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**THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN RAY BRADURY'S  
EARLY NOVELS**

Bakalářská práce

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## Abstract

The role of women in the science fiction of the 1950s was often stereotyped. In this study, the role of women in Ray Bradbury's early fictional novels *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles* was analyzed, his biography taken into account. Bradbury, even though creating some exceptionally strong female characters, seemingly promoted common masculine stereotypes of the period.

## Introduction

"There are plenty of images of women in science fiction. There are hardly any women."

(Joana Russ, 1971)

The aim of this work is to analyze the image of women in Ray Bradbury's early futuristic novels, *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles*, assess how were the female characters of the books influenced by common stereotypes of the period and through this find out, how Ray Bradbury felt about the development of women position in the society.

*The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451* are Bradbury's first and only futuristic novels Bradbury published and at the same time among his best known and most influential novels, as they both helped to elevate the prestige of science fiction literature in the eyes of general public and academic critics. The images of women they gave represent his prediction on how will the women's right develop in future.

The thesis is divided into four parts. The first part summarizes Bradbury's life and his professional career and analyzes his attitude toward women, giving insight necessary to understand the role of women in his novels. Next two chapters deal with the given books in detail to analyze the role of the female characters. Last chapter briefly analyzes the images of women from both books, pointing out the differences and similarities

The basis for the work is my own reading and study of the above books and of the authors' biographies. This I have consulted with my research in the area based on works by renowned authors, such as Sharp, Reid and Johnson, and their critiques on science fiction literature, combined with the experience with gender studies gained through several courses taken during my study.

# 1 Ray Bradbury

In the first part of the thesis is summarized the biography of Ray Bradbury along with his attitude toward women.

## 1.1 Biography

This chapter briefly summarizes biography of Ray Bradbury and deals with his writing style for better understanding of *Fahrenheit 451*, the views it contains and its structure.

Michael Sharp in his book *Popular Contemporary Writers* (2006) says that Ray Bradbury was among the most important science fiction authors of the 20th century as he had done a lot to change the general view on science fiction literature as a whole. Sharp supports his claims with the fact that Ray Bradbury was the first science fiction author who managed to have his work published in mainstream periodicals and not only in special-interest magazines (also known as fanzines<sup>1</sup>). Although Bradbury published only what he considered to be the best of his work, more than 500 of his stories went to print since he started writing in 1940s (Sharp, 2006: 219).

Being such a prolific author there is no wonder that Bradbury did not respect genres and is in general hard to be classified as one genre author only. Robin Anne Reid in her book *Ray Bradbury: A Critical Companion* (2000) states that professional critics' opinions on what genre Bradbury wrote vary according to what work they read (Reid, 2000: 7). Furthermore, Sharp (2006) states that Bradbury did not consider himself a science fiction author but rather a fantasy writer (Sharp, 2006: 225). The fact is that Bradbury's stories are written in variety of genres such as horror, mystery, fantasy, gothic and suspense (Sharp, 2006: 226). Bradbury in his introduction to *The Ray Bradbury Companion* (cited in Reid, 2000: 8) states that it was very hard for him to be an exclusive science fiction author as in the early days of his career science fiction was by large neglected by reviewers and academics and was considered to be a

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<sup>1</sup> Fanzine - fanzine is a magazine written, printed and distributed by fans or a specific genre author. Fanzines usually consist of 1 to 100 pages with circulation of 5 to 5000 copies (Clute,2011: 777).

second class literature. This view changed only after the launch of Sputnik and the moon landing in 1969 (Reid, 2000: 8).

Bradbury was highly influential writer and through his lifetime work he helped to increase the prestige and recognition of science fiction literature in the eyes of academics and literary critics (Sharp, 2006: 223). According to Reid (2000) Bradbury's greatest achievement, despite all the awards he received later, was when his *The Martian Chronicle* received positive review by mainstream British novelist Christopher Isherwood in 1950, considered to be his breakthrough to mainstream popularity. In his review Isherwood described Bradbury as a fantasy author, continuing the tradition of Edgar Allan Poe, rather than science fiction (i.e. low-grade literature see above) author and so helped to increase Bradbury's reputation (Reid, 2000: 4).

Bradbury was not an ordinary science fiction author especially because of the message he conveyed through his books. He did not overuse technology or science in his stories and usually used it to demonstrate that misuse or abusive use of technology may lead to bitter end, and that technological boom does not always mean improvement of the quality of human life, which was at the time a rather unique opinion (Zipes in Rabkin, 1983: 182, Sharp, 2006: 225).

Even though Bradbury saw technology as capable of making human life a misery it was not so in every case and he still believed that it is necessary to question the influence of every machine individually and that space colonization is the only possibility for humankind in order to survive (Sharp, 2006: 226).

All this corresponds well with Bradbury's lifestyle. One of the most iconic science fiction authors and visionaries had never learned to drive, did not fly in airplanes and openly admitted that he did not even know how to change a light bulb (Sharp, 2006: 226).

Reid (2000) states that paradoxically Bradbury's most severe critics were at the same time members of science fiction community who regularly labeled him as "anti-science fiction" author (Reid, 2000: 9). Bradbury (cited in Sharp, 2006) commented on this in *Playboy* interview in 1996 when he said: "I don't care what the science fiction trade technicians say. They are furious that I get away with murder. I use scientific idea as a platform to leap into the air and never come back. This keeps them angry at me. They still begrudge my putting an atmosphere on Mars in *The Martian Chronicles* more than forty years ago" (Sharp, 2006: 225). Another science fiction author Damon Knight (cited in Sharp, 2006)



said that Bradbury was a nostalgist and not a futurist, using science fiction as a mere background for "tapping emotions" (Sharp, 2006: 225).

The nostalgic side of Bradbury's writing is shown in the great importance he gave to small town life in his stories, embodied in his image of front porches. In his writing a front porch is a place for family meetings and conversations, while some technology such as televisions or cars tend to separate people from each other (Sharp, 2006: 227). This idea he used in many of his stories, including *Fahrenheit 451*.

Bradbury's writing style is unique in yet another way. He always considered himself a self-taught writer, regularly writing few pages every day and later a story a week, which he considered to be a useful habit (Sharp, 2006: 220). He also recommended this habit to other writers and advised them to write as quickly as possible for that he saw as the only way for a writer to gain their own writing style (Sharp, 2006: 221).

Ray Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920 in the town of Waukegan, Illinois (Sharp, 2006: 219). The town of Waukegan, then with nearly twenty thousand inhabitants, had a great impact on his later career even though Ray Bradbury lived here for only a few years after his birth (Reid, 2000: 1). Waukegan, mixed with other of his experiences, later appeared in his stories as the Green Town, though significantly altered (Reid, 2000: 6).

This partly biographical style of writing in which he mixed facts with fantasy and memories is typical for Bradbury's writing (Reid, 2000: 6). This fact is also connected with Bradbury's claim of recalling everything since his birth and stating that a movie version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, which he saw at the age of three, had been a great inspiration for his *Graveyard for Lunatics* (Reid, 2000: 1).

Bradbury started writing when he was only twelve years old and perhaps thanks to the aforementioned habit he had successfully published his first short story in 1938 at the age of eighteen (Sharp, 2006: 220). It was also the year when Bradbury graduated from high school and decided to become full-time writer (Sharp, 221).

His career started as it did for many other science fiction authors at a fan magazine *Super Science Stories* where his short story *Pendulum* was published and later he wrote stories for the legendary *Weird Tales*<sup>2</sup> magazine (Reid, 2000: 3, Sharp, 2006: 223). Bradbury's first short stories were published there and being a science fiction fan himself Bradbury then

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<sup>2</sup> *Weird Tales* - original *Weird Tales* was a magazine published from 1923 to 1953. It contained dark fantasy and horror stories. Most importantly many renowned authors contributed to the *Weird Tales* magazines such as Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith (Clute, 2011: 2429)

published 4 issues of his own fanzine *Futura Fantastici*, issued between 1939 and 1941, in which some of his early short stories were published (Clute, 2011: 778).

At the beginning of his career in 1941 he wrote 51 stories of which only three were sold but his career escalated quickly after he rent his own flat with a typewriter in it and fully dedicated his life to writing (Reid, 2000: 3). In the 1940s Bradbury also met Marguerite McClure during a visit to a local bookstore and married her soon after (Sharp, 2006: 221).

The following decade was the most successful in his whole career. During the fifties Bradbury published in quick succession his most important opuses: *The Martian Chronicles* (1950), *The Illustrated Man* (1951), *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and *Dandelion Wine* (1957) along with a few other short story collections such as *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (1953), *The October Country* (1955) and *A Medicine for Melancholy* (1959) (Reid, 2000: 4, Sharp, 2006: 228).

In this decade Bradbury also wrote several screenplays among which was *It Came from Outer Space*<sup>3</sup> (1953), which later became first 3-D science fiction movie (Reid, 2000: 4). Bradbury kept this pace for the rest of his professional life and continued to write short stories, novels, poetry, screenplays and plays, essays and nonfiction (*Zen in the Art of Writing*) (Reid, 2000: 4).

Bradbury was awarded many times for his life-long contribution to science fiction and horror literature. He received major awards such as the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement at the World Fantasy Convention in 1977, the Grand Master Nebula Award from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America association in 1988, three times he won the Bram Stoker Award and later received the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Horror Writers Association (Reid, 2000: 4).

He also won an Emmy, was an Oscar nominee in 1962 and a Moon crater (Dandelion Crater) and a Mars landing site (Bradbury Landing) were named in his honor, fitting tribute to a lifetime science fiction author (Reid, 2000: 5).

## 1.2 Bradbury and women

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<sup>3</sup> *It Came from Outer Space* - now a classic movie in the genre, which Bradbury based on his short story *The Meteor*, is a typical allegory warning against communist invasion (Sharp, 2006: 224)

This chapter is a continuation of the last one and deals with Bradbury's attitude towards women's rights movements and women in general.

As mentioned in chapter 1.1, Bradbury's life philosophy was based mostly on small town life, which he had given a great importance even in his novels, in conjunction with traditional Christian values (see above). Bradbury spent his whole life with one woman - his wife, whom he undoubtedly respected greatly (Weller, 2005). His respect for traditional values is also clearly shown by the fact that Bradbury seldom mixed eroticism or pornography to his writing, be it fiction or non-fiction.

Bradbury commented on this absence of sex in his science fiction in *Playboy magazine* interview in which he denied that he was just shying away from eroticism by saying: "There is no reason to write pornography when your own sex life is good. Why waste time writing about it?" (Kelley, 1996).

However, in his lifetime Bradbury had been many times called a sexist and received many letters from women organizations concerned with the same issue (Bradbury, 1979). Mostly the authors of the letters demanded more women characters added to his works or whole novels rewritten with deeper emphasis on female characters (see below). These minor "sexism" problems were by far overshadowed by Bradbury's defense of Senator Bob Packwood<sup>4</sup> in *Politically Incorrect*<sup>5</sup>, show hosted by Bill Maher. Bradbury defended his friend Packwood by saying: "So he pinched his secretary! Big deal, who hasn't?" and later on the same show said, that he wooed his wife by sexually harassing her until she consented to marry him (Thiel, 2012). However, at the time of the romance (1941) this kind of behavior was not yet considered illegal.

These statements must be considered in context of the show as it was about the absence of political correctness. Bradbury also had his doubts about the whole case, seeing it as staged. In the *Playboy magazine* interview Bradbury commented this case by saying: "I wish he were still in Congress. I sent him a telegram a year ago and told him to stand firm because those women are jerks. They wait 20 years. They are offended 20 years later. Don't hand me that" (Kelley, 1996).

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<sup>4</sup> Senator Bob Packwood resigned in 1995 after being accused of sexual harassment by ten of his former co-workers (Source: Wikipedia). Packwood was at the time Bradbury's friend and Bradbury revered him mostly because he was one of the few Senators, who supported the US space program and NASA (Bradbury in Kelley, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> *Politically Incorrect* was a late-night talk show hosted by comedian Bill Maher, who is well known for his "bluntness" and politically incorrect statements and the show was hosted in the same manner (Source: IMDB.com).

Nevertheless, most of Bradbury's comments on women or women rights were neutral or positive. This philosophy of his he summarized in the *Playboy magazine* interview when answering a question about why women are not so interested in science fiction literature as men are: "There are two races of people - men and women - no matter what women's libbers would have you pretend. The male is motivated by toys and science because men are born with no purpose in the universe except to procreate. There is lots of time to kill beyond that. They've got to find work. Men have no inherent center to themselves beyond procreating. Women, however, are born with a center. They can create the universe, mother it, teach it, nurture it. Men read science fiction to build the future. Women don't need to read it. They are the future" (Kelley, 1996). Interpretation of this statement may differ and even though the initial division of sexes is somewhat sexist, the message it conveys is clearly positive towards women and their role in the society.

The statement above also contains certain negative elements against "women libbers". This negative attitude might originate from Bradbury's hatred for all the groups that tried to interfere with his or any other author's work and wanted them to change or even censor some of the work so it would not be controversial (Bradbury, 1979). In a Coda for new edition of *Fahrenheit 451* in 1979 Bradbury commented on this issue by appealing to general public and minority groups alike not to insult him by proposing changes to his work (Bradbury, 1979). This means he was not really opposed against anyone or any minority as long as it was not trying to tell him how to write his novels.

In the Coda Bradbury (1979) states that his play *Leviathan 99* was rejected by a university theatre because there were no women in it and the management stated that they will not risk a negative reaction of women activists. Bradbury (1979) claims 75 sections of *Fahrenheit 451* were censored or changed in its previous edition by the publisher fearful of contaminating the young readers, which is exactly what Bradbury tried to warn about in *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1979).

Ray Bradbury, one of the most influential science fiction authors of the 20th century, seemed to prefer the traditional way of life which influenced his views on women. Although Bradbury was one of the less sexist authors of the period, his advocating of a friend accused of sexual harassment and his bluntness, were the main reasons why he was criticised by the women's right movements.

## 2 Fahrenheit 451

This chapter deals with the book *Fahrenheit 451*, its themes, setting, plot and the image of women it gives.

### 2.1 Introduction

*Fahrenheit 451* is probably the best known book Ray Bradbury ever published. It was first published in 1953 and has been in print ever since (Sharp, 2006: 229). In the afterword to the book's new edition, Bradbury (1979) described how the book came to be. *Fahrenheit 451* is in fact an extended version of his earlier novella *The Fire Man* (1951), which he wrote in the basement of the local university library on a rented typewriter. Bradbury (1979) states that he paid 10 cents per half an hour and because the time literally was money he managed to write the first draft of *The Fire Man*, approximately 25,000 characters long, in 9 days for 9 dollars and eighty cents (Bradbury, 1979). *The Fire Man* was first published in *Galaxy* magazine in 1951 and later in the first issues of *Playboy* magazine (Bradbury, 1979; Kelley, 1996).

In the afterword Bradbury (1979) claims that he spent his writing breaks by wandering through the library upstairs and enjoying the atmosphere of the large library. Bradbury (1979) writes: "[In the library] I strolled, lost in love, down the corridors, and through the stacks, touching books, pulling volumes out, turning pages, thrusting volumes back, drowning in all the good stuffs that are the essence of libraries. What a place, don't you agree, to write a novel about burning books in the Future!" (Bradbury; 1979).

In an essay on *Fahrenheit 451*, *Burning Bright*, Bradbury (1993) reveals other sources he used when writing *Fahrenheit 451*, describing them as small steps before a great leap. Apart from *The Fire Man*, Bradbury (1993) mentions a short story *Bonfire*, about a man who muses of books that are soon to be destroyed due to the impending end of the world. Next story Bradbury mentions is *Bright Phoenix*, a story about how townspeople saved books by memorizing them, thus making them out of the reach of the local bigot, the book burner. Bradbury (1993) mentions two stories from *The Martian Chronicles* (1950), the *Exiles*

(originally published in *The Illustrated Man* in 1951, later added to *The Martian Chronicles: The Complete Edition*, published in 2010) and Usher II, both containing reference to burning other literary works. "The fifth hop" for Bradbury was incident with the police, which led him to write his short story *The Pedestrian* (1951) and later *The Fire Man* (Bradbury in Bloom, 2008).

Additionally, short story collection named *A Pleasure to Burn: Fahrenheit 451 Stories* was published in 2010. This is a collection of 16 of Bradbury's short stories, that allegedly led him to writing *Fahrenheit 451*, excluding Usher II.

*Fahrenheit 451* was later adapted to other media. A movie based on the book was filmed in 1966, and even though Bradbury (1996) said it was the best movie adaptation of the book, he claimed that he was eager to redo the whole movie because François Truffaut, the director, left out too many important things (Kelley, 1996; Reid, 2000: 53). The book adaptations also include several stage plays, radio dramatization (1982) and a video game (1986) (Bradbury, 1982; Kelley, 1996).

## 2.2 Themes

*Fahrenheit 451* includes a wide range of themes. According to Sharp (2006), the book acts mainly as a criticism of a socio-political conformity in the United States of the 1950s (Sharp, 2006: 229). Zipes (1983) is of the similar opinion as Sharp (2006) when he agrees that the book's main aim is to criticize McCarthyism and social issues of the then United States (Zipes in Rabkin, 1983: 182).

Even though this interpretation of the book is very common and seems logical, it is in fact a persisting myth. Bradbury (2007) denied that the book was a criticism of McCarthyism or censorship in the short interview which he gave in 2007 and can be found in form of a video named *Bradbury on Censorship/Television* on his dedicated website. In the video Bradbury says: "I wasn't worried about freedom. I was worried about people being turned into morons by TV" and later in the video he adds "*Fahrenheit's* not about censorship, it's about

the moronic influence on popular culture through local TV news, the proliferation of giant screens and the bombardment of "factoids"<sup>6</sup>..." (Bradbury, 2007).

Reid (2000) is convinced that the main theme of the book is: "the resistance to the conformity imposed by a mass media and the use of technology to control individuals" (Reid, 2000: 59). In *Fahrenheit 451*, television acts as the main antagonist. Because of its bad influence people stopped reading books, which, in turn, were simplified ad absurdum or burned by minority activists and the people did nothing to stop this because they were content with the simplicity of the television. Reid (2000) points out that the fireman Captain Beatty and ex-teacher Faber said in the book that the people stopped reading of their own accord (Reid, 2000:60). The society then adapted to this by the TV education and film teachers which further demented the population and suppressed individualism (Reid, 2000: 59).

According to Reid (2000) this is the contrary of the censorship/McCarthyism myth which says that the government censored the books. In *Fahrenheit 451* the government actually does not act in any way except for the bomb-carrying planes flying overhead a few times throughout the book (Reid, 2000: 60).

Another major theme in the book is the warning against car misuse which is expressed in Clarissa's death, Mildred's fast driving in the countryside or in the episode where Montag is almost killed by a car driven by teenagers (Reid, 2000: 59).

*Fahrenheit 451* comprises several major themes. The main theme, as stated by the author, seems to be a warning against conformism imposed by the technological advance.

## 2.3 Setting

The story of the book is set in a city in the near future United States. According to Reid (2000) the city is located in the Midwest area, based on the fact that Montag met his wife in Chicago, Faber can take bus to St. Louis and refers to Los Angeles as a remote place (Reid, 2000: 59).

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<sup>6</sup> Factoid - Bradbury defines the factoid as a shortened fact up to the point where it becomes so incomplete it is misleading or irrelevant. He gives an example of a factoid by saying: "They [television] tell you when Napoleon was born but not who he was" (Bradbury, 2007).

The exact date is also unknown. The only time reference given is at the beginning of the second chapter, when Montag states that the country had started and won two atomic wars since the certain date (Bradbury, 1953). However, this date changed with later editions of the book, as it is in the case of *The Martian Chronicles*. In the first edition of the book (Ballantine Books, 1953) this date is 1960 but in the later Ballantine Books edition printed in 1980 (Ballantine Books, 1980) it is changed to 1990. This date is also mentioned in the audio version of the book (Harper Audio, 2001) which is read by the author, indicating this time change was intentional.

*Fahrenheit 451* captures the story of Guy Montag, a fireman in the future who becomes self aware and rebels against the oppressive society. In the Bradbury's dystopian future the purpose of the firemen<sup>7</sup> is changed and their main goal is to find and burn all books, which are forbidden to be read. Bradbury (1979) in the new *Fahrenheit 451* edition afterword points out that a crime really was to read a book, not own it, as Captain Beatty shows Montag his vast collection of books in an added story about how Beatty became a fireman (Bradbury, 1979).

The firemen in the book use clear indications about their relation to fire. They use symbolic number of 451, which refers to the autoignition temperature of paper and fire salamander and the mystical bird phoenix as their official symbols (Reid, 2000: 53)

## 2.4 Plot

The first chapter of the book named The Hearth and the Salamander starts at the point in Montag's life, when he is satisfied with the life of a fireman he is living. He finds a great pleasure in the book burning and does not question the nature of this work. This changes after he meets a curious girl named Clarisse who starts asking him questions about simple things. Her final question, whether he is happy, really makes Montag think about the course his life has taken over the years.

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<sup>7</sup> Fireman - the term firefighter has replaced the obsolete term fireman, yet it was still in use when Bradbury wrote the book. In this work firefighters will be referred to as firemen because of its double meaning (someone who douses or starts a fire) and the fact, that there are no female firefighters mentioned in the book.



However, when Montag arrives home he finds out his wife, Mildred, has attempted a suicide when she overdosed herself with sleeping pills. As this seems to be a common phenomenon, emergency hospital sends only two cynical technicians who pump her stomach and then replace her blood before going to a next case. Next morning Mildred denies that she tried to kill herself. It is not certain whether she lies to Montag or if she really is unable to remember it. Mildred resumes her regular lifestyle consisting of day long watching television, in a form of wall sized screens called parlour walls and listening to radio.

During the next week Montag and Clarisse grow closer with surprising ease up to the point where he considers her to be his close friend and part of his life. Clarisse's influence on Montag starts to show when he questions his superior, Captain Beatty, about things Clarisse had told him which gets him into an intricate situation and he almost gives away his hidden collection of books. He is saved though when the fire alarm sounds and the firemen have to attend it.

At their destination the firemen are surprised to find a woman, accused of book reading, because, as Montag states, they are just cleaners or "janitors" and the police usually takes care of the suspect. In the chaos of the firemen at work, Montag manages to steal and hide one book in his coat. The woman watches as the firemen pile up her books and drench them with kerosene but later refuses to leave the house filled with the flammable substance and instead starts the fire herself and is burned along with her books.

Montag is shaken by this incident and when he arrives home that evening he tries to think about something else but this only brings him to a revelation that neither he nor his wife can remember where they met. He then questions his wife about Clarisse and Mildred suddenly remembers that she was supposed to tell Montag about Clarisse's rumored death. Montag is emotionally exhausted and goes to sleep.

As Mildred is an unreliable source of information, Clarisse's disappearance is a mystery. In the movie adaptation of the book (Truffaut, 1966) Montag meets Clarisse again at the end as one of the Book People. In the new edition afterword Bradbury (1979) states that he changed the ending of *Fahrenheit 451* play adaptation in similar fashion. He suggests though that at this point in the book Clarisse might be dead (Bradbury, 1979).

The next noon, when he wakes up, Montag's change is apparent. He feels ill, refuses to go to work and the smell of kerosene, which in the earlier part of the book he described as a perfume, makes him vomit. He asks Mildred to call in sick for him, afraid of Captain's

reaction. Yet Captain Beatty notices Montag's absence on the early shift and comes to visit him. He then explains to Montag how the evolution of mass culture and the minority pressure changed the society so the books became redundant and later the government started to get rid of them in the public interest.

It seems that at this point Beatty is trying to merely confuse Montag with an adjusted version of history, but Montag resists and after Beatty leaves, he reveals his collection of books to Mildred. She tries to burn them but is convinced by Montag to try to find out whether there is anything useful in them. This is the end of the first chapter.

The second chapter, *The Sieve and the Sand* picks up the story a while after the first ended. Montag is trying to read as many books as possible before going back to work. He is desperate as he fails to extract anything useful from the books and further frustrated when Mildred invites her friends to come over to watch a show with her.

Montag leaves the house and heads to Faber, an old professor he once met. Faber initially does not trust Montag, but he wins Faber's trust with a copy of the New Testament he gives him. Faber then explains to Montag what he, and the rest of the people, are missing in life: quality or texture of information, leisure time to digest it and "the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the inter-action of the first two" (cited in Reid, 2000: 55). Together, Montag and Faber hatch a plan to start secretly printing books. Nevertheless, Montag has to go to work first and confront Beatty so Faber gives him a communication device through which he can talk to him.

In the afterword, Bradbury (1979) mentioned that only 20 years after he finished *Fahrenheit 451* did he realize he subconsciously named Montag after a paper manufacturer and his counterpart Faber he named after a maker of pencils (Bradbury, 1979). Later in the book Montag hopes a new Montag will be created after he will learn more from Faber.

Montag leaves and heads home, in touch with Faber. However when he arrives home and sees Mildred and her friends he cannot resist the urge to convince them about the importance of books and reads them *Dover Beach* by Matthew Arnold. His attempt fails, the women, stressed by the situation and not understanding the poem, get hysterical and angry.

Montag leaves and proceeds to confront Beatty at the fire station, but Beatty is ready for him, telling him about a dream he allegedly had, in which they both argued about the meaning of books by quoting them. This leaves Montag thoroughly confused and shaken. This argument

is ended by the fire alarm and all the firemen go. Only too late Montag realizes they were called to burn his own house.

In the third chapter, Burning Bright, Montag learns that it was Mildred who made the call. He is then forced by Beatty to burn his own house with a flamethrower. After this Montag gives up and does not defend himself against Beatty's attacks. However when Beatty discovers Montag has the communication device and threatens to track down the person on the other end, Montag kills Beatty and a mechanical dog, used by firemen to exterminate people, with a flamethrower and escapes. Montag later muses about Beatty's death and comes to a conclusion that Beatty wanted to die at his hand.

Montag flees toward Faber's house and on the run manages to hide books in other fireman's house and call in alarm. He then surprises Faber who thought Montag dead and then they both watch the hunt for Montag in Faber's small television, also learning that the war had been declared. Realizing he must keep on fleeing Faber instructs Montag to try to find the Book People, underground organization of people such as him while he will try to cover up his trail and later escape to St. Louis.

Another mechanical hound is on Montag's trail. He manages to get to the river and is carried by its stream to the countryside. During this floating Montag decides to never burn anything again.

After a while of wandering through the city surrounding forest Montag finds the Book People and they welcome him. They have been watching the hunt on a small TV and Montag sees how another man is killed in his place so the government does not lose its face. He learns that the Book People are trying to save the literature by dedicating their lives to a book which they memorize and so they keep it safe.

The next day the city is destroyed by a jet plane and the war is over. Montag and the group move toward the ruins to help restore humanity and in hopes that people will learn from this futile war and the next society will not make the same mistake.

## 2.5 The depiction of women in *Fahrenheit 451*

This chapter deals with the role Bradbury associated to the future women in *Fahrenheit 451*.

In Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* coda (1979), as mentioned above, Bradbury paraphrases a letter he received from his female fan, studying at Vassar College<sup>8</sup>, where she states how much she enjoyed the book but is also asking if "it wouldn't be a good idea to rewrite the book with more women's characters and roles" which Bradbury rejected, because he saw it as an insult of his work (Bradbury, 1979).

Clute and Nicholls in their *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*<sup>9</sup> (2011) state that the absence of women characters is an unsurprising fact, since science fiction developed in patriarchal society and was made chiefly by men for men or boys. In fact, Clute and Nicholls claim (2011) that the role of women characters in science fiction started to improve only after 1960s, and still, in most cases, was male determined (Clute & Nicholls, 2011). Clute and Nicholls (2011) describe basic male-determined roles of women as objects to be: desired, feared, rescued or destroyed. Shortly, women characters in science fiction are used to confirm the masculinity of the men protagonists (Clute & Nicholls, 2011).

Based on this, Clute and Nicholls (2011) describe main female stereotypes that reoccur in science fiction: "the Timorous Virgin (good for being rescued, and for having things explained to her), the Amazon Queen (sexually desirable and terrifying at the same time, usually set up to be "tamed" by the super-masculine hero), the Frustrated Spinster Scientist (an object lesson to girl readers that career success equals feminine failure), the Good Wife (keeps quietly in the background, loving her man and never making trouble) and the Tomboy Kid Sister (who has a semblance of autonomy only until male appreciation of her burgeoning sexuality transforms her into Virgin or Wife)" (Clute & Nicholls, 2011).

This rule does not seem to apply to *Fahrenheit 451*. The only stereotype used in the book is vaguely similar to the Good Wife, represented by Montag's wife, Mildred, and her friends, Mrs. Bowles and Mrs. Phelps, who do nothing throughout the book except for passive

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<sup>8</sup> Vassar College - one of the Seven Sisters, is an elite university originally offering higher education strictly to women (Source: wikipedia.org)

<sup>9</sup> The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction - the book was originally published in a printed version in 1979. The third edition of the book was published online, transcribed from the second edition, and made free (2011). In this work, third edition of the encyclopedia was used.

actions (such as watching television, listening to radio) or use kitchen instruments (toaster, incinerator). Nevertheless, neither of the women is a loving wife and Mildred is certainly a troublemaker, as she abandons her husband to save her own comfort. Mildred is also depicted as driving a car, though using it only to have fun while killing small animals at high speed. Reid (2000) considers Mildred to be one of the main antagonists of the book because of her apathy and because she turns Montag in at the end of the book (Reid, 2000: 58)

Apart from these partly stereotype characters there are strong women characters whose roles are not male determined. Furthermore, the deuteragonist of the book is a young girl, Clarisse, who functions as a guide to Montag and without her, his change would not have started. Clarisse is the main initiator of Montag's transformation, her influence on Montag being one of the causes to his reading books. However Clarisse's own relationship to books is unclear as she never admits to have read any throughout the story. The only information on this matter is given by Captain Beatty when he mentions that no book has ever been officially found in her family's house. This can mean that Clarisse's family never owned books or that they were able to hide them so well, the firemen or any other government authority were unable to find them, which, however, is the less possible option as the firemen seem to be trained to find books as it was in the case of the old woman. Ironically, Bradbury brought Montag to books through a girl who never read them.

Another unique female character is the book reading woman, who commits suicide in the first chapter of the book. This woman is not only the single female character proved to be reading books in *Fahrenheit 451*, but she also openly rebels against the oppressing society when she is discovered, which makes her a stronger and more courageous character than Faber.

The conflict between the same sexes is apparent. Mildred and her friends on one side and Clarisse and the woman on the other. According to Zipes (1983) Clarisse, whose name suggests clarity and illumination, serves as Montag's guide and teacher through the story and her disappearance is the last push for Montag's change (Zipes in Rabkin, 1983: 185). While Reid (2000) suggests that Mildred (and her friends Mrs. Phelps and Mrs. Bowles) represent the bad aspects of the future society: conformism, consumerism, selfishness, apathy and car overuse (Reid, 2000: 57-59).

Neither of the groups fit into the common female stereotype of the time in which the book was written e.g. housewife satisfied with cooking and raising children (see Freidan, 1964) nor do they fit the stereotypes of the female science fiction characters as described in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Clute & Nicholls, 2011), implying that Bradbury was not largely affected by these stereotypes.

However, even though *Fahrenheit 451* contains an excessive amount of quotations from different time periods and places, no female author is quoted by anyone in the book. The Book People movement, a group of people who try to save the books by memorising them, consists exclusively of bearded men, never mentioning any female member of the movement. Furthermore, no female author's book is mentioned as being preserved by the group even though Granger, the leader of the group, mentions there are thousands of members across the whole county.

The absence of female authors in the book, despite Bradbury's positive attitude toward women (see chapter 1.2), is surprising. It could indicate that Bradbury either considered male authors more important than the female authors, or that he or the leaders of the Book People did not deem their literature worth preserving.

Role of women in *Fahrenheit 451* is extraordinary, as it contains several strong female characters, whose roles are not exclusively male-determined. This is uncommon for the science fiction literature of the period.

### 3 The Martian Chronicles

This part of the book deals with another Bradbury's early futuristic novel, *The Martian Chronicles*, which is compared with *Fahrenheit 451* in later part.

#### 3.1 Introduction

*The Martian Chronicles* is, as Reid (2000) argues, one of the best known of Bradbury's work. It was a great success and this popular book is in print since it was published (Reid, 2000: 25). As stated above, this was the book that started Bradbury's career as a writer. Furthermore, *The Martian Chronicles*, with the help of Christopher Isherwood, managed to elevate the status of science fiction in the eyes of both the general public and the academics, because it invoked the power of metaphor instead of just exposing the technological toys (Kelley, 1996; Reid, 2000: 4).

According to Bradbury (1996) his meeting with Christopher Isherwood was a lucky coincidence. He commented on this meeting by saying: "I recognized Isherwood browsing in a Santa Monica bookstore. My book had just come out, so I grabbed a copy off the shelf, signed it and gave it to him. His face fell and my heart sank, but two days later he called and said, "Do you know what you've done?" I asked, "What?" And he simply told me to read his review in the Times. His rave turned my life around; the book immediately made the best-seller lists and has been in print ever since" (Kelley, 1996)

*The Martian Chronicles* never was an ordinary science fiction book. Many literary critics (Reid, Johnson, Sharp) and Bradbury himself do not even label it as such. Reid (2000) considers *The Martian Chronicles* to be "science fantasy" and Johnson (2008) states that *The Martian Chronicles* was written as a speculative fantasy rather than science fiction (Reid, 2000: 25; Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 32). Johnson (2008) adds that Bradbury did not try to portray Mars as it could actually exist and thus was never concerned with the possibility that science would someday prove him wrong (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 25). Sharp (2006) suggests that Bradbury put the scientific aspect aside, to be able to make a "poetic" speculative fiction (Sharp, 2006: 234)

Both Reid (2000) and Sharp (2006) consider Bradbury's science fiction exceptional and certainly not mainstream, stressing that the science fiction of the 1950s, in most cases, celebrated the impact the technology had on improving human life, completely discarding the negative effects (Reid, 2000: 33; Sharp, 2006: 234).

*The Martian Chronicles* is a collection of short stories that Bradbury failed to sell separately, but was later advised by Walter Bradbury<sup>10</sup> to change them to form a book (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 29). This change, Reid (2000) claims, was a major one, because as the most of the stories were new or rewritten, and shorter bridging stories were added, Bradbury basically wrote a completely new book, which literary critic Jonathan Eller (cited in Reid, 2000) considers to be novel rather mere collection of short stories (Reid, 2000: 27). Reid (2000) and Johnson (2008) agree that the short stories are connected together to form a very solid structure (Reid, 2000: 27; Johnson, 2008: 30). Furthermore, Reid (2000) compares the structure of *The Martian Chronicles* with the structure of *The Plantagenet Chronicles* (circa 1000 - 1300) and states that the level of narrative unity in the books is comparable, thanks to the chronological narrative and the "metaplot" used by Bradbury to connect the stories (Reid, 2000: 27)

In the introduction to 1997 edition of *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury revealed his sources of inspiration. The sources include Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (Reid, 2000: 25). Johnson (2008) points out that Bradbury was also inspired by Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter stories, and quotes Bradbury saying: "[Burroughs] took me out under the stars in Illinois and pointed up and said, with John Carter, simply: Go There. . . . Without Edgar Rice Burroughs, *The Martian Chronicles* would never have been born." Johnson (2008) states that another inspirational figure was Bradbury's friend Leigh Brackett, who wrote fantasy stories about Mars too, heavily influenced by Burroughs and American astronomer Percival Lowell, who was obsessed with the idea, based on the paintings and photographs of Martian canals, that Mars was a home to a race of engineers (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 31).

Johnson (2008) argues, though, that Bradbury's Mars was, despite the influence of Burroughs and Brackett, highly unique as he wrote not simple adventure stories but wanted to touch upon deeper human emotions (Johnson, 2008: 32).

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<sup>10</sup> Walter Bradbury - was an editor at Doubleday publishing and, despite being his namesake, was not related to Ray Bradbury in any way (Reid, 2000: 25).



### 3.2 Themes

With its 28 short stories in total, (26 in 1950s edition, in later edition two short stories were added and one was left out) *The Martian Chronicles* comprises a wide range of themes. The presence of a single main theme in the book is generally disputed by literary critics (such as Johnson or Reid) and to point out the single most important theme of the book seems impossible.

Reid (2000) suggests that the main theme of the book is a critique of the American reliance on technology and Bradbury's attempt to emphasize the negative effects it has on people (Reid, 2000: 33). Humans are mostly portrayed as arrogant and selfish beings who force the Martians into defensive position with only a few exceptions (Reid, 2000: 29).

Johnson (2008) suggests that the main theme is the vicious circle of the destruction and rebuilding of nations as it reoccurs in human history (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 37). The destruction of a nation through colonization and through the misuse of technology is a theme emphasized by Sharp (2006). Additionally, he claims that the final message of the book is the mankind is likely going destroy itself and others trough its own technology (Sharp 2006: 234).

Sharp (2006) emphasizes the allegory of the settling of the west, which represents the general idea about the main theme of the book, also supported by Johnson (2008) (Sharp, 2006: 233, Johnson, 2008: 35). According to Sharp (2008) the human colonies on Mars closely resemble the small Midwestern towns of the period (Sharp, 2008: 233)

To this Johnson (2008) adds that the general nature of the Martian civilization seems to reflect the civilization of ancient Greece, as the Martians love art and science the most, opposed to then modern man and his obsession with technology (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 37).

Other themes of the book include racism in the United States of the 1950s and the devastation of the original American inhabitants by smallpox.

### 3.3 Setting

*The Martian chronicles* is set on two different stages. Six of the stories take place on Earth or begin there and the rest of the stories in the book is set on planet Mars. Reid (2000) points out though that all the main characters of the earth stories want to go to Mars (Reid, 2000: 33).

The book captures chronologically nearly 30 years, mapping the development of the human exploration and colonization of Mars, ended by a nuclear war on Earth. This period starts in January 1999 and ends in October 2026 in the first edition of the book. In the 1997 edition of the book, the story of the book was postponed by 31 years, in order to keep the story of the book in the near future, as was the case with the later editions of *Fahrenheit 451*. The edited version starts in 2030 and ends in 2057.

### 3.4 Structure

The plot in *The Martian Chronicles* is episodic as the whole book is a collection of short stories. These stories could be divided in two ways. Reid (2000) divides the stories in the book into two categories: sixteen of them she considers to be "full stories", which are distinguished by named characters, focusing more on the characters and conflicts and the remaining eleven stories she describes as "bridge sections", which focus more on the setting and events (Reid, 2000: 26).

However, the book is generally divided into three sections: the first section, which Johnson (2008) describes as a prologue to the book, deals with the preparation of Martians for the invasion from earth and comprises the stories from Rocket Summer to The Third Expedition. The second section or the main section of the book captures the colonization of Mars. The Final section of the book is concerned with the start of the nuclear war on earth and the survival with the remaining people on mars, begins with The Luggage Store (Johnson, 2008: 33 - 36). The final part of the book captures the longest time period, from 2005 to 2026. As the book advances the general mood of the stories change, from comic or ironic stories to tragic stories.

### 3.5 Plot

The first short story of the book, *Rocket Summer*, takes place on earth and depicts how the weather suddenly changed because of the start of many rockets heading for Mars. No specific characters are mentioned in the story and it serves mainly as an introduction to the whole book.

The second story, *Ylla*, takes place on Mars in the Martian family, consisting of the married couple only, Mr. and Mrs. K. The wife is experiencing a recurring telepathic dream about the crewmember of the first human expedition, as it is reaching Mars. When she tells her husband, he becomes jealous of the astronaut, and kills him and his colleague as soon as they land. This is one of the few stories in which the daily life of Martians can be observed, characteristic for the first part of the book.

Next is another "bridging" story, *The Summer Night*, which deals with what happens to the telepathic Martian population when the second human expedition draws near Mars. The story takes place at an amphitheater again resembling the ancient Greece.

A comic story *The Earth Men* is the first story with human protagonist. It depicts the adventures of the second expedition members after their arrival on Mars. They are overlooked by Martians who consider the leader of the expedition to be mentally ill and the rest of the crew his telepathic hallucinations. At the end of the story the crew is shot dead by Martian psychologist who is trying to cure them. In this and the second story, the patriarchic structure of the Martian family, very similar to that of Earth, can be seen.

This story is followed by quick return back to Earth, where a man is demanding to be taken along with one of the expeditions, but is refused. *The Taxpayer* is one of the less fantastic stories and is more of a social criticism as the man is trying to claim his rights of a taxpayer. Johnson (2008) considers this story to be an example of an elegant way Bradbury uses to avoid all the triteness of prolonged scenes such as the departure or the settlement and the evacuation of Mars (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 35).

*The Third Expedition*, in which a mood changes from comic to horror, captures what happened to captain Black and his third expedition as they landed on Mars near the city similar to the one, where Captain Black grew up. The crew is divided as each member meets some long lost relative or friends, who are really Martians in disguise. Too late is the trap discovered and all the men are killed. This is the last story of the "prologue" of *The Martian Chronicles* (see above).

The main body of the book begins with the story —And the Moon Be Still as Bright, in which most of the original population of Mars is dead of chicken pox and the crew of the fourth expedition is preparing to settle it. One of them, however, realizes the men would destroy the remains of the beautiful Martian culture and tries to postpone the settling process by killing his colleagues at which he fails and is killed himself. Johnson (2008) suggests that the statues found in the ruins of Martian cities closely resemble the Greek pantheon, another connection between the Ancient Greece and the Martian population (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 35).

In this story, the few characters that reappear throughout the book are introduced. The abrupt change in the nature of the stories is again an elegant way to avoid the cliché of an interplanetary war (Johnson, 2008: 34).

The Settlers, The Green Morning, The Locusts, Interim, The shore and the Naming of Names are short bridging stories about the nature of the men who come to settle Mars, the transformation of Mars through the planting of trees and building cities and renaming the Martian places.

Thus in The Night Meeting, which is a story of an encounter of a man and a Martian out of time at a lone highway, the human population of Mars is on the rise and the cities are being built while the Martian civilization is fading and their cities are in ruins. Reid (2000) points out that this is the only story of the original edition of the book, where the meeting of the two races does not lead to a death (Reid, 2000: 30).

The Musicians, a story about a number of boys playing amongst ruins of the old civilization and the corpses of dead Martians, mentions the Firemen, who set fire to dead Martian towns in order to clean them, somewhat similar to the firemen in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Usher II seems to be another allusion to *Fahrenheit 451*. It describes the process of the banning of books by totalitarian government back on earth, caused by the minority pressure, similar to the story described in *Fahrenheit 451*. This version does not deny its direct criticism of McCarthyism, as is the case with *Fahrenheit 451*, mentioning that the use of the word communism could be worth your life, and also extends the ban to movies. The protagonist of the story, Stendahl flees Earth to be safe but is followed by investigators of moral crimes. Stendahl kills him and many eminent people of the regime in the same way as victims were killed in famous horror stories, such as *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The*

*Cask of Amontillado* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* by E. A. Poe, making their ignorance of literature fatal.

The whole story seems to be an intermission of the book. It seems out of place and is full of dark humor and hyperboles as if to let the reader rest from the previous stories and prepare him/her for the serious stories to come.

In the 1997 edition of the book stories *The Fire Balloons* and *The Wilderness* were added, replacing *Way in the Middle of the Air*. The first is an original story about priests going to Mars to help the Martians cleanse their souls of sins, yet discovering that the Martians already found a way to dematerialize their bodies. This story brings back the metaphysical level, introduced in *—And the Moon Be Still as Bright*. This story was originally published in *The Illustrated Man* (1951). And *The Wilderness* is the only story fully dedicated to women and description of their way of colonizing. On the other hand, *Way in the Middle of the Air* is fully dedicated to the exodus of African Americans from Earth, describing the racism of the 1950s.

The women, African Americans and the old, from the story *The Old Ones*, form a third wave of colonists, indicating that the colonization of Mars was nearly complete. The first two waves were the first explorers and the lone adventurers and workers.

*The Martian* is the story of an old couple, who met one of the remaining Martians shape shifted into their long lost son. However, when they take him to the city, the Martian starts shifting whenever he is near a person with a strong memory of someone, ultimately leading to a death of exhaustion. This story seems to be a counterpart of *The Third Expedition*, in which the Martians use their shape shifting ability to kill the humans.

The next three stories happen in a quick succession, depicting start of the nuclear war on Earth. In *The Luggage Store* this possibility is first hinted at, suggesting the eminent return of the most people back to Earth if the nuclear war breaks out. *The Off Season* is about a man from the fourth expedition whose business is ruined because of the nuclear war and in *The Watchers* the people of Mars watch Earth burn and decide to hear the call to come back.

The last set of stories deals with what happened after the war, Mars now abandoned with only a few last inhabitants. *The Silent Towns* is a rather comic story, describing the situation in the deserted cities where two last people of Mars, or so they believe, meet. Similar is the situation in *The Long Years*, taking place twenty years later, in which the characters

from —And the Moon Be Still reappear. This is a tragic story about the lone man, who, out of desperation builds a robotic copies of the dead members of his family.

The next is a last bridging story, *There Will Come Soft Rains*, which depicts the situation on Earth, destroyed by the nuclear war. It captures the last day of an automated house, which, oblivious of the its owners death continues the daily routines and shows us the basic outline of the ordinary day before the nuclear war. The owner of the house seems to be McClellan family, which is referred to in *Fahrenheit 451* as well.

In the last story of the book, *The Million Year Picnic*, one family flees to Mars from devastated Earth. As the original Martians and the human colonists are most probably all gone, the family members are now the only inhabitants of the planet, thus Martians. As Johnson (2008) suggests, the ending of the book is ironic in its deeper meaning. The original Martians depend on their shape shifting ability to survive and at the beginning of the book shape shift to human form, yet at the end of the book the Earthmen change into Martians (Johnson in Bloom, 2008: 36).

### 3.6 The Role of Women in The Martian Chronicles

This chapter analyzes the role and position of women characters in *The Martian Chronicles*.

Most of the short stories in *The Martian Chronicles* were written several years before *Fahrenheit 451* and so the role associated to women is not so various and the stereotypes are stronger throughout the book than in the latter *Fahrenheit 451*. Only several of the stories are depicting women and only one story (*The Wilderness*) is dedicated exclusively to women protagonists. However, all the women in the book fulfill the male-determined roles, which is the biggest difference in women's roles between the two novels.

The reoccurring female stereotypes, based on the Clute and Nicholls' typology (see chapter 2.3.1), are the Timorous Virgins, who are "rescued" from their "misery" by men willing to marry them and the Good Wives, with the exception that the Good Wife sometimes has an argument with her husband. Furthermore, the human and the Martian culture are very similar in their attitude towards women, as in both the female characters seem to be subordinate to male characters.

The first major female character appears in the story Ylla. Mrs. K is a clear example of the Good Wife stereotype, even though she argues with her husband sometimes. Most of the time she seems to spend at home, cleaning or cooking for her husband. Her visit to her female friend is considered less important than the visitor her husband invited. However, she resists her husband's urge to leave for the hotel.

Next major female character is another Martian, Mrs. Ttt from the story The Earth Men. When she is confronted by the expedition she is just busy cleaning the house, watering flowers and cooking for her husband.

These are the best depicted Martian women in the book, before the Martian society collapses, both in similar roles, resembling that of the Good Wife. Furthermore, the expeditions confront more Martians in the cities and all the more respectable functions (psychologist, doctor, businessman) seem to be done by the males. The Martian society is in general very similar to the human society and seems to be preserving the same stereotypes.

Then there are women from Earth, as depicted in The Wilderness. Those women, Janice and Leonora, are depicted as soon to be Good Wives. Their whole venture to Mars has one objective only – to get married. Additionally, Leonora says in the story that not a whole universe can stop her from running after a man. Janice and Leonora are not the only women going to Mars, an unknown multitude of women is preparing for the take off, however, their objectives unclear.

The colonizing women that came before this wave, are referred to in The Fire Balloons as "the wicked women", and the Mayor of the city considers them to be the main reason why the men of the colonies need saving. The coming of the first women is also mentioned in The Shore: "Everyone knew who the first women would be." Reid (2000) divides the women of the book to two categories: "good women", represented by the women from The Wilderness and "bad women", those who came before the "good women", most probably prostitutes (Reid, 2000: 31). Both of these roles are male-determined, thus the women in the book are generally depicted as dependant on men.

In The Martian, Off Season and The Million Year Picnic, women characters are also always wives, following their husbands. In the first story the old woman easily succumbs to the Martians influence. In Off Season, the wife of the main protagonist seems to be the more intelligent of the two, yet she never contradicts her husband.

The last story depicting a female character in depth is *The Silent Towns*. This is a comic story about the "last" people on Mars, in which the man arranges a meeting with the last woman on Mars only to discover she is the opposite of his beauty ideals, and chooses to run away from her. The woman is vain and spends most of her time in beauty salons eating chocolate and watching romantic movies. However, this is a comic story and this image of a woman seems to be a parody of the womanly qualities.

The roles of women characters in *The Martian Chronicles* are more limited and stereotyped than the roles of women characters in *Fahrenheit 451*, as the women fulfill traditional male-determined roles only e.g. wives or housewives. There is an absence of strong and independent women characters.



## 4 Comparison of the female characters in the novels

In this chapter the roles of female characters and their position in *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles* are compared.

### 4.1 The differences in roles of women in the books

The obvious difference between the two novels is the presence of the strong female characters (such as Clarisse and the book reading woman) in *Fahrenheit 451*. These characters are independent of the male characters in the book and do not fit the basic science fiction stereotypes of the period (see above).

However, in *The Martian Chronicles* all the female characters fulfill only the male-dependant roles, mostly wives or soon to be wives. Bradbury did not give a new or unexpected roles to the Martian females, who are basically the same as the women on Earth or in the colonies, fitting in the stereotype of the Good Wife.

The women in the books are also different in their attitude toward motherhood. The women influenced by the mass culture of *Fahrenheit 451*, represented by Mildred and her friends, seem to consider maternity to be an inconvenience and nothing but trouble. In *The Martian Chronicles*, however, women come to help colonize and repopulate Mars. The mothers in the stories, as depicted in *The Musicians* and *The Martian*, seem to be more caring and loving.

The love is another difference. The relationships in *Fahrenheit 451* seem to be generally without any feelings, while in *The Martian Chronicles* the married women, as seen in the stories *The Wilderness*, *The Martian* and *The Million Year Long Picnic*, are faithful and loving, promoting the desired Good Wife stereotype.

## 4.2 The similarities in roles of women in the books

The presence of female characters in both books is limited. Women are not mentioned in the Book People movement in *Fahrenheit 451* and no women author is quoted throughout the book or in the similar short story Usher II, while many male authors and their work are cited directly or indirectly (see Women in *Fahrenheit 451*). In *The Martian Chronicles* only several female characters appear, again outnumbered by the males.

The hierarchy of the both Martian and human societies in *The Martian Chronicles* and of the society in *Fahrenheit 451* is patriarchal. In *The Martian Chronicles* the women serve only as a background characters, never given any important role or the power to change anything. In neither of the books do the women any other work than housekeeping. The sole exception to this rule is Usher II, in which the group of people, consisting of both men and women is referred to as eminent people. Whether are the women only their wives is unclear.

Each book gives its own image of women, in some ways different. The connection between them is the subordinate position of women in all the cultures in both books. This indicates that Bradbury did not believe that a change in hierarchy or social structure may come, and predicted the near future women to be still in the same social roles e.g. male dependant.

## Conclusion

This work described and analyzed the female characters of the book and compared it with the stereotypic female characters of science fiction literature of the period. The image of women that Ray Bradbury's early novels give is in a few ways ahead of its time, because of exceptionally strong female characters. The impact of the period is visible in stereotypes of women as housewives or similar male-determined roles, which reoccur throughout the books. Bradbury claims in several interviews that his esteem for women is high, yet in his writing women are mostly portrayed as subordinate.

The women of *The Martian Chronicles* are generally more in background and dominated by men while in *Fahrenheit 451* women are not so stereotyped. In both books, women are absent in any intellectually demanding position or profession. Even though many books by different authors are referred to throughout the books, no female author is mentioned, possibly indicating the author's opinion about their lesser value or importance.

Bradbury seems to have been influenced by the traditional patriarchal model of family, that he himself experienced and preferred, in which women were more dependent on their husbands.

The two novels do not create a coherent image of future women, yet their position in both is similar, that is subordinate to men. This Bradbury's "prediction" thus informs us about the author's negative attitude toward the possibility of future change or further development of the social position of women.

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## Résumé

Bakalářská práce analyzuje pozici ženských postav v prvních vědecko-fantastických románech Raye Bradburyho, tedy *451° Fahrenheita* a *Martánské kronice*. Knihy jsou analyzovány na základě vlastního rozboru a životopisu autora. Pomocí komparace jsou vyvozeny pro obě knihy společné aspekty ženských rolí. Tyto aspekty protěžující klasické stereotypy patriarchální společnosti, zřejmě odrážejí autorovy vlastní názory na ideální uspořádání společnosti a nedůvěru v budoucí změnu společenské pozice žen.

## Annotation

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<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2013

<b>Název práce:</b>	Zobrazení žen v prvních románech Raye Bradburyho
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	The Image of Women in Ray Bradbury's early novels
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Role ženských postav ve science fiction literatuře 50. let minulého století byla ve většině případů stereotypní. Tato práce analyzuje ženské role v prvních románech Raye Bradburyho, <i>451° Fahrenheita</i> a <i>Mart'anské kronice</i> v kontextu s jeho způsobem života. Navzdory tomu, že Bradbury vytvořil silné charaktery, v jeho románech se objevují běžné ženské stereotypy.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	451° Fahrenheita, Bradbury, Mart'anská kronika, ženy, zobrazení žen, feminismus, mužnost, stereotypy, klišé, povídky, rovnocennost
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The role of women in the science fiction of the 1950s was often stereotyped. In this study, the role of women in Ray Bradbury's early fictional novels <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and <i>The Martian Chronicles</i> was analyzed, his biography taken into account. Bradbury, even though creating some exceptionally strong females characters, seemingly promoted common feminine stereotypes of the period.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury, Martian Chronicles, women, image of women, feminism, masculinity, stereotypes, clichés, short stories, equality
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	0 příloh
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	40 stran
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	Angličtina