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**Silencing, Language and Power Relationship in
Ray Bradbury's**

Fahrenheit 451 (1953)

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Nº D'ordre:

Nº De série:

To:

My beloved parents

My dear brother Chahir

My dear brother Aziz and his wife Rosa

My lovely sister Samira and her husband Mohamed

My sweet little angels Sonia and Cilia

My darling Youcef and his family

All those who love me

You reader

Yasmina

To:

My dear parents who provided me with moral support

My lovely brothers: Rabah, Hamid, Karim, and Abdenour

My lovely sisters: Razika, Nora, Fatiha, and Lydia

All my friends who encouraged me

All my family and cousins

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Abstract:

This dissertation attempts to study the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The aim is to provide an analysis of the way the writer reveals the way silencing is used as a tool of control and oppression, and to show the manner in which the protagonist's power relationships are changeable and the way he progresses thanks to his contacts with the main characters: Clarisse McClellan, Captain Beatty and Professor Faber, in Bradbury's novel. The goal of this study is achieved thanks to Pierre Bourdieu's social theory of language and Power developed in his book which is entitled *Language and Symbolic Power*, (1991). This dissertation examines the literary work by focusing on the cultural and socio-historical contexts of the 1950s; it has reviewed the most important events of the 1950s in order to show their connection to the novel's context, as a first chapter. In the second chapter, it is deduced that silence functions as a means of control and oppression due to the ruler's surveillance and intimidation which lead to people's fear and passivity. Finally, the third chapter provides the reader with the idea that language and power are interconnected and their relationship is a flexible one.

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I. Introduction:

The genre of dystopian fiction of the 1950's was flourishing as it was a time of remarkable social and political changes, particularly in the USA. With the aim of exploring the social and political structures of societies, the writers of the dystopian literature use their writings to manipulate and recreate their social reality, since dystopia "does not exist in a vacuum."¹ This means that the dystopian literature reproduces the existing events of the writers' current time and imagined future, and this reproduces what many writers want to clarify within their novels, as it is the case with Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* exemplifies nearly all the features which characterize the field of dystopian Literature. As an illustration, the dystopia of Ray Bradbury mirrors a time when books are forbidden and people have no sense of their history due to the fact that the oppressive state and technological innovations are controlling and promoting the illusion of happiness and conformity for the citizens of Fahrenheit's society.

Besides, dystopian literature is used to transmit the writers' imagined possible future. Through their works, the writers warn readers about the existing dangers in their society and show what they think the world will become if people continue their current way of actions. So, the answer to why "dystopias provoke despair on the part of the readers, it is because their writers want their readers to take them as a serious menace."² That is to say, thanks to the dystopian writers the dystopias' pessimistic views result and create fear, discontent, and consideration in the readers as regards the social and political systems, and this view is evident in *Fahrenheit 451*. In fact, this research paper attempts to deal with the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*.

Review of the Literature:

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* has stimulated the interest of critics all around the world since its publication. Bradbury is among those literary figures that come to mirror aspects of his personal experiences within his literary works. Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes have described him as:

An important figure in the development of science fiction, Ray Bradbury was among the first authors to combine the concepts of science fiction with a sophisticated prose style. In a career that has spanned more than forty years, Bradbury has written fantasies, crime and mystery stories, supernatural tales, and mainstream literature as well as science fiction.³

So, his works of literature show their closest relationships with his life, as it is the case with his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, which is often seen as Bradbury's both science fiction and dystopian novel.

One of those scholars who were interested in Bradbury's novel is William F. Touponce. In his book entitled *Ray Bradbury and the Poetics of Reverie*, Touponce claims that "*Fahrenheit 451* moves from a fantastic world to a real one."⁴ In other words, Touponce's argues that the imagined setting and the futuristic society of *Fahrenheit* are linked to the real milieu of the 1950s. As a result, the writer, as an American individual, reveals his own imagination of the American society after the chaotic results of the war along with the manipulation of the technological innovations, which established more passivity and conformity.

In addition, the main story of Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* can be best illustrated by what Rafeeq O. McGiveron said in his article, which is entitled " 'To Build a Mirror Factory': the Mirror and Self-Examination in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*," about the American society and government as it is reflected in the mentioned novel. He has stated:

With Montag's failures and successes, Bradbury shows that all of us, as individuals and as a society, must struggle to take a long, hard look in the mirror. Whether we look at

ourselves from another's perspective or from the perspective of a good work of art, we need this self-examination to help avoid self-destruction.⁵

So, from the above quotation one may well deduce that there is a considerable relationship between the novel's story and its readers, i.e. the novel has an attractive story, and as readers, we must react in relation to the novel's concluded objectives and lessons, such as the power of books and critical thinking.

In addition, Alina Gerall in her thesis which is entitled "'And the Leaves of the Tree Were for the Healing of the Nations": Literature and Civil Disobedience in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*" has studied the theme of civil disobedience in this novel. She argues that "The three sections of Bradbury's narrative track the progression of Montag's civil disobedience, from questioning his lack of knowledge to taking action against his oppression to the final consequences of his actions."⁶ She has analyzed the process of the protagonist's disobedience of the firemen's law until his rebellion. As a result, he concludes:

Most civil disobedience theorists agree that only public acts qualify as being acts of civil disobedience and Montag's reading is not public. His reading, which is initially just disobedience, becomes civil disobedience when he attempts to include others, i.e. the poetry reading to Mildred and her friends. That singular public act, which leads to attention from the authorities, is public enough to justify Montag's later reading (as well as his meeting with Faber and preserving books) as "civil disobedience" rather than simply "law breaking."⁷

Another critic named M. Keith Booker, who is among the most representative critics of Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* as a dystopian fiction, states in his book which is entitled: *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide*, that "[Bradbury's] *Fahrenheit 451* responds directly to the cultural environment in America in the early 1950s."⁸ This means that Bradbury's novel portrays a real image of the American culture due to his life experience in America in the 1950s, under the consequences of many events, like the Cold War, the fear of communism and the growth of mass media influences, which means that the manipulations of the

social and political events push the writer to reflect those issues within his writing. In fact, Bradbury is concerned in his novel with the anxieties of his time because "We must remember that Bradbury was writing about the same time as the Angry Young Generation in England and the Beat Generation in America, groups of writers who rejected the affluence and vacuousness of technological innovation in capitalist societies."⁹

In addition, David Karlson-Weimann explored the contradictory state of the fire metaphor as a literary tool within his work which is entitled "Burning Images: The Metaphor of Fire in Literature" focusing on Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Great Fire of London* by Peter Ackroyd. He claims:

Montag's physical movement from the modern, exploited world into the natural, primitive one outside the city is telling that we are now returned to an earlier state, a more basic condition of human life. In terms of the fire metaphor, the culture-carrying works now reside inside humans, and so the only way to access them is through human interaction, exactly what the government in the city sought to eradicate.¹⁰

So, David Karlson-Weimann has discussed the use of fire as a metaphor in literature not only as a literary tool to reflect the performance of control and oppression, but also as a symbol of purification; so, he has resulted that "Fire stands for both destruction and rebirth, the one form physical, the other metaphorical."¹¹

Finally, in her article entitled "Postmodern Dystopian Fiction: An Analysis of Bradbury's '*Fahrenheit 451*'," Maria Anwar has described the theme of censorship in Bradbury's novel. She says:

Bradbury developed *Fahrenheit 451* during the late 1940s and published it in 1950 just after World War II, coinciding with America's growing fear of communism. His theme of censorship and forced conformity, where books are forbidden and burned - shows the irrationality of the 20th century where people in power suppressed human free thinking and individuality.¹²

Therefore, Maria Anwar's analysis of *Fahrenheit 451* about the theme of censorship explains that Bradbury sends a straight message by showing readers the political environment in which his work of fiction was written to represent the extent to which "dystopian citizens do not possess authority over their lives and are regimented through a highly regulated schedule, which they do not even question anymore."¹³ As a result, Maria Anwar's study aims to reflect what can happen if people allow the government to take total control of what they do.

Issue and Working Hypothesis:

In the light of this review of the literature about Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451*, it is noticed that Bradbury's novel has been subject to many critics worldwide. However, to our knowledge and as far as we are informed, no previous study of the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Bradbury's novel has been dealt with before. Hence, the objective of this study is to try to add a new perspective in the analysis of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* by suggesting an answer to what is the revealed utility of silencing and how is the link between language and power in the mentioned novel. So, the respective work will be analyzed from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory of language and power developed in his book which is entitled *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991).

Methodological Outline:

The dissertation is structured by following the IMRAD approach. The work is divided into four parts. The first part includes an introduction, the review of some related works, the issue and working hypothesis, and the methodological outline. The second part introduces the method and materials. It will include Pierre Bourdieu's theory of language and power to which we have resorted to achieve the goal of this dissertation. As regard to the materials, the research paper is provided with a summary of Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* and a biography of the author

himself. The third part will consist of giving the final findings of this paper, and the answer to the problematic. The last part will be devoted to the analysis; the first chapter introduces to the reader the cultural and socio- historical milieu of the 1950s to show its connection with the context of the novel. The second chapter is devoted to talk about the act of silencing and its role in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Finally, the third one is concerned with the study of language and its relationship with power, by analyzing the protagonist's power relationships with Clarisse McClellan, Captain Beatty and Professor Faber in the mentioned novel.

Endnotes:

¹ “David Sisk, *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias*, 167,” qtd. in Henriette Wien, *The Power Of Discourse*. 2012, 1. Viewed on June 14th, 2017. Available on: <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/4848/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>

² “Fátima Vieira, "The Concept of Utopia." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, 17,” qtd. in Henriette Wien, *The Power Of Discourse*. 2012, 3-4. Viewed on June 14th, 2017. Available on: <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/4848/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>

³ Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes, *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature*, 4vols. (United States of America: Cengage Learning, 2009), 181.

⁴ “William F. Touponce, *Ray Bradbury and the Poetics of Reverie*, 7,” qtd. in Alina Gerall, “And the Leaves of the Tree Were for the Healing of the Nations”: Literature and Civil Disobedience in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*.’ 2008.

⁵ Rafeeq O. McGiveron, "To Build a Mirror Factory': the Mirror and Self-Examination in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 69.

⁶ Alina Gerall, “And the Leaves of the Tree Were for the Healing of the Nations”: Literature and Civil Disobedience in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*’ (thesis, Asheville: University of North Carolina, 2008), 13.

⁷ Ibid, 19

⁸ “M. Keith Booker, *Dystopian Literature: a Theory and Research Guide*, 88,” qtd in Henriette Wien, *The Power of Discourse*. 2012, 2. Viewed on June 15th, 2017. Available on: <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/4848/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>

⁹ Jack Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 6.

¹⁰ David Karlson Weimann, "Burning Images: The Metaphor of Fire in Literature" (BA thesis, Goteburgs Universitet, 2014), 16.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Maria Anwar, "Postmodern Dystopian Fiction: An Analysis of Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451'" (American Research Institute for Policy Development: International Journal of Language and Literature: June 2016, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 246-249), 247. Viewed on July 18th, 2017. Available on: http://ijll-net.com/journals/ijll/Vol_4_No_1_June_2016/29.pdf

¹³ Julia Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel: A Comparative Analysis" (MA thesis, California State University, 2012), 31.

II. Method and Materials

1. Method:

Pierre Felix Bourdieu (1930- 2002) is a twentieth century French philosopher, sociologist, and public intellectual. His theories are widely used and applied in a range of disciplines and research areas such as the social sciences and the humanities.¹⁴ He has become a reference in different areas like education, culture, and sociology. And his main concepts namely are Habitus, Capital, and Field and Symbolic Power. However, we will just borrow some aspects of Bourdieu's theory of language and power developed in his book which is entitled *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991).

Language and Symbolic Power represents Bourdieu's major contribution to the study of language and power in the world today. The book reflects Pierre Bourdieu's writings on language and on the relations among language, power, and politics, as Louise A. Hitchcock has described him:

In his later work, *Language and Symbolic Power* (a differently edited collection of essays based on *Ce que parler veut dire: l'économie des échanges linguistiques*, first published in French in 1982), Bourdieu turns his attention to how language is used in the creation and maintenance of power relations. Among other things, Bourdieu looks at style of speaking as well as the personal vs. institutionally constrained and official use of language, in order to analyze the role of language use in establishing, reproducing, negotiating, or resisting power relationships.¹⁵

Albeit Bourdieu has developed his theory of language and power according to the capitalist democratic societies with a linguistic and an economic vocabulary, but we believe that his ideas are also relevant to discuss the oppressive society of Fahrenheit, because his thoughts are linked to a society where democracy is unclear as it is the case in the city of Fahrenheit, i.e. language in dystopian fiction is an important issue used as a tool to establish the desired laws: It

is through the presence or absence of words that laws are introduced so that people are deceived; and thanks to language or the lack of words people rebel and work to gain their own rights.

Moreover, Pierre Bourdieu, in his work *Language and Symbolic Power*, has discussed the relationship between language and power and the social position of the speakers. Bourdieu does not believe that language is an object of contemplation, like the way linguistics characterizes it, but he considers it as an instrument of action and power.¹⁶ So, this view leads us to realize the reason why language and missing words and communication in *Fahrenheit 451* are established to follow the benefits of firemen's policy, as Bourdieu claims it: "It is rare in everyday life for language to function as a pure instrument of communication."¹⁷

In relation to what Pierre Bourdieu says in his theory of language and power, we may realize that the state is responsible for generating and controlling the social uses of the official language in a particular society¹⁸ and it does so through the education system, which plays a decisive role in the "construction, legitimation and imposition of an official language."¹⁹ Indeed, the author of dystopian literature is aware of the way oppressive states use language as a tool in establishing high control over their citizens. As it is depicted in *Fahrenheit 451*, the use of language has been limited to what firemen regime has limited. So, even though language is an effective weapon, for firefighters, it has lost its meaning for people who are made to believe that pleasure and entertainment are the only aim of their life; whereas, the citizens who disobey the city's law are considered dangerous, like Clarisse who is considered an immense threat to the state's stability.²⁰ Furthermore, in Fahrenheit's society, books, reading and attentive communications between people are banned so as to silence all the valuable sources of knowledge and to manipulate the citizens through the TV Walls' programs and the Mechanical Hound's surveillance, because the government's need for hiding those books signals the danger of

thoughts. By controlling thoughts, the ruler will be able to control actions, so reality is changed and silenced.

Indeed, the choice of Bourdieu's theory did not come at random. It is appropriate to Bradbury's novel in dealing with the manner in which the act of silencing works as a tool of control and oppression; it is also fitting to analyze the relationship between language and power believing that Bourdieu's views about language and power are the key concepts to analyze Fahrenheit's society.

2. Materials:

A-Summary of the Novel:

Fahrenheit 451 tells the story of Guy Montag, the central protagonist, who works as a fireman. In Fahrenheit's society, firefighters' work is to set fires to burn books and the houses that own them rather than to put fires out. The novel describes how the protagonist has developed from a banner of books to a protector and a memorizer person. The novel is divided into three main parts. To begin with, in "The Hearth and the Salamander", Montag works as a fireman in the city of Fahrenheit. When he meets his neighbor- Clarisse McClellan- and communicates with her, he realizes that he is unaware of how wrong society is. She influences him although she has strange behaviors compared with the other citizens of their society. He discovers the answer to her question whether he is happy or not when he finds his wife Mildred has taken many sleeping pills. As a result, he alerts on the medical help. Then, Mildred is saved, but she does not remember her suicide attempt. She enjoys her time seating and following her three walls of communicative TV. Back at the fire station, the Mechanical Hound threatens Montag; as a result, Captain Beatty warns him teasingly that the threat is related to Montag's possible culpable conscience. Besides, Montag and Clarisse continue their interactions which help him to

reexamine his own life and to discover the deep dissatisfaction within his society. One night, Montag asks his wife where their first meeting was, but both of them cannot remember. Then, Mildred tells her husband that Clarisse has been killed. The next day, Montag doesn't go to work because of his confusion about Clarisse's unexpected death and the vision of the old woman's burning, Mrs. Hudson, who preferred to die rather than leave her library. This leads Beatty to visit him at home; the captain delivers a speech to give lessons for Montag about issues like firemen's duty towards their society.

In "The Sieve and the Sand", Montag shows Mildred his hiding of a Bible with twenty other books after Beatty's leave. The couple tries to read the books to find answers to his wonders; however, Mildred soon stops her reading and insists on her husband to put down the books to live happily. Later on, Montag remembers the Professor Faber who is able to help him. On his subway journey to meet the professor, he tries to memorize passages from the Bible. Montag frightens Faber as a fireman, but when the old professor is convinced by the fireman's good intentions he accepted to help him. They agreed to communicate through a tiny two-way radio placed in Montag's ear. At home, Montag finds Mildred's friends over watching TV and this led him to challenge his wife's friends by reading poetry and trying to convince them to listen to his own views; unfortunately, his act brings despair and disappointment to the ladies. At work, Beatty mocks Montag using contradictory quotations taken from classical books to convince him about the uselessness of books; suddenly, an alarm comes in giving the fire truck the address of the protagonist's house.

In the third part which is called "Burning Bright", firemen arrive to the address and Mildred leaves the house after the alarm against her husband. Under arrest, Montag is forced by Beatty to burn his own house; then, when Beatty discovers the two-way radio, he tries to know its

source; so, he insults Montag who defends himself by burning Beatty with the flamethrower. Now, the fireman is a fugitive and a televised manhunt; Montag causes the burning of Black's house and visits Faber who suggests for him the way to pass the river in order to run from the Mechanical Hound and to meet the Book People, who have memorized thousands of books to preserve them. Finally, the protagonist memorizes some parts of the book of Ecclesiastes as a contribution to be involved with the Book People. In the next morning, enemy bombers rapidly begin and end the war against the city reducing it to powder. Now, Montag remembers his first meeting with Mildred in Chicago and mourns his failed marriage with her. Then, he conducts the Book People, as a leader, toward the city to rebuild a new society full of mirrors.

B-Biography of the Author:

Ray Douglas Bradbury (1920-2012) is an American writer of many genres and he is the author of various literary works that include short stories, plays, novels, poetry, and screenplays. Bradbury began writing stories at the age of 12, as he had stated it: "I had been writing short stories from the age of twelve."²¹ He started his career in 1938 when he published his first short story in a fan magazine. In 1950, he published his first book: *The Martian Chronicles*, which describes human being's first attempt to colonize the planet of Mars. It has established his reputation as a science fiction writer. Moreover, the 1950s and 1960s were the most successful and productive years for Bradbury, with his popular story collections, like: *The Illustrated Man* (1951) and *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (1953); they have been followed by *The October Country* (1955) and *Dandelion Wine* (1957), an autobiographical novel.²² In 1962, Bradbury lived the publication of his most admired work of fiction, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*.

From the mid-1960s on, Bradbury devoted more time to motion picture and stage adaptations of his works as well, like poetry and essays, as he has claimed it: "I probably have

written more poems, essays, stories, plays, and novels about libraries, librarians, and authors than any other writer today [1993]."²³ Besides, it is worth mentioning that Bradbury's novels are known for being imaginative and dramatic, as it is the case with his famous work, *Fahrenheit 451* published in 1953, which was first published in 1951 as a shorter version in *Galaxy Science Fiction* called 'The Fireman'. Bradbury's writings during the early period of the Cold War and technological development of the 1950s have reflected his worries about people under a totalitarian government and the danger of the higher spread of technology, this is why he tried to convey his warnings to his readers, above all, the American citizens, thanks to his status as a "prolific writer who wrote every day up until his death."²⁴

Bradbury is one of the most celebrated among 20th and 21st century American writers of speculative fiction. Many of Bradbury's works have been adapted into television shows or films. In 2000, he received the National Book Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. In 2004, Bradbury received the National Medal of Arts, which is the highest award given to artists and art patrons by the US Government. And in 2007, the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded Bradbury a Special Citation for his distinguished career.²⁵

Endnotes:

¹⁴ Louise A. Hitchcock, *Theory for Classics: A student's guide* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 89.

¹⁵ Ibid, 93.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1982), ed. John B. Thompson, trans. G. Raymond & M. Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 37.

¹⁷ Ibid, 77.

¹⁸ Ibid, 45.

¹⁹ Ibid, 48.

²⁰ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, (1953; repr. Cambridge: Pro Quest LLC [eng], 2002), 172. N.B. Hereafter all quotations cited in the text shall be taken from this edition.

²¹ Ray Bradbury, "Burning Bright," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 58.

²² Jeanne M. Mcglinn, *The Teacher Guide to Ray Bradbury: Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Simon & Schuster A CBS Company), 4.

²³ Bradbury, "Burning Bright," 59.

²⁴ M. Mcglinn, *The Teacher Guide to Ray Bradbury: Fahrenheit 451*, (New York: Simon & Schuster A CBS Company), 4.

²⁵ Rasha Mohsen, Ray Bradbury, (Bibliotheca Alexandrina: The Big Reader), 2. Viewed on June 13th, 2017. Available on:
https://www.bibalex.org/libraries/presentation/static/Ray_Bradbury_eng.pdf

III. Results:

This dissertation deals with the study of the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. To reach its aim, it is enhanced by Bourdieu's approach which is developed in his book entitled *Language and Symbolic Power*. Then, this research paper is provided with information about the author and the novel to facilitate for readers the understanding of the analysis.

In the discussion part, the first chapter is presented as a historical background of the 1950s. It has reviewed the main cultural and socio-historical events, which influenced and inspired Ray Bradbury's writing, in order to make the context of *Fahrenheit 451* clearer. It has been recognized that Bradbury was really inspired by different experiences, under the incident of Nazi Book Burnings, the issue of McCarthyism and the Cold War, and the spread of technology that had pushed him to produce his novel *Fahrenheit 451*.

The second chapter demonstrates the act of silencing and its function in *Fahrenheit 451*. It has been acknowledged that silencing is a problem in the dystopian society. It works as a means of control and oppression through the establishment of surveillance and intimidation by the ruling group, which result people's great fear and submissiveness when they do not question, oppose or fight domination.

The third chapter deals with language and its relationship with power in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The study is based on Montag's power relationships with Clarisse McClellan, Captain Beatty and Professor Faber by analyzing their interactions. Thus, throughout *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury reveals the immense lack of language in Fahrenheit's city and the way language and power are unified by a flexible relationship.

IV. Discussion:

Chapter One: The Cultural and Socio-historical Background of *Fahrenheit 451*

This part aims to gather enough materials to discuss the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Before starting our analysis, our reader needs to understand the context of this literary work, because it helps him or her to know the climate in which the author lived and the facts that influenced his writings; as Northrop Frye puts it: "Research begins in what is known as "background", and one would expect it, as it goes on, to start organizing the foreground as well. Telling us what we should know about literature ought to fulfill itself in telling us something about what it is."²⁶ So, it is important to present the historical background of *Fahrenheit 451* to shed light on the milieu of the 1950s in America and its relation with Bradbury's construction of this novel.

Ray Bradbury has lived in a period when the United States of America knew many intellectual, political and scientific changes that influenced the culture and literature of that time. For instance, after the stressful results of the Second World War, people's positive thinking transformed into a negative one, and the future has been depicted with gloomy pictures in order to reflect the threatened world under many issues; such as the scary atmosphere under McCarthy's regime and the spread of the new technologies. Thus, the turmoil and chaos that overtook the United States during the period of the 1950s had inspired his writings which came to depict the hostility of war and the issues that characterized his society. As a result, as an American citizen and author, Bradbury has reflected, within his work, what he lived and experienced before and during the 1950s:

Fahrenheit 451 is discussed in terms of the world's problems at large when it is essentially bound to the reality of the early 1950s in America, and it is the specificity of

the crises endangering the fabric of American society which stamp the narrative concern.²⁷

In fact, the era of the 1950s had witnessed great changes which had influenced all aspects of people's life all over the world, mainly the American ones. Among the most significant events that pushed Ray Bradbury to produce his work, we have the following ones:

1-Nazi Regime of Book Burnings and *Fahrenheit 451*:

The book burnings of the Nazi regime in Germany presents an authentic symbol of the atmosphere of fear and repression that flourished during the 1930s, and it was within this context of artistic repression that Bradbury expanded his story 'The Fireman' into a full length novel. This explains why "Bradbury is an eminently careful and conscious writer, and he always has specific occurrences and conditions in mind when he projects into the future. In *Fahrenheit 451*, he was obviously reacting to the political and intellectual climate of his times."²⁸ In this respect, the author's motivations to produce the novel during the 1950s were to re-create the atmosphere of fear and repression that prevailed when he was writing the book. *Fahrenheit 451* is one of the most famous works in the dystopian literature during the 1950s in America. At the first glance, the novel seems to be a science fiction story of a society where books are prohibited and burned. But, when one contemplates deeper in this novel, he realizes that the novel also tries to teach lessons and stimulate messages about censorship, word's power, surveillance, technology, and knowledge.

Fahrenheit 451 was developed in the years immediately following World War II. As far as the cultural context is concerned, the author's writing is largely determined by historical circumstances; above all, under the influence of the book burnings of the Nazi regime in Germany during the 1930s and this is mirrored within the novel where "the image of book-burning, the symbolic helmet, the uniform with a salamander on the arm and a phoenix disc on

his chest suggest a situation of the past, namely the Nazis [...] and book-burning of the 1930s."²⁹ This Nazi book burnings began and took place by the rebelled students, not the government, to reflect their anti-intellectualism, as an instance, they have "burned over 25,000 *un-German* books on Opernplatz in Berlin in public, which manifests that the domineering structure was against knowledge, enlightenment, and cultivation. These events had a substantial influence over Bradbury's dystopian vision in *Fahrenheit 451*."³⁰ So, this can prove that Bradbury was influenced by this burning and great censorship of books to bury their content because books preserve and memorialize those who have lived before.³¹

Besides, Bradbury's ideas were enhanced by his experiences and memories. He imagines a society dominated by fear and control, and all this society's aspects refer to the real situation that characterized the societies under Nazism and Stalinism. As an example, Bradbury has stated: "Of course. There was Hitler torching books in Germany in 1934; rumors of Stalin and his match people and tinderboxes. Plus, long ago, the witch hunts in Salem in 1680, where my ten-times-great-grandmother Mary Bradbury was tried but escaped the burning."³² This quotation reveals the extent to which he was influenced by the act of humiliating his family too; as a result, he has illustrated this act with the burning of the old lady inside the society of his *Fahrenheit 451*, because this lady illustrates the uselessness of resisting the system of the firemen and the government's power; in this way, Bradbury proves for his reader the danger of living in a world which has no human feelings. Furthermore, like Fahrenheit's firemen, Hitler was burning books in Germany, and this act also harmed Bradbury, as Diane S. Wood has reported:

In his 1966 Introduction to *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury expresses moral outrage concerning book burning: "when Hitler burned a book I felt it as keenly, please forgive me, as his killing a human, for in the long sum of history they are one and the same flesh. Mind or body, put to the oven, is a sinful practice."³³

As regards the political side, Totalitarianism was a political system which started in the west in the early 1920s first by the Italian Fascists led by Benito Mussolini. Then, it was more outlined with Stalin by increasing purges of political opponents and innocent people in an attempt to terrorize the regime's enemies, real or imagined ones.³⁴ So, the representation of the oppressive law of the firemen in Fahrenheit's city is related to the influence of the totalitarian models of Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler.

It is also clear from reading Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* that he was against the destruction of books from his childhood. As he has stated: "It was inevitable that I would hear or read about the triple burnings of the Alexandrian library, two of which were accidental, one on purpose. Knowing this at nine, I wept."³⁵ So, for Bradbury, the destruction of culture through books means the destruction of book's preservation of humans' sayings and thoughts, this is why *Fahrenheit 451* deals with the removal of books. As an illustration, the Captain of firemen interferes in the citizen's private intellectual life in the name of their mission to spread happiness and to eliminate the established belief of books' danger in order to eradicate social difference; but the reality of doing so is that firemen are afraid from that books will enable the citizens to think and find truth. Therefore, the society policies enforce illiteracy and thoughtlessness, and control the behavior and the lives of people, because their history and art are neglected and even prohibited; i.e. people's fear of violence and punishment has created the feeling of the need of protection which has conducted them to passivity and ignorance. In doing so, it can be deduced that Bradbury wants to say that not only an authoritarian government can create and result such a reality, but also people's ignorance of their reality, and this may be the reason why it has been hard for them to escape or overcome their fear. Therefore, Ray Bradbury was inspired by the historical facts of the 1950s in America, and throughout his novel *Fahrenheit 451*, he depicts his imaginative

results of a future, when non-thinkers occupy the American society and a totalitarian government outlaws the rights of writing and reading due to citizens' addiction to the technological innovations, and this is the reason why "Bradbury, a half-century ago, had the foresight to see that the age of the Screen (movie, TV, computer) could destroy reading. If you cannot read Shakespeare and his peers, then you will forfeit memory, and if you cannot remember, then you will not be able to think."³⁶ So, it is possible to argue that through his work, Bradbury is expressing his fears about the future of books.

2-McCarthyism, the Cold War and *Fahrenheit 451*:

Bradbury's fiction is connected to its historical events to provide the reader with the major insights on the 1950s and its great issues, such as the fear of Communism and the issue of the Cold War. The United States had many disputes with the Communist Party and all what was affiliated with it. For this reason, Senator Joe McCarthy claimed that he had a list of a group of American citizens who were affiliated with the Communist Party; so, those people were considered a threat to the stability of the American citizens and society:

In the early 1950s McCarthy accused all kinds of people-government officials, scientists, famous entertainers - of secretly working for the Soviet Union. He never gave proof, but Americans were so full of fears about communism that many believed him. McCarthy ruined hundreds of innocent people. People grew afraid to give jobs or even to show friendship to anyone he accused. If they did, they risked being named as traitors themselves.³⁷

In other words, this great oppression and fear are reflected in Bradbury's novel, Bradbury wrote *Fahrenheit 451* as a way to describe the chaos and fear that characterized the American society during that time. For instance, the great control reflected in the novel resembles what Bradbury and the American citizens had experienced during the McCarthy era. This is why the fear of Communism became a phobia in America, and anyone speaking out against the government was

a suspect, and this idea can be related to the way "McCarthy had bullied the Army into removing some "tainted" books from the overseas libraries." ³⁸

Furthermore, Bradbury's novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, was among the banned books because the author presents the real results of the dangers of banning books. According to what he has stated: "Meanwhile, our search for a magazine publisher to print portions of *Fahrenheit 451* came to a dead end. No one wanted to take a chance on a novel about past, present or future censorship."³⁹ This means that Bradbury wrote the novel to depict the reason why the powerful groups do not permit the publication of some kinds of books because these dominant groups avoid all the challenging ideas: "Bradbury, writing in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, envisions a time when people choose to sit by the hour watching television programs and where owning books is a crime."⁴⁰ In his novel also, Book People are still alive far from Fahrenheit's society, but they are considered dead for the firemen and the citizens inside the society, so, this may be related to the idea that Bradbury expresses the despair that was felt by the Americans of many citizens due to the McCarthy regime.

The end of the WWII brought the beginning of a Cold War as an ideological conflict that tied the Soviet Union and its allies against the United States and its allies too. The Cold War developed since diversity about the shape of the postwar world created suspicion and distrust between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁴¹ American reaction to Communism was just as unjustly as communist governments were; as a result, under the leadership of Senator Joe McCarthy, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, extremely attacked public figures who were suspected communists, and during the Cold War, this McCarthyism became a ghost. These ideas summarize the idea that "McCarthy in many ways represented the worst domestic excesses of the Cold War."⁴² Furthermore, during the 1950s, schools too in different states introduced

courses such as Communism Vs Americanism to wage the propaganda war at home as "the Cold War was the most important political and diplomatic issue of the early postwar period. It grew out of longstanding disagreements between the Soviet Union and the United States."⁴³ So, this conveys the idea that through his novel, Bradbury envisions a society where war is maintained in order to achieve social stability:

As a law-enforcer, Montag symbolizes those forces of repression which were executing the orders of McCarthy supporters and the conservative United States government led by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, and J. Edgar Hoover. He is not a simple law officer but belongs to the special agency of liquidation and espionage, similar to the FBI and CIA.⁴⁴

In the 1950s, the threat and fear of a nuclear war was a major preoccupation for the western civilization, due to the fact that the Cold War did not only shape U.S. foreign policy, but also it had influenced deeply the domestic affairs. Americans had long feared radical subversion. These fears could at times be overdrawn, and used to justify otherwise intolerable political restrictions.⁴⁵ As a result, people were under constant reminder of the fear of atomic attack. Similarly, Bradbury's fiction is shaped by his own experience of the atrocities of WWII, for the reason that the experience of the atomic bombs during WWII was a scary event for him and disaster for the whole humanity. It served as a powerful argument in Bradbury's novel, where a direct result of the citizens' limited knowledge is that their entire city is destroyed because they have no idea about what is truly happening in their world. So, in relation to Bradbury's experience, we find "throughout the novel, war lurks in the background until it finally erupts. The obvious reference here is to the Cold War and the Korean War which might lead to such an atomic explosion as that which occurs at the end of the book."⁴⁶

Indeed, we can deduce that Bradbury's fiction is based on his memory of his own experience in the American society. Through his novel, he is showing that the state's keeping

people under control is a way of maintaining stability and order; that is to say, people are not allowed to act according to their will and needs; instead, they have to follow the order of the government which results that a totalitarian regime controls the entire society by imposing fear and submission. In other words, Firemen's ability to be anywhere anytime causes the fear that gives them more power; they use violence and terror as a means of control to frighten people in order to be obedient.

3-Technological Advancement and *Fahrenheit 451*:

The scientific development and the new technologies are considered so beneficial, but it is worth mentioning that they are becoming tools of manipulation and domination. In the 1950s, people experienced the emergence of the technological innovations of different kinds in relation to mass media, like: television's and radio's ownership in the United States of America. Their great influence and wide use created a kind of people's addiction to them. Therefore, media is considered so powerful to manipulate when people are widely exposed to it and trust it. In the imagined society of Bradbury's novel, technology is greatly advanced and dominates the city; as an example: TV, radio broadcasts, fast cars and atomic weapons dominate people's life at the cost of classical books and literature:

Bradbury's main theme is the extent to which technology can be used for social control, specifically through the use of the mass media for all education and entertainment. The novel describes people being bombarded twenty-four hours a day by "TV class," "film teacher[s]," and TV parlors and televisors. The technology is used to promote a mass culture and to suppress individualism.⁴⁷

Moreover, the vision of technology is one of the features of dystopian literature. And what is important about technology in the dystopian fiction is the setting of the story. The writer of this kind of literature sets the story in far future where the state is developed in terms of technology

and science in order to reflect his own time with an imaginary story in the future. Then, due to the abuse of science, technology and science are used to shape people into unthinking citizens in the sense that the increase of prosperity in the United States after the Second World War resulted a rise of passivity and conformity; as a result, it is evident why "during the 1950s, many cultural commentators pointed out that a sense of uniformity pervaded American society. Conformity, they asserted, was numbingly common."⁴⁸

The TV was an important invention which was developed to become a popular and dominant force with a widespread impact on American citizens. Thus, people's life became full of control and censorship with no privacy, because "Television, still very limited in the choices it gave its viewers, contributed to the homogenizing cultural trend by providing young and old with a shared experience reflecting accepted social patterns."⁴⁹ This is mirrored too in Bradbury's novel, where the Parlor Walls became the 'family' and the 'relatives' of nearly all the citizens inside the city. However, the pessimistic consequences of the obsession for technology, like television are catastrophic. So, Bradbury's novel is an illustration of the negative effects of TV, because:

Although Fahrenheit 451 can be viewed as a passionate attack on censorship and the McCarthyism of the early 1950s, which Bradbury and others had likened to Nazi oppression and book burning, the novel can also be seen as an attack on the growing power of 1950s mass culture, particularly television, whose dynamics disallow complexity of thought and that consistently falls prey to the demands of special interest groups.⁵⁰

This quotation reflects the blame of television for its negative consequences on people's thinking. It demonstrates that the reliance on TV is a strategy followed by the ruler to conduct the society; it reveals also to the reader how the state in Fahrenheit is controlling people's lives. i.e. people living inside the city are reduced to tools following the idea that science means happiness, but

they are not able to realize that technology makes them unaware of their own loss of individuality.

In addition, the misuse of science and technology may result the loss of human characteristics. This reminds us about the dependence on technology: in the novel, technological advancement has not only changed the concept of individuality, but also it has created a sense of neglect. In the dystopian literature, individuals' behaviors are a direct result of the uses and advances of technology, and through technology, emotions are kept under control. Therefore, in Fahrenheit's city, people's ability to control their behavior and feelings using medicines is a kind of a technological manipulation.

Besides, the misuse of technology creates fear that leads to the establishment of repression through the use of dangerous means of control and surveillance, like the atomic bomb, nuclear energy or robots. This is the reason why Bradbury's skepticism of government power and its scientific solutions to problems comes from his experiences in WWII; and as regards his novel "Critics tend to agree, however, that the book represents some of Bradbury's central concerns. As one commentator puts it, "*Fahrenheit 451* reflects Bradbury's lifelong love of books and his defense of the imagination against the menace of technology and government manipulation."⁵¹ So, Bradbury, within his novel, has portrayed the possible dangers of the misuse of technical advancement, and these are the reasons which brought to the creation of dystopia in the mind of the reader. As a result, the imagined society of Fahrenheit will push its readers to think about the possible solutions to the expected dangers. And from these points, it is possible to see a kind of pessimism in the 1950s which drives us to assume that those events had huge influence on Bradbury's writing.

In the context of all what has been said, as readers, we can deduce that Bradbury's work and vision has captured the dissatisfaction about the Nazi- Burning regime of the 1930s, the fear of Communism and the Cold War, and the horrors of the development and misuse of technology. Therefore, we may suppose that Bradbury would remind us that those who refuse to learn from history are designed to repeat it.⁵² So, Bradbury's message is an appeal to the readers who must use both the real-life examples of these issues with the fictional society of the novel in order to avoid the coming back or the progress of such phenomena.

End notes:

²⁶ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, (United State of America: Princeton University Press, 1957), 8.

²⁷ Jack Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 4.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 5.

³⁰ Emrah Atasoy, "Impediment to Knowledge and Imagination in Ray Bradbury's Dystopian Novel, *Fahrenheit 451*," (Valparaiso, Indiana, the U.S.A.: Valparaiso University, 20-21 March 2015), 404. Viewed on April 9th, 2017. Available on: <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/26/2006/20943.pdf>

³¹ Diane S.Wood, "Bradbury and Atwood: Exile as Rational Decision," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 48.

³² Ray Bradbury, "Burning Bright," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 58.

³³ Wood, "Bradbury and Atwood," 44.

³⁴ Oleg Tulski, "A Man against the System: The Legacy of George Orwell's '1984'", (Tartu University: Narva College, 2014), 11. Viewed on December 28th, 2017. Available on: http://dspace.ut.ee/bitstream/handle/10062/42073/Tulski_Oleg.pdf

³⁵ Bradbury, "Burning Bright," 58.

³⁶ Harold Bloom, *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*. (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 1-2.

- ³⁷ O'Callaghan, *An Illustrated History of the USA*, 17th ed. (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 109.
- ³⁸ Bradbury, "Burning Bright," 60.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Wood, "Bradbury and Atwood," 43.
- ⁴¹ Alonzo L. Hamby, *Outline of U.S. History*, (U.S.: Ohio University, 2005), 260.
- ⁴² Ibid, 266.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 259.
- ⁴⁴ Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions," 5.
- ⁴⁵ Hamby, *Outline of U.S. History*, 265.
- ⁴⁶ Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions," 7.
- ⁴⁷ Robin Anne Reid, "Fahrenheit 451 (1953)," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 77.
- ⁴⁸ Hamby, *Outline of U.S. History*, 270.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes, *Gale-Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature*, 4vols. (United States of America: Cengage Learning, 2009), 182.
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 184.
- ⁵² Steven E. Kagle, "Homage to Melville: Ray Bradbury and the Nineteenth-Century American Romance," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 28.

Chapter Two: The Act of Silencing in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

As announced before, this part seeks to analyze the way Ray Bradbury reveals the issue of silence and its role in his novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. Through this section, we intend to show how silence functions as a means of control and oppression. Silence is taken to be the result of passivity and powerlessness. It is related to the "The silence that weighs on the conditions which force citizens [...] to face the alternative of having to abdicate their rights by abstaining from voting or being dispossessed by the fact that they delegate their power."⁵³ This means that people are silenced because of the dominant group who exercise control and oppression against them; as a result, they give up their privileges and become docile and submissive.

1-Silencing as a Means of Control and Oppression in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*:

In Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, the state has silenced its citizens with its control of people's language and communication. The government knows that language is a danger for the state's stability, since "Books and writing are often used to symbolize intelligence and individual knowledge [...] similarly are the burning and destroying of books used as symbols for the destruction of knowledge,"⁵⁴ and this is the reason why "the authorities of the society found in *Fahrenheit 451* go to great lengths to silence any sign of dissention or intellectual deliberation,"⁵⁵ as a result, the system had forbidden any kind of writing or reading to avoid asking questions and thinking; they have ordered the books to be burned to prevent people's resistance and quarrel, because keeping people in ignorance is a significant tool for the regime, since one cannot exercise any resistance without knowledge of an alternative.⁵⁶ As an illustration, when Clarisse questions Montag whether he reads the books he burns, he has answered her "That's against the law,"⁵⁷ which reflects the extent to which the government controls its people, who are silenced to

avoid any desire from them to question their status. Thus, we may relate these ideas to what Bourdieu thinks about the notion of symbolic power:

Symbolic power refer[s] not so much to a specific type of power, but rather to an aspect of most forms of power as they are routinely deployed in social life. For in the routine flow of day-to-day life, power is seldom exercised as overt physical force: instead it is transmuted into a symbolic form, and thereby endowed with a kind of legitimacy that it would not otherwise have.⁵⁸

This quotation demonstrates the way symbolic power is exercised regularly, not as a bodily force but in a symbolic manner. For example, most of the citizens in Fahrenheit's society follow the rules of the firemen's order. The state has established firemen's language as an official language to conduct the state to happiness as a comforting method to justify power and control people's minds.⁵⁹ As a result, the citizens are still acknowledging that this language is the legitimate one without questioning why, and this explains their acceptance of the symbolic violence unconsciously; so, this results in people's acceptance of their positions where the state is controlling the social uses of the official language⁶⁰ to avoid their awareness of the hidden truths of the way "books signify knowledge and power to the owner."⁶¹ Therefore, the state's policy confirms the silenced atmosphere of the city because any act of disobedience means penalty, as it is the case with Clarisse's cousin who was punished because of his disloyalty to the state's official language and law.

Besides, in Fahrenheit's society, there are few citizens who have illegal access to the 'official language'. As an example, Clarisse "challenges the system by speaking up against it through stealing the language and spreading the message of the silenced victims, thus making the act of her narrating a rebellion in itself."⁶² In other words, Clarisse has acquired language from her family; she uses language to communicate freely and against the state's law; her behaviors reveal the real suffering of people under control. However, the remaining citizens are unaware of

their situation, because for them "what the regime says is true, will become true, no matter what the truth really is,"⁶³ as it is the case with Montag, who was not able to get insights to books even though he is a fireman, since both their language and ideas are hidden with the false impression that they are dangerous. In reality, the ideas are powerful and he was not able to understand them in order to change his mind due to the fact that he was blinded with the state's instructions by believing that books are considered as the principal threat to the notions of equality and happiness.⁶⁴ Therefore, we can relate the reflected fictional silence of the novel to the real one related to the period of the 1950s, since "*Fahrenheit 451* begins with an acceptable statement for the silent 1950s in America which demanded a silence to all dissent: "It was a pleasure to burn."⁶⁵ In other words, this statement represents the firemen's maxim concerning the use of fire as a symbol of pressure and a proof of power in *Fahrenheit 451* as well as to the scary atmosphere of the 1950s in America.

Silence is an important issue which is reflected throughout Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The firemen's orders have made every attempt to silence the rebels and to make the finding of words hard. Through silence, the state's oppression continues to survive due to the fact that the government has "the power of imposing a vision of the social world,"⁶⁶ under the illusion of a contented life for the citizens. As an illustration, inside the society of *Fahrenheit*, Bradbury has depicted how the menace of external threats, like war are silenced not only to avoid tensions and anxieties, but also to maintain people's happiness in order to impose the way in which "people will lose their potential to criticize the government because they have limited source of knowledge and information."⁶⁷ Otherwise, the citizens will feel that they are deceived by their state with a pretended contentment; so, they are helping the state's oppression involuntarily and they are unable to realize the falling apart of the world around them; these ideas also may be

connected to Bourdieu's saying that "the most successful ideological effects are those which have no need of words, and ask no more than complicitous silence."⁶⁸

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury portrays the danger of people's great dependence on technology. The citizens of Fahrenheit's society are conducted like robots by their state which bans all acts of thinking and communication. They are perceived to be under constant surveillance, since the secret for preserving the state and keeping the people from uniting and rebelling lies in surveillance and the limitations of communication.⁶⁹ These ideas are best illustrated by Beatty's arguments:

People want to be happy, isn't that right? Haven't you heard it all your life? I want to be happy, people say. Well, aren't they? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give them fun? That's all we live for, isn't it? For pleasure, for titillation? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of these.⁷⁰

This quotation demonstrates that in Fahrenheit's city, the government has taken total control of what its citizens observe and hear, "imposing their own interests as the interests of those whom they represent."⁷¹ And this is the reason why firemen insist that books must be destroyed by burning, because they know that "knowledge is power. Without free speech or access to anything written, it is impossible to acquire knowledge and power."⁷² This idea is best illustrated in this society with Mildred, who is addicted to the Parlor Walls to occupy herself in order not only to reach the pretended happiness, but also to forget her pains, since "she sees the characters in her programs as more real than her husband. However, her unacknowledged unhappiness with her life is shown by regular suicide attempts."⁷³ Accordingly, Mildred, like all the remaining citizens, does not relieve her frustrations and negative feelings by resolving them but by escaping from them due to the fact that her suicide attempt is considered usual to the emergency responders, who have the same cases nine or ten a night.⁷⁴

In addition, banning books means that the right of knowledge is debased. The Parlor Walls and the seashell repress both people's thoughts and actions because "It makes people think that their life is good enough just by listening or watching the entertainment all day long, so they will not have time to think about anything else."⁷⁵ This view also is apparent with Mildred's attempt to hide Montage's rebellion by reading poetry for her friends. She says: "Ladies, once a year, every fireman's allowed to bring one book home, from the old days, to show his family how silly it all was, how nervous that sort of thing can make you, how crazy."⁷⁶ This quotation mirrors the extent to which the citizens of the city are so ignorant and unreceptive about what is going on.

Furthermore, in the state's order, people are not only silenced to avoid any resistance or rebellion but also they have no opportunities to communicate. They are occupied with the state's limited schedule of a happy life because the government filters the knowledge by banning the books, so people will only know what the government wants them to know. Then, by doing this, people also lose their ability to convey their own thoughts.⁷⁷ Therefore, people's stability in their society is based on the technological innovations that, unfortunately, help the firemen to control the society "the way that suits their interests,"⁷⁸ through surveying communication and imposing its lack; one of the instances when this occurs is when Mildred asked her husband for the fourth wall-TV. She says: "It's really fun. It'll be even more fun when we can afford to have the fourth wall installed. How long you figure before we save up and get the fourth wall torn out and a fourth wall-TV put in? It's only two thousand dollars."⁷⁹ The quotation demonstrates that people have no time for thinking about their real life; they just believe in the city's system which conducts them to fulfill their happiness, and in doing so they are thinking that they are living as it should be.

In relation to Bourdieu's views, symbolic power is "An 'invisible' power which is 'misrecognized' as such and thereby 'recognized' as legitimate."⁸⁰ In other words, Fahrenheit's city is conducted by the firemen's rule which is confirmed by the citizens' acceptance of banning books. People in *Fahrenheit 451* are also controlled by government ideologies; they have an unreasonable fear and hatred to the books. Knowledge does not fit with the government long term agenda, so they manipulate people's mind to hate the books. Then, they make people think that the books are very dangerous, reading or even keeping the books is a sin for them.⁸¹ Indeed, the act of forbidding books helps the state to practice its power indirectly since the one who is in control of knowledge is in control of power and consequently controls what can be said and claimed⁸² when people ask only for happiness; for them the government's order is divine and "facts of that sort don't change,"⁸³ as Captain Beatty orders Montag "Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy."⁸⁴

Additionally, we may say that the "authorized language"⁸⁵ has a significant role in silencing people's voices through the concepts of misrecognition and legitimate language. Bourdieu claims that "legitimate language is a semi-artificial language which has to be sustained by a permanent effort of correction, a task which falls both to institutions specially designed for this purpose and to individual speakers."⁸⁶ This citation reflects the way the concepts of recognition and misrecognition are reproducing acts of power, i.e. the way recognition and misrecognition produce the recurrence of silence is through the rulers' different acts, whether they are right or wrong, their behaviors are legitimized for the benefits of the powerful rule since "There are three main agendas [...] in controlling the society. These agendas are: to make people become passive, to make people believe what the government wants them to believe, and to eliminate people's chance to rebel."⁸⁷ This is the reason why symbolic power has to be

understood in and through a given relation between those who exercise power, like Beatty's policy, and those who submit to it, as it is the case with the citizens of the city because in Fahrenheit's society the way the government uses to protect its domination is by banning the books, thus it makes people become dull and have no capacity to think by themselves.⁸⁸

In Fahrenheit's society, the paradox of technology also represents its double-sided effects on privacy. The state uses technology not only as a strategy for creating conformity and equality, but also for spying on and surveying the citizens. For example, Faber is aware of what is happening wrong in his society, but he did not react against the state's restrictions since even if he is "aware of the ongoing injustice and the immense power with which the authoritarian forces reign, yet still trapped within the totalitarian regime."⁸⁹ These ideas demonstrate that the professor knows that he could not do any change alone since anyone who proves individuality, curiosity or signs of misapprehension is subjected to torture or death.⁹⁰ Therefore, we can realize that the fear of punishment leads the citizens to be obedient because "The constraints of the market weigh first and foremost on those members [...] who have no choice but to abdicate or hand over their power to the party."⁹¹ In other words, the fact that those individuals have to give up their power under the state's oppression mirrors the establishment of silence; as result, Faber has remained silent by isolating himself to prevent conflicts with the state because he knows the government considers that "a book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it."⁹²

As another point of clarification, the mechanism used by the authorities to keep people powerless pushed Faber to reveal his views to Montag. Faber knows that the government wants to silence thoughts and values of books to eradicate the power of language and literature, where firefighters are "the Happiness Boys" who "stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought."⁹³ In this way, the state's

oppression is established through violence since the firehouse has the authority to use violence to fight against the criminals who are intellectuals or booklovers in order to keep the safeguarding of the dominant ideology.⁹⁴ As it is the case with Beatty who asserts to Montag that:

Coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book. Serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside. Better yet, into the incinerator. Funerals are unhappy and pagan? Eliminate them, too. Five minutes after a person is dead he's on his way to the Big Flue, the Incinerators serviced by helicopters all over the country. Ten minutes after death a man's a speck of black dust Let's not quibble over individuals with memoriams. Forget them. Burn them all, burn everything.⁹⁵

Furthermore, in Fahrenheit's city, the government has developed the lie of happiness as a truth to emphasize people's hatred of books where violence became a source of entertainment. It is not punishable by the state's rule and it is prevalent on the streets and in broadcast entertainment, which reveals the notion that "violence has become a normal part of life, and people do not question its presence."⁹⁶ In the novel, the familiarity of violence is illustrated by Montag's thought "There are too many of us, he thought. There are billions of us and that's too many. Nobody knows anyone. Strangers come and violate you."⁹⁷ Indeed, we can relay the commonness of violence in Fahrenheit's city to Bourdieu's view, which is "symbolic power requires, as a condition of its success, that those subjected to it believe in the legitimacy of power and the legitimacy of those who wield it."⁹⁸ Also, to have great annoyance, the state also follows the method of compelling the citizens who are distrustful to have psychiatric care. In Fahrenheit's city, Clarisse is an instance of those victims who are forced to go to psychiatrists since they seek to discover what is wrong with her.⁹⁹ Clarisse informs Montag "The psychiatrist wants to know why I go out and hike around in the forests and watch the birds and collect butterflies."¹⁰⁰ Hence, the psychiatrist visits is regarded as means for the state's profit to eliminate people's challenge and disagreement.

Moreover, the authorities adjust people's thinking to be occupied by sports and games. People drive cars very fast and whoever drives slower than the allowed limit can be thrown in jail. Beatty proves this idea by stating that "With school turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkerers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers, and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers, and imaginative creators, the word 'intellectual,' of course, became the swear word it deserved to be."¹⁰¹ Consequently, the government achieves control of the society by telling people what to think, instead of letting them to think for themselves. The goal of doing so is to show that the citizens are silenced with no occasions of speech since "Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are [...]excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence."¹⁰² Therefore, we can deduce that violence is used as a means of oppression in the authoritarian state of *Fahrenheit 451* because the violence that occurs is a warning of what may yet come once intellectualism passes away.¹⁰³

Besides, Bourdieu claims that "in politics, 'to say is to do', that is, it is to get people to believe that you can do what you say."¹⁰⁴ Similarly, in *Fahrenheit 451*, the state tries its best to hide its mistakes to ensure stability and order inside the city of Fahrenheit thanks to its reliance to the media. This idea asserts Bradbury's view about the power of the media not only to lie but also to fake events as a means of state propaganda.¹⁰⁵ The authorities of Fahrenheit did not acknowledge its own deficiency when Montag escapes from the city and when the system of the society fails to catch him. As a result, the state has pretended its success to construct people's trust about the firemen's strength since "the government fakes the news so they can keep [...] their dominance because they know that if people lost their trust of the government, they will face a very big problem."¹⁰⁶ These ideas are illustrated with Granger's description of the scene to Montag:

Right up at the end of that street is our victim. See how our camera is coming in? Building the scene. Suspense. Long shot. Right now, some poor fellow is out for a walk. A rarity. An odd one. Don't think the police don't know the habits of queer ducks like that, men who walk mornings for the hell.¹⁰⁷

This quotation reveals the conduct followed by the state to hide its failure of catching Montag. So, in order to save its face,¹⁰⁸ the state has taken an innocent man's death as a scapegoat to announce for the citizens that "the search is over, Montag is dead; a crime against society has been avenged."¹⁰⁹ Thus, the evidence suggests that these signs indicate that the law was very wrong since language is used as a primary weapon by government to close up people's wonders and rumors and to silence any kind of disobedience because any revolt against the regime is eliminated through propaganda and indoctrination.¹¹⁰ This also is illustrated, within the novel, with the disappearance of Clarisse without explanation, even though Beatty and Mildred has claimed that she was killed in a car accident. Indeed, Bradbury is able to point out that language can be misused to mislead people. He wrote *Fahrenheit 451* as a means to make people aware that this type of society could exist if domination and erosion of language continued. And this can be occurred only when people became afraid of punishment and believe that they are in need for the state's protection due to the negative reminding and positive promising of their ruler.¹¹¹ So, they will conduct themselves to passivity and ignorance with their silence because:

Passive people are the perfect object of the government control, because they will never argue or question the government policies and propagandas. Then, to protect its domination over the society, the government as the representation of the ruling class must make people become an easy object of control. One of the ways that they use is limiting and filtering people's knowledge, which will make them passive.¹¹²

Besides, the policy of Fahrenheit's state seeks to eliminate controversy in order to assert the citizens' submission to their orders. Firemen forbid people's interaction and reading of books because any challenging word is powerful than a sword. For instance, in Fahrenheit's city, the old lady's disobedience signifies madness for the citizens, although in reality she is a martyr for

books. The state's pressure is sustained by people because "symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it."¹¹³ So, this is the reason why the firemen's law is carried on in order:

To remind people of the threat to their protected society [...] People are supposed to learn the lesson without doing anything they are not supposed to. Moreover, they should also feel that it is necessary to be rid of rebels and be reminded that the rulers are needed, caring and protective of their people.¹¹⁴

This quotation claims that the state's propaganda pushes the citizens to report any dissidents. This method of making alarms against the subversives has resulted in an irrational fear from people's side because every individual can never know who to trust with the suspicions of everyone.¹¹⁵ Thus, through this system, the power of words and old books are silenced in order to convince more the citizens about the needlessness of literature and classics, as Beatty informs Montag:

Books say nothing! Nothing you can teach or believe. They're about non-existent people, figments of imagination, if they're fiction. And if they're non-fiction, it's worse, one professor calling another an idiot, one philosopher screaming down another's gullet. All of them running about, putting out the stars and extinguishing the sun. You come away lost.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, Beatty's speech about the history of firemen drives Montag to focus on the way followed by firemen to silence the old lady and Clarisse's independence because "to discourage resistance and to protect its power, the state has probably used this tactic to fake the punishment of the subversives,"¹¹⁷ under the order that they "Must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against."¹¹⁸

Moreover, lack of interest in politics is a strategy of the state to control its citizens' thinking to sustain its "conquest of power".¹¹⁹ The government fills people with entertainment

and makes them busy where no one cares to what happens to each other and "no one has time anymore for anyone else."¹²⁰ Even the right of vote is distorted to fit the goals of the regime. People learn to vote for the attractive candidate because he is appealing for the media. As an example, when the ladies talked about politics, Mrs. Bowles said "I voted last election, same as everyone, and I laid it on the line for President Noble. I think he's one of the nicest-looking men who ever became president."¹²¹ So, one can deduce that people choose to remain ignorant instead of having to face the true reality to avoid the discovery of an uncomfortable lifestyle:

Mildred and her friend's conversations on the politics regarding the presidential election epitomize the shallowness of the debate since it revolves around the candidates' outlook rather than their political campaigns. This indifference to politics is evidently an outcome of the ruling ideology.¹²²

The citation above mirrors the ambiguous society where the state makes its people happy under the illusion that they are learning new things. However, in reality pleasure and thoughts are isolated from them since know-how is far-away, as Montag believes it: "We have everything we need to be happy, but we aren't happy. Something's missing. I looked around. The only thing I positively knew was gone was the books I'd burned in ten or twelve years. So I thought books might help."¹²³

In addition, the immense silence about the destruction of knowledge and the huge dependence on technology has thrown away the enormous need for truth. The Book People are against the way the government of Fahrenheit's city has silenced its citizens by using technology and forbidding classical books since "In the world of *Fahrenheit 451* people have given up thinking for mindless pursuits."¹²⁴ In other words, when any society becomes so blinded by technology, the human life became insignificant and people will live in a total alienation, and this is the reason why Bradbury "In all of his work, he emphasizes basic human values and cautions against unthinking acceptance of technological progress."¹²⁵ Therefore, the book people

want to prevent the development of a "Dark Age"¹²⁶ which resembles Fahrenheit's society. So, they decided to be outcasts by taking nature as a refuge because they know that "a society without education would stagnate in its evolution and might even move backwards."¹²⁷ In fact, the Book People have left Fahrenheit's society to hide outside of it to memorize books and wait for the right time to react. They are aware of the situation where "living among oppression in totalitarian states are the proletariat, the sheep of society, the ones who conduct their lives blissfully, completely unable to "wake up" from their oppressed life and realize the circumstances under which they live."¹²⁸ Thus, their choice to live in the margins of the society is a result of the absurd and insensitive city of Fahrenheit where people are obliged to go with the flow or swim upstream.¹²⁹

Finally, the absence of relationships and intellectual exchanges denotes the great intimidation of the state to its citizens. The regime declares that anyone who breaks the law must be punished and this leads People to be anxious for their safety. As a result, the citizens are conducted to close their eyes to their emotions since the ruler knows that "human emotions like love are also supposed to awaken [...] irrational instincts and thus can serve as a threatening source for the state's control."¹³⁰ This is the reason why, after welcoming Montag back from the dead,¹³¹ Granger clarifies the manner in which the society of Fahrenheit is gone wrong; their way of memorizing books and relating on their human memory to promise a reasonable future for their children. Then, he reaffirms a universal wisdom "Everyone must leave something behind when he dies [...] a child or a book or a painting or a house or a wall built or a pair of shoes made."¹³² Therefore, one may say that the government of Fahrenheit controls its people and oppresses them, since "there are no longer any innocent words. [...] Each word, each expression, threatens to take on two antagonistic senses."¹³³ However, even if this dystopian society "depicts

resistance as futile, that the system is unalterable. Any attempt to make a change to the system, whether by thought or force, is without success,"¹³⁴ we can assume that "To everything there is a season. Yes. A time to break down and a time to build up. Yes. A time to keep silence and a time to speak."¹³⁵

Endnotes:

⁵³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1982), ed. John B. Thompson, trans. G. Raymond & M. Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 171.

⁵⁴ David Pascoe, "The Power of Fictional Constructed Languages in Post-War English Literature 1948 – 1980" (BA thesis, Utrecht University, July 2015), 28.

⁵⁵ Henriette Wien, "The Power of Discourse" (master's thesis, University of Tromsø, Autumn 2012), 3. Viewed on June 15th, 2017. Available on: <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/4848/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>

⁵⁶ Fredrik Pettersson, "Discourse and Oppression in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" (Linnaeus University, 2014), 10.

⁵⁷ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953; repr. Cambridge: Pro Quest LLC [eng], 2002), 16.

⁵⁸ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 23.

⁵⁹ Fredrik Nyström, "Surveilled and Silenced: a Study about Acquiring and Maintaining Power in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" (Halmstad University, 2012), 11.

⁶⁰ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 45.

⁶¹ Nyström, "Surveilled and Silenced," 16.

⁶² Julia Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel: A Comparative Analysis" (master's thesis, California State University, 2012), 70.

⁶³ Pettersson, "Discourse and Oppression in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*," 18.

⁶⁴ Bülent Somay, "Ideological Apparatuses of the (Fantastic) State: Repressive and Non-Repressive State Apparatuses in the 20th Century Dystopian Novels" (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2006), 97.

⁶⁵ Jack Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 5.

⁶⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 221.

⁶⁷ Muhammad Septian Haryando, "Government Control and Restriction on Society as Reflected in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury: an Intertextual

Reading” (English Department, Andalas University 2015), Vivid Journal Vol.4 No.1, 5. Viewed on December 28th, 2017. Available on:

<http://download.portalgaruda.org/article.php?article=359474&val=7493&title=Government%20Control%20and%20Restriction%20on%20Society%20as%20Reflected%20in%20Nineteen%20EightyFour%20by%20George%20Orwell%20and%20Fahrenheit%20451%20by%20Ray%20Bradbury:%20an%20Intertextual%20Reading>

⁶⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 188.

⁶⁹ Nyström, “Surveilled and Silenced,” 18.

⁷⁰ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 169.

⁷¹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 175.

⁷² Nyström, “Surveilled and Silenced,” 15.

⁷³ Robin Anne Reid, “Fahrenheit 451 (1953),” in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 76.

⁷⁴ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 39.

⁷⁵ Hradec Králové, “Dystopia and Society: George Orwell and Ray Bradbury” (Univerzita Hradec Králové, 2016), 7. Viewed on December 28th, 2017. Available on: <https://theses.cz/id/v7c7g5/STAG83364.pdf> *dystopia and society*

⁷⁶ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 282.

⁷⁷ Muhammad Septian Haryando, “Government Control and Restriction on Society,” 5.

⁷⁸ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 219.

⁷⁹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 54- 55.

⁸⁰ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 23.

⁸¹ Králové, “Dystopia and Society,” 6.

⁸² Pettersson, “Discourse and Oppression,” 9.

⁸³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 174.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 133.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 60.

⁸⁷ Králové, “Dystopia and Society,” 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 5.

⁸⁹ Kristian Leonhardsen, Anonymous, 39. Viewed on December 28th, 2017. Available on:

<https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/299848/Masteroppgave%20Kristian%20Leonhardsen.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

- ⁹⁰ Vojin Dimitrijević, *The Reign of Terror: A study on human rights and state terror*, trans. Ana Knežević Bojović (Belgrade, 2016), 21.
- ⁹¹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 173.
- ⁹² Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 166.
- ⁹³ Ibid, 176.
- ⁹⁴ Evrim Ersöz Koç, “Subject and State: Ideology, State Apparatuses and Interpellation in *Fahrenheit 451*” (Turkey: Dokuz Eylül University, 2015), 109-110.
- ⁹⁵ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 170.
- ⁹⁶ Jonathan De Souza, “Violence and Society in Dystopian Fiction” (BA thesis, Universiteit Utrecht, 2011), 8.
- ⁹⁷ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 41.
- ⁹⁸ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 23.
- ⁹⁹ Králové, “Dystopia and Society,” 17.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 61.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid, 165-166
- ¹⁰² Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 55.
- ¹⁰³ De Souza, “Violence and Society in Dystopian Fiction,” 8.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 190.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ersöz Koç, “Subject and State,” 114.
- ¹⁰⁶ Králové, “Dystopia and Society,” 6.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 423.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 424.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 427.
- ¹¹⁰ Gerhard, “Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel,” 63.
- ¹¹¹ Nyström, “Surveilled and Silenced,” 10.
- ¹¹² Harley Ferris, “A Study in Dystopian Fiction” (ENGL 487, Independent Study), 4.
- ¹¹³ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 164.
- ¹¹⁴ Nyström, “Surveilled and Silenced,” 12.

- ¹¹⁵ Pettersson, "Discourse and Oppression," 13
- ¹¹⁶ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 177-178
- ¹¹⁷ Ersöz Koç, "Subject and State," 114.
- ¹¹⁸ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 166.
- ¹¹⁹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 181.
- ¹²⁰ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 63.
- ¹²¹ Ibid, 275.
- ¹²² Ersöz Koç, "Subject and State," 119-120.
- ¹²³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 230-231.
- ¹²⁴ Ray Bradbury, "Burning Bright," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 19.
- ¹²⁵ Anne Marie Hacht and Dwayne D. Hayes, *Gale-Contextual Encyclopedia of American Literature*, 4vols. (United States of America: Cengage Learning, 2009), 183.
- ¹²⁶ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 439.
- ¹²⁷ Nyström, "Surveilled and Silenced," 15-16.
- ¹²⁸ Kristian Leonhardsen, Anonymous, 39.
- ¹²⁹ Ferris, "Study in Dystopian Fiction," 26.
- ¹³⁰ Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel," 17.
- ¹³¹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 428.
- ¹³² Ibid, 448.
- ¹³³ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 40.
- ¹³⁴ Kristian Leonhardsen, Anonymous, 45.
- ¹³⁵ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 473.

Chapter Three: The Relationship between Language and Power in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

This chapter deals with the analysis of language and its relationship with power in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* by applying Pierre Bourdieu's approach. By focusing on the linkage between language and power, the center of attention in this analysis is on their connectedness to analyze the power relationships of the protagonist, Montag, with the other characters, especially Clarisse McClellan, Captain Beatty and Professor Faber, because their power relationships are best portrayed through the language they use within their conversations.

1- Language in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*:

Bradbury's work is concerned with the survival of language and the power of the written word, since it presents a future where there is no reasonable position for books;

The dystopian future in the novel is also created by the social control of history and knowledge, enforced through the technology of book burning. Since access to printed knowledge and books is restricted, the only source for information is the government, which presents a distorted and simplified view of history. The government is not the only cause of this future: Beatty and Faber claim that the American population, in its desire for positive images and simplicity, demanded the suppression of books as complex, contradictory, and difficult.¹³⁶

This means that language plays a dangerous role in Fahrenheit's society due to the fact that the state forbids all acts of reading, writing, or owning books which "took some man a lifetime maybe to put some of his thoughts down, looking around at the world and life,"¹³⁷ as books reflect a great threat for the citizens' happiness and the strength of the government through the know-how they contain. The menace of books for the state's conduct is the reason why firemen take the shot from the weapon to violate man's mind.¹³⁸ However, it is worth mentioning that book's rejection started with people's lack of interest in them and not through the state; the latter gains benefits from the citizens' behavior by emphasizing the idea of book's danger to eliminate

citizen's thinking and by instructing in people the hate of books to reach an illusory life of happiness and equality. So, Bradbury, in his novel, focuses on how the government gained power over the society when the citizens have given up themselves the value of reading books; as a result, the firemen have limited people's rights by putting strict laws to forbid reading and communication between people in order to fulfill a happy life for all the citizens of the state, because "The government has convinced people that the way their society functions and government operates is intended for the common good of the state and its citizens."¹³⁹ This idea claims what Bourdieu states: "the language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs,"¹⁴⁰ which means that when people do not reclaim about their position they facilitate the state's manipulation which pretends that it works for their benefits.

In Bradbury's novel, firemen are executing their power by forcing people to be passive following the narrated law of the state, as it is the case with Captain Beatty who claims to Montag the legitimacy of the profession of firefighters:

There was no longer need of firemen for the old purposes. They were given the new job, as custodians of our peace of mind, the focus of our understandable and rightful dread of being inferior; official censors, judges, and executors. That's you, Montag, and that's me.¹⁴¹

The above quotation reveals the higher position of firemen in their society and the importance of their order, as a result, people's minds are controlled by the limit of the language that is allowed to be used in order that they would not have words to express their thoughts and feelings; so, there is no creative thinking or choice due to the fact that: "[e]limination of the old words and their linguistic meanings from the language not only suggests the [...] attempt to erase the past and abrogate human history, but it also reveals the[...] intention to control man through language."¹⁴²

In addition, the state does not only control the thoughts of the present life of its citizens, but also their past which is established by changing the citizens' rights like the one of reading. For example, Clarisse asks Montag "Do you ever read any of the books you burn?"¹⁴³ He laughed and answered her that the idea is an opponent to the rule,¹⁴⁴ this reflects people's unawareness of their own rights since one of the ways which the state uses to manipulate and control "the human mind and in particular memory, is through the extermination and falsification of any historical facts."¹⁴⁵ As another instance, firemen's job is opposed to its real function; Clarisse's question illustrates this thought when she wonders: "Is it true that long ago firemen put fires out instead of going to start them?"¹⁴⁶ But, Montag responded negatively, because for him houses have always been burnable.¹⁴⁷ Clarisse's awareness helps her to realize that what he has said is "Strange" due to the fact that she "heard once that a long time ago houses used to burn by accident and they needed firemen to stop the flames."¹⁴⁸ So, Clarisse's language claims her thoughts which are far from the imposed vision of the state's oppression because she seldom watches the 'Parlour walls'.¹⁴⁹

Then, firemen's attempt to devalue the power of language and books symbolizes their totalitarian regime over the citizens who are only following them. For this reason, Montag requires Professor Faber's aid, because as he says "Nobody listens any more. I can't talk to the walls because they're yelling at me. I can't talk to my wife; she listens to the walls. I just want someone to hear what I have to say. And maybe if I talk long enough, it'll make sense. And I want you to teach me to understand what I read."¹⁵⁰ In doing so, Montag recognizes the great injustices that are applied to hide the valuable knowledge of book and the irrational regime of their totalitarian society. As a result, he begins to reflect his acts of rebellion and resistance against the oppressive society where he lives; his transformation and change allows him to

become an active citizen. For instance, his change is depicted through the language he uses to express his thinking, as he tells Millie:

Is it because we're having so much fun at home we've forgotten the world? Is it because we're so rich and the rest of the world's so poor and we just don't care if they are? I've heard rumours; the world is starving, but we're well-fed. Is it true, the world works hard and we play? Is that why we're hated so much? I've heard the rumours about hate, too, once in a long while, over the years. Do you know why? I don't, that's sure! Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave. They just might stop us from making the same damn insane mistakes!¹⁵¹

This quotation expresses the extent to which Montag represents his suspicion about the hidden reality of books and his curiosity to discover reality.

Pierre Bourdieu in his work, *Language and Symbolic Power*, refers to Mikhail Bakhtin by saying: "Mikhail Bakhtin reminds us that, in revolutionary situations, common words take on opposite meanings. In fact, there are no neutral."¹⁵² This means that in revolutionary circumstances words carry a contradictory meaning for people who live in various social conditions. Similarly, in *Fahrenheit 451*, words have opposite significance for the citizens inside the society; as an example, Faber has supposed to Montag the objective of books, where he thinks that "the books are to remind us what asses and fools we are,"¹⁵³ although he believes:

Most of us can't rush around, talking to everyone, know all the cities of the world, we haven't time, money or that many friends. The things you're looking for, Montag, are in the world, but the only way the average chap will ever see ninety-nine per cent of them is in a book.¹⁵⁴

Also, the firemen's official slogan is "It's fine work. Monday burn Millay, Wednesday Whitman, Friday Faulkner, burn 'em to ashes, then burn the ashes."¹⁵⁵ And this means that the slogan has an opposite meaning because instead of the firemen's looking for the appropriate ways of preserving classic books, as the Book People do outside of Fahrenheit's city and who assume that their life is devoted to save knowledge.¹⁵⁶ However, the firefighters see that "Classics cut to fit fifteen-

minute radio shows,"¹⁵⁷ and the dictionaries were used for reference¹⁵⁸ and the cartoons and pictures in books push the mind to drink less and less.¹⁵⁹

In Fahrenheit's city, the citizens are united under the state's order but separated from the remaining world. They are forbidden to learn how to think; people have to believe that the state is working to make them live with contentment without books as a result they "are so accustomed to their routine that they fail to see any flaws within the system and believe that this is how their life should be."¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately, they would not know that they are living in a total ignorance in comparison with the people who live out of the state of Fahrenheit. All the citizens speak but no one is free to use his language as he wishes, and the only communication they are allowed to have is with their relatives. This is evident with Clarisse's saying:

Uncle says there used to be front porches. And people sat there sometimes at night, talking when they wanted to talk, rocking, and not talking when they didn't want to talk. Sometimes they just sat there and thought about things, turned things over. My uncle says the architects got rid of the front porches because they didn't look well. But my uncle says that was merely rationalizing it; the real reason, hidden underneath, might be they didn't want people sitting like that, doing nothing, rocking, talking; that was the wrong kind of social life. People talked too much. And they had time to think. So they ran off with the porches.¹⁶¹

This quotation denotes that in a society where reading is strictly forbidden, as it is the case with the society of Fahrenheit, any act of reading is a form of rebellion and the state restricts people's communication to only what is acceptable to the state's law and benefits in order to prevent the citizens of the city from discussing any unwanted ideas or thoughts because language is not only speech, but also reading and writing. So, instead of deleting only some words or meanings from the citizens language, firemen's order banned all books of literature and classics; the permitted ones are comics, the good old confessions, or trade journals¹⁶² and the three dimensional sex magazines.¹⁶³ Thus, the government's aim is to abolish people's thoughts and restrict their language which leads to the control of people's actions too.

In fact, the issue of using language as a tool to establish social order in Fahrenheit's society is apparent through the different relationships of the characters and the way they use language to communicate. In Fahrenheit's society, people's right of free thinking is taken-for-granted and is considered to be a crime against the state, which results that language became a tool of mind control and oppression. So, to deal with the significance of how language demonstrates power relationships in the mentioned novel, the following analysis is devoted to discuss the different power relationships of Montag with the other characters, mainly: McClellan Clarisse, Captain Beatty, and Professor Faber.

1-1- Guy Montag and Clarisse McClellan:

Clarisse's speech symbolically demonstrates her ability to be useful in the society of Fahrenheit. She breaks the rules as she performs forbidden acts, for instance she does not go to school because they "don't miss" her and she is considered "anti-social."¹⁶⁴ In this context, she explains for Montag that she does not like school for its program of:

An hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, and more sports, but do you know, we never ask questions, or at least most don't; they just run the answers at you, bing, bing,bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film-teacher. That's not social to me at all.¹⁶⁵

This quotation reflects that Clarisse ignores the law of education and goes against the values of the state's order since she uses the power of knowledge and the word to establish her own position within her own society. As a result, she is aware of the real status of Montag because

Clarisse infers that his consciousness has been stunted by the two-hundred-foot-long billboards, the parlour walls, races, and fun parks, all of which she avoids because they prevent her from being alone with her own thoughts.¹⁶⁶

In addition, Bourdieu claims that: "the relations of communication [...] are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized."¹⁶⁷ This means that the individuals' communications and way of thinking are

constructed according to their interactions inside the social structures of the field where they interact. Thus, the status of Clarisse is defined not only as an ordinary individual but also as an intellectual who sustains the protagonist and contributes most to his change, and her power is highlighted with the place of their meeting which is nature inside their society. Furthermore, Bourdieu considers language to be both a method of communication and a mechanism of power.¹⁶⁸ He emphasizes that the essential in human communication is the social space where interactions occur. In Fahrenheit's city, the street is the social space where Montag and Clarisse communicate. Clarisse loves nature where she uses her mind to think and her tongue to question her wonders with Montag; and this act is against the order of the state which controls its citizens with technology and forbids people's meeting in nature. So, Clarisse exposes her power that comes from her reading of books and her uncle's wakefulness to debate with Montag to whom she says "I'm not afraid of you at all,"¹⁶⁹ and this because many people are afraid of firemen, but she sees him an ordinary man.¹⁷⁰

Fahrenheit's society is restricting all its citizens from any opportunity which may lead them to think. And even loneliness is not permitted because people are occupied with TV Walls programs; as a result, Clarisse is proud of her difference in relation to the others; this is best explained through her conversation with Montag when she says "I haven't any friends. That's supposed to prove I'm abnormal. But everyone I know is either shouting or dancing around like wild or beating up one another. Do you notice how people hurt each other nowadays?"¹⁷¹ Clarisse also demonstrates the great threat which she represents to the society due to the fact that individuality is considered a crime in a totalitarian state since it engages the competence to think differently from others or feel emotions; thus, it has to be eradicated.¹⁷²

In addition, for Clarisse's reactions against the law when she performs acts of rebellion, Montag tells his wife that people like Clarisse are needed because "men like Beatty are afraid of her. I can't understand it. Why should they be so afraid of someone like her?"¹⁷³ So we can link his statement to what Bourdieu has said "the use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse, depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he can have to the language of the institution, that is, to the official [...]and legitimate speech."¹⁷⁴ In other words, the use of language in Fahrenheit's society is restricted only to the state benefits; people have no access for it because they are only conducted with the language of the 'Parlor Walls'. So, their position as citizens does not permit for them to find or use other language than the one of the state; whereas, Clarisse has acquired a position against the state thanks to her admission to the language of books and her uncle's clarifications. As a result, we may deduce that Clarisse has the power of language through which she provides her idea for the need of the development of rebels; in fact, Clarisse is a source of power for Montag's awareness.

Besides, the education of her family gives her a full power to challenge the society that restricts her happiness. Clarisse crosses the boundaries because she rejects the restrictions of the society,

Clarisse, a young woman who lives with her family near Montag, likes to do things most people consider crazy: walk at night; talk about happiness, love, and nature; and question what is presented as normal or socially appropriate.¹⁷⁵

Although she knows the punishment of the state for the disobedient citizens from the experience of her uncle, as she says "My uncle drove slowly on a highway once. He drove forty miles an hour and they jailed him for two days. Isn't that funny, and sad, too?"¹⁷⁶

Montag's conversation with Clarisse awakens him to transform into an active citizen rather than an authoritarian fireman. When he becomes determined to spread the truth of books,

he convinced himself to do it alone.¹⁷⁷ He breaks the rules of his own profession by finding that language is considered too dangerous to be used; and when "Clarisse was gone,"¹⁷⁸ he has lost the file. Therefore, he decides to use the weapon that the authorities fear and forbid when he realizes that the evil within their society was not a result of books, but instead people's lack of awareness about the necessity of reading books was the great issue; this best mirrors his discovered wakefulness, as when he tells his wife "I thought about books. And for the first time I realized that a man was behind each one of the books. A man had to think them up. A man had to take a long time to put them down on paper. And I'd never even thought that thought before."¹⁷⁹

Moreover, the totalitarian society in Fahrenheit is lacking its own history and classical literature. Montag as a fireman does not know the history of his profession until Captain Beatty narrates it to him:

When did it all start, you ask, this job of ours, how did it come about, where, when? Well, I'd say it really got started around about a thing called the Civil War. Even though our rule-book claims it was founded earlier. The fact is we didn't get along well until photography came into its own. Then--motion pictures in the early twentieth century. Radio. Television. Things began to have mass.¹⁸⁰

This quotation illustrates that the system of governance conducts the city to live in a pretended natural way because the citizens do not know about the stories of the previous generations; only those who read books or lived in the ancient time or live outside of Fahrenheit's city know about the past. As an illustration, Clarisse's communication with Montag is arguable thanks to her uncle's guidance. Montag remarks this by saying "Your uncle said, your uncle said. Your uncle must be a remarkable man."¹⁸¹ So, their power relationship is confirmed through language. They have a unified relationship as Clarisse emphasizes her power when she communicates with him on the one hand; on the other hand, Montag's relationship changes along with his shifting position in his society. This is explained by the manner in which Montag is trying to discover and

reveal the hidden value of books, under the surveillance of the firemen's regime, thanks to Faber's affirmation too "It's not books you need, it's some of the things that once were in books. The same things could be in the 'parlour families' today. The same infinite detail and awareness could be projected through the radios and televisions, but are not."¹⁸²

Besides, the lack of information is part of the state regime in order to limit people's knowledge. Banning literature and books also are means of distorting reality and making people believe that they are happy with their life to prevent debatable thoughts through the power of words. As an illustration, after Clarisse's disappearance, Montag wonders and thinks about the reason why the old lady remains in her place i.e. she made him curious about her reason to break the law and to be burned, he says to Mildred "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."¹⁸³ Therefore, the old lady knows the power of the written word, albeit she was facing death but this woman "knelt among the books, touching the drenched leather and cardboard, reading the gilt titles with her fingers while her eyes accused Montag "You can't ever have my books,"¹⁸⁴ i.e. she knows how important it is to think, gain knowledge, and learn from the past as the word of wisdom says that to know is to win.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, we see that contrary to Mildred and her friends who are shallow and materialistic, Clarisse's role in this dystopian city is to change Montag; she enlightens his road as a candlelight and opens his eyes to the true and real problems of Fahrenheit's society.

1-2- Guy Montag and Captain Beatty:

The main objective of Firemen is to use power in order to burn books. Montag's power relationship with Beatty is an ambivalent one due to the fact that Beatty uses a fight with language against Montag who had lacked it but then he has acquired its power later on. By

analyzing Montag's relationships, we find that there are many ways in which his position changes in the society and his relationships also change. Montag is a powerful fireman in Fahrenheit society who was a dominant before realizing the real goal of books; then, he became a victim of the regime who has symbolic power and linguistic capital; however, Montag does not remain on the same position till the end, since he has succeeded to gain knowledge and power when he manages to break out of Fahrenheit's city.

Bourdieu claims that power comes into the language from outside.¹⁸⁶ In Fahrenheit's society, this opinion can be related to the different social positions between Montag and the other characters. Those positions are the key factors which demonstrate their influence on each other, and their conversations are the tools from which they realize their position within their society. Bourdieu claims also that language can work for and against one's goals.¹⁸⁷ Also, this idea is related to some citizens of Fahrenheit's society who have been silenced by the regime, and this is best explained by Faber's words to Montag:

You are looking at a coward. I saw the way things were going, a long time back. I said nothing. I'm one of the innocents who could have spoken up and out when no one would listen to the 'guilty', but I did not speak and thus became guilty myself. And when finally they set the structure to burn the books, using the firemen, I grunted a few times and subsided, for there were no others grunting or yelling with me, by then. Now, it's too late.¹⁸⁸

Besides, according to Bourdieu, it depends on the surroundings of the speakers what kind of language they use and what kind of language they can and are supposed to use since individuals speak with different degrees of authority and it depends on the person's use of words and how much strength those words carry.¹⁸⁹ That is to say, power is related to language thanks to individual's communication and is tightly connected with the social position of the speaker. Beatty is very abrupt and authoritative when speaking, because he tries to demonstrate to his adversaries that he has the power to conduct them to what he wants, and this is apparent when he

orders Mildred to shut the 'relatives' up.¹⁹⁰ As a result, in Bradbury's novel, Beatty is the only one who uses words and speaks as he wants, since he has been given a great deal of power by the institution of the state due to the fact that "In keeping with the idea that knowledge is power, Bradbury gives us several hints that the fire chief has had frequent access to the forbidden texts and that this is either a cause or a result of his being made chief."¹⁹¹

Moreover, for Bourdieu the state creates a unified linguistic Market, where only the official language is accepted and this official language is the language taught to children at school.¹⁹² In *Fahrenheit*, the official language is the language taught to the citizen through TV Wall screens- the relatives; as it is the case with Mildred and her friends who represent the way all the citizens live in the city of Fahrenheit, and this explains how the state facilitates a program of total conformity and the way this government encourages people to believe in the state's norms. For example, Beatty summarizes the basic points of a happy society for Montag; he asserts:

You can't build a house without nails and wood. If you don't want a house built, hide the nails and wood. If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none. Let him forget there is such a thing as war.¹⁹³

In this sense, Beatty uses his knowledge to manipulate the others, because as a fireman he uses his know-how to his full advantage. So, Beatty is the only one who is good with using words and arguments. When Beatty tries to impose his superiority whenever he can, Montag remains obedient with a silence which is understood as an alert to the Captain i.e. Montag looks for hidden reasons behind Beatty's words and behaviors, and this conduct has pushed the Captain to reach the conclusion that Montag is trying to deceive him, because "despite Beatty's explanation, Montag is firm in his resolution, for he suspects that there is more to Beatty's analysis than meets

the eye."¹⁹⁴ As an instance, the following conversation between Captain Beatty and Montag illustrates these ideas well. It is stated:

Montag asked his chief: "what if a fireman accidentally, really not, intending anything, takes a book home with him?" Beatty answered him: "A natural error. Curiosity alone," then he added "We don't get over-anxious or mad. We let the fireman keep the book twenty-four hours. If he hasn't burned it by then, we simply come and burn it for him."¹⁹⁵

So, through this dialogue, Bradbury shows us how the lack of human rights, like: free speech, communication, and reading, result in a total helplessness.

In addition, within the novel, Montag is depicted losing his own control over the situation when he tries to convince Mildred's friends about the importance of books. His reading of poetry to Mildred's friends aims to affirm that he has acquired the power to expand his unofficial linguistic competence and that he does not follow the rules of Fahrenheit's city. Opposing Montag, Captain Beatty's realization of book's power allows him to use his knowledge to deceive the others and to rationalize the work of the firemen. For instance, Beatty quotes from literature contradictory saying in order to frighten Montag; Beatty begins by trying to push Montag to reveal his secrets, by stating that if he hides his ignorance, no one will hit him and he'll never learn,¹⁹⁶ then, he argues in opposition to what he has said:

The crisis is past and all is well, the sheep returns to the fold. We're all sheep who have strayed at times. Truth is truth, to the end of reckoning, we've cried. They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts, we've shouted to ourselves. 'Sweet food of sweetly uttered knowledge,' Sir Philip Sidney said. But on the other hand: 'Words are like leaves and where they most abound, much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.'
Alexander Pope. What do you think of that?¹⁹⁷

Furthermore, Beatty contradicts his first sayings against books by claiming "What traitors books can be! You think they're backing you up, and they turn on you."¹⁹⁸ In other words, books become the institution which gives ultimate power to its readers as it is the case with Beatty who defeats Montag through his know-how, whereas this latter sat like a carved white stone.¹⁹⁹ Thus,

the conversation between Montag and his boss gets lots of their power from the position of the speakers as well as their surroundings in Bourdieu's terms. Therefore, Beatty follows no doubt the principal support of the dream of absolute power²⁰⁰ because he knows that who controls language can control people who use it; as a result, this is the reason why he blames Montag "Give a man a few lines of verse and he thinks he's the Lord of all Creation. You think you can walk on water with your books. Well, the world can get by just fine without them. Look where they got you."²⁰¹

Additionally, Montag's consciousness flourished with the help of the Professor Faber who has accepted to assist him against Beatty from whom Montag is afraid because the Captain is "read enough so he has all the answers, or seems to have."²⁰² When Beatty sees Montag's power increasing more than him, he is depicted trying to get back his powerful position after a close surveillance to Montag's behavior. Beatty compensates his position by using the Mechanical Hound's aid and the threat of fire which is used to burn everything in order to make sure that the city is under control; as an example, Beatty charges Montag for his disobedience of the Fireman's order "Now you did it. Old Montag wanted to fly near the sun and now that he's burnt his damn wings, he wonders why. Didn't I hint enough when I sent the Hound around your place?"²⁰³ So, as a Captain and through his official status, his struggle and supported position, Beatty tries to impose his order on Montag to burn his own house "I want you to do this job all by your lonesome, Montag. Not with kerosene and a match, but piecework, with a flamethrower. Your house, your clean-up."²⁰⁴ In contrast to Beatty, Montag reaches the Knowledge which allows him to gain control over Beatty. This idea demonstrates that he can be an equal to Beatty by knowing how to use language, since repression helped Montag to reach an individual consciousness which proves the development of his own strength of mind. He did not want to kill anyone, not even

Beatty.²⁰⁵ However, when Beatty shows a weakness by losing control over himself, Montag sees him "just stood there, joking, needling,"²⁰⁶ he realizes that he must remember "burn them or they'll burn you" because fire is best for everything.²⁰⁷

Finally, the institution and its agents are connected through a complex relationship, as Bourdieu expresses it:

The law which governs the exchanges between agents and institutions can be expressed in this way: the institution gives everything, starting with power over the institution, to those who have given everything to the institution. But this is because they were nothing outside the institution or without the institution and because they cannot deny the institution without purely and simply denying themselves by depriving themselves of everything that they have become through and for the institution to which they owe everything.²⁰⁸

This quotation shows how the citizens are dependent on the state's conduct, and the latter sets the rules to conduct the society. But, the oppressive states always find themselves penalized by their own orders, by establishing the old saying that "what goes around comes around", and really this is what has happened to Beatty in Fahrenheit's society. Because he himself was forcing the establishment of the firemen's commands, his end was achieved by Montag. In other words, although Beatty has a high symbolic power in the society of Fahrenheit, but the Captain loses his power totally after Montag's defeat. So, we can understand that Montag's disobedience to the regime reflects the way his awareness leads to his change, because "He does not want to be defined according to his social function anymore."²⁰⁹ In fact, the analysis of the power relationship between Captain Beatty and Montag demonstrates how it is often the linguistic capacity to utter some words that makes the distribution of power. Thus, we find that the power relationship between Montag and Beatty is a flexible one.

1-3- Guy Montag and Professor Faber:

At first, Montag, as a firefighter, has less linguistic competence because he had no literacy and no knowledge about the world of books; However, when he realizes that Faber is belonging

to the past and he has enough power and linguistic capital to manipulate the market and create a 'profit of distinction' for Montag's own advantage,²¹⁰ he looks for Faber and requests him to teach him in order to fight Beatty. Faber, as a retired professor, wonders about Montag's real intentions. He is doubtful about Montag's reality by saying to him "You're a hopeless romantic,"²¹¹ and this is the result of his own disappointment of the state's total censorship of books and communication inside his society. However, Faber has accepted to help Montag to show that "One of the main functions Faber serves in the novel is to answer some of Montag's questions and to give him ideas for how to change what he is doing."²¹²

Moreover, Montag realizes that information is so important than material things. He wants to discover and understand the world contained in books, as he affirms it "someone somewhere will give me back the old face and the old hands the way they were."²¹³ In Bourdieu's terms, language reflects institutionalized power, and the complex relations between the speaker, the language and the social space determine who and to what degree has the right to be listened to, who has the right to interrupt the speaker or who has the right to ask questions.²¹⁴ In other words, Montag is a fireman who wants Faber to help him inside their city of Fahrenheit and against the regime of firemen, but this latter who was a professor does not believe him since he is only a citizen under the rule of firefighters; he knows that his language is rejected compared to that of the institution and he has no right to say something against the order of the state. These ideas are best illustrated with a conversation between Montag and Faber. As it is stated:

When Montag asked Faber for work together, He was surprised from the pronoun 'we', Montag explained it more by saying: "You and I." "Oh, no!" Faber sat up. "But let me tell you my plan--" "If you insist on telling me, I must ask you to leave." "But aren't you interested?" "Not if you start talking the sort of talk that might get me burnt for my trouble. The only way I could possibly listen to you would be if somehow the fireman structure itself could be burnt."²¹⁵

This citation demonstrates that the first plan of Faber is used only as a mockery to reflect his hate of firemen. But after his realization of Montag's real conversion, he becomes satisfied with his recognition that rebellion against the state's laws attains Montag. Therefore, Faber encourages Montag to break the rules of Fahrenheit; as he advises him "Don't look to be saved in any one thing, person, machine, or library. Do your own bit of saving, and if you drown, at least die knowing you were headed for shore."²¹⁶ Then, he directs him to remember that "the firemen are rarely necessary. The public itself stopped reading of its own accord."²¹⁷ So, Faber's and Montag's power relationship is organized thanks to their shared awareness of the state's illegal power against books, following the idea that those who don't build must burn.²¹⁸

One can find also that through language, the nuances of power relations are expressed in the relationships between Montag and Beatty and between Montag and Faber, i.e. through their communications we understand how much power they gain or lose through their conversations. For instance, Beatty and Faber cause ongoing battle for the status of Montag, and this is mirrored with Faber's saying to Montag:

All right, he's had his say. You must take it in. I'll say my say, too, in the next few hours. And you'll take it in. And you'll try to judge them and make your decision as to which way to jump, or fall. But I want it to be your decision, not mine, and not the Captain's. But remember that the Captain belongs to the most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom.²¹⁹

So, this quotation represents the linguistic capacity of Faber to pronounce his desired ideas in order to show the way for Montag who is in need to make the distribution of power changes, either by following Beatty's orders or by applying Faber's guidelines.

Moreover, the law of the totalitarian society of Fahrenheit stands on the idea that it controls thoughts by controlling language. As a result, inside the city, the citizens are turned inhuman; they are following the firemen's commands and the city's organization through the TV Walls

programs, where they cannot realize that they are deprived from the real language which is that of the classical books. To illustrate this point, when Faber was turning the pages in the Bible, he explained to Montag how the state has cleansed the real image of their Christ:

It's as good as I remember. Lord, how they've changed it- in our `parlours' these days. Christ is one of the `family' now. I often wonder it. God recognizes His own son the way we've dressed him up, or is it dressed him down? He's a regular peppermint stick now, all sugar crystal and saccharine when he isn't making veiled references to certain commercial products that every worshipper absolutely needs.²²⁰

The quotation reflects that even the Bible is rewritten for the benefits of the Firemen regime in order to control the citizens of the society, where religion is educated only on the Parlour Walls.

Besides, when Montag gains his awareness about the power of the word, he eventually rejects his previous authoritarian culture which considers books evil since they make people question and think. As a result, Faber proposes for Montag the way to pass the river in order to run from the state's chase; he helped Montag not only with directions, but also with a suitcase full of Faber's dirtiest clothes "To keep the ancient odour of Mr. Faber in,"²²¹ and to deceive the Mechanical Hound. Furthermore, Faber's involvement in Montag's improvement of power is by facilitating the way for Montag to meet the Book People. He has informed Montag that:

There's lots of old Harvard degrees on the tracks between here and Los Angeles. Most of them are wanted and hunted in the cities. They survive, I guess. There aren't many of them, and I guess the Government's never considered them a great enough danger to go in and track them down. You might hole up with them for a time and get in touch with me.²²²

Therefore, Montag has a consistent relationship with the professor Faber since he arrives to think that: "He would be Montag-plus-Faber, fire plus water, and then, one day, after everything had mixed and simmered and worked away in silence, there would be neither fire nor water, but wine."²²³ i.e. the suggestion of wine is used as a symbol for the Book People who represents the qualities of Montag plus Faber. Therefore, these ideas indicate to what level Bradbury believes in the power of literature to direct and reinforce people's interactions through language. As a result,

we may deduce that it is through language that the degree of power relations are expressed in the dynamic power relationships of the protagonist with the other characters and this claims Bourdieu's statement that "the notions of symbolic power and symbolic violence are rather flexible notions."²²⁴

Endnotes:

¹³⁶ Robin Anne Reid, "Fahrenheit 451 (1953), in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom, (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 77.

¹³⁷ Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953; repr. Cambridge: Pro Quest LLC [eng], 2002), 147.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 167.

¹³⁹ Julia Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel: A Comparative Analysis" (master's thesis, California State University, 2012), 37.

¹⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1982), ed. John B. Thompson, trans. G. Raymond & M. Adamson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 91.

¹⁴¹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 167.

¹⁴² Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel," 88.

¹⁴³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 16.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel," 59.

¹⁴⁶ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 17.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 230.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 204.

¹⁵² Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 40.

¹⁵³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 242.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 17.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 435.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 155.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 162.
- ¹⁶⁰ Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel," 38.
- ¹⁶¹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 180-181.
- ¹⁶² Ibid, 165.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid, 164.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 80.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 81.
- ¹⁶⁶ Jack Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions in Bradbury's Vision of America in *Fahrenheit 451*," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451* ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 6.
- ¹⁶⁷ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 117.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 114.
- ¹⁶⁹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 14.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid, 82.
- ¹⁷² Gerhard, "Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel," 39.
- ¹⁷³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 192.
- ¹⁷⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 109.
- ¹⁷⁵ Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions," 6.
- ¹⁷⁶ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 19-20.
- ¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 219.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 87.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 146.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 153.
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid, 86.

- ¹⁸² Ibid, 231.
- ¹⁸³ Ibid, 144.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 106.
- ¹⁸⁵ Jim Meisenheimer, *The 12 Questions to Ask Customers*. Viewed on December 23th, 2016. Available on: <http://www.meisenheimer.com/ebook/12bestq.pdf>
- ¹⁸⁶ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 38.
- ¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 55.
- ¹⁸⁸ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 229.
- ¹⁸⁹ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 75.
- ¹⁹⁰ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 150.
- ¹⁹¹ Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions," 8.
- ¹⁹² Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 49.
- ¹⁹³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 173.
- ¹⁹⁴ Zipes, "Mass Degradation of Humanity and Massive Contradictions," 8.
- ¹⁹⁵ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 178-179.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 298.
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 303.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 309.
- ¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 252.
- ²⁰⁰ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 42.
- ²⁰¹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 331.
- ²⁰² Ibid, 252.
- ²⁰³ Ibid, 318.
- ²⁰⁴ Ibid, 325.
- ²⁰⁵ Ibid, 346.
- ²⁰⁶ Ibid, 245.
- ²⁰⁷ Ibid, 253.
- ²⁰⁸ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 109.

- ²⁰⁹ Robin Anne Reid, "Fahrenheit 451 (1953)," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 75.
- ²¹⁰ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 18.
- ²¹¹ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 231.
- ²¹² Susan Spencer, "The Post-Apocalyptic Library: Oral and Literate Culture in Fahrenheit 451 and A Canticle for Leibowitz," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publication, 2008), 34.
- ²¹³ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 217.
- ²¹⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 242-243.
- ²¹⁵ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 239-240.
- ²¹⁶ Ibid, 242-243.
- ²¹⁷ Ibid, 245.
- ²¹⁸ Ibid, 253.
- ²¹⁹ Ibid, 310.
- ²²⁰ Ibid, 228.
- ²²¹ Ibid, 386.
- ²²² Ibid, 375.
- ²²³ Ibid, 294.
- ²²⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 23.

Conclusion

This research paper has examined one of Ray Bradbury's most esteemed works, *Fahrenheit 451*. It is based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of language and power developed in his book which is entitled *Language and Symbolic Power* to discuss the act of silencing and the relationship between language and power in Bradbury's novel. As it is shown in this dissertation, in the first chapter, the focus has been related to the study of the cultural and socio-historical background of the 1950s to find its relation with Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*.

The second chapter dealt with the act of silencing in the dystopian society of Fahrenheit. This act is used as a means of control and oppression to make people docile. So, silencing is considered as a strategy by the leading group through its use of surveillance and intimidation in order to reinforce their dominance over people.

The third chapter was concerned with the analysis of language and its relationship with power in Bradbury's novel. It has shown how the oppressed society of Fahrenheit is controlled by suppressing free communications and thoughts through the eradication of language. More than this, the power relationships of the Protagonist, Guy Montag, with the other characters, mainly Clarisse McClellan, Captain Beatty, and Professor Faber, were analyzed thanks to their conversations to find that language and power are interrelated with a flexible relationship.

The framework of the memoir did not permit us to deal with all the issues of the book. We hope that we have helped our readership to a better understanding of our research and we believe that *Fahrenheit 451* is still rich with research topics that other students may handle further. Therefore, it is due to the interested students to make more research about Ray Bradbury's work *Fahrenheit 451*, because we believe that much can be written on the issues of religion, Feminism, and figurative language, like Symbolism and Imagery.

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