

Dismantling the Binaries in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)

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Abstrak

Peneliti membahas dua masalah yang ada di dalam novel *Fahrenheit 451* dengan menunjukkan oposisi biner dan membongkarnya. Objek yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah novel karya Ray Bradbury yang berjudul "*Fahrenheit 451*". Narasi berkisar pada karakter utamanya yaitu Montag dan karakter utama lainnya dalam menghadapi masalah di dunianya. Metode yang digunakan adalah teori oposisi biner dan dekonstruksi Jaques Derrida. Derrida sangat kritis terhadap pendekatan strukturalis dalam membedah karya sastra yang ia nyatakan bahwa karya sastra terdiri dari Oposisi Biner. Seperti yang ia nyatakan dengan metode dekonstruksinya, makna dalam teks tidak bersifat universal karena membentuk kemiripan struktur hirarki yang ia sebut sebagai Oposisi Biner. Dalam konsep Oposisi Biner Derrida, dengan menganalisis keistimewaan Makna Dominan, kelemahan Makna Subordinat, dan ketidakstabilan antar istilah yang berpasangan dapat mendekonstruksi Oposisi Biner yang ada di dalam buku tersebut. Dengan demikian, interpretasi makna yang baru dapat memberikan makna yang sebenarnya dari sebuah makna yang bersifat arbitrer. Hasil dalam menemukan Oposisi Biner dalam Novel *Fahrenheit 451* adalah sebagai berikut: Perempuan Mandiri vs Ibu Rumah Tangga, Kelompok Terpelajar vs Warga Tidak Terpelajar, Masalah Kolektif vs Masalah Individu, Pekerjaan vs Panggilan Jiwa, Diajarkan vs Otodidak, Kesenangan vs Kepedihan. Ternyata, peneliti mampu membongkarnya dengan membalikkan istilah-istilah subordinat dan menggusur oposisi biner. Sebagai kesimpulan, teori Dekonstruksi berusaha untuk membantah gagasan yang diterima secara umum dan menyajikan alternatif yang mungkin tampak kontradiktif bagi sebagian orang. Sudut pandang yang berbeda dapat diabaikan, terlepas dari kenyataan bahwa kebenaran biasanya diterima begitu saja, menunjukkan bahwa kebenaran dapat bersifat subjektif.

Kata Kunci: *Dekonstruksi, Oposisi Biner, Makna*

Abstract

The researcher discussed two problems that exist in *Fahrenheit 451* novel by pointing out the binary opposition and dismantling them. The Object that was used for this research is Novel by Ray Bradbury titled "*Fahrenheit 451*". The narrative revolves around its main character namely Montag and other major characters in facing problems of their world. The method that was used is Jaques Derrida's binary oppositions and deconstruction theory. Derrida was critical to structuralist approach in dismembering literature works that he stated if they were consist of Binary Opposition. As he stated with his deconstruction method, meaning in text was not universal as it forms resemblance of hierarchy structure which he called Binary Opposition. In Derrida's concept of Binary Opposition, by analyzing the privileges of Dominant Meaning, the disadvantages of Subordinate Meaning and the instability between paired terms can deconstruct the Binary Oppositions that present in the book. Thus, new interpretation of meanings can give true meaning of being arbitrary. The results in finding Binary Opposition in Novel *Fahrenheit 451* are the followings: Independent Woman vs Housewife, Expelled Educated Group vs Uneducated Citizen, Collective Issues vs Individual's Problems, Job vs Avocation, Taught vs Self-taught, Pleasure vs Pain. Turns out, the researcher is able to dismantle it by reversing the subordinate terms and displacing binary opposition. As a conclusion, Deconstruction theory seeks to disprove commonly accepted notions and present alternatives that may appear contradictory to some. Different points of view may be ignored, despite the fact that truth is commonly taken for granted, suggesting the truth can be subjective.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Binary Opposition, Meaning

INTRODUCTION

The main problem in the novel *Fahrenheit 451* written by Ray Bradbury is the censorship of books from an oppressive government. This also correlates with the

existing hegemonic system that hierarchy and binary opposition are also automatically present in the post-structuralism perspective. Gramsci's theory of hegemony stated that jurisdiction in the government system can be influenced by the social class that economically holds the

highest power and the order of society will obey this power structure (Holub, 1992). This authoritarian structure has a basis for judging good and bad in society, therefore the story *Fahrenheit 451* also contains elements of binary opposition.

The fictional world that Ray Bradbury creates in *Fahrenheit 451* is set in a world that places characters in a life of media censorship, where books as a resource for critical thinking are burned and television technology becomes a tool for hegemonic control (Bradbury, 1953). This is structural and exactly the same as Levi-Strauss' explanation of social bricolage. The dominance of certain social classes who are in control, especially resources, will instill a new mindset and identity in society (Lévi-Strauss, 1966).

In continuing the structural discussion in *Fahrenheit 451*, Antonio Gramsci with his counter-hegemony theory can also evaluate the phenomenon. In each economic class, the thoughts of organic intellectuals will develop a culture that is accepted by society as a whole, but the opposition of other organic thinkers will also offer democratic and humanitarian rules to realize a commensurate order (Holub, 1992). However, post-structuralism offers a more philosophical approach to cultural phenomenon that always dynamic. Derrida rejects the view of structuralism in binary opposition in the idealization of society, because there are unique backgrounds that embody the binary thinking patterns of society (Norris, 2002).

Derrida departs from Saussure's idea of the signified/signifier concept, which according to him is the initial foundation of the term binary opposition. The signifier in a language is always bound by its signified, because both are dependent and determined from the meaning of one of them (Saussure, 1959). Western phonocentrism that prioritizes "speech" over "writing" philosophically delays the presence of meaning and thus does not provide the finality of meaning if the underlying structures are missing (Derrida, 1967).

In explaining the meanings that remain "absent," Derrida introduces the terms "différance" and "deferral" to present an alternative configuration of these meanings' positions within a structural hierarchy, reflecting their dynamic nature in relation to fluctuations over time and changes (Raj, 2022). Binary oppositions are not solely discussed from absent and present, but also from self-presence, which means that the definition of a term requires something else as a different description to only just arrive at being incomplete due to the indefinite nature of meaning (Derrida, 1982). Each word points to another as if it is following a trace and it requires other terms in addition to inform clearer meaning or in Derrida's term means

supplement (Caputo, 1997). The addition of the supplement from the external extension is not an afterthought but rather provides a detailed overview of the main meaning (Spivak, 1976).

Derrida also conveyed that the historical context and general conception of western culture can be evaluated if we discuss it philosophically through the dissection of social structures (Norris, 2002). In the discussion of the deconstruction of binary opposition, Derrida means that the order of dualism that competes in meaning, has a position of which one is above or below, and the stratum refers as a hierarchy of meanings (Al-Fayyadl, 2005). Similar to Platonism in the chronology between essence and appearance, the hierarchy of meaning can be constructed by re-examining why essence comes first, and then we take the viewpoint to lower the dominating order in the hierarchy (Sikirivwa, 2020).

In defining dominant meaning, we can look if a strong and socially accepted term gains legitimacy, while the opposite is removed from its dominant trace as consequence (Derrida, 1971). Sublimation of symbols and mass media plays an important role in building dominant cultural structures. This unawareness happens due to the influence that is considered natural, mythical and truthfully invisible to the public (Barthes, 1972). There are many things that affirm the dominant term, yet the root of the support can be sought again by looking at the authorization of the existing structure. Term legitimacy is derived from the trust of people who are subject to ingrained culture and not by complex logic in knowledge (Derrida, 1976).

As in Derrida's theory of deconstruction, the hierarchy of meaning places pairs of binary oppositions into two positions: dominant meaning and subordinate meaning. Having known about how dominant meaning is supported by the culture and understanding of society, other roles such as institutions are also vital in maintaining dominant meaning. On the other hand, institutions, which are also enforcers of law and moral standards, hold the power to label things that are interpreted as subordinate, which may give a non-neutral understanding (Foucault, 1975). Subordinate meaning is secondary, meaning that is considered by connotation and dominant culture as undesirable. Secondary meaning can be elevated if we explore the truth that seemingly still hidden or obscure in the establishment of dominant power, which also means exploring the philosophy behind it (Derrida, 1971). In its implementation, subordinate meaning is the result of the marginalization process of terms that are considered unstable and therefore not prioritized. In fact, if we reflect again on the dominance of "speech" over "writing" that Derrida discusses, this marginalization is based on bias

since speech also has the instabilities that are possessed by the problems in writing (Norris, 1982).

Derrida is steadfast in arguing that subordinate meaning can be given the same position as dominant meaning, which he calls the “reversal” of binary opposition. His deconstruction is guided by critics to Hegel in dialectics which according to him the conceptual in meaning are always continuous and never fixated, therefore reversal is used to understand the implementation of the subordinate side and interactions that have not been revealed (Royle, 2003). In the application of reversal, the marginalized term reinforces the statement that meaning is unstable and dependent on oppositional meaning. Later, the victory of the reversed marginalized meaning will not just ignored, rather the most important result of reversing is the structural order as the basis of the binary opposition (Derrida, 1981).

The ultimate goal in deconstruction is not to reverse the hierarchy if subordinate meaning can be reversed into dominant, since the root conceptualization of both terms is also still fixated and therefore displacement looks for the instability of both meanings of what underlies behind them (Derrida, 1982). Displacement evaluates conflicts and philosophical factors that make the text expose its structures if there are internal changes that stop a meaning from being stable (Derrida, 1981).

As described by Derrida, the deconstruction of binary oppositions uses philosophy as a key in the exploration of structure and culture. The cycle in independent research enables a more dense philosophical approach to examine previous research (Kraus, 2022). It is inherent that an analysis must first look at similar themes and issues in order to obtain concrete knowledge and supporting its theoretical frameworks (Hadi & Afandi, 2021).

Fictional stories often use binary oppositions in themes and characterization metrics. Cultural dynamics and imbalances in the social aspects of society can be found from comparisons between languages in determining binary oppositions such as “Good” and “Evil” (Onyshchak & Shastalo, et. al., 2023). Other works of Ray Bradbury's, *Man Machinery*, are examined with the approach of Trubetskoy's method of phonology which produces new variables in the linguistic perspective of binary terms (Podsievak & Sieriakova, et. al., 2020). In the study of Freudian psychoanalysis, the discussion has found the characterization of Montag as the instinctual Id, Beatty as the controlling Ego, and the government that makes the laws as the Superego (Datta & Dutta, 2023). From these previous studies, the credibility and nuances of Ray Bradbury and his work *Fahrenheit 451* have shown qualities of being valuable for further discussion.

METHODOLOGY

In analyzing this study, the researcher uses Derrida's binary opposition and deconstruction approach to dismantle the binary terms in *Fahrenheit 451* novel by Ray Bradbury. Quotations such as dialogue, monologue, and exposition in *Fahrenheit 451* are used as evidence in the discussion of binary opposition. The researcher also explores other sources in the form of journals, articles, and books that significantly contribute to discussion of this research. The data that has been collected in the form of quotations from the novel *Fahrenheit 451*, is discussed in the concept of binary opposition and Derrida's deconstruction theory with the following process: (1) identifying the binary opposition by discussing which term leans to dominant meaning and subordinate meaning, (2) deconstructing the binary opposition by reversing the subordinate meaning and displacement of both terms in order for the binary opposition to show arbitrary qualities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Independent woman vs Housewife

An independent woman who is financially free is an ideal status in *Fahrenheit 451* since the hegemony created by consumptive society requires individuals to have purchasing power for holding its foundation. Apart from the financial aspect, the story also shows the freedom of self-actualization in the character Clarisse as someone who is unmarried and not at the age to enter the workforce.

“..... So I've lots of time for crazy thoughts, I guess.....I just want to figure out who they are and what they want and where they're going.....”
(Bradbury, 1953)

As shown in the quotation above, Clarisse had time to think freely in her mind, unlike Mildred who got shackled by responsibility of maintaining the household as a housewife. In terms of finances, a housewife like Mildred can also be stressed if a household need is not met.

“...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.”
(Bradbury, 1953)

Being dependence on their husbands for tertiary purchases as shown by Mildred, is not ideal. Hence the subordinate role of the housewife and the dominant idealization of independent woman is the structural hierarchy in defining self-actualization for women.

Expelled Educated group vs Uneducated citizen

The policy of burning books made the educated class flee the city to adapt. However, this did not silence their aspirations and ability to resist censorship. Meanwhile, the majority of people who do not have a high educational background are exploited because of their

limited knowledge.

"This is Fred Clement, former occupant of the Thomas Hardy chair at Cambridge in the years before it became an Atomic Engineering School. This other is Dr. Simmons from U.C.L.A.,....." (Bradbury, 1953)

Their privilege is not in their degree, rather in their ability to think critically against censorship. Scholar people are more open to the idea of books and the subtle oppression, thus putting them at dominant idealization and invulnerable.

The uneducated, on the other hand, do not have that sense. Moreover, critical thinking is crucial to building existing democratic structures. Here they see politicians not by the content of their speeches, as in the following quote: *"I think he's one of the nicest looking men ever became president. (Bradbury, 1953)"*. The way they judge politicians that prioritize only appearance puts the uneducated in a position of subordinate meaning. This is due to them being easily exploited by having shallow political understanding.

Collective's issues vs Individual's problems

"Let him forget there is such a thing as war. If the government is inefficient, top-heavy, and tax-mad, better it be all those than that people worry over it. Peace, Montag." (Bradbury, 1953).

In the excerpt above, the government being incompetent while imposing heavy taxes is invisible through the collective lens of society. Instead of resolving these issues, the government prioritizes silence on the issues of the war they are facing. Things that are for collective security are considered superior issues. Thus, we can see that collective issues become the dominant meaning in the hierarchy.

Montag stood trying to make himself feel the shock of the quiet statement from the radio, but nothing would happen. The war would have to wait for him to come to it in his personal file, an hour, two hours from now. (Bradbury, 1953)

On the other hand, issues involving individual problems are not as important as Montag feels. The regime in Fahrenheit 451 views individuals as mere barriers to societal harmony, preventing them from succumbing to fear and paranoia. This can be interpreted if the issue of the individual is a subordinate meaning that is not prioritized and neglected.

Job vs Avocation

"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." (Bradbury, 1953)

The government in Fahrenheit 451 sees the job of firefighter as symbolic and noble. By implying what Beatty said in explaining how a fireman is chosen, we know that inferior people with no special skills are given jobs without high qualifications. The job also has three crucial roles at once as Beatty said.

Apart from his work, Montag, who is also a fireman, has an interest in knowledge from books. However, this contradicts the firemen's mission to burn all books. One example of this dilemma is emphasized in the following quote from Mildred: *"You'll ruin us! Who's more important, me or that Bible?" She was beginning to shriek now, sitting there like a wax doll melting in its own heat."* (Bradbury, 1953). From this quote, we can see that avocation or dedication in individual interests is not considered important. Therefore, avocation is subordinate, while working a stable job is mandatory or interpreted as dominant meaning in the hierarchy.

Taught vs Self-taught

Gaining knowledge from being "taught" is mandatory in the world of Fahrenheit 451. Not only as a result of the censorship policy on books, but we can also see it from the following dialog excerpt: *"Why aren't you in school? I see you every day wandering around."* (Bradbury, 1953). In the dialogue, Montag asks why Clarisse doesn't go to school. This emphasizes that studying through school, which is certainly through teaching, is a common thing. From both government and cultural emphasis, gaining knowledge from being "taught" occupies the position of dominant meaning.

"Well," said Beatty, "Now you did it. Old Montag wanted to fly near the sun and now that he's burnt his damn wings, he wonders why. Didn't I hint enough when I sent the Hound around your place?" (Bradbury, 1953)

In the dialog between Beatty and Montag in the quote, Beatty as a superior warns Montag that learning from books is prohibited and has sanctions. From this we see that knowledge gained outside of verbal teaching is radical and can be concluded if "self-taught" is in a subordinate position.

Pleasure vs Pain

The circumstances that put people at the constant influence of entertainment and the desire for self-gratification are manifested by their own characteristics. This is reflected in Beatty's words in the following quote: *Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work.* (Bradbury, 1953). As we all know, feeling good is what everyone wants after work. "Pleasure" is the

reward of hard work and has become irreplaceable. This dependence and demand for pleasure is what makes the society in Fahrenheit 451. Therefore, "pleasure" is inevitably as dominant meaning.

"Pain" is the word to avoid if one wants to get "pleasure". In the story Fahrenheit 451, we are given one example in the character of Mildred, where she uses sleeping pills to forget all of her problems, as the following quote shows: *"The small crystal bottle of sleeping tablets which earlier today had been filled with thirty capsules and which now lay uncapped and empty in the light of the tiny flare."* (Bradbury, 1953). This implies that finding the source of the problem, which can be painful to go through, is not something they have ever been exposed to. It can be concluded that "pain" is the subordinate meaning.

Deconstructing Independent Woman vs Housewife

Instead of relying on independent women as contributors to consumerism, a housewife should play a more important role in the sustainability of the household which also aligns to government motives. The quote: *"They write the script with one part missing. It's a new idea. The homemaker, that's me, is the missing part."* (Bradbury, 1953) provides an explanation of why the helplessness of a housewife seems to be lifted and given a special role by government media programs

"Go home." Montag fixed his eyes upon her, quietly. "Go home and think of your first husband divorced and your second husband killed in a jet and your third husband blowing his brains out, go home and think of the dozen abortions you've had, go home and think of that and your damn Caesarean sections" (Bradbury, 1953)

The neglectful parenting and hedonistic influence that being endorsed into independent women can be considered very destructive to the household, as in the quote about Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles, where abortion and divorce are likely to occur. On the other hand, a housewife like Mildred can be seen more stable relationship. This particular quality is the part where housewife can be seen as dominant meaning by reversing the hierarchy.

If we apply "displacing" to both terms of independent woman and housewife, we find bias in the comparison between Mildred and Clarisse. In essence, Mildred cannot be said to be "independent" if she is still dependent on her husband, Montag. Marital status invalidates Mildred in the category of independent woman even though Mildred also has aspirations to pursue such as managing a household. Meanwhile, Clarisse without marital status can be said to be independent with her aspirations of free thinking being fulfilled.

Regarding the discussion of gender roles in housewives, roles like Mildred can be said to be

performative, unlike her socialite friends as in the following quote:

"It's our third marriage each and we're independent. Be independent, we always said. He said, if I get killed off, you just go right ahead and don't cry, but get married again, and don't think of me." (Bradbury, 1953)

Roles, actions, wishful thinking and social expectations are performative processes that build the formation of gender identities and roles (Butler, 1990). Referring to the structural point that Derrida emphasizes from his "displacing" process, without performative roles like Mildred the definition of female roles does not exist. Performative acts like Mildred's are the basis of the definition of the wife's role in the household. From the examples of independent women in Fahrenheit 451 such as Clarisse, Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles, we can see that such role is missing from them.

Deconstructing Educated vs Uneducated

In reversing "the uneducated" to be the dominant one, we can see how their position is greatly benefited from the following quote:

"...Were all firemen picked then for their looks as well as their proclivities? The color of cinders and ash about them, and the continual smell of burning from their pipes." (Bradbury, 1953)

The prerequisites of the firemen's profession do not require experts; rather, they do require the involvement of people who behave deviantly. In doing so, burning books is never a moral conflict for them. This benefits those without education, and therefore the "uneducated" are considered desirable especially by the government. These chosen people can be subconsciously exploited by giving them important roles as enforcers of censorship while fostering the doctrine. Institutions have full control over people's personas and knowledge, which can provide structured power and vice versa (Foucault, 1975).

Whether or not an individual is educated cannot be a benchmark for knowledge. This can be seen from the point of view of formal education, where educational history such as undergraduate degrees etc. becomes a measure of one's intellectual intelligence.

Derrida's "Displacement" looks for the basic structure of how education becomes an obligation to climb social stratification. In Fahrenheit 451, the uneducated also have the same opportunity to get a job. This has its own intentions and factors, especially from the strengthening of the government regime that holds hegemonic control.

People will be swept away by entertainment and find difficulties in determining their political votes due to them pursuing other forms of escapism that put them at comfort (Postman, 1985). The term "uneducated" due to political blindness is not something that is born from the

nature of ignorance, but rather an engineering scheme implanted by the government for social control (Chomsky, 1997).

Deconstructing Collective's issues vs Individual's problems

In addition to censorship on books that are considered radical, we can also see other massive issues such as the ongoing war in Fahrenheit 451 as in the following quote: *"Is it because we're having so much fun at home we've forgotten the world?"* (Bradbury, 1953). Silenced individual voices like Montag and other scholars can call for a ceasefire for diplomacy in war. The perspective of the individual is crucial because the people do not inherently agree with the power of the collective voice. The war could have been stopped if the opposition voice of the government regime was heard.

Although war is an urgent and collective issue on behalf of everyone, the government relies heavily on small issues for diversion. The red herring is evidenced in the following quote where Montag's pursuit is put into the public spotlight: *"They're faking. You threw them off at the river. They can't admit it. They know they can hold their audience only so long....."* (Bradbury, 1953). The government needs individual issues to sell their false narratives, hence "individual's issues" can be placed as dominant meaning.

"There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God." (Bradbury, 1953)

The quote above gives Beatty's thoughts on the existing censorship, where the bias and hypocrisy of the majority prevails. To this continuation of ideas Beatty also adds: *"We stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought"* (Bradbury, 1953). This particular way of thinking is very misguided, since fundamentally, issues that spark from individuals can accumulate into collectives. And from the structural search of the "displacing" method, we know the root of the collective problem is none other than an individual problem. The collective voice will confuse itself and not be able to distinguish which side is being oppressed when individual issues are deemed unimportant (Mills, 1959).

Deconstructing Job vs Avocation

Avocation in the world of Fahrenheit 451 is not something that can directly provide income to individuals, but it can be denied from the following quote: *"I paid for all this—how? Playing the stock market, of course, the last refuge in the world for the dangerous intellectual out of a*

job." (Bradbury, 1953). The quote explains how the character Faber can still earn a penny through the stock market, despite his avocation for knowledge in books. However, the money earned is not commensurate with a normal job.

Faber is also an old man of retirement age. This gives a new perspective that people who are no longer of working age can have an income through avocations. Efforts like Faber's are considered subversive and can replace normal work. Therefore, avocation or interest in certain activities and fields can occupy dominant meaning in the hierarchy of ways to earn a living. The avocation that people get from individualization will adjust the work culture and traditional labor that may appear to isolate their rights (Gelber, 1999).

"That made you for a little while a drunkard. Read a few lines and off you go over the cliff. Bang, you're ready to blow up the world, chop off heads, knock down women and children, destroy authority. I know, I've been through it all." (Bradbury, 1953)

In the quote above we are given a scene of Beatty explaining his knowledge on literacy. Beatty in the context of the dialog piece is also in a sober condition, but he can still remember the quotes from the book he read. This implies that Beatty is a passionate person in literacy and is very contrary to his position as captain of the firemen assigned to burn books. The dialogue detail "I've been through it all", shows that Beatty has given up pursuing his aspirations. In this case, Beatty has a moral dilemma between his avocation and duty at work. He thinks that work provides more moral encouragement and this is crucial in dissecting the structure of how normal work is viewed in the eyes of society. In Derrida's displacing method, we need to know how people tend to prefer work and abandon their ethical code as individuals.

Max Weber mentions that the discipline and financial stability gained from work fosters a society that abides by a system of work ethics, which in the context of Fahrenheit 451's story is the moral righteousness of burning books. Max Weber calls this "Beruf". This is how work is viewed in the displacement of "job" and "avocation" in Fahrenheit 451. Professions that instill moral correctness and provide individuals with financial security in their professionalism are considered a form of hegemonic social culture and enlightenment (Weber, 1905).

Deconstructing Taught vs Self-taught

In the following short excerpt: *"Books aren't people. You read and I look all around, but there isn't*

anybody!”....(Bradbury, 1953), Mildred implies that books do not represent the people she has always seen in entertainment. This is causal if we look at how the visual warmth of television programs already gives the illusion of close interaction. In reversing “self-taught” to make it the dominant position, we can see how books have more value in Fahrenheit 451. Books are often considered unidirectional communication, despite books being 2-way communication that involves feedback or criticism, unlike government influences through media that are anti-critique.

“People don’t talk about anything.” “Oh, they must!” “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.”(Bradbury, 1953)

From the quote about Clarisse's opinion above, we know that not only Mildred, but the general public has been swept up in the media. They talk about objective topics and this goes against what Clarisse considers basic communication. People don't get to know each other, since they are no longer care about greetings and personal questions, thus making it difficult for Clarisse to enter the conversation. People get to know each other is resemblance of self-taught because they themselves want to initiate connection and not isolation. From this, we know that self-taught can sit at the dominant position.

Displacement looks for the underlying structure of how they can take everything told for granted. Through the following dialog, we are shown that Beatty holds belief to why being taught is superior: *“She didn’t want to know how a thing was done, but why. That can be embarrassing”*(Bradbury, 1953). Beatty criticized that Clarisse, who seems to be all-knowing and inquisitive, is only book-smart. According to Beatty, knowledge from books will be self-conflicting. However, that is how criticism works and it's to validate one or the other. Someone like Beatty forgot that there is a possibility if knowledge is not necessarily absolute. Likewise, the majority of people who took the same perspective to Beatty, thus making the government regime strengthen without opposing ideas.

Likewise, another thing to consider is the structure of education in the world of Fahrenheit 451, where books as a form of self-taught are also considered as radicalization. In this case, Fahrenheit 451's government only allows such a rule if teaching must be direct between teacher and student. Books are considered to have strong ideas that can make people defect to government policies. Montag's search for alternatives to knowledge in the story is likely the case if such restrictions exist. Self-taught learning is part of the critique of the

“banking model” that the knowledge attained from teacher deemed as not universal and therefore the interest of learning will defect from the existing institutions (Freire, 1970).

Deconstructing Pleasure vs Pain

Painful things in its rules are difficult to be tolerated in individuals. But in the story of Fahrenheit 451, we are shown by several characters in their process of voicing their rights and getting self-actualization.

On the front porch where she had come to weigh them quietly with her eyes, her quietness a condemnation, the woman stood motionless. Beatty flicked his fingers to spark the kerosene.”(Bradbury, 1953)

In the quote above, we are shown the character of the old woman who is willing to die by fire along with her house. It shows that in voicing her rights to keep books, the old woman must give up her life. She thought that by dying with her books, the event would be a symbolic form of protest to the authoritarian government.

He had just stood there, not really trying to save himself, just stood there, joking, needling, thought Montag, and the thought was enough to stifle his sobbing and let him pause for air.”(Bradbury, 1953)

Another character, Beatty, also has an awareness of pain. As in the quote above, Beatty gave up his life so that his aspirations could be continued by Montag. He is willing to advocate for books despite him previously opposing the idea that reading books can give meaning to someone's life. Beatty realizes that in order to realize a world free from the system of oppression, he must sacrifice himself to be burned in the fire for Montag to escape the ambush. This is an experience of pain for the betterment of the world.

Exposure to pain is also shown to Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles when Montag reads poetry to them in the following quote: *“Why do people want to hurt people? Not enough hurt in the world, you got to tease people with stuff like that!”* (Bradbury, 1953). They think the world is just for fun and as result, they feel shocked at the content of the poem Montag read. The world is full of painful things around us, whether it is the hardships experienced by others or the cruel conditions of the world reflected through literary works. In this case, “pain” can be used as a way of looking at the world to raise awareness in each individual, that the world we see is not entirely beautiful and happy. Therefore, painful experiences can be used in a dominant position so that people do not feel apathetic to their surroundings, especially in the world of Fahrenheit 451 where people are trapped in illusion by seemingly hegemonic constitutional order.

Displacement explores again the nature and

factors that make “pleasure” and “pain” continuous. We have seen in the characters' experiences of how pain is the process that must be taken to get pleasure. What is more crucial is the individualization of the characters.

“Once as a child he had sat upon a yellow dune,..... because some cruel cousin had said, “Fill this sieve and you’ll get a dime!” And the faster he poured, the faster it sifted through with a hot whispering. His hands were tired, the sand was boiling, the sieve was empty,..... without a sound, he felt the tears move down his cheeks. (Bradbury, 1953)

The above quote tells about Montag's past when he sifted sand for dimes. Despite it was just a random suggestion from his relative, Montag persevered even though his chances were slim and he accepted the harsh reality that there would never be dimes in the sand. Such a thing would only be done by an optimistic yet cynical individual. The individualization traits are factors to the perspective of experiencing pain.

In the meaning of “pleasure” we are given the following philosophical quote from Beatty: *“That’s all we live for, isn’t it?” For pleasure, for titillation? And you must admit our culture provides plenty of these.” (Bradbury, 1953).* For him, finding “pleasure” is the basic fulfillment of human instinct in the hierarchy of needs. The need has become culturally and uniformly individualized that it grows apathy for other things in the world.

Foucault explains about “panoptic control” which if we connect it with his concept, the society in Fahrenheit 451 is like being trapped in a prison. The government system that has become a social control creates a nuance if people have to submit and self-regulate like they are being watched, hence why they start to adjust the existing system internally and give up their individualization (Foucault, 1975).

We have seen in the characters' stories that pain is not always being avoided and has many individual factors. On the other hand, we have also been given a quote about the caesarean policy that facilitates the hedonistic tendencies of Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles. In fact, philosophically, childbirth gives a deep meaning to a woman and her biological child. The mother's painful experience of childbirth plays an important role where culture will champion the storytelling of the mother and the child to remember the essence behind how humanity is formed through the process of childbirth or childbearing (Bergum, 1997).

Pleasure in the Fahrenheit 451 story discussion has been observed if the meaning is taken from habits and internalization in society. If we examine it again, pleasure can also mean a painful experience in order to get self-actualization which is exemplified in the characters of

Montag, Beatty, and the old woman. Therefore, definition of “pleasure” and “pain” in the Fahrenheit 451 is arbitrary.

CONCLUSION

The problem asked about the existence of binary opposition and its arbitrary quality in Fahrenheit 451 has been analyzed using Derrida's deconstruction. In Derrida's theory and assumption of hierarchy of meaning, we can identify which term has the quality of dominant meaning and subordinate meaning. The discussion does not end at identifying binary oppositions, rather it is discourses such as reversal and displacement that can re-examine philosophically and structurally how these binary oppositions exist in the novel Fahrenheit 451.

According to deconstruction theory, the result and discussion that follow Fahrenheit 451's main characters, narratives and themes have allowed for a new interpretation of meanings through binary opposition. This is accomplished by breaking down the binary oppositions found in the book's content. The following topics are discussed in pairs: independent woman against housewife, educated versus uneducated, collective versus individual difficulties, job versus vocation, taught versus self-taught, and pleasure versus pain. The results are new categorization of terms in their qualities to be dominant meaning and subordinate meaning.

To summarize the results of the deconstruction process in dismantling the binaries, the researcher provides the essence of the instability of paired terms in Derrida's deconstruction. Independent woman vs housewife has a bias in judging performance because one's marital status is also involved. Educated vs uneducated has a reliance on the involvement of books as an alternative and degrees are only a system. The issue of the individual is the forerunner of the collective issue that society structurally treats through oppression. Avocations can also fulfill economic needs and are outside the spectrum of normal work. Self-taught will be ostracized if “taught” is institutionalized and there is a ban on reading books. Both Pleasure and Pain give meaning to individualization and the pursuit of self-actualization in each person. After being analyzed by the researcher, this study reveals the existence of binary oppositions that place each term in its position. These binary oppositions become arbitrary if they are disambiguated using Derrida's deconstruction. The overlooked view in the book now has a strong meaning, and the unstable structures underlying the philosophy have been revealed. By dismantling the binary opposition in Fahrenheit 451, the researcher suggests that the meaning in the book is not universal, but dynamic.

Suggestion

Derrida's deconstruction initiates concepts that are culturally biased, therefore this research is only limited to these disciplinary guidelines. The researcher hopes that the discussion of binary opposition and its deconstruction in Fahrenheit 451 can contribute to the milestones in post-structuralism and adjacent theories. Hopefully, this research will also be useful for the discussion of other academic fields as well as the continuation of the discussion of the novel Fahrenheit 451. The researcher supports if this research is given constructive criticism and suggestions from other examiners, since the results presented bound to not covers everything into the discussion.

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