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Pushed Outside:

Ostracism and Censorship in Ray Bradbury's "The Pedestrian"

Ray Bradbury shows his skepticism of technology and "progress" in "The Pedestrian." In this story, a popular pastime is viewed as regressive, outdated, and abnormal. He does not have a viewing screen in his house, which is expected of the members of this society. His behavior proposes an alternative activity that the government does not approve of, and this threatens their monopoly on control. Mr. Mead's behavior is deemed threatening even though it is not hurting anyone—the powers in charge see his determination to walk every night as abnormal behavior and use a number of techniques to ostracize him from society at large, which parallels social pressure that we often see today for those not involved in many technologies.

The act of ostracizing someone who is different than the rest of the group is a common reaction of a society. In "The Pedestrian," once the police car has stopped Mr. Mead, a conversation begins about why he is out walking. The car asks ". . .you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?" "No," responds Mr. Mead. The response then comes, "'No?' There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation" (2). This

**Commented [KW1]:** Always use the author's name and the title of the work in your introduction.  
•Don't start with "In this story" even if the title/author are in your essay title.

**Commented [KW2]:** Put your thesis—main point or answer to the question you've been asked—at the end of your first paragraph.  
•Thesis=answer to question or your argument about what's being said between the lines.  
•Use wording that connects it to the question you're answering.

**Commented [KW3]:** Begin each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence.

**Commented [KW4]:** Use evidence to support your points; with literature or a response to a reading, use something specific from the work.  
•Make sure to cite correctly.  
•Remember, in MLA you need Author and Location  
•If you're only writing about one source, you will only need location in your in-text citations once you've given the author's name and the title in your introduction. However, it is good form to use the author's name here and there, and the title now and then as appropriate.

quiet subtle response is an indictment of his lack of a screen. Much like many people's non-verbal responses when a person admits that they don't use social media or other connected devices, this car represents an unspoken accusation of disapproval and an implicit message of otherness or ostracizing.

As he is taken away in the police car, we notice another detail that indicates his ostracism. The city is described as "an entire city of houses that were dark," yet, as the car passes his house, the narrator tells us that "one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness. 'That's *my* house,' said Leonard Mead" (emphasis original 3). His lit up house is symbolic of his difference from the rest of society. He is very easily identified as someone who is different. In the same way, many of today's jokes and cultural references are linked to social media, and anyone not in that loop is seen in the dark, therefore creating another layer of ostracism.

In the end, Bradbury's story, written in 1951, reflects some of the aspects of our modern society. Those who participate in media through constantly consuming it create a society that has its own rules and insider knowledge, leaving those who don't on the outside. This is no new phenomenon, yet as technology becomes more prolific, it holds truths for us to be aware of. While most of us still walk down the street freely, we have created situations in which people have been arrested for simply doing that very thing because of expectations of what they should or should not be doing. To create a place

**Commented [KW5]:** After you give a quote, explain what it shows in terms of your main point.

- How is this an example of that?
- How does it relate to the wider point you brought up in your introduction?

**Commented [KW6]:** Topic sentence

**Commented [KW7]:** Evidence

Note that I added the words "emphasis original" in the in-text citation to note that those italics in the quote were in the original story. If you change something in a quote, remember that there are ways to indicate that.

**Commented [KLW8]:** These last paragraphs here are Interpretation of the quote and connection to the main point.

**Commented [KW9]:** Remember that your conclusion should not just restate what you said.

- What does it all add up to?
- How does it come together to show us something deeper about that point you began with?
- Why is that important?

Don't introduce new points in the conclusion. This is just where you wrap it up and put it in context of the big picture: The big so what?

where if someone acts differently, without breaking the law, becomes a suspicious offence, is to limit our humanity and society, as well as progress itself. The problem with Mr. Mead's walking is not the walking, but his refusal to join the crowd. The crowd (or mob mentality) creates a more controllable situation for power. When we see an action as normal and begin to think that everyone should do it, then it is time to question whether or not we actually hold on to the ideals of freedom we constantly proclaim and simultaneously remind ourselves that the freedom not to do things is just as important as the freedom to do them.

Work Cited

Bradbury, Ray. "The Pedestrian." *Riverside Local Schools*. Accessed 24 Jan. 2017. <http://www.riversidelocalschools.com/Downloads/pedestrian%20short%20story.pdf>

**Commented [KW10]:** Always provide your Work Cited page. Notice here its *work* not *works* because we have only one source.

All sources should be alphabetized by the first thing in the citation, and they should be formatted with a [hanging indent](#).

**Commented [KW11]:** In order to find the website's name, I had to downstream in the original URL for the story—delete everything after the .com, .gov, .net, etc. That took me to the home page for this website.

**Commented [KW12]:** If there's not an upload date, give the date you accessed it.

**Commented [KW13]:** Notice I've also removed the hyperlink. If you're turning in your paper in print, make sure you do that. If you're turning things in online, you should leave it linked.