

Extended Essay
English B
Category 3: Literature

Corruption of Power and Its Influence on the Individual

How does Ray Bradbury in Fahrenheit 451 explore the power of the government and the helplessness of the individual along with the dystopic elements?

2783 words

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Introduction

The purpose of this extended essay is to highlight the differences between different types of pressure as generations change through the novel Fahrenheit 451. The extended essay focuses on society's physical and mental oppression of individuals with differences in regard to the fact that the novel 'Fahrenheit 451' takes a different approach to that pressure. Ironically, the restraints in which individuals live contribute to the author's development of the protagonist's character traits and even force the protagonists to pass strict tests to see how long they can resist oppression. Citizens are required to follow a single trend, and think in the same way, yet not concern the commands behind the injustice. In Fahrenheit 451, we see a takeover of technology and a decrease in natural ways in this futuristic society where books are banned. 'Families' are no longer living beings, but rather TV shows. There will be no more materialistic books made from trees. Only television shows that immerse viewers in the trust and control of the government. The society becomes so engrossed in technology that they fail to notice the war raging in their country. This proves to be their undoing in the end, as an enemy missile swipes the city to oblivion due to their lack of knowledge and care. Ray Bradbury saw these oppressive governments through years and shaded them in his novel. Literature has been a major witness to man's inability to learn from his past and make changes to change his oppressive destiny. The author develops dystopian concepts by focusing not only on the main characters but also on various motives that provide sub-conscious meanings about tyrannical governments.

This essay will explore the issue of power and individualism under the influence of dystopian attitudes. For this purpose, the essay will focus on the analysis of free thought, educational pressures, and the respectful nature of the characters.

The Right to Free Thought

As a dystopian concept, there is unavoidable pressure on freedom of expression and speech. The desire of party members to prevent freedom of thought is the official government policy that prevents freedom of speech. The concept is primarily concerned with freedom of expression, or the right of an individual to express his or her opinions without fear of being criticized. Individualism is forbidden in Fahrenheit 451. Guy Montag becomes a victim of the fires he puts out when the Captain discovers he has forbidden books in his house. Because the Captain's visit to Montag's house foreshadows Montag's crimes being revealed, exercising free speech does not have to be done orally - even single interactions with Faber Montag are found by the party members. 'We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed' says The Captain, which actually refers to the title of the second chapter: 'The sieve and the sand'. The sand and sieve symbols represent the three elimination processes that individuals go through in order to reclaim various rights in a society that leads to the monopolization of disparate mindsets. The animalistic imagery, on the other hand, adds to the black irony Ray Bradbury attempts to demonstrate while questioning the freedom of speech in a world ruled by fear. Clarisse, the butterfly, symbolizes the distinction between man and natural beauty. Creatures act according to their instincts, but Bradbury's world forbids humans from acting on their intuition. Guy Montag considers Clarisse to be "an odd one", which means she is on the verge of being arrested by government officials because the party's policies rely heavily on vanishing unique individuals in order to pursue of the perfect citizenship topic.

The character Clarisse is portrayed by Bradbury through broad sensory imagery in 'The flower on her hand' and 'Walking in a circle around Montag, which hint at a little attractive girl looking for a friend to express her emotions. With her, Bradbury emphasizes the importance of companionship in exposing one's ideals to injustice. Guy Montag appears to be alone before

meeting Clarisse. Clarisse is isolated by both her mates and her close circle, but she understands Guy Montag's loneliness. Clarisse supposedly searches for a fellow to have fun as a child, but her main reason for finding Montag on the way home is to have an elder relative to trust in. Clarisse, who has no family ties, tries to find her own rightness, and her determination motivates Montag not to be silent in the presence of Mildred, his silent wife. 'No, you do not extinguish the entire smell of kerosene,' Clarisse says, shedding light on her accusation of Montag's dissatisfaction with the principles of the tyrannous society.

The American dream also has an impact on one's freedom of expression, as the dream-language has subjugated intellectuals' free thinking. As the party uses The American Dream to manipulate both nationalistic and emotional conventions, the dream of becoming wealthy generates free emotion. The transformation of the United States' national symbol, the Bald Eagle, into the 'Phoenix represents the desire to become wealthy.

The monitoring of free thought by governments raises serious concerns about censorship, suppression of dissent, and infringement of individual rights. Government surveillance can track online activities and control information flow, leading to a chilling effect on free speech and discouraging individuals from freely expressing their thoughts and opinions. Such monitoring can also create a climate of fear and mistrust, undermine trust in democratic institutions, and stifle new and innovative ideas. It is crucial for governments to acknowledge the importance of free thought and safeguard individuals' rights to express themselves without fear of retribution. Instead of monitoring free thought, governments should promote open dialogue and embrace diverse perspectives to create a more inclusive and democratic society.

Free thought is the ability to think and express oneself independently, without being restricted or influenced by dogma, authority, or tradition. It is the ability to question commonly held

beliefs and assumptions, to challenge established norms, and to explore new ideas and possibilities. Free thought is essential for personal growth, intellectual development, and social progress. It allows individuals to develop their own unique perspective on the world, to seek truth and knowledge, and to engage in constructive dialogue with others. Free thought encourages curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, and promotes diversity of thought and the exchange of ideas. It is a fundamental human right that should be protected and nurtured, as it is essential for the advancement of society and the well-being of all individuals.

Pressure on Education

Education is what distinguishes the controlled from the controller. In order to make the country grow financially and authoritatively, the legislatures and their future generations must maintain silence and illiteracy. Despite the fact that Fahrenheit 451 takes place in the middle of WWII, the American Dream and its attendant expectations are represented in a language that demonstrates the conflict between what is sought and what is found. Guy Montag, as his name implies, is an ordinary citizen who allows governmental agencies to manipulate him for political purposes. The authoritative forces demonstrate firefighting as a remarkable occupation in the country. A job option that does not require a university or college education. 'Books bombarded his shoulders,' describes a typical day in Montag's environment.

Mildred, Montag's intolerant wife, is one of the ideal citizens the party wants to have and although Montag has almost no bonds with her after she calls her television screens a 'family', yet he still thinks whether his 'Poor Mildred' has managed to survive both mentally and physically from the fire attack to their house. Mildred attempts suicide by taking an overdose of her medication because she lacks the information and mental capacity to read the procedure on the pill-box. Mildred, in Guy Montag's vision, allows the entrance of 'Emergency

Machinery echoing like a black cobra' inside her stomach, to remove the natural blood in her veins and transfer the artificially produced blood.

Ray Bradbury emphasizes the distinction between the educated and the illiterate from the start. Montag is notable for giving importance to even unknown people, and he refers to Faber as "the old man" before interacting with him. The old man works as a college professor at the local university as a response to the fact that he is isolated from the community in which he has spent his entire life. According to statistics from the Bureau of Community, university attendance has dropped to a bare minimum since the government began to provide citizens with basic daily necessities, enough to ensure they are not working to spend time learning. Ray Bradbury directs his critiques to the illiterate by the awakening Guy Montag has after meeting the rebels, dissolving the purposes behind every operation state members take. The literate have a tradition of orally passing on the knowledge they have gained from books, which also necessitates the burning of books once the members have finished reading them. The description of a 'city looking like a heap of baking powder' by the headmaster, Granger, states an argument of books being reincarnated with new members joining the union. Not only is survival established, but also a new form of education among the new community in which Guy Montag finds himself: 'knowledge being transmitted and enriched by the citizens'. The impact of government pressure on education can be both positive and negative. While it can motivate schools and teachers to prioritize academic standards, promote accountability, and ensure that students meet certain benchmarks, it can also result in a narrow focus on test scores and a one-size-fits-all approach to education that stifles creativity and critical thinking. Thus, striking a balance between promoting academic standards and fostering an environment that encourages creativity, exploration, and individuality is crucial. This can be achieved by empowering teachers, providing resources for innovative teaching methods, and

listening to feedback from students, parents, and educators. By doing so, we can ensure that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for the challenges of the future while also nurturing their unique talents and abilities.

Pressure on Individual's Reputation

Individuals' misunderstandings about reputation are relatively commented on in the novel Fahrenheit 451. Montag is an honorable firefighter in the city of L.A. but he receives no benefits from his respected job in society. The number '451' on his helmet does not represent pride to him, but he desires to have a distinct identity. Montag's reputation eventually affects his wife, Mildred, who does not even contribute physically to the state. Granger alludes to 'The Book of Ecclesiasts,' allowing Montag to recognize the extensive point of view required for a revolutionary act. Religion represents an ideological deviation from the party's control over individuals, and the governors prefer not to include religion as a party of citizens' daily lives, despite the fact that religion is given birth by holy books on Montag's list of burned books. The juxtaposition of The Captain's and Granger's identities distinguishes the concept of reputation and how it is used. Granger says, 'We must build a mirror factory to see ourselves,' defining his palpable pursuit of the community's distributed 'fair' reputation. Granger demonstrates the path to wisdom and social status in order for his followers to track down his method of judgment. Captain Beatty, on the other hand, believes in the party's ideals and does not want to harm the members of his firefighting center. According to Beatty, if one holds a position in society, he is required to change his behavior in accordance with the rules established by the government. Granger's understanding of freedom, on the other hand, has isolated him from the society of L.A., where he lives in deplorable conditions. Guy Montag's fear of his reputation is described using animalistic imagery. When describing the pipe, he

compares it to a "python," demonstrating his guilty conscience. Many members of both past and present-day societies lack conscience, which makes it difficult to understand why history repeats itself.

The novel also includes Biblical references to Jesus Christ's miracle of turning water into wine. Ray Bradbury expands on the wine allusion by using the wine miracle to describe sudden changes that occur in an unprecedented manner. Faber emphasizes the significance of dissimilarities by describing Montag as fire and himself as water. Individuals have a specific place in the community, but social identification is not one of the most important factors in determining happiness. The legislators expect citizens to be satisfied with the knowledge that they are serving for the order established by the party; however, Guy Montag is one of the 'socially wealthy' individuals who recognizes the importance of maintaining one's mental health before seeking a place to gain respect and be acclaimed. One major irony is that, while government agencies seek to destroy emotions by burning books, they inadvertently encourage citizens to express their emotions. Montag reciting a poem to one of Mildred's emotionless guests causes her to shriek, falter, and begin to mutter her criticisms of the party. The impact of reputation pressure on individuals can be severe, affecting both their personal and professional lives. In today's digital era, where social media and online platforms are ubiquitous, individuals may be exposed to negative comments, false accusations, or derogatory remarks that can spread quickly and damage their reputation. Such pressure can negatively impact their ability to secure employment, form relationships, and engage in social activities. It may even lead some individuals to engage in unethical or illegal behavior to avoid negative consequences. It is crucial for individuals to recognize the importance of their reputation and take measures to safeguard it. This can include being mindful of their online presence, avoiding contentious or inflammatory topics, and maintaining a professional and

respectful demeanor. Society also has a role to play in creating a more empathetic and understanding environment that values individuals based on their character and contributions, rather than superficial traits such as appearance or social status.

Conclusion

One quote from Victorian literature states, 'No man grows wise before having his share of winters,' implying that wisdom comes from the inevitability of dictatorship oppression. Fahrenheit 451 describes the situation in which people live in a world ruled by fear. Ray Bradbury approaches the concept with a message: 'History repeats itself if one does not dare to take a step to prevent the formation of minority oppression.' History is not written in a specific area, but it is shared globally for the benefit of man to learn how to resist pressures that affect his desire to live freely. Individuals rarely march against political hierarchies that degrade their quality of life. Individuals with unusual headsets become icons for citizens to gather the self-respect required to overthrow the dictatorship in order to have their voices heard. The author's development of context from various perspectives contributes to the literary idea of empathy among oppressed societies and the ideal truth. However, if people are unable to see reality through the eyes of oppressed authors, then literature will continue to revolve around a single fixed topic of 'dystopia,' which cripples person's sensational desires. Even though the state is aware of their existence and is suspicious of their activities, it makes no attempt to integrate them into the system. They choose to disregard them. As a result, the ideal state in Fahrenheit 451 has an exclusionist attitude toward the Others, whether they are within the system, such as Clarisse, Faber, and Montag, or outside the system, such as the intellectuals.

The novel's themes of censorship, government control, and the importance of intellectual freedom remain relevant in the 21st century world. In today's world, where the internet and social media have become dominant forces in shaping public opinion, there is a risk of censorship and the suppression of free speech. Governments and powerful corporations have the ability to control the narrative by regulating what information is disseminated and how it is presented to the public. This is particularly concerning in the context of social media, where algorithms can be used to manipulate what users see and read.

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