

Ignorance is happiness

Literature, Russian Literature



Ignorance is happiness Think about communication now, how do people talk to each other? Think about entertainment, how do people have fun? Or how about knowledge, how do people share information? How do people find out about history? People today use cell phones, the Internet, and the television. But until about a century ago, no one had any of that. No one had Phones or flat screen TV's. No one had Facebook or Twitter accounts. So how did people back then live and work? The answer is with writing, with books. People still read today, but what if people lost all interest in books? What if people turned on books? Would mass book burnings start? Would books be outlawed and become illegal? What would society be like then? This is exactly what Ray Bradbury's novel is about. In this book, the author describes a society where books have been banned by the government, and because of that, ignorant is all that the people there are. In Ray Bradbury's novel, Fahrenheit 451, he utilizes the setting, conflict, and point of view to enhance this theme. In literature, the setting is the time and place a story takes place. Ray Bradbury used the futuristic setting to show what a world where television and sea shell radios are the most important things in a person's life would be like. He's created a society sometime after 1990, in a place called Elm City. It is a place where every one is equally ignorant, where the government tries to brainwash everyone to not question anything. Beatty quoted, " The home environment can undo a lot you try to do at school. That's why we've lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now we're almost snatching them from the cradle" (Bradbury 60). In order to make sure people grow up the way they want, the government has made sure children are taught from a very young age what they should believe in.

Kids like Clarisse McClellan are thought of as outcasts because she questions everything around her. The citizens then do not like to think independently either. Faber said, " Off-hours, yes. But time to think... rushes you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn't time to protest, ' what nonsense!' (Bradbury 84). The quotes, " patience, Montag. Let the war turn off the ' families.' Our civilization is flinging itself to pieces. Stand back from the centrifuge" (Bradbury 87), and, " In again out again Finnegan" (Bradbury 94), shows that people who they should care about are not important. Husbands are off at war, and their wives do not care at all. The setting contributes a lot to the theme, without the futuristic setting, the impact would not have been as great. Characterization also plays a part in the story. Characterization is when the writer reveals the personality of or describes a character. This helps by letting the readers gain more understanding of the people of that time. Mrs. Phelps stated, " He (her husband) said, if I get killed off, you just go right ahead and don't cry, but get married again, and don't think of me" (Bradbury 95). This quote shows that relationships are not significant anymore; people do not take the time to keep healthy relationships and communicate. Mildred quoted, " It's only two thousand dollars. And I think you should consider me sometimes. " (Bradbury 20). Even though Guy Montag said that in order to have the fourth wall put in, he'd have to pay a third of his yearly pay, Mildred does not seem to care. All she wants is her entertainment. Not all people then are like Mildred and Mrs. Phelps though, there are people like Clarisse McClellan. She said, " I rarely watch the ' parlor walls' or go to races or Fun Parks. So I've lots of time for crazy thoughts, I guess" (Bradbury 9). Clarisse does not spend her time

driving around at insane speeds running over pedestrians. She likes to take walks, enjoy nature. She likes to taste the rain and smell the flowers. But because of this she was thought of as weird and crazy. There is definitely something wrong with a society like that if someone like Clarisse became an outcast. The last thing that Ray Bradbury incorporated into his novel was the conflicts. Conflicts are struggles between two forces. There were both external and internal conflicts in the story. One conflict is an internal conflict when Montag burned the woman, and starts to see that everything he had been doing his whole life was wrong, and starts wondering what books have to say. " 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" (Bradbury 51). Another conflict is between him and Mildred. " Books are not people. You read and I look all around, but there isn't anybody! " (Bradbury 73). This shows how ignorant and shallow people like Mildred can be. She spends all day watching the television, completely immersed with her parlor ' families'. The last conflict is between Montag and Beatty, or the society he lives in. Beatty said, " serenity, Montag. Peace, Montag. Take your fight outside. Better yet, into the incinerator...burn all burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean" (Bradbury 59-60). Beatty said that he too, was once curious about books, so he read them, laws or no laws. But he did not want to think about the meanings behind the words in books, and he turned against them. Beatty does not burn books because he is told to, but he actually believes in burning books. He believes that books cause confusion, contradictions, and disorder. But the one thing that he does not realize is that, that is what

literature is for. There are many important messages that Fahrenheit 451 portrays. In order to help us understand them, Ray Bradbury's novel, Fahrenheit 451 uses the setting, characterization, and conflict to help underline these themes. The setting that was created was a futuristic society. This helped the readers imagine what a world without books or knowledge would be like. The characterization of the people showed that everyone was happy without knowledge, and the people who were not were outcasts. Lastly the conflicts between the characters demonstrate the ignorance of the people.