

Rambos of the road a response essay

Countries, United States



This essay deals with American road manners and how they have change dover time. The writer remembers a time in his youth when Americans were “ a self-reliant, civil people tooling around in family cruisers.” He laments the aggression and lack of kindness and patience that many drivers now display and the title of the essay refers mockingly to the series of Rambo films, full of extreme and macho violence – which seems to be influencing the matter of driving etiquette. The title of the essay – ‘ Rambos of the Road’ – is memorable because it alliterates.

The author gives us various examples of the anger and lack of consideration that he has seen on American roads – and these passage are largely descriptive. The most memorable scene is an incident he describes at the Manhattan end of the Lincoln Tunnel. Not only is it a striking example of what we now call road rage, it has a slightly comic feel to it because the actions of the irate “ Wall Street type” who rams the bus that is blocking his way is absolutely futile – it achieves absolutely nothing and, therefore, becomes absurd.

The writer is nostalgic for th past when American driving etiquette was better: “ it seemed to me that people were at their finest and most civilized when in their cars. They seemed so orderly and considerate, so reasonable.” He therefore identifies road rage as a way in which Americans have changed and admits that it is a phenomenon that affects us all: “ in our cars we all become a little crazy.” The essay ends on a very serious note, claiming that America’s civilization is devalued by the bullies of the roads:

They represent an America that derides the values of decency and good

manners, then roan the highways riding shotgun and shrieking freedom. By allowing this to happen, the rest of us approve.