Summer Holiday Reading 2021

Fahrenheit 451

For our reading classes together over the summer holidays, we will be exploring each book in three lessons, with the first offering a general overview, the second delving into the stylistic and narrative elements of the writing and the final lesson offering a closer, more thorough examination of the text itself through the use of close textual analysis and with particular attention paid to literary techniques and structural devices. These lessons are designed to help the students develop new frameworks through which to read and understand literature, equipping them with the vocabulary with which to discuss themes, genre and morals.

*Lesson 1:* **Introduction to *Fahrenheit 451***

In lesson 1 we will focus on discussing the context and history behind the book, thinking about the historical background of book burnings and what they represent. The class will be able to evaluate their own feelings and opinions on the novel through this lens, thinking about why this is a classic. We will discuss the genre of dystopia, thinking about what features of the society in the novel make it dystopian and tying it to events in history. We will discuss the theme of rebellion, considering this through the eyes of the protagonist of the story whose view on the society he lives in directly responds to the acts of resistance he witnesses. We will consider the way in which Montag’s consciousness develops and ask if it is necessary to the novel that it is *books* that are banned in this society, thinking about the irony that lies behind that authorial choice. This lesson is designed to keep the students a firm grasp of the important history behind the story and consider why stories of the repression and dystopia are such an important literary genre.

*Lesson 2:* **Exploring Style and Narrative**

In lesson 2 we will dive further into the novel, thinking about the motifs, characterisation and structure of the plot. At the beginning of the lesson the students will have the chance to discuss and analyse their favourite quotations from the book, writing their own version of these whilst retaining the core message behind them. We will focus on the key motifs of paradoxes, animal imagery and religion, thinking about the way this supports the role of repression and violence in the novel. Finally, we will consider the characterisation in this book, asking ourselves what we can learn from comparing the reactions of different characters to the society they live in. This lesson aims to give the students a solid grounding in the thematic and narrative landscape of the novel, considering how motifs are used to cement a semantic image in the reader’s mind and discovering how violence underpins every piece of description in this novel.