

Problems within the society in fahrenheit 451

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Do you remember how your parents would always say too much television will “turn your brain to mush?” This just so happens to be the case in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, which poses an eerily similar problem. This novel is about a society caught in the technology of tomorrow, while losing the knowledge of yesterday. Television makes the problems in real life seem distant, and makes people care less about their actual life. Television is also a tool, used and abused by the government in Bradbury’s world. TV just might also take away a human’s one, true right: to think freely.

TV, or “the parlor,” is the enemy in the world of *Fahrenheit 451* and perhaps even of the world we know today. The parlor walls are a tool used by the government to detach people from reality. Mildred and Montag, the protagonist, are so disjoined from each other that neither would even care if the other were to die the next day. The people in this land all have the same mindset: “He 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”(95): they try very hard to be independent of their significant others. This society has lost all sense of communal love, because people are nothing but a way to get money. Mildred would not mind if Guy were to die, as long as she inherited enough money for another TV wall. As Montag says, “That’s one-third of my yearly pay.” “It’s only two thousand dollars,” she replied. “And I should think you’d consider me sometimes. If we had a fourth wall, why it’d be just like this room wasn’t ours at all, but all kinds of exotic people’s rooms. We could do without a few things” (20). Mildred thinks that Guy should care more about her and, oddly, demonstrate this care by giving her an even bigger television wall. Montag is just trapped in the illusion that he loves Mildred, because she

does nothing for him, she has no job, and does not even talk to him, yet he buys her so much.

Mildred abuses her relationship with Montag further by neglecting him so she that can be with her “ family.” When Montag is sick in bed, he pleads for Mille to change: “ Will you turn the parlour off?’ he asked. ‘ That’s my family’ ... ‘ I’ll turn it down.’ She went out of the room and did nothing to the parlour and came back.” The definition of “ family” is far different from what it is today. The married couple has no love for each other, and shares no common interests. Although not by blood, Mildred is more closely related to the television than to her actual family, her husband. The parlour is just a replacement for the family people already had, but the parlour does not have scary thoughts, that are to be hidden.

Adding to this theme of unpleasant fixation, the government uses the civilians like puppets, and television like the puppet master’s hand. The parlor is used mostly to control the emotions of the public. When Granger is showing Montag that he is still being chased, he says, “ They’re faking. You threw them off at the river. They can’t admit it. They know they can hold their audience only so long...So they’re sniffing for a scape-goat to end things with a bang” (148). They have to kill someone in the end, so the government would rather kill one person than lose the happiness of many. Ultimately, it was supposedly beneficial to the people protected by the government to be happy, and secure, because of one strange man’s death. The people of one suburb are literally used as a weapon by the government, when Montag hears what the people would have seen on their walls: “ Police

suggest entire population in the Elm Terrace area do as follows: Everyone in every house in every street open a front or rear door or look from the windows. The fugitive cannot escape if everyone in the next minute looks from his house" (138). These commands from the TV are followed religiously because following in this manner entertains the people; they do not know what else to do with their time. The government knows this, and uses the people as a collective weapon. People are so easily manipulated in this world that they are almost better than literal weapons, as long as they do not think, that is.

With the television telling you what to do, how to do it, and when to do it, you not need to think for yourself, or even act with human dignity at all. Mildred realizes this, at least in Montag's mind, at the end, when the bombs come down on the city. Montag thinks, " she saw her own face reflected there, in a mirror instead of a crystal ball, and it was such a wildly empty face, all by itself in the room, touching nothing, starved and eating of itself"(159). Montag imagines that Mildred finally realizes what she had been doing to her life with the television. It has finally come to her that she has touched nothing, and changing nothing in the world. She simply existed, not for or against anything, but simply caught in the system. Mildred's friends lack basic human affection for their own children, as demonstrated when one said, " I put up with them when they come home three days a month... They'd just as soon kick as kiss me" (96). This woman denies her children what today is basic love. This reaction is basically neglect, which causes the kids to in turn be terrible adults and neglect their own kids. If the adults do not stop, the cycle will continue infinitely.

As Fahrenheit 451 shows, the influence of television is a very dangerous tool, if abused. It can be used to make people forget about the world's problems, and remove the human rights of self-thought. TV can turn people into a mass weapon, which is why television is so dangerous. Whenever someone turns on the television, think to yourself: are you watching the TV, or is it watching you?