

# A Study of “The Other” in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*

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## **Abstract**

Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* is regarded as a dystopian book; however, it also depicts an ideal state from the perspective of the authority. This study examines how the authority treats ‘the other’ in this ideal state. There are two types of the other; the ones who are in the system and the ones who are not in the system. After the society is deprived of books, the rulers impose some tools to the society to keep them under control. Despite keeping them away from an intellectual life and making benefit of oppressive tools, there emerge some people who happen to act against the will of the authority. This study reveals that the authority excludes the others instead of trying to include them into the ideal system.

**Keywords:** *Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451, The Other, Authority, System*

## **Özet**

Ray Bradbury’nin *Fahrenheit 451* adlı eseri distopik bir kitap olarak kabul edilse de kitapta anlatılan otoritenin bakış açısına göre bir ütopyayı da tasvir etmektedir. Bu çalışma, otoritenin ‘öteki’ye nasıl davrandığını incelemektedir. İki çeşit öteki vardır; sistemin içinde olanlar ve sistemin dışında olanlar. Toplum kitaplardan mahrum bırakıldıktan sonra yöneticiler insanları kontrol altına almak için bazı araçları dayatır. Ancak insanları entelektüel hayattan uzak tutmasına ve bazı araçları kullanmasına rağmen, otoritenin isteklerinin aksine hareket eden bazı insanlar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma otoritenin, ötekileri, ideal sisteme dâhil etmek yerine dışladığını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451, Öteki, Otorite, Sistem*

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Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451* describes the future of American society which is highly engaged in television, social activities and consumerism. The story is told from the viewpoint of the main character Guy Montag, who is a fireman. However, the job of the firemen in the book is the exact opposite of the one in real life –as the homes are fire proof firemen are not the ones who extinguish the fire but are the ones who *ignite* the fire. They start the fire to burn the books which had been swept out of people's life long time ago. It is illegal to read books in this *ideal* state. Whenever the firemen are informed about someone who is keeping one or many books, they go and burn the books, sometimes including the house. Books are excluded from society as they are believed to contain adverse ideas. Therefore, Beatty – the chief of the firemen – calls the books traitors since “they turn you on when you think they're backing you.” He also mentions about the difference of the interpretations of the books and says, “Others can use them, too, and there you are, lost in the middle of the moor.” (Bradbury 82) The society deprived of books is the one which can easily be kept under the control of the rulers with the help of some important tools imposed on the society. In the case of the society in *Fahrenheit 451* these are as follows:

Even though television seems to be the source of oppression in the perfect state order of *Fahrenheit 451*, it is in fact not the source of oppression. It is one of the instruments that ensures the maintenance of the established order. It is not the source, it is the consequence. Fire Chief Beatty explains the source of book burnings and thus the oppression as follows: “It didn't come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God.” (45) First people themselves demanded books to vanish from the society, and then came the censorship. As a result, the oppression was applied by the state step by step.

Mentioning the origins of censorship, Rodney Smolla says, “Censors know no political right or political left, no religion, no generation.” He believes that they feel they are doing what is right:

The censor always believes in the moral righteousness of his or her cause. Indeed, the censor may be - dare

we say it? – “right,” at least in some sense. History’s fair-minded and objective assessment may well be that a particular censor at a particular time and place was motivated to vindicate values widely shared in the society by people of reasonably sound judgment and good will. (Smolla 901)

Thus, in the case of *Fahrenheit 451*, the fragile attitude of the minorities is used as a justification and outpouring of good will to start censorship. Beatty thinks that the society is vast and they do not want their minorities to be upset. And as “a book is a loaded gun in the house next door,” (Bradbury 47) the solution is to “burn it.” For example, as black people do not like *Little Black Sambo*, and white people do not feel good about *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, they burn them. (47) However, the scope of the minority is not limited to ethnical origins like what we understand today, it is a much more extended one. For instance, if “someone writes a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs and the cigarette people weep” (47) the weeping people become the minority who should not be made upset and hence that book should be burned as well. Even these examples do not exactly show the extent of the definition of minority. To understand this, it is better to pay attention to Beatty’s words. He warns people not to “step on the toes of the Chinese, Swedes, Italians, Germans, Texans, Brooklynites, Irishmen, people from Oregon or Mexico” decreasing the scope, not on the toes of “Mormons, Baptists, Unitarians, second generation” and even not on the toes of “dog lovers, the cat lovers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs.” (46) Then we can ask who is not a minority? The answer is clear: nobody.

And since a book is a loaded gun pointed towards a “minor minor minority,” (46) it should be either transformed or burned. Transformation means that at first “authors, full of evil thoughts, locked up their typewriters and magazines became a nice blend of vanilla tapioca [which means that they are about unimportant issues]. Books became dishwasher. Then no wonder books stopped selling, the critics said. And for the public who knew what it wanted and who were thus spinning happily, the state let the comic books survive.” (46) The transformation of the books is completed through this process. They are turned into useless papers to make the people busy with unimportant things. These transformed books and magazines are

supported with dimensional sex magazines. However, the censorship did not come from the government down, but from the people up. This is the most effective kind of censorship. Since the society demanded it, there cannot be a reaction against the rulers. If the situation was the opposite, there would have been reaction and even protests against the authority.

When the transformation of the books was complete, intellectual activities lost their importance and schools for liberal arts like Faber's, were closed "for lack of students and patronage." (57) After the books lost their importance and schools raising critical students were closed, the transformation of the society was almost complete. When the condition of the society matured, the state interfered with television.

Televisions in this perfect state are wall-sized and they cover the walls of the house in accordance with the economic situation of the family. If they have enough money, they have these wall-sized screens on all four walls of the living room and there are also televisions in the other rooms of the house. They can watch TV even when they go sleep since there is one hanging on the ceilings of the rooms. Guy Montag's wife Mildred symbolizes the *ideal citizen* that the authority appreciates and even though they have screens on their three walls she desires a fourth one. "It's only two thousand dollars," she says, but it means one third of Montag's yearly income. (15) For Mildred, who is a total conformist, it is only some money, but the reality that she misses is that it is a huge amount of money. Moreover, she is ready to live without some other things for the sake of that screen.

Television in this state functions as the basic source of propaganda. It gives an unreal picture of life and distorts reality to keep the people under control. This is seen with two clear examples. One of the examples is Montag's chase by the police force. It is broadcasted live on TV. Montag manages to escape easily from the place after he murders Beatty. But it is shown on TV that he is caught by the mechanical hound and killed. However, it is not Montag; it is an ordinary citizen who is not aware of anything. TV does not even show his face after he is captured; just a perception is formed as if Montag is captured. (111) Thus, the illusion that the authority cannot be defeated is imposed on people. The other example is that Mildred and

the other conformist citizens call the TV as their family. Even though people do not have a good relationship with their children, let alone their relatives, they call TV characters as their uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. Apart from being machines that are always on, people can take part in interactive TV programs, which also demonstrate a different form of illusion. In these programs, authors write the script with missing parts. When the time comes for the missing part, characters look at the audience and the people watching the show say the missing line. As a conformist, Montag's wife Mildred usually takes part in these programs, but when asked what the program is about, she has nothing to say, she just plays her role thinking that she is really in the show. However, the same missing part is sent to a lot of people in the country at the same time and they are all taken under control with just one or two sentences. Therefore, the illusion is always keeping people busy with unimportant things. Marshall McLuhan, philosopher of communication theory, says that "All media exists to invest our lives with artificial perception and arbitrary values." (1964) in his 1964 book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.

Another source of keeping people busy and thus oppressing them is the seashell radios. These are tiny radios put into people's ears while they are doing daily activities, working or even sleeping. Therefore, there is no communication between people most of the time, even between husband and wife. Since people's ears are busy with listening, they develop a new skill: lip-reading as Montag's wife Mildred does. Since seashells are another form of oppression, they both block the interaction in the society and make people busy with the way of life that the authority wishes. People do not have the time to think and criticize, because when they are away from the TV they are together with the seashells.

Even though Clarisse is aware of the situation and questions the authority's applications, almost all of the people appreciate these kinds of activities. People talk about their wonderful cars, clothes, and swimming pools. She does not think that they have a real conversation since they are all a kind of designed dialogue.

In *Fahrenheit 451*'s ideal society, people should spend their free time in accordance with the authority's wishes. People are either made busy with

sports or contests. "More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun," says Captain Beatty referring to what people are supposed to do, in their free time. (46) He summarizes the aim of these sports, "You don't have to think, eh?" Also at the school, they are given "an hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, and more sports." (13) Rafeeq O. McGiveron says that "simplification of education reinforces the public's existing desire to avoid difficult thought." (27-29) Therefore, as people are stuffed with sports at school and in their free time, they do not have time to think. As long as they are busy with sports, they are supposed to buy new equipment and support the system.

Another way of making people busy with material things is the competitions. They are asked about "the words to more popular songs or the names of state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year. Cram them full of non-combustible data" and they are made feel that they are brilliant with information. (Bradbury 46) With the help of these factual numbers, which Ray Bradbury calls factoids, they feel the need to take part in competitions and win some money to spend again. Commercial advertising is another tool that accelerates consumerism in the perfect state. For Smolla "commercial advertising and political propaganda are as ubiquitous as the screeching bombers." (896) There are roadside billboards which are two hundred feet long so that fast drivers who have expensive cars can see them easily. However, advertising is not limited to billboards; they are in all aspects of daily life. Advertisements can also distort some important figures who were once important to people. For instance, when talking about the Bible, Faber says that the authority changed the Bible in their parlors, and Christ turned into a member of the family. (Bradbury 63) Then he questions if God can recognize his own son the way they dressed him or not. "He's a regular peppermint stick now, all sugar-crystal and saccasirene;" (63) that is, he is consumed by the commercial advertising world. Also during the chase for Montag, which was very important for the authority since they were looking for a criminal to be punished, there were pauses for the necessary commercials. The system takes advantage of any possible opportunity to lead its citizens for consumerism. Since these advertisements give a lot of clues about their time McLuhan says that "Historians and archeologists will one day discover that the ads of our time are the richest and most faithful reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities." (1964)

Characteristics of the family in *Fahrenheit 451*'s ideal state can be seen in the lives of Montag and his wife Mildred. They are married for a long time, but there is no authentic communication between them. At the beginning of the book, Mildred loses her consciousness because of the overdose of the sleeping pills she frequently takes. When she wakes up in the morning after she is treated by medics, she does not remember what had happened the night before. There is a gap between the spouses because of the drugs taken. Whenever Montag tries to start a conversation, Mildred is either busy with the television, the seashell radio, or she is on the phone. She cannot hear what Montag says. Therefore, she develops the skill of lip-reading. Apart from the lack of communication, there is a lack of interest between the spouses and in the society. Nobody cares for others and Mildred does not remember when and where she met Montag and neither does he. People on television are regarded as family while real family and relatives are forgotten. Relatives aside, people do not even care about their own children. Mildred's friend Mrs. Phelps says that "no one in his right mind would have children," but they have babies because of the idea that is imposed on them by the authority: "the world must reproduce, the race must go on." (Bradbury 73) Their love for their children is limited because of their love for the authority. It is a duty to have children. Mrs. Phelps summarizes how they look after their children:

I plunk the children in school nine days out of ten. I put up with them when they come home three days a month; it's not bad at all. You heave them into the 'parlour' and turn the switch. It's like –washing clothes; stuff laundry in and slam the lid. (73)

This is just what the authority wants. "Heredity and environment are funny things," says Captain Beatty, who adds that "you can't get rid yourself of all the old ducks in just a few years" (48) referring to the bringing up of new generations. Since "the home environment can undo a lot that they try to do at school" they "lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now and they are almost snatching them from the cradle." (47) Authority separates the children from their homes as early as possible and spends as much time as possible with them since they try to build a society which conforms to the authority. This way, as the system can "get rid of the old ducks," (48) they guarantee the future of the system.

Another source that helps keep people under control in this ideal state is the use of drugs. Drugs are the last bullet of the state. First, people are given education in the way that the state wishes; second, they are misled and intoxicated with television and media; next, they are made busy with a consumerist way of life; then, they are followed step by step by the authority; and lastly, in case of any rebellious action, they are stupefied with the use of drugs. Captain Beatty's words show how widespread the use of drugs is: "so bring on your clubs and parties, your acrobats and magicians, your dare-devils, jet cars, motorcycle helicopters, your sex and heroin, more of everything to do with automatic reflex." (58) Another form of drugs, which can be considered more innocent, is the sleeping pills. When Mildred overdoses because of the sleeping pills, medical technicians come to treat her. When Montag asks them why there are not any doctors, they answer that they treat the same case nine or ten times a night. (11) That is, people use and overuse sleeping pills even if they think that they have a perfect life.

## **The Others in the System**

### **Clarisse McClellan**

Clarisse McClellan is the embodiment of being the other in the perfect system, even though she is only seventeen. She is just the opposite of the people who are highly engaged with unnatural activities. She enjoys nature, walks in the forest and in the rain, and watches the animals, activities of which are beyond the taste of her society. Unlike the other people in the system, she rarely watches the parlour walls or goes to races and Fun Parks. She does not like what other people like. Therefore, she is regarded as anti-social among her friends. On the other hand, she does not have friends, as she is afraid of her peers because "everyone she knows is either shouting or dancing around like wild or beating up one another [...] They kill each other." (23)

Clarisse's difference also stems from her family. There is a real relationship between her family members; they come together, and chat and most importantly they listen to each other, which cannot be found in other houses. Thanks to her uncle, she could learn about the time before the ideal state was founded. Her family life "frees her from blindly accepting the social and conventional 'truths' that comprise the present state of

reality.” (Valentine 1998) She can talk about the past when firemen used to extinguish fires not ignite them. On the other hand, Clarisse is a student who does not ask how things happen. Instead she asks why things happen. So, Beatty finds it embarrassing. He says, “you ask why to a lot of things and you wind up very unhappy indeed.” (Bradbury 48) For Beatty she is a time bomb ready to explode at any time, and she also affects people around her. He asks Montag, “You weren’t fooled by that little idiot’s routine, now, were you? Flowers, butterflies, leaves, sunsets, oh, hell!” (86) Beatty emphasizes that people like Clarisse make people feel guilty. He becomes happy about her death: “the poor girl’s better off dead.” (48) Moreover, Clarisse motivated Montag to question the meaning of the life. After their constant speeches on the way home, Montag is affected by her and starts to question if he is really happy or not. He also questions the reality behind the televisions, billboards, and sleeping pills.

Speaking on behalf of the system, Captain Beatty admits that the authority has a record about the girl and her family. He says that her uncle and the girl were recorded as anti-socials and they even had an alarm on them. They searched but could not find any books in their previous location. He blames her family for her being an outcast and mentions the concerns of the system: “the home environment can undo a lot you try to do at school.” (29) In brief, although the authority knows Clarisse and her influence around her very well, they do not choose to punish her. The only thing that they do is to watch and wait for the consequences. The authority does not do anything to rescue her from being an outcast and to include her into the system. Therefore, we can say that the system has an exclusionist attitude towards Clarisse McClellan. She is just ignored by the authority.

### **Professor Faber**

Professor Faber is another character in the novel that can be regarded as other. He is an old professor whose school is closed for lack of students after the ideal state was founded and books lost their importance. He is an intellectual who does not have a place in the new order of the society. After his school is closed he lives in the society as *the Other*. During their talk with Montag, he admits that he has a share in the current situation of the system. He says that he behaved cowardly when the transformation of the society was being done – books being burnt and intellectual life being

ruined. (63) Assuming that he is responsible for the prevailing meaninglessness of life; he lives alone, and has almost no connection with the other people. He lives in the society but he is not a member of it. When Montag visits him for help to overthrow the authority, he thinks that “it is too late” for such an action as the transformation of the society has already been completed. (63) Montag convinces him by tearing the pages of the last probable copy of the Bible. (68) Even though he blames himself for being a coward, he has plans for a probable rebel. For instance he designs a seashell like radio to use for communication. He puts the tool into Montag’s ear and tells him what to do until Montag ends up in his home after he kills Beatty. Faber is the one who informs Montag about the intellectuals living far away from the city. He tells Montag what to do to escape from the authority and arrive at the intellectuals’ camp area. When Montag leaves his house, Faber sets out to find the retired printer in St. Louis to duplicate the Bible and revolt against the authority. Feeling happy after a long time for what he is doing, Faber says, “I feel alive for the first time in years.” He gains his lost courage again and reveals his dedication:

I feel I’m doing what I should have done a lifetime ago. For a little while I’m not afraid. Maybe it’s because I’m doing the right thing at last. Maybe it’s because I’ve done a rash thing and don’t want to look the coward to you. I suppose I’ll have to do even more violent things, exposing myself so I won’t fall down on the job and turn scared again. (98)

Professor Faber’s first encounter with the authority is his meeting with Montag. Montag searches him and feels the book in his pocket but does not arrest him. He does not burn the book and lets him go. (57) Faber is unlike ordinary people. He does not take part in group activities and sports; instead he prefers to be alone at home. He does not have wall-size televisions at home as everyone else does. However, he is not totally ignorant of the society; he is aware of the intellectuals living in the far end of the city, and he is also aware of the old printers who can print and duplicate the Bible. But, he lives as an outcast in the society. Although the authority is aware of his being the Other, they do not try to include him to the system. He is not a problem as long as he is on his own. Even when he

helped Montag with the seashell radio, he would not have been punished if Beatty had not recognized him. Although Captain Beatty recognized him, he would continue to live in the society as he did before Montag. However, he chooses to visit the old printer and be a rebel in the system. Therefore, he would be caught and punished even if it is not mentioned in the book. In short, the system keeps its exclusionist attitude towards Faber as well.

### **Guy Montag**

Although Clarisse and Faber are the outcasts of the society from the beginning of the story, it is not the case for the fireman Guy Montag. At first, Montag is happy with his job and position in the society as a fireman. When they burn books he feels like an “amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning” (1) because “he feels that he is preserving an ideal by —changing dangerous books into harmless ashes” (Valentine 84) The smell of the kerosene which they use to burn books is like a perfume to him.

We see Montag just like all the conformist members of the society, he plays card games with other firemen at the station and bets on which animal will be first killed by the Mechanical Hound. (Bradbury, 18) “One thing about which fish know exactly nothing is water, since they have no anti-environment which would enable them to perceive the element they live in.” (175) says McLuhan to refer to how effective the environment of a person is. In Montag’s case, Clarisse McClellan supplies him with anti-environment that he needs to be aware of the real situation. She makes Montag aware of the long ago forgotten pleasures of life like the smell of the flowers, the rain and the dew on the grass early in the morning. Clarisse helps Montag to question the reality behind what is seen in front of the curtain. Influenced by her speech, Montag reaches the first step of his awareness about what is going on in the ideal society he is in. He starts to enjoy nature and once even opens his mouth to taste the rain just like Clarisse does earlier. Then, during their discussion with his wife Mildred, he asks her, “How long is it since you were bothered about something important, about something real?” (Bradbury 41) This question demonstrates that Montag is no longer a conformist citizen; he begins to question what real is for the society and what reality itself is.

The next thing that contributed to Montag's change is his wife's taking a lot of pills and suffering from an overdose. One day, when Montag arrives home he sees Mildred lying on the floor like a dead body. When medical technicians come, they easily understand that it is due to the over use of sleeping pills. During the night he questions their marriage in which there is almost no communication or compassion. They are in the same house but they share almost nothing as Mildred is always busy with televisions, seashells or talking on the phone with others. (27)

The last factor in Montag's change is that they burn a woman with her books. He cannot forget the incident and he tells it to his wife: "this fire'll last me the rest of my life. God! I've been trying to put it out, in my mind, all night. I'm crazy with trying." (40) The woman quotes from Hugh Latimer,<sup>1</sup> "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out," and refuses to leave her house. As a result, she gets burned with her books but also lights a candle in Montag. This incident becomes a turning point for Montag.

After these three events, Montag's transformation is complete. He is one of the other at this moment. He gains his awareness and consciousness, and he reads the book he stole from the woman who was burnt alive. He also has other books hidden in the house. He reads the books and decides not to be a part of the system anymore. He goes to Faber and asks for help to overthrow the system. When Mildred betrays him and informs the authority that Montag keeps books at home, he is among the firemen to burn his own house. Captain Beatty tries to teach him a lesson about what would happen if he revolts, and makes him burn his own house. However, this does not seem a punishment for Montag. Indeed he is happy to burn his house. It is a reward for him since he "wanted to change everything... everything that showed that he had lived here in this empty house with a strange woman who would forget him tomorrow, who had gone and quite forgotten him already, listening to her Seashell radio." (87) During the incident Captain Beatty understands that someone helps Montag. When Montag understands that Faber is in danger, he kills Fire Chief Beatty since Faber is the only person to help him. Then he becomes a fugitive, so the authority tries to find and punish him. (90)

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<sup>1</sup> *Hugh Latimer, the Church of England chaplain to King Edward VI, was burned alive in 1555.*

What would happen if he had not revolted against the system and had chosen to be like Faber? The answer is that the system would not care for him even if he works as a guardian of the system, as a fireman. Later, it is revealed that he had been stealing and keeping books even before his transformation into a rebel. He has books stored in a secret part of his house. If he had not read a poem to Mildred's friends and made Mildred aware of his habit of keeping books and had he not killed Beatty, he would be living in the society both as an outcast and as a guard of the system. He would be reading and enjoying his books secretly. The authority would not be uncomfortable with him as long as he chose to be on his own. Therefore, it is clear that the authority decides to punish him only after he revolted against it. If he had not revolted, he would continue his normal life, which proves that the system has an exclusionist attitude towards the other.

### **The Others outside the System**

Clarisse, Faber, and Montag are the others who are in the system; however the intellectuals constitute the other who is outside the system. Montag first becomes aware of them when professor Faber gives directions to Montag about how to escape from the authority. They live along the river at the end of the railroad, in the countryside. Faber says that if Montag walks 'far enough' he will see that there are lots of old Harvard degrees on the tracks between there and Los Angeles. The track that Montag followed to reach them "came out of the city and rusted across the land, through forest and woods, deserted then by the river." (108) Intellectuals live far away from the society, outside of the authority of the system. While Montag tries to reach there, he feels the water, he sees the forest and gets closer to reality. When he spends some time with them he remembers when and where he meets his wife. He could not remember this information before his transformation.

There are significant contrasts between the life they have and the life in the city. The first thing is the fire: when Montag meets them they are gathered around a fire. However, in Montag's case, fire means destruction. In the countryside, it is a welcoming and friendly fire. The other symbol of contrast is the small portable television at the camp. In the city they have wall-size televisions, but the intellectuals have a very small and portable

one, which demonstrates that they do not adopt the values of the authority. These examples show that they have a totally different life than that which the authority imposes on the city people. Unlike the people in the city, they are aware of the tools that the system uses to keep people under control. Granger, the leader of the group, has the capacity to predict that the authority was going to deceive the audience in order not to show the weakness of the system when they cannot find Montag during the chase: “the show’s got to have a snap ending, quick! If they started searching the whole damn river it might take all night. So they’re sniffing for a scape-goat to end things with a bang. Watch. They’ll catch Montag in the next five minutes!” (Bradbury 111)

The authority does not regard this small group of intellectuals as a threat. Faber says: “most of them are wanted and hunted in the cities. They survive, I guess. I guess the Government’s never considered them a great enough danger to go in and track them down.” (98) However, the number of the intellectuals is not too small to disregard. When Montag asks how many of them there are, Granger answers: “thousands on the roads, the abandoned rail tracks.” In addition to their number, they have been forming a network and memorizing books “over a period of twenty years.” (115)

Despite the fact that their number is not very small and they have a running network, “the city people let us be”, says Granger. He also states that the system does not really care about them as long as they do not form the majority: “The city has never cared so much about us to bother with an elaborate chase like this to find us. A few crackpots with verses in their heads can’t touch them, and they know it and we know it; everyone knows it. So long as the vast population doesn’t wander about quoting the Magna Charta and the Constitution, it’s all right. The firemen were enough to check that, now and then. No, the cities don’t bother us.” (116)

The authority does not hunt the intellectuals since they are considered to be harmless by the authority. However, Montag breaks the order and causes unrest in the society and therefore he is hunted and killed as a part of the illusion. In brief, the group of intellectuals – whether they are in the society or in the woods – are not taken into consideration as a serious threat, and they are ignored. The authority neither tries to include them

into the ideal system of the state nor punishes them. Instead, they have an exclusionist attitude towards them.

## **Conclusion**

The society in *Fahrenheit 451* is an oppressed society. After a kind of revolution, the people are surrounded with many things to prevent them from free thinking, criticizing and enjoying nature.

The first and the most important tool that the authority uses is television. Televisions in this ideal state are wall-sized and everybody has them in their houses. They try to have televisions on the four walls of their living room. If they have three like Mildred, they try to convince the family members to have the fourth one even if it costs one third of their annual income. Moreover, televisions are not considered machines by the people. They call them *family* and regard the characters in the shows as uncles, aunts and nephews while they never see their real relatives. Not only relatives, but even wife and husband do not talk in the same home as television takes up all their time. In brief, television replaces their real family and relatives. As mothers do not want to spend time with their children they are happy to keep their children at school as long as possible.

The other tool is the seashell radios. When people are not busy with television, they are made busy with tiny radios that they put in their ears. Because of these, people in the same house do not talk to each other and a new skill is developed: lip-reading.

Another way of keeping people busy is sports and group activities. Beatty who seems like speaking on behalf of the authority says, "More sports for everyone, group spirit, fun and you don't have to think." (115) This functions in two ways. First, people are kept busy and they do not have time to think. Secondly, the authority forms a kind of auto-control. That is, when people are with other people, they will not dare to do something that the authority would not approve, or even if they do, they can immediately be warned by the others. Consumerism also serves the same aim. As they are encouraged to consume more and more, they are in debt (like the Montag family) and cannot take the risk of revolting against the authority. These are not enough to keep people under control, so they also watch the people

in case of a rebellious action with monitoring devices and helicopters that blanket the country. People constantly feel the frightening breath of the Mechanical Hound, too.

The authority also does not want people to be committed to their families or relatives. Therefore, children are taken to school as early as cradle age and they spend “nine out of ten days” at school. This way the system has the advantage of educating the children themselves and preventing any case of undoing the given education (as in the case of Clarisse). Also, there is not a strong husband and wife bond. When a husband dies in a war, the woman can get married in a very short time. As there is not a good family and relative relationship, people also become informers to each other, just like how Mildred informed on her own husband. This is the other thing that the system takes advantage of. Even if the authority has taken all the necessary precautions to keep the people under control, it does not leave it up to chance. So it embeds the last tool, drugs. People are free to use drugs and they are promoted to take sleeping pills (the most innocent level of drugs) every night. When they do not feel happy with televisions, seashells, group activities or consuming, they take the pills and remain obedient citizens.

Although the authority uses all the tools mentioned above to keep people under control, some people manage to be the outcast or *the Other*. Then what is the attitude of the authority to them?

First of all, there are two types of *the Other* for the authority: the ones in the system and the ones outside system. In the ideal state of *Fahrenheit 451*, Clarisse, Faber and Montag are *the Others* who are in the system. As mentioned before, even though the authority has a record on Clarisse that she is an outcast, they do not try to include her into the system nor do they punish her. Instead they let her live, as long as she does not spread her ideas. And when she dies, Beatty – who speaks on behalf of the system – makes do with expressing his happiness about the incident. When we consider Professor Faber's situation, we see that he has been leading an outcast life for a long time. And the system does not see him as a threat either.

In addition to them, the main character of the book, Guy Montag, who has been stealing and keeping books for a long time, is not seen as a danger until his wife informs on him to the authority. After he kills Fire Chief Beatty, he escapes and starts to live with the intellectuals. It is very striking that even though the authority regards Montag as a great threat to the system and chases him to death, they do not care about him when they lose track of him. They kill an innocent man and deceive the citizens. They only care about protecting the illusion that the state cannot be fooled or defeated. When the so-called Montag is killed, they stop looking for Montag and let him live.

The authority also does not care about the intellectuals living in the forest either. Even though the state is aware of their existence and suspicious about their activities, it does not try to include them into the system. They choose to ignore them. Consequently, the ideal state in *Fahrenheit 451* has an exclusionist attitude towards *the Others*, who are in the system like Clarisse, Faber and Montag or outside the system like the intellectuals.

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