
Another Bradbury Prediction Comes True

By Mackenzie Brown

Mindless Television and Distracting Technologies

Technologies have been increasing in importance for a long time now. From tracking the movements of stars to the creation of pocket watches, technology improvements have always been useful. It's when we misuse our technologies that things can get out of hand. In the 1950's and the 1960's, television was used for the first live broadcastings of political conventions and entertainment. From 1959 to 1970, the percentage of households in the United States with a TV went up from 88 percent to 96 percent, and television-watching started to impact American culture. It's commonly known that human beings need connection and interaction. We need to talk, to be listened to, make connections and be a part of our world. Bradbury's characters in Fahrenheit 451 were distracted by their TV

screens that took up entire walls, which is strikingly similar to the way we treat our shows and movies today. Often times, we decide to watch television because it is more entertaining to our short attention spans than other more stimulating options. In doing so, do we turn away from thinking and the threat of forming 'different' opinions, even if it's only for thirty minutes or an hour? The 'seashells' in Bradbury's novel seem a lot like some of today's technologies. Bluetooth, headphones, earsets. Many times, Bradbury's protagonist couldn't begin conversations with his wife due to her 'seashell' earpiece. Phones and other devices have their perks; it's when we never put them down that we miss out on actual connections and opportunities. When talking about 'mindless TV' and distractions from the Internet and games, the first thing that many people think of is likely a child's life, their shows, their lack of outdoor adventures. The thing is, many soaps, game shows,

reruns, and reality TV shows that older people watch are just as thoughtlessly distracting.



Ray Bradbury

Who are the role models of today's children? Who do they look to as they grow up? They haven't seen or known anything other than what the people around them have done. Fahrenheit 451's community ruled out independent thought themselves; their government didn't initially force them to stop having opinions and conform. But even when Guy Montag decides to read, there is an advertisement drowning out his thoughts. Sound familiar?

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