

Art and fahrenheit 451



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The Art of Burning Books Fahrenheit 451 is a book that at first glance deals with censorship. Censorship has always been an issue with different governments across the world. From the Bible being banned in countries where Christianity is not practiced by the majority to the recent WikiLeaks scandal in which the website has published secret government documents on various international wars and affairs that have been kept from the general public, censorship is practiced in all countries.

Since Ray Bradbury's novel deals with this kind of governmental censorship of knowledge and information, it is easy to interpret that he wrote this book to condemn the government's power over the public. Book burning is one of the most extreme, but also common censorships out there. It is one of the easiest ways to suppress information, but in a way, it is also the most violent. The destruction of someone's ideas and thoughts lead Bradbury to create a group of characters who try to memorize the books' content to keep those ideas alive.

It is a powerful image and a powerful way to fight censorship. This motif is close to Bradbury's heart for two reasons. As a writer, he is completely against editors censoring the creativity and originality of authors as they did during the days he published this novel. The second point is that he lived the aftermaths of WWII and the on-setting Red Scare that occurred within the United States. A climate like that would've made anyone question censorship. There is a sense of oppression in the society that Bradbury builds for Montag and his friends.

Though characters like his wife Mildred do not see it, Clarisse, Faber, and the woman who chooses to be burned alongside her books fight against this social regime. The intelligence and enlightenment they gain from reading makes them understand that the society they live in is oppressive. Montag joins their views as he discovers the knowledge books hold and his world of ignorance and bliss turns into one of survival and change. From this, we can infer (and Bradbury confirms) that an even more important motif in the books is the presence of technology.

While many people have pointed out that Bradbury specifically criticized the government for censorship, it is the technological aspect that he emphasizes. The story does not go into detail about how and why books became banned in the first place, but it is easy to deduce that this society includes many people like Mildred who spend their days in front of large television screens. The brainwashing by the vast entertainment system in this society is not the only troubling thing. The technology isolates people and prevents them from the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and opinions.

The most bizarre part of the whole scenario is that these people choose mindless television viewing instead of trying to learn something or engage in discussions. All signs point to the fact that it was the public who originally chose to stop reading books, therefore labeling them obsolete. The book evokes controversy. Since the political and social motifs are so pronounced in the book, they are discussed by the readers of the book in various different ways. Bradbury has been criticized by some to be criticizing the government, always a big "no-no". Yet he himself insists that it is the technology aspect that he is more worried about, not government suddenly

rounding up all literature and burning it. He talks about the intellectual demise of society, opening up an international conversation about these issues. People perceive things differently - the intent of the author, or artist, does not always coincide with his audience. Yet it shows how versatile the discussion of this piece of work can become. The book has even experienced some of its own bans across the United States, particularly in high schools.

Some students and their parents have spoken out against the mild language used in the book, such as "hell" and "damn." Whether the real offence lies in the important issues is unclear, but people do speak out against the novel. In one instance, a student at Caney Creek High School in Texas complained about the book because "she said she was offended by" the cursing in it and the burning of the Bible." Her father Alton Verm pressed the issue in 2006 claiming that there was no reason for this book to be read because of its use of God's name in vain.

The irony is inescapable, but still, this kind of banning has been implemented by many high schools across the nation. One of the last and most important themes of the book though is hope and rebirth. At the very end, when this mindless society has destroyed itself through nuclear war, government manipulation, lack of education or general knowledge, and complete disregard for the true and meaningful joys of life, hope appears as the hobos with Montag in lead begin their return to the destroyed city. The people who regarded intelligence as the highest value are the ones to survive and begin rebuilding their world with the knowledge they have saved. This shows Bradbury's optimistic outlook on the future even though at first he paints a grim picture. The rebirth of the city is as important as its destruction and

Bradbury feels that books truly hold the answers to everything. It is hard to disagree. The aesthetics of the book lie in the composition of such a futuristic and interesting society that is based on our own, yet is also a world that we would never want to imagine for ourselves.

The book evokes many different emotions for the reader and that is the main point of great literature. Books must relate to people on the basic human principle of “feeling.” Fahrenheit 451 evokes that wonder and excitement that the creation of a new and unknown world brings. We talk about art being self-expression as well as something that communicates to others. For Ray Bradbury, the novel is definitely a reflection of his opinions about the society he lives in, especially because of the role entertainment begins to play during the years he writes out this futuristic scenario.

He puts his doubts, fears, and predictions into the colorful story, but he also writes to warn his generation of what could happen if this new technology of televisions and radios is abused and urges the public to not forget where real knowledge comes from. He is communicating with his audience in a very simple and direct manner while keeping the integrity of the science fiction genre alive. What makes this art though, is not just the expression in the book.

It is regarded as a classic by our modern-day society and appeals to all types of people, young and old. This shows that it truly engages the reader in a powerful way, as great art should. People enjoy the book – whether it’s the easy read, the interesting plot, the completely different world, the topic of books and book burning, and the motifs of censorship and the impact of

technology on humans. It obviously brings joy to its readers otherwise so many people would not read it and discuss it.

Novels engage all the senses through words. Sight is used with the imagination to bring the words to life. Sound is portrayed through dialogue and the bustle of the community. Touch, smell, and taste can all be evoked through brief phrases such as when the woman chooses to burn herself - the reader can just about feel the flames, smell burning flesh, and see her pain. Such powerful imagery draws the reader in and overall, the consensus seems that the book is enjoyable and interesting.

It engages the imagination and Ray Bradbury does a superb job of writing in a way in which the plot and characters are understood with clarity. That is the most important aspect of a novel. Sources: Fahrenheit 451 Background. Grade Saver. 2011. Wrigley Deborah. Parent Files Complaint About Book Assigned as Student Reading. News. October 3, 2006.