

# A sound of thunder and the understanding of causality and figurative language

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"A Sound of Thunder" is a science fiction short story written by Ray Bradbury, the story follows the protagonist Eckels who pays \$10,000 to a time travel company called Time Safari Inc, they conduct dangerous trips which consist of taking people back to any time period to hunt animals. Specifically, Eckels wanted to travel back in time to hunt down one of the most notorious monsters that ever existed in history, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. The company has no guarantee for the safety or return of the escapades, and so to regulate these difficulties there are strict instructions and expectations for how the hunters should act once they travel back in time. His guide Travis warns the other hunters they should follow a designated path, and that interrupting the past could have irreparable repercussions in the future, even for something as simple as stepping on a mouse could have a drastic effect. However, upon seeing the Tyrannosaurus Rex up close, Eckels panicked and went off the trail killing a butterfly in the process. When he returns to the future it turns out that killing one butterfly had the effect of changing the presidential election.

The author heavily emphasizes the usage of imagery and figurative language to create the story's mood and atmosphere as unnerving, calm, and mysterious. The explanation on the jungle is an example of when Bradbury uses imagery to depict a visual of the jungle, "Sounds like music and sounds like flying tents filled the sky, and those were pterodactyls soaring with cavernous gray wings, gigantic bats of delirium and night fever." (Bradbury page 5) this allows us to form a picture in our minds as we read, and his auditory imagery enhances this experience even more because it appeals to our sense of hearing. On top of this he uses figurative language particularly

personification to bring life to inanimate objects which gives the reader a more vivid picture of what is happening in the text.

Bradbury uses personification to establish a certain mood and build a more believable story as the reader will be drawn in by the emotions of the objects. Along with the imagery, with personification side by side it, the author did a good job to convey certain feelings as it is setting the atmosphere for how it's like in the prehistoric and future setting. An example of this was when Eckels was describing how "The machine slowed; it's scream fell to a murmur. The machine stopped" (Bradbury page 3). The combination of both the usage of imagery and figurative language helps feed the imagination of the readers so they can be immersed in the story.

Bradbury provides an interpretation on the dangers of choices, and how one decision from the past no matter how insignificant it is, could have a rippling effect that would impact the future. He stresses the concept of causality within the story, the events in the story whether be it past, present, or future are all connected by a chain of causes and effects. According to Travis, "crushing certain plants could add up infinitesimally. A little error here would multiply in sixty years, all out of proportion..." (Bradbury page 4) One event causes another, and which causes another and creates a domino effect. Due to a cause being a reason something happens, an effect would result to the consequential aftermaths of the cause. These connections further emphasize the fact that a small butterfly had such a massive effect on the world. The potential ripple effects may be overlooked due to how small it is, but we seem to not consider a small decision can make a big impact. This is both

empowering and frightening in a way that failure and positive change are both present in the real-life world and basically on two sides of the same coin. Although this short story is predictable due to how linear it is, I would recommend this book because the overall narrative makes it immersive and it relates to the real world.