

Literature as a Reflection of History and Social Change

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Abstract:

Literature has always been a mirror of society. In this respect, this article aims at drawing the relationship between the famous Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* and the American socio-political context of the 1950s. As a dystopian text, the novel is concerned with systematic abuse of power and technology that may be achieved through Social Engineering which is implemented gradually through its sub-applications/theories by the government. By using a qualitative approach and critical analysis of the literature, the investigation focusses on the process of implementing Social Engineering in the American post-WWII society through human soul engineering, censorship and mass psychological manipulation

Keywords: Literature; Society; Social Engineering; Manipulation; censorship.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Second-World War brought devastating results in terms of casualties and losses. In Fact, statistically there was no winning side, except for USA which emerged as one of two major powers with the USSR. Thus, the world entered a post war era with two rivaling forces, which are USSR and USA. This era was known as the Cold-War, a new modern warfare that relied on proxy wars and none direct confrontation. Despite the catastrophes and horrors this rivalry has instilled in the world, there occurred a change that affected everything. The world witnessed a boost in scientific achievement, philosophy, technology, media coverage, human rights, and of course literature. The latter witnessed an enormous emergence of new genres and new styles which reflected the status quo of the post-world war society and the cold war anxiety, as it spoke about war horrors and traumas. These genres came in the form of science fiction, metafiction, realism, naturalism, spy fiction, cyberpunk and dystopia. All in all, these genres depicted portions of the social concerns using different styles depending on their authors' context. However, one of the genres prophesized a dark future of mankind, and depicted aspects of the social, political and economic uproars of the mid-twentieth century, which is Dystopia. This genre serves as one of the pillars of this study.

Dystopian fiction started as a reaction to the utopian dream and the changes occurring in societies. The term was coined by Thomas More in his magnum opus ***Utopia*** in 1516. However, Dystopia remained a term to be used until its revival as a genre in the 20th century. This literature mirrored the social distress of the society with slight distortion that sent it into the near future. Dystopias deals with the subjects of dehumanization, totalitarian regimes, the decline of the



civilization, western civilization, especially (Yora,1963, p, 27). It evokes disturbing apocalyptic and pessimistic images about existing, or fictional realities to draw attention to society, environment, politics, economics, religion, psychology, ethics, science or technology. Thus, it allows authors to dive into the possible political and social dangers humanity faces when a government gains excessive autonomy from the citizens they ought to serve. This causes the society to forcibly switch to leviathan regimes and dystopian in outcome. This leads us to the primary focus of this study, which is Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (henceforth *F451*). The novel is a mixture between Dystopia and Science-fiction, and occasionally, it is classified or studied as both. The novel projects the social scene of the 1950s America in a futuristic society that appears perfect and idealistic almost 'utopian', but in reality, it is the exact opposite. Thus, it becomes 'dystopian'. This is ought to serve as a mimesis of his times and as an attempt to draw the readers eyes to the dangers facing or may come to their society. Additionally, the novel prophesized about the loss of interest in reading. Simply put, Bradbury "a half-century ago, had the foresight to see that the age of the Screen (movie, TV, computer) could destroy reading" (Bloom et al, 2008, p, 2), which is an image that we witness today in our society, as people leans toward technology at the expense of reading and books.

Furthermore, many critics have examined the extent to which the novel criticizes McCarthyism, the Cold War, and the dependency on technology. In this regard, Bradbury has expressed his resentment of this governmental interference in the people's lives, and the chains that it put on free-speech, "I was angry at Senator Joseph McCarthy and the people before him, like Parnell Thomas and the House Un-American Activities Committee"(Beley, 2006, p,140).

Herein, McCarthyism is the practice of making unfounded accusations of “subversion and treason” (Doherty, 2003, p, 109). Especially, if related to communism and socialism. Therefore, it led to a big wave of censorship, discrimination, violation of human rights, instillation of fear in people and using propaganda to shift the population’s gaze to hate everything that is socialist or communist. These acts of manipulation are all projected and presented in the novel.

In a nutshell, Ray Bradbury’s *F 451* has been studied from various angles, mainly; from totalitarian perspective, from psychological and cultural perspective, from the perspective of media, and technology. However, the novel was not approached from the perspective of SE. Thus, the main focus of this research will be the Social Engineering implementation in *F451*. The paper will investigate the extent of SE’s existence in the novel though the study of its sub-applications (or sub-theories). Therefore, SE is a crucial and necessary approach to the dystopian literature that provides not only; the application of the notion on a literary work, but in real-life situations as well. Due to the fact that, using SE in literature serves as a means to influence readers to behave in a certain way. A great example would be the case of Thomas Pain’s pamphlet, *Common Sense* which is regarded by the historian Gordon S. Wood as, "the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era" (Wood, 2002, p, 55). Therefore, it is necessary to approach *F451* from this angle because it provides a ground for the application of the theory through the study of the characters, the society, and the government.

The research adopts a qualitative approach to study the novel. Thus, the research relies on the novel as a primary source, while using literary materials, books, articles, and written data as a secondary source. Herein, the main theory of the research is SE theory, while



relying on its sub-theories, mainly; Nudge theory, or as it is coined by the academic D J Stewart as “the art of the nudge” (Wilk, 1999, p, 71) which is a microtargeted design geared towards a specific group of people, irrespective of the scale of intended intervention. In their book, ***Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness***, Thaler and Sunstein stated, “A nudge, as we will use the term, is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.(Thaler and Sunstein, 2008, p, 6)

As stated earlier, Ray Bradbury's, ***F451*** is heavily influenced by the historical and political status of America in particular and the world in general, governmental strategies, and propagandas. Hence the analysis in this paper focuses on answering these core questions:

- To what extent does the government use social engineering in Ray Bradbury's ***Fahrenheit 451*** to ensure public control, and how it is implemented and applied on the novel?
- How does these methods unravel on the characters psychology, behavior, and how does it prevail on the bigger context of society?
- To what extent does the novel reflect the historical and social realities of 1950s America?

This study starts by investigating the relationship between Bradbury's socio-political era, and the events of the novel. Here, the main focus is the influence of the Nazi book burning, Communist Censorship, and McCarthyism's mass engineering. After that, the article treats the implementation of nudging by using 'Human Soul

Engineering’ with regard to the strategies that laid the floor to it. Furthermore, I intend to address governments censorship’s original implementation, how it is used to nudge the populous, and its relation with Plato’s ideas of censorship. Thus, this research examines its traces in the novel and its effects on the society as a whole

2. Concepts and Historical Background

2.1 Social Engineering

The manipulation technique is best known as Social Engineering (henceforth SE). Heretofore, the study aims at investigating SE in the novel. However, the novel is not solely chosen because of the implementation of SE, or because of its projection. But, due to the fact that this area is not explored as far as our novel is concerned, and it is applicable to our real time societies. Herein, SE is a political science theory that ought to create strategies for public, or mass, control. Thus, it is “based on the notion that Laws are used as a means to shape society and regulate people’s behaviour. It is an attempt to control the human conduct through the help of Law” (Gochhayat, 2010, p, 1), which dates back to Plato’s ***Republic***. Where in his utopian model, he tries to censure whatever seemed unnecessary in order to control the population’s behavior. The effects of SE enhance with newer generations; the younger they are manipulated, the easier they are controlled. Besides, it has different approaches, and uses numerous strategies some of which are; nudge theory, psychological engineering, eugenics, technological engineering, media manipulation, and total institutions. All of which serves as mediums explored in ***F451***.

Prior to dealing with the researches that dealt with our novel, it is necessary to explore some of the works that have dealt with the notion



of Social Engineering, or is closely related to it. For instance, the philosopher Karl Popper in his master piece of political science *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume 1, The Spell of Plato*, and *Volume 2, Hegel and Marx* distinguishes between the Democratic social engineering and Utopian social engineering, and how are they often used in real times under the influence of what he called ‘Great Men’, especially, in the first book that scrutinize and critics the Platonic approach on the subject. An item that relates to the study that I am conducting because the government of *F451* philosophical tendencies are heavily linked with Plato’s republican ‘utopian’ ideas. Nevertheless, Christopher Hadnagy’s book *Social Engineering, the Art of Human Hacking* provides in depth analysis of the strategies used to make an effective Social Engineering. It approaches the concept from a position of the doers. Thus, it tackles the implementation of SE, its psychological aspects and outcomes on people’s behavior, in addition to the methods of reverse engineering and how to counter it.

2.1 Historical Context

Before discussing nudging technics of censorship and human soul engineering, and to analyze this in connection with the novel, I first need to put *F451* back into its historical context. Though the novel is set in a near-future environment. Its events manifest deep roots with the historical reality witnessed by the author. The unrest brought by two great wars, especially after the grand finale played by the U.S.A on Japanese soil, the mushroom cloud and acid rain, that took the lives of millions. Additionally, the cultural holocaust that took place in the WW2, spreading through the world like fire and to the Cold War era that had influenced negatively the imagination of Ray Bradbury, whose affection for books and libraries apexed the other reasons to the

creation of the novel. Bradbury commenting on *F451* and expressing his concern for the libraries says, “I imagined its real root-system goes back to my great and abiding love for libraries” (Bradbury, 1993, p, 25). Nevertheless, Bradbury’s fears were also intensified due to the 1930’s Nazi book burning, “Nazi Germany burned over 25,000 un-German books in Berlin in public, which manifests that the domineering structure was against knowledge, enlightenment, and cultivation” (Atasoy, 2015, p, 401). In *F451*, the Nazi are represented by the Firemen linked by their holy quest of burning all types of knowledge regardless of its efficiency or benefits.

Furthermore, not long after the Nazi book burning, The Soviet Union under Stalin entered the phase of the ‘Great Purge’. The number one factor in this case is censorship, where Stalin coined all form of literature as ‘Human Soul engineering’, (henceforth HSE), and their makers as engineers. The fear of a sensitive information leak that can be used against the Soviet Union drove the censorship to the highest levels, so far. Another, parallel between the Bradbury’s fears projected within his novel, exaggerated by the dystopian pessimism and dreadful imagery. It became an attempt from the author to call the world, especially, Americans to draw eye to the state that mankind has reached. Bradbury says, about the Nazi and the Communist ‘knowledge purges’, according to the critic and scholar Atasoy, “They burned the authors instead of the books so I learned then how dangerous it all was because if they didn’t have books and the ability to read you couldn’t be part of any civilization; you couldn’t be part of democracy” (Atasoy, 2015, p, 17).

Nonetheless, Europe was not the sole perpetrator because the United States had its fair-share of unrest in the post-second war period. Commenting on this link between the novel and its era of *1950s*, the critic Hoskinson said, *F451* “deals with subjects and issues



that were shaped by the political climate of the United States in the decade immediately following World War II” (Hoskinson, 2011, p, 126). McCarthyism took hold over the Americans, one of the earliest implementations of SE on massive scale. Most of Americans were nudged to hate and fear the Soviet in the cold war period. It was displayed in acts of violence, unhappiness, unrest, emotional and intellectual chaos. All of which, made a direct impact on Bradbury, who was against the McCarthy’s doctrine. Yet, not all of the new age’s horrors were brought by political decision, some spiked due to the overspreading of TVs and Radios. Hence, the media gained the necessary power it lacked to reach the masses in nearly every house, or place, all the times. Bradbury’s annoyance with the spread of Tv sets, fear of the loss of the books, and the ever-growing political control over the populous was expressed as well by his fellow authors. Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and George Orwell’s *1984* are both stories about societies engulfed in a dystopian world of manipulation, obsession by technology and conditioned happiness. Thus, both Dystopian novels are intertwined with *F451*.

In the novel, the particularities of the SE technics reflect those of the authors context. Where in, post-ww2 ‘McCarthyite American’ society unique social tools were used for the communist investigations, and to shift the populous gaze to a common enemy. In the novel, the protagonist Montag who works as a fireman happens to question both his job and the dominant anti-intellectual ideology. Moreover, the novel used similar tools on two layers of depth. The first being an attempt to change the newly set ‘American anti-literature anti-communist’ foundations. Thus, play the readers. However, such a possibility can only come to reality if the in-depth of the novel was as plausible and manipulative as its context. Herein, the

exemplar profoundness of the manipulations and indoctrinations was drawn from the corpse of the novel itself. This can be exemplified from the woman's quote before being burned, "Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out" (*F451*, p, 33). The quote generates possibility beyond the context of judgement within the novel. In fact, it is the author's prophecy about the upcoming revolution, one of books, and the other in the real world of consciousness. However, the quote once examined textually while taking into consideration the edges of the conversation down beyond superficialities a double layered meaning comes into relevance. The words are concentrated on the term "fire" that shall never be put out. The fire of the fire department and its counterpart of knowledge and revolution. Furthermore, the word "play the man" (*F451*, p, 33) is an attempt to show the acquired level of consciousness from literacy/literature. The meaning nudges the readers to contemplate over the importance of literature. The same way it does nudge Montag to the truth searching quest. Henceforth, the quote shows the levels of SE and with it HSE. While on the other hand, Beatty's reply reflects another nudging tool that is censorship.

3. Human Soul Engineering as a Nudging Technique

The novel is established in a post-nuclear civil war period. The significance of the nuclear war, without its realistic connection with Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings, establishes a new beginning and opportunity for the authority in *F451*. The government is presented with a golden plate to shape society to fit its agenda. Despite the fact that the novel begins with an already-shaped nearly-perfect utopian law abiding society. I have found prevailing hints about the process taken by the government in order to achieve such a result of engineered, fully controlled population. Here, the first measure with



assistance of the 'nuclear purge' the authority concentrated its efforts on all types of literature, especially its cultural and historical side. This means that literature plays a dangerous role in **F451'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" (**F451** p, 40) as truth pose a great threat for the citizens' happiness and the government's power through the implications it contains. The hazards of books for the state's dominion are the impetus on which the firemen took the torch to burn man's memoriae, as explained by Orwell in **1984**, "who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell, 1949, p, 260). As the quote shows to control the masses' present there must be a mastery over the masses' past. Nonetheless, the alteration of history in **F451** began with the background of firemen, personified in the firemen's rule book, "Firemen were Established, 1790, to burn English-influenced books in the Colonies. First Fireman: Benjamin Franklin" (**F451**, p, 32). In the eyes of the government, the idea that firemen once prevented fires rather than fuel them is detrimental to the firemen's current purpose. Hence, the action of burning books became the new holy war, where the fire department mimicked the actions of the 14-15th Century clergymen and their monopoly over knowledge and its spread. In reality, the destruction of books is a recurrent image says the critic and scholar Rubin, "In February 2012, American soldiers were reported to have burned copies of the Coran in Afghanistan, which instigated a massive revolt among the population that resulted in several deaths" (Rubin, 2012, p, 12). Regardless of the reason behind the villainous act, the fact remains that burning a book considered the holiest script in Islam demonstrate intolerance in its best suit accompanied by violence and hatred. To the reading lot, it is



difficult to comprehend the reasons behind such an act because literature – in all of its forms – remain an inlet to different cultures, histories, and life.

Another historical alteration is the changing of the citizens' rights like the one of reading. A point demonstrated in a conversation between Clarisse and Montag, when she asks him, “Do you ever read any of the books you burn?” (*F451*, p, 5). He laughed and answered immediately that the idea is an opponent to the rule, this shows people's unconsciousness 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” (Gerhard p, 59). Accordingly, Bradbury, in *F451*, focuses on how the state gained power over the society when the citizens have books. Consequently, the firemen have limited people's rights by imposing strict laws to forbid reading and communication as happiness fulfillment measure to all citizens. According to the critic McGiveron the nudging went impeccably 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” (Bloom et al, 2008, p, 54). This idea resonates with the scholar Hansen’s explanation of nudging through technology as he stated, “nudges have received renewed attention due to the availability of smart technology that allows policymakers to apply nudging more systematically precisely in the contexts where they will be effective” (Hansen and Jespersen, 2002, p, 11).

Additionally, it also claims the scholar Bourdieu’s statement, “the language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs” (Bourdieu, 1977, p, 58). i.e., in the lack of knowledge of rights and persistency to defend it, they facilitate the state's manipulation that is disguised as beneficial for them. As a result, the



citizens adjust to their new established rights. Bradbury comments on this by stating that 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” (Bradbury, 1993, p, 55).

Furthermore, in the novel, the firemen are executing their power while forcing citizens to take a passive state following the dictated law of the state, an example would be Captain Beatty’s attempt to assure Montag of the Firemen’s legitimacy, “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” (*F451*, p, 56). The quote reveals the importance of the firemen from the authority’s point of view for the public order. Opposingly, it also reveals the terrifying force that government have where it can establish new historical facts as their benefit sees fit. Moreover, it reflects the depth of the falsification abilities they possess, in addition to the deniability of rights imposed on the citizens. Herein, the quote clarifies the intention of the government to create mindless, emotionless, and uncreative herd of sheep that follows. Then, firemen’s attempt to devalue the power of history and books that symbolizes their authoritarian regime over the society who are only destined to follow. Thus, the destructibility of rights and history as stated by the critic Gerhard comes only through, the “elimination 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” (Gerhard, 2012, p, 88). 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?” (*F451*, p, 6). But Montag responded negatively, because for him houses have always been burnable. Clarisse's awareness helps her realize that what he has said is, “Strange”. So, her curiosity claims her thoughts which are far from the imposed vision of the state's oppression because she seldom watches the “Parlour walls”.

Nevertheless, the citizens are united under the state's order but separated from the remaining world. They are also prohibited to interact or to make connections except for entertainment purposes. Thus, the citizens are guaranteed speech but denied communication even with their real-relatives. The only connection the citizens are ought to have is with TV families. In fact, in the **Fahrenheit** society where reading is strictly forbidden, 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 knowledge is not only spoken, but also read and written. An example of this case of the lack in communication is revealed in the conversation between Montag and Faber. 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.” (*F451*, p, 78). The quotation denotes the overgrowing gap between people that is consuming even the relationship between families. Herein, Montag reveals his concerns to Faber about the issue of ignorance and feeble connections between the members of society. No one listens to the other anymore, nor do they speak to each other unless the subject is ‘fun’ or ‘entertainment’. Thus, the quote reveals the gradual loss of intellectuality, interest, and care in the *F451*'s society.



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 journals and the three-dimensional sex magazines. Thus, the government's aim is to abolish people's thoughts and restrict their communication which leads to the control of people's actions too.

However, it is worth noting that book's desertion began with people's lack of interest because of the growing technology not directly by the authority; the latter gainsaid the books, while it nudged the population to TVs 'the family' to benefit the best. The Critic Yeung comments on this, "Nowadays, policymakers do not need to guess citizens' preferences. communication, will give them access to solid information on what drives citizens with a greater degree of precision than any behavioral experiment would" (Yeung, 2012, p, 17). In this respect, data can be dangerous once used for the wrong purposes. As consequence, the government successfully influenced citizen's thinking by planting in people the hate of books to reach an illusory life of happiness and equality. In addition, the government advertised its own produced literature, in all of its forms, to nudge the populous to act as wanted, and therefore, fence mending them.

4. The Implementation of Censorship and its Effects on Freedom in *Fahrenheit 451*:

The human social engineering requires two processes in order to work, the first is falsification. In other words, the act of erasing or modifying permanently previous established facts to serve certain purposes, such act becomes possible only once historicism is applied. The USSR president Joseph Stalin commented on this in his speech at

home of Maxim Gorky, “The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks.... And therefore, I raise my glass to you, writers, the engineers of the human soul” (Stalin,1932, p, 98). The second is promotion of governmental ideologies, and self-made literature. Therefore, nudging the population to act in a certain way, until the new belief is carved in their subconsciousness and becomes natural. However, the process, in general, comes to serve and facilitate the role of censorship as it is based on Plato’s historicism and propre promotion of the government’s propaganda. According to Popper, “It is an old idea, or rather, a loosely connected set of ideas which have become, unfortunately, so much a part of our spiritual atmosphere that they are usually taken for granted, and hardly ever questioned” (Popper, 2002,p, 7). In this case, the primaria metam is the gradual annihilation of literature while acting based on a mass consensus over the necessity of such a quest. Hence, establishment of a new common sense.

Nonetheless, the late century has witnessed large movements against all literary forms. The major issue elapsed by the shifting conviction of the various wide-spreading regimes -Capitalism vs Communism-, thus, the conflict became more intellectual than actual. The fight over intelligence required more severity and decisiveness. Therefore, the result was major banning, destruction, and censorship of intellectual property, literature mostly, in avoidance of weaknesses. Regardless of the political regime of any given nation, censorship basis is foremost based on Plato’s utopian tendencies. Imagine that someone wants to ban *1984*, *Brave New World*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Fahrenheit 451*, name any modern, or dystopian literature that may be regarded to call to defy authorities. Following this line of reasoning, to be able to ban such works, it is required to investigate why defying the authority is wrong? What are its cons? (In regard to



these questions, you may want to read Plato's Apology to get a sense of how to argue the position.) Second, it is required to have an implied or directly stated psychological theory. Therefore, a reconciliation with the gathered arguments in regard to the possible deniability of rights accompanying it.

Bradbury, in his novel, expressed his own discontent with such methodologies that requires the annihilation of literature alongside its makers. Consequently, it mimics Platonic censorship as an attempt to nudge the readers to take action against such ways to free the literature from its shackles. Thus, the novel bared criticism for 'Plato's spell' influencing the demagogue of censorship that is played by the government. The critic and Philosopher Karl Popper comments on this point by stating,

Judged from the Athenian viewpoint, it is nothing less than the demand that all literary education be strangled by a close adherence to the example of Sparta with its strict state control of all literary matters. Not only poetry but also music in the ordinary sense of the term are to be controlled by a rigid censorship, and both are to be devoted entirely to strengthening the stability of the state by making the young more conscious of class discipline. (Popper, 2002, p, 60)

The above quote denotes the Athenian censorship that is coined after Sparta. This type of censorship is also present in **F451**, where not only literature whether written, or audiovisual, but also extends to the premises of other communitarian activities such as gatherings and sport events. An example of this case is presented in Clarisse's Uncle speech, "How are you supposed to root for the home team when you don't even have a program or know the names? For that matter, what

colour jerseys are they wearing as they trot out on to the field?" (F451, p, 15). From this, we can detect that the government's censorship activities have reached an extent where it controls various fields. However, this does not deny the fact that the government allow other types of edited, and scripted to fit materials that provides the citizens with an amount of freedom and happiness, exaggerated and believed to be the maximum of freedom and happiness attainable. Even though, the happiness of the mass heavily defended and exerted by the Firemen comes on the expense of the happiness of the literate and knowledge seekers.

Be that as it may, in the novel the government argue that it never imposed any form of censorship but it was the will of the people. Beatty explains how people abandoned literature in their 'pursuit of happiness' and to modern technological advancements. The issue is the ulterior motivation of the government to carry such act in an ever-growing consistent matter. Hitherto, the controversy of the governments allegations divulges. we can detect from the text that as the people disregarded literature, still the government did not stand-by without taking action. The action of burning books and its consequences, the alteration of the citizens' rights opposes Beatty's explanation.

In this direction, the captain denotes not only that the implementation of censorship, where educational institutions shifted toward physical teaching 'labour education' instead of 'propre education', but also, the alteration of the entire curriculum, where the government requires no more 'intellectuals, or thinkers.' All to serve absolute equality that makes everyone the same, physically and mentally. Thus, the abandonment of the meritocracy system, of achievements, of rewards, of anything that can a human being strive to achieve. No more success, not if it is academic, the sole welcomed



achievements are those of burning books and their readers. Therefore, the entire population is carefully nudged from early stages toward the ultimate goal of serving the government under false pretences, and of false happiness.

Another point is detected from Beatty's speech that is exclusion, and monopoly of knowledge from the upper-controlling class to the ruled class. These points can be when he proves his knowledge in a superiority performance to convince Montag over the menace and dangers of books. As it happens, if people are all equal, all share the same knowledge, all participate in the same activity, hence, all the same. Then, how come that there is a ruling class, and by its existence, how do they know what to burn and what to leave? If the government is the same as the population, then how come that only the superiors have knowledge of the books, or the old ways. Thus, it lacks plausibility from the start as Beatty gainsays his own words. His highly performative well-structured dialect proves that the ruling-class is separate, in fact, from the ruled-class. Hence, this proves exclusion in education and the monopoly over knowledge which implies, "The strict division of the classes; i.e., the ruling class consisting of herdsmen and watch-dogs must be strictly separated from the human cattle" (Popper, 2002, p, 84).

In Poppers identification of Plato's censorship tyrannical strategies of censorship, he enumerates five important elements that satisfy his 'utopian' programme. The fourth point explains the actions taken by the government in **F451** as he states, "There must be a censorship of all intellectual activities of the ruling class, and a continual propaganda aiming at moulding and unifying their minds. All innovation in education, legislation, and religion must be prevented or suppressed" (Popper, 2002, p, 85). In this scenario, we can understand

the steps taken by the government in the process of ensuring its authority over the citizens in *F451*. The quote once applied to Beatty's words reveals that the government was successful at reaching its aims. The first step that the government took is shaping and altering history. Then, it banned and burned any literary form, beginning with books and ending with communication.

Thirdly, the government stops and punishes all intellectual activities. This point is better shown in the Firemen's actions when dealing with 'suspects', such as the case with the women in attic; No 11. Elm City where Bradbury describes, "They crashed the front door and grabbed at a woman, though she was not running, she was not trying to escape. She was only standing, weaving from side to side, her eyes fixed upon a nothingness in the wall as if they had struck her a terrible blow upon the head" (*F451*,p, 33). In the quote, two worlds are important; the first world is of the Firemen and their brutality in dealing with a harmless, yet fully weaponized with knowledge woman. The second is the side of the woman as she embraced her fate without struggle or fight. From this, we can understand the huge fearsome presence of the Firemen, or government. As a result, and despite, the extent of knowledge that the woman possess she remains as harmful as a lamb, as she was unable to be free from the dogmatic establishment of the government.

In fact, the book readers are considered as dangerous to governance, as they present a challenge to the authority. Faber reveals to Montag the true essence of books when he shows him that they are not important material, because they remain only paper, but what matters most is truth, the knowledge it carries. Thus, in government's eyes the danger it presents, the true threat. Then, based on what reasoning can one's knowledge be judged as superior to the knowledge of another? It is arduous to discern knowledge



quantitatively, if not outlandish, and to discern it subjectively between certain individuals is similarly tricky. Beatty is, in reality, continually raining quotes. He indeed employs books to his benefit when arguing against Montag. According to the Captain, the books are paradoxical and illogical, “What traitors books can be! You think they’re backing you up and they turn on you. Others can use them, too, and there you are, lost in the middle of the moor, in a great welter of nouns and verbs and adjectives” (*F451*, p,104). In conflict there can be nothing but misery, and books produce nothing but conflict. In Beatty’s mind, knowledge unlike ignorance, is the master engineer of unhappiness and misery. If happiness, and thus peace insofar as it is the pursuit of happiness, is the objective, then books must be censored and burned.

Then, the government moulded and unified the minds of the citizens. Case on point, the previous steps played a remarkable role in this matter. The authority triumphed, mostly, in erasing the existence of minorities and with them books and ‘poisonous’ knowledge. Consequently, the citizens in the novel, fall under three categories. The majority, the minority, and shadows. The majority are the law-abiding government fearing citizens. This type of characters is either knowledgeable and afraid, as the case of Faber. Otherwise, unconscious, not willing to be free, drunk and addicted to the sold false happiness of the government, as in the case with Mildred. The second category, the minority, or the alienated outcasts of society are all the people who chose exile over humility. Those who engage in activities involving enlightened thought are considered subversives. The scholar and critic Christine comments on this, “Those who own or read works of literature—considered contraband in their society—are punished by fire; their books and home are burned by the firemen, an agency dedicated to the destruction of books, and the book owners

themselves are thrown into prison” (Shell, 2014, p, 9). Thus, they live hidden in the suburbs carrying their knowledge with them, as in Granger’s and his lots case. The last category of ‘shadow’ are people that live in the city, pursuing knowledge and unafraid of doing so. They do not socialize but inform once possible. However, these people are all profiled and have a file in the Firemen’s house. The moment they commit a mistake they cease to exist. Here, the two characters that best exemplifies this category are Clarisse and Montag.

Even though Clarisse’s end is unknow but her case, in theory, is closed by the Firemen because she influenced a Fireman and ignited Montag’s curiosity for truth. As a result, for the governmental laws and new foundations, the majority became identical ‘all equal’ as Beatty stated. This also prevails in Clarisse’s discussion with Montag when she describes her discontent with how everyone is undistinguishably similar, “No, not anything. They name a lot of cars or clothes or swimming-pools mostly and say how swell! But they all say the same things and nobody says anything different from anyone else” (*F451*, p,28). As the quote indicates, the citizens are not only unified in ideology, but as well in mindset. The people became so unified to the point of being identical.

Finally, all innovation in education, legislation, religion, is supressed and dismissed permanently. The Firemen burn the books, and dispose of their owners. In Bradbury’s novel, the people have no right in owning books, let it be to be innovative regarding literature. Therefore, and since, the government have implemented all the censorship processes. We can confirm that the authority was more than successful in achieving an Athenian censorship. From this, we can further absorb the fact that regardless of the governmental allegations of their advertised democracy. They have breached it from



about keeping its power position. Furthermore, as an additional proof of the fall of democracy is the falsification of news. The government stole the credibility of the news as it allows no report of actual events, but of stories and pre-scripted shows made by the government. The critic Lippmann comments,

All that the sharpest critics of democracy have alleged is true, if there is no steady supply of trustworthy and relevant news. Incompetence and aimlessness, corruption and disloyalty, panic and ultimate disaster, must come to any people which is denied an assured access to the facts. No one can manage anything on pap. Neither can a people. (Lippmann, 2008, p, 25)

Once applied on the novel, the quote reveals the absence the printed news; thus, we can conclude the end of the printed materials of all sorts. Not even a scripted printed news survived the censorship of government. If there is no news, no papers, no credibility, and with it no management or understanding of the content. Therefore, the population lose the ability to distinguish the real from the imaginary. If the only form of news that is left, without giving the people any choice of selecting their favourite material. Hence, they are all equally nudged to a one possible product. On this, we can understand that the government does not promote or seek democracy, but in fact, it sells the citizens the illusion of democracy. Consequently, the **Fahrenheit**'s society views happiness as the absence of discomfort or pain; such discomfort or pain, in the collective reasoning, is only possible when people think critically about their world. Hence, they fall to Plato's description, "to become, by long habit, utterly incapable of doing anything at all independently" (Plato and Thomas, 1980, p, 219) because the society view "fun" or "pleasure" as any activity which provides careless amusement and easy distraction from the

heavier problems of life. Nevertheless, this pleasure hunt that the authority committed society into came on the expense of their own Freedom.

Herein, we see the conception of freedom at play in the text, at least society's understanding of freedom, is problematic. It contradicts itself, freedom becoming the means to oppress the freedom of others. Superficially, freedom and knowledge lie in an antagonistic relationship, and in order to preserve the one, the other must be abolished. That there is something beyond this conception of freedom, that this vacuous freedom from conflict is not good for society, that happiness is, perhaps, not the supreme objective, is hinted at by Montag, "We need not to be let alone. We need to be really bothered once in a while. How long is it since you were really bothered? About something important? Something real?" (*F451*,p.49). Since, the government's ideology in the novel is inspired from Plato's doctrine. Then, it is required to scrutinize it to further understand the government's ideology.

Plato's doctrine of freedom presents difficulties. The scholar and critic Stalley claims, "To many readers it will seem paradoxical or even perverse to suggest that Plato has a doctrine of freedom. After all, commentators have repeatedly emphasized that the ideal city of the Republic leaves little room for the kinds of freedom valued by writers in the liberal tradition" (Stalley, 1932, p,145). However, he goes on to claim that Socrates' task in the Republic is to show that, "only the just man is truly free" (Plato, 2000, p, 73). So, freedom is then, to do 'Just' and the just to Plato is to do the best course of action that would benefit the state most. Thus, Freedom is subverted, and according to Popper, "The enemies of freedom have always charged its defenders with subversion" (Popper, 2002, p, 86). Yet, it remains



change because “Change is evil, rest is divine. All change can be arrested if the state is made an exact copy of its original, i.e., of the Form or Idea of the city. Should it be asked how this practicable, we can reply with the naturalistic formula: Back to nature!” (Plato, 2000,p, 250). To arrest all change, by the upkeep of an inflexible class division and class ordinance. In case I am right in this interpretation, at that point we ought to say that Plato’s request for equity leaves out his political programme at the level of totalitarianism. If applied on **F451**, which its authoritarian doctrine is heavily influenced by the Platonic ideology. We find out that the city is based on the republic’s state. Hence, it is governed and molded on the apparatus of original nature. Once again, in Plato’s eyes, the human nature requires the man to do a one job per-design. If the man is a Fireman, he shall remain so in that function without any change. The change will bring chaos and disorder.

Therefore, knowledge is influential and motivating in **F451**. Then, it becomes easy to understand the reason behind banning knowledge in the first place. Regardless of the classical role of any given character, and the deniability of freedom they suffer from, a function must be maintained with an abandonment of reason. If reason and knowledge are the motive to pursue one’s freedom, then they magnify the chances of class intermingling. Already I can see the closeness between freedom as represented by Beatty and freedom as understood by Plato. In this case, knowledge and freedom are antagonistic because true freedom only occurs through justice. Therefore, any class intermingling must be unjust, and anything of the opposite is just. From the example of Plato’s classes, I can understand why the more we raise in the class level we spot more freedom. In fact, his three classes are projected in the novel. First, the guardians, in our case fire

chiefs and above because they regard the state as the most important element that should be guarded above all else. Second, the warriors, like the police, media, and the Firemen, whose job is to defend the state by executing the laws, shaping the minds, and destroying the threats. Third, the working class whose job is to keep the state functioning and preserving it economically with their labour.

Finally, the one who tops the classes is the philosopher king whose wisdom and justice ‘dictate’ and safekeep the state. Nonetheless, from this class division while linked to freedom and knowledge, I can mostly calculate the shares. The philosopher king whose justice and wisdom keep the state; thus, get the biggest portion of Freedom and knowledge. Next, the guardians with what is left of knowledge and most of the remaining freedom. Then, the warriors get a portion of freedom since they defend the law, and hence, they are bestowed a certain amount of freedom but no knowledge so they cannot be promoted to the upper class of guardians. Finally, the working class whose portion of freedom ‘as presented the largest is actually the thinnest’ because they perform their duties and go to their long-awaited activities of pleasure and fun.

Hereto, we have seen a sharp contrast in the relationship between freedom and knowledge. Also, between the rulers and the ruled, as exhibited in *Fahrenheit 451* and in Plato. However, while the novel begins with this understanding of freedom, it does not end there. Here we must note something that's not explicitly clear within the novel: What spurs Montag's want for information, knowledge and freedom? We note that Clarisse affects misery in Montag, but what is this despondency? It isn't basically the despondency of the need for arousing gratification. He can discover erotic delight any time he wants. This is often more profound unhappiness, and its character is uncovered when Clarisse uncovers to Montag that he isn't in love.



Usually, a state he was uninformed of in himself, but once it has been uncovered, he cannot overlook it, it flashes love in him and propels his journey for the rest of the novel. But how does it start love in Montag, and what kind of love? Taking after Plato, we are able to turn to the Symposium to reply to these questions. In this discourse, Diotima uncovers to Socrates how to rise from the world of things to the Good itself.

The ascension section within the Symposium shows the nature of love and how it inspires the quest for knowledge. Love, as it is being examined in the dialogue is “eros” which is love that desires. Desire, however, and this is what was missing in the Symposium prior to Socrates’ speech, necessarily entails a lack of what is desired, and it is this lack which inspire the search for wisdom. By attaining wisdom, one can be just, and by attaining just one can be free. Because the just man is the free man. No one who is ignorant will want to become wise. If you don’t think you need anything, of course you won’t want what you don’t think you need. By revealing Montag’s ignorance, Clarisse incites unhappiness in Montag, which manifests itself as a recognition of need or lack. Montag now knows what Socrates knows i.e., that he is ignorant, and he can start the search for wisdom.

Ergo, seeing that Montag has recognized something fundamentally lacking in the status quo and cannot be treated as one of the straightforward thoughtless citizens who are soothed with base arousing delight, Beatty must smooth Montag's raffled feather with something to fill the void that Montag has begun to feel, and he does so by explaining the purpose of book burning and how it began. But the purpose of this is to pacify him. By giving him a little knowledge, he hopes Montag will be satisfied and give up his fascination with

books. He even offers Montag a chance at redemption and reintegration.

Beatty actually seems surprised when Montag hesitates to embrace the offer and immediately return to his previous state of blithe acceptance. She seeks to keep him chained to the wall by appealing, ironically, to reason. For this reason, Montag struggles throughout the novel in his quest of freedom that was denied once the government censored and burned the books. The censorship, thus, nudged the people to accept to live in a society without freedom. Montag's escape from the authorities at the end of the novel serves as *F451*'s glimmer of hope.

Withal, the contention that *F451*'s government political nudging program have led us to examine the Platonic methods played, hidden and masked, by the pursuit of moral ideas of Happiness, Freedom, Truth, Knowledge, and Justice. In the same manner Plato devised his agenda for the Republic that is advertised by an advocacy for democracy. Similarly, in the novel, the utilitarian democracy advertised by the government, while it promoted the hidden propaganda of nudging using both censorship and HSE to attain and maintain governance, and thus, public control. Herein, of course, the government's success of using nudging can be presented in the effect of the 'open society'. Popper explained the notion, "Open Society was a society in which, let's say, one can breathe freely, think freely, in which every human being has value and in which society doesn't exert any superfluous constraints on people" (Popper, 2002, p, 160).

Thus, if I follow the platonic example on freedom, then *F451*'s society can be classified as an 'open society' from governmental point of view. Where in reality, it nothing but a closed society. The fact that the people are able to breath freely as long as they do not defy any



law, or do any suspicious behavior, lead us to reconsider this advocated democracy. Of course, it remains from our point of view as literate. Unfortunately, it is not applicable from a law-abiding citizen from the novel. Since, they are free to think as long as they do not think of and about books, or knowledge. The majority lacks propre knowledge to understand their situation. This lack is but a consequence of censorship, of course, the government seek it, while the citizens are too busy in their quest of Happiness.

Hereunder, not many citizens, characters, are willing to change their lives. Simply, because they have already succumbed deep in the illusion sold by the government of the ‘open society’. Furthermore, they are docile to all governments laws because it is the only way to be Happy. It is the only way to maintain Justice, social stability, and peace. An example of this case would be Mildred. She lives with her husband, Montag, asking of nothing but more tools for entertainment, “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” (*F451*, p, 18). This situation would work as an example for the closeness of the society, since it provides us with the necessary elements constructing a close society. Where, “A closed society resembles a herd or a tribe in being a semi-organic unit whose members are held together by semi-biological ties—kinship, living together, sharing common efforts, common dangers, common joys and common distress” (Popper, 2002, p, 169).

Nevertheless, this ‘semi-biological organisms’ serve as a mere concrete link, but nothing more, because there is no depth to the connection between the people. There is no abstract relationship, whatsoever, linking the masses but only concrete factual relationship.

i.e., it lacks emotion. The same as the relationship between Mildred and Montag, where there is no love, no passion, no concern, just like strangers. Hence, the government grows even more powerful to gain a dictatorial power. With that comes practical omnipotence that emphasis the strength of the Firehouse. In comparison, the basic idea of democracy is to limit power, to control it, and directing it properly that is a lacking element in **F451**'s society and government. From this, we can concur on the fact that the government, with its supporting bodies, is an enemy of an 'open society' because despite all its allegations it serves only its interest. Therefore, **F451**'s government

4. CONCLUSION

The article has led us through the historical significance of Bradbury's contemporary time and its impact on the novel. The second world war with its nuclear bombs relate directly to the beginning of **F451**, where it is set in a post-nuclear civil war period. The Nazi book burning had a major hand behind the story plot. Further, I investigated the close relationship between the Communist censorship with the events of the novel. Nevertheless, I found that not only the external factors had interference with the novel, but also the internal factors within the United States. The McCarthyite Social Engineering against Communism affected Bradbury directly, who hated this doctrine and occasionally objected it. Hence, on a side, it caused **Fahrenheit 451** to attempt to counter the McCarthyite SE. On the other side, the novel integrated SE's systematic construct of the government in its quest of



total governance. In the light of this, the article examined the direct implementation of the nudging technic that leaned on two strategies. The first one, as we have seen earlier in this paper, is the utilization of HSE. In other words, the government used literature to nudge the society to serve its best interest. The investigation led to the understanding of the steps that the government took to assure the success of its plans. These steps emerged as the act of falsifying history of the world, and especially, of the Firemen's. Thus, the falsification was facilitated by the book purging and the atomic war that their civilization witnessed. Next, is the amendments and deniability of rights. Because of nudging, these rights were accepted by the society gradually, until they accepted completely as their sole rights. Thus, the society became an instrument in the hand of the government. I then attempted to investigate censorship. Here, I tried to relate the ideas of Plato and the implementation of censorship in *F451*. In this, the government appeared to use censorship as defined by Plato in his *Republic*, and exaggerated its importance on the government taking advantage of HSE. Furthermore, in the paper, I spotted that the censorship was advocated under the name of Happiness to all, Freedom, and Justice. Thus, as to make a defense against these ideas we scrutinized and projected the Platonic ideas of censorship, Justice, Happiness, Freedom, and how they were denied in the novel. As a result, in the novel, the implementation of censorship led the society to be denied Truth, Freedom, Knowledge, and the



pursuit of true Happiness to the government's hierarchical, exclusive class divisions. Therefore, the society succumbed to the alleged notion of open society. Here again, the analysis opposed the governments allegations, where the result showed that the citizens in *F451* were living in a rather 'closed society' than an open one. Bradbury's text stands as a testimony of his period and can be read as reflection of his time. It has been demonstrated that the novel's events and ideologies are highly inspired by the realities of the 1950s America which confirms the tight correlation between literature, history and social change.

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