what motivated this research is the fact that literature is a major element for sociologists' findings. In addition, the reflection of society in literature is the role of literature, dystopian genre, in changing society's drawbacks into advantages. Moreover, being aware of the influencive relationship between dystopian literature and society, the novel Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

(1953) seems to be suitable to the research since it holds the core of these research, which is the role of literature in improving society's state from under average to flourishing state.

Literature as a social therapy is a topic that triggers couple of questions. The first question that manifests itself: in which way such relationship, literature and society, would help society? On the other hand, how does literature become a society's healer? This question triggers other sub-questions: does really art have an effect on any kind of a political situation? How can we reach utopia out of dystopia? How do books change people's way of thinking? Does Bradbury's work reflect the importance of books in making the world better place?

The hypothesis that comes to be a suitable answer for the previous questions is the fact that literature might help sociologists through highlighting certain society's wonderings. Through this, it is considering as a therapeutic tool. Another hypothesis that seems to be relevant to the questions raised above is the fact that art, literature, is used to renew the spirit, which brings happiness. The other hypothesis, that sounds more suitable is the fact that diversity of voices found in literature are actually what make the change.

In an attempt to give adequate answers to the previous problematic questions and verify the relevance of the hypotheses mentioned above, an analytical approach will be followed in order to highlight the impact and the role literature within society, and the influence of society in literary works.

Correspondingly, the present work will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will be dedicated to the theoretical background for this dissertation. It will provide an inductive study that aims at bringing together the theories used. In addition, through the use of postmodern theory, it will attempt to conceptualize and archived the shift move from modernism toward postmodernism, highlighting, also, the features, techniques, and

themes tackled by postmodern writers. Moreover, the study conducted in this chapter will provide an overview, yet detailed concepts concerning the dystopian genre. This chapter will provide a set of information of dystopia since its emergence. Thereby; it will shed light on the most controversial point in this dissertation; literature, dystopian, as a social therapy. This part will discuss the relationship between literature and society. Thereafter, the relationship that makes the world better place.

Likewise, the second chapter's aim is to investigate what events, people, and ideas influenced Bradbury in writing his novel. It also investigates how *Fahrenheit 451*'s characters and events represent postmodernism and the dystopian genre. Thereafter, *Fahrenheit 451*'s themes, characters, and events are critically tackled in reflecting the dystopian atmosphere and the postmodern era stylistically, and thematically speaking.

Nonetheless, the last chapter will adopt an analytical study that aims at investigating the way characters benefited from literature. Besides, to literature's role in transforming individual's life; hence whole society is being transformed. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight the effects of the presence and the absence of literature in making people's life bright or dark and ignorance. It, also, highlights the role of art, literature, in breaking through when language fails to do so. Eventually, it sheds light on the power of pen in bringing about solutions to social changes.

In order to conduct the present research a number of academic sources have been consulted and used as references. The most related ones are explained as follows: the first authors negotiate the relationship between literature, society, and sociology. Other students, however, while they are consulting their researches, discussing throughout different novels the role of dystopian genre in empowering female characters, and the

rebellion of other characters toward conformity. Eventually, new humanist criticism had provided readers as well as critics with virtual glasses to see literature differently.

As a starting point, different authors have negotiated the relationship between literature, society, and sociology. René Wellek and Warren's *theory of literature* discusses in details what links literature to society. They, eventually, consider literature simply as a life that represents the social reality. As De Bonald states, "literature is an expression of life"; he means that the author is part of any social institution; thus he is producing would express what is happening around him. They believe what defines literature is society. However, a Ph.D. thesis tackles the correlation between literature and sociology, which is known as sociology of literature. This is another area of study, which sees literature as a kind of sociology. For the researcher, both of them study social institutions scientifically. Nevertheless, they are not alike when literature focuses on generalized reality of society; sociology makes use of such data to have a specific expression.

To illustrate the role of dystopian literature, certain sources were recommended. "the international journal of English language: literature in humanities" looks over the idea of conformity and its unwanted consequences. They uses *Fahrenheit 451*'s protagonist, to shed light on the good effects of refusing following the authority blindly. For them what is decided for you is not always in one's favour. In Dewi Boulen's dissertation, there was a clear statement on the role of dystopian society, bad conditions in empowering females, and she consolidates her thesis through *Handmaid's Tale* and *Catching Fire*. Bruno Capaci along with MARIA ZAŁĘSKA<sup>5</sup> approach the relation of literature and society through the rhetorical genre in tow masterpieces of Italian literature. They clarify how society is affected negatively through certain words.

In tackling literary criticism and its role, new humanist criticism is of great importance. This school of criticism stressed on the function of literature as “rehumanizing”. For them even if the readers could not grasp what is meant by literary work, the critic’s role is to be mediator between the two. He is going to transmit the meaning and trying to make a sense of equilibria in between. I.A.Richars, one of this school’s pillars, who is famous for his practical criticism. He stated the role of critic, mainly after the wars, that as much as the doctor is concerned with the health of the body as the critic with the health of the mind. Thus, for him, the critic is a healer.

Indeed, as it is mentioned above, there are multiple growing ideas on dystopian literature, society, and sociology; however, less works have been set forth the relationship between the three notions. In the same way, many subjects remained untackled, which is treating those concepts all together in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Therefore, this present work aiming at bringing these concepts together applied to Bradbury’s novel. Moreover, bridging the gap, which is missing in all previous works: perceiving literature as a social therapy.

# **Chapter I**

## **Theoretical Background**

## **Introduction**

The twentieth century was a watershed in human's history. It is considered as a bridge that witnessed multiple changes on different levels of life. The human mentality, as a result, has been overthrown. The latter situation brought with it a new appearance to our world. All these are clearly echoed in literature, which is eventually, considered as a mirror to society.

This chapter, consequently, concerns with some of the variations of the twentieth century. It sheds light on the most effective philosophical thoughts. Postmodernism and dystopian literature\_ novel \_ take the lion's share in both the present chapter as well as during the twentieth century. More precisely, this chapter tackles the shift move from modernism to post modernism, along with the features and aspects of postmodernism. In addition to what does it mean a dystopian novel and what is its main lineaments. Eventually, the last part will tackle the most important point in this study, which is literature as a social therapy. This will discuss how literature could be a social therapy? Thus, this chapter is to set the platform to some crucial ideas.

### **I. The Shift toward Postmodernism**

Postmodernism as any other literary and philosophical movement did not appear suddenly and it is hardly to be dated. As a philosophical concept is elusive and difficult to be defined. To start with, postmodernism as a name indicates; it has a tied relationship with modernism. Literally speaking, postmodernism means "coming after" modernism. It can be understood as the period followed modernism. However, such a movement needs both historical and theoretical definition. Before engaging with its definition, it is properly to know firstly how it was foregrounded. It was actually evoked by many other fields, because people started to be aware that they are in a period after what is known as

modernism. Firstly, Kenneth Boulding argues that “postcivilization” is an essential part of *the meaning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century* (1964); and George Steiner who subtitled his essay “in bluebeard’s castle (1971) as notes toward the definition of postculture. Besides, to Frederick Seinderg’s title “Post-Historic Man”. Those are just examples of the use of the word “post” in multiple fields by different writers, thinkers, philosophers, historians that have introduced the concept as followed to the modernist era.

Nevertheless, it was properly borrowed to literature studies as Ihab Hassan states in his work “Toward the Concept of Postmodernism” that Fridrico De Onis has used it for the first time in his work *Antologia De La Poesa Espanola E Hispanoamerica* (1882\_1932). In addition to Dudley Fits who utilized it in his *Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Poetry* of 1942. Thus, both writers from different regions mean the period reacted to modernism.

Unlike them Arnold Toynbee’s *A Study of History*, the concept here means a new historical cycle in western civilization around the fifties. Furthermore, Irving Howe and Horry Levin are considered as the first to introduce the concept as a movement different from modernism. (Ihab Hassan, toward the concept of postmodrnism)

## **I. 1. Definition of Postmodernism**

The question would be always raised is whether we are aware and know what is postmodernism. At first, it is regarded as a “theory against all theories”. A human condition play a crucial role in shaping such movement. It is, as any other movement, cannot be simply understood without being foregrounded on philosophical thoughts. In order to set clear boundaries to postmodernism, one should grounded it on modernist movement as a starting point. Most thinkers who defined postmodernism set a kind of comparison between modernist values and aesthetic techniques such as Hutcheon,

Jameson, Jenks, and McHale (Bran Nicole, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*).

However, Bran Nicole argues that it is more workable to compare postmodernism to realism because the crucial point between postmodernism and modernism is simply about dominant elements. Patricia Waugh, as well, believes that post modernity is synonymous to fictionality, while modernism is almost equivalent to consciousness. Fictionality for her inquires the relationship between language and the fictional world along with the real one. This is why he claims that postmodernism is against realism rather than modernism. owing to the fact that writers always seek to fictionalize the world unlike realists.

## **I. 2. The Emergence of Postmodernism**

It is a common sense that postmodernism has emerged either as a reaction to, emerged of, or merely as a superseding to a movement before it. According to Nicole it is not just compared to periods preceded it rather periods and movements. Postmodernism exemplifies the movement that would be placed within all the assumptions to be taken into consideration, it does not sharply break with modernism.

Initially, postmodernism came as a reaction to modernism. It sought to change the view of modernists toward the world. The modernist writers tend to be objective in their interpretations of the world around. 1900 was the industrial time where people were materialists and depended on concrete things. They were also fascinated. Because of colonialism and the feeling of being attached to one another, they perceived the truth as being universal and single.

As it is mentioned before, postmodernism does not sharply break with modernism. in effect it just steps forward with modernist beliefs, ideas, and themes. An

example of such continuation is simply when postmodernists endeavour to develop the theme of alienation to a more one's alienation from his own thoughts and feelings. This theme would take the movement step forward. Jean- François Lyotard, describes in his work *the postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, the society that exists after modernism and sets the condition that marks the end of modernism. In his work as well, he criticizes the enlightenment thinkers.

What leads to the emergence or the shift to postmodernism is the same as it is mentioned before "the dominant". Special dominant in any given text is what helps the reader or even writers to determine whether it is postmodern text. An instances of such elements are self-reflexivity of the text, the critique developed out of the text, and the involvement of the reader within the text to be interpreted as Brian McHale explained. He was the one who introduces this concept to make a distinction between modernism and postmodernism. He borrows it from the Russian formalist theorist Roman Jakobson (Bran Nicole, *The Cambridge Introduction To Postmodern Fiction*). The quest here is not on the techniques themselves rather in the degrees that are used in text such as the evolvement of the reader was used before, but what is decisive in this case is the context of postmodern ear that helps in making those techniques more dominant.

### **I. 3. Theorists' Views on the Shift Move**

The shift from modernism to post modernism did not happen suddenly, yet it is a smooth and gradual move solely like Anton Pokrivak summarizes:

*The shift from modernism to postmodernism is understood as the shift within ontology from determinacy to indeterminacy of being, from transcendence to immanence, from symbol to allegory, from the world of ideology to the world play. (qtd.in Hassan, The Postmodern Turn)*

As if he provides us with the core points that changed from modernism to postmodernism. He first states that people even start to question within themselves the world outside. In addition, the sceptic view toward the universe and nothing is any more an absolute. Public now do not look for what is transcended rather what is present and concrete. Moreover, nothing could be logic as everything depended on perspectives.

The same idea actually was discussed by Brian McHale. He sees that the shift from modernism to postmodernism was the shift from epistemology to ontology. According to him, postmodern writers tend to seek the nature of literature and its problematic relation to real world, which was raised in three levels: ontology of literature, ontology of reality, and the relationship between literature and reality. He came up with such ideas and strengthened them through close reading and comprehension to Foucault's structuralism, semiotics discussed by Eco as well as Bakhtinian criticism. (Santiago Juan-Navarro, archival reflections, 23, 24)

He defines postmodernism as a "discursive construction and not a category with empirical value". This idea was found in Ihab Hassan's critics, who is considered as the first critic to discuss postmodernism from a literary view. McHale believes that such a claim is a kind of continuation of modernism as well as he sheds light on the idea how this movement is heterogeneous and collects different disciplines within (ibid, 19\_20). It is a miscellaneous one for its writers belong to different ideologies among which communists, socialists, architects... at first. In addition, for it is built upon paradoxes. Postmodern discourse is considered as a heterogeneous, because it avoids dichotomized concepts that of modernism. (Steinar Kvale, 6)

However, Jameson perceives such a shift came as a response to institutionalized modernism (ibid.27). He relates postmodernism to the period that witnesses social and

economic changes rather than spots it merely as a style. Moreover, he refers the postmodern time or emergence to post war times that took place in US. In other words, he means the period that is known as neo-colonialism. It is known that postmodernist writers concentrate on aesthetic in fact they try to analyse a “late capitalist cultural condition of postmodernity” (Christopher butler, 3). This kind of relation to economical field led Jameson to define postmodernism as “cultural logic of late capitalism”. It means the shift move is made the industrial age to age of information. Then, he believes that this change has resulted in the emergence of hyperreality, where simulation was replaced by reality. Besides to the inability of the conscious mind to distinguish between reality from simulation of reality. Baudrillard and his theory or postmodern concept simulacra (1981) also highlighted this idea.

John Barth, on the other hands, states that “postmodern fiction took a more nihilistic stance in portraying the random of indeterminacy of events and meaningless actions, projecting an epistemological scepticism later articulated in postmodern theory” (qtd.in Ihab Hassan). Thus postmodernism is a movement that is based on scepticism, relativism, and logocentricism<sup>1</sup>. First, it believes that objective truth is impossible to be reached. As it is mentioned before every was questioned during that era and everything was based on relativism. Instead of the truth we have perspectives. Thus, those perspectives limit what is epistemology. This was resulted from the wars especially the Second World War, which is considered as a turning point for humans; hence, this was reflected on literature and eventually it was hard to writers to keep on modernist values and beliefs. The working example of such turn is found in both works of Warhol and Mark

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<sup>1</sup> "Logocentrism" is a term coined by the German philosopher Ludwig Klages in the 1920s. It refers to the tradition of Western science and philosophy that regards words and language as a fundamental expression of an external reality. It holds the logos as epistemologically superior and that there is an original, irreducible object which the logos represents. It, therefore, holds that one's presence in the world is necessarily mediated. According to logocentrism, the logos is the ideal representation of the Platonic ideal.

Kastabi. Both state that there is no simple truth. Thus, no single theory or even one aesthetic form. (Best and Kellner, *The Postmodern Turn*)

Jean-François Lyotard in his work: *postmodern condition: a report to knowledge*. He could simply provide us with a clear precise definition. He declares that, “simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives.” He confirms that metanarratives are incredible, thus lacking authenticity. As a movement, it breaks the differences between science, art, and morality. Lyotard highlights that postmodern scientific knowledge cannot be based on performativity, because efficiency must be calculated based on stable system. In other words, it is meant that knowledge is about changing, adopting, and generating new ideas, and not depend on stable facts. According to Lyotard, relying on small narratives or what he also labels it “language games”. The latter means there is a form of language simpler than language itself. Last mentioned ideas limited the context in which there are clearly defined rules to help understanding behaviour. Lyotard’s work describes the society that exists after modernism and sets the condition that marks the end of modernism.

Linda Hutcheon one of the major theorist of postmodern fiction suggests that postmodernism in 21th century is, “A thing of the past because it has become fully Institutionalized it has its canonized texts, its Ontologies, primers and readers, its dichotomies and its histories.” (qtd in. Bran Nicole)

Hutcheon sheds light on very crucial point in this movement among which is history. It already tackled before that post modernism questions everything. In addition, this is considering as shared point between postcolonialism and postmodernism. Both tries to find truth and this what led eventually to the emergence of new types of writers who are known as ethnicities.

For Eco, Jenks, and Hutcheon postmodernism is a self-reference genre, which reflects to itself through the use of parody and irony. Besides, to the use of metafiction, which is seen as a reminder that is a mere fiction not a mirror reflection of the world, but just a collection of multiple images and stories in one text. The latter is known as pastiche. It is a postmodern device used to collect multiple ideas from different sources and paste them together. (ibid)

Postmodern writers unlike modernists never try to be innovative rather they see creativity because of such device. John Barth stresses on this idea in his essay “the literature of exhaustion”. He declares that there is a kind of creativity in the use of old forms. He responds to the one who sees it as plagiarism, rather it is a modification by using the linguistic and textual play. For him originality and authenticity are undermined. This is achieved through different techniques such as intertextuality. Julia Kristeva, who revised the theory of dialogic text by Bakhtin, has coined that concept. Together state that authors are never original but from already existing texts.

The other crucial and most useful device is historiographic metafiction. Hutcheon introduced it. She came up with it after a critical studies of Foucault’s discourse of power, Fredrick Jameson (1989), Hayden White, Lindenberger. All of them have talked about how people cannot any more trust history since it imposes a false teleology. Thus, historiographic metafiction is a technique used to tell history through fiction, when one cannot even distinguish between events and its narration. This device symbolizes postmodernism. This is another feature of postmodernism; it is on one hand a self-reflexive and on the other a record of history. This eventually leads to undermine any sense of subjectivity.

Literature during realism was a mere description of the world outside and most writers were considered as business men. They used to write to have money; thus it was considered as source of living. Nevertheless, at the time modernism writers elevated the level of literature and made it some how difficult to be read through the use of intertextuality, allusion, paradoxes and so on. This came as a result of changes happened on different fields. Economically, there was industrial revolution. Politically, there exist the end of imperialism and the emergence of colonialism. Socially was a result of previous mentioned factors the clear aspect of it was the beginning of social classes. Before also there were found women used to write under male nicknames because they were segregated. However, these changes with postmodernism for instance women got their rights and became more liberated, and this is clearly in that era. The experience of writers as soldiers was present in postmodern writers. Postmodernism is known as the literature of the “re” because it reconstructing, requesting the past and everything in the universe.

## **II. Utopia to Dystopia**

For thousands of years, man’s ultimate goal is to have a perfect world. A world where there is no hunger, prejudice, wars, and no unhappiness. The question that would manifest itself is whether this dream comes to true or it is just the vice versa. This free and organized world is known as utopic one; while the other world is labelled as a dystopic one. Thus, utopia<sup>2</sup> and dystopia are considered as antonyms; then they cannot exist in the same place and time. However, these two concepts are relatives and not absolutes, and one leads to the emergence of the other.

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<sup>2</sup> In 1516, Sir Thomas More introduced the word utopia for the first time in his work imaginary perfect island Utopia. The roots of such word are from the Greek word “ou- topos”, which means “no place” or “nowhere”. However, its original name is “eu- topos” which means the good place. In literature refers to the description of society where everything is organized perfectly. The writers usually attempt to highlight or imagine a society in which government is honest, peoples are happy, and everyone is tolerant and safe. They portray their world as paradise on the earth. The utopian novel is mainly political, social, and philosophical. The most famous utopic novels are Plato’s The Republic (360 - 370 BC), More’s Utopia (1516), and New Atlantis by Sir Francis Bacon (1627)

## II. 1. Science Fiction and Dystopian Literature

In a postmodern context, it is not that obvious to have definite and clear definition for such concept “science fiction”, however, it can be defined as a fiction based on imagination and involved future scientific or technological inventions as well as space and the unknown are portrayed. Thus, what relates science fiction and dystopia fiction or literature?

The two genres are mismatched. It is important to recognize dystopian fiction as a sub-genre category of science fiction. However, not all science fiction novels are necessarily dystopias. Michael Solana of Wired claims that in science fiction novels, man uses technology, which eventually causes a disruption of societies in particular and the whole world in general. Hence, such combination leads many people to believe that the reason behind dystopian societies, in which there is more and more of despair and disillusionment, is the advancement of technology. “This is where the combination of these genres can overlap and cause confusion and even panic in a reader” (Science Fiction and Dystopia). Though both genres are similar, science fiction to some extent is independent of dystopia. Science fiction is more about unreal situations unlike dystopian one. Science fiction is not about future, but is about a cultural anxieties and observation of present government and society. Then, dystopian fiction is classified as a science fiction.

Nevertheless, dystopia is different from apocalyptic genre<sup>3</sup>, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic one. It is set mostly in real settings. Writers of such genre are trying to

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<sup>3</sup> **Apocalyptic literature**, literary [genre](#) that foretells supernaturally inspired cataclysmic events that will transpire at the end of the world. A product of the Judeo-Christian tradition, apocalyptic [literature](#) is characteristically pseudonymous; it takes narrative form, employs [esoteric](#) language, expresses a pessimistic view of the present, and treats the final events as [imminent](#).

depict reality with common men characters, who have struggles in their lives. Thus, it is a kind of warning of what may happen in the future out of present conditions. (ibid)

## **II. 2. The Nature of Dystopia**

Dystopia as a word traced back to the ancient Greek terminology that is understood for “bad” and “place” (dys and topos in order). Thus, as a term suggest, it is used to describe the unfavourable world. (The Nature of Dystopia)

In 1740s, the historian George Claeys coined the word dystopia. He entitled his work in a shrewd new study “Dystopia: A Natural History”. According to his work, dystopia can be seen as apocalyptic, or post-apocalyptic, but it is or it has to be anti-utopian. This refers to a world in which people tries to create or build a republic of perfection; however they end up creating a republic of misery. The dystopian novel, hence, emerged as response to the first utopian novel *looking backward* (1880), which talked about a socialist utopia during 2000.

If utopias believe in progress dystopias do not. Moreover, if the first offer promises dystopias set forth warnings. For instance, *the time machine* (1895) introduces a machine ruling people; while in *when the sleeper awakes* (1899) presents a world in which people are enslaved by propaganda. Thus, the reason behind dystopian world is utopia itself. Utopia is a kind of planned society ruled and organized according to certain rules, which is disastrous, and that is why utopia contains dystopia. This is why almost all dystopian novels are notably a critique to political practices; critique as well for planned societies that are taking the form of political parables. This is clearly explained in Atwood saying (1980s), “it’s a sad commentary on our age that find dystopias a lot easier to believe in than utopias we can only imagine, dystopias we have already had”(A Golden Age For Dystopian Fiction). Dystopia reflects a world of despair; such type of novels are

pessimistic about technology, economy, and politics. They claim that we are dying slowly of “stupidity”. (ibid)

## **II. 3. The Evolution of Dystopian Literature/Novel**

Dystopian literature has been a vessel for a political commentary dating back to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dystopian novel is considered as a subgenre of science fiction. As a genre, it emerged thanks to Thomas More’s *Utopia* where he suggested the perfect world to live in. In this vein, the dystopian stories were emerged to highlight the features of totalitarian government which has a total control over its citizens. These stories are considered as a popular warning over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As a starting point, *Brave New World* defines dystopia as “an imagined society or state of affairs in which conditions are extremely bad, especially in which these conditions result from the continuation of some current trend to an extreme”(brief history of the dystopian novel). More’s book pushed both dystopian fiction and communism. Among the most famous writers, who took the lead in writing such genre, is G.H Well. His work *The Time Machine* (1895) portrayed a world that became distinctly darker with the appearance of another post-human race. This book is based on Darwin’s theory of evolution; in addition to his interests in social classes or Marx’s theory.

*The Iron Heel* (1906) made an assumption out of criticizing their present London and predicted London’s way of life and society on 27<sup>th</sup> century. This was the same as Brian Aldiss explained in his *Billion Year Spree*. For him, the novel demonstrates that, “London has no real vision of the future his future is just the present and past, only move so” (ibid).

Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* (1920) is considered as the birth of modern dystopia. With this novel, dystopia was redefined. It used this genre as a political commentary; it also

expanded on the theme of personal discovery. It shed light on the importance of art in dystopian literature, as well. Within this novel, the totalitarian government banned any kind of thinking, emotions, and individuality. These ideas came because of his participation in the Bolshevik revolution; moreover, he was sent to exile in Europe. For his ideas were so strong, it did not translated to Russian language until 1950s and did not released until the fall of the Soviet Union.

Thanks to the emergence of communism and socialism in Europe, many dystopian novels have seen the light. On top of these novels is Huxley's *Brave New World*. Huxley's work was based on Well's work. Katherine Burdekin's *Swastika* depicted Hitler's Nazism. She clearly criticized how Hitler is idolized, and at the same time she believed, that he is the reason behind wars in Europe and in the entire world. Through the protagonist, people understood how do the world is fabricated by authoritative, which made them even saw Hitler as an idolized, Caucasian god-like figure.

Moreover, the dystopian novel is addressed to young readers. For instance, Lois Lowery's *The Giver* (1993) is directed to high and middle school students. Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* is another good example, where Katniss is forced to fight against other children to survive. Thus, it is considered as a "ritualistic lesson against rebellion".

All mentioned novels above share the same theme, which is criticizing society from different aspects: politics, religion, technology... thus it is obvious that the source of dystopian genre is socialism, science, technology, and social acceptance.(ibid)

Thanks to Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, dystopian literature established a clear identity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As any other literary genre, dystopian genre has evolved as society has changed. The focus on politics in dystopian genre is due to political corruptions in the world; it also focused on self-identity. "the new generation of dystopian literature

provides an interest example of the evolution of literature of the literature with society”( dystopian fiction: an introduction).

One can conclude that these type of novels have something in common is warning. “dystopian literature contains works that have a chilling kernel of truth to them, and act as a cautionary tale for astute readers”( brief history of the dystopian novel).

## **II. 4. Dystopian Novel (Definition and Characteristics)**

Dystopia can be defined as, “a futuristic, imaginary universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system” (readwritethink). According to this quotation, dystopia is any unfavourable place to be in. these bad conditions is clearly portrayed in novels of such genre.

Dystopian society/novel has definite features. Any dystopian novel contains propaganda; it uses to control the citizens. Thoughts, freedom, information is banned. Citizens are under constant surveillance. They live in a dehumanized condition, and fear of the world outside. The protagonist, also, feels trapped. For him, something is went wrong; then he tries to question the existing political and social system. Eventually, he struggles to escape of such terrible world.

Furthermore, there are different types of dystopian control. Corporate control refers to control of media in terms of consumerism. Incompetent government controls society, this type is known as a Bureaucratic one. Technological control is where society is

controlled by technology as robots. Finally, philosophical or religious control, this type controls people through certain beliefs or philosophical ideas as myth. (ibid)

The conflict in literature is, clearly, highlighted in such novels to show certain control. Man against society takes always the lead. Society plays the role of antagonist working against protagonists aims and desires. society often has a great oppression on man; this oppression is exemplified in a totalitarian government. This eventually resulting in limiting their liberties.

Nevertheless, the question of dystopia is relative. What is dystopian society for one person maybe utopian for other one. Dystopia is determined by one's point of view. For instance, if the government banned reading some may consider this as limiting of freedom; while for others, who are not interested in reading, it is nothing. The same thing can be applied to intellectual thinking, love, marriage, freedom from surveillance, and so on and so forth.

Hence, almost all kinds of seem at first as utopias, but in fact they are dystopia, or at least transformed to be dystopian one; because society always favours B over A. then thy find out that B is actually distracting their life. Eventually, such novels are trying to send message, that we may live in a dystopian world and we are not even aware of it. Dystopias, as a conclusion, are often used as a cautionary tales. The best dystopia is what tackles issues that would help humans to be humans, and explained what is meant by being part of a big civilization. (Dystopian Fiction: An Introduction)

To sum up all what has been discussed on dystopia; it is described as,

*Dystopia used to be a fiction of resistance; it's Become a fiction of submission, the fiction of an untrusting, lonely, and sullen twenty-first century, the fiction of fake news and infowars, the fiction of helplessness. It cannot imagine a better future, and it doesn't ask anyone to bother to make one. It nurses grievances and Indulges resentments; it doesn't call for courage it finds that cowardice suffices. Its only admonition is: despair more. It appeals to both the left and the Right, because, in the end, it requires so little by way Of literary, political, or moral imagination, asking only That you enjoy the company of the people who has fear of the aligns comfortably with your own. Left or right, the radical pessimism of a remitting dystopianism has left itself contributed to the unravelling of the liberal state and the weakening of a commitment to political pluralism. (The New Yorker)*

### **III. Literature as a Social Therapy**

The idea of art for art's sake has been almost removed from the academic literary spheres since 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most postmodern writers<sup>4</sup> who happen to fall under the genre of dystopian fiction believe in the role of literature as being more than makes something just beautiful for the sake of being beautiful. The use of literature as a means to fix the flows of the postmodern world. This idea has been proved by various critiques and through multiple arguments. For instance the role of literature between past and postmodern era, the relation between literature and society, as well as psychology.

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<sup>4</sup> Major dystopian postmodernists' writers are William Golden, Margaret Atwood, Ray Bradbury, and George Orwell.

### **III. 1. Literature's Role since Victorian Era**

Art for art's sake was the slogan of 19<sup>th</sup> century literature. This slogan was borrowed from the French motto "l'art pour l'art". It means that art needed no justification, and that it needs to serve no purpose. The beauty of art was the only thing that was adopted and needed to be discussed; no other thing is tackled. On the top of the writers who believed in and used this slogan is Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Such writers as Walter Pater and his followers led the English aesthetic movement which was founded against Victorian moralism. Their works asserted that there was no connection between art and morality. They believed that such writings provided pleasure, but did not convey a moral or sentimental message. They refused John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold's concept of art as a moral or useful thing. Art for art's sake was clearly declared, and played a major role in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture Of Dorian Grey*. (Art for art's sake)

### **III. 2. Postmodernism and Art for Art's Sake**

Many events changed the world's overview in multiple fields, which was clearly reflected in literature. Among these events were the two big wars, the suffrage movement, and the great depression. A new vision appeared such as the idea that the world was not going to be better but worse mainly because of the scientific and technological advancement and their disastrous effects on population. On the artistic level a new cultural movement emerged against the aesthetic movement. It was known as Dadaism. Dadaists believed that modernist beliefs on the purposelessness of art has just failed. This, hence, influenced others, which resulted in emerging new artistic styles and movements as Surrealism. (ibid)

Art for art's sake has lost its brightness because art is no more seen as a purposeless, but it has increasingly become a part of public life; for instance informing and

advertising what is happening in the world to members of society. This eventually has raised a new perspective on the role of the artist in society. He is no more the source of beauty, yet he is trying to make things seem beautiful out of chaotic world in order to raise a kind of awareness among common people. (“New World Encyclopedia”, 2016)

### **III. 3. The Role of Dystopian Literature in Fixing Society**

As it is mentioned before the dystopian literature is mainly the genre that clearly rejected first the idea of the art in general and literature in specific is used just for the sake of being art or beautiful. In this respect, dystopian literature comes to question whether the idea of good or perfect society is correct. Therefore, dystopias teach us that there is no existence for such perfect world. They believe that whenever one forces himself to have a perfect world, he will just end up in a dystopian one; because such perfectness leads people to lose their free will, independence, and freedom. It, moreover, teaches us that ordinary people will make a difference. Through this, they are trying to send a clear image to population, which is always try to do something to change your conditions to be better. In addition, this comes just through a kind of awareness, which is, eventually, the role of literature in general and the dystopian genre in particular. (Psychology Today, 2018)

### **III. 4. The Psychological Effects of Fiction on Society and Individuals**

The question that manifests itself is does fiction build the morality of the individual and so society or just it breaks down. To answer this one should follow what fiction did to society since its early stages. Plato for instance believed that fiction would break his ideal republic; thus, he banned fiction.

Nevertheless, according to social ecology<sup>5</sup> studies, books have the capacity to make a better society. Social ecologists stated that dystopian writers focused on studies in depth in either psychology, criminology, ecology, sociology or all of them. Such knowledge is taken into consideration to create a plot that addresses such issues in attempting to find solutions. It was proved that books have such capacity and powerful enough to change societies for instance *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe<sup>6</sup>. Her book could change society's view about slavery and transformed the overall American point of view. The same thing can be applied to George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* which affected people's views on government and politics.

Another question can be asked is how could pieces of writing fix society's problems. Keith Oatley answered this question. He believed that stories create empathy for their lead characters. Because of their struggles, the reader started to share their experiences and place it in their real world; thus their affection is more than of the non-fiction one. He, hence, tested his assumption on Anton Chekhov's<sup>7</sup> story: *The Lady with the Dog*. He introduced the story to a set of readers; he then changed the plot of a story to a document entry as if it was a real story and gave it to other group of readers. After that, he studied both groups' reactions before and after they read. The ones read the original story have an emotional reaction; moreover, they were acting the same as the story's characters; he also witnessed a change in their personality unlike the others.

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<sup>5</sup> Founded by activist Murray Bookchin, social ecology is an approach to society that embraces an ecological, reconstructive, and communitarian view on society.

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe was an author and social activist best known for her popular anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

<sup>7</sup> Russian writer Anton Chekhov is recognized as a master of the modern short story and a leading playwright of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Professors and psychologists as David Rapp and Richard Gerrig just did the same study as Oatley. They, eventually, discovered that such readers' reaction is very similar toward characters as with their families or friends. They created their own perspectives and expectations about character's behaviour based on what they know about them.

Oatley summed the psychological power of fiction of reader and society in general in his saying, ". . . reading fiction improves understanding of others, and this has a very basic importance in society, not just in the general way of making the world a better place by improving interpersonal understanding, but in specific areas such as politics, business, and education. In an era when high-school and university subjects are evaluated economically, our results do have economic implications" ("psychology today", 2018). For Oatley fiction is very important for making society a better place. He emphasized on the fact that just reading not even criticism or analysis is very important. For him who reads is going to make change in his society. Reading did not just affect or change the individual perspective, as he declared "interpersonal understanding" i.e. referring to the coexistence and understanding politics, business, and education. For him fiction summed up society with all its different angles. Thus, people would have an overall idea of what is happening around them, even if it is not in their domain or at their age and then they would know the best way to respond to any problem confronted them just through comparing their real experience to the one written in fiction.

In sum, fiction changes people's perception of the world. Fiction in general has the power to change people's personalities. Then, it has a great role in changing society in either good or bad way. Nevertheless, writers are having a goal, which is fixing society's problems through presenting it to the surface.

Psychologists believe in a new idea, which is perspective taken or experience-taken. Both Geoff Kaufman and Lisa Libby (2012) who proposed such term. Experience taking is more radical than perspective taking. The latter refers to the notion of having an idea of what may other person is thinking about; while the first refers to a kind of merging with other person's not only thoughts and beliefs, but also his state of being. For instance empathy, which is day-to-day life example. In this vein, Kauffman and Libby explained this through the notion of experience taking. They carries out that, "readers simulate the events of a narrative as though they were a particular character in the story world, adopting the character's mind set and perspective as the story progresses rather than orienting themselves as an observer or evaluator of the character . . . the greater the ability of a reader to simulate the subjective experience of a character\_ the greater the potential that story has to change the reader's self-concept, attitudes, ad behaviour" (ibid).

They believe that the more the reader put himself within the new character's choes, the more they adopt new self-concept, attitudes and even behaviour. Thus, the readers are not just passive observers of the events of the plot, but they simulate or imitate the characters that affected them most eventually; they have almost the same way of thinking if this isn't the case, they will change in one way or another.

To prove so, they presented a story to students. They were given a good information on the protagonist's actions, thoughts, and beliefs. The students were divided into to groups, and each group was also divided to other sub-groups. The first experiment focused on how students, as readers, thought of themselves as individuals and how much their individual consciousness would affect their experience- taking. The results showed that their individual experience more than the experience- taking. In the second experiments, sub- group were asked to think of themselves as only average student no matter of their background as they read the story; however, the others read the story

without any instructions. The results, hence, were more experience-taking showed in the first than the second. In the third experiment, some other students were asked to read the story in a cubicle that had mirrors in it; while the others were put in one without mirrors. The latter group showed less experience-taking. Whereas, they tried to assimilate the last group within the story either by making the protagonist went through the same experience as theirs, or made him African-American and them white and so on. Eventually, the experience taking was increasing. According to experiments, it proved that one might think that he has just one life, but fiction enables us to lead many lives, and to experience different people's personality; hence, he will be many kinds of persons.

### **III. 5. Literature and Society**

René Wellek and Warren in their work *theory of literature* saw literature as a social institution, where language is its social creation. They went further to define that literature is merely the representation of life, where life is a social reality. It is a common sense that a poet or a writer is a member of society. Then, he is presenting something happening around him in his real life; thus, literature itself has arisen with a particular social institution. Literature has a social function or use more than individuals do. In order to come up with approximately a clear definition of literature, one should have a good look at society, because simply what composes literature is only the experience watched by the writer in any given society.

In this vein, many attempts have been made to check the influence of society on literature and to judge the position of literature in society. The latter study concern refers to the sociological approach to literature. Different philosophers, who were interested in such relationship between literature and society, cultivated this approach. On the top of which, is the Marxist critics. They didn't just study the relation between the two fields, but they

tried to define the conception of what these relations should be, both of them either in present or future “classless” society. They concluded that such relation between society and implications of author’s work, it did not only refer to be statement of literature and society, but prophets of the future.

Such relation was clearly discussed by de Boland. He stated that, “literature is an expression of society”. In any piece of writing three components are always present: the sociology of the writer, the social content of the works themselves, and the influence of literature on society. A writer as a member of society, he can be studied and considered as a social being; thus, “the social allegiance, attitude, and ideology of a writer can be studied not only in his writings but also, frequently, in biographical extra-literary documents. The writer has been a citizen, has pronounced on questions of social and political importance has taken part in the issues of his time” (97). This declares the high relationship between literature and society. For them, the biography of the writer plays a major role in interpreting his text and the problem, which he wants to raise to the surface. His ideology and allegiance are very important in the way he is treating the problem, because It may be seen as a problem for him; while for other writers as not a big deal.

This changed has occurred, because reading is no more restricted to elites. As Leavis points out that, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century only peasants were allowed to read what university men read, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there existed books for nine to ten year-olds, books for boys of high school age, books for those, who “lived alone” .thus, “ study of the economic basis of literature and the social status of the writer is inextricably bound up with a study of the audience he addresses and upon which he is depend financially” ( theory of literature, 99).

One of the basis of such relation is that they have a mutual one as Wellek and Warren stated, “the writer is not only influenced by society; he influences it. Art not merely reproduces life but also shapes it. People may model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines” (102). This quote has concluded all that writers and art are not purposeless rather it has a major role in changing our society. Writers are not working in vain, but they has a mission, which is stimulated by society just for society itself as if they are in circular chain one affects the other and the other eventually affects the first and so on.

Moreover, it is hypothesized that young readers are more affected than the old ones. Young readers “take literature more naively as transcript rather than interpretation of life” (theory of literature, 102).

Literature and society are twins that cannot be separated. Literature is considered as a record as Thomas Warton, the first real historian of English poetry, argues that, “Literature has the peculiar merit of faithfully recording the features of the times, and of preserving the most picturesque and expressive representation on manners” (qtd.in 103). He assumes that literature is the reference for history and civilization, among such great works are Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, which offered a complete survey of social types and Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives of Windsor*. In this respect, Marxist’s “sociology of knowledge” can be seen as a good interpretation for such relation. This was highly discussed by others as Freud, Nietzsche, and Pareto. All explained the social implications of a writer’s works, and how literature influences the social changes as Sorkin argues that the degree of integration differs from society to another. (94-102)

### III. 5. a. Sociology of Literature

Sociology of literature is a specialized area of study that tries to study the relation between literary work and the social structure in which it is created. It releases that the social institution determines the existence of any literary work, where it was found. This field, also, highlighted the relationship between a literary phenomenon and social structure. The sociological study of literature proves that is highly important to understand the socioeconomic situations, political issues, the worldview, and the creativity of the writers.

It seems that literature and sociology are two different and distinct areas of study; however, they share similar “conspectus”. Sociology provides us with a scientific description of certain phenomenon of the entire social structure. Nevertheless, literature, as an integral part of society, it did not just describe and analyse society, but it sets forth and shows how men and women feel about any social experience. Haggard believed that, “without the full literary witness the student of society will be blind to the fullness of society” (qtd.in sociology of literature, 650-653). Based on Haggard’s view, literature and society just complete each other. Through such complementary, sociology of literature has seen light to study the relationship between these two fields. This kind of study has emerged since Plato. He is considered among the first critics to discuss certain relationship. He has raised the question about social implications of literature. Besides, to de Boland’s Marxism who believed that literature is an “expression of society”. Besides to Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*, Karl Marx, and Frederic Engles. All these had made a valuable contribution in sociological criticism; they saw literature as “economic infrastructure of society” (ibid).

Furthermore, the humanistic approach stated that literature played a great role in society. Its pioneers proved this. For instance Richards declared that literature or its critics is considered as a healer; for him, the critic is as much concerned with the health of the mind as the doctor with the health of the body. Dr. Leavis the founder of the school claimed that critic has the function of transmitting the text to the reader and try to simplify it and make it more understandable. However, Matthew Arnold elevated literature to rank of religion and saw critics as the priests. For them, literary texts provide traditions that can oppose or at best reverse the decline that occurs at the level of ethics and values.

## **Conclusion**

Eventually, this chapter discussed three major components of this project in their specific details. Postmodernism as an era or context to this work. It is been proved what is postmodernism as “theory against all theories”, besides to its major theorists. Dystopian literature took the second place in relation to postmodernism. Eventually the core of this research was discussed in tackling how literature is a social therapy. All these were discussed in isolation; in order to pave the way to the second chapter. Where it will be shown the relation between these bid concepts and the case study. Hence, this chapter is considered to be the platform by which we pave the way to other discussions.

## **Chapter II**

### **Postmodernism and Dystopia in**

*Fahrenheit 451* (1953)

## Introduction

It is not that surprising to claim the existence of postmodernism and dystopian genre. However, what is missing is the reflection of such big concepts in literature to one of the controversial works. To this end, this chapter will set forth the discussion that is concerned with the novel: *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Consequently, the following chapter contains the historical background in which epoch this novel was written and what circumstances shaped the plot. In order to understand why Ray Bradbury chooses such characters, events, and themes. Did he allude to anything? As we have seen in the first chapter that there existed no writer who wrote just for the sake of writing. Nonetheless, as Peter Brook<sup>8</sup> suggested that art is a vehicle; taking into consideration that literature is art. After one sheds light on the most important events in shaping the plot of the story; then the second part will be tackling the postmodern elements and characters that are manifested and made this story a postmodern one. Eventually comes the right time to discuss how this novel is a dystopian one. This part will discuss the major features and elements of a dystopian genre presented in Bradbury's work. All these set of ideas are, absolutely, based on what was mentioned in the previous chapter. Thus, this chapter contains three main parts. The historical background or the contextualization of the novel takes the first place. Secondly, the analysis on how *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) is a postmodern work. And subsequently, the last part will present Bradbury's work as a dystopian fiction, how this work is classified to be a dystopian genre.

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Brook, in full Peter Stephen Paul Brook, (born March 21, 1925, London, England), English producer-director of Shakespeare's plays whose daring productions of other dramatists' works contributed significantly to the development of the 20th century's avant-garde stage.

## **I. Events, People, and Ideas That Influenced Ray Bradbury To Write *Fahrenheit 451*(1953)**

As de Boland stated that, “literature is the expression of society” (qtd in. Wellek and Warren 95). In addition, the writer’s work is to reflect what happening in his society either to find social solutions or just to express their views and ideas. This is the same what happens with Bradbury when he decided to wrote this novel. He was affected by different circumstances politically and socially speaking. This work mainly was the reflection of fifties as it was published in 1953. During fifties, a set of events changed the American features of society, which is clearly reflected in the present work. Three main events that characterized the fifties: televisions, McCarthyism, and the cold war.

### **I. 1. Transition from Radio to Television**

During fifties, U.S witnessed a radical change in multiple levels of society. First, Americans moved from farming to white-collar jobs. This resulted in emerging new styles of life among which was the rise of consumerism<sup>9</sup>, suburban living, automobile culture, and conformity. The reason behind this new way of life is the advertisement of televisions. One of the most popular products in fifties was T.V. the result was that we had T.V families, who spent a large amount of time in front of T.V. They used to sit together chatting or listening to radio, yet, during fifties, they follow more than one program and real shows such as I Love Lucy<sup>10</sup>. They were addicted to such illusions. The other reason is

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<sup>9</sup> Consumerism is an economic theory which states that a progressively greater level of consumption is beneficial to the consumers.

Since the 1800s and the Industrial Revolution the world has been consuming at a higher rate than ever. The Revolution allowed products to be available in enormous quantities for the first time in history. Because of their unheard of low cost, products were basically made available to all. This unlimited access led to the era of Mass Consumption. It soon grew to be expected that people have the latest model of the newest appliance.

<sup>10</sup> I Love Lucy is an American television sitcom starring Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz, Vivian Vance, and William Frawley. The black-and-white series originally ran from October 15, 1951 to May 6, 1957 on CBS. After the series ended in 1957, a modified version continued for three more seasons with 13 one-hour

the baby boom of the fifties. Parents were just trying to keep their children entertained. The baby boom was the prime reason behind the emergence of new culture, which is consumerism. The latter was the reason behind conformity during fifties. It was claimed by Nickles<sup>11</sup> who said, “Household furnishing and appliance purchases climbed 240 percent . . . The median family income rose 30 percent in purchasing power” (qtd in. 123 Helpme).

This kind of conformity emerging in USA during fifties reflected the growing of materialism. It, eventually, resulted in the absence of the American cultural values. Bradbury demonstrates this through Mildred’s materialistic desires when she claims, “ it’s really fun, it will be even more fun when we can afford to have the forth wall installed how long you figure before you save up and get the fourth wall torn out and a fourth wall. T.V put it. It’s only two thousand dollars” (20). Bradbury explains how her desires are not limited. She is never satisfied. She always calls for more materials on the expense of spiritual values. She is an empty woman, a hedonistic<sup>12</sup> one. This purely reflected the women during fifties. It was due to advertisement. Hence, family is replaced by T.V that brainwashes the people. Bradbury believes that this medium is what destroyed American society. As Johnson quotes in “Open Culture”, He described T.V as a medium that “gives you the dates of napoleon, but not who he was, spreading factoids instead of knowledge. They stuff you with so much useless information, you feel full” (qtd in. Open Culture).

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specials; it ran from 1957 to 1960. It was first known as The Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Show and later in reruns as The Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Lee Nickles (born December 6, 1948) is an American politician and lobbyist who was a Republican United States Senator from Oklahoma from 1981 until 2005. He was considered both a fiscal and social conservative. After retiring from the Senate as the longest serving senator from Oklahoma (1981-2003), he founded the Nickles Group, a lobbying firm

<sup>12</sup> The term "hedonism," from the Greek word ἡδονή (hēdonē) for pleasure, refers to several related theories about what is good for us, how we should behave, and what motivates us to behave in the way that we do. All hedonistic theories identify pleasure and pain as the only important elements of whatever phenomena they are designed to describe. If hedonistic theories identified pleasure and pain as merely two important elements, instead of the only important elements of what they are describing, then they would not be nearly as unpopular as they all are. However, the claim that pleasure and pain are the only things of ultimate importance is what makes hedonism distinctive and philosophically interesting.

Ray Bradbury, hence, emphasises on the bad effects of television on population. He, furthermore, claims so throughout *Mildred*. She is clearly addicted to T.V; she believes that the family show is her family. She would lose her husband but not her T.V. the family in soap opera<sup>13</sup> show is more precious than her real one. Here is the description how she is preparing for her shows,

*She was quite obviously waiting for him to go. "I didn't do that, she said. "Never in a billion years." "All right if you say so," he said. That's what the lady said." She turned back to her script. "What's on the afternoon?" he asked tiredly. She didn't look up from script again. "Well, this play comes on wall-to-wall circuit in ten minutes. They mailed me my part this morning . . . (9)*

She never pays attention to her husband, as she is highly concerned if she is going to miss any part from this episode. Her addiction is also reflects in the next scene when she asks Montag when he will put the fourth parlour wall. Although he declares how they are expensive, but she seems careless. She says, "how long you figure before we save up and get the forth wall torn out and a fourth wall- TV put in? It's only two thousand dollars." "That's one-third of my yearly pay." "It's only two thousand dollars," she replied. "And I should think you'd consider me sometimes." (ibid)

She is highly blind and is being brainwashes. She does not care about anything else but her TV walls. Through mainly *Mildred*, Bradbury argues his suspicion of the bad effects of TV an media in general on people. It is a simulation controlled by government to keep people busy and tricked of being full and happy.

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<sup>13</sup> A soap opera is an ongoing, episodic work of fiction presented in serial format on television, radio and in novels, featuring the lives of many characters and focusing on emotional relationships to the point of melodrama. The term soap opera originated from radio dramas being sponsored by soap manufacturers

## I. 2. Cold War

Another major event that featured the American society, during fifties, was the cold war. The cold war was an ideological conflict: communism versus capitalism. It actually begun as a misunderstanding between U.S.A and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R)<sup>14</sup>. The war was without any direct official military confrontation, where each side resembled a threat to the other. It was launched in Yalta conference<sup>15</sup> 1945 and ended with the fall of Berlin wall in 1990. The cold war alliances resembled in NATO<sup>16</sup>, SEATO<sup>17</sup>, Warsaw pact<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Soviet Union, in full Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.), Russian Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik or Sovetsky Soyuz, former northern Eurasian empire (1917/22–1991) stretching from the Baltic and Black seas to the Pacific Ocean and, in its final years, consisting of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (S.S.R.'s): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (now Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya (now Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (now Moldova), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The capital was Moscow, then and now the capital of Russia.

<sup>15</sup> Yalta Conference, (February 4–11, 1945), major World War II conference of the three chief Allied leaders, Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain, and Premier Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union, which met at Yalta in Crimea to plan the final defeat and occupation of Nazi Germany.

<sup>16</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO /'neɪtoʊ/; French: Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord; OTAN), also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between several North American and European countries based on the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949.

<sup>17</sup> Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), regional-defense organization from 1955 to 1977, created by the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty, signed at Manila on Sept. 8, 1954, by the representatives of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The treaty came into force on Feb. 19, 1955. Pakistan withdrew in 1968, and France suspended financial support in 1975. The organization held its final exercise on Feb. 20, 1976, and formally ended on June 30, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> The Soviet Union and seven of its European satellites sign a treaty establishing the Warsaw Pact, a mutual defense organization that put the Soviets in command of the armed forces of the member states.

### I. 3. McCarthyism

Senator Joseph McCarthy<sup>19</sup> was another popular figure during the fifties, who drew a new line in American history. His name became synonymous with the "Red Scare"<sup>20</sup>. His era was characterized by political repression. He manipulated his people through the fear from communism. He made his people believe that they are under conspiracy. He, moreover, established an institution: House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)<sup>21</sup>. This institution was used to arrest anyone who was suspected to spy for Soviets. Most of these were writers, publishers and producers. Among the one arrested was the writer Arthur Miller.

In relation to the novel, aspects of communism and rules of McCarthyism are reflected in Montag's personal life and work. There is a kind of allegory between Montag's society and McCarthyism in terms of limitation and prisoning of citizens. There is, also, a kind of comparison drawn between Beatty and Senator McCarthy. Furthermore, in both settings, ignorance allows the government to assume power.

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<sup>19</sup> Joseph McCarthy, in full Joseph Raymond McCarthy, (born November 14, 1908, near Appleton, Wisconsin, U.S.—died May 2, 1957, Bethesda, Maryland), U.S. senator who lent his name to the term McCarthyism. McCarthy dominated the U.S. political climate in the early 1950s through his sensational but unproven charges of communist subversion in high government circles. In 1954, in a rare move, his Senate colleagues officially censured him for unbecoming conduct.

<sup>20</sup>A "Red Scare" is promotion of widespread fear by a society or state about a potential rise of communism, anarchism, or radical leftism. The term is most often used to refer to two periods in the history of the United States with this name. The First Red Scare, which occurred immediately after World War I, revolved around a perceived threat from the American labor movement, anarchist revolution and political radicalism. The Second Red Scare, which occurred immediately after World War II, was preoccupied with national or foreign communists infiltrating or subverting U.S. society or the federal government.

<sup>21</sup> The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, investigated allegations of communist activity in the U.S. during the early years of the Cold War (1945-91). Established in 1938, the committee wielded its subpoena power as a weapon and called citizens to testify in high-profile hearings before Congress. This intimidating atmosphere often produced dramatic but questionable revelations about Communists infiltrating American institutions and subversive actions by well-known citizens. HUAC's controversial tactics contributed to the fear, distrust and repression that existed during the anticommunist hysteria of the 1950s. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, HUAC's influence was in decline, and in 1969 it was renamed the Committee on Internal Security. Although it ceased issuing subpoenas that year, its operations continued until 1975.

## **II. *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) as a Postmodern Work**

*Fahrenheit 451* can be labelled as a postmodern novel. At first, it was written after the Second World War, which meant the period or the era of the emergence of postmodernism as a movement, which was characterized by the feeling of loss, disillusionment, and disintegration. Thus, it is considered as a postmodern work since it was written during the era of this movement. Secondly, it manifests, almost, all features of postmodernism. It presents postmodernism thematically and stylistically speaking. Bradbury talked about contemporary themes that reflected postmodern era or fifties in the United States. In order to present such controversially themes, he, as any other postmodern writer, used a new postmodern techniques and literary devices.

### **II. 1. Postmodern Themes in *Fahrenheit 451*(1953)**

Post modernism as a movement was founded up on three main components: relativism, scepticism, and logocentrism. In fact, this what established Bradbury's novel. Relativism, based on Einstein's theory, refers to the idea that there is no absolute truth or reality. However, whether reality, truth, or facts are relative to each person and situation. In the novel, the totalitarian regime tends to manipulate people through conformity and restriction of their freedoms especially the intellectual one. The latter is, however, rebelled by Montag, the story protagonist, when he realizes the bad effects of such restriction. He believes that not everything society or government says is true, yet this is relative and depends on individuals themselves. They have the right to choose what is good or bad for them; even if is set by religion or morals, because they are no more absolute.

For instance, it is an omen for Montag that his wife does not remember their first meeting, while it is not that big deal for her to worry about it. However, it is a big problem if she misses a program on T.V. in the section "The Hearth and the Salamander", Montag

deduced that his wife is ignorant about their life and relationship, “and suddenly she was so strange he couldn’t believe he knew her at all. He was in someone else’s house . . .” (Bradbury 42).

The act of breaking the law itself manifests the postmodern movement. After the questions of Clarisse<sup>22</sup>, he starts doubting everything around him. He strongly believes that what is given to him is not necessarily true or right and this is right the practical side of Baudrillard’s notion of simulation<sup>23</sup> and hyperreality. He stated that people are living in hyperreal world. A world, which is not very real, but just a version of reality, and this what stimulated people. This version seems more real than reality itself. This, eventually, what helps government to control people.

Montag seems to realize such reality that he is tricked by people around him and nothing is an absolute fact anymore. This epiphany<sup>24</sup> caused by Clarisse’s questions especially when she asked, “Are you happy?” (Bradbury, 108). This question is what helps him to be aware of his hyperreal world; this is, also, strengthened through his observation to his wife, whom he discovered that is addicted to T.V, which makes her a silly person.

Postmodernism showed a great disillusionment in the advancement of technology. Bradbury, then, examines the destructive side of technology and dictatorship, which deprived people from any sense of freedom.

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<sup>22</sup> Clarisse McClellan - A beautiful seventeen-year-old who introduces Montag to the world’s potential for beauty and meaning with her gentle innocence and curiosity. She is an outcast from society because of her odd habits, which include hiking, playing with flowers, and asking questions, but she and her (equally odd) family seem genuinely happy with themselves and each other.

<sup>23</sup> Simulacra and Simulation (French: Simulacres et Simulation) is a 1981 philosophical treatise by Jean Baudrillard, in which he seeks to examine the relationships among reality, symbols, and society, in particular the significations and symbolism of culture and media that are involved in constructing an understanding of shared existence. Simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no original to begin with, or that no longer have an original. Simulation is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time.[

<sup>24</sup> Derived from the Greek word epiphaneia, epiphany means “appearance,” or “manifestation.” In literary terms, an epiphany is that moment in the story where a character achieves realization, awareness, or a feeling of knowledge, after which events are seen through the prism of this new light in the story.

Furthermore, he manifests postmodernism through the rejection of grand narratives. The same as Lyotard's catchphrase of postmodernism, which says, "incredulity toward metanarrativity". It is reflected in the novel. Bradbury emphasizes on the idea that facts and ideas provided by government are not always reliable; nevertheless, each single person should doubt such ideas. The latter is shown through Montag, who starts questioning everything and tries to make his own version of understanding and perceiving of things.

## II. 2. Postmodern Styles in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)

The novel contains different postmodern techniques and literary devices such as metafiction<sup>25</sup>. This novel falls under the metafictional types of novel. This technique blurs between fiction and reality. Bradbury argues the importance of books and reading throughout the novel, while he himself a writer of fiction. He is addressing an issue to an audience and at the same time, he is commenting on it. Through using an omniscient narrator in one way and Montag's observation on the other. The latter is also known as a self-reflexive technique<sup>26</sup>, where text reflects itself. This is a core stone technique used by postmodernists. The story talks about itself. Through writer's comments on some events. A good example to clarify so is when Montag asks his wife on the old woman, that burns herself with her books; he says, ". . . for the first time I realized that a man was behind each one of the books . . . it took some man and lifetime maybe to put some of his thoughts down, looking around at the world and life (Bradbury, 25).

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<sup>25</sup> Metafiction occurs in fictional stories when the story examines the elements of fiction itself. For example, a story that explores how stories are made by commenting on character types, how plots are formed, or other aspects of storytelling is engaged in an example of metafiction. Metafiction can be playful or dramatic, but it always forces the reader to think about the nature of storytelling itself and how fictional stories are made.

<sup>26</sup> A term applied to literary works that openly reflect upon their own processes of artful composition. Such self-referentiality is frequently found in modern works of fiction that repeatedly refer to their own fictional status (see metafiction). The narrator in such works, and in their earlier equivalents such as Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), is sometimes called a 'self-conscious narrator'. Self-reflexivity may also be found often in poetry. See also *mise-en-abyme*, romantic irony.

Disintegration and unconventional plot is also another distinct feature of postmodernism. In this novel, the plot starts in the middle, then events go back to the early begging events in Montag's life, when he first met professor Faber. Thus, the writer uses a fragmented plot because the chronological and the traditional plot no more works for any postmodern writer.

The novel, as well, employs irony. For instance, Montag is supposed to be a firefighter, who burns books; he is the saviour by the end. The firefighter, also, is expected to fight fire and save people's life; however, he is just doing the contrary. Eventually, jailed for driving carefully...

One of the most influential theories in postmodernism is deconstructionist approach. This is evident in this book, when Clarisse tells Montag that in he past fireman were supposed to put off fires. Although he knows that and believes that is a questionable thing, he just ignores it.

At last, the other postmodern technique, yet it is a theme more than a technique: paranoia<sup>27</sup>. The sense of paranoia is presented throughout the plot. Montag, for example, is targeted by the Mechanical Hound, his wife betrays him, and his boss tries to lecture him on the bad sides of books. ( International Journal Of Language And Literature, Vol.4)

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<sup>27</sup> the belief that there's an ordering system behind the chaos of the world is another recurring postmodern theme. For the postmodernist, no ordering is extremely dependent upon the subject, so paranoia often straddles the line between delusion and brilliant insight. Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, long-considered a prototype of postmodern literature, presents a situation which may be "coincidence or conspiracy – or a cruel joke".[40] This often coincides with the theme of technoculture and hyperreality. For example, in *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut, the character Dwayne Hoover becomes violent when he's convinced that everyone else in the world is a robot and he is the only human.

### **III. *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) as a Dystopian Novel**

Once one talks about dystopia, the first meaning that comes to his mind, definitely based on the explanations founded in the first chapter, that “dystopia” is the antonym of “utopia”, which means simply the perfect and the imaginative world that is impossible to be existed. Thereby, dystopian world is just the contrary, i.e. a terrible place. In other words, a totalitarian government and dictatorship regime controls the world. This world is manipulated by propagandas, surveillance, and a restriction of citizen’s freedoms. Bradbury’s work is perfectly a good example of a dystopian genre. Almost all elements or features of a dystopian genre is presented clearly in this novel.

#### **III. 1. Propaganda in *Fahrenheit 451*(1953)**

The first sign that shows that this novel is a dystopian one is the horrible place in which Montag lives, which is controlled by propaganda<sup>28</sup>. Propaganda consists of ideas by the government to announce certain ideas to citizens, in order to manipulate such society. This is manifested in the novel, when the protagonist portrayed throughout events in the novel, that books are not useful to people but harmful. Nonetheless, T.V programs are the best way for families to spend a joyful time together, because, simply, they are following the orders of the government, and doing nothing else but what the authoritative power says. In this novel, the government or the institution just does so. They admit that through burning books, they are creating a better place for their society. They destroy different pieces of information to control and manipulate people’s minds and even they control their

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<sup>28</sup> Propaganda is the spreading of rumors, false or correct information, or an idea, in order to influence the opinion of society. It may advance an idea or bring into disrepute an opposite idea. In literature, writers use propaganda as a literary technique to manipulate public opinion for or against one idea or another. In history, we can search a plethora of literary works used as propaganda to shape public perceptions, and direct their behavior to get a response. Generally, propaganda is a technique for convincing people, but which is misleading in nature, or promotes a false viewpoint.

religious, political, and moral orientations. They are saying, indirectly, that they are helping them not vice versa, because books will make people think about things. This is not good for them; nevertheless, it just makes them suffer more and more. You are entertained and having everything, just leave the government to think instead on you to live a peaceful life.

Propaganda plays a major role in shaping *Fahrenheit 451's* plot. To reinforce so, Bradbury extracts firefighters' code from Benjamin franklin's<sup>29</sup> words. He says, "Established, 1790, to burn English influenced books in the colonies first firemen: Benjamin franklin" (26). This just explains and reinforces their argues, that they have right to burn books. It is, also, in their goods the same as franklin had done before. It is his orders at first, thus we should follow it. (E. notes)

Another event reflects how much propaganda technique is used in the novel to keep people ignorance. Then, they are easy manipulated. This is purly the reflection of media's role in America during fifties. Bradbury stressed so when he mentions that, " they're faking, you threw them off at the river they can't admit it. They know they can hold their audience only so long. The show's got to have a smap ending, quick . . . so they're sniffing for a scape-goat to end things with a bang"(148).

It is not acceptable to consider Montag as a revolutionary figure. This presents a danger for government's position and power. Thereafter, they uses such fictitious image in order to get rid of any other revolutionary thinking or attempts. TV is used to destroy such behaviours and control people's way of thinking and living. (e.Notes)

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<sup>29</sup>Benjamin Franklin (January 17, 1706 to April 17, 1790) was a Founding Father and a polymath, inventor, scientist, printer, politician, freemason and diplomat. Franklin helped to draft the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and he negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War. His scientific pursuits included investigations into electricity, mathematics and mapmaking. A writer known for his wit and wisdom, Franklin also published Poor Richard's Almanack, invented bifocal glasses and organized the first successful American lending library.

### III. 2. Totalitarian Government / Censorship

In *Fahrenheit 451*, censorship or the totalitarian regime is manifested in the firemen institution that censors literature. Such totalitarian regime tends to ban books through burning them for restricting people's views. In fact, they are banned from any kind of thinking or even questioning the surrounding. They are exploited by fake entertainment such as Mildred<sup>30</sup>, who spends hours in front of T.V without even understanding what she is watching. They are, also, manipulated by the fear of being killed or sent to prison. This institution censored any kind of ideas or information. Montag himself, who is a fireman, is not allowed to know why he is burning them; for him is just for the sake of being good for his people. He, moreover, does not know what is in this books that let the government to burn them. When Clarisse asks him, "do ever read any of the books you burn? He laughed, "That's against the law" (Bradbury, 8). This, eventually, confirms that the totalitarian style of government is the firemen institution.

Other events in the novel show that it is a totalitarian government and its people are following its orders, because they are panicked. When Montag claims in the previous quotation that is against law to learn about what is in the burned books; this shows how is faithful to his government orders and what does society say. Furthermore, the reaction of his wife and her friend "Mrs. Bowles"<sup>31</sup>, when he reads for them a poem clarifies their controlling by government because they refuse such action as it is considered a taboo. Bradbury says, "Mrs. Bowles stood up and glared at Montag. You see? I knew it would happen! . . . Now I've had it proved to me. You're nasty. Mr. Montag, you're nasty" (109).

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<sup>30</sup> Mildred Montag - Montag's brittle, sickly looking wife. She is obsessed with watching television and refuses to engage in frank conversation with her husband about their marriage or her feelings. Her suicide attempt, which she refuses even to acknowledge, clearly indicates that she harbors a great deal of pain. Small-minded and childish, Mildred does not understand her husband and apparently has no desire to do so.

<sup>31</sup> One of Mildred's friends. Like Mrs. Phelps, she does not seem to care deeply about her own miserable life, which includes one divorce, one husband killed in an accident, one husband who commits suicide, and two children who hate her. Both of Mildred's friends are represented as typical specimens of their society.

Moreover, Montag's boss Beatty<sup>32</sup> believes that no one should question his authority and actions of burning books. The other satirical thing is when Mildred tells on her husband, because she believes that she has to follow the government orders. No matter for he to betray her husband; she did not think of the consequences. The most important thing as it was controlled and seduced by T.V is to do what the authority says.

### **III. 3. People under a Constant Surveillance**

In *Fahrenheit 451*, there is not much technology that watches people. However, people are spying on each other. Mildred fits the best example for so. She tells on her husband that he reads books and even where he hides. She never thought of the aftermaths of her deeds, because T.V programs wash her bargain. She is convinced that she is doing the right thing.

Nevertheless, Bradbury uses technology. It is manifested in the Mechanical Hound<sup>33</sup> and the machines that are used to burn books and the houses that contains books. These tools make people in the novel under a constant surveillance, which makes them restricted. They lack any kind of privacy. Different events reflect such surveillance. For instance, when Clarisse's family moves away, Montag started to analyse their action. He thinks they were being moved by force because they visit a psychologist. This demonstrates that the government knows every single detail of its citizens. The Hound, also, is a kind of robot dog that is used to track on the wanted persons. A good example is what happens with Montag by the end, when he runs.

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<sup>32</sup> Captain Beatty - The captain of Montag's fire department. Although he is himself extremely well-read, paradoxically he hates books and people who insist on reading them. He is cunning and devious, and so perceptive that he appears to read Montag's thoughts.

<sup>33</sup> In *Fahrenheit 451*, the mechanical hound is a dog-shaped robot with eight legs. It is made of metal. Its purpose is to hunt down and kill fugitives, who have violated the law of the society. After Guy Montag kills Captain Beatty, he becomes a wanted person.

They are under constant surveillance even in their houses. This clearly shown when Bradbury describes their houses,

*All of those chemical balances and percentages on all of us here in the house are recorded in the master life downstairs. It would be easy for someone to set up a partial combination on the hound's memory a touch of amino acids, perhaps. That would account for what the animal did just now. Reacted toward me. (230)*

### **III. 4. Realization of Characters of Being Unhappy (the Protagonist)**

What causes the changes in Montag's life is his sudden realization of his lack to unhappiness, which is triggered by the question of Clarisse. From the very beginning of the novel, there exists a bloomy, dark, and pessimistic atmosphere. Readers can eventually grasp the dystopian society, where citizens are living under a dictatorship in the name of democracy. Hence such people are not and this what was actually asked by Clarisse to Montag.

Clarisse says, "Are you happy?" (Bradbury, 8). This question is a turning point in the changing the events of the novel, especially Montag's actions. It raises his own consciousness. This what causes him a doubt in the world around him, then he passes through a kind of dilemma<sup>34</sup>. There is another reason for this question, it is to shed light on the fact that people are not even aware of their miserable life, and thus, restricting their critical thinking. Such manipulation violates their right to be free.

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<sup>34</sup> A dilemma (Greek: δίλημμα "double proposition") is a problem offering two unrelated possibilities, neither of which is unambiguously acceptable or preferable. Time and or the perception of time strongly influencing the decision-making. The dilemma is sometimes used as a rhetorical device, in the form "you must accept either A, or B"; here A and B would be propositions each leading to some further conclusion. Applied incorrectly, it constitutes a false dichotomy, a fallacy.

In this vein, not being free at that time means they are not allowed to know about other cultures and societies. Thus, they would decide their life is a dystopian or a utopian one. Montag himself experiences this, when he compares his life to others mainly the girl that he met. He says, “I want to hold onto this funny thing god, it’s gotten big on me. I don’t know what that is, I’m so dammed unhappy. I’m so mad, and I don’t know why” (10). This dilemma is caused due to comparison of his life to others. Thus, he can get that he is not happy, but he is a part of a dystopian world. This is due to his ignorance.

## **Conclusion**

*Fahrenheit 451* perfectly exemplifies the dystopian genre. This is shown through different elements presented in the novel. These elements have been discussed in details in this chapter. It was also proved that Bradbury’s work is a very good example of postmodernism as a movement. This chapter presented different ideas concerning the novel. It is proved that *Fahrenheit* is a dystopian postmodern novel that reflects the fifties in American history. Eventually, this is the second step that paved the way to the last chapter, which is the core of all this research

## **Chapter III**

### **Dystopian Literature as a Social Therapy in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)**

## Introduction

Dystopian literature comes to reflect the dark and chaotic side of the world. This genre found its basis through fighting certain issues. *Fahrenheit 451* dealt with a dystopian society being manipulated and limited by authoritative powers. Throughout the events of the novel and the actions of certain characters, the light after dark is clearly manifested. Based on the most important concepts that has been discussed in the previous two chapters, *Fahrenheit* seems to be the right example to show and prove how literature and more precisely dystopian literature is considered to be the catalyst for social change. In order to set forth the arguments for certain claim, this chapter is been divided to three main sections. Each section deals with a part of the novel: content and form. First, Bradbury presents Montag as being the protagonist that shapes the novel's events. Here, he shows a very crucial point that reflects the importance of literature; his moment of realization of real state leads him to discover his real world. Secondly, the writer, also, deduces directly and indirectly the psychological effects of books on people. He shows such impact on more than one character as professor Faber. However, this chapter will discuss to main characters: Beatty and Montag. They are opposing to each other. Each one reflects a new type of readers; thus a different reactions toward literature. It highlighted their perceptions and reactions toward literature. Third, this chapter will discuss Bradbury's symbolic use of titles and certain signs. Every single detail in the novel from its title to sections' title have to do with the core of this chapter, which is being healed by literature. Eventually, art as an instrument for social change is the last point that proves all what have been stated as a hypothesis.

## I. The Relationship Between Happiness and Freedom in *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)

The pursuit of happiness is clearly called for in *Fahrenheit 451* the first sign of so is the search for freedom. Among the necessities to achieve happiness is freedom. Both terms have no definite and clear definition; the same as it was proved in the previous chapters that everything is framed within a postmodern frame is relative. In this respect, Frank Tyger says, “doing what you like is freedom. Liking what you do is happiness” (qtd. in academia). He believed that in order to reach happiness is mainly through being free.

In the novel, Montag himself declares it. He says that, “we have everything we need to be happy, but we are not happy. Something is missing” (Bradbury 78). This is a clear evident that they do miss freedom. Thereafter, they are surfing for their right, which was started by the founding fathers as the basic thing for everyone: pursuit of happiness. The writer is referring to red scare through Montag’s statement. He is claiming that they are the city upon hell, but they are not happy as long as they are limited.

The fact of being unhappy is exposed to Montag since the early beginning of the novel. Clarisse is the one who raises such doubt when she asks him, “Are you happy?” (7). This question gets Montag in a kind of dilemma<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to face such fact.

After facing the bitter truth, it is high time for him to find solutions, and this is the starting point during his journey in searching for truth. Bradbury describes Montag by the end how he becomes; he says, “He stood up breathing, and the more he breathed the land

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<sup>35</sup> A dilemma (Greek: δῖλημμα "double proposition") is a problem offering two unrelated possibilities, neither of which is unambiguously acceptable or preferable. Time and or the perception of time strongly influencing the decision-making. The dilemma is sometimes used as a rhetorical device, in the form "you must accept either A, or B"; here A and B would be propositions each leading to some further conclusion. Applied incorrectly, it constitutes a false dichotomy, a fallacy.

in, the more he was filled up with all the details of the land. He was not empty. There was more than enough here to fill him. There would always be more than enough” (138). The land in this case refers to the freedom. As if he is saying the more Montag breaths freedom the more he filled up with all details of happiness. The “emptiness”, however, refers to the missing part when it is filled, it is done and he is not empty anymore.

The writer, also, highlights the role of government in convincing its citizens as being happy. In this vein, Montag says, “it is because we’re so rich and the rest of the world so poor and we just don’t care if they are? I ‘ve heard rumors; the world is starving, but we’re well fed. It is true the world works hard and we play?” (Bradbury 69). In this passage, he declares the government use of the comparative state in a reverse way. This makes people believes they are living in a better conditions, which hinders them from complaining. This makes them always believe they are doing wrong if they complain, because they are better than the other world. In this situation, they are convinced they are in the heaven. They manipulated people through playing with their collective unconscious<sup>36</sup> as Carl Jung<sup>37</sup> once claimed. Besides to Gramsci’s<sup>38</sup> hegemony<sup>39</sup>, which explains in details the way people are convinced by certain ideas.

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<sup>36</sup> Collective unconscious, term introduced by psychiatrist Carl Jung to represent a form of the unconscious (that part of the mind containing memories and impulses of which the individual is not aware) common to mankind as a whole and originating in the inherited structure of the brain. It is distinct from the personal unconscious, which arises from the experience of the individual. According to Jung, the collective unconscious contains archetypes, or universal primordial images and ideas.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Jung was an early supporter of Freud because of their shared interest in the unconscious. He was an active member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (formerly known as the Wednesday Psychological Society). When the International Psychoanalytical Association formed in 1910 Jung became president at the request of Freud.

<sup>38</sup> Antonio Francesco Gramsci (Italian: [an'to:njo fran'tjesko 'gramfi] (About this sound listen); 22 January 1891 – 27 April 1937) was an Italian Marxist philosopher and politician. He wrote on political theory, sociology and linguistics. He attempted to break from the economic determinism of traditional Marxist thought and so is considered a key neo-Marxist.[1] He was a founding member and one-time leader of the Communist Party of Italy and was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime

<sup>39</sup> The idea of a ‘third face of power’, or ‘invisible power’ has its roots partly, in Marxist thinking about the pervasive power of ideology, values and beliefs in reproducing class relations and concealing contradictions (Heywood, 1994: 100). Marx recognised that economic exploitation was not the only driver behind capitalism, and that the system was reinforced by a dominance of ruling class ideas and values – leading to

## I. 1. A World With and Without Literature

The novel romanticizes the importance of books and reading. Johnathan Eller<sup>40</sup> asserts that Fahrenheit 451 has “come to symbolize the importance of literary and reading in an increasingly visual culture” (qtd.in academia.edu). He witnesses that in Bradbury’s novel the importance of reading and the existence of literature is highly necessary for any nation.

Professor Faber, for example, in a conversation with Guy Montag explaining for him the importance of books and reading. Faber asks him, “Do you know why books such as this are so important? Because they have quality, and what does the word quality mean? To me it means texture” (Bradbury 83). For him, the meaning behind words in any book is important. He refers to this as a “texture”. Books do not just particularize people’s thoughts and help to develop their individual vision. However it enriches their language and meaning of life, which help them to articulate their emotions in a clear words. This what makes the difference clear between Clarisse and Montag. Clarisse is very expressive unlike Montag. While she talks about her observation of the surrounding at length, he just replies, “you think too many things . . . I didn’t know that” (Bradbury 9). When she also asks him if he is happy, he replies, “Am I what?” (10). This shows his dumbness and emptiness. He finds it difficult to express himself the same as Clarisse, because he did not read books as Clarisse does. He lacks the right vocabulary to express his emotions.

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Engels’s famous concern that ‘false consciousness’ would keep the working class from recognising and rejecting their oppression (Heywood, 1994: 85).

<sup>40</sup> Chancellor's Professor of English

Adjunct Professor of American Studies

Director of the Center for Ray Bradbury Studies

General Editor of The New Ray Bradbury Review

General Editor of The Collected Stories of Ray Bradbury

Advising Textual Editor of the Santayana Edition

Senior Textual Editor in the Institute for American Thought

This gives a clear idea about the importance of books in one's daily life. This eventually, the state of being paralyzed to express one's own emotions, ideas, and feelings. Makes him automatically violent. If one goes back to the origin and the meaning of violence, it will be clear the reasons of such behaviour. Violence as a word, its roots goes back to the Latin word "violentia" which means vehement or fierce. In other words, it refers to an "over helming fervent passion", which is represents in the novel by "fire". When the feelings are suppressed the person tends to be violent, which is shown in most characters in the novel. For instance, when the firemen want to burn the old women's books, she refuses to leave; thus she is burned with her house. However, as Montag he has once read, he begs her to leave by saying, "you can come with me . . . please . . . here" (Bradbury 39). He feels sorry about her, unlike other firemen who say nothing and show no sympathy. The same thing happens with his wife when Clarisse was killed, she shows no sympathy and she does not even tell Montag about this accident.

A world without books, is a world of apathy, in which people resembles machines like The Mechanical Hound in *Fahrenheit 451*. Without books, one becomes violent, by such behaviour; he will be seen as a criminal by either government or society.

Without books, whatever the government does, it is seen as a legitimate; however with books, things will change and people are more aware of its dictatorship behaviour toward its citizens.

Books, thus, are seen by Beatty as "treacherous weapons" in the novel, because books are having capacity to change the status quo provided by government. Books will help people to challenge government of practicing violence. The violence is not just limited to physical one, but to psychological effect as well. This is reflected in most characters especially Montag and Beatty. Who presented different versions of readers. The

latter presented the forcing power that causes violence; while the other reflects the one who seeks peace through knowledge.

According to Foucault's notion of language and power. He believes that language and power have a tie relationship. This is shown in the novel, as the government banned books to have an overall control over the population. With books, people have a command over the language, then they can discuss and communicate, thus call for their rights and holds power as a result.

The prime source of language is books. Books contains all kind of words that helps people to communicate and express themselves. Thus, it can be understood that the one has books, he has power. It is believed that the one has books; he has control over the past, the present, and the future. Hence without books, any person is powerless and has no meaning to resist state's violence. Montag, at first, was powerless, as he read almost no books; however by the end and after reading books with the help of Faber, he becomes powerful. Eventually, he rebels and resists the state control.

Books are considered the most powerful tool for any oppressed or even unoppressed person to resist against any kind of oppression by either a government or any other threat for his freedom. Books can gain such power since they have "texture" as Faber explains to Montag.

Nonetheless, the absence of books is the fuel of an ignorant population, thus dictatorship government. The reason behind violence is the absence of books. *Fahrenheit 451* tries to send a message, which is the importance of books and having knowledge, thus power and at the same time warns people who are heavily depending on TV and other medium of communication through clarifying their bad consequences; on top of which is the violence.

People without books think they are doing great; while is just the contrary. The same as Montag thinks at first before Clarisse's question, which triggers him to read books, that he is happy and free. What makes him discover so is mainly through literature, and the fact of banning books makes him more curious to know about them. Eventually, because he reads the Ecclesiastes<sup>41</sup> book helps him to understand the essence of life, which launches his journey of self-discovery.

Subsequently, in order to avoid violence individuals have to work collaboratively to avoid the absence of books. This is the first role of books toward social change and better life. Books are refuge for each one who oppressed.

## **II. Psychological Impact of Books on Major Characters**

Literature has the capacity to change people's life. This change starts from the inner side of each individual. Books in general cause a kind of dilemma; out of which men decide his situation. They touch either the personal life or even the political one. This is reflected in the main characters. They pass through a conflict whether they will change their life as the book suggests or the way the reader grasps its connotation; or just ignore things inside it just as Beatty has done. Subsequently, Montag and Beatty exemplifies the two different versions of such people who react differently to books. They show the power of books in changing one's life.

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<sup>41</sup> Ecclesiastes (/ɪˌkliːziˈæstiːz/; Greek: Ἐκκλησιαστής, Ekklesiastēs, Hebrew: קהלת, qōhelet) is one of 24 books of the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible, where it is classified as one of the Ketuvim (or "Writings"). Originally written c. 450-180 BCE, it is also among the canonical Wisdom Books in the Old Testament of most denominations of Christianity. The title Ecclesiastes is a Latin transliteration of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Kohelet, the pseudonym used by the author of the book. The book is a musing by a King of Jerusalem as he relates his experiences and draws lessons from them, often self-critical. The author, introducing himself as the son of David, discusses the meaning of life and the best way to live. He proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently hevel, meaning "vain" or "futile", ("mere breath"), as both wise and foolish end in death. Kohelet clearly endorses wisdom as a means for a well-lived earthly life. In light of this senselessness, one should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily life, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's work, which are gifts from the hand of God.

## II. 1. Effects of Books on Beatty

At the beginning, he believes in and loves so much reading books. He can successfully explain his society into details. He, also, can see how his society is going slowly toward declining, because of the lack of books there. He was as Montag. He read some pieces of books that they burned them. He advises Montag by saying, “read a few lines and off you go over the cliff. Bang, you’re ready to blow up the world . . . I know, I’ve been through it all” (Bradbury 106). This proves that books that he has read once has inspired him.

Furthermore, when he is discussing with Montag on literature, he seems more analytical than Montag. He is like going deeper with each book. He also has a philosophical point of view. He has a critical thinking when dealing with books. This what helps him to understand the world around him. It also helps him to manipulate people around him.

Nevertheless, as the events going on, he is getting against books unlike Montag. After all kind of a critical thinking, he just claims that, “what traitors books can be! you think they’re baking you up, and they turn on you”(Bradbury 107). He believes that books are just a set of words. Anyone uses books just to manipulate you the way he likes. For him, it is just like any other way of controlling people’s consciousness.

He uses literary knowledge to argue that his society is better without literature. Montag himself tells Faber how Beatty is a good reader he says, “He’s read enough so he has all the answers, or seems to have. His voice is like butter. I am afraid he will talk me back the way I was” (Bradbury 89). This shows how reading is so beneficial that is reflects in his society. He seems so strong to others as he discusses with them using philosophies. This gives him a kind of confidence in himself.

As Montag is ignorant about the quotes that Beatty uses. He feels amused and paralyzed. This as Bradbury describes him. He says, “Montag’s head whirled sickeningly. He felt beaten unmercifully on brow, eye, nose, lips, chin, on shoulders, on up flailing arms. He wanted to yell ‘No! Shut up, you’re confusing things, stop it’” (107).

Nevertheless, Faber warns Montag about Beatty that he is “muddying the waters”

Even Montag himself admits so,

*. . . I was doing a terrible thing in using the very books you clung to, to rebut on every hand, on every point! What traitors books can be! You think they’re backing you up, and they turn on you others can use them to, and there you are lost in the middle of the moor, in great welter of nouns and verbs and adjectives. (107)*

This shows how books are effected in enriching person’s personality. However, in the case of Beatty, he knows how books are important and all what is mentioned in books are true, yet he refuses to apply what they say. If he will do so, he will lose his position as being a chef. This bitter truth hinders him from practicing the justice. Nonetheless, he loses his life by the end and wins nothing.

Beatty says, “We can’t have our minorities upset and stirred” (108). This is his excuse for burning books. He further explains that, “that way leads melancholy” (ibid). For him, if people read books, they will start thinking. The fact of thinking leads them to a kind of comparison their real life and the fictitious one. They eventually, discover the existence of racism, sexism, and the unjust. Hence, they will feel mad and distressed about their life. Subsequently, this alarms a danger for their happiness.

Beatty convinced himself at first; then explains to his population that books are just useless when he says, “none of those books agree with a regular damned tower of the bible. Snap out of it! The people in those books never lived . . .” (109). He is following different

ways to convince his people that books are not in their goods. Ironically speaking, to back up his arguments, he extracts from literature to prove that literature is bad.

He believes that books are banned to keep people happy. He sees books as a gun; he says, “. . . is a loaded gun in the house next door” and he makes firemen as heroes. They become “custodians of our peace of mind” (111). Here one can see the conflict within himself. He believes that books are good, but in order not to lose his position as being a chef and sacrifices the fact being happy. Thus, he chooses to live in such simulation. Nevertheless, by the end Montag kills him. Montag excuses his deed by saying that “he wanted to die” (116). This eventually proves that Beatty was not that happy person, yet he tries to act as being so. He was not happy because he read books and these books affected him. Hence, he could not taste happiness yet he is in the position he wanted.

### **II. 3. Impacts of Books on Montag**

Montag wants his wife to start question things as he does. He tells her about the woman who burns herself with her books. He says, “You weren’t there, you didn’t see, there must be something in books, things we can’t imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don’t stay for nothing” (35). Throughout these events, he starts question the importance of books. He believes within himself the necessity of books in person’s life. He sees it as the only refuge and solutions for his society’s decline. He starts to see how technology isolated people.

Faber, furthermore, plays a great role in helping Montag to understand and grasp the importance on books in life. He believes that they have the power to get things better in the world. He says that, “there is nothing magical” about books, but the kind of information they contain. However, he explains that not every book is that necessity; he suggests three components must be found in any book to be useful for reading. He says,

“Number one, as I said quality of information. Number two leisure to digest it. And number three: the right to carry out actions based what we learn from the inter-action of the first Two”. (55)

Books do not force any one to do anything. Nevertheless, book makes the reader thinks and questions his life and society. Hence, in *Fahrenheit 451* the government banned them, because it cannot control their conclusions and reactions after deep thinking that is resulted from reading literature.

At first, Montag was so happy and feels entertained in torching books of Walt Whitman, James Faulkner, and so on. The irony is as if he knows that they are great novelists and poets; while he reads none of them. He recognizes their importance and significance without even looking at their names before burning them.

Montag has been brainwashed for almost thirty years, but through reading, he starts to recognize what is going around him. This what causes a nightmare for any totalitarian government or society.

Books are considered as the revelation that opened Montag’s eyes. For instance, government succeeded to keep its subjects busy and not thinking at all as Mildred did. She always favours watching silly clown on TV instead of listening to her husband.

Books gets Montag into a traumatic<sup>42</sup> experience. Especially after the old woman accident, he starts questioning and doubting the importance of books. Montag faces an external and physical conflict in freeing his mind. The conflict manifests in whether these books are good or just bad as Beatty tries to convince him. Through reading books, he will be seen as a rebellious. Otherwise, he will understand nothing on the doubts in his mind.

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<sup>42</sup> Psychological trauma may set in after a distressing or life-threatening event. Sufferers may develop extreme anxiety or PTSD, or they may have ongoing problems with relationships and self-esteem. But many overcome trauma, offering inspiration to others who have had life-altering negative experiences.

He really wants to experience the love for books as the woman sacrifices her life for books. This inner conflict causes him a lot of pain and sufferance. Eventually he chooses books as being the only solution for everything.

Thereafter, books raises a kind of dilemma for Montag. He was traumatized by the event of the woman who burns herself. This event, besides to Clarisse's death causes him illness. Nevertheless, after he face such truths through reading and literature, he can recover and found a new life. This witnesses a transformational phase from the state of ignorance to self-realization, from being villain to a hero. He says at first, "it was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed" (4). He, also, says, "it's fine work. Monday burns Millay, Wednesday Whitman, Friday Faulkner, burn'em to ashes, then burn the ashes that's our official slogan" (ibid). These two quotations reflects how evil was Montag.

Nonetheless, the same person after reading books he becomes a hero. He says, "We never burned right" (160). After couple of events, he realizes that his life is meaningless and the only to give meaning and colour his dark and gloomy life is through literature. Thus, he starts reading books in a kind of a journey in searching for real happiness. Unfortunately, he cannot understand what the real meaning of such books is. Hence, he asks Faber to help him. Faber, then, explains to him the significance of books and guides him on how he can positively benefited from literature.

### **III. Symbolism in *Fahrenheit 451*(1953)**

Symbolism is used to give depth to the story. Writers use symbolism to represent ideas and provide new themes. Themes that cannot be tackled directly, but it sends messages through connotation meaning. They refer to things happen in the real world but cannot explain it in direct way. It, also, gives beauty to the novel or any composition.

Bradbury uses more than one symbol such as the fire, the hound, the phoenix. Moreover, he was very talented in choosing the titles of his book, from the title of the novel to the titles of each section. Each section connotes a meaning for the whole story. Without symbolism, *Fahrenheit 451* would be just a story that suspects the possible future out of stable circumstances. Nevertheless, Bradbury's effective use of language, he depicts the story that lasts for different places and times. Thus, it becomes a story of humanity.

### **III. 1. Phoenix and Fire in *Fahrenheit 451*(1953)**

For so long, Montag sees and believes that his happiness lies in the government's symbol: phoenix. However, he realizes the terrible fact behind such symbol. This kind of realization comes mainly after the visit of Beatty to Montag's home in his phoenix car, which refers to a destructive sign for any one that comes across him.

According to Montag's rebellious action, he just represents phoenix life. The phoenix as Bradbury explains, "Built a pyre and burnt himself up" (163). This quote reflects Montag's deeds throughout the story.

He sacrifices his life in order to help society as a whole. He burns himself; this as Granger<sup>43</sup> explains this action, which symbolizes rebirth. He says, "The phoenix burnt himself up; he sprang out of the ashes, he got himself born all over again" (Bradbury 163). As an adult Montag might see the fire as a tool for playing and having a good time. As he grows up, he still believes that through burning things, especially books, is his own get way for happiness the same as the phoenix feels. The fire, as he thinks, is the source for his happiness and his society as a whole. However, it represents repression and turns them just emotionless and empty persons. Bradbury describes him as being forced to be "happy

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<sup>43</sup> Granger :The leader of the "Book People," the group of hobo intellectuals Montag finds in the country. Granger is intelligent, patient, and confident in the strength of the human spirit. He is committed to preserving literature through the current Dark Age.

all the time” (59). Thus, by the end, Montag understands where real happiness lies. He burns his old life to start over again. He is reborn again.

In the end, phoenix is used as sign of rebirth and renewal. Ultimately, it refers to Bradbury’s message to humanity; anyone who is repressed emotionally, and are limited intellectually speaking. Eventually, the true meaning of fire comes to the surface; the meaning of warmth and comfort exists again. He himself claims so by saying, “. . . was not burning. It was warming” (145).

Fire continues to represent Montag’s source of joy. The new sense of fire in Montag’s life becomes the fire of truth and knowledge. A fire that torches light instead of burning things. Granger saying to Montag, “welcome back from the dead” (150), clarifies this. He uses fire to burn his old life; this is reflected in burning his boss, who represents the destructive kind of fire. In order to renew his thoughts and to start a new life with very different features: a life which is bright, promising, and open his mind to learn new things. New life helps him to explore the real of the real by himself; not what the government or any authoritative power says.

Subsequently, it seems that Montag loses everything; however, he wins himself. He is being reborn in a new society that is promising. Even if he did not enjoy his life, he helps in a creating a free world for the new generation with the treasure, which is literature left by elders. It is the basis of everything: history, science, and religion.

### III. 2. The Relationship of the Title and the Book

*Fahrenheit 451* is the temperature in which books or papers burn. However, Bradbury uses the firemen, who supposed to fight fire, to burn books. The title emphasizes the totalitarian regime that occurs in the novel. At the beginning, Bradbury describes that regime, he says,

*with his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. (2)*

These few lines referred to the atmosphere found in that society. The horrors that are caused by the firemen. From the early beginning, the reader grasps the gloomy atmosphere. Throughout the novel, Bradbury smoothly goes with events. He, first, provides readers with the gloomy word as it lacks literature under the title: *The Hearth and the Salamander*; then the two other sections that contains climax and resolution.

The first section refers to a gloomy place. He explains the reason behind being is the absence of literature. The ignorance of people and the totalitarian regime causes such terrible place. However, the second section refers to the moment of realization. It is entitled: *The Sieve and The Sand*. Bradbury is saying in other way, the time where people starts to get rid of the bad things using the sieve. The same as this tool does with the gallstone found in the sand. The last section, eventually, provides solutions, which is literature and reading. It is entitled: *Burning Bright*. This shows the bright after darkness. It also refers to warmth fire that was used at first as a tool for burning; it becomes, eventually, thanks to the light of literature the useful fire that helps people being warmed.

#### ***IV. Fahrenheit 451 (1953) as a Catalyst for Social Change***

It is believed that art in general and literature in particular play a great role in creating different opportunities for people to decide about the future they will live. Mr. Sanchez who suggested that, “art can also remind us what we are fighting for”, proved this. The same thing is clearly highlighted in this novel, which argues the early stated hypothesis that literature is a central point in our lives. In other words, literature is founded to make people’s life better in multiple levels.

Moreover, art can be a tool to understand things in more clearer way. Social issues are not always clear. In the same respect people are living in a chaotic world, which hinder them from distinguishing what is the problem in order to find solutions. Different simulations trick them. Thus, art, at least, raises questions that shall make people think. Art should speak up truth. It is considered as a cultural tool that humanizes emotions, fears, and voices the voiceless. The latter, is reflected in most characters especially Montag. He literally changes from a fireman, who follows laws to a totally another person, who challenges the same laws. This change occurs thanks to literature he has read. Literature at least enriches him with more vocabulary, because with words he speaks and with speaking he can express himself.

## Conclusion

Moving throughout the novel, things become clearer. This chapter tackles the most important issue in this work: literature as a social therapy. It explains in details with quotations from the novel how literature is used as an instrument for social change. *Fahrenheit 451's plot* helps to prove so. The first part reflects the first moment of realization that helps the protagonist to look for change. Then, the second part highlights the psychological effects of books on readers. It sheds light on two main characters who reflect different reactions toward books and how each is benefited from books. Thirdly, the role of symbolism is highly recommended in showing the importance of literature. Eventually, it is clearly declared the major role of literature in changing any given society to be improved. All these are being reflected and proved throughout Bradbury's novel.

# **General Conclusion**

In the past several decades, a new orientation emerged in defining literature's role in society. Since the emergence of the humanistic approach, literature's features has been changed. For the first time literature is being ranked to and giving the same importance in person's life as astronomy and physics. They come to believe and reject the notion that literature is just a type of art, which is used for the sake of art and highlighting the world's beauty. The fact that reflecting the world's beauty in itself plays a major role in society. Thus, new writers believe in such idea and try to highlight its sacred role through their inspirational works. In order to achieve so, they vary in their techniques and themes. Each work reflects a specific period. This phenomenon has been widely observed in the dystopian genre.

Nevertheless, the dystopian genre in itself was seen as a weapon against society. It is believed that this genre reflects the dark side of society, which is considered as an omen. Dystopian literature seems to be not so beneficial for society; however, it has a great power in transforming a society into better conditions. It highlights what is under surface, in order to make people aware of such sickness. Then, people eventually will try to think of any kind of change. For instance, in the political seen, they will think twice before choosing their candidates and so on. Eventually, this is the first step toward changing.

Dystopian fiction teaches us that there is no existence for such perfect world. It tries to clarify that the exaggeration in perfectness would eventually turn to be just the most horrific world. Such perfectness leads people to lose their free will, independence, and freedom. Nonetheless, dystopian fiction's role is to reflect the power of the ordinary person in making the difference; he always tries to do something to change their conditions for the best. Such role was highly highlighted in this dissertation through mainly its protagonist Montag.

Indeed, the work dealt with in this dissertation: Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is classified to be the best work reflecting the role of dystopian fiction in making the world better place. The novel itself deals with the idea of the importance of books and literature. Throughout characters, Bradbury clarifies his view, which is the dangerous of ignoring literature. Moreover, he sheds light on the necessity of books in any given society.

Doubts and curiosity in Montag was established from the early stages of the story. The same as the dystopian fiction does with readers. In this vein, Bradbury shows the conflict inside and outside Montag. Montag's mind is opened by the first encounter with Clarisse, and Mildred represents an anesthetized society where everyone is repressed. Beatty, on the other hand, delivers Montag's mirror image as a contemptuous reader. Beatty's suspicious, also, becomes the evident for Montag, as he struggles with intellectual curiosity. The landscape, moreover, represents his mind. In the conclusion, Montag's final conflict is in leaving behind the structured world of artifice that has now been destroyed and living a life of enlightened and independent thought.

Thereby, by returning to the problematic questions that fuelled this research, it becomes neatly prominent that the methodological plan followed in this study that adopted the analytical approach has its fruits. After analysing, the way literature (dystopian) triggers individuals toward changing through the portrayal of major characters in the novel, it becomes confirmed that these characters, especially Montag, found it ultimately problematic to live in a kind of simulation or a world without literature.

Bradbury translates the role of literature in enriching societies through his novel. The story's end reflects and proves the hypothesis that was set at the beginning of this project. Literature is really a catalyst for social change. Its role is to renew the spirit. It pushes toward freedom which, eventually, brings happiness. The end of the novel seems, at

first to be gloomy and distressing. Montag loses his wife, who is killed, his house, which is burnt, and his whole society and life, which has been destroyed. However, he is still drawing a kind of ray of hope. By the end, Bradbury gives us a promise of better life with literature as he exemplifies using the phoenix life.

Correspondingly, it is worth mentioning that this project is not as attainable as it was expected. Without mentioning the obstacles and difficulties that hinder this project from being perfect than this modest research as it was planned to. Subsequently, this present project may set the platform for other new visions. It can be considered the first step that paved the way to many other issues that are not discussed such as the role of memory for both society and literature, a comparison between types of literature and its reflection on individuals. The impact of literature from a biologic point of view. Finally, the fact that this work combines literature and society or sociology makes it an essential contribution to the academic studies that deal with psychology and sociology.

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# Appendices



## **Appendix A: Author Biography**

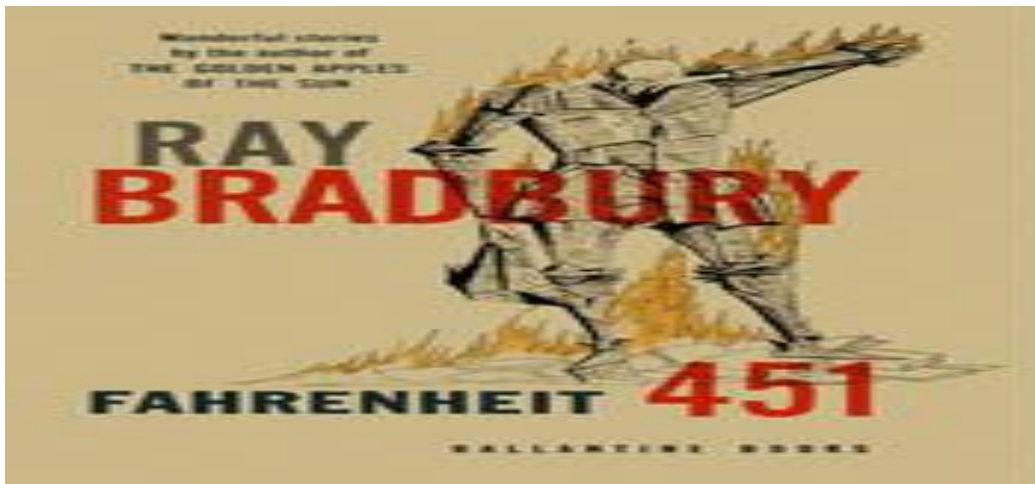
Ray Bradbury (Ray Douglas Bradbury) was an American author best known for his highly imaginative short stories and novels that blend a poetic style, nostalgia for childhood, social criticism, and an awareness of the hazards of runaway technology. As a child, Bradbury loved horror films such as *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925); the books of L. Frank Baum and Edgar Rice Burroughs, and the first science fiction magazine, *Amazing Stories*. Bradbury was born in 1920 in Illinois U.S. in 1934, his family moved to Los Angeles. In 1937, Bradbury joined the Los Angeles Science Fiction League, where he received encouragement from young writers such as Henry Kuttner, Edmond Hamilton, Robert Heinlein, and Leigh Brackett, who met weekly with him. Bradbury published his first short story, “Hollerbochen’s Dilemma” (1938), in the league’s “fanzine,” *Imagination!* He published his own fanzine, *Futura Fantasia*, in 1939. That same year Bradbury traveled to the first World Science Fiction convention, in New York City, where he met many of the genre’s editors.

One of Bradbury's most personal works, *Dandelion Wine* (1957), is an autobiographical novel about a magical but too brief summer of a 12-year-old boy in Green Town, Illinois (a fictionalized version of his childhood home of Waukegan). His next collection, *A Medicine for Melancholy* (1959), contained "All Summer in a Day," a poignant story of childhood cruelty on Venus, where the Sun comes out only every seven years. The Midwest of his childhood was once again the setting of *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962), in which a carnival comes to town run by the mysterious and evil Mr. Dark. The next year, he published his first collection of short plays, *The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics*.

In the 1970s Bradbury no longer wrote short fiction at his previous pace, turning his energy to poetry and drama. Earlier in his career he had sold several mystery short stories, and he returned to the genre with *Death Is a Lonely Business* (1985), an homage to the detective stories of writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett mixed with an autobiographical setting of 1949 Venice, California, where Bradbury lived at the time. Two sequels, *A Graveyard for Lunatics* (1990) and *Let's All Kill Constance* (2002), mined his experiences in 1950s and '60s Hollywood. His final novel, *Farewell Summer* (2006), was a sequel to *Dandelion Wine*. He adapted 59 of his short stories for the television series *The Ray Bradbury Theatre* (1985–92).

Bradbury was often considered a science fiction author, but he said that his only science fiction book was *Fahrenheit 451*. Strictly speaking, much of his work was fantasy, horror, or mysteries. He said, "I use a scientific idea as a platform to leap into the air and never come back." He received many honours for his work including an Emmy for his animated adaptation of *The Halloween Tree* (1994) and the National Medal of Arts (2004).

In 2007, the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded Bradbury a Special Citation for his distinguished career. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)



## **Appendix B: The Novel Synopsis**

Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), is regarded as his greatest work. In a future society where books are forbidden, Guy Montag, a "fireman" whose job is the burning of books, takes a book and is seduced by reading. *Fahrenheit 451* has been acclaimed for its anti-censorship themes and its defense of literature against the encroachment of electronic media.

Set in the 24th century, *Fahrenheit 451* tells the story of the protagonist, Guy Montag. At first, Montag takes pleasure in his profession as a fireman, burning illegally owned books and the homes of their owners. However, Montag soon begins to question the value of his profession and, in turn, his life. Throughout the novel Montag struggles with his existence, eventually fleeing his oppressive, censored society and joining an underground network of intellectuals. With his newfound friends, Montag witnesses the atomic destruction of his former city and dedicates himself to rebuilding a literate and cultural society.

In sum, Guy Montag lives in a world where owning books is illegal. As a fireman, it's his job to destroy the books he finds. According to him, paper books start to burn at 451 degrees Fahrenheit. After an encounter with his new neighbour, the young and freethinking

Clarisse, Montag begins questioning his job. Meanwhile, Montag's wife Mildred overdoses on sleeping pills, but returns to watching TV after receiving medical attention. Suddenly, Clarisse disappears and Montag steals a book from the home of an old lady who chooses to burn alive rather than forsake her books. Montag's boss, Captain Beatty, explains why books were banned. Mildred turns Montag in. He burns his house and kills Beatty to protect Faber, then escapes as an atomic war begins. He joins a group who memorize books to preserve them. (GradeSaver)