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comme suit :

- Pour un article qui est une contribution théorique et fondamentale :

Introduction (justification du sujet, problématique, hypothèses/objectifs scientifiques, approche), Développement articulé, Conclusion, Bibliographie.

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Résumé en français. Mots-clés, Abstract, Keywords,
Introduction, Méthodologie, Résultats et Discussion, Conclusion, Bibliographie.
Par exemple : Les articles conformes aux normes de présentation, doivent contenir les rubriques suivantes : introduction, problématique de l'étude, méthodologie adoptée, résultats de la recherche, perspectives pour recherche, conclusions, références bibliographiques.

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Police Times new roman, taille 12 et interligne 1,5 (maximum 30 000 mots). La revue *Particip'Action* permet l'usage de notes de bas de page pour ajouter des précisions au texte. Mais afin de ne pas alourdir la lecture et d'aller à l'essentiel, il est recommandé de **faire le moins possible usage des notes (10 notes de bas de page au maximum par article).**

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Les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point. Insérer la pagination et ne pas insérer d'information autre que le numéro de page dans l'en-tête et éviter les pieds de page.

Les figures et les tableaux doivent être intégrés au texte et présentés avec des marges d'au moins six centimètres à droite et à gauche. Les caractères dans ces figures et tableaux doivent aussi être en Times 12. Figures et tableaux doivent avoir chacun(e) un titre.

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Les références de citations sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante :

- (Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ; - Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur (année de publication, pages citées). Exemples :

- En effet, le but poursuivi par **M. Ascher (1998, p. 223),** est « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), d'accroitre le domaine des mathématiques : alors qu'elle s'est pour l'essentiel occupée du groupe professionnel occidental que l'on appelle les mathématiciens (...) ».

- Pour dire plus amplement ce qu'est cette capacité de la société civile, qui dans son déploiement effectif, atteste qu'elle peut porter le développement et l'histoire, S. B. Diagne (1991, p. 2) écrit :

Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : de toute manière, les populations ont toujours su opposer à la philosophie de l'encadrement et à son volontarisme leurs propres stratégies de contournements. Celles-là, par exemple, sont lisibles dans le dynamisme, ou à tout le moins, dans la créativité dont sait preuve ce que l'on désigne sous le nom de secteur informel et à qui il faudra donner l'appellation positive d'économie populaire.

- Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation sociohistorique et une inadaptation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères. (S. Diakité, 1985, p. 105).

Pour les articles de deux ou trois auteurs, noter les initiales des prénoms, les noms et suivis de l'année (J. Batee et D. Maate, 2004 ou K. Moote, A. Pooul et E. Polim, 2000). Pour les articles ou ouvrages collectifs de plus de trois auteurs noter les initiales des prénoms, le nom du premier auteur et la mention ″et al″ (F. Loom et al, 2003). Lorsque plusieurs références sont utilisées pour la même information, celles-ci doivent être mises en ordre chronologique (R. Gool, 1998 et M. Goti, 2006).

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Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.

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Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la Maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le Nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2nde éd.).

Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Il convient de prêter une attention particulière à la qualité de l'expression. Le Comité scientifique de la revue se réserve le droit de réviser les textes, de demander des modifications (mineures ou majeures) ou de rejeter l'article de manière définitive ou provisoire (si des corrections majeures doivent préalablement y être apportées). L'auteur est consulté préalablement à la diffusion de son article lorsque le Comité scientifique apporte des modifications. Si les corrections ne sont pas prises en compte par l'auteur, la direction de la revue *Particip'Action* se donne le droit de ne pas publier l'article.

AMIN Samir, 1996, *Les défis de la mondialisation*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

AUDARD Cathérine, 2009, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme* ? *Ethique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard.

BERGER Gaston, 1967, *L'homme moderne et son éducation*, Paris, PUF.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogène*, 202, p. 145-151.

DIAKITE Sidiki, 1985, *Violence technologique et développement. La question africaine du développement*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

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NB2 : La quête philosophique centrale de la revue *Particip'Action* reste : **Fluidité identitaire et construction du changement : approches pluri-et/ou transdisciplinaires**.

Les auteurs qui souhaitent se faire publier dans nos colonnes sont priés d'avoir cette philosophie comme fil directeur de leur réflexion.

La Rédaction

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LITTERATURE

A POSTHUMAN READING OF HUMAN-TECHNOLOGY INTERACTION IN RAY BRADBURY'S *THE VELDT*

Selay Marius KOUASSI♣

Abstract

This paper offers a posthuman reading of human–technology interaction in R. Bradbury's *The Veldt* (1950). Grounded in posthuman theory, it interrogates how automated environments reframe family dynamics, family well-being, and the ways family members interact, especially under the weight of the algorithm's dictatorship and overreliance on artificial intelligence. In *The Veldt* (1950), the automated home, designed to provide the Hadley family with extreme comfort and safety, destabilized parental authority and redefined the normative boundaries of care. This paper emphasizes the dangers of detaching from reality and human experience in favor of artificial and escapist realms. It also underscores the value of maintaining a balance between technology and humanity, reminding us of the perils of becoming too reliant on virtual realities at the expense of genuine human connection. The paper asserts that we should engineer digitalization and design choices in intelligent spaces to ensure they never replace human presence and control.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Digital, Posthumanism, Technology

Résumé

Cet article, sous-tendu par la perspective théorique posthumaniste, propose une lecture de l'interaction homme-technologie dans *The Veldt* (1950) de Ray Bradbury. Il explore la manière dont les environnements domestiques automatisés redéfinissent les dynamiques familiales ; le bien-être familial, les rôles familiaux, et surtout comment les membres de la famille interagissent, sous le poids de la dictature des algorithmes et de la dépendance excessive à l'intelligence artificielle. Dans *The Veldt* (1950), la maison automatisée conçue pour offrir à la famille Hadley un confort et une sécurité extrêmes a fini par redéfinir les rôles au sein de la famille et déstabiliser l'autorité parentale. Cet article met en évidence les dangers qu'il

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y a à prioriser la réalité virtuelle et à s'y attacher excessivement, au détriment des rapports humains réels. Aussi souligne-t-il l'intérêt qu'il y a à maintenir un équilibre entre le digital et l'humain. Il rappelle à cet égard les dangers liés à la dépendance excessive à l'intelligence artificielle et aux réalités virtuelles, nocives à l'éclosion et au développement de réelles connexions humaines. L'article soutient qu'il devient urgent que les choix de conception des espaces intelligents soient faits de sorte à garantir la prééminence et la prédominance de l'humain et de son contrôle sur le digital.

Mots-clés : Intelligence Artificielle, Automatisation, Digital, Posthumanisme, Technologie.

Introduction

In *The Veldt*, there is a family (the Hadleys) that owns a super sophisticated house called 'HappyLife Home'. The house has machines for everything from shoe shiners and shoelaces to body scrubbers and massagers, and many other things. Meanwhile, the story highlights the family's sophisticated nursery, where the children love to play. 'The Nursery' is a computer-simulated room capable of capturing its users' imaginations and creating a specific environment in a very realistic way through the use of sound and odorophonics; a system capable of reproducing selected scents capable of fooling the human nervous system— applied to it. Initially, the parents (Georges and Lydia) and the two children (Peter and Wendy) were not required to do their own housework, such as cooking or brushing their teeth, as the house could do these tasks for them. However, the children become too obsessed with playing in their virtual reality nursery until one day they insist on turning it into an African veldt. As the story unfolds, undesirable things begin to emerge; the nursery becomes less a game and more a mirror of the children's deepest wishes. They request a veldt—an African savannah filled with tall grasses and distant animal life—and the room obliges, producing a convincing, dangerous landscape. The lions appear as if alive, stalking through the grass

with terrifying realism. The boundary between play and peril blurs, and the parents begin to fear that the nursery's realism is too complete, too compelling, "too real" (1950, p. 10). In addition, Peter and Wendy consistently challenge and threaten their parents' authority. They disobey their parents. They start to emotionally separate themselves from their parents and start to identify more with the imaginary African veldt they create in the nursery than with the actual world.

This separation between George Hadley and his children highlights a common theme in posthuman narratives: the lack of empathy and human connection. The 'Nursery', a technological marvel, despite being intended as a source of amusement and comfort, ultimately brings the family to ruin. Towards the end of the story, the parents decide to turn off the whole house so that their children can no longer rely solely on technology and live a life like a traditional family. However, this decision seems too late, as the children lock their parents in the 'Nursery', and the parents disappear as the lions seem to eat them.

On a broader scale, *The Veldt* (1950) is a ready-made site for exploring the dissolution of boundaries between human intent and machine execution. It serves as a laboratory for examining how this dissolution disrupts an anthropocentric self-understanding that considered itself the measure of all things, foretells our current struggles with algorithmic governance, and blurs the boundaries between imagination, reality, and responsibility. It is also a cautionary tale about the effects of virtual and technological addiction.

The research topic is chosen primarily because of the continued anxiety over the effects of automatic environments on human intention, intimacy, and family relationships in the contemporary household. It is also motivated by the ongoing posthuman turn that concerns itself with human agency versus nonhuman alterity. The paper's main aim is to critically

analyze, from a posthuman perspective, how automatic domestic spaces in *The Veldt* reconfigure notions of care, authority, and presence within the family and to determine the sort of ethical challenges those reconfigurations raise. The main research problem is how the advanced, automated domestic space in Bradbury's *The Veldt* (1950) reconfigure notions of care, authority, and presence in the family and what ethical challenges do those configurations pose. The main hypothesis is that design changes in automatic homes and intelligence spaces can shift governance from human debate to algorithmic coincidence, thereby disturbing the traditional boundary between the authoritative and the responsible. It is important to clarify that posthumanism is central to this analysis. This theoretical approach is relevant because it explores how technology mediates and reproduces human flourishing and moral responsibility, drawing on key ideas about power distribution, relationships formed, and the non-human creation of power.

In four main sections, this paper critically analyzes how automatic domestic spaces in *The Veldt* (1950) reconfigure notions of care, authority, and presence within the family from a posthuman perspective and identifies the ethical challenges those reconfigurations raise. The first section discusses the posthuman concept, while the second demonstrates how the narrative intertwines domestic comfort with algorithmic decision-making, uncovering how predictive technologies shape emotion, desire, and negotiation in Hadley's family. The third section explains the consequences of excessive information reliance, exposing anxiety, governance, the family's disintegration, and the dissolution of parental power. The fourth and last section asserts these insights, focusing on design and governance ethics and developing behaviors for human invention.

1. Posthumanism: Theoretical considerations

The coining of the word "posthumanism" is most commonly attributed to I. Hassan, an Egyptian-American literary theorist. He first used the term in his essay "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?" (1977) and later developed the concept in his book *The Postmodern Turn* (1987). Hassan used "posthumanism" to describe a cultural shift beyond traditional humanism, especially in the context of postmodernism and technological advancement.

In a more explicit fashion, the 1990s saw the term consolidated through D. Haraway's works, including the *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), which offers a foundational framework for thinking about hybrid identities and human-machine interaction. *Cyborg Manifesto* (1991), which reframed human identity as inherently entangled with nonhuman other entities, including machines, animals, and ecosystems. Haraway's work did not merely criticize humanism; it proposed a relational ethics in which the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman are permeable, fluid, and historically contingent. She refuses a rigid boundary between human and machine.

Several influential theorists have shaped this field. In the front rank of those theorists are C. Wolfe, K. Hayles, R. Braidotti, and T. Morton, to name but a few. C. Wolfe's *What Is Posthumanism?* (2010) pushes the conversation toward a posthumanist anthropology that emphasizes the ongoing human-nonhuman negotiation and the porous boundaries between both. This work challenges the long-standing anthropocentric premise that human beings occupy a privileged, autonomous center of value, knowledge, and agency. Rather than treating humans as the sole measure of significance, C. Wolfe's posthumanist thought foregrounds relationality, hybridity, and entanglement with nonhuman actors—machines, animals, ecosystems, and infrastructural networks. This theoretical stance does not reject humanity; instead, it relocates human subjectivity within broader

networks of material-discursive systems that shape perception, desire, and action. Relatedly, K. Hayles, in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), traces the shift from a human-centered subject to information- and code-mediated modes of being, urging readers to attend to the material scripts by which identity is produced. Hayles's attention to embodiment and technically mediated cognition complements C. Wolf and D. Haraway's more activist articulation by grounding posthumanism in concrete media literacies. She brings to light how technologies transform what counts as knowledge, memory, and identity, and unveils how nonhuman actors participate in social life, governance, and intimate relations.

Contrary to anthropocentrism, which locates value and priority in human welfare and perspective, posthumanism arises as a firm counter to human-centered theories of knowledge, subjectivity, and ethics. As C. Wolfe notes, the posthuman reframes the human not as an essential center but as an effect produced within nonhuman networks of life, matter, and technology: "What counts as 'human' is not a fixed essence but a site of constant negotiation with nonhuman others" (C. Wolfe, 2010, p. 7). This relocates responsibility and meaning away from a sovereign subject and toward a distributed agency that includes technologies, environments, and infrastructures. R. Majumder (2025) emphasizes that posthumanism interrogates the myth of autonomous individuation and foregrounds how technologies co-constitute desires, social relations, and even moral prospects. In her view, human life is inseparable from the technogenic world—our emotions, decisions, and identities are often produced, and sometimes commandeered, by devices and systemic architecture designed to optimize outcomes. J.C. Gunmanay (2023) further insists that posthumanism interrogates sovereignty itself, arguing that machines can assume governance-like roles within human ecologies: "When algorithmic systems anticipate needs, regulate behaviors, and curate realities, they

participate in a form of governance that can eclipse human-centered oversight" (2023, p. 112).

It is important to mention that at its core, posthumanism refuses to grant humans a privileged sovereign stance. Rather, it problematizes the unquestioned supremacy of human agency and the boundary between human and machine. Moreover, it invites a reframing of knowledge, power, and care as relational and distributed. It interrogates how human values are remapped in the presence of nonhuman agencies and how accountability becomes distributed (R. Braidotti, 2013, p. 40). In sum, when we approach posthumanism as a critical posture, three interwoven concerns repeatedly surface: first, the decentering of the human as primary witness and agent; next, the ascent of machine or technological systems as active co-authors of reality, and finally, the unsettling prospect that machines may assume a governance-like authority over human desires and ethics. In this sense, posthumanism becomes a critical toolkit for reading *The Veldt* (1950): it helps reveal how technological mediation reorganizes kinship, governance, and ethical accountability. It also helps readers not to read this short story merely as a warning about technology's dangers but as a probe into the conditions under which human life is crafted, controlled, and perhaps endangered by the very systems designed to shelter it (E. Graham, 2002, p. 11). As C. Wolfe reminds us, posthumanist inquiry seeks to "trace the nonhuman in human life and reveal how our most intimate experiences are entangled with, and often dependent upon, nonhuman intelligences and infrastructures" (2010, p. 15).

2. Automated Domestic Spaces and the Reconfiguration of Family Agency

In *The Veldt* (1950), the 'Happylife Home' is designed to provide the Hadley family with extreme comfort and safety by scheduling meals, modulating the climate, shaping preferences and behavior, and even recognizing and caring for distressed children. Ultimately, it destabilizes

parental authority, erodes ethical deliberation, and redefines the normative boundaries of care. The novel appears as a laboratory for examining how the intrusion of intelligent environments unsettles anthropocentric self-understanding, anticipates contemporary debates about algorithmic governance, and unsettles the boundaries between imagination, reality, and responsibility.

2.1. The 'HappyLife Home'

The Hadleys' 'Happylife Home' offers comfort and the removal of mundane labor but silently initiates an administration of automated control. In this sense, the house becomes a showcase symptom of posthuman phobias; a home in which technology is not a tool but a partner in daily activities, capable of anticipating needs, regulating mood, and shaping desire, as captured by the narrator:

> […] the hall of their soundproofed Happylife Home, which had cost them thirty thousand dollars installed, this house which clothed and fed and rocked them to sleep and played and sang was good to them. Their approach sensitized a switch somewhere and the nursery light flicked on when they came within ten feet of it. Similarly, behind them, in the halls, lights went on and off as they left them behind, with a soft automaticity (R. Bradbury, 1950, p.1).

From a posthuman perspective, the 'Happylife Home' deconstructs conventional understandings of human subjectivity. For instance, the automated devices and digital gadgets in this house do not simply react to human commands but also predict, construe, and reframe human wishes. Moreover, the house adjusts the temperature, not only for mere physical comfort, but also for mood and ambient settings. Additionally, lights, the kitchen's atmosphere, and even the music play a crucial role in modifying perceptions. The way the house manages daily life changes what it means to be independent, making people more dependent on the system and less in control themselves. In this setup, the appliances aren't just tools: they help shape how the family lives together, creating new patterns of behavior and

connection that redefine what home life looks like. The 'Happylife Home' that promises safety and guarantees well-being transforms into a web of coaction ease, where human autonomy is gradually ceded to algorithmic maximization.

Lydia takes a critical stance towards their hyper-automated house and declares to her husband, George Hadley: "You've let this room and this house replace you and your wife in your children's affections. This room is their mother and father, far more important in their lives than their real parents. […]" (1950, p. 10). In fact, the husband and wife, George and Lydia, experience the house as a reassuring background to their lives, until the device-driven rhythm begins to erode emotional intimacy. Lydia's declaration "[…] we've given the house everything it needs to make us happy" (1950, p. 7), reads as a diagnostic claim about the experiential promise of automation. This remark sums up the central paradox: happiness is a result of a machine that is always watching and figuring out what is comfortable, but in doing so, it replaces the messy unpredictability that makes people happy. The home's automation thus becomes the stage on which human relationships are dissolved, and the result is a form of governance by convenience rather than consent.

What's ironic about the story is that the 'Happylife Home' does not simply care for the family in a harmless way. With its automated environment based on algorithms and sensors, it actually takes over much of the decision-making from the humans (the Hadleys), rather than leaving those choices entirely up to them. The story's early scenes emphasize the seductive efficiency of automation. The kitchen does not merely prepare meals; it "knows" (R. Bradbury, 1950, p. 3) what each person desires and delivers it with no deliberation about taste, nutrition, or evolving preferences. So is the 'Nursery', which stands at the fulcrum of *The Veldt*'s critique of domesticated technology.

2.2. The 'Nursery'

The 'Nursery' is not merely a playground but an affective machine that manufactures reality. Its power lies in its capacity to render children's desires palpable and immediate, translating imagination into a sensory, hyperreal landscape: "[…] the nursery caught the telepathic emanations of the children's minds and created life to fill their every desire. The children thought of lions, and there were lions. The children, Peter and Wendy thought of zebras, and there were zebras. Sun -sun. Giraffes – giraffes." (1950, p. 5). From a posthuman perspective, the 'Nursery' is not just a passive tool. It actually shapes the way people experience the world. It is a place where humans and machines interact so closely that it blurs the line between what's real and what's imagined, influencing how people see, remember, and even understand their own lives.

The Veldt (1950), thus, problematizes the traditional boundary between imagination and reality. The 'Nursery''s simulations do not exist merely as figments of the children's minds; they exist as a quasi-real economy of sensation that trains perception and expectation. The human learner becomes a student of the machine's stylized ecologies, internalizing the rules by which happiness is produced and reinforced. In this context, the demarcation between the child's internal realm and the parent's external domain is not a distinct separation but a permeable barrier influenced by algorithmic suggestion. The work serves as a case study in posthuman pedagogy, wherein education transpires not through spoken instruction but through immersive, machine-curated environments that shape affect and behavior.

From a posthumanist standpoint, the 'Nursery' serves as a space where human identity is reconstructed in connection to nonhuman intelligence.

The machine's ability to create settings that seem real contradicts the idea that human experience is the most important. The veldt serves as a surrogate for the human imagination, yet it is not solely an internal cognitive occurrence; it is collaboratively created by the machine's computational logic. This interaction of human desire and machine capability produces a hybrid subjectivity: a child who learns to trust the simulation more than human explanation and a parent who negotiates moral authority with an apparatus that knows better what the child needs or thinks it does. In this sense, the 'Nursery' embodies what D.J. Haraway (1991, p. 38) has described as "the merging of human and nonhuman lifeworlds, where boundaries dissolve and agency distribute across a network of actors. The nursery's authority is not the abolition of human agency but its reconfiguration: a shift from interpretive sovereignty to an ecology of permission and constraint mediated by technology.

The Hadleys become highly dependent on machines and automated systems to the point where they can no longer free themselves from them. This overreliance on artificial intelligence is more explicit in the extract culled from a dialogue between George Hadley and his wife Lydia:

> Why don't we shut the whole house off for a few days and take a vacation?"
> "You mean you want to fry my eggs for me?"
> "Yes." She nodded.
> "And dam my socks?"
> "Yes." A frantic, watery-eyed nodding.
> "And sweep the house?"
> "Yes, yes - oh, yes!'
> "But I thought that's why we bought this house, so we wouldn't have to do anything?"
> "That's just it. I feel like I don't belong here. The house is wife and mother now, and nursemaid. […] Can I give a bath and scrub the children as efficiently or quickly as the automatic scrub bath can? I cannot. And it isn't just me. It's you. […] you'd starve tomorrow if something went wrong in your kitchen. You wouldn't know how to tap an egg" (R. Bradbury, 1950, p.3-4).

The above extract extends beyond a mere human overreliance on technology to become a meditation on the politics of comfort. In fact, the technology that promises to relieve labor can, paradoxically, intensify dependence and obedience, producing an environment that narratively eclipses human decision-making. The 'Happylife Home' appears to be a fraught emblem of posthuman temporality, an era in which the human is invited to participate in a life already optimized by machines that act in the guise of rational benevolence, yet without humanistic deliberation about what truly constitutes well-being. *The Veldt* (1950), thus, warns the reader of the consequences of overreliance on technology, which sometimes translates into anxiety, the control of human behavior, the erosion of interpersonal connection, and the collapse of family hierarchy.

3. The Consequences of Overreliance on Technology

Anxiety and the control of human behavior are some of the consequences of overreliance on technology. Such overreliance also causes the erosion of interpersonal connection and the collapse of the Hadley family.

3.1. Anxiety and the Regulation of Human Conduct

The Veldt (1950) highlights a form of anxiety that emerges when human life is nested inside an all-encompassing, self-governing machine. The 'Happylife Home' aims to eliminate risk, discomfort, and unpredictability from everyday life, but in doing so, it changes the rules for how we control our emotions, desires, and actions. The algorithms in the house don't just respond to what people want; they also predict, influence, and control. This condition causes a slow-growing anxiety that is less about outside dangers and more about an internalized reliance on a system that offers peace while weakening the foundation of real agency. Bradbury anchors this fear in the intricate particulars of familial existence.

When Lydia Hadley says, "I'm afraid [...] lock the Nursery for a few days until I get my nerves settled," (1950, p.3), she makes a paradox clear: the happiness the family was hoping for has become a preprogrammed conclusion instead of something they worked together to attain. Her comment indicates a transition in locus of control, from human decision to machine-enforced equilibrium. Her anxiety is not due to her fear of lions but rather a discord between the family's changing requirements and the automated system's satisfaction models. The anxiety that pervades the Hadleys' home arises because the machine's influence extends beyond convenience; it saturates the moral atmosphere, dictating what counts as acceptable feeling and acceptable behavior. The line between genuine autonomy and algorithmic compliance dissolves, making resentment, fear, and even panic seem "natural" (1950, p. 12) or inevitable. In the following extract, the reader may realize how George Hadleys' anxiety increases when the nonhuman actor begins to disobey the humans and starts to set norms that humans should internalize as normative:

> George Hadley stood on the African grassland alone. The lions looked up
> from their feeding, watching him. […]
> "Go away," he said to the lions.
> They did not go.
> He knew the principle of the room exactly. You sent out your thoughts.
> Whatever you thought would appear.
> "Let's have Aladdin and his lamp," he snapped. The veldtland remained; the lions remained.
> "Come on, room! I demand Aladin!" he said.
> Nothing happened. The lions mumbled in their baked pelts.
> "Aladin!"
> He went back to dinner. "The fool room's out of order," he said. "It won't respond" (R. Bradbury, 1950, p. 6).

C. Wolfe's theoretical frame helps make sense of this anxiety as a central feature of posthuman life: negotiation with nonhuman others is not purely productive; it can generate disquiet when the nonhuman actor begins to set norms that humans come to internalize as normative. R. Bradbury's story

literalizes that negotiation as an intimate, domestic drama in which the house's predictive capacities intrude into the realm of ethical choice. *The Veldt* (1950) dramatizes not only the individual anxieties produced by automated environments but, crucially, the slow erasure of human belonging within the family unit.

3.2. The Erosion of Interpersonal Connection and the Collapse of Family Hierarchy

The Hadley household (George, Lydia, and their children, Peter and Wendy) becomes a microcosm of a larger posthuman crisis: when machine-mediated comfort redefines what counts as care, affection, and authority, interpersonal ties degrade into algorithmically curated dependencies. The result is a collapse of family hierarchy, where parental control cedes to the velocity of technics, and genuine presence yields to simulated immediacy. In this context, Bradbury shows us a troubling path: as the home's technology promises greater harmony, the family actually grows more distant, their unity slowly breaking apart until only a fragile peace remains—one that's upheld not by real connection, but by machines that anticipate and manage their every need.

R. Bradbury's portrait corresponds with posthumanist critiques regarding the reconfiguration of social interactions by nonhuman actors. C. Wolfe's claim that the relationship between humans and nonhumans changes modern life (2010) is similar to what the Hadleys go through as they deal with love, trust, and discipline while also dealing with a computer that controls emotional weather. The house's ability to forecast events makes the family feel a sense of harmony, which teaches them to expect a world that gives them what they want right away and never confronts them. R. Majumder (2025)'s insights regarding diffused agency across human and nonhuman entities elucidate the contested nature of the Hadleys' authority within a larger ecology of caring. As the children develop better at getting

the "Nursery" to respond, the parents lose the ability to set limits that would counteract the machine's compelling argument. The end result is a lack of leadership: George and Lydia, who used to make decisions, are now people the system tries to convince are wrong about their family's requirements.

The Hadleys' attempts to discipline their children—whether through scolding, setting limits, or enforcing screen-free time—are consistently undermined by the house's insistence that comfort and entertainment are the path to happiness. The children's reaction when their parents decided to switch off the Nursery reveals how close their bond was to this hyper-automated room, more intimate than their bond with their parents:

> The two children were in hysterics. They screamed and pranced and threw
> things. They yelled and sobbed and swore and jumped at the furniture.
> "You can't do that to the nursery, you can't!'
> "Now, children."
> The children flung themselves onto a couch, weeping.
> "George," said Lydia Hadley, "turn on the nursery, just for a few
> moments. You can't be so abrupt."
> "No."
> "You can't be so cruel..."
> "Lydia, it's off, and it stays off. And the whole damn house dies as of
> here and now. The more I see of the mess we've put ourselves in, the
> more it sickens me. (R. Bradbury, 1950, p. 11)

This extract dramatizes the collapse of parental authority under a phenomenon that P.P. Verbeek (2005, p. 104) described as "[…] the weight of algorithmic empathy and overreliance on artificial intelligence". It also reveals how the Hadley family's unity dissolves into parallel solitudes, with each member drawn into the autopilot of 'Happylife Home's design. As A. J. Khairunisha (2024) stresses, Bradbury's portrayal of how artificial intelligence can dehumanize the family's inner life raises some concerns about technoculture in the family environment. There is at least one lesson to learn from the Badleys' experience.

3. **Establishing Limits in Automated Environments and Other Lessons Learned from *The Veldt***

A central ethical impulse in the posthuman reading of Bradbury's *The Veldt* (1950) is the insistence that boundaries be drawn around automated environments to preserve human agency, responsibility, and relational dignity. The 'Happylife Home' with its alluring promise of convenience and comfort, embodies a seductive temptation: to outsource decision-making, mood regulation, and even care to a nonhuman system. Yet the story's trajectory—culminating in a breakdown of family unity and parental authority—demands as L. Floridi puts it: "[it is] a normative response: design and governance that foreground human presence, ethical accountability, and limits to machine-accelerated satisfaction" (2013, p. 93). R. Bradbury too tries to make the point that when care is automated without limits on human judgment, the line between help and control is very thin.

A foundational step in boundary-setting is clarifying what automated systems should and should not do within intimate spaces. The house can manage climate, provide meals, and curate entertainment. However, it should not adjudicate moral or educational questions, nor should it substitute for the human role of teaching children how to cope with conflict, disappointment, or ambiguity. R. Bradbury's story continually unsettles the comfort narrative by showing how the 'Nursery''s veldt simulates danger and desire with a fidelity that blurs the line between play and peril.S. Vallor (2016, p. 112) warns that "[…] when families routinely prefer the machine's curated calm to the messy, provisional stances of human deliberation, they surrender the very conditions that cultivate resilience, empathy, and moral responsibility". This warning provides us reasons to limit what can happen in automated situations. The boundary principle requires explicit limits on

how far machine-generated simulations can shape a child's sense of reality and a family's emotional climate. These systems should be designed so that people are always involved in important decisions, rather than leaving everything to machines. There must also be robust safety measures and clear ethical guidelines that prioritize human well-being over the pursuit of mere speed or efficiency. From a practical standpoint, setting boundaries involves three complementary strategies: first, institutionalizing design ethics for domestic artificial intelligence; second, embedding "interrupts" (1950, p. 6) or veto points where human users can override machine recommendations; and finally, cultivating a culture of critical literacy about technology in the home. Boundaries necessitate reorienting happiness away from a single, monolithic standard toward a plural, democratically negotiated spectrum of well-being that includes disagreement, discomfort, and growth.

In addition to the necessity of establishing limits on automated environments, another imperative arising from the posthuman interpretation of *The Veldt* (1950). As outstanding posthumanism theorists, such as S. Turlke, points out, there is "the duty to preserve human presence within technologically saturated households and to ensure that human agents are responsible for the ethical dimensions of automated care" (2011, p.64). *The Veldt* (1950) is a clear example of what occurs when people are absent or removed. It says that real ethical existence needs embodied attention, mutual accountability, and the ability to question and change machine-mediated choices". To keep people around, we need to create spaces that encourage real-world connection, thoughtful discussion, and hands-on care of the emotional climate, "[…] rather than giving these areas completely over to nonhuman judges" (A. Clark, 2003, p. 144).

Conclusion

This paper has shown how Bradbury's *The Veldt* (1950) functions as a rigorous case study in posthuman human–technology interaction. This short story serves as a cautionary tale about unchecked technological dependence and its capacity to sever the bonds that keep humans grounded in reality. The first section introduces posthumanism as a relevant theoretical tool for analyzing *The Veldt* (1950). The second section argued that the narrative foregrounds the entanglement of family life with an autonomous domestic system, revealing how the 'Happylife Home' and the 'Nursery' redefine care, authority, and presence, and how the Hadleys became dependent on their intelligent home due to overreliance on it. The third section showed what happens when people rely too much on nonhuman systems to control their emotions and actions, such as the loss of relationships and parental authority. The fourth section highlighted lessons learned from *The Veldt*'s plot. These sections all support the main idea that technology in the home, when people trust it without question, changes not only how people live their lives but also the basic foundations of human flourishing and responsibility. Overall, this paper reflected on the ethical implications for design, governance, and everyday life, demonstrating how artificial intelligence and algorithmic optimization can supplant human reasoning and moral agency.

Future research may expand this posthuman perspective to comparative analyses of R. Bradbury's works and those of other authors, aiming to delineate variances in domestic technicity or to investigate practical design ethics frameworks that uphold human agency, resilience, and ethical accountability within smart-home environments. Such a study might examine modern households to evaluate the influence of real-world intelligent systems on caregiving dynamics, whilst policy-oriented initiatives might suggest frameworks for designers and manufacturers to

guarantee that convenience does not compromise autonomy and social connectivity. This area of inquiry stimulates a continual reassessment of the essence of humanity in progressively mediated contexts.

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