

The pedestrian essay sample

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



This essay will focus on the recent short story we read in class, "The Pedestrian" written by author Ray Bradbury. I will aim to examine various areas, but mainly the conflict between the individual protagonist, Leonard Mead, and the antagonist of society in general. Furthermore, I will look over various techniques used by the author and refer to aspects such as plot, characterisation, setting and language.

This short story commences with the main character, the individual, Leonard Mead. Mead extracted in this story as a non-conformist, went out for a walk every night. However, the night ended rather strangely resulting in an arrest by the police. The police imprisoned him for existing as a non-conformist and took him to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies.

Leonard Mead, previously an author has no intention to be a non-conformist, he simply walks because he enjoys it. He is the Protagonist, where his opponent is society. Mead lives on his own, as he is not married and enjoys walking.

For example, Ray Bradbury comments that:-

" Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house".

This quote helps us to emphasise the idea that Leonard Mead is an isolated character, leading a very different life from the rest of society, by walking out at night for the last ten years.

Author, Ray Bradbury elucidates the fact that Leonard Mead was not a villainous man by quoting:-

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“ For long ago he wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night, because the dog in intermittent squads would parallel his journey with barkings if he wore hard heels, and lights might click on and faces appear and an entire street be startled by the passing of a lone figure, himself, in the early November evening”.

This quote highlights the fact that this character was a sympathetic and considerate person, who was out not to harm anyone. Yet, it also shows his unwillingness to be seen by others.

However, the first sign of conflict in this story approaches us. The following quote shows how critical Mead was towards the conformists and television.

For example:

“ Whats up tonight, on channel four, channel seven and channel nine?”

Leonard Mead talked to the houses because he felt that he was more likely to get a response from them than the people inside. This proved society had lost the ability to communicate. This emphasises how critical Mead was towards people, and how television has taken over their life. He believes people in this city, of America have lost their ability to communicate or take part in different activities.

Furthermore, the next sign of conflict which Ray Bradbury makes references to are the various images which refer to death and decay. This short story was set in a city, in America, during the dark and deteriorated winter. The author continues this idea of death and decay by forming a number of

images with metaphors in a row: such as “ graveyards” and “ scarab-beetles”. For example, this quote refers to images relating to graveyards:

“ It was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the faintest glimmers of fire light appeared in flickers behind the windows”.

The quote mentioned above makes use of an extended metaphor, as it lists a number of metaphors used to describe the images of death and decay, which in this case is the graveyard. The purpose of this technique is to highlight, and show what the author is trying to tell the reader. Another good metaphor: “ scarab-beetles” was also exploited by the author. This metaphor emphasised the overall shape of vehicles and the movements. For instance: cars appeared like beetles, which kept close together, and scurried around.

By contrast, the third sign of conflict occurs when Mead was detained by the police under suspicion for questioning. The police ask him various questions and are shocked that he leads a different life. The police car questions Leonard Mead with suspicion, for example:

“ No profession’, said the police car in a metallic whisper”.

This showed that the profession which Mead thought he had (writer) was now non-existent in the year, 2053 A. D.

Perhaps, the main sign of conflict was the arrest of Mead, and the significance of the police car. Mead’s eventual arrest was for being a non-conformist and leading a different life. He was taken to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies. This was a centre where

scientists carried out tests on patients, as an attempt to change the individuals from non-conformists to conformists. In other words, for people who communicated or lived life as in the past. The police force in 2053 had been shortened from three cars to one, due to a decrease in crime rates, resulting from last years elections. The internal structure of the police car required no human form. The police cars totally comprised of advanced computer systems, allowing the car to communicate with people electronically. The inside of this car was like a little cell, or a little black jail with bars. The author comments the inside of the car as:

“ It smelled of riveted steel”.

“ It smelled of harsh antiseptic”.

“ It smelled too clean and hard metallic”.

Ray Bradbury makes use of repetition in order to emphasise the fact the car smelled of assorted scents. The assorted scents within the car were important, because, it was unpleasant, clinical and did not really have a scent to identify it with.

In addition, the ending of this story indicated the last sign of conflict. I found the ending of this story pessimistic, as people should have the right to take a walk, after all no harm is being caused. I consider society to have won this conflict between the individual and society.

In conclusion, the short story; “ The Pedestrian”, written by Ray Bradbury, allows the reader to infest upon the great detail of how living life in the year

2053 AD changes dramatically. The author makes immense use of various techniques such as similes, metaphors and repetition to address a point to the audience, the readers. Personally, I feel the message which Ray Bradbury tries to direct towards the reader is simply a warning that if society continues the way it is going, the results portrayed in this story could soon become reality. Therefore, Ray Bradbury tries to encourage the reader to change their way of life.