## English Composition Final Exam Essay

The sense of self-respect and self-worth is a crucial quality of the soul that lies within the human heart, and this is what suppose to make human beings different from one another, and losing this is what leads to suffering and being dehumanized. The two short annotated pieces of literature Sonny’s Blues by James Baldwin and The Pedestrian by Ray Bradbury are two equivalently similar essays depicting the harsh reality of the world itself and the suffering that lies within it. Both of the narratives on these works of literature, reflect the real aspects of the modern world, implying it to be full of suffering, dehumanization, and loneliness even though there are people all around them at all times. And, both pieces of literature provide these themes to the audience through the struggle of their characters.

## Universality of Suffering

It is not a surprising fact to state that there exists a universal pattern of people suffering in the real world despite what nation they live in. Every existing person in this world bears the suffering and handles it in their way. The same theme is reflected in both the pieces of literature through narrative texts. In Sonny’s Blues this theme is extremely clear, Sonny the narrator’s brother had been suffering most of his life, he suffered his father’s untimely death at an early age, he suffered the loss of his mother while his early teenage (Ref-s399974). It is also shown that Sonny had been suffering from drug abuse and drug addiction all his life for which he got convicted and went to prison. And, Sonny suffered in prison as well. On the other hand, the narrator also suffered the loss of his daughter, which made him write a letter to Sonny. In one sequence he also quotes “all that hatred, misery and love. It’s a wonder it doesn’t blow the avenue apart” (Ref-s399974). Sonny makes this comment as just getting out of the prison, he observed upon a religious event that promises salvation. However, all he had faced in his life he knows is that nobody grants someone salvation.

Touching upon “The Pedestrian”, the literature also depicts a similar theme. The narrative quote “to put your feet on a concrete walk through silence was what Mr. Leonard Mead dearly loved to do” (Ref-f099842). At the initial phase of the narrative, this sentence makes it clear that the protagonist is suffering from loneliness as he lives alone and walks alone at night because he had nothing better to do. The environment is also described to be silent and dreadful with no joy on the streets whatsoever. In their way, both the literature captures the theme of universal suffering perfectly.

### Dehumanization

Another theme, that persists throughout both pieces of literature is the dehumanization of the modern world. While one of the literature reflects it through the behavior of the modern society towards one another, the other one reflects it through the evolution of technology and the lack of human aspect in it. In the first literature, the whole narrative has shown that how modern society has developed a sense of conformity, and whoever doesn’t fall under that domain is treated as an outcast. This is the dehumanization aspect of Sonny’s Blues. Even during the start of the narrative, the unnamed narrator exclaims “I could not believe yet I wouldn’t doubt it” when he read in the newspaper that his little brother was sentenced to prison for drug use (Ref-f382465). The author’s attitude towards this statement implies that how dehumanized modern society has become that even a family member can be as distant as a stranger. The narrator even though he was the big brother and made a promise to look after Sonny, gave up on him, never tried to get close to his brother, never helped him with his addiction problem and after he hears the news, he puts it as it was inevitable.

The second literature, The Pedestrian, divulges into this theme in more of a 2053 A.D Sci-fi and technological context. As the protagonist encounters a car with no person in it, interrogate him on why was he walking. Within the context of that surrounding, Leonard walking was so out of the ordinary, the technological intelligence felt the need to interrogate him and judge him as mentally unstable (Gomez & Peters, 2023). The literature also shows the result of conformity similar to that, represented in Sonny’s Blues. If there was an actual human interrogating instead, the protagonist would have returned safely to his home after his walk. This is how the similar dehumanization aspect is reflected in this work but in a different context.

### Loneliness

Loneliness is another common that persists in both of these works. It is shown that Loneliness can occur from being different, being ambitious, and despite having people around you. Exploring this subject into Sonny’s Blues, we as readers can detect the emotions behind Sonny’s struggle and how he was lonely despite having his brother and his drug-addict friends. The underlying hint of loneliness presented through Sonny was made clear by the author when the narrator comments “he was like an animal waiting to be coaxed into the light” upon seeing his brother Sonny (Ref-s914557). It was made clear that the narrator had abandoned his brother Sonny, and as a result of his loneliness and suffering, no one was there to help with his drug addiction, which is how Sonny ended up in prison.

Similar to how Sonny was lonely because he was different, Leonard Mead from The Pedestrians, was a similar character. While everyone was inside their home after a day at work, watching TV, and being too involved in the technologies, Mead enjoyed the more non-technological primitive aspect of life such as walking for fresh air. Mead’s walking experience is also described as the walking through a graveyard, as a representation of how lonely he was at that moment because he was different (Ref-u056733). And in his life, Bradbury was lonely as he lived alone and didn’t own television while others were very much into the modern technologies, hence he had no one similar to him around him, but himself.

### Conclusion

As described above, both these works are similar in the way how they represent modern society and the harsh realities driven by such as society. Sonny’s Blues, while exposing the tone of loneliness, dehumanization, and suffering in the past context of the scenario, The Pedestrian, reflects upon similar themes but in the future scenario. Both these works form an implication that no matter the era, past, present, or future, the harsh features of the grounded reality remains constant.