

## **POWERPOINT PRESENTATION # 8** (For Eighth Grade)

### **RAY BRADBURY: AMERICA'S FICTIONEER**

Bradbury is best known for highly imaginative science-fiction stories and novels that blend social criticism with an awareness of the dangers of runaway technology. Ray Bradbury was among the first authors to combine the concepts of science fiction with a sophisticated prose style. Often described as economical yet poetic, Bradbury's fiction conveys a vivid sense of place in which everyday events are transformed into unusual, sometimes sinister situations

The author of more than thirty books, Ray Bradbury is one of the most celebrated fiction writers of our time. Among his best-known works are FAHRENHEIT 451, THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, DANDELION WINE, and SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES. He has written for the theater and the cinema, including the screenplay for John Huston's classic film adaptation of MOBY DICK, and was nominated for an Academy Award.

He adapted sixty-five of his stories for television's (USA Network's) *The Ray Bradbury Theater* during the 1980s, and won an Emmy for his teleplay of *The Halloween Tree*. In 2000, he was honored by the National Book Foundation with a medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Illinois, to a Swedish immigrant mother and a father who was a power and telephone lineman. His paternal grandfather and great-grandfather were newspaper publishers.

Bradbury was a reader and writer throughout his youth, spending much time in libraries. He attributes his lifelong habit of writing every day to an incident in 1932 when a carnival entertainer, Mr. Electrico, touched him with an electrified sword, made his hair stand on end, and shouted, "*Live forever!*"

Bradbury lived in Tucson, Arizona, for a short while, but eventually settled in Los Angeles in 1934, when Ray was thirteen.

After High School Bradbury sold newspapers. He continued to educate himself at the local library, and having been influenced by science fiction heroes like Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers, he began to publish science fiction stories in fanzines in 1938.

Launching his own fanzine in 1939, titled *Futura Fantasia*. Bradbury's first paid piece was for the pulp magazine *Super Science Stories* in 1941, for which he earned \$15. He became a full-time

writer by the end of 1942. His first book, *Dark Carnival*, a collection of short works, was published in 1947.

Ray Bradbury married Marguerite McClure (1922–2003) in 1947, and they had four daughters.

A chance encounter in a Los Angeles bookstore with the British critic/writer Christopher Isherwood gave Bradbury the opportunity to put *The Martian Chronicles* into the hands of a respected critic. Isherwood's glowing review followed and substantially boosted Bradbury's career.

### **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES**

His reputation as a leading writer of science fiction was established with the publication of *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*, a series of short stories which describe the first attempts of Earth people to colonize Mars. As much a fable and cautionary tale as science fiction, *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES* reflects some of the prevailing anxieties of America in the early atomic age of the 1950s: the fear of nuclear war, the longing for a simpler life, reactions against racism and censorship, and fear of foreign political powers.

### **FAHRENHEIT 451**

Another of Bradbury's best-known works, *FAHRENHEIT 451*, developed out of a series of five short stories which Bradbury wrote in the early 1950s. *FAHRENHEIT 451* --- the temperature at which book paper burns --- is set in a future society where the written word is forbidden, and firemen are utilized for burning books and putting out the fires.

### **CRITIQUE**

Bradbury's best work, however, has arguably been in the area of the short story. And these stories are closer to fantasy than science fiction --- and closer to reality than fantasy.

While Bradbury's popularity is acknowledged even by his detractors, many critics find the reasons for his success difficult to pinpoint. Some believe that the tension Bradbury creates between fantasy and reality is central to his ability to convey his visions and interests to his readers. Peter Stoler asserted that Bradbury's reputation rests on his "chillingly understated stories about a familiar world where it is always a few minutes before midnight on Halloween, and where the unspeakable and unthinkable become commonplace."

Mary Ross proposed that "Perhaps the special quality of [Bradbury's] fantasy lies in the fact that people to whom amazing things happen are often so simply, often touchingly, like ourselves." In

a genre in which futurism and the fantastic are usually synonymous, Bradbury stands out for his celebration of the future in realistic terms and his exploration of conventional values and ideas

As one of the first science fiction writers to convey his themes through a refined prose style replete with subtlety and humanistic analogies, Bradbury has helped make science fiction a more respected and mainstream literary genre and is widely admired by the literary establishment.

As you prepare to read Bradbury, expect to enter a world of childish awe, futuristic wonder, and other worldly terror, all courtesy of America's Fictioneer.

**The Works of Ray Bradbury include the following :**

- Novels

(1950) The Martian Chronicles

(1953) Fahrenheit 451

(1957) Dandelion Wine

(1962) Something Wicked This Way Comes

(1972) The Halloween Tree

(2006) Farewell Summer

- Short story collections

(1947) Dark Carnival

(1951) The Illustrated Man

(1955) The October Country

(1962) R is for Rocket

(1962) The Small Assassin

(1969) I Sing The Body Electric

(1983) A Memory of Murder

(1996) Quicker Than The Eye

(2005) A Sound of Thunder

- Plays
  - (1948) The Meadow
  - (1966) The Pedestrian
  - (1972) The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit
  - (1975) Pillar of Fire and Other Plays
  - (1988) Falling Upward
  - (1953) It Came from Outer Space

## REFERENCES

- Teenreads\_com -- Author Profile Ray Bradbury.mht
- Ray Bradbury - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.mht

*" Anything you dream is fiction and anything you accomplish is science. The whole history of mankind is nothing but science fiction." -Ray Bradbury*