“Rays cut the air! Power bombs exploded incessantly! Evaporays robbed the Earth of its water—shot it up into the atmosphere and made of it a fog that condensed only after many months. And heat rays made deserts out of fertile terrain.” (The Record, np) This quote from one of Raymond Bradbury’s works show his beliefs of human’s destructive ability. Raymond Douglas Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois. He loved reading fantasy stories as a child, so he naturally decided to become an Author. Because his family could not afford college during the great depression, Bradbury went to the library daily. He ended up publishing his first work, *Pendulum,* in 1941. His most famous work, *Fahrenheit 451*, which was released during the red scare of the 1950s, was praised very highly for its opinions on censorship. Ray Bradbury died on June 5, 2012 in Los Angeles California(“Ray Bradbury Biography”, np). Though Bradbury wrote some very popular full-length books, he is also known for his shorter stories (Gregersen, np). In these, he displays many sorts of dystopian scenarios, which usually end in death or destruction. Ray Bradbury shows human’s ability to destroy with technology through Conflict, Setting, and Climax.

Firstly, Bradbury shows human’s ability to destroy with technology through conflict. One of Bradbury’s most famous short stories was called *The Veldt*. It was about a family in the future and their adventures with a curious piece of technology, known as “The Nursery”. The father of the family George was thinking about the Nursery’s effect on his children: “Death thoughts. They were awfully young, Wendy and Peter, for death thoughts. Or, no, you were never too young, really. Long before you knew what death was you were wishing it on someone else. When you were two years old you were shooting people with toy guns. But this – the long, hot African veldt. The awful death in the jaws of a lion. And repeated again and again” (The Veldt, np). This quote occurred after George and his wife, Lydia, had just escaped simulated lions from the nursery that had just finished killing and eating something before they went in. George knew that the lions were created by their children because the nursery simulate the children’s thoughts, and he was surprised that their children had imagined something as gruesome as something getting killed by lions. This shows how the nursery destroyed the children’s innocence by granting anything they wanted. Because the children could think about deadly things such as lions and they would show up, they continued to imagine these things, until the thoughts took control of their minds. This is the main conflict of the short story, and the children eventually get very angry with their parents when they threaten to turn off the nursery. Another way that Bradbury uses Conflict to display the ability of humans to destroy is in his short story *The Record*. In this story, people had completed all of science, gotten bored, and ended up killing each other for fun. “Rays cut the air! Power bombs exploded incessantly! Evaporays robbed the Earth of its water—shot it up into the atmosphere and made of it a fog that condensed only after many months. And heat rays made deserts out of fertile terrain.” (The Record, np) Because humans had done everything that there was to do, they felt purposeless and ended up killing each other with their technology. This quote from the beginning of the story introduces the war as the main conflict of the story, while also displaying the immense weaponry that the humans have access to. Overall, Bradbury appears to show technological destruction both passively and actively. Through the children, he shows technology causing slow collapse into corruption through their addiction to the nursery, while through the completionistic society he shows the ability of man to completely obliterate anything with technology by exhibiting weapons of mass destruction. However, this is only one of many ways that Bradbury uses humans causing damage with technology.

Although Bradbury uses conflict to display human’s ability to destroy themselves, he also uses Setting. In Bradbury’s *A Sound of thunder*, Eckles, the main character, had just accidentally messed with the timeline and had come back to the present. ”And there was a feel. His flesh twitched. His hands twitched. He stood drinking the oddness with the pores of his body…Somehow, the sign had changed: TYME SEFARI INC. SEFARIS TU ANY YEER EN THE PAST. YU NAIM THE ANIMALL. WEE TAEK YU THAIR. YU SHOOT ITT” (A Sound of Thunder, np). Eckles had not known that he had messed up all of time itself. He had simply stepped off of the path of a Safari to 60 million years B.C., but in fact, he had stepped on a butterfly, which caused a chain reaction all down the whole of time. This quote shows how off Eckles feels, and how he feels the damage before he then sees it through the broken English on the sign. What is eerie about this setting in this story is how it is very similar in the end to how it is in the beginning but is just different enough to be noticeable by Eckles. The slight weirdness that Eckles gets helps make the big differences between the timelines stand out tenfold. Bradbury uses Setting very subtly in this story, but in another, he uses it quite obviously. In There Will Come Soft Rains, Bradbury uses setting throughout the story. This story is told from the perspective of a house. Bradbury describes the weather and the western side of the house: “The house stood alone in a city of rubble and ashes. This was the one house left standing. At night the ruined city gave off a radioactive glow which could be seen for miles. The water pelted windowpanes, running down the charred west side where the house had been burned, evenly free of its white paint. The entire west face of the house was black, save for five places. Here the silhouette in paint of a man mowing a lawn. Here, as in a photograph, a woman bent to pick flowers. Still farther over, their images burned on wood in one titanic instant, a small boy, hands flung into the air; higher up, the image of a thrown ball, and opposite him a girl, hands raised to catch a ball which never came down” (There Will Come Soft Rains, np). This quote displays the remnants of the family that lived in a house and reveals that the family had been reduced to “Atom Bomb Shadows”, as seen in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The house is the only one left standing among the wreckage of Los Angeles. This quote exhibits human’s current best way to cause damage: the atomic bomb. Because the setting of the story is the single house standing amongst the rubble caused by one of these bombs, it contrasts the city of Los Angeles with what it once was, helping the destruction to be seen more clearly. Using setting, Bradbury describes the destruction caused by humans both unknowingly and on purpose. He showed the consequences of time travel mishaps, caused by a freak accident, as well as the devastation of the atomic bomb, a modern threat.

A final way that Bradbury shows Human ability to destroy technology is with his Climaxes. In many of Bradbury’s short stories, they end in the climax. At the end of *The Veldt,* Bradbury leaves the story at its climax. “Mr. Hadley looked at his wife and they turned and looked back at the beasts edging slowly forward, knees bent, tails in the air. Mr. and Mrs. Hadley screamed. And suddenly they realized why those other screams had sounded familiar” (The Veldt, np) This quote occurs after Mr. and Mrs. Hadley give the children five more minutes before they turned off the nursery forever. The children get very angry and lock them in the nursery with the lions to die. This quote shows humans’–even children’s– ability to do damage with technology. The children in the story decide that their technology is worth more than their parent’s lives, so they lock them in the nursery and kill them with the technology. The fact that Bradbury left the story hanging almost immediately after this quote allows the climax to stand on its own without a resolution, causing the reader to get the most out of the message in the climax. Bradbury quite likes to leave his climaxes violent when he ends his story for them, and *A Sound of Thunder* is another one. In *A Sound of Thunder*, Bradbury ends the story with its name: “He scrabbled at the golden butterfly with shaking fingers. "Can't we," he pleaded to the world, to himself, to the officials, to the Machine, "can't we take it back, can't we make it alive again? Can't we start over? Can't we­" He did not move. Eyes shut, he waited, shivering. He heard Travis breathe loud in the room; he heard Travis shift his rifle, click the safety catch, and raise the weapon. There was a sound of thunder” (A Sound of Thunder, np). This quote happens right after Eckles realizes what he had done by stepping off the path earlier. He realizes that he had stepped on a butterfly and that that creature’s death was what had caused all the damage throughout time. This quote uses Eckles’ death, the climax of the story, to show how truly severe the damage caused by the time machine was. Because of Eckles’ accident with the machine, he destroyed the timeline and ended up getting himself killed for his mistakes. Bradbury’s tendency to end stories at the climax allows the messages to ring like a bell, undisturbed by any sort of resolution.

Humans can cause a lot of damage using their technology, and Ray Bradbury managed to capture that fact perfectly in his short stories. In *There will come soft rains*, the setting is in a nuclear wasteland Los Angeles. If Tsar Bomba, the largest nuclear bomb designed, were to be detonated in Los Angeles, The Estimated Casualties would be around 10 Million, Los Angeles would be leveled, and damage would be felt from as far away as 57.02 miles away(Wellerstein, np). Given that humans currently have that much destructive power in their hands, they need to be careful with how they use such powers.

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