



Book title

Marionettes, Inc.

Author

Ray Bradbury



Bibliographic information

Author: Ray Bradbury
Country: United States
Language: English
Genre: Science fiction short stories
Publisher: Doubleday & Company
Publication date: 1951
Media type: Print (Hardback)
Pages: 256
ISBN: 0-553-23096-4

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

- <http://www.angelfire.com/or/grace/marionettes.html>

Theme

A conflict between man and machine and depicts the human dependence on technology.



Short summary

The creation of an android look-alike allows Braling to escape from his wife and indulge in pleasures otherwise denied him - specifically, a trip to Rio. While this may seem ideal, what this doesn't allow is a mature handling of the situation, one where responsibility is claimed instead of shunted to the most convenient piece of technology available. Having handed over that responsibility to his marionette, Braling is horrified when the marionette wants complete responsibility - actually loving his wife and wanting to take care of her. The marionettes in the story are able to develop feelings and to imagine a world beyond their servitude.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

1. appropriate for the target group of readers
2. reflects readers' interests
3. the recommendation and the report emerged from the survey results
4. highly motivational

What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

Bradbury uses "Marionettes, Inc.," as a metaphor to describe how if society is not careful technology will overtake the minds of humans, and that possibly once technology advances far enough along, gain superiority over humans. Explain that as technology develops and consumes the minds of its users, it may control, quite literally, human lives.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

The story answers to a questions such are:

1. In society where everyone becomes caught up with the media and other forms of new entertainment, do people realize that they are being consumed by it before it is too late?
2. Do people control the technology or is it the other way around?
3. By investing in technology do we increase our freedom, and therefore our life satisfaction? People are drawn to using entertainment technology to pursue happiness, and the more they use it, the more they get a sense of short term happiness.



4. Bradbury addresses this issue because of his concern that humans focus much more on amusements than they should. Surprisingly, Bradbury's short story "Marionettes, Inc." (as well as Fahrenheit 451) written 60 years ago, can still be applied to the current society. Facebook, television shows, movies, and video games, among many other forms of entertainment technology make people lose focus on what is really important in life. Bradbury and other writers analyze the trends in society, and it is important to read their works to understand the issues of the past to solve the issues of present.

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

The 1950s were bustling with new types of technology, and everyone was eager to try them out. Movies, television shows, and advertisements captured the attention of society. It was

an exciting time to live; however there were some critics, such as Ray Bradbury, that believed that the current trend was going to lead to the superiority of machines over humans. Specifically, Bradbury addresses this argument in his 1951 compilation of short stories entitled, *The Illustrated Man*. In this compilation, Bradbury addresses significant social issues, such as racism, selfishness, and capitalism. Among these, was his concern about the overuse of entertainment technology. In "Marionettes, Inc.," Bradbury directly addresses how technology controls the lives of its enthusiasts; specifically critiques entertainment technology and how it consumed the minds of Americans in the 1950s. Also critiques the trend in society that if everyone becomes caught up with the media and other forms of new entertainment, they will not realize that they are being consumed by it until it is too late.

Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

For Bradbury, the idea that self-centred desires are the base of human unhappiness connects to his belief that accepting your own limitations and enthusiastically pursuing the everyday joys in your life is always the right choice. The idea that dependence on technology is a direct route to a dehumanised society. Ray Bradbury was acutely aware that human society can easily become oppressive and regimented, and he saw censorship by the government as the first step towards totalitarianism.

The loss of humanity due to an unquestioning dependence on technology is the downfall for many Bradbury characters



METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

"Marionettes, Inc.", Ray Bradbury

Description of educational activity

Duration: 1 x 45 minutes

Students' age: 15-19

Class organization: group work

Lesson aims:

The aim of the lesson is to motivate students to read in a way that reading comprehension enables them to understand the relationship between characters - married partners, humans and robots; reflection on the issues of responsibility to the other, the question of making decisions and the consequences of the decisions themselves, the willingness to face the possibility or the inability to make the wishes and dreams come true.

The other goal is to enable Ss to develop their ability to design and develop a plot in a story based on reading the fragments.

Ss will gain the knowledge and understanding of a famous 20th century writer and his short-story opus from the SF area from the mid-20th century.

Handouts:

- excerpts
- situation description

Activities:

1. Students individually consider the issues and expose their views in public:

- what is their dream or desire



- what would they be willing to do to make that dream or desire come true ?

2. Ss work in groups of 4-5 .

Ss read the **1st excerpt**:

From the beginning of the story

till the sentences:

"...She won't know I'm gone. I'll be back in a month and no one the wiser, except you."

Short summary of the excerpt:

From the conversation between two friends Smith and Brailing, they find out about their lives. They find that Brailing married 10 years ago almost against his will because of family relations. By choosing a marriage instead of traveling to Rio his life dream remains unfulfilled. Now, after 10 years of marriage, he plans to go to Rio without his wife, and she will not even notice that him not being home for a month. The reading ends when Brailing is about to reveal how he is going to do it.

After having read the excerpt, the students have to guess how Brailing will disappear for a month without his wife noticing his absence.

Ss in groups publicly present their plot versions

3. Students read the 2nd excerpt from the story from the sentence:

"Hello, Brailing," he said.

till the sentence

"... From \$7,600 to our \$15,000 de luxe model..."



Reading it they reveal the original plan of the plot.

- they compare the actual plot with their solutions.

- find "FOR" and "AGAINST" arguments for such a decision by the main character, focusing on different aspects - ethical, humane, emotional, etc.

4. Students read the 3rd excerpt from the sentence:

...“Well, it’s the cellar box for you, B-Two.”

till the sentence

...“Don’t run!”

That is the moment when B2 defends his right to a full life and denies obedience to B1.

Students in the groups guess how the potential problem between B1 and B2 will be solved.

5. After presenting their final solutions to this problem, the students get the final excerpt to read and find the actual development of the story.

From the sentence

„Brailing Two said, “I’m going to put you in the box, lock it, and lose the key. “

till the end of the story.

6. We divide the students into 3 groups representing 3 characters: Brailing 1, Brailing 2 and wife of B1. Within the group, they elaborate how their character will expose and defend their right to freedom of choice and decision.



For example:

B1 - his right to a fulfilling his dream

B2 - his right to the full life of a human being

The wife - her right to a life in marriage, love, sharing, loyalty ...

7. Conclusion - Discussion:

- Does the aim justify the means?
- How far does personal freedom go?
- Making decisions - responsibility
- Confronting the consequences of their decisions

Evaluation methods :

During the lesson, the students will be very active in guessing and designing as well as presenting their plots.

The Role of Teachers - monitoring the work of students, their interaction, reading for details, making notes and participating in collective activities.

In order to evaluate the effective effects of previous activities on the students, they are asked to make a short presentation, in no more than 5 minutes, in which to make a profound analysis of the main characters and their relationships

The Impact of RSP Reading Activity:

Practices that support students's choice, collaboration, and joint learning outcomes control can be associated with self-addressed reading interest and engaging reading behavior.

Teachers can organize reading lessons to develop self-sufficiency, competence and engagement in teens.



Connection to curriculum

Grade: 3rd

Curriculum:

Civic education - responsible behaviour, empathy development, understanding of gender relations, (dis) ability to make decisions, dealing with the consequences of their own decisions

World Literature - 20st SF- Reading and Evaluation

History - the development of modern technologies

Knowledge:

- Understand relationships in fictional SF situations and compare them with real life situations
- Develop fluent reading
- Improve understanding by reading
- Organize information in a certain way

Skills:

- Use handouts incentives
- Guess
- Compare and contrast
- Summarize
- Work effectively in groups, cooperate

Competencies:

- Establishing the link between SF culture and our own
- Ability to visualize the read material
- Follow the instructions and devise the plot
- Evaluate decisions and reflect on the consequences of these
- Support and justify attitudes

Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Ray Bradbury

"Marionettes, Inc."

<http://www.angelfire.com/or/grace/marionettes.html>

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Information and methodology on
„Singer in the Night“ (novel)

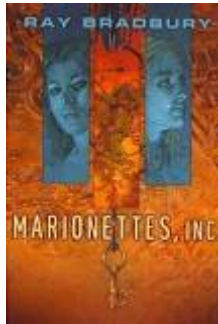


Editor:

ISBN:

Number of pages:

Year of issue: 1949



Results

Students will be able to:

- Understand the task by reading the guidelines.
- design a plot,
- show different views,
- link and design stories of different characters,
- assess the relationship between characters,
- justify their reactions and decisions,
- to awaken the subtleties of certain decisions
- guess,
- interpret.

Recommendations

Teaching method and the text can help increase students' interest in reading. This text encourages awareness of human relationships and helper robots.

The teacher monitors students to ensure they work effectively.

A short story can be adjusted to the language level of the group - it may be shorter - by cutting less important phrases related to descriptions or extending to additional fragments of the same short story. Students can be offered a glossary of difficult words.