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Civics
Essay

Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 forces us to envision a world that is so structured and censored firemen exist not to fight fires, for all buildings are fireproof, but instead to burn books.

Fahrenheit 451 is a horrific account of what could happen in an all too close future when society carries "political correctness" to its extreme.

One of the primary characters that one meets in Fahrenheit 451 is a young girl named Clarisse. She has been raised to live the way things once were, in a time where people had true freedom. Because of Clarisse's view of life she is branded as anti-social by her teachers and an outcast by her fellow classmates. Clarisse becomes acquainted with another main character named Guy Montag. Montag is a fireman who deep inside does not want to live a life without having to think. Montag's inner thoughts become more and more a part of him as the book progresses. Montag eventually becomes a freedom fighter of sorts when he joins a group of people who illegally hide and read books. Montag's wife Mildred on the other hand prefers not to have to think, but rather to allow others to think for her to simply say "yes I agree." Mildred is the epitome of laziness. The most complex of all the characters is the fire chief Beatty. Beatty is a man who once was educated but has now turned his back on education and works to destroy it. Beatty knows what is in books but chooses not to care, not to do anything but help the destruction of books.

The loss of the characters freedom to read and to think was not an act that was forced on the people but, embraced by the people. The people loved the idea of not having to think anymore. The desire to confront issues was gradually lost by the people. Since the desire to confront issues was lost people stopped doing anything that was so called "politically incorrect" so as to offend no one. After a while not confronting issues became so natural that anyone who did was considered odd and a threat. This caused laws to be made saying that no one could be different. And these laws were accepted by most. An example of this passive destruction is a comment of Mildred's that said "Oh lets not think about that it's too painful." The people decided that they did not want to think, so they didn't.

As frightful as it may seem this book is all too real. If mankind is not careful about how much "political correctness" affects our lives our world could end up identical to the world portrayed in Fahrenheit 451.

