

Technology: the downturn of society

[Literature](#), [Fiction](#)



Technology has been affecting society since the beginning of time. In every era there is a new form of technology that has helped shape society. In Ray Bradbury's "The Veldt," he expresses the change that technology brought to the Hadley residence through their virtual reality room. In Michiko Kakutani's "Bananas for Rent," she writes about the change that the media, a form of technology, has brought to the American society. Although the story is fiction and the essay is nonfiction, both works deal with the change that technology has brought upon society. Both works express a negative connotation on the subject of technology. Although there are several distinctions between both works, when seen through the formalist lens, "The Veldt" and "Bananas for Rent" both answer the ontological question of the importance of technology using similar methods. Both authors answer the question using their tone, foreshadowing, and plot. Bradbury uses his story's tone to prove that technology has degraded society. Throughout the story, the author expresses troubled and somber tone through the use of his dialogue and descriptions. In a description of the house, the author writes, "The house was full of dead bodies, it seemed. It felt like a mechanical cemetery. So silent. None of the humming hidden energy of machines waiting to function at the tap of a button (Bradbury 1736). This descriptive passage adds to the somber tone of the story by creating a dead atmosphere. It also proves that the technology had destroyed the house by claiming that it felt like it was a mechanical cemetery. The author used the story's tone to exemplify the death that the machines were bringing upon the house. Through the formalist lens by examining the tone, one can see the decline of the house that was brought upon by its technology. The author adds the literary device

of foreshadowing to demonstrate that technology has caused society to decline. Throughout the story the author foreshadows the death of the Hadley parents through the technology found in their home. The parents keep hearing screams every time they go into the nursery, which is a virtual reality room. While in the nursery, George Hadley finds his wallet and shows it to his wife, " The smell of hot grass was on it and the smell of a lion. There were drops of saliva on it, it had been chewed, and there were blood smears on both sides" (1732). The constant screams that the parents hear and the wallet that the dad found, both foreshadow the death by the lions that the two parents were going to experience in the nursery. The author foreshadowed that the technology was going to kill the parents of the house as it tore the family apart. The foreshadowing gave an insight to the reader as it picked up that technology was no good for the members of the household. By using the formalist lens in examining this story, the viewer is able to see how degrading the nursery was for the family by focusing on the literary device of foreshadowing. Bradbury's plot in his short story expresses how technology ultimately brought the destruction of the Hadley family. The Hadley's Happy Life Home does everything for them except take care of their emotional needs. When the family psychologist is talking to father referring to the nursery, he states, " You've let this room and this house replace you and your win in you children's affections. This room is their mother and father, far more important in their lives than their real parents" (1735). The children don't get the love they want from their parents and instead they focus that love on their nursery. When their parents take it away, Peter and Wendy grow arrogant and aggressive. The story's plot of what happens when

physical needs are satisfied, but emotional needs are not help magnify the problem that technology brought to the Hadley residence. The nursery tore the family apart as it became the children's new parents. Through the formalist lens, one can examine the plot that revolves around the trouble that the house brought upon the family. Similarly to Ray Bradbury's approaches, Kakutani uses her essay's tone to defy the negative aspect that technology is bringing upon the American culture. Kakutani uses an informational and serious tone to explain how America's culture is relying solely on the use of advertisements. The author, referring to advertisements, says, " They are as pervasive as roaches, as persuasive as the weather, as popular as Princess Diana" (Kakutani 130). Advertisements are everywhere as Kakutani explains by using her informational tone. She later explains how advertisement has become " our cultural literacy [...]" (131). She informs the public how society is taking in advertisements, a form of technology, and making it their culture. The existing American culture is declining and it is now being formed by what technology brings us. Similarly to " The Veldt," Kakutani uses tone to show how technology has changed society. In this case advertisements have become America's literacy culture. In the same case, Bradbury used a somber tone to show that technology had taken over the children's emotional needs, as they no longer needed their parents. Through using the formalist lens, one can see that Kakutani used an informational tone to express how technology was degrading America's culture. In " Bananas for Rent," the author uses foreshadowing to express how technology is transforming American culture. She foreshadows how technology is becoming part of our contemporary culture. She has examined

and observed students and states, " that students share no common culture of book or history; what they share is a knowledge of commercials" (131). She later explains, " The end result of advertising's ability to disguise itself as entertainment and entertainment's willingness to adopt the hard-sell methods of advertising is a blurring of the lines between art and commerce (132). The author foreshadows how culture through our American youth is changing from books to things found in the media. Advertisements that are used for commerce are now intruding our culture, as it is becoming an art. Advertisements as a whole have transformed American society. In the same way Bradbury used foreshadowing to express how the house was completely changing the lives of the Hadley's. Bradbury's foreshadowing showed that technology was destroying the Hadley family, which is the greatest change one can overcome: complete destruction. Both works express how the foreshadowing of the use of technology brought change to society. By using the formalist lens, it is made clear that the author used foreshadowing to get across the point that technology is completely changing society. In Kakutani's essay, she uses its plot to express how technology is transforming society. Throughout the essay, Kakutani gives countless examples of how advertisements, through the media, are changing our culture. She explains what makes advertising part of our culture, " It's that advertising's attention-grabbing hype has become, our information-glutted age, the modus operandi of the world at large" (132). Advertisement has become part of our culture because it is used as a way to grab the consumer's attention as it is the most widely used form of propaganda. Kakutani's plot of advertisements affecting the American culture shows how technology has transformed society from a

society of books to a society of commercials, billboards, and magazine ads. In the same way Bradbury used the plot in his story to explain how the use of technology had taken care of the family's physical needs, but not the emotional needs. The family had gone from a united family to a broken and unsatisfied family as a result of technology. The change that technology had brought to society is seen in both works through their plots. Through the formalist lens, one can view how plot is used to defy the change that technology brings to a community. Society has a greater reliance on technology then ever before, which might bring our ultimate downfall. The fact that the change that technology is bringing upon society is answered in both nonfiction and fictional stories brings verity to the fact that technology is affecting our society. Since both works deal with a negative connotation of the change that technology is bringing, it leads one to realize that technology is destroying the norms from our past. As our nation's reliance on technology grows and grows, it leads society to question the direction our nation is heading. If technology were to fail, it would bring the ultimate downturn of society. Works Cited Bradbury, Ray. " Veldt." The Britannica: Library of Great American Writing. Ed. Louis Untermeyer. Chicago, IL: Britannica Press, 1960. 1726-1738. Kakutani, Michiko. " Bananas for Rent." Short Takes. Ed. Joseph Opiela. New York City, NY: Longman Publishers, 2002. 130-133.