

‘ T H E P E D E S T R I A N ’
B y R a y B r a d b u r y

“The Pedestrian” was written by Ray Bradbury. He offers a very disturbing image of the future in which the story is set.

The story begins on a cold November night – “there was a good crystal frost in the air.” Leonard Mead goes out for a walk as he had done for many years. As he walks by the “tomb like buildings” he mocks the people inside; “what’s up tonight on channel four, channel seven, channel nine?” Ray Bradbury seems to imply that in the future people didn’t do anything besides sitting in watching television.

Mr. Mead claims that in all the years he has been out walking he has never seen anyone else. However this night was an exception. Mead is approached by a police car, the only one left in the city. The car has no driver and speaks in a “metallic” voice. The car doesn’t understand why Mr. Mead is out walking. Mr. Mead explains that he is just out walking to see. In the end the car takes Mr. Mead to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies for “just walking.”

Ray Bradbury employs several literary techniques to express his pessimistic vision of the future. The title, for example, is significant. The title ‘The Pedestrian’ sounds harmless and innocent however the story is very sinister. The next technique which is very significant is the impact the first sentence has on the reader. The first two sentences are long and both have an inverted word order. They begin with a verb and what is most important is that you have to wait until the end before you meet Mr. Mead.

Ray Bradbury’s characterisation of Mr. Mead is very effective. It shows us how Mead is alone “he was alone in this world of AD 2052” You are told how Mr. Mead is different from the rest of society. Society is philistine which Mead is an author. Leonard Mead is a character who has a sense of humour. This in ties with the next major technique; the imagery associated with death: “tomb like buildings.” Ray Bradbury has an excellent descriptive of the activities of people; nothing. The good points if these techniques are that it arouses the reader’s interest. People find it very interesting how in the future “nobody has no time” to do anything. And they wonder if this would happen. “The city of three million” is a ghost town and is a gradual revelation of a sinister society.

The police car is described as having human qualities by Ray Bradbury: “a metallic voice called to him.” He also says that the car sits and has a “radio throat” Later the reader get a surprise by finding out that nobody is actually in the car. The conversation between Mead and the car is significant because you, the reader, finds out what society really is like and how “just walking” is a crime. Mr. Mead

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mocks himself to calm the situation however this doesn't work. "I protest" Mead says. He is protesting not against his foul treatment by the police but to the whole society.

To finish this section off well there is an effective description of the back of the car. Ray Bradbury describes as the back of the car as a cell which smells of "rusty steel and harsh antiseptic"

Ray Bradbury's techniques used in 'The Pedestrian' are excellent. It creates tension and he has a very convincing character.