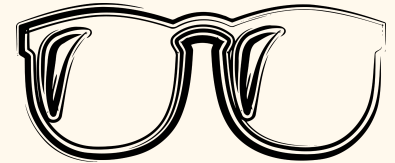


Censorship in Fahrenheit 451

Prose

Author's Intent

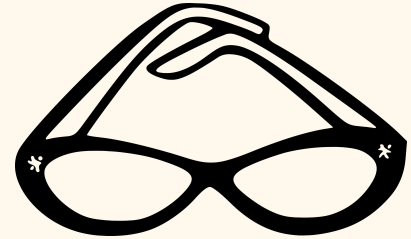
- Sends a very direct message showing readers what can happen if they allow the government to take control of the media
- Expresses concerns that mass media has the ability to suppress free speech to the same extent as a totalitarian regime
- By showing the systematic destruction of books, we are given an extreme depiction of censorship as a cautionary tale
- Through his depiction of the banning of books and the misinformation spread by the government, he attempts to criticize censorship's effects on society



Effect of Censorship on Society

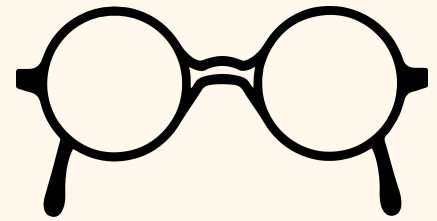
- *Decreased trust between people*
 - Why: By the government's harsh restrictions, people are motivated to report each other to the government
 - How: The old woman who burned herself and her books was reported by her neighbours, Montag was reported by his wife
 - So what: Bad because people have shallow and transactional relationships, less focused on peaceful coexistence and collaborating with our fellow man and more focused on selfishness and self-preservation
- *Self-censorship*
 - Why: The government's enforcement of censorship has strengthened society's aversion to books

- How: The way society does not talk/cannot talk about sensitive or more negative topics
- So what: Bad because people cannot fully express themselves and are therefore sadder
- *Desensitization of violence*
 - Why: Limited intellectual stimulation provided + people are more isolated from each other -> lower significance of a human life
 - How: The teenagers who 'kill each other', the way Mildred has run over animals with no remorse
 - So what: If people are more desensitized to violence, they are more likely to cause harm to others in society in pursuit of selfish thrills and would be more blasé to humans in general
- *The "dumbing down" of society*
 - Why: Media being overly simplified + Government having a heavy hand in what the citizens view have caused a decrease in critical thinking
 - How: The government's view of giving sides to an argument ('Better yet, give him none.')
 - So what: People only know what they are told by the government and thus lack the critical thinking and knowledge to know if what the government wants is truly the best thing for them
- *The apathy of people to emotion*
 - Why: Censorship was put into place to make people happy, and therefore lack the knowledge on how to deal with negative emotions
 - How: 'Come on, let's be cheery, you turn the family on, now.' (Mildred) -> her response to negative emotion is immediately shifting it to another topic, ignoring the problem instead of fixing it, Montag's lack of reaction to the violence occurring in Clarisse's life
 - So what: When people are less open to feeling emotions, their lives become more shallow and their relationships with others less meaningful which can cause a less cohesive society with looser morals and values



Views on Censorship

- *Beatty: Harmony between people (/pos)*
 - 'You must understand that our civilization that we can't have our minorities upset and stirred'. -> shows the ultimate goal of himself, and by extension the government on what censorship is meant to do
 - 'Coloured people don't like Little Black Sambo? Burn it.' -> shows that offensive literature was destroyed in order to keep peace, anyone can potentially offended by a subject so books are better off destroyed lest they incite anger
 - So what: Bad because people have shallow and transactional relationships, less focused on peaceful coexistence and collaborating with our fellow man and more focused on selfishness and self-preservation
- *Faber: Spread lies to the people (/neg)*
 - '(Books) show the pores in the face of life.' -> shows that books are showing an imperfect view of the world, which is against what the government want
- *Clarisse: Makes people shallow (/neg)*
 - Her experience at school also shows how pervasive censorship is in their society
 - 'A lot of water poured down the spout and out the bottom, and them telling us it's wine when it's not' -> shows how the government is using censorship to control and influence thinking to believe and support them
- It is important to note that Montag's development and his view of censorship is influenced by those around him (Beatty, Clarisse, Faber)



Lines

- 'Although the books and people have fallen victims to censorship in *Fahrenheit 451*, luckily, some citizens remain who are willing to sacrifice their lives to ensure that books remain alive.' (Cliffnotes) -> highlighting how society at large is not hopelessly irredeemable

- Beatty says that without books, one person can't be more or less intelligent than another person. He claims this way of living provides people "peace of mind." While many people in the novel are not interested in books, we come to see that the practice of avoiding books does not keep society peaceful. (Sparknotes)
- By eliminating information or multiple perspectives on an issue, people will only know what they are told by their televisions or ear pieces. Beatty says that not having to worry about two sides of a question will make people happier. However, it is clear from the rest of the novel that the citizens of this society are not particularly happy. (Sparknotes)