

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Nowadays, people live in the era where technology cannot be separated from daily activities. Every household in the world definitely has at least one TV set. In addition, most people also have their own gadgets, such as smartphone or laptop, which have become important part of their lives. Certainly, technology has made our lives and works easier. However, whether we realize it or not, people have become too attached on technology. For example, there are a lot of accidents happen because people are busy texting on their mobile phones while they are driving and there are also a lot of people who become sedentary because they are too engrossed in watching TV.

One of the writers who are interested in dealing with the issue of the effect on technology in human life is a science fiction and fantasy author, Ray Bradbury. Bradbury's works usually contain important issues that have contribution to the society. For example, his *The Martian Chronicles* inspires NASA to begin the exploration to Mars. The NASA program scientist, Michael Mayer has said that NASA and millions of other readers are inspired by the story that Bradbury writes

to dream of the possibility of life on Mars (“NASA Mars Rover Begins Driving at Bradbury Landing”).

His other important work is *Fahrenheit 451*, which I choose to analyze for my thesis. *Fahrenheit 451* is a depiction of a fantasy futuristic society that is surrounded by masses of technology. In this novel, Bradbury shows his contribution through the society through the social criticism, as it is stated that “The novel is significant as social commentary on the ever increasing importance placed on technology, as well on the effects of television and other mass media on literature” (“Ray Bradbury: Master of American Science Fiction?”). In his novel, Bradbury wants to criticize the role of television, which at the time when the novel was written was so popular in the America society.

Watching television became more tempting than reading books. As a result, interest in reading was decreased. “In the 1950s, schools began to use television in the classroom because it was becoming apparent that children's reading levels were dropping” (“Historical Context: Fahrenheit 451”). In the novel people fill their mind with mindless entertainment from huge television walls in their house and any form of knowledge and literature are abandoned and banned. People are ignorant of their surroundings as they become addicted to TV walls. They never question about anything that happens around them since they do not have space and time to think. Through this novel, Bradbury wants to convey a message about the replacement of the importance of books and knowledge with mindless entertainment from television that surrounds a society.

Bradbury uses the differences between the two major characters in the novel to deliver the message as stated above. The first character, Montag, has a

subconscious discontentment of his life which can be eased only after he finds and reads books, which is considered illegal by the government. He finds that books challenge and broaden his mind. The second character, Mildred, is the reflection of the people in the society, who is always occupied with television and consequently, grows numb and empty-headed. The portrayal of these two characters provides some ideas that support each other regarding the issue in the novel. Therefore, I believe that the analysis of major characters is the most appropriate element to be used to reveal the effect of the issues in the novel as “through the characters, we can see the author's intent” (“Analyzing Characters in Literature”).

The criticism that I choose to analyze the novel is formalism since “all the elements necessary for understanding the work are contained within the work itself” (“Critical Approaches to Literature”). Therefore, any other external source is unnecessary because the information needed for the analysis is available in the novel.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problems that will be analyzed in this thesis are:

1. What are the characteristics of the major characters?
2. What is the purpose of the author in creating such characters?

### **Purpose of the Study**

According to the statement of the problem, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the characteristics of the major characters.
2. To show the purpose of the author in creating such characters.

## **Method of Research**

I used library research in writing my thesis. First, I began with reading the primary text, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Second, I searched for additional information through internet and other references to support my study. Third, I used the information that I had gathered to analyze the primary text. After that, I wrote my thesis and drew some conclusions from the studies I had done.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two consists of Analysis of the Major Characters in *Fahrenheit 451*. Chapter Three is Conclusion, then followed by Bibliography and Appendices, consisting of Synopsis of the Novel and Biography of the Author.

