"The Veldt" by Ray Bradbury is a dark tale about a futuristic world in which technology takes over humanity. Two parents have given their children everything: a home that takes care of them, a nursery that bends to their every whim, a rocket for everyday use. George and Lydia have become reliant on their house. It rocks them to sleep at night. It ties their shoes. It makes their food. It basically does all of the things that they should be doing as adults and parents. In this short story, Bradbury argues the many negative aspects of technology on humanity, many of which have manifested today.

Ray Bradbury illustrates the idea of technology leading to addiction in both the kids and the parents. Needless to say, 10-year old twins Wendy and Peter love their Happy Life house. They especially love their nursery, a sort of imaginarium, where anything they imagine comes to life instantly--all they must do is think it. It seems as real as real could be, down to the smells, the feel of the ground, the warmth of the sun on a summer's day. Whenever this virtual reality world is threatened to be taken away from them, they throw a temper tantrum, illustrating their addiction to this technology, and also Bradbury’s point that technology causes addiction. The parents have also become addicted to smoking, drinking, and taking sleeping pills because they are so bored with their lives. Although Bradbury argues this point in 1951, we also see this today with an overmedicated society in which there are a plethora of drugs and many addicts. 23 million Americans are now addicted to alcohol and other drugs. 1 in 25 people take sleeping pills in today’s society, illustrating how many of Bradbury’s ideas have come to fruition.

Another prominent theme in this story is the idea that technology is replacing the parents and alienating families. George and Lydia grow worried when the nursery's interior changes: no longer do they see Aladdin and his lamp, or the cow jumping over the moon. Instead, an African veldt (or plain) has emerged, and it won't go away. They recognize that something is amiss with their children, and also are beginning to feel the wear of their technology-filled lives: the house has become wife and mother, which frustrates Lydia. They (with the help of psychologist David McCLean) realize that they are becoming unnecessary in their own home thanks to all that it can do, and they have been--unconsciously or not--feeling the strain of being useless.

*"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. And now you come along and want to shut it off. No wonder there's hatred here. You can feel it coming out of the sky. Feel that sun."*

The parents also come to the realization that their children are spoiled, almost beyond repair, and they resent their parents meddling in their affairs and their attempts at disciplinary action. Bradbury is making a comment that when technology becomes their parents, parents become obsolete. We can see this in today’s modern world, with parents using technology to babysit the children – video games, TV, computer-time, and movies have replaced family time in modern day. Today's children are spending an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media, including televisions, computers, phones and other electronic devices. This illustrates Bradbury’s ideas becoming real.

Bradbury also makes a commentary on plastic and it’s effects on humanity. The children take a helicopter to the Plastics carnival. They no longer play outside, use their imagination, or enjoy nature or athletics the way children were meant to grow up. Although plastics were just coming into popularity in 1951, we can see the proliferation of technology today. Now there is a floating island of plastic in the Pacific Ocean twice the size of Texas. We use enough plastic water bottles in one year to reach to the moon and back 38 times. This shows the dangers of plastic and how it has taken over our world, as predicted by Ray Bradbury in 1951.

Bradbury's short story is a chilling cautionary tale of the dangers of technology in the modern world, many of which have become reality since 1951. It reminds us that parents need to parent their children, and that technology cannot become mother or father without disastrous consequences, whether it be the a bed that rocks you to sleep, or a computer that stays on 24/7. He warns of what happens when there is a breakdown in communication in families, of the need to feel needed--all too real in this day and age. And he reminds us that in this technologically-driven world, that family should still come first. He illustrates an over-medicated society, and comments on the problem of plastics in society, even in its advent. We have seen these technological problems proliferate and intensify astronomically since Bradbury first proposed these ideas, and humanity needs to recognize the dangers of destruction and use technology in moderation.