

Mediation: Fahrenheit 451

The novel *Fahrenheit 451* was written by Ray Bradbury in the 1950s, and all of my information about this book is based on a book review by Andreas Kurth.

The book tells the story of Guy Montag, who is a firefighter in the novel. But it is important to know that the firefighters don't put out fires. They search for books and libraries to destroy them with fire at exactly 451 degrees Fahrenheit. The reason why books are forbidden is simple. They get people to think about their behavior and about the world, what could not be tolerated by the government to enforce power over all citizens. Also there is the concept of bread and circuses noticeable. The government provides all citizens with access to drugs, theme parks and video screens, in return it is forbidden for the citizens to own any kind of literature.

The atmosphere is oppressive¹ and tired because people can't speak freely and they can't develop any kind of art or creativity because they aren't allowed to think independent and because nobody is allowed the own this kind of things because it lets the people think independent. In addition, the people are just dazed² by the large amount of free time activities.

At the beginning of the story it seems that Montag fits perfectly into this type of system, but he has hidden some of the stolen books secretly in his house. Through the 17 years old Clarisse, Montag gets in touch with the things which were unknown a long time for him: the art of words, the value of thinking independent and the beauty of the nature. In another fire run, a woman committed suicide because she can't live without her books. This fire run shocks Montag and he wants to discover why the woman wanted to die rather than to burn the books. That is the reason why he has started to read books.

Last but not least there is an important difference between *Fahrenheit 451* and other novels about a dystopian government. In *Fahrenheit 451* is no specific form of government. The other novels, e.g. *1984* by George Orwells, are based on a totalitarian form of government. Moreover Ray Bradburry was really worried about the upcoming television area. He had the fear that books will be replaced by modern television shows. His fears become obvious because the woman in his books wanted to die to have books.

¹ beklemmend

² Other word for blind