

Knowledge is key

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In society, humans live their lives doing many repetitive things.

In fact, the more we do them, the more used to it we get and the less we have to think about it. Technology develops, time speeds up, and things are done with an effortless amount of thought. These specific ways get people so caught up in time that they forget about what it means to act humanely. We become careless with communication, put our relationships on the edge, and live in an ignorant manner. Life goes on and, before we know it, these actions cause us to judge ourselves after doing things we weren't intending to do.

These unnatural actions and feelings are shown in the book Fahrenheit 451. Ray Bradbury shows how the lack of knowledge can cause people to act in an inhumane and impetuous manner through the use of character dialogue, metaphor, and personification. In the beginning of the book, Clarisse conveys to Montag through her dialogue how her discovery of knowledge has led her to know what it means to be humane. It is thought by their society that she is what would be considered “crazy.” All her talk of stories and curiosity has made people suspicious. More importantly, she has Montag reconsidering what it means to act humane.

In a piece of her dialogue, Clarisse says to Montag, “They want to know what I do with my time. I tell them that sometimes I just sit and think” (Bradbury 23). In Clarisse's mind, part of acting in a humane way is thinking. Although others think this is strange, she believes it is a huge part of living. The more Montag speaks with Clarisse, the more he realizes that she isn't the insane one, but the one with the discovery of thinking that makes her

even more humane. Along with the ability to think, she also possesses the knowledge of communicating with others.

Later, she shares her findings by saying, “ I’m antisocial they say. I don’t mix. It’s so strange. I’m very social indeed. It all depends on what you mean by social, doesn’t it? Social to me means talking to you about things like this” (Bradbury 29). In their society, she is judged because of the fact that they are taught how to be social in a different way as compared to face-to-face verbal communication.

Montag realizes this and learns the importance of communicating with other humans. As Clarisse carries on, she explains how many lifestyles involve tv, sports, and rushing place to place without taking our time and thinking. This lack of thinking has caused a push in just doing and not unleashing our curiosity, a big part of human nature and our strive to learn. The knowledge possessed by Clarisse shows how the society’s lack of knowledge has caused a fast-paced, antisocial, unnatural way of living. To further expand upon the idea of inhumanity, the use of metaphors between characters was very critical to show faulty human relationships and feelings.

Bradbury uses the relationship between Mildred and Montag to show how the lack of knowledge can stimulate an absence of communication and love. These factors are vital to our behavior and interactions between others. The marriage of Mildred and Montag shows the constant struggle of holding a strong, trusting relationship and making time for the people in your life. To show this, Bradbury uses the metaphor of a wall that comes between their relationship, that states, “ Well, wasn’t there a wall between him and

Mildred, when you came down to it? Literally not just one wall but, so far, three! And expensive, too!” (Bradbury 44). In this example, Mildred lacks the knowledge of putting her time towards other people in her life. The wall between them represents the lack of a humane, healthy relationship and the blockades that interfere.

They are so used to being around one another that they forget what it means to love one another. With the desire for money and the lack of knowledge concerning humane relationships, they lose the natural ability to verbally communicate and compensate their ideas and feelings with one another. This metaphor shows how these blockades create lifeless, inhumane bonds between ourselves and the other people that are truly a part of us. Not only that, but they cause an error in human emotions. Later on in the book, Montag comes clean with Mildred’s friends and shares his hidden books. As Mildred claims this as nonsense, she explains “ how silly it all was” which shows that she didn’t understand what knowledge Montag possessed.

Montag felt that “ the room was blazing hot, he was all fire, he was all coldness; they sat in the middle of an empty desert” while she forced Montag to read more to prove her point. Then as he continued reading “ his voice went out across the desert, into the whiteness, and around the three sitting women there in the great hot emptiness” (Bradbury 99). This shows how the feelings and emotions from the books help others gain knowledge of real human emotions. In the metaphor, the desert was the empty minds and his voice was the knowledge filling their minds. This sharing of knowledge caused them to cry and feel even more emotion.

It opened up their minds and hearts to their true feelings. Without this knowledge, we forget the emotions we have inside of us, including the capability to love, be sad, and feel anger. These emotionless bonds and feelings are because of the uncharitable words and actions towards others, and the lack of knowledge amongst people. Throughout the book, Bradbury uses Montag's hands to personify how being ignorant can lead to inhumane behavior. While being a fireman, Montag had been so used to starting the fires and burning the books that he lacked knowledge and became impulsive in his actions. Since he had only known that burning books was the right thing to do, he began to do devastating and unnecessary things, such as committing murder.

To capture this, the book personifies, " His hands had done it all, his hand, with a brain of its own, with a conscience and curiosity in each trembling figure, had turned thief" (Bradbury 37). Montag had been so used to doing what society had taught him to do, that he proceeded to carry on with his work. He used his hands as a thoughtless action against humanity. This lack of knowing what he had actually done caused him to set another house ablaze, along with an innocent human being. To us, it is an act of murder, but to them it was an effort to protect society from the " dangers" of books.

Effortless actions prevented Montag from being morally correct, and as things moved on in the book, Montag continued to gain more and more guilt with his thoughtless behavior. He thinks, " So it was the hand that started it all" (Bradbury 41). As Montag realizes his wrong doings, he sees how impetuous actions can cost people their humanity. He knows that because of everything that has happened to him, these inhumane actions will only

deepen and deepen because “ His hands had been infected, and soon it would be his arms” (Bradbury 41). This means that once he had done these things over and over again, it had become very difficult for him to break free from these nasty habits. Something so continuous can cause an influence in our actions and everyday behavior, just like Montag’s job as a fireman has changed how he acted.

Even towards the end of the book, Montag is still expecting himself to continue this immoral focus that seems to be locked into his hands.

Continuing this pattern, “ Montag saw the surprise there and himself glanced to his hands to see what new things they had done. Thinking back later he could never decide whether the hands or Beatty’s reaction to the hands gave him the final push towards murder” (Bradbury 119). Now, not only has his former actions sunk in, but has yet caused him to commit another murder. An inhumane action led by the ignorance of moral behavior. A lack of thought so beyond his control that he has pertained from using his brain to its full potential, and continued his impetuous actions.

In the final analysis, inhumane actions are caused by the lack of knowledge and absence of communication amongst people. We often forget what it means to act humanely and with thought and care towards each other. By doing so, we create a life of thoughtless decisions and occlude our relationships with others. Many of the characters in the book were reeled in by society and became caught up in what they had been used to doing, which in turn was not necessarily the right thing. The knowledge they lacked included: thought, communication, healthy relationships, and self-control; all vital pieces of achieving humanity. Bradbury uses character dialogue,
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metaphor, and personification to show how ignorance leads to inhumane and impetuous actions.