

Massachusetts Letters About Literature 2016
Massachusetts Center for the Book
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Level III Honors Award

Dear Ray Bradbury,

My name is Nick. I live in a nice house and have a great family. We are not poor so I have been blessed to have many different types of technology to choose from when at home. There are plenty of TV's, one for everyone if we wanted. We all have phones, tablets, and laptops to go on when the television gets boring. This is how my family was spending our time. We would watch TV and not talk to each other very much.

This track of constant immersion into technology was getting worse year after year. Each year we would get a bigger TV or the better iPhone or some new piece of technology that would continue to distract us from interacting with the person sitting right next to us. It was Thanksgiving Day at my house this year, dinner wasn't ready yet. All of my cousins were there. Looking around the living room you would expect everyone to be talking because no one has seen each other in months but, every person in the room was looking down at their phones. Fifteen people in one room, with no one talking! What happened to us? Just the year before we had fun playing games and interacting with one another.

This was my sophomore year of high school. I didn't realize it at the time, but we were going down a dark path of diminishing interactions with our own family members. Then my English teacher told me we would be reading *Fahrenheit 451*. I thought it was just another one of those school books that bore you to death. But it wasn't, your book opened my eyes to what I couldn't see before. Society was engulfed in technology, there were absolutely no human interactions between normal citizens. In the novel, Guy Montag has a wife who he barely communicates with, she never leaves her house, and doesn't have any real friends. This radical society seemed so plausible to me given enough time. Every time I would go to BestBuy or another television selling store I would see the TV's getting bigger and bigger. I directly related the interactive TV's the size of walls from the books to this. Anyone who has an iPhone knows just with a simple command to your phone you can pull up anything from the Internet.

Fahrenheit 451 made me realize that the society shown was where we were headed, maybe not in the near future, but in the future it is a possibility. This hit me hard, I knew there was nothing I could do about the technological side. Technological advances make life easier which is not a bad thing. Lack of human interactions, face to face connections however, are what is plaguing our society. . After finishing the book I came to realize I can do something about it. I stopped watching so much TV. When my family comes home after school or work, I put down my phone to talk to them about what is going on. These types of connections cannot be made through the Internet. The emotion, facial expressions, and mood given off when you ask someone how their day was is lost in technology.

Although I still may have the latest iPhones and other pieces of technology that can distract me from everything else in the world, I have come to appreciate face to face interactions. The connections that I have made from putting down my phone to just say a few words to anyone I can has made the whole way I think about technology change. Reading your book has changed me in that I use technology only to a certain extent and value the things computers cannot do.

Sincerely,

Nick

Nick
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