

ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AS UNIVERSAL: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FAHRENHEIT 451

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ABSTRACT

The current research is a critical study of Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451" and has attempted to explain how epistemology has been made conflicting and controversial, leading to the idea of implementation of universal anthropological knowledge. It is the knowledge about human races and their collective interests and benefits. Advancing anthropological knowledge is a need of the day because a majority of the world's problems are due to books. The researcher explained that universal human knowledge will build trust, tolerance, and acceptance on the part of individuals and scholars from every culture and society around the globe. The perspective of "Ethnoepistemology" has been used as a theoretical framework in guiding and providing context to the study. "Ethnoepistemology" also decentralized the concept of one dominant center in the field of knowledge i.e. "The West knowledge". Having a qualitative and epistemological nature, the research used "Close Reading" as a method of data analysis to highlight the hidden meanings and concepts. The study concluded that the implementing and considering anthropological knowledge as universal will regain the declined scope of academia as it is universal.

Keywords: Anthropological Knowledge, Conflicts, Decentralization, Ethnoepistemology, Intolerance, Manipulation, Universal.

1. INTRODUCTION

J.K Rowling (2017) says, "if you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book." Despite appearing simple, this quote is very thought-provoking as it questions the notion of reading. Whenever we talk of books, we expect many productive and philosophical things. With reading comes wisdom and knowledge, but here in this quote, the words "don't like" and "right book" have a very deep meaning. Why wouldn't one want to read? If we look at the binary operation's concept of Saussure, it becomes obvious that besides good books, we also have bad books. That's why Rowling is saying that there are also bad books. That has considerably contributed to corrupting and making problematic the field of "Knowledge". In the 21st century, the field of knowledge has been made problematic and controversial through the biased subjective representation of ideologies. The notions of biased representation have diminished the interest of people in reading books, and they are taking an interest in the leisure of technological inventions. This shifting of attitude from books and reading to screens, movies, video games, etc. has a very negative impact on the dealings of people within and from diverse communities. To address this problem of biased, controversial and corrupted epistemology, the researcher suggests the implementation of universal anthropological knowledge. Anthropology is the study of humanity, human behavior, societies, cultures, linguistics and human development as a whole. The concept of holism is at the core of anthropology. Anthropological knowledge is universal knowledge that can be shared and learned equally as it focuses on human races, their lives, problems, and situations and is beneficial to all. Fredrik Barth (2002) says "a knowledge without knowers" rejecting and avoiding boundaries and specifications in the field of knowledge. This is the knowledge that has no specific audience but is productive and progressive for all human races across the globe. According to Cabezero, Carvalho da Silva, Demetriadou-Saltet, Halbartschlager, Christidis, and Mihai (2010), universal knowledge is a perspective on education that results from the reality that modern people live and communicate in a world that is becoming more and more globalized. Given that people nowadays live and communicate in an increasingly globalized society, universal education is a perspective on education that has emerged. To foster new ways of thinking and acting, education must equip students with the knowledge and abilities to look on and show their perspectives and obligations within interconnected and multicultural groups/communities and to take into account and mark the vital relations between collective societal, environmental, administrative, and monetary complications. The point of universal schooling and criticism is shifting from an individualistic attitude, which is typically associated with dominance, to a relational culture focused on cooperation and universality. By accepting and implementing the universal anthropological knowledge, the world can witness harmony, peace, and progress because it is the universal knowledge that spreads awareness regarding the existence of humans, their development, needs, and problems. The misrepresentation and exploitation of different human races can be discouraged, as this type of knowledge considers the benefits and progress of all human races.

2. SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, published in 1954, opens in a dystopian American city. A fireman named Guy Montag burns and destroys books. In the context of the novel, firemen lights fire instead of controlling or stopping it. People do not read books or enjoy nature as much as they love driving fast and watching unnecessary amounts of TV. In the novel, Montag learns that an elderly woman is hiding a collection of restricted literature in her house. To eventually find them, he snatches them and hides them under an air-conditioning drain. The woman then shocks him by saying that she would rather be burned alive with her books instead of giving them to the firemen. This incident made him reflect on what's in the books. He meets an old professor (Faber), who enlightens him that the significance of books lies in the comprehensive information they comprise about life. Toward the close of the story, Montag fights the firemen, and, as an effect, tastes demise.

Basically, the story is about conflicting ideas in books and theories and censorship's attitude towards such books.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the modern globalized era, the need for productive education is increasing to address contemporary issues progressively. But due to the notion of biased subjective approaches and ideologies, the field of knowledge is controversial. The basic aims and objectives of epistemology sound very ironic. Instead of bringing reforms to society, the conflicting and controversial theories and concepts bring destruction in one way or the other. The misrepresentation of one group of people or the other, manipulation of facts and representation of false or one-sided histories has considerably contributed to modern problems. In such a scenario, the implementation of anthropological and universally accepted concepts and ideologies is needed to spread awareness among the masses regarding a peaceful and progressive coexistence in the global village.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is important because, in the backdrop of Islamophobia, the war on terror, COVID-19, an unstable world order, proxy wars, biased representations of cultures, racism, and many more, many writers are producing literature from their point of view, making things biased and one-sided. This led to different conflicts on the national and international levels. The importance of this study is due to the fact that it concentrates on anthropological and globally accepted knowledge that works for the development and progressivism of human beings. This anthropological knowledge will address human-related issues and will work for the betterment of their conditions amid the tense and hypocritical era through academia.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Delic (2017), the emergence of techno-science has exposed serious faults in the dominant information and perception systems. Contrarily, the modern era links a new understanding of financial sides, post-democracy, post-politics, and bio-political control over existing and non-representative varieties of the current violence. In the twenty-first century, dominant ideology, the bio-politics of immediate pleasure, spiritual revivalism, and the deterioration of developed education came together with techno-optimism and techno-dictatorship. For science to recover, it is crucial to adopt a universal epistemological and moral turn toward the facts. Because knowledge has become a biased and hate-producing force and its interest is fading. Besides scientific knowledge, the social aspects of epistemology are also made biased and gendered. Skov (2020) claims that the underrepresentation of women in academic settings is commonly acknowledged to be caused by unconscious or subconscious bias. There were publications on unconscious/implied gender favoritism in the academic circles that are indexed in Scopus or PsycINFO up to February 2020, more than half, in the period 2018–2020, were published (Skov, 2020). Reinterpretations and fabrications of knowledge were prevalent in these articles. The excerpt under discussion demonstrates how discrimination against women limits their capacity and originality to contribute to academia. It should be remembered that when referring to the participation of women or men in various domains of knowledge, "gender" is a neutral term. Regarding unconscious gender discrimination, further academic research is required. With the level of awareness that exists today, care should be used while examining the data on gender inequalities in academia. Researchers (particularly women) are pushed to leave their careers since they don't expect recognition for their contributions to academia due to the biased culture of academia that is prevalent in the modern day. The misrepresentation through academia not only limited to the notion of "gendered" but it also has several other fields of conflict and destruction. Amid the spike in intolerance and extremism in Pakistan, many scholars aimed their guns toward the course contents design for elementary and secondary education. Declaring the school textbooks as problematic and controversial, Anis (2012) explains that in the history, several evidences frequently blamed textbooks in schools particularly, those created and published in the public sector, for the growing fanaticism in Pakistan. He cited an article from the Jinnah Institute which reveals that the curriculum is still biased and could be held solely responsible for the religious extremism in Pakistani culture. These textbooks are referred to in the report as the "hate curriculum"

(paragraph 2), and it is said that they are not only lacking in innovation but also do not encourage a youth's creativity. The grave accusation against them is regarding the contents it teaches are believed to be discriminatory, unfair and wholly or partially instills a conservative and subjective attitude in the youngster. Anis (2012) illustrates the causes of East Pakistan's separation: the education sector in East Pakistan was fully under Hindu influence. They provoked the student's anger against the Western Wing through discourses and texts. India, Russia, and the United States all wanted Pakistan to be split up and they did so. This perspective makes it clear that knowledge can cause great harm if it is manipulated and distorted in favor of individual interests. The interest of dominant class considers that epistemology is only centered on them and only they will publish and propagate ideologies. According to Horsthemke (2017), a recent viewpoint claims that the dominant social group has mainly neglected ethnic or cultural groups because they have their distinctive and gendered epistemologies. A corollary to this point of view is that educational research is conducted in an environment that includes simple beliefs regarding the creation of facts and awareness that represent the favorites and historical operation of this dominant group. The desire for epistemic diversity becomes problematic when it confounds epistemological pluralism and relativism. If some demands for new, varied, alternative, decolonized, or de-masculinized epistemologies are not addressed, they might lead to philosophical challenges and disagreements among people, resulting in a lack of interest in academics. Battiste (2000), further elongate the idea. He says that "Indigenous scholars are now struggling to define Indigenous humanity" (p. 13). To address education, research, and the classic storytelling of terrific devastation, painful struggle, and continued existence, both parties must first develop a shared understanding of the thought processes that led to this alienation. Indigenous students must be allowed to participate in meaningful debates and interactions as well as to start critically assessing knowledge and information. In addition to thoughtful debates and discussions, the researcher's opinion is that academia must advance ideas that foster harmony and unite people in their knowledge of reality and ideals. Living in a globalized world, people needs to accept and tolerate each other's perspective and they need to address the collective problem of the masses in a universal manner. In the history of civilization, according to Krikwood (2001), humanity ushered in a new era of globalization that brought about a variety of complex global and cross-cultural exchanges. With only one mouse click, the technological revolution connected everything. Nearly every country is impacted by the dynamics of change sweeping the globe in this new, globalized era. Such cooperative possessions, diverse abilities, plus the united supremacy have caused many contrasts and conflicts among diverse beliefs and personalities, such as narrow-mindedness and contempt, both socially and culturally. Given the rapid changes and the urgent need for schools to incorporate global knowledge into curricula, Krikwood thinks that universal epistemology is essential in the Golden Age. Students are becoming exposed to several issues that call for a focus on universal knowledge. Kirkwood elaborates that these scholars will live in a new world order, necessitating the requirement for international epistemology (2001). He points out that their regular encounters will take in people from different social, racial, etymological, and cultural experiences. There will be several worst health issues in history, inequalities between more and less developed countries, dreadful conditions of environment, international immigration, raising population, indigenous nationalism, and the dissolution of the nation (Kirkwood-2001). To authorize scholars with multitude of views of the world, to understand and work well in cultural, social, and economic settings and to escalate the impression of globalization and how vital it stays, a suitable, internationally accepted curriculum is required.

Fresno Pacific faculty (2018) argues that an inclusive classroom awareness comprises teaching the people both locally and globally regarding different realms and societies, along with their civil rights and responsibilities. In an interconnected world, the capacity to comprehend, value, and interact with students from different beliefs and culture is progressively important for both academic and social advancement. The aim behind universal consciousness is to form global citizens who are welcoming to individuals raised up in different nations, societies, and religious situations. It presents a chance for instructors to show students how their daily decisions can affect individuals all over the world. Global consciousness is based on the guiding principle of building a more peaceful and just world. To do this, one must have respect for people with diverse backgrounds and traditions. Teachers can have one of the biggest impacts on children in pursuing this objective. O'Malley (2018), suggests that higher education has a critical part to show in resisting the growth of populism and nationalism and solving international concerns for example scarceness and climate alteration by way of emphasizing collective standards such as human' self-respect and the significance of research and education. Human ability will become more important in university and national competitions. The nations that can fascinate brilliant and vastly trained individuals as well as provide them with chances to advance their capacities will be the most prosperous. But these same nations will similarly create more welcoming peoples for the reason that, at the national level, a strongly developed teaching system will assist in reducing societal stiffness, encouraging tolerance, and contributing to a better understanding of different nations, faiths, and languages. She further stated that, while internationalization encourages individuals to live, study, and effort in diverse nations, it has also been used as a negative

term for various common people accordingly of the issues it presents. Maybe it's time to go back to a perspective that is founded on respect, tolerance, human dignity, and the sharing of ideas across cultures and religions. Education, and higher education, in particular, will be extremely important in this regard. Higher education has to play a key role in comprehending and resolving issues that have an ethical influence on all countries. Studies and education programs that address issues including hunger, poverty, and illiteracy as well as how to make cities, communities, and society more sustainable. Due to the interrelated nature of these issues, a multidisciplinary approach is required; universities have a shared body of knowledge that we must continue to expand.

The researcher is of the view that scholars and philosophers need to work on the promotion of anthropological knowledge. This knowledge will be centered on the problem of human races as a whole and it will address the problem of modern world not on individual base but collective one. Anthropological knowledge is universal because it focuses on the existence, nature and attitude of human. The notion of holism is at the center of this approach as it will appeal to each and every one, everywhere. Therefore, sharing ideologies, perspectives, and problems would be easy to comprehend as it says that knowledge can be shared and learn equally. Hence, we can say that it is anthropological knowledge that is universal and beneficial to all.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research study is guided by “ethno-epistemological” concept promoted by Masaharu, Jonardon, and Cliff Goddard (2022). According to this concept (quoted by- James Maffie) Ethnoepistemology, a type of “naturalized epistemology”, views all “epistemological” endeavors as wholly “natural” events that should be explained, comprehended, and assessed from humanity based and wholly a “posteriori” viewpoint. In this way, it explores the different variety of human epistemological endeavors, from the everyday person through cognitive experts (such as scientists, doctors, clerics, necromancer, and diviners) to the intellectuals themselves who practice epistemology. “Ethnoepistemology” encompasses both local and non-local practices of knowledge and views the knowledge and epistemological concepts of the Western as just one amongst numerous alternatives, a situational and progressed project of epistemology available to humans. Thus, it seeks to “decenter and provincialize” Western epistemology's meanings, goals, beliefs, approaches, difficulties, and claims. The majority of Western epistemologies adhere to what ethnoepistemology sees as a double standard, exempting themselves from the same anthropological examination that Western ethnographers apply to the epistemologies of non-Western civilizations. Additionally, it rejects the double standard that refers to Western thinkers' epistemological endeavors as true epistemology while classifying those of the other theorists as just ethnoepistemologies. “Ethnoepistemologists” claim that there is a duality explicitly and typically stated by the claim that philosophers in other societies pursue exclusively “ethnoepistemology” or “ethnophilosophy.” Whatever others do is thus relegated to the realm of anthropological curiosity, and individuals who engage in it are regarded as inexperienced and unqualified to take part in the Western “genuinely philosophical” discourse. Ethnoepistemologists find it objectionable when Western philosophers use the terms “ethnophilosophy” and “ethnoepistemology” as it implies that the philosophy of West is the standard through which all other nations' ideologies and thoughtful activities are to be measured and comprehended that it is “philosophy simpliciter” rather than any among several ethnophilosophies. The more widely “ecumenical and non-ethnocentric” usage of the word “ethnoepistemology” eludes this limitation by encompassing universal “epistemological” activity, whether Native American, East Asian, African, European, or any other. In this broad view, all “epistemological activities” are examples of “ethnoepistemology”, and all ethnoepistemologies are examples of epistemology.

The researcher's perspective focuses on human-centered knowledge, i.e. anthropological knowledge.

7. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The researcher intended to find out any opportunity of approaching to term with a universal anthropological knowledge in the context of “Fahrenheit 451.”

Research Question

Is there any opportunity of the attainment of universal anthropological knowledge with reference to Fahrenheit-451”?

8. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Having epistemological, qualitative nature and descriptive paradigm, the research used close reading method as a tool of data analysis. Close reading is a process of looking closely and deeply into the text to dig out the hidden concepts and it allowed the research to bring the abstract concepts and hidden themes to the surface. According to Pugh and Johnson (2013), the school of close reading, which flourished in the 1930s and 1940s, is linked to contemporary criticism. Read attentively and examine the text in detail to grasp its nuances. Never skim. Although this instruction may look too simple to be a methodical guide to analyze literature, “close reading” is the basis from which all

knowledgeable understandings arise. Close reading, in the view of Klarer (2013), is a significant notion that is occasionally used interchangeably with “new-criticism.” As a result, “new-criticism” concentrates researches on concepts like re-readings, contradiction, puns, irony, symbolism, or rhetorical figures because these are the smallest, most easily identifiable components of a literary work and have a close relationship to the broader context. It implies a thorough examination of these crucial elements, which represent a text's wider structures. According to a close reading of the book, it is anticipated that the elements stated will represent the overall literary work's coherent structure.

9. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. **“A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the weapon. Breach man’s mind. Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?”.**

(“Bradbury, 1954: p. 77”)

These lines are taken from Beatty's speech: the villain and Chief of Fire Company, paradoxically, a highly educated character and a figure who remains constant in the development of his personality during the course of the novel until his demise. After "The Hearth and Salamander," Captain Beatty discusses these words and explains to Montag the reconstructed history. It is crucial to understand that the entire speech of Beatty is ironic. He protects the breakdown of legitimacy in a zealous, almost sad manner. While still knowledgeable, he is eager to promote societal equality and condemns the practice of textbooks as “weapons” while openly employing them. This is the most significant quote in the book since it drives the plot forward and uses the metaphor "book is a loaded gun" to explain why the book should be burned. Through Beatty's voice, the quote is explained. He starts by stating that everyone is presumed to be equal under the Constitution. Because of books, he disputes the possibility of this presumption. On a deeper level, he is asserting that books prevent people from being equal because many academics from diverse fields and areas glorify one group while demonizing the other. By drawing disparities between individuals or groups—for instance, between colonial and postcolonial societies and Muslims and non-Muslims—many are setting the path for hostilities. This is a result of the knowledge that books contain. They would forbid and burn literature to stop disputes and assaults between groups. The metaphor in the passage compares a book and a gun. Yes, that is accurate since books have the power to mislead people and act in opposition to wisdom, harmony, and growing civilization (the main objectives and expected notions of knowledge). No one is aware of who or which book is going to shoot them, i.e., which author's wicked thoughts are going to target them. Firemen are destroying books because of wicked ideas, conflicting theories, and ideologies. This passage clarifies a lot of things about the novel. It explains why firefighters are destroying books rather than saving them. It also serves as the plot's foundation. This is by far the most important of the book's significant quotes. The researcher views the burning of books as a disagreeable experience and suggests that in its place, academe ought to concentrate on “universal theories” that work smoothly deprived of fundamentally opposing viewpoints that are mutilating the sentiments of one group or another. The patience and open mindedness of every group have to be taken into account in epistemology, and efforts should be made to use universally recognized theories and ideas to bring people closer together without taking into account personal interests or bias. This is only possible when human centered knowledge will get implemented with a universal understanding of human nature.

- 2 **“You must understand that our civilization is so vast that we can't have our minorities upset and stirred. Ask yourself, what do we want in this country, above all? People want to be happy, isn't that right? Haven't you heard it all your life? I want to be happy, people say. Well, aren't they? Don't we keep them moving, don't we give them fun?”.**

(“Bradbury, 1954: p. 78”)

Beatty delivered a speech to Montag in his apartment regarding the idea of ceasing and burning book. This quote is a part of that speech. The phrase and “Beatty's” entire statement stands in contrast to one of the book's themes, which is the “power of books.” Conflicting views in epistemology upset Beatty, a very well-read and philosophical character, and he is either misled by some authorities or some books. He argues that our civilization is too wide and sensitive and that it wants pleasure, thus we should burn and neglect books. Because of this, they truly detest and disapprove of anything that causes conflict or jeopardizes the social order. People are drawn to things that make them happy. Beatty emphasizes the idea that everyone wants to have a happy life by using the words “happy” and “fun” twice in the sentence. The significance of these statements in this text lies in Beatty's belief that book burning is not a negative idea because it causes people to be unhappy. After all, they don't agree with one another. This argument contends that because they divide people, books can be used as traitors. Whatever one group perceives as useful information and rational insight offends the sensibilities of another in one way or another, which alters people's perceptions of literature. The passage: “Coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo. Burn it. White people don't feel good about Uncle Tom's Cabin. Burn it” (p. 78), Beatty is referring to “Little Black Sambo,” authored by “Helen Bannerman (1899)”. This work

received a lot of criticism for its contradictory and hyperbolic portrayal of “black people.” The words “coloured” and “white” are used very clearly to demonstrate “racism” in the sentences above. The argument goes that because of writers’ subjective viewpoints, which will glorify one race above another, books actively encourage racism and fuel racial tensions. Beatty believes that individuals offend each other via academia. Beatty also alludes to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom Cabin in this passage (1852). This book is viewed as a white community offender. These allusions are made to encourage the burning of books since the firemen believe that reading books leads to disagreements and unhappy lives, and “everyone wants to live a happy life”. The paragraph demonstrates that pleasure does not reside in writings (books) but rather in stuffs out of “books” because they provide readers with conflicting theories and confusion. In a democratic society, the researcher opposes the idea of forbidding or burning books because it seems highly weird and immoral. According to the research, adopting universal and anthropological conventions for epistemology is something that academics can agree upon. Additionally, a more comprehensive elimination of hate, racism, religious extremism and other issues will result from teaching and offering the same anthropological knowledge everywhere. This implementation of universal knowledge seems to be the last hope.

3 “It’s not books you need, it’s some of the things that once were in books”. (“Bradbury, 1954: p. 107”)

Faber’s house serves as the setting for the line, where he and Montag are talking about censorship and books. These ideas are communicated through Faber’s mouth through the third-person omniscient narrator. Faber is expressing his opinion on a bleak society. Montag wants to find a type of expression that accurately captures human existence and offers people fulfilment and a solid understanding of reality. The context of the story makes it clear that, in the past, books contained all knowledge, but that, all of a sudden, people began to detest books’ reading and became absorbed in video games, movies, and other forms of pleasurable things. The quote from Faber, “It’s not books you need, it’s some of the things that once were in books,” responds to claim of Montag that academia used to serve as a humorous means of expressing human experience, thoughts, conflicts, and a host of other things, but that nowadays it lacks several essential components. “Number one, as I said, quality of information,” Faber summarizes this statement. “Number two: leisure to digest it”. “And number three: the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the interaction of the first two (p. 110).” Faber draws attention to the flaws that writings have and need to be fixed. There may be a variety of explanations for why these things are absent from the book. Many books are indeed of low quality because there are too many authors who only care about receiving recognition. As a result, they do not take care of their books’ contents and refuse to acknowledge the damage that their books may cause. Instead, they simply write down whatever ideas, good or bad, come to them. The researcher’s interpretation of “lack of information” in the context of the current study is that some writers instead spread misinformation and create conflicts rather than providing reliable information. They need to deliver factual evidences to the public, so that the public must also be able to comprehend it and use it to connect with others. It is necessary to implement such contents that have practical usefulness and reach. In addition, the adoption of a common curriculum and anthropological knowledge which addresses the human races collectively can boost academic interest and the future.

10. CONCLUSION

Knowledge has been misused in the context of Fahrenheit 451, and the field of epistemology has been made controversial and corrupt. The character of Beatty is crucial in that he brainwashes people using conflicting theories inserted in academia. Throughout the course of this study, the researcher finds out that the majority of modern problems are not natural but caused by several things, one of which is the field of knowledge. In the modern-day world, academia is made controversial and problematic by the insertion and advancement of biased subjective understanding and interpretation by some notorious writers. They construct ideologies that are extremist in nature and character. The misrepresentation and manipulation of truths and concepts have caused a lot of modern problems. Their conflicting ideas have significantly declined interest in academia. After analyzing the data using the close reading method, the researchers concluded that to address modern-day issues caused by epistemological conflicts, the world needs to consider anthropological knowledge—the knowledge of human races and their behavior—as universal.

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