THE PEDESTRIAN

Multiple Choice Questions

1) Leonard Mead wears sneakers during the night walks to _____.

(a) run faster (b) keep his feet warm

(c) impress upon the passers by (d) avoid barking dogs

2) By profession, Leonard is a _____.

(a) player (b) writer (c) dancer (d) singer

3) Ray Bradbury's short story 'The Pedestrian, can be best described as _____.

(a) utopian (b) dystopian (c) humorous (d) a fairy tale

4) What does the author want to convey bay referring to the people in their homes as 'gray phantoms'?

(a) They are old and haggard (b) They have gray hairs.

(c) They are lifeless (d) They have no colours in their lives

5) Mead compare his walk to _____.

(a) walk to office (b) a graveyard walk

(c) Both (a) and (b) (d) None of these

6) What does the empty, silent night reflect about Leonard Mead's emotional state?

(a) A sense of loneliness and isolation (b) A feeling of peace and satisfaction

(c) A lack of purpose (d) A longing for societal connection

7) What is the societal norm that Leonard Mead does not conform to in The Pedestrian?

(a) Working in an office job (b) Engaging in nightly walks

(c) Watching television (d) Reading books

8) Which of the following is reflected by the statement that Leonard Mead was as good as alone?

(a) He was a non-conformist (b) He was a lonely person

(c) He longed for the company of others (d) He wished to be like his neighbour

9) How does the police car characterise Leonard Mead's actions when it first encounters him?

(a) Erratic and dangerous (b) Curious but harmless

(c) A clear violation of societal rules (d) A threat to society's safety

10) Identify the type of imagery used in the phrase-smelling its rusty smell?

(a) Tactile imagery (b) Olfactory imagery

(c) Visual imagery (d) Auditory imagery

11) He (Mead) was within a block of his destination when the lone car turned a corner quite suddenly means that Mead was _____.

(a) blocked by a single car when he suddenly turned the corner

(b) surprised to find a block preventing the single car from turning

(c) destined to be blocked suddenly by a car on a lonely stress

(d) close to his home when the car appeared without warming

12) Identify the following best represents the story's critique of technology?

(a) The police car as an unemotional, authoritarian force

(b) Leonard Mead's refusal to use technology

(c) The isolation created by society's dependence on television

(d) All of the above

13) The robotic police car is described as having all of the following except _____.

(a) an emotionless voice (b) a mechanical nature

(c) a cold, calculating manner (d) a human like appearance

14) Which of the following statements is NOT true of Leonard Mead?

(a) He enjoyed walking the streets at night.

(b) He was married to a writer.

(c) He was arrested for being out of his home at night.

(d) He kept all the lights in his home turned on.

15) What does the robotic police car imply about people in the society?

(a) They are all responsible citizens.

(b) They are all constantly engaged in meaningful activities.

(c) They are all complacent and follow societal rules without question.

(d) They are curious about the world around them.

16) Select the option which shows the correct relationship between statements (1) and (2).

Statement 1 : Mead compares walking through the empty, silent streets to walking through a graveyard.

Statement 2 : Mead compares the empty street to the dry riverbeds of a windless desert.

(a) Statements 1 and 2 are both true.

(b) Statements 1 and 2 are both false.

(c) Statement 1 is true, and Statement 2 is false.

(d) Statement 1 is false, and Statement 2 is true.

17) What is the final irony of the story?

(a) Leonard Mead is taken away for committing no crime.

(b) Leonard Mead escapes unnoticed.

(c) The robotic police car realises its mistake.

(d) The society eventually changes for the better.

18) Explain the significance of the story's title, 'The Pedestrian'?

(a) It highlights the main character's love for walking.

(b) It refers to the robotic police car's role in society.

(c) It symbolises the passive, mechanical nature of the society.

(d) It represents a shift away from individuality towards community.

19) Why was Mead taken away to the Psychiatric centre?

(a) To cure him of his regressive tendencies.

(b) To punish him for being a bachelor.

(c) To punish him for behaving like a drunkard.

(d) None of the above.

20) Choose the option that lists the sequence of events from Ray Bradbury's short story, 'The Pedestrian'.

(i) One night he was nearing home, he was stopped by a police car.

(ii) Since his answer were considered odd and unacceptable, he was forced to enter the car and taken away.

(iii) Leonard Mead loved to walk through the empty sheets at night.

(iv) A metallic voice from the car asked him a series of questions.

(a) (i), (i), (iii), (iv) (b) (i), (iii), (iv), (ii) (c) (iii), (i), (iv), (ii) (d) (iv). (i), (ii), (iii)

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

"The streets were silent and long, with only the faintest whisper of a breeze. He turned back at the intersection, moving slowly. He had walked for an hour, and there was a slight chill in the air. He walked through empty neighbourhoods, streets filled only with the faint smell of burning leaves."

(i) How does Bradbury use symbolism in the story to convey the desolation of the society in which Leonard Mead lives?

Ans. Bradbury uses the symbolism, 'eyes of the dead' to describe the dull, lifeless glow of TV screens inside homes. It emphasises the emotional emptiness and passive existence of people in the story's society. Like the dead, they are physically present but mentally and spiritually unengaged, consumed by technology and detached from real life.

(ii) What is the significance of Leonard Mead being the only one walking in this deserted world?

Ans. Mead's solitary walk highlights his isolation from the rest of society. His decision to walk in a world where no one else does suggests that he is out of sync with the conformist, technology-dependent world around him. This reinforces the theme of individuality versus conformity.

(iii) What do the 'empty houses' symbolise in the context of the story?

Ans. The 'empty houses symbolise a society that has retreated into passivity, where individuals are metaphorically and physically absent from the world around them. People are no longer engaged in real-life activities or relationships, preferring to be isolated and absorbed by the passive entertainment of television.

(iv) Why does the description of the street as empty have a strong connection to the protagonist's mental state?

Ans. The emptiness of the street mirrors Leonard Mead's mental and emotional state. His loneliness is reflected in the deserted world he walks through. Mead is disconnected from others and lives in a society that has chosen comfort over meaningful interaction or intellectual pursuit, much like the empty homes around him.

(v) How does Bradbury's description of the streetlamps contrast with Leonard Mead's individualism?

Ans. The streetlamps, described as 'eyes of the dead contrast with Mead's individuality because while he seeks life and engagement through his walks, the streetlamps represent a lifeless society that sees no value in such activity. Mead's desire to walk, a human activity, stands in stark contrast to the passive, controlled existence represented by the streetlamps.

Extract 2

"He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference."

(i) What was Leonard Mead's occupation? What did he love to do? When is the story set?

Ans. Leonard Mead's occupation is not explicitly mentioned in the story, but it is implied that he is a writer, as he has the time and inclination to walk around the city at night and enjoy solitary activities. Moreover during the interrogation he claims himself as a writer.

He loves to take long, solitary walks through the city, especially at night, enjoying the quiet and empty streets.

The story is set in a futuristic, dystopian society. possibly in the mid-to-late 21st century, where technology dominates and people have become isolated from each other.

(ii) To what does Mead compare his walk through the empty streets? Mention two reasons he gives for making this comparison?

Ans. Mead compares his walk through the empty streets to walking through a graveyard

Two reasons for this comparison are

(a) The streets are empty, silent, and lifeless, just like a graveyard.

(b) There is no human presence, and everything is eerie and still, adding to the feeling of desolation.

(iii) Elaborate on the atmosphere of the story.

Ans. The atmosphere of the story is one of silence and isolation. The protagonist, Leonard Mead is alone on the empty streets during his night walks in the world of AD 2053. The city has a deserted, graveyard look.

(iv) What happened quite suddenly as he was making his way home? What was Mead's immediate reaction?

Ans. As Mead was making his way home, a robotic police car appeared quite suddenly, turning a corner.

Mead was immediately startled and confused by its appearance, as he did not expect to be confronted by any authority while simply walking

(v) Why was Mead taken away by the police car? Would you call this a horror story or a piece of science fiction? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. Mead was taken away by the police car because he was considered suspicious for walking alone at night in a society where people are expected to stay indoors, watching television. The authorities could not understand why anyone would choose to be outside for no reason.

This is a piece of science fiction, not a horror story. It depicts a dystopian future where technology and conformity dominate, and individual freedom is suppressed. The story explores the consequences of a highly controlled society rather than focusing on supernatural or horrific elements.

Extract 3

He (Mead) was alone in this world of A.D. 2053, or as good as alone, and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of a cigar."

(i) What was the thing that Leonard Mead 'most dearly loved to do'?

Ans. Mead most dearly loved to go for walks in the streets, especially at night. This activity brings him joy and peace, as it allows him to be alone and think freely.

(ii) Why did Mead switch to wearing sneakers when he went for a walk?

Ans. Mead switched to wearing sneakers so that he could walk quietly without making a sound, ensuring he wouldn't be heard and to avoid the barking dogs, lights being switched on, or people peeping out startled.

(iii) What are Mead's neighbours and fellow citizens doing when Mead is out walking? What can you conclude about Mead from this?

Ans. Mead's neighbours and fellow citizens are all inside their homes, watching television. This suggests that society in this future world is isolated and disconnected. People prefer passive activities rather than engaging in anything as active or stimulating as taking a walk.

Mead, in contrast, stands out as an individual who values personal reflection and physical activity. This makes him somewhat of an outsider in this society.

(iv) What reasons does Mead give for being out alone on the street at night? Why is this viewed with suspicion?

Ans. Mead explains that he is out for a walk because he simply enjoys it and finds peace in it. He has no destination in mind and does not engage in any crime or mischief However, this is viewed with suspicion because, in a society where everyone is glued to their screens, such behaviour is considered add or even dangerous. It doesn't fit with the prescribed norms of passivity and conformity.

(v) Where is Mead taken at the end of the story? Why is he taken to this place? If you had to describe this story in a single word, what word would you use? Give a reason for your choice of word.

Ans. At the end of the story, Mead is taken to a psychiatric centre because he is considered abnormal for walking alone at night. In this future society, where people are expected to stay indoors and passively consume media, his behaviour is deemed suspicious and mentally unstable.

If I had to describe this story in a single word, I would choose 'conformity' This word encapsulates the central theme of the story, which explores how a highly controlled society suppresses individuality and punishes anyone who does not conform to its rigid expectations.

Extract 4

"He turned his head, and there was the faintest smile on his lips as he stared up at the enormous face of the empty television screen. There were no other faces but those of the dead."

(1) What is the significance of the 'enormous face of the empty television screen' in this passage?

Ans. The 'enormous face of the empty television screen represents the pervasive influence of technology in society, overshadowing all other forms of interaction or human connection. The fact that it is 'empty' highlights the hollowness and emptiness of the lives of those who are engrossed in their passive consumption of media reinforcing the dystopian theme of disconnection.

(ii) What do the 'faces of the dead' represent in the context of the story?

Ans. The 'faces of the dead symbolise the metaphorical death of individuality and human engagement in the society. People are so absorbed in their screens that they no longer engage with life in a meaningful way, resulting in an emotional and social death. This is a critique of a society where technology replaces human interaction and fulfillment.

(iii) How does Mead's reaction to the television screen (a smile) contrast with the rest of society?

Ans. Mead's faint smile may indicate his awareness of the absurdity of a society consumed by television, or it could reflect his recognition of his role as an outsider. While others in society may be passively engaged with the screen, Mead retains a semblance of individuality and thought, making him stand out from the passive masses.

(iv) What role does television play in reflecting the society's values and mindset?

Ans. Television represents a society that has prioritised passive entertainment over intellectual engagement, creativity, or human connection. It symbolises the societal control mechanisms that keep people disengaged and docile, reinforcing the themes of conformity and isolation in the story.

(v) What might the fact that there are no living 'faces' on the screen suggest about the future of human interaction in this society?

Ans. The fact that there are no living faces on the screen suggests that human interaction in this society has disappeared. People no longer talk to each other or connect in real life Instead, they are isolated, spending all their time watching television. The screen is empty, just like their lives, showing that technology has replaced real relationships. This also hints at a world where emotions and conversations no longer matter. The reference to 'faces of the dead' suggests that people are physically alive but socially and emotionally lifeless, trapped in a world controlled by screens and routines.

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