The Martian Chronicles: The Themes, Styles, And Techniques Of Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois and passed away on June 5, 2012 at the age of 91. Bradbury wrote novels and short stories using themes of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Bradbury also used these themes when writing screenplays and treatments for television and film. His most famous novel was Fahrenheit 451, which soon became an instant classic in the era of McCarthyism. He won many awards and honors throughout his lengthy career. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2007. One of the most prestigious honors that he was awarded was being named the “ideas consultant” for the United States Pavilion at the 1964 World’s Fair. His legacy is still lived on today, with his works being taught in schools around the world and past works being made into films and television series.

Many of Ray Bradbury’s well known works display a fantasy style. In most of his fantasy works, he uses a “they come here type” style of writing (Sullivan 1311). This is a style where the setting of the story is the primary, normal, everyday world (1311). The fantasy style is shown through outside creatures or ideas from a secondary world that invade the primary world and makes the world different (1311). It is mostly an invasion of ideas which change the normal perspective or principles in the primary world (1311). Bradbury uses another style in his fantasy works that is contrary to the “they come here” style. This style is the “you go there” style. (1311). Ray Bradbury uses this style in works such as “The Golden Kite, the Silver Wind” and “Death and the Maiden” (1311). Bradbury describes his writing as reality with a little twist. (1312).

Throughout his career, Bradbury used the style of horror. This style is shown primarily in his earlier works. Much of the horror elements come from carnival imagery (1310). One example of carnival imagery in one of his stories is shown in his work The October Country. “It was one of those things they keep in a jar in the tent of a sideshow on the outskirts of a little, drowsy town. One of those pale things drifting in alcohol plasma, forever dreaming and circling, with its peeled, dead eyes staring out at you never seeing you (The October Country, Ballantine, 1955 p. 81) (1310). In Bradbury’s horror tales, he uses some of the same characters (1310). He uses skeletons, witches, dwarfs, magicians, and freaks that would be in a carnival (1310). A carnival element that he liked to use is the magic at carnivals (1310). He uses black magic in his story “The Big Black White Game.” (1310). This story linked a Negro baseball team with black magic. When Bradbury wrote using the style of horror, he tried to shock the readers (1310). He tried to make the readers “suffer” while reading his horror works (1310).

Bradbury uses the theme of nostalgia in many of his works. He used nostalgia seasonally (1313). He wrote nostalgia in the summer mostly. The nostalgia he uses places an emphasis on limited locality (Smith 61). Limited locality is the writing theme where the author stabilizes a place. Bradbury focused on writing how ideas that were developed in the past have a long lasting effect on ideas in the present (61). This style of nostalgia is called critical nostalgia (61). Bradbury uses cycles for chronology (61). The cycles use places in time and temporal markers to track where the reader is (61). Bradbury uses these cycles in The Martian Chronicles (61). In this work, Bradbury uses linear chronology to keep track of events and time (61).

The time cycle Bradbury uses in his many works differs between them. One style that Bradbury uses in his time cycle is how vultures treat time. In The Martian Chronicles, the Martians view time as being at odds with human conceptions (62). He shows the similarity of how the martinas treat time and how the Native people treat time, both counting down the days till they become extinct (71). In his stories, Bradbury often include elements in the time cycle such as a borderland and contact zone (62). A borderland in a story is created when two or more cultures interact or compete with each other. A borderland crests its own time dimension (62). The time is different when both cultures view time differently (62). Contact zones also occur in the time cycle when different cultures meet and interact with each other (61). His cycles are often out of place and have an unorganized structure (62).

Bradbury changes his narrative style through his works. One style that he used is the diary (62). The diary is a linear form of narrative (62). One of his works that used the narrative form of diary is The Martian Chronicles (62). The Martian Chronicles is written in the diary form and Bradbury uses the third person past tense, since the events in the story already happened to the main character (62). Bradbury puts gaps in the time sequence if this story, which makes the story line uneven. The stories in this work are in chronological order, despite the different dimensions and time (61). He wrote this style like how the main character in the work wrote a diary or journal (62).With different dates and entries (62). His time cycle represent a normal time and a twisted time (62).

The healing powers of love is a style and theme present in some of Ray Bradbury's works (Sullivan 1314). One of his works where this style is most present is "A Medicine for Melancholy." (1314). The dying patient in this work was not able to be cured by doctors. When the patient is looked into the eyes by a man, she is suddenly better. The theme is when a character does not have love or is desperate for love. This character then becomes physically ill because of this reason (1314). When the character then finds love, they become healthy.

One element of writing that Bradbury often used while writing his works was the expansion of time (Smith 73). He expressed the expansion of time through the use of punctuation (73). Bradbury usually uses chronological order for the timing of events in his works (73). However, Bradbury's usage of ellipses in his stories can stop and disrupt the chronological order of time (73). One of Bradybury's works where the usage of ellipses is present is The Martian Chronicles (73). When Bradbury uses ellipses in The Martian Chronicles, they disrupt the consistent forward flow of time (73). The ellipses also are used as an extension or blend of the time in the story (73). When an ellipses occured in the story, a piece of song or dialogue is continued (73). His usage of ellipses is present in The Martian Chronicles, mostly in the conclusion of the work (74). The ellipses that are used separate the distinctions of time in the time cycle in the work (74).

A major theme in some of Ray Bradbury's work is modern day technology controlling humans and affecting their creative abilities (Weiner 83). In many of his works, Bradbury writes about gadgets and inventions that he came up with for the story (85). There are many inventions that are not invented yet at the time of his stories that he includes in the story (85). Some inventions that are present today but not invented a time which he wrote the story are earbuds, which were called seashells in the story, and a 24/7 banking service in Fahrenheit 451 (84). Another invention that was shown in his works that was not invented yet was an iPod in his story The Women which was written in 1948 (85). Ray Bradbury's work The Murderer, written in 1953, showed a prisoner who was feeling oppressed by a radio wristwatch, which was also a phone

(85). There is another story, The Illustrated Man, where there are two children whose nursery which there is virtual reality (85).

In many of Ray Bradbury's works, he made the appearance and structure of his sentences replicate look like a telegram (Smith 76). Bradbury often used obsolete technology in his writing (76). The use of a telegram structured paragraph shows the devastation of infrastructure on Earth and shows how communication of a national tragedy during both World War I and World War II via telegraph (76). The connection between the communication in the wars is similar to those of the stories because they both communicate a loss which can not be reversed (76). Both the messages from war and the messages communicated in the stories are sent from an unfamiliar place (76). The use of telegrams and messages sent from telegrams relating to the messages that were sent in the story is used in the story The Martian Chronicles, especially the final story The Watchers (76). In The Watchers, Morse code is also used as a type of communication between characters in the story (76).

Ray Bradbury often expressed how he disliked modern technology in many of his literary works (Dominianni 49). Bradbury is not always opposed to the thought of new and modern technology (49). The one aspect about the new technology that he is opposed to is how the new and modern technology can take over and enter the human aspects of life (49). In one of Ray Bradbury's works, "There Will Come Soft Rains", he depicts humanity and subordinate towards the new machines and technology (49). Bradbury often mentions the usage of robots and new machinery in his works (49). He references machines such as wall clocks, robotic animals such as mice, an automatic stove, and a robot that can read poetry (50). He also writes about robots that are meant to extinguish fires, which are called "blind robot faces." (50).

One of Bradbury's most prominent themes in his literary was contemporary literature (McNelly 4). Bradbury believed that man should not and can not be controlled by the new and modern machines and technology (4). In many of his works, Bradbury makes his characters shallow (4). He often places himself in his own stories. In his novel Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury is portrayed through the main protagonist of the story Guy Montag (4). This novel does not only express Bradbury's feelings about present day society and technology, but also the relationships between people (4). Bradbury demonstrates his feelings towards present day society by adding the element of book burning, and how it is against normal society to like and read books (4). He shows the relationships between people, such as Montag and his wife (4). His writing shows that a man can have a man can have multiple mistresses in his life, but a man can also have many affairs with books, and the result from those affairs is great literature (4)

Often times in his writing, Ray Bradbury uses metaphors (McNelly 4). Bradbury uses metaphors in his writings to portray a method of understanding present day reality and then helping the reader understand the reality being portrayed the same way the writer sees it (4). In Bradbury's novel Fahrenheit 451, the book burning is the metaphor present. The metaphor is how the society within the novel hates the idea of reading and how they are against books (4). In his work "The Illustrated Man", the metaphor present within the story is a moving tattoo (4). The story also demonstrates nostalgia, but nostalgia for the future (4). One major metaphor that is shwin throughout his works is shown through Jules Verne and Herman Melville (4). The metaphor show is the shape of a submarine, spaceship, or whale, which are cylinder shaped (4). This shape is the symbol on how Ray Bradbury portrays the universe (4). Another major metaphor that is used throughout Bradbury's works is wilderness (4). Through the metaphor of wilderness, the themes of ironic detachment and emotional involvement are expressed (4). He

expresses that America is a wilderness country that people explore and discover (4). The first wilderness that the people of America discovered was the wilderness of the sea (4). Next wilderness that was founded was the wilderness of the land of America (4). The final wilderness to be explored, according to Bradbury, is space (4). Bradbury also uses the element of self awareness (4). He uses self awareness in his work “The Highway.” The awareness that he uses is an awareness of irony (4).

In many of Bradbury’s, he makes his characters in the story similar to himself. The characters in his works sound like Bradbury would in real life (Pfeiffer 121). He makes the dialogue in his works sound like he is the one talking, not just his characters (121). The way the characters talk in his fiction works sound just like Bradbury would in real life (121). Bradbury often uses satire and humor in his literary works (121). One result that they want the reader to experience while reading his work is laughter (121). His use of humor is complex throughout his works and is expressed throughout the way that he structured the story (121). The humor and satire that he uses is supposed to teach lessons to the reader however. Bradbury is very direct and upfront about announcing the certain agenda of a story (121). He is explicit in what he tells the reader they must think while reading one of his literary works (121). Bradbury is often looked at as a culture changer and a mischief maker throughout his ideas expressed in his works (121).

Throughout his career, Ray Bradbury devoted a lot of energy and time into self advertisement in his writing (Pfeiffer 120). Bradbury often advertised the messages that he wrote in his stories and works (120). In many of his works, he wrote radical messages and messages of revolution (120). Another element that is present in Bradbury’s works is the citing of Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw (121). He has cited both of these authors mischievously and respectfully (121). There are fiction works and poems that are written by Bradbury that explicitly include George Bernard Shaw. One particular instance where Bernad Shaw’s name was explicitly mentioned was in the novel Fahrenheit 451 (121). Bradbury also incorporates some of the themes and elements from Benerard’s literary works such as the themes of vegetarianism and alleged sexual adventuring (123). Bradbury would often take lines from Bernard Shaw’s work and twist them into his own style (123).

“In The Martian Chronicles, Ray Bradbury uses much the same technique. Bradbury's Mars is not the Mars of the as- tronomers of the forties. It is scientifically inaccurate by the science of the day in which it was written. It is a highly unlikely and implausible conception of Mars. But what is it, really? It is the rural, small-town midwest of Bradbury's childhood. Like most of us, Bradbury seems to feel that the world was right when he was a kid learning about it, and that since then it has some- how gone wrong. When, in 'The Third Expedition' (original title: 'Mars Is Heaven!'), Captain Black and his men travel by spaceship from earth to Mars in the year 2000, they are actually traveling back in time from 2000 to 1926. In this manner, Brad- bury can juxtapose rural 1926 with technological 2000. And he leaves no doubt where he stands: the technological invaders are destroyed. At the end of the last story in the collection, 'The Million-Year Picnic,' he comes right out and explain” (Patrouch 37).

In many of Bradbury's works, the elements of science that he refers to are scientifically out of date.