

Reading responses 2017

The Pedestrian by Ray Bradbury

In this short story, 'The Pedestrian' by author Ray Bradbury, I was hooked in a bad way because I see the same outcome as him for the future of humanity by all getting shut in a house watching shit on TV while you're working robot is doing everything for you. Mr. Bradbury is trying to show how life of the 21st century is all getting brainwashed into doing the same thing every night for the rest of their life, by government control and fitting into society.

Ray Bradbury wrote 'The pedestrian' in 1953 and wrote about his predicament of the year 2052, so 99 years in the future for him. At the start of the 1950s was when TV was just made, and Mr. Bradbury knew straight away that these TVs will kill humanity and electrical stuff will take over the world. "you have a viewing screen in your house to see with? NO." Mr. Bradbury is showing us that not everyone is going to conform to government control and you can't go get the wrong idea about people's view of not having a TV to watch every night, thinking that the guy is extremely weird and put him into a "psychiatric center for research on regressive tendencies." When Mr. Mead could be homeless and have no money like the people who live on the streets of Hollywood that can't even afford enough money for food and water. This can relate to the movie Wall-E and how they grow up by electrical equipment, not having to walk anywhere and are constantly looking at a computer screen. I feel that the people of the 21st century are getting sucked into following the line (like sheep in a paddock, getting chased by 1 dog that controls them all) of buying all this electrical equipment so when you wake up all you have to do is put some bread in a toaster and then 'BANG'! Two minutes later you have toast. Before we know we will have robots running around for us making our toast so we can sleep an extra 10 minutes because the day before must have been so hard doing shit all on the fucking couch! This short story made me realize that life isn't always about sitting in front of a computer screen for endless hours getting fat when you could be out in the world doing beautiful, exhilarating adventures with family and friends. This has motivated me to get out surfing and enjoying every single moment of it and spending as much time with my family as possible, as I can't see them much living away from them.

To be seen as normal you must fit into society, but to be able to fit into society you must act normal and do the exact same as everyone else, like watch TV at night and talking to people through texting. "Have you done this often? Many times for years. Says Mr. Mead." Mr. Bradbury is showing us that in the year of 2052 everyone is watching TV while Mr. Mead wants to be a human and walk around getting fresh air, like a goose not flying in his colony and flying by himself. This can relate to the movie Project X The movie is about 3 teens who are trying to fit into society by throwing the biggest party of the year and trashing their parents house just to be accepted by the 'cool kids'. This is how far people will go to fit into society. Mr. Bradbury may have not wrote about teen parties but for parents and teens growing up in the 21st century this is how they have to fit into society by watching TV programmes and making sure they are up with

the latest seasons. I feel life of the 21 century is not all about sports now, it's about "8:30 pm? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off stage?" This is how young children are now brought up by playing on their iPad, watching 'frozen' a kid's movie about princesses running around outside getting fresh air into their lungs and not an electronic item in sight. While the young girls watching this movie don't go into their backyard to play around because their parents spent all the money on the iPad (\$1,299.00) instead of a small play ground (\$619.00). Kid's need to learn about life by getting out into the world and experiencing it for himself, instead of there parents letting them sit in their room for 24 hours a day. Parents can't punish the kids because 'sending them to their room' because that's where the stupid kid already is.

In conclusion I feel 'the pedestrian' is a powerful and awaking short story that kids need to read to get them motivated enough to get them out of the square box and into the real world because life is short and before they know, they will be stuck in a rest home watching TV with the volume right up just to hear a funny joke. While the kids of the 22 century are doing the exact same as what their great grandparents were doing.

The matrix's reading response

the matrix's film, by the Wachowski brothers was filmed in the year of 1999 and shows a storyline based on dystopia. My overall response is that I am amazed at how they showed a normal looking lifestyle in a computer system when at the start of the movie they looked like they were living like us by going to work, watching TV but we're being watched by surveillance and force by government control just like us in the 21st century.

For my first response i'll be talking about **Government control and how the government are super controlling and are allowed to do anything they want to their city** (video game). Government control means, a group of politics having authorizations over the actions of people, bosses and pretty much have the city/world in the palm of their hands. For example, Neo is being watched by the agents when they come into his work and rip him out of his work site and place him into a boring square box and they interview him and force answers out of him about the matrix's and what has happened to him lately. When Neo doesn't answer the questions the agents start to get angry and start controlling him by punching him and then somehow making his lips stick together meaning he can't talk, and placing a tracking device into his bellybutton. But then Neo wakes up in his bed thinking what just happened was a dream, this is due to the agents running the game world and can make anything happen. This can all relate to North Korea and how their leaders have full control of the country by only allowing 1 TV channel and NO internet to the whole country. The reason why the leaders do this is so they can have everyone like them and able to control the people of North Korea. I feel that government control to this extent is horrible as it is shutting people in their houses or work site and not letting them see the world through their own eyes just like Nelson Mandela who was forced into prison for 27 years by white people because he was black. Then in 1994, Nelson Mandela was the first ever black president of south Africa. This can relate to Neo as he was just an average person but knew something wasn't right and went through some trouble to get the real stuff out and later in the movie to over power the agents and beat them.

For my second response i'll be talking about surveillance and how Neo is being watched everywhere by the agents, making sure that he is doing what he should be doing. Surveillance is being watched by government, high ranked people, through phones, drones and they are able to see our movement and can read our text and what not. In the movie the matrix, Neo is being watched by two groups, the agents who are the bad ones, and morpheus who is the good person. When everything weird started to happen to Neo, the agents ripped him out of the office and place him in a square box with surveillance cameras filling the room so everything he says and do will be recorded. The agents then placed a tracking device into his belly button, which means they would be able to track his every movement anywhere around the world. Tracking devices are the most common things in the world today and you wouldn't even think about what it is. Your mobile phone is being tracked, every text, Facebook notification and websites you go on are all being traced by the government. Also cameras are placed on every road, at every intersection, alleyways and corner tracking your movements and now drones are being used to help with this. In Hong Kong, China, they have 30 million cameras on the streets to watch over

their city, so this shows that the government are wanting to bring the rate of crime down but who far will they have to go for that. Having the surveillance cameras are a positive to stop crime rates going up and creating a utopia city, but when you are being forced to go to work everyday like Neo to 'create energy' for video game that they live in. it starts to become a dystopian city and will end up like North Korea.

Divergent by Neil burger reading response

In the novel 'Divergent' by Neil Burger, we see **Government control** is seen by placing citizen into groups in order to control easier. Diving into groups is a classic way of controlling people. Tris quotes, "Our founders build the walls to keep us safe, and they divided us into 5 groups, Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), Erudite (the intelligent), Abnegation (the selfless), and Candor (the honest)." Splitting them into 5 different groups shows the government is able to force people to do jobs they don't want to do. Specific evidence of this, Erudite wants to take control and to do this they need to eliminate abnegation control of the government, to do this Erudite use Dauntless (they drugged them by lying to them) to attack and kill them. This is a classic way of, "gaining and maintaining power by breaking up larger concentrations of power into pieces that individually have less power than the one implementing the strategy." (Wikipedia). I feel sorry for the people like Tris who want to enjoy there life but instead are forced into doing jobs that they don't want to do. Like me, i'm forced to go to school if i want a living when im older. It's like North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and how he had to get everyone to like him so he could get power over everyone and then turned on everyone who voted for him and from then he was able to control everyone.

Tris cares about this a lot because she is now apart of dauntless but she came from abnegation so her family is still apart of abnegation. This matters because Tris will be forced to kill her family and old friends. The impact this puts on the audience is shocked and confused as you are unaware what Tris well do as she has to kill her family and friends. This makes Tris frightened because she doesn't want to kill her family and friends but she also wants to be apart of dauntless because that's where she feels she belongs. The impact this places on the plot is confusing as you are unaware of what Tris might do. Neil Burger's message he is trying to show thought this scene is you don't want to get forced want to get forced around by people that have more control and that we should be allowed or rights to choose what we want to do with our lives. I am able to relate to this because at my old school (Christchurch boys high) if you didn't do rowing, rugby or cricket you wouldn't get recognized so for me it was hard to get my achievements heard by everyone which made me not like the school as they only looked at the "top sports." This can relate to 'Examination Day' because Dick and his family are being controlled by the government in a small, enclosed environment and Dick's city has been made one group full of low IQ people.

The novel 'Divergent' has shown this better as they have created more of a real life situation without robots or computers and made the audience feel more connected to Tris and her friends and family through drama and love, which is key to making people feel more emotional towards the movie. Neil Burger made the audience also dislike erudite and the dauntless leaders and we thought they were the good people from the start, this made a twist in the film and make us connect more with the novel.

Reading response on Edward Scissorhands

In the film Edward Scissorhands by Tim Burton a character that helped me to understand the important message of conformity is Edward Scissorhands himself. Edward Scissorhands is the story of Edward, an unfinished robot whose inventor died before he could give Edward real hands and left him with scissors for hands. Throughout the film he tries to become accepted by people around him but unfortunately he is unable to conform to society's norm. Visual and oral language features such as music, dialogue, camera shots, lighting and costume are used by Tim Burton to show one's struggle to fit in.

Initially, we see Edward as different, a figure of nonconformity. As we are first introduced to him, Tim Burton uses dark lighting and a long shot to show a full body view of Edward which creates a striking silhouette of him, his extended scissor hands and the surroundings of a dark mansion on a lone hill with the view of a peaceful and colourful town. Sweet and soft string music is used to create a mysterious atmosphere which we associate with Edward. We immediately realise that Edward is ever so out of the normal with his scissor hands being the main reason for his abnormality. To add to this uncommonness he wears a buckled leather suit accompanied by his pale, scarred face and wild black hair. With the further use of these film techniques we instantly label Edward as a freak just as society would and cannot imagine him living in harmony with the perfect society below, no matter what his personality is like.

We are first introduced to the town through an establishing shot which allows for a pan of the suburban streets. We find it hard to understand how Edward's dark freakish image is going to fit in with their perfect society. High key lighting is used to give us a flawless and cheerful impression of the town. The pastel, toned colours used on the houses, cars and even costumes of the townspeople gives us a further impression that everyone conforms to each other. When Edward moves in with a family in the suburban town we immediately see that the neighbourhood push him to conform, "Blend, blend, blend, blending is the secret," This was said by Peg to Edward as she applied concealer to cover up the scars on his face. Close-up shots of Peg's face were used to show her frustration (furrowed eyebrows and grunting) to make Edward look normal and fit into society's norm by blending in. In reality you cannot change people to fit your ideals; we must accept them for who they are.

As the film progresses the thought of this perfect society crumbles as they push out Edward from the community, wrongly labelling him the bad guy as he is quickly accused of burglary, rape and physical attack. The most intense scene involving ostracisation towards Edward is the snow scene where Jim, the boyfriend of Kim who Edward loves, yells to him, "What the hell do you think you're doing hanging around here, huh? Get the hell outta here! Go you freak!" This bad use of dialogue represents society's immediate reaction to Edward's abnormality. Neighbours who once praised Edward for his difference quickly turn on him. A long shot is used with dark lighting, much like at the start of the film which showed Edward's reaction to the cruel society, but this time he is running from the town "back to where he came from," Fast paced music is used to heighten the tension in this scene. We see that in reality prejudice triumphs and

those of difference are pushed away from the conformed place where they do not fit. Tim Burton uses this film to emphasise to us that we must accept people's differences, and look beyond their appearance. This is definitely worth learning about.

The idea of conformity is worth learning about in the film *Edward Scissorhands* as it helps us understand the way society reacts to people who have a different or abnormal appearance. Tim Burton helps us see the immediate prejudice society can have against the unusual or odd. Visual and oral language features such as music, dialogue, camera shots, lighting and costume are used to highlight this idea.

Title: 'Royals' Lorde

Throughout the song 'Royals' I was thoroughly engaged in the lyrics being performed by New Zealand singer Lorde. 'Royals' was released in 2013 when media influence on youth began to boom. By calling the song 'Royals', Lorde is being ironic as throughout the song she slights the wealthy, pompous lifestyle of the elite who we might call as 'Royals'. But as the song plays, the audience is given this idea of breaking free from the grip of conformity and the love of material things. Lorde is one artist that has realised the amount of devastation this conformity has already caused us, such as the social and peer pressure surrounding the ideas the media feeds to youth and how doing this discourages being unique which makes for a very boring, bland society. Through her music Lorde is trying to highlight this idea of conformity and how it's affecting us. I was able to relate to what Lorde was saying as like her, i have grown up in New Zealand immersed in American cultural imperialism. For instance, we are saturated with US shows and infomercials on our televisions and American products throughout our shopping stores. Because all these products are immersed on us, it leaves little room for people to escape from US culture and is easy for New Zealanders to conform to American media, even in our own country.

In the pre chorus Lorde uses lines such as, "But every song's like, gold teeth, grey goose, trippin' in the bathroom..." In doing this, she is listing expensive possessions such as gold and costly alcohol and other material objects, which not only makes for a good 'hook' that got me interested in the song, but also serves as a brilliant technique for getting the true message of anti-conformity across, as it's immediately followed by the words, "we don't care.... we aren't caught up in your love affair." This is a great use of personal pronouns by Lorde that includes the audience in a way that says "we're with her" and made me think with a similar mindset to Lorde, realising my happiness isn't due to having the latest iPhone or Nike sneakers, but rather the simple things like family and friends. When Lorde lists these phenomenal objects, immediately followed by a contrasting perspective, it's that great example of juxtaposition that creates a strong connection in the minds of the audience.

Similarly in the song 'Californiacation' by the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, the media's effect on society in a negative way is also depicted. In this song, Anthony Kiedus writes about how the media is influencing their audience into conforming to a Hollywood ideal just like Lorde does through the lyrics in 'Royals'. Hollywood lifestyle is constantly broadcasted through social media and TV show, and through these platforms, the idea that it's okay for someone to have an idol or someone you look up to has been taken and twisted upon itself, making for a 'perfect person' that everybody wants to conform to. This perfection is almost always impossible to achieve. This

message is conveyed throughout 'Royals' as well as in 'Californication' by the use of lines such as, "Little girls from Sweden dream of silver screen quotations." This describes that the media's influence has no geographical boundaries. The little girl reference is also used as a metaphor for innocence, and represents how the force of conformity is able to corrupt that image of purity and virtue. Later in the song, Kiedus refers back to this character, "Marry me girl. Be my fairy to the world, be my very own constellation. A teenage bride with a baby inside getting high on information", meaning that while many aspire to be the next big name in Hollywood, very few are able to fulfil their high expectations of themselves. In this situation, often things can quickly spiral into depression, anxiety and in some severe cases, drug abuse or suicide. Anthony Kiedus and Lorde in writing these songs are trying to warn against the idea of Hollywood and fame and conforming to the media ideal, as if the audience, by getting stuck following this conforming trend, this is the person they will become, fake and deluded.

Not only is the idea of anti-conformity clear in the lyrics of Lorde's song 'Royals', I found that this message was also conveyed through the music video. The video lacks excitement and rather than hyping up teenage hood to be exhilarating and amazing which the media often does, instead it depicts the scenes of real life. Lorde goes against pop video conventions and the normal pop star look. She dresses like a simple teenager with near no makeup and a basic hairstyle, making her easy to relate to by the target audience, which are teenagers. The four other featured people throughout the video are also dressed in plain basic attire, showing that they have not conformed to the trends that are generated by the media. The setting that the video is set in, is unlike most glamorous pop song videos. A long landscape shot showing an empty street, is the opening shot for the 'Royals' video. The street is almost symmetrical, with one side of the street being darker than the other, both the line of houses and sky above are darker while the opposite side of the street is much lighter. To me this represents differing sides to society, the rich and poor, the glamorous and unglamorous, the famous and nonfamous. Another shot from the video that stood out to me is a mid shot of a sports gym, empty aside from one teenage boy in the centre. The boy stands still looking directly up at a basketball hoop. The emptiness surrounding the boy a symbol of his life, alone and nothing ahead. These shots from the 'Royals' music video plus several others show a plain but realistic lifestyle of New Zealand teens who know they'll never have a luxurious lifestyle. This music video is like no other I have ever watched, as it doesn't exaggerate normal life like others do to appeal to an audience. Instead it goes against the normal ordeals of the pop world by having a realistic and relatable video that doesn't conform to the mold that nearly all music videos fit into, by making fame, wealth and material objects the centre of the song.

Lorde is one artist that rather than obeying the words of the media giant, she is seeing the ludicrousness of the media's grip on today's youth and attempting to make a difference. During an interview with NZ Listener, Lorde spoke about her inspiration in writing the song, "When I wrote Royals, I was listening to a lot of rap, but also a lot of Lana Del Rey, because she's obviously really hip-hop influenced, but all those references to expensive alcohol, beautiful clothes and beautiful cars - I was thinking, 'This is so opulent, but it's also bulls--t.'" I found this interesting as Lorde was only 16 years old when 'Royals' was released and she was not only able to turn away from media influence on herself as well as urge other youth to not conform to media. I found 'Royals' engaging because the song and video successfully represented the mindset of teenagers in New Zealand so I was able to relate to Lorde.

Title: the return of the blue moon

Author: matt hewitt

Enjoyment, only word that can decrease my ideas about this short story. Right from word go i knew that this article about a surf break that barely breaks called 'blue moon bar' was gold. Throughout the text i agree with Matt hewitt the whole time. Matt is one of the top surfers in NZ and is from the east coast of the north island. I can relate to Matt quit well but will get deeper into this in my statement.

Matt Hewitt, one of the top surfers from NZ currently. He is from the east coast of the north island. Last year the east coast had zero swell for about 7 months then at the start of the year there was a spike in the swell lucky enough for matt he knew of this break. He took a bit of a risk going there because blue moon bar barely breaks and as the east coast had been having no swell it was even more risky. Blue moon bar is very quiet with not many surfers knowing about the break which is every surfer's dream to have a perfect wave with out anyone else. Now going back to when the east coast had zero swell here is what matt said about it, "the east coast in 2016 had a horror run with flat spells up to 6 weeks with only a dribble on offer to relieve the frustration." now i can relate to this because as being from the east coast also i knew what it was like from when i used to live in Christchurch.waiting for the next swell to hit and it was the longest waiting period of my life.

For my second response Matt was surfing long hours that day and was living the dream. The day matt went surfing. The photo in surfing nz mag shows that the weather was very nice and Matt was surfing long hour. When you go surfing you wouldn't usually get very hot. Matt was out in the water at nine o'clock and was in around 3 now that sounds like a while but he says "six hours later i crawled my way up the beach back to my car and felt like i have been locked in a sauna". Matt is a great guy but he still had another 6 hours of light left so he wouldn't of got locked in a sauna because he would've still been surfing some of the best waves he's ever surfed instead of sitting in a car doing nothing. Sometimes you have got to make the most of what you love doing and not give up easily. I can relate to this because i have surfed pumping waves then came in and regretted it because the next day the surf had gone flat again and there nothing for me to even stand on.

In conclusion this is a great read and when you're reading about something you love it makes it that much better and makes you feel good and not want to stop doing something you love.