

Fahrenheit 451 in the Context of Books and History of Book Burnings

Kitaplar ve Kitap Yakmanın Tarihi Bağlamında Fahrenheit 451

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ABSTRACT

Books are written sources of information that contribute to the history of civilization and culture. In certain periods of history books have been banned, destroyed, stolen, and removed for the personal interests of those responsible for their protection. The most effective and widespread way to destroy books has been to burn them. Incidents of book burnings that have happened for various reasons have mostly occurred in situations such as chaos and rebellion. Books have been burned in Athens, China, Jerusalem, England, Sarajevo, and Baghdad. The aim of this study is to examine the historical process and reasons for burning books through the events evoked by *Fahrenheit 451* and stories of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Douglas Bradbury (1920-2012). *Fahrenheit 451* is a novel in the science fiction genre. According to Bradbury, science fiction is also a sociological study of the future. The work stands out with the way it deals with social issues and people's problems. *Fahrenheit 451* builds a future based on a simple question: What if books were now just objects that were burned? Based on this question, it is necessary to emphasize that the book was written to prevent the feared situation from happening. *Fahrenheit 451* is a book of warning. Bradbury envisions a future with advanced technology to stress that dependence on technology would change the structure of society and how people live as he fears that people will not read books in the future. In this study, information about books and book burning is given, based on the events in the *Fahrenheit 451* novel and *Fahrenheit 451* stories.

Keywords: Turkish Islamic Literature, Book Burning, Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury, Technology, Societal Impact.

ÖZ

Kitaplar, medeniyet ve kültür tarihine katkıda bulunan yazılı bilgi kaynaklarıdır. Tarihin belli dönemlerinde yasaklanmış, imha edilmiş, çalınmış, onları korumakla yükümlü kişilerin şahsi çıkarları uğruna ortadan kaldırılmıştır. Kitapları yok etmenin en etkili ve yaygın yolu da onları yakmak olmuştur. Çeşitli sebeplere dayanan kitap yakma olayları, çoğunlukla kargaşa, isyan gibi durumlarda ortaya çıkmıştır. Atina'da, Çin'de, Kudüs'te, İngiltere'de, Saraybosna'da ve Bağdat'ta kitaplar yakılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, *Fahrenheit 451*'in çağrıştırdığı olaylar ve Ray Douglas Bradbury'nin (1920-2012) *Fahrenheit 451* hikayeleri aracılığıyla kitap yakmanın tarihsel sürecini ve nedenlerini incelemektir. *Fahrenheit 451*, bilim kurgu türünde bir romandır. Bradbury'e göre bilim kurgu da geleceğin sosyolojik araştırmasıdır. Eser, toplumsal meseleler ile insanların problemlerini ele alış şekli ile dikkat çekmektedir. *Fahrenheit 451* basit bir soru üzerinden bir gelecek inşa etmektedir: Ya kitaplar artık sadece yakılan objeler olsaydı? Bu sorudan yola çıkarak kitabın korkulan durumun olmaması için yazılmış olduğunu vurgulamak gerekmektedir. *Fahrenheit 451* bir uyarı kitabıdır. Bradbury, insanların gelecekte kitap okumayacağından korktuğu için teknolojiye bağımlılığın toplum yapısını ve insanların yaşam biçimini değiştireceğini vurgulamak amacıyla ileri teknolojiye sahip bir gelecek öngörmektedir. Bu çalışmada, *Fahrenheit 451* romanı ve *Fahrenheit 451* öykülerindeki olaylar ölçüt alınarak kitap ve kitap yakma hakkında bilgiler verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk İslam Edebiyatı, Kitap Yakma, Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury, Teknoloji, Toplumsal Etki.

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INTRODUCTION

Fahrenheit 451, which begins with doubt and is associated with the sacred, reminds us of the book with its historical background, various prohibitions, and intense book-burning incidents, and reveals the dramatic stories of the books. In this article, it will be useful to take a brief look at the history of books, which are the most important values of knowledge subject to the formation of libraries, but also sometimes subject to destruction.

Until today, books have gone through various stages in terms of form. Tablets, rolls, and plates were used throughout antiquity as early forms of books. Clay tablets of the Sumerians, papyrus of the Egyptians, paper scrolls of Romans, parchments, and microfilms can all be considered books of their time. The book as we know it today was shaped by the invention of today's paper in the 8th century.¹ Various methods were sought for copying texts from an early period, and the printing method was used in Egypt, China, Korea, and the Central Asian Uyghur Turks. The first book printing with modern techniques was done in the West in Germany by Johannes Gutenberg (1398-1468) in the 15th century.² The rapid spread of book printing enabled the spread of reform ideas and eventually the establishment of many libraries in schools, churches, and cities. Frankly, different cultures attributed different characteristics to the book. Narrations memorized and recounted in the medieval Islamic world were called oral books.³ Yazma/manuscript is the common name for all kinds of books, treatises, tablets, and documents written by hand, in the Islamic world, it is used with the terms dest-nüvis and hatt-ı destî.⁴ Still, according to Cemil Meriç, the first book itself is the memory.⁵

The book, which is an inseparable part of people, like Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) who eventually bought back the book he had given as a gift, is defined as the knowledge and dreams that humanity has accumulated on their shelves.⁶ The book, which was named and developed in different ways in each period by different cultures raises many questions. Why were they being collected in the first place? How come people attribute such a degree of importance to the books? Despite the importance given to the books, why were they burned or destroyed throughout history? While searching for answers to these questions, we need to take a brief look at the history of the book.

Collecting books has been seen since the invention of writing. Collections in Egyptian temples, the remains of the royal library in Mesopotamia, and the books of the Assyrian King are all examples of this. In the 7th century BC, the tablets in Nineveh constituted the library of the Assyrian King.⁷ These tablets were made of baked clay and covered with cuneiform on both sides. They were broken in fires and became unreadable when their order was confounded.⁸ In the Greek world, the libraries of Pisistratos of Athens, Polycrates, Euclides, Nicocrates of Cyprus, Neleos, and Aristotle were among the first.⁹

The development of books and libraries throughout history results from the importance people have given to books. The tradition of patronizing writers and their books among the elite soon led to the formation of large libraries. Older libraries have also been a source of inspiration in the formation of libraries. Books have been written, ordered to be written, reproduced through copying, purchased from auctions or second-hand booksellers, changed hands in cases such as inheritance and transfer, and books have been acquired through donations and grants. From time to time, books have been a necessity for scholars and an element of adornment for the rich. The struggle of book lovers to obtain the book they want at book auctions is expressed in various works.

Although it is thought to have existed in the Homeric period, the book flourished during the Hellenistic period. The Library of Alexandria was founded by the Ptolemies (325-246 BC) with the support of Demetrios Phalereus of Athens (350-280 BC) and initially consisted of seven hundred thousand books. The library was a unique center and observatory consisting of works translated into Greek from various languages, books of Babylonian, Egyptian, Jewish and Greek thought, Indian manuscripts, and books on mathematics, history, medicine, law, and alchemy. After the first library was burned in 391 AD and the second was destroyed in 641 AD, the famous Library of Alexandria totally perished.¹⁰

The libraries of the early Roman Empire and the library established by Emperor Hadrian (76-138 AD) in Athens are among the special and famous libraries. Libraries proliferated in the Eastern Roman Empire and new ones were established to replace the burned libraries. The most famous monastery libraries rich in religious texts are the Stoudions in Byzantium, the monastery on the peninsula of Mount Arthos, and the monastery of St. Catherine. Royal libraries became

1 Abdulkadir Yılmaz, *Türk Kitap Sanatları Tabir ve İstilahları* (İstanbul: Damla Yayınevi, 2004), 187.

2 Albert Labarre, *Kitabın Tarihi*, translated by. Işık Ergüden (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 2012), 63.

3 İsmail E. Erünsal, *Ortaçağ İslam Dünyasında Kitap ve Kütüphane* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2018), 27.

4 Orhan Bilgin, "Yazma", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2013), 43/369-373.

5 Cemil Meriç, *Bu Ülke* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2024), 84.

6 Umberto Eco-Jean Claude Carrière, translated by. Sosi Dolanoğlu, *Kitaplardan Kurtulabileceğinizi Sanmayın* (İstanbul: Can Sanat Yayınları, 2010), 13.

7 The first national library belonging to Assurbanipal (668-627 BC) was transferred to the British Museum after the 19th century.

8 M. Joachim Menant, *Ninova Sarayı Kütüphanesi*, translated by. Vedii İlmen (İstanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2005), 54, 104.

9 Ray Macleod, *İskenderiye Kütüphanesi, Antik Dünyanın Öğrenim Merkezi*, translated by. Elif Böke (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006), 83.

10 Jacques Bergier, *Lanetli Kitaplar*, translated by. Vedat Gülşen Üretürk (İstanbul: Ruh ve Madde Yayınları, 1981), 20-24.

widespread from Louis IX (1214-1270) onwards.¹¹ One of the best-known libraries in medieval England is the Library of St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury.¹²

In Europe, cathedral and monastery libraries were first established in Italy and Spain in the 6th century, and in Germany in the 9th and 10th centuries; and university libraries were established in Italy, France, Spain, England and Germany. In the 15th and 16th centuries, palace libraries and later specialized libraries attract attention.¹³ The Bodleian Library, one of the oldest libraries in Europe, was first opened as a center for printed books and has become one of the richest libraries in England with its manuscript collection. Leiden University Library is also famous for its collection of Islamic manuscripts.¹⁴ The library with the most books is the Library of Congress in the USA. England, Canada, New York, Russia, Japan, France, China, Spain, Brazil, Ireland, Germany, Italy and Turkey also have rich libraries.¹⁵

Arab civilization developed in the Middle East and the Mediterranean from the 8th to the 10th century. The book has a religious character in the Arab civilization due to the important place of the *Holy Qur'an* in tradition. In the process of copying books in the Islamic world, texts were written on forms of eight, ten, or twelve pages and bound together. The duplication of books was an important profession and those who did this job were members of the ulema class. There are many works from this period before the printing press that have survived to the present day thanks to the efforts of copyists and calligraphers.¹⁶ As important and valuable as accessing or acquiring a book is for a person, it is also important to protect it from all kinds of negativities, especially sun rays. There is even a belief and practice in our culture to prevent it from being eaten by moths. Thus, in Eastern culture, there is a tradition that various prayers and expressions such as *Yâ Allah! Yâ Hafız! Yâ Kebikeç!* are written in the margins of books to protect them from disasters and calamities.¹⁷

The libraries of the Arabs of the Middle Ages are also among the important libraries.¹⁸ At the end of the 10th century, eighteen thousand volumes of books of the Fatimid ruler Aziz-Billah (975-996) were among the private collections. Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, and Cordoba were important as the political, cultural, and commercial centers of Muslims in the Middle Ages. These cities provided mosques that could be a meeting point for ideas and a repository for books. Scribes, paper manufacturers, librarians, and second-hand booksellers served the books, and scientific life became possible owing to urban merchants.¹⁹

It is seen that great value was given to books starting from the Umayyads and Abbasids.²⁰ The Abbasid period (750-860) is the period when translations were made from ancient civilizations. Libraries were established everywhere, from the Islamic administration in Spain to the Abbasid kingdom in Iraq. In the *Beytül-hikme*/House of Wisdom established in Baghdad, works were being translated, and their commentaries were made. The activities here had great repercussions in the following centuries. The movement that started in Baghdad and the libraries that were established spread to other cities of the empire, and Islamic cities began to compete with each other in science and knowledge. Books from Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Upper Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Constantinople, Iran, Khorasan, Khwarazm, India, and Sudan were brought to the House of Wisdom, which was transformed from a library into a research center.²¹

The first library in Islamic geography that has a catalog today is the Eşrefiyye Library, established in Damascus in the 13th century.²² Among Islamic countries, the Abbasid Library in Baghdad²³, the Fatimid Library in Cairo, and the Andalusian Umayyad Library in Cordoba are among the largest and most special libraries. In the Ottoman Empire, libraries were established by the statesmen, stateswomen, and scholars of the period starting from the reign of Bayezid I (1389-1402).²⁴

In the 15th century, books were printed in printing houses established by Jews and Christians within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. In 900/1494, the first printing house in Istanbul was established by Jews. Before the establishment of the printing house in Turkey, books were printed in Europe and sent to Islamic countries. The first Turkish printing house was established during the reign of Sultan Ahmet III (1703-1730), the first book printing in Istanbul took place in

11 Labarre, *Kitabın Tarihi*, 25, 39.

12 Richard Ovenden, *Kitapları Yakmak*, çev. Füsün Doruker (İstanbul: al-Baraka Yayınları, 2020), 71.

13 Jürgen Seefeldt-Ludger Syré, *Geçmiş ve Geleceğe Açılan Kapı Almanya'da Kütüphaneler: Portale zu Vergangenheit und Zukunft: Bibliotheken in Deutschland*, çev. Meltem Arun, Hildesheim; Zürich; New York Georg Olms, Verlag, 2007, 13. <http://www.goethe.de/kug/pro/ifa/tuerkis.pdf>

14 Alexander Bevilacqua, *Şark Kütüphanesi, İslam ve Avrupa Aydınlanması*, translated by. Kenan Çapık (İstanbul. Yeditepe Yayınları, 2023), 88, 94.

15 <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/insanligin-ortak-hafizasi-dev-kutuphaneler/1427941>

16 Samet Öztürk, *Kitapların Dünyası* (İstanbul: Neva Yayınları, 2021), 43-46.

17 Tülay Artan-Hatice Aynur, *Osmanlı Kitap Koleksiyonerleri ve Koleksiyonları, İtibar ve İhtiras* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2022), 138, 154.

18 Labarre, *Kitabın Tarihi*, 52.

19 Jonathan Lyons, *Hikmet Evi, Araplar Batı Medeniyetini Nasıl Dönüştürdü?*, translated by. Şaban Bıyıklı-Mehmet Savan (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap Yayınları, 2009), 185.

20 Nebi Bozkurt, "Kitap", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2002), 26/120-121.

21 Mustafa Demirci, *Beytül-Hikme* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1996), 182, 218, 241.

22 Artan-Aynur, *İtibar ve İhtiras*, 131.

23 This library was damaged during the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.

24 İsmail E. Erünsal, "Kütüphane", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2003), 27/11-32.

1729, and the first religious book was published in the Ottoman Empire in 1218/1803.²⁵ The 18th century was when the number of libraries and books in libraries increased with the initiative of Grand Vizier Damat İbrahim Pasha.²⁶ Until the last quarter of the 19th century, the book that was produced by various branches of handicrafts in the Ottoman Empire was not just perceived as an object to be read but also as an object of visual importance and aesthetic value with the beauty of its writings, illuminations, miniatures, and binding. Access to valuable and expensive books was difficult, and over time, book cabinets in masjids, mosques, and lodges were converted into libraries. The first foundation library was established by Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmet Pasha.²⁷ In 1882, public libraries were established in Istanbul, followed by Balıkesir, İzmir, and Ankara. In the Republican period, The Library of Grand National Assembly in Ankara and the Library of Research Institute of Turkology in Istanbul began to be established from 1920 onwards.²⁸

While libraries have been preserved with all their beautiful features, they have been looted, closed, and restored, and some of them have been rebuilt for different purposes. Throughout history, libraries and archives have been subject to various attacks, and librarians and archivists have risked their lives to protect knowledge. Some have even lost their lives for this cause.²⁹ The burning of books, the use of book bindings as insoles for soldiers' shoes, as steps for muddy roads, and as reinforcement for certain objects are all unusual uses of old books. These practices were prevalent in the Middle Ages, and Anthony Wood (1632-1695) made the following statements about lost books in one of his works about a century later than the Reformation in 1550: "Some of those books so taken out by the Reformers were burnt, some sold away for Robin Hood's pennyworths, either to Booksellers, or to Glovers to press their gloves, or Taylors to make measures, or to Bookbinders to cover books bound by them, and some also kept by the Reformers for their own use".³⁰ Although all these practices once caused books to lose their value, their importance and value will be understood in the future.

1. BURNING OF BOOKS

Books have been the guardians of culture and memory preserved in libraries for centuries, but in every period, people have always been concerned about authoritarian books and considered them as threats to their states. In this respect since ancient times, many books have been burned, incinerated, thrown into rivers, confiscated, or scattered. Thus, this is the reason why poets and writers were exiled and thrown into prison and why their books were burned. Books are the enemy of dictators, censorship is a derivative of power, and in the history of reading, the fires of censors have burned from papyrus to the present day.³¹

Book burnings in history date back to before Christ. Between 1352 and 1334 BC, Pharaoh Akhenaton began by destroying the knowledge of the priests of Amon. The burning of books belonging to the Aton religion after Akhenaton showed that the books had parallel power with the administration. The burnings primarily concerned the holy books. The son of the Babylonian governor, Buhtunnasr/Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC), collected and burned the Torah manuscripts in order to destroy the religion of the people in the lands of Palestine. A hundred years later, the prophet Esdra/Ezra,³² known as Uzeyr, rewrote them from memory.

The burning of some of the books of Confucius (551-479 BC), the most important philosopher of China, by the order of the emperor, is known as the great book-burning incident in history. The burning of the books is attributed to the desire to make people forget Confucianism, which is based on moral teachings, and Confucius, who put humanity at the heart of his teachings. Still, Confucius's thoughts, whose books were burned like those of many other thinkers during the Chou dynasty, became widely accepted again during the Han dynasty. In 411 BC, the works of Protagoras were burned in a square in Athens. In 213 BC, the Chinese Emperor Shih Huang-ti ordered books to be burned to put an end to reading. In 168 BC, the Jewish library in Jerusalem was burned in an uprising, and in 303, Diocletianus ordered the burning of Christian books with an edict.³³

In the first centuries of Islam, the scholars relied on their memories and argued against writing (but later, they could not refrain from recording their knowledge) because of the fear that written texts would fall into unreliable hands. According to that idea, if the accumulation of knowledge remained dependent on written sources, it could be lost, burned, and incinerated at any moment.³⁴ Since it was not possible to prevent this, certain measures were taken to prevent the destruction of the sacred books. Memorizing the text of the Qur'an so that it would remain preserved and passed down

25 Mahmut Gündüz, "Matbaanın Tarihçesi ve İlk Kur'an-ı Kerim Basmaları", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 12 (1978), 335-350.

26 Alpay Kabacalı, *Türk Kitap Tarihi*, 2. Baskı (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1989), 32.

27 Kabacalı, *Türk Kitap Tarihi*, 118.

28 Meral Alpay, *Harf Devriminin Kütüphanelerde Yansıması* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1976), 46,49, 69.

29 For the roles of librarians and archivists and the importance they gave to libraries, see Ovenden, *Burning Books*, 16, 20, 24.

30 Anthony Wood, *History and Antiquities of the Universitie Oxford* (Oxford 1792), 2/919.

31 Alberto Manguel, *Okumanın Tarihi*, translated by. Füsun Elioğlu, 12. Baskı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2023), 332.

32 See also Baki Adam, "Üzeyir", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 42/ 401-402.

33 Manguel, *Okumanın Tarihi*, 332.

34 In the first half of the second century, there are texts, lecture notes, and book versions of these notes used to aid memorization.

to subsequent generations is also a precautionary measure of the Prophet Muhammed.³⁵ One of the ways to protect the Qur'an was to memorize it, and until it was written down, the Prophet took care of it, recited it in his prayers, and repeated it in his speeches. He also asked his companions to memorize and recite the verses during prayers.³⁶ Imam Ghazali's (d. 505/1111) memorization of his notes in textbooks at a young age was also the result of an experience that required him to take precautions.³⁷ The burning incidents related to the Qur'an occurred during the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr, and his own book composed of the Hazrat Prophet's hadiths was also destroyed due to the fear of attributing words that did not belong to him.³⁸ Hazrat Osman's burning of the book was for the purpose of protecting the Qur'an.³⁹ He duplicated the Qur'an based on the first copy and ordered the burning of the other pages and mushafs.⁴⁰

During the Umayyad period, the books of the palace library were burned by the order of Ibn Abu Amir al-Mansur, and a library was burned by the Ismailis during the Hamdanid period. It is also known that a library was destroyed in a fire in Baghdad during the Buwayhi period, a library in Tripoli was looted and burned by the Crusaders in 1109 during the Ammarids period, the books in the madrasah established by Nizamulmulk in Isfahan were burned in a rebellion in 1147 during the Seljuk period, and that the library of Muhammad Khwarazmshah was burned during the Mongol invasion in 616/1219 during the Khwarazm period. The Mongol invasions initiated by Genghis Khan (1167-1227) began to threaten the libraries of the Islamic world, and by the end of the Mongol invasion in 1220-1221, there was no trace left of the books in the Bukhara Mosque and the madrasah and libraries in the city of Merv. The same situation continued during the reign of Hulagu (1218-1265), and Hasan Sabbah's Alamut library was also affected by these destructions.⁴¹ When the Mongol army entered Baghdad in 1258, the city was looted, the libraries were destroyed and some of the books were burned.⁴²

One of the hospital libraries established by the Mamluks in the Middle Ages was also reduced to ashes in a fire. During the Ghaznavid period, Mahmud of Ghazni also had books burned in 420/1029 on the grounds that the library contained books belonging to ahlul bi'dah and heretics.⁴³ The libraries of madrasahs established in Muslim states in North Africa were also burned, and the books in mosque libraries disappeared.⁴⁴ The books of Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), Ghazali (d. 1111), and Ibn Rushd/Averroes (d. 1198) were also among the books burned.⁴⁵ Another thinker whose books were burned was Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi.⁴⁶

In human history, the destruction of books has not always been the result of external factors and devastating events. Sometimes writers have attempted to destroy their own works. Such as Honore de Balzac (1799-1850), Nikolay Gogol (1809-1852), Dostoyevski (1821-1881), James Joyce (1882-1941), Franz Kafka (1883-1924). According to the sources of Islamic History, some books were destroyed by their authors themselves. Abu 'Amr b. al-'Ala (d. 154/771), Davud al-Ta'i (d. 165/781), Sufyan al-Savri (d. 161/778), Yusuf b. Asbat (d. 196/811-2) and Abu Sulayman al-Darani (d. 215/830) are among these authors.⁴⁷

It is known that in the translation centers of Andalusia, people from different languages and religions made translations from Eastern languages (Arabic, Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew, Persian) in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Hence, a scientific and cultural bridge was formed between the East and the West. The formation of this environment was due to the caliphs themselves supporting scientific and cultural activities. As a result of the interest in science in Andalusia, Muslim scholars were trained all over the world, they wrote thousands of works, and great importance was given to scholars, books, and libraries.⁴⁸

Sources state that Andalusia was at a very advanced level in terms of culture and civilization, especially during the reign of Abdurrahman III (891-961). His library was also burned centuries later.⁴⁹ Later, with the book passion of Hakem II (961-976), a large palace library was built in Madinat al-Zahra by purchasing books from many provinces and obtaining valu-

35 İmam Muhammed b. Muhammed b. Süleyman er-Rûdânî, *Cem'u'l-fevâid, Büyük Hadis Külliyyatı*, ter. Naim Erdoğan (İstanbul: İz Yayınları, 2007), I/40.

36 Hayrettin Öztürk, "Hazreti Peygamber (A.S) Döneminde Kur'an Ayetlerinin ve Surelerinin Tesbit ve Tertibi Hakkında Bir Değerlendirme", *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 20/20-21 (2005), 217.

37 İmam Gazali, *İhya'u Ulum'id-din*, translated by. Ali Arslan (İstanbul: Hikmet Neşriyat, 1992), I/11.

38 Muhammed Hamidullah, *İslam'ın Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2018), 71-72.

39 Parlak, "Endülüs'te Kitap Yazma Hadiseleri", 201, 202; Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, *Kıyas-ı Enbiyâ ve Tevârih-i Hulefâ* (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, İstanbul 1976), I/40-42.

40 *Sahih-i Buhari ve Tercemesi*, translated by. Mehmed Sofuoğlu (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınevi, 1988), XI/5080-5084; Hamidullah, *İslam'ın Doğuşu*, 34-35.

41 Samet Öztürk, *Kitapların Dünyası* (İstanbul: Neva Yayınları, 2021), 80.

42 Abdülaziz ed-Dûrî, "Bağdat", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1991), 4/ 425-433.

43 Pedersen, *İslam Dünyasında Kitabın Tarihi*, 132.

44 Erünsal, "Kütüphane", 22.

45 Lyons, *Hikmet Evi*, 206.

46 See also Osman Nuri Karadayı, *İbnü'l-Arabî'de İbâreden İşârete İşârî ve Gâi Yorum Kitâbu'l-Gâyât* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2022), 23.

47 Hikmet Yaman, "'Kendim Yazdım Kendim Yaktım': Ebû Hayyân et-Tevhîdî'nin (ö. 414/1023) Kitaplarını İmhası", *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 59 (2020), 31-49.

48 Parlak, "Endülüs'te Kitap Yazma Hadiseleri", 206-207.

49 İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *Ah Endülüs*, 6. Baskı (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2020), 106.

able works through copying. The most important books of the period were written here, and the palace library laid the groundwork for future translation activities. However, the destruction of books on philosophy and science by the grand vizier of the Andalusian Umayyad State, Ibn Abu Amir el-Mansur (d. 392/1002), and his permission to remove and burn unpopular books from the library in order to please Sunni scholars along with the looting of libraries by Berbers after the collapse of the Andalusian Umayyad State led to the loss of the rich book collections in Andalusia, and these events were a great disaster for the Andalusian culture and civilization. The Christians who took Spain back from the Muslims burned many books and libraries belonging to Muslims in the cities they captured. The Church, Christian clergy, and the Inquisition courts played a leading role in this.⁵⁰ Andalusia witnessed the largest book-burning event in history. French physicist Pierre Curie said: "We have 30 books left from Andalusia. We were able to split the atom. If half of the one million burned books had reached us, we would have been traveling between galaxies in space long ago".⁵¹

The section on the burning of books in the ode written by an Arab Muslim from Granada to Bayezıt II after the revolt of the Muslims of Granada/Girnata in 1499 is very striking.

They burned all the books in our hands and threw them into filth and garbage.

They threw our religious books into the fire with mockery and insult.

They left no book for any Muslim, not even a Qur'an to be read in solitude.

*Anyone who was known to fast and pray would have been thrown into the fire anyway was being thrown away.*⁵²

In the 19th century, a number of burning incidents also took place in the West. When the British army attacked Washington, the Presidential mansion and the Congress building where the Congressional Library was located were set on fire. Scottish soldier and writer George Robert Gleig (1796-1888), as a witness to the fire, sadly described the library and the fire as follows: "A noble library, several printing offices, and all the national archives were likewise committed to the flames, which, though no doubt the property of government, might better have been spared".⁵³ In 1940, the New York Times reported that a library was destroyed, leaving behind twisted and burnt beams, manuscripts, medals, porcelain, silk flags, and catalogs.⁵⁴ During the 1991 Iraq war, thousands of books were lost in the looted libraries and the Palace of Wisdom, where the manuscripts were located, was burned. The Iraqi National Library also suffered the same destruction.⁵⁵

In the 20th century, the University of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Library in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Sarajevo Oriental Institute, were bombed, and ten years later, the National Library and the library in the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs in Baghdad were reduced to ruins, and many works were destroyed.⁵⁶ Manuscripts, maps, photographs, documents, cadastral records, books, and magazines in the libraries were burned, and only less than ten percent of the books were saved.⁵⁷ Manuscripts from the 17th and 19th centuries were also burned and destroyed along with the Careva (Hünkar) Mosque built by Yavuz Sultan Selim. In the same century, in February 1992, millions of books were destroyed in the city of Khojaly in Azerbaijan.⁵⁸

In history, librarians and archivists have preserved and saved some books from fires. The antiquarian John Leland (1503-1552) was one of those who saved books. He describes how he protected monastery books in his book *The Itinerary*.⁵⁹ In the same context, Fahrenheit 451's protagonist also becomes a character who wishes to save books like librarians and archivists of the past.

2. FAHRENHEIT 451

Ray Bradbury's book, written in 1953, is an impressive work portraying a world where books are banned in which fire-fighters burn books. Bradbury's language is dense and descriptive. The symbols and metaphors used in the novel increase the depth of the themes. Fire symbolizes destruction and cleansing while being used as a burning tool and represents knowledge and rebirth in accordance with the myth of Prometheus. Books symbolizes knowledge, freedom, and

50 Johannes Pedersen, *İslam Dünyasında Kitabın Tarihi*, ter. Mustafa Macit Karagözoğlu, 4. Baskı (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2021), 130; Necmeddin Mehmet Bardakçı, "İslâm kültür ve medeniyetinin Batı'ya açılan kapısı: Endülüs". *Kültür: İki Aylık Kültür Sanat Araştırma Dergisi Endülüs Özel Sayısı* 8 (2007), 46.

51 See also Necmeddin Mehmet Bardakçı, "İslâm kültür ve medeniyetinin Batı'ya açılan kapısı: Endülüs", 46-66.

52 Azmi Yüksel, "Endülüs'ten II. Bayezid'a Yazılan Anonim Bir Şiir", *Belleten* 52/205 (Aralık 1988), 1575-1583.

53 George Robert Gleig, *A Narrative of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans, Under Generals Ross, Pakenham, and Lambert, in the years 1814 and 1815* (London: John Murray, 1821), 127.

54 Ovenden, *Kitapları Yakmak*, 147.

55 Nahide Şimşir, "İslam Medeniyetini Yok etmenin En Kestirme Yolu: Savaşı Vesile Kılıp Kütüphanelerini Yakmak", *Yeni Türkiye* 23/98 (2017), 612-623.

56 James Raven, *Kayıp Kütüphaneler*, translated by. Dilek Berilgen Cenkçiler (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2023), 11.

57 Ovenden, *Kitapları Yakmak*, 193-208.

58 Öztürk, *Kitapların Dünyası*, 83.

59 See also Leland John. 1907. *The Itinerary in or about the years 1535-1543*. edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), XI.

individuality. The destruction of books symbolizes society's thought control. The Mechanical Hound represents the government's oppressive power and control and symbolizes technology's authority over people. The mirror symbolizes self-discovery and inner reflection, representing Montag's process of questioning himself and society. The narrative style encourages the reader to think and question while bringing the mind the long history of book burnings. Why did firefighters start burning books while they were putting out fires? Why were books deemed to be objects to be burned? How to secure books and thus knowledge in such a society?

In the book, Bradbury imagines a society that wants to eliminate the unsettling legacy of books and decides to burn them, echoing the past authorities who waged wars against books. 451 Fahrenheit is the temperature at which paper burns, and it is the firemen who are tasked with burning the books. When books start burning, they crackle, splatter, burn, curl, and disappear as paper flames. The book takes its name from the temperature at which book paper burns. It focuses on subjects such as censorship, freedom of access to knowledge, social control, the effects of technology, fluctuations in culture, and obviously books. The government in the world of *Fahrenheit 451* has banned and burned books to maintain control over society. Imagining a society deprived of the culture emanating from the book allows Bradbury to show how technology can negatively affect human relationships and thoughts. Television and other technological devices cause people to live superficial lives and lose their capacity for deep thought in the absence of books.

Guy Montag, the protagonist of the novel, is a firefighter who does not question the act of burning books in the beginning, but as the novel progresses, he becomes more conscious and rebels against the imposed rules. He must deal with those around him who believe books are harmful. He arrives at a state of mind to believe that the person who protects and understands books will find a way to exist. Clarisse McClellan, who has a different and questioning point of view, is Montag's young neighbor, and plays an important role in Montag's transformation. Montag's wife, Mildred, is addicted to television and represents the superficial values of society as she is a character who is distant from her own feelings and thoughts. Montag's boss, Captain Beatty, advocates the necessity of book burning, and by the end of the novel, he becomes the antagonist. Faber is a former professor and Montag's ally. He teaches Montag the value of books and how they can change society.

According to Professor Faber in *Fahrenheit 451*, one of the reasons why books are important is that they are of quality. "Books have pores, properties. They can be examined with a microscope. The more pores, the more accurately recorded life details can fit on a page per square centimeter, the more literary it is."⁶⁰ Another is that books require time, and third, books make you think. "However, you can't argue with a television receiver. Why? Because it is instantaneous, it tells you what to think and then bangs it into your head. It tells you its conclusions so one after another that your mind doesn't have time to object, to say, "What nonsense."⁶¹ According to *Fahrenheit 451*, "books are there to remind us that we are stupid, foolish. They are like the guards who say to Caesar, "Remember, Caesar, that you are mortal" as the procession passes noisily on the street. Most of us cannot talk to everyone, we cannot know all the cities, we do not have the time, money, or that many friends. The things we are looking for can only be seen in books."⁶² The importance of books is emphasized throughout the novel by Bradbury illustrating the significance given to books throughout history.

Fahrenheit 451 can be read in multiple ways due to Ray Bradbury's masterful pen. Science fiction stories are about real or fictional events and future developments. Beyond echoing the past, the novel draws conclusions to be refrained so that people would not lose their ability to think and imagine a better life for themselves. *Fahrenheit 451* imagines a possible future based on the changing world of the 1950s. Actions of people may yield to a wanted future if people do not solely obey the rules of the government prohibiting books. Also, the series of events in science fiction allows its characters to find themselves in different conditions. *Fahrenheit 451*'s heroes, such as Montag and Faber, are strong and book lover characters in the novel who experience various adventures to save books like John Leland. Besides, the novel features strong literary arts and a beautiful style. Faber's similes about books, such as books smelling like coconuts or a spice from a foreign land. While describing the burning of the book, Bradbury says that the magazines are thrown away like slaughtered birds, the books piled on top of each other resembled heaps of fish, the golden eyes of the book titles glittered during the burning, and the kerosene vapors were like blooming flowers.⁶³ Such descriptions allow readers to imagine the events in the history of book burnings even though their details are unknown. Wherever and whenever such an incident happened to the books, it was disastrous and undesirable. Bradbury's masterful pen, thus, opens a way of reading for the novel to be perceived as one of those occasions of book burnings in an imagined world of the 1950s echoing the past and cautioning against such a future.

Displaying the effects of new inventions on people in science fiction stories is crucial to look into the future. Accordingly, in *Fahrenheit 451*, the negative effects of television and computers on people are revealed through the idea that they will cause people to stop reading books. The questions asked throughout the novel, what if people stopped reading books or if books were banned, are Bradbury's thoughts that emerged from his fear that cinema, television, and computers would

60 Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, translated by. Dost Körpe (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2018), 105.

61 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 106.

62 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 108.

63 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 55, 58, 60.

dominate and surpass books and that the age would end reading. Bradbury had the foresight to see the course of the age in the 1950s and created a work showing that such an end would be disappointing.

One of the elements that develop tension in the plot is the construction of a dystopian future. In *Fahrenheit 451*, the author is pessimistic about the society of the future because the end of both books and people is depressing, which is in line with the author's thoughts. The conditions in which people find themselves in science fiction can be technological and also sociological. Where books are burned, people are burned as well. In *Fahrenheit 451*, the events begin with burning books and end with burning people themselves.⁶⁴

Bradbury, who constructs this based on the importance of the book, imagines another book-loving character in a story who expresses surrender with rebellion, saying firemen to lock him in a cloister full of books, build a wall of books over him, even imprison him to books and then to burn them all along with him.⁶⁵ Montag realizes the value of books when he encounters such an incident as he says: "There must be something in books, things we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing".⁶⁶ This approach suggests that books have much more value than simple objects. Also, during his epiphany, Montag realizes that a book can also have a voice by saying that; "... for the first time I realized that a man was behind each one of the books. A man had to think them up ... It took some man a lifetime maybe to put some of his thoughts down, looking around at the world and life and then I come along in two minutes and boom! it's all over".⁶⁷

Bradbury emphasizes the importance of the book in his novel and reveals the reasons for burning it. Books contain memories that will never be lost, and that is why they are important. Books are the treasures of the world that those memorizers keep in their minds; they are alive to their lovers, and they talk to people. People can find themselves in books whereas watching TV is just passing the time. Reading is necessary in order not to be left behind. So why were books burned? Books were banned because they made people unhappy and disrupted their harmony with society. The path to happiness was through being equal, so it was necessary to burn books. Novels, biographies, autobiographies, books of philosophy, logic, and criticism were burned. The book begins by describing how Montag feels about burning books:

"It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history. With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black".⁶⁸

However, despite being a fireman, Montag changes his perspective on books toward the end. He starts to save as many books as he can in his house that he cannot bear to burn, and when the books in his house are getting burned, he starts by burning the other things he does not want. Eventually, he decides to leave his job to dedicate himself to a much more noble cause: protecting the books. When he realizes that he cannot possibly save the material books, he thinks of the method applied by older generations attempting to preserve the contents of the books: memorize. To protect the Bible before he decides to hand it over to Beatty, he starts to memorize it indicating that: "... no phrase must escape me, each line must be memorized. I will myself to do it".⁶⁹ The novel also emphasizes the importance of human relationships and empathy. When Guy Montag, the protagonist of the book, meets Clarisse McClellan, his perspective on the world changes, and this leads to an emotional awakening. Montag has the hope that humanity can be reborn through books, and he decides to memorize and protect the books by getting together with the fugitives, echoing the long history of people sacrificing their lives to save the books. The fugitives themselves need to be noted specifically. The outcast group consists of people like professors or ex-writers among others. Shortly people who mattered once books were still valued. Banning books also means banning people who share an affinity with them. Montag realizes shortly after encountering them that these people are not ordinary fugitives but rather people who embarked on a mission to save the books by memorizing them. In this way, Bradbury resonates the ideas about the history of book burnings. Even though deprived of material objects, people can rely on their ability to memorize books as a last resort to save the content of the books.

Bradbury's concerns about new inventions, social media, and digitalization began in 1950 when people spent too much time watching TV. With these thoughts in mind, Bradbury revealed in his novel what kind of disasters could occur when books were banned. In an environment without no books, ignorance would continue, human relations would decline, and books would not function in societies dependent on electronics. Thus, Montag laments: "Maybe the books can get us half out of the cave. They just might stop us from making the same damn insane mistakes! ... An hour a day, two hours, with

64 John Sutherland, *Edebiyatın Kısa Tarihi*, translated by. Tufan Göbekçin (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2018), 225.

65 Bradbury, *Yakma Zevki, Fahrenheit 451 Öyküleri*, translated by. Murat Özbak (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2023), 85.

66 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 72.

67 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 72.

68 Bradbury, *Yakma Zevki, Fahrenheit 451 Öyküleri*, 23.

69 Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 100.

these books, and maybe ...".⁷⁰ In a way, Bradbury through this lamentation echoes Pierre Curie's remark on the largest book burning event. *Fahrenheit 451* was written in the 1950s America. The book can be said to be a criticism of the censorship and oppression policies of this period and can also be seen as a reaction to the consumer culture and the rise of technology in society after World War II. It is essential in the literary world and it is still relevant. Its warnings about technology and censorship continue to be valid in today's world. The work emphasizes the power of the individual and the importance of knowledge and states that hope and change are the guides.

In the short story that inspired *Fahrenheit 451*, named *The Pedestrian*, Bradbury showcased his thoughts about television addiction and his fear that surrendering to television would almost perish society. Leonard Mead, the character in the story, is a writer who likes to wander around the streets as a pedestrian. Apparently, it is the year 2131, and even though he has been walking for ten years, he does not see anyone around. People just stay in their homes and spend the time watching the TV. As he walked nothing could be seen in the windows except for the flickering and cold lights of TVs. He mocks with people whispering to the houses to ask what is on the TV that night. But it is not a desired future. Police take Leonard Mead to a psychology center for walking around and for not having a screen to look at, unlike the rest of society. Bradbury thought about the relationship between books, society, and technology in short stories and *Fahrenheit 451*. He reminds humanity that books are not just objects; they are our imagination, our memory, and even our whole world in accordance with the thoughts of Mallarme, who thinks the book is the reason for the existence of the earth, or Bloy, who believes people are the lines, words, or letters of a magical book and that endless book is the only thing that exists, rather frankly that book is the world itself.⁷¹

CONCLUSION

The research found that some of the books were burned by fire, some were burned during rebellions, some were burned for preservation purposes, and some were burned because they were full of errors or had the potential to cause errors. For a certain period, the printing of books with errors was banned, and their copies were collected and burned. The burning of books was done to prevent development, destroy civilizations, and eliminate different ideas.

Burning is the systematic destruction of books that are considered dangerous. Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is a fictionalized account of the systematic destruction of books. It is not possible to perceive *Fahrenheit 451* as a totality of realities. However, the question in the novel, as Bradbury puts it: "what if books were objects that were burned?" took us to the historical process of book burning. Although it is science fiction, the fact that the novel begins with a fire and the ways in which books are destroyed brought us to the point of discussing whether such events have occurred in history. With the transformation of the novel into history, history's own realities and cries emerged. With this study, it was tried to emphasize the violence against books, the extent of the invasion, and the perspective on scientific and cultural values. Another concern in the novel is the fear that people will stop reading books and become dependent on technology. In *Fahrenheit 451*, this fear was prevented with various measures. In this context, an attempt was made to present these measures with examples that are similar to history.

The most important factor in people's rise from nomadism to the level of civilization was the knowledge of cultural characteristics and their transfer to writing. The most common way for this transmission to occur across generations is through writing and therefore books. Nowadays, interaction with information is progressing rapidly. Developments in the field of science and technology cause, make it necessary, to constantly update the definition of the concept of information.⁷² The main point of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* can be extended to say that while keeping up with technology, traditional and digital media should be used together without disregarding any means of carrying knowledge. Since the speed of access to information cannot be accurate while keeping up with technology, classical sources should be used as the basis for accessing information. This essay has demonstrated such an approach in reading history alongside science fiction literature.

Thus, the discussion has brought us to the current state of our own times almost 70 years after the original publication date of *Fahrenheit 451*. The evolution of books from print to the internet should not diminish the interest and commitment to books. Internet-oriented media may be seen as convenient and for protection, but they will never replace the book that is held, felt, and owned. Information stored on internet platforms always carries the risk of loss because digital information is vulnerable to neglect and destruction. For this reason, books will continue to live as long as they are preserved and passed down from generation to generation for the development of people and societies. The new generation should be raised with an understanding of culture and art, and the pleasure of reading should be given, not the pleasure of burning.

The novel about books written by an author who loved books very much reveals the value of books and libraries and the necessity of protecting them. We do not know Bradbury's relationship with the Qur'an and Islam, but in a way, he whispers to all humanity the first command of Allah to the Prophet Muhammed, "Read!".

⁷⁰ Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, 95.

⁷¹ Borges, Jorge Luis, *Öteki Soruşturmalar*. translated by Peral Bayaz Charum and Türker Armaner (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), 180.

⁷² Muzaffer Üzümcü, "Din Eğitimi Biliminde Farklı Bilgi Türleri Arasındaki Etkileşim", *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* 60/1 (Aralık 2023), 108-120.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Kitaplar yazılmış, yazdırılmış, istinsah yoluyla çoğaltılmış, müzayede ya da sahaflardan alınmış; miras, intikal gibi durumlarda el değiştirmiş; kitaplara bağış ve hibe yoluyla sahip olunmuştur. Zaman zaman kitaplar, âlimler için bir zorunluluk, zenginler için ise tezyinat unsuru olmuştur. Kitap meraklılarının istediği kitaba ulaşmak için kitap müzayedelerinde gösterdikleri uğraşın çeşitli eserlerde ifade edildiğine rastlanmıştır. Emevî ve Abbâsiler'den itibaren kitaba büyük değer verildiği görülmüştür. Abbasiler dönemi (750-860), antik medeniyetlerden tercümelerin yapıldığı dönemdir. İspanya'daki İslam yönetiminden Irak'taki Abbasi krallığına kadar her yerde kütüphaneler kurulmuştur. Bağdat'ta kurulan Beytülhikme'de eserler tercüme edilirken, şerhleri de yapılmıştır. Buradaki faaliyetler daha sonraki asırlarda büyük yankılar uyandırmıştır. Bağdat'ta başlayan hareket ve oluşturulan kütüphaneler devletin diğer şehirlerine dağılmış, İslam şehirleri, ilim ve fende birbirleriyle yarışır hale gelmiştir. Kütüphaneden araştırma merkezine dönüşen Beytülhikme'ye Mısır, Filistin, Suriye, Irak, Yukarı Mezopotamya, Küçük Asya, Konstantiniyye, İran, Horasan, Harezm, Hint ve Sudan'dan kitaplar getirilmiştir. Tarih boyunca kitabın ve kütüphanelerin gelişmesi, insanların kitaba gösterdikleri önemden kaynaklanmaktadır. Seçkinler arasında yazarlarla kitaplarına hami olma geleneği, kısa süre sonra büyük kütüphanelerin oluşmasını sağlamıştır. Kütüphanelerin oluşumunda da eski kütüphaneler ilham kaynağı olmuştur. İslam coğrafyasında bugün kataloğu bulunan ilk kütüphane 13. yüzyılda Şam'da kurulmuş olan Eşrefiyye kütüphanesidir. İslam ülkeleri içerisinde özellikle Bağdat'ta Abbasi kütüphanesi, Kahire'de Fatimî Kütüphanesi ve Kurtuba'daki Endülüs Emevîleri kütüphanesi büyük ve özel kütüphaneler arasındadır. Osmanlı'da kütüphaneler, I. Bayezid (1389-1402) döneminden itibaren dönemin devlet adamları, kadınları ve âlimleri tarafından kurulmuştur. 18. yüzyıl, Sadrazam Damat İbrahim Paşa'nın ön ayak olmasıyla kütüphaneler ve kütüphanelerdeki kitapların sayısının arttığı bir dönemdir. Kütüphaneler bütün güzel özellikleri ile korunurken farklı amaçlarla zaman zaman yağmalanmış, kapatılmış, restore edilmiş, bir kısmı da yeniden kurulmuştur. Tarih boyunca kütüphaneler ve arşivler çeşitli saldırılara maruz kalmış, bilgiyi korumak uğruna kütüphaneciler ve arşivciler yaşamlarını tehlikeye atmışlardır. Kitapların önemine vâkıfken insanlar tarafından yakılması, kitap ciltlerinin asker ayakkabılarına tabanlık yapmak için kullanılması, çamurlu yollara basamak olması, bazı eşyaları güçlendirmek için kullanılması, eski kitapların olağandışı yollarla kullanımına yönelik uygulamalar arasında yerini almıştır. Kitaplar, yüzyıllardır insanoğlunun kültür ve hafızasının kütüphanelerde muhafaza edilen beççileri olmuşlar, fakat her dönemde insanlar otoriter kitaplardan her zaman endişe duymuş, bu tür kitapları devletleri için tehdit kabul etmişlerdir. Şair ve yazarların sürgüne gönderilmeleri, zindana atılmaları ve kitaplarının yakılması bundan kaynaklanmıştır. Tarihte kitap yakma olayları, milattan öncesine dayanmaktadır. M.Ö. 1352-1334 yılları arasında Firavun Akhenaton, Amon rahiplerinin bilgilerini imha etmekle işe başlamıştır. Akhenaton'dan sonra Aton dinine ait kitapların yakılması, kitaplarla iktidarın paralel güce sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Yakma olayları, öncelikle kutsal kitaplar üzerinde olmuştur. Felsefe, astronomi gibi kadim ilimler sahasındaki kitaplar da yakılan eserler arasındadır. İmparatorun buyruğu ile Çin'in önemli filozofu Konfüçyüs'ün (M.Ö. 551-479) bazı kitaplarının yakılması, tarihte büyük kitap yakma olayı olarak kayda geçmiştir. Kitapların yakılması, ahlâk öğretilerine dayalı Konfüçyüsçülüğün ve öğretisinin temeline insanı alan Konfüçyüs'ün unutturulmak istenmesine dayandırılmıştır. Fakat Chou hanedanlığı sırasında pek çok başka düşünür gibi kitapları yakılan Konfüçyüs'ün düşünceleri Han hanedanlığı sırasında yeniden yaygın olarak kabul görmüştür. M.Ö.411'de Atina'da bir meydanda Protagoras'ın eserleri yakılmıştır. M.Ö. 213'te Çin İmparatoru Şih Huang-ti okumaya son vermek amacıyla kitap yaktırmıştır. M.Ö. 168'de Kudüs'teki Yahudi kitaplığı bir ayaklanmada yanmış, 303'te de Diocletianus bir fermanla Hristiyan kitaplarının yaktırılmasını emretmiştir. Bütün bu tarihî olaylar, Ray Bradbury'nin 1953 yılında yazdığı *Fahrenheit 451* adlı romanından esinlenerek araştırılmıştır. Yakmak, tehlikeli olduğu düşünülen kitapların yöntemli şekilde yok edilişidir. Bradbury'nin *Fahrenheit 451* adlı kitabı da kitapların sistematik olarak yok edilişine dair bir kurguyla yazılmıştır. Kitapları çok seven yazarın kitaplarla ilgili sıradışı romanı, kitaplar ve kütüphanelerin değeri ve onları korumanın gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bilim kurgu öykülerinde yeni icatların insanlar üzerinde bıraktığı etkiye yer verilir. *Fahrenheit 451*'de de televizyon ve bilgisayarın insanlar üzerinde yapacağı olumsuz etki, kitap okumayı bırakacakları düşüncesiyle ortaya konmuştur. Roman boyu sorulan "Peki ya insanlar kitap okumayı bıraksalardı ya da kitaplar yasaklansaydı?" soruları, Bradbury'nin sinema, televizyon ve bilgisayarın kitaba hâkim olacağı, baskın çıkacağı, teknoloji çağının okumayı bitireceği korkusuyla oluşan düşünceleridir.