

Intro to *Fahrenheit 451*

by Ray Bradbury

Fahrenheit 451

- Published in 1953
- Presents a future American society where books are outlawed and firemen burn any house that contains them.



Dystopian Fiction

- Opposite of utopia
- Characteristics:
 - > Poverty and totalitarian governments
 - > Environmental disaster or cataclysmic decline
 - > Oppression of justice and freedom
 - > Often set in the future
 - > Often analogies for real-world issues

Text-to-World Connections

- Dystopian fiction is often an analogy for real-world issues.
 - > McCarthyism
 - > Censorship
 - > Book Burning
 - > Dangers of tv

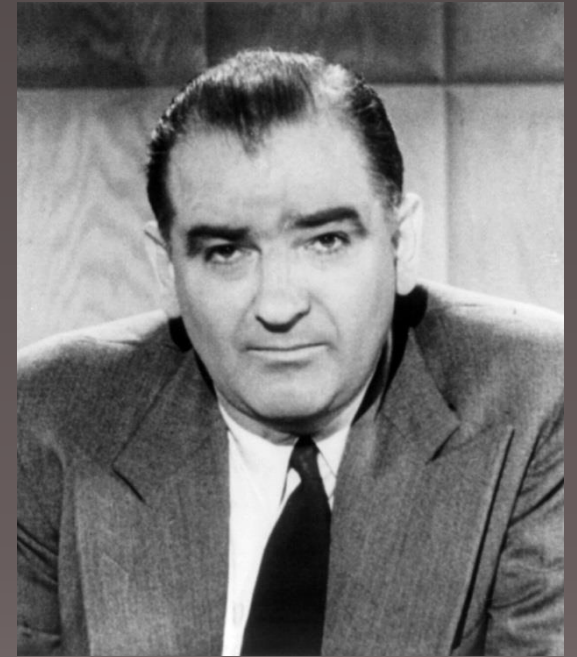
Real-World Issues in F451

- McCarthyism

- > Making unfair allegations in order to restrict dissent or political criticism.

- McCarthy Era, 1950-1956

- > Heightened fears of communist influence & spies in America.
- > Thousands of Americans accused of being communists and became the subject of aggressive investigations.
- > Many lost their jobs and careers were destroyed. Some were imprisoned.



Senator Joseph McCarthy
of Wisconsin,
an anti-communist

Real-World Issues in F451

◉ Censorship

The practice of suppressing or deleting anything considered objectionable.

- > Clean versions of music
- > Internet censorship in China
- > Books banned, edited, and/or challenged
 - *The Scarlet Letter*
 - *Frankenstein*
 - *Of Mice and Men*
 - *Great Gatsby*
 - *Night*



Real-World Issues in F451

● Book Burning

Bradbury was horrified by the Nazi book burning campaigns of WWII. They burned books by Jewish authors or authors considered un-German



Real-World Issues in F451

- Dangers of tv



Television - Roald Dahl

They sit and stare and stare and sit
Until they're hypnotised by it,
Until they're absolutely drunk
With all that shocking ghastly junk.

IT ROTTS THE SENSE IN THE HEAD!

IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!

IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND!

IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND BLIND

Fahrenheit 451
Symbolism

Symbolism in *F451*

- Books (80)
 - > Knowledge
 - > Truth
 - > Independent thinking
 - > Diversity
 - > Culture

Symbolism in *F451*

- Front Porch (60)
 - > Community
 - > The Past

Symbolism in *F451*

- Mechanical Hound (21-22, 24-25)
 - > Dangers of government
 - > Society without a conscience

Fire

○ (Negative)

- > Destruction
- > Erasure (see “Books”)
- > Censorship

○ (Positive)

- > Warmth/Light
- > Renewal/Rebirth

Fire

- “It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened, and *changed*.” (1)
- “Burn all, burn everything. Fire is bright and fire is clean.” (57)
- “We never burned *right*...” (113)
- Bonfire, with Granger (138-140)