
Literary Analysis Of Bradbury's The Veldt, The Science Fiction Masterpiece

Originally named "The World the Children Made," "The Veldt" is a science fiction short story written by American writer, Ray Bradbury. It was the first story in his anthology, *The Illustrated Man*, published by Doubleday in 1951. According to Terry Heller, in the article "Ray Bradbury," Bradbury began writing stories and poems as soon as he learned how to write. He also worked in a variety of genres, including fantasy and science fiction. "The Veldt" was thought of as a great success with critics and readers, especially since it was published one year after Bradbury's successful publication of *The Martian Chronicles* ("Overview"). He was influenced to write "The Veldt" when televisions were getting popular and people feared that watching too much of it would lead to the breakdown of families.

The of "The Veldt" is that technology is harmful and can destroy family relationships. In this story, Bradbury talks about two parents who buy their 10-year-old twin children a smart house called "Happy-life Home." This house can perform most human functions, such as cleaning, cooking, helping get dressed, rocking the kids to sleep, and it also includes a nursery that works with the thoughts. This nursery is designed to recreate a scene in complete detail of the occupant's thought. "The Veldt" shows how technology this advanced caused these children to crave control and become a danger to their parents.

George and Lydia Hadley, live with their twin children, Peter and Windey, in their technologically advanced "Happy-life Home." Lydia assumes that something is wrong with the nursery in the house and tells her husband to check it out. When they went in, the room came to life and they saw themselves in the middle of an African veldt. It looked real and they started to feel as if they were really there, under the hot sun and they could smell all the things around them, which is not the way this nursery usually operates. They saw from a distance what appeared to be lions eating something that was killed, and then the lions suddenly started running towards them. Lydia was terrified and they closed the door and went into the house. George tried reassuring Lydia that it isn't real and that it was just a veldt created by the children due to reading too much about Africa.

The author reveals this about the wife's thoughts, "That's just it. I feel like I don't belong here. The house is wife and mother now, and nurse for the children. Can I compete with an African veldt? Can I give a bath and clean the children as efficiently or quickly as the automatic body wash can? I cannot. And it isn't just me. It's you. You've been awfully nervous lately." (Bradbury 62) The two discuss this thought and plan on shutting down the house for a few days as they don't see it is necessary to have it on when they can still perform the duties the house took over. George decides to double-check the nursery one more time and knowing it reacts to thoughts, he attempts to change the African veldt into a new scene and finds out he is unable to do so.

George and Lydia then question their children about the African scenery and the children deny it exists. They go in and show their parents a lovely green forest but George does not believe they are telling the truth. As they are leaving the room they find one of George's old wallets with bite marks and blood on it. They then decide to invite the children's psychologist, David McClean, to

look at the nursery and give them his thoughts. They then hear lions roaring and oddly familiar screams coming from the nursery. Peter later found out from his father that they are considering turning off the house for a while and threatened his father not to do so (“Overview”).

When David McClean assesses the situation, “he admits that he has a very bad feeling about what is taking place. He says that the children seem to care more about the room than they do about their parents and that the situation has become quite dangerous” (“Overview”). Moments later George began switching off the house and suggests to the children that they all go on a little vacation together but they cried and begged him for one more moment in the nursery. Peter gets so mad that he tells his father he hates him and he wanted him to be dead, the author reveals about Peter's thoughts, “Oh, I hate you!” and “I wish you were dead!” (Bradbury 66). Convinced by his wife, George allowed his children a few more minutes in it. The children then led on the parents to go into the nursery with the realistic African veldt as they locked their parents inside. The lions began to approach them again as they screamed, realizing the screams they heard before from the nursery had been their own screams. David arrives and the children greet him by the nursery and he sees the lions feeding on something from far while Wendy offers him a cup of tea.

At the beginning of the story, the theme was focused on the technological marvel HappyLife Home the family-owned and how it is able to tend to their needs. This technological advancement controlled their daily life and caused the family to have a lack of connection with one another. This portion of the story explained how the parents felt the house was taking over duties they are able to provide to their children, however, allowing the children to grow in a technology controlled environment caused the children to be attached. The nursery was described to be more of a parental figure than their own parents. It was something they are attached to and therefore taking it away was scary for the children and is like a parent abandoning them. This shows how technology can destroy a family bond that needs time and human interaction to be achieved.

As the events in the story go on the author draws a detailed picture of what the African veldt looked and felt and smelled like and this shows the revenge the children wanted on their parents. Whenever the parents didn't listen to the children they threatened the parents. When children are used to things going their way they keep doing the same things so they can have what they want.

Another theme included in the story is when the parents died. It showed that they did not build the same foundation that the children built with the nursery. They thought of it as a parent to them and since they did not have that same connection with their parents they did not care for them dying.

“The Veldt” is told from a third-person omniscient point of view. While most of the story is revealed from George's perspective. For example, the reader gets into George's mind when he thought to himself when he and Lydia were eating dinner without the children the reader got to see his thoughts about locking the nursery,” As for the nursery, thought George Hadley, it won't hurt for the children to be locked out of it a while.” (Bradbury 62). At the end of the story, he changed the point of view to David's side, Bradbury talked about when David got into the veldt by the children and asked about their parents, “ On the far them he could see the water hole and the yellow veldt. Above was the hot sun. He began to sweat. “Where are your father and mother?” (Bradbury 66). We know that the point of view changed from George to David

because George was killed by the lions.

The author uses the hot sun and fierce lions as a symbol in "The Veldt" to describe the rage built into the children, the hot sun and the anger of the lions are how the children feel about their parents. The sun was referred to 10 times in the story, while the lions were referred to 36 times. Every time the parents go into the nursery they feel the hot sun burning and they see the lions eating their victim. The children had so much hatred that they imagined death by the lions eating a victim.

Bradbury talks about the dark side of technology and how it can destroy families, and how technology can replace human connection. He suggests that technology is no longer useful for the family, and the author's goal is to raise awareness of the dangers of allowing technology to become too powerful, and the dangers of parents losing control of their children.

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