

Analysis of power in fahrenheit 451

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Analysis of Power in Fahrenheit 451 In Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, the United States is portrayed as a totalitarian government in which the people are brainwashed through the destruction of literature and increased pleasure activities. During the novel, many characters fight to gain control over their lives and free themselves from the clutch of the government and the firemen. Bradbury uses the introduction of Faber and Clarisse into Guy Montag's life to symbolize that in order to free one's self from the destructive constraints of society and gain power over it; one must submit themselves to guidance and care. In the beginning of the novel, Bradbury uses Clarisse to introduce the concept of going against the social norm in order to have power over society's laws. This begins when Bradbury makes Clarisse ask Montag if he is happy, challenging him to actually think for the first time and realize that television walls and burning books leave him feeling empty. It continues throughout the novel as Montag experiences the full effect of Clarisse, and eventually begins to think and do some of the things she talks about; " He (Montag) felt his body divide into a hotness and a coldness, a softness and a hardness, a trembling and a not trembling, the two halves grinding one upon the other. ' You'd better run on to your appointment,' he said. And she ran off and left him standing there in the rain. Only after a long time did he move. And then, very slowly, as he walked, he tilted his head back in the rain just for a few moments, and opened his mouth..." (Bradbury 24). In this quote Bradbury shows that as Montag gave up his power to say no to Clarisse, he was freed to accept guidance from her and experience things in life, such as tasting rain or driving slow on the freeway. Through this goes against societal norms and

becomes a free individual who can think and make decisions on his own, leading him to stealing the books and killing Beatty, thus freeing himself from the control and fear that was related to Beatty. As Bradbury continues in the novel and removes Clarisse from the story, he introduces another major influence on Guy Montag, Faber, who is depicted as an ancient author, and actor who has a love for literature and thinking, who takes Montag under his wing and trains him to think logically and challenge society. This is seen when Montag first visits Faber's house and confesses that he is not happy; "I don't know. We have everything we need to be happy, but we aren't happy. Something's missing. I looked around. The only thing I positively knew was gone was the books I'd burned in ten or twelve years. So I thought books might help" (Bradbury 82). By cooperating and relying upon Faber for guidance, Montag is able to convey his feelings about the social norms, how having lots of material wealth and living in a brain dead fashion does not make a person happy, and leaves them powerless to those who know more. Through this Montag proves that he is unique in that he does not wish to remain a follower or inferior to people such as Beatty, due to lack of knowledge or will to learn. By using Faber as a teacher and mentor, Ray Bradbury is able to portray a change in Montag, highlighting the fact that Montag does not wish to be held powerless by greater forces such as Beatty and fear itself. Faber actively encourages Montag to think about his current situation and how the use of knowledge and literature could positively affect the world and the problems they face. This scheming ultimately leads to the killing of Beatty and the placing of the book in a fireman's house. By killing Beatty, Montag defeats his fear of Beatty and overcomes his powerless state,

allowing him to be free of corruptive influence which drove him towards the destruction of literature. Through the placing of the book in Mr. Black's house, Montag begins to start a movement in which the social norms that firemen and people held so dear would be attacked, causing people to think, freeing them from the power of the government, firemen, and social norms. These two acts symbolize a complete change within Guy Montag, changing from a follower, powerless against the wit and strength of Beatty and afraid of acting against him, to a leader who has the power to spread the knowledge and usefulness of literature. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* displays many examples of the gaining and losing of power. Guy Montag is one character who is able to throw off the restricting aspects of society and power hungry, tyrannical leaders, in order to be free in his thought and ability to consume knowledge. In the novel, Bradbury uses Clarisse and Faber to challenge and provoke thought in Guy Montag proving that through guidance and positive influence, one can overthrow the clutches of corrupt power. Works Cited Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Del Rey Book, 1991. Print.