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Player piano kurt vonnegut pdf

Kurt Vonnegut was a master of contemporary American literature. His black humor, satirical voice and unparalleled imagination first caught America's attention in *Sirens of the Titans* in 1959 and established him as a true artist with *Cat's Cradle* in 1963. He was, as Graham Greene stated, one of america's finest living writers. Vonnegut died in April 2007. The modern reader, who now observes mass-produced self-driving cars and other unseen artificial intelligence projects, could then be persuaded to pick up *Player Piano* on the grounds that his penchant lies in the disturbing déjà vu premise. *Player Piano* takes place in future America where engineers have pushed computer decision-making abilities to absolute limits, to a place where the vast majority of occupations are automated, and most decisions are delegated to the central computer, EPICAC. The justification is to create a casual existence and man's freedom from torment. The result is that much of American society seems useless, pays basic income and redirects to pointless hectic work, while real work and power lies in an elite minority of managers and engineers whose goal is to push more and more work out of the human realm.Dr. Paul Proteus, the hero and key architect of EPICAC, is facing a spiritual crisis of the automated world. As he regained consciousness of the plight of Homestead, a half-employed slum with fixed state income, he is jockeying in competition for the top spot by his social climber wife, Anita. One comes at the expense of the other – confirming the dignity and humanity of the Homesteaders means losing material and romantic comfort. The escalation comes in the form of Ghost Shirts – a revolutionary group that seeks to right the wrongs of not being given anything meaningful to society. Reflection is provided in the person of chess bratpuhra, a curious despot who visits from a country that actively practices slavery; consistently finds and highlights the analogies of oppression that engineers must clumsily justify. A striking side ethal unfolds as the shah drives around town, and he tries to search for an ordinary woman for prostitution. To the surprise of engineers, he's successful. The woman admits that she had never engaged in prostitution before, and was forced to do so only by her writer husband being fired; his refusal to write according to socially dictated scenarios for the mass market left their family poor. When an engineer asks her why her husband would prefer to become a prostitute, she replies: I am proud to say that he is one of the few men with remaining self-esteem. The predictable plot presents an unusual and honest theme for our days – that a society that outsources all work to technology can inadvertently exhaust and Humanity. **Player Piano* can be purchased locally here. Rachel Bradley is an English teacher, writer and co-founder of Yirmi Yedi. Read her poem I've Never Been to Damascus previously published in the Bosphorus Review. Next: First novel written by Kurt Vonnegut, published in 1952 *Player Piano* First edition, hardcoverAuthorKurt Vonnegut Jr.CountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishGenreScience fictionPublisherCharles Scribner's SonsPublication dateAugust 18, 1952[1]Media typePrint (hardback & paperback)Pages296Dewey Decimal813.54LC ClassPS3572.O5 *Player Piano* is the first novel by american writer Kurt Vonnegut Jr., published in 1952. The novel depicts the dystopia of automation partly inspired by the author's time working at General Electric, describing the negative impact technology can have on quality of life. [2] The story takes place in a close future society that is almost completely mechanized, eliminating the need for human workers. Widespread mechanization creates a conflict between the wealthy upper classes, engineers and managers, who maintain society, and the lower classes, whose skills and purposes in society have been replaced by machines. The book uses irony and sentimentality, which were to become features that developed further in Vonnegut's later works. [2] Plot *Player Piano* is set in the near future, after World War III. While most Americans struggled abroad, the nation's managers and engineers faced a depleted workforce and responded by developing ingenious automated systems that allowed factories to work with only a few workers. The novel begins ten years after the war when most factory workers were replaced by machines. The population bifurcation is represented by the division of Iliia, New York to The Homestead, where every person lives, not a manager or engineer, and the other side of the river, where all engineers and managers live. *Player Piano* develops two parallel plots that converge only briefly, and then unfoundedly, at the beginning and end of the novel. A more prominent plotline follows the protagonist, Dr. Paul Proteus (referred to as Paul), the intelligent, 35-year-old factory manager of Ilium Works. The secondary line follows an American chess tour from Bratpulir, a spiritual leader of six million in the far, underdeveloped nation. The purpose of the two lines is to give two perspectives of the system: one from an insider who is an emblematic system, and one of the outsiders watching it. Paul, for all intents and purposes, is the living embodiment of what a man within the system should strive to be, and chess is a visitor from a very different culture and thus applies a very different context to everything he sees on his tour. The main line traces Paul's development from uncritical cognition in the system to one of the outspoken critics. Paul's father, George, was the first National, Industrial, Commercial Communications, Foodstuffs, and Resources Director. George had almost complete control over the nation's economy and was more powerful than the president of the United States, who by then had effectively become a puppet. Paul inherited his father's reputation and social status, but he has vague dissatisfaction with the industrial system and his contributions to society. His struggle with this unnamed predicament is heightened when Ed Finnerty, an old friend whom Paul has always elevated high, informs him that he has left his important engineering job in Washington, DC. Paul and Finnerty visit a bar in the Homestead area of the city, where workers displaced by machines live their meaningless lives in mass-produced houses. There, they meet with Episcopallan Minister Lasher, with a master's degree in anthropology, which puts in words the unfairness of a system that the two engineers only vaguely felt. Paul eventually learns that Lasher is the leader of a rebel group known as the Ghost Shirt Society, though Finnerty immediately takes a step with him. Paul is not brave enough to make a clean break, as Finnerty did, until his superiors asked him to betray Finnerty and Lasher. However, Paul is buying a rundown farm, run by an elderly heir to previous owners. Paul's intention is to start a new life living off the land with his wife Anita, but Anita is appalled by Paul's desires to radically change his lifestyle. Paul and Ana's relationship is emotional distance and personal disagreements. She and Paul were quickly married when she appeared to be pregnant, but it turned out anita was infertile and just a hysterical pregnancy. [3] Of all the people on the north side of the river, Anita was the only one whose contempt for those in Homestead was imbued with active hatred.... If Paul was ever moved to be extremely cruel to her, the cruelest thing he could do... it would have been to show her why she hated [The Homesteaders] as she did: if he hadn't married her, here she would be, as she would have been. He temporarily persuades Paul to stay in his position and to continue competing with two other engineers, Dr. Shepherd and Dr. Garth, for a more prominent position in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After rumors of Paul's disloyalty to the system and suspicious activity during a guest appearance in Livade, an annual competition of high-class engineers, begin to circulate, Paul determines that with or without Anita, he must work with his friend Finnerty, among others, to stop the socioeconomic system from machines replacing people. He quits his job and is captured by the Ghost Shirt Society in which he is publicly a figurehead of the organization even though the position is only nominal. In my father's success. The name is known among citizens and thus the organization intends to use his name to his advantage by making him a false 'leader' in order to gain publicity. In the first meeting of the Ghost Shirt Society Paul attends, police raid him and catch Paul. Paul was put on public trial, but was acquitted as the Ghost Shirt Society and the general population began to rebel, destroying automated factories. The mob, once released, goes further than ghost shirt leaders planned, destroying both food production plants and redundant plants. Despite the brief and impressive success of the insurgency, the army quickly surrounding the city, and the citizenry, accustomed to the comfort of the system, begins to rebuild the machines of its own will. Paul, Finnerty, Lasher and other members of the Ghost Shirt Society admit they at least tried to stop the government system before surrendering to the military. The main themes of Automation of industry and the effect it has on society are the dominant themes of *The Player Piano*. It is a novel about humans and machines, and machines often get the best of it, as will machines. More specifically, it turns into a theme vonnegut returns to, a problem whose sstumy horrors will eventually be made around the world by the sophistication of machines. The problem is this: How to love people who have no use. [6] Unlike much dystopian fiction, the novel's society was created by indifference, both to the population and to the technology that replaced it. As such, the sense of pointlessness of those living in a capitalist society has outgrown the need for them that must be corrected. [7] Humanity's blind faith in technology and its usually catastrophic effect on society, as well as the dehumanisation of the poor or oppressed later became common themes during Vonnegut's work. Vonnegut continued to believe throughout his life that novel themes were of importance to society, writing, for example, in 1983 [9] *Style Player Piano* depicting the beginnings of the idiosyncratic style vonnegut developed and employed throughout most of his career. It has early hints of the hallmarks of Vonnegutian's flair of using meta-fiction, as when a writer's wife describes her husband's dilemma to the chess of a bratpuhra in the back of a limousine: that a writer's anti-machine novel can't get a passing quotient of readability under the reading machine's scoring algorithm. However, the fourth wall does not break, as in later writings. His style of a self-deprecating chapter of no more than five hundred words, often as many as fifty, that would define his writing, had yet to be developed. [7] The background cover of Utopia 14, as the novel is titled for the 1954 edition of Utopia, is the first to be published in *The New York Times*. Influences In a 1973 interview with *The New York Times*, *The New York Times* book-writing inspiration:[10] I was working for General Electric at the time, right after World War II, and I saw a rotor cutting milling machine on jet engines, gas turbines. It was a very expensive thing for a machinist, to cut out what is in fact one of those Brâncuși forms. So they had a computer-controlled milling mill built to cut the blades, and I was fascinated by it. That was in 1949. *Player Piano* was my answer to the implication that they all run small boxes. The idea of doing it, you know, made sense, perfect sense. Having a little clickbox to make all the decisions wasn't a mean thing to do. But I was a shame for human beings who got their dignity from their jobs. In the same interview, he admits to gleefully ripping off the action of *Brave New World*, whose plot was gleefully ripped away from Yevgeny Zamyatin. [10] Title *A Player piano* is a modified piano that plays by itself. The keys of the piano move towards the pattern of holes drilled into the unwinding of the scroll. Unlike a musical synthesizer, the instrument actually produces the sound itself, with buttons moving up and down, driving hammers hitting the strings. Like his colleague, the player's piano can be played by hand. When a reel is passed through the instrument, the movement of its buttons produces the illusion that an invisible performer plays the instrument. Vonnegut uses the piano as a metaphor to represent how even the simplest activities, such as teaching yourself how to play the piano in your spare time, have been replaced by machines instead of humans. Early in the book, Paul Proteus' friend and future ghost shirt society member, Ed Finnerty, is shown hand-playing piano for musicians, suggesting the idea of people reclaiming their animus from machines. The book's most tragic character is Rudy Hertz, the machinist who was the prototype shot by the machines. These are the pianos of players who replicate his physical movements. Publishing History This satirical look at the industrialization and rhetoric of General Electric[11] and large corporations, which discussed arguments very current in the postwar United States, was instead advertised by the publisher with the more innocuous and market-like label of science fiction, a genre that flourished in mass popular culture in the 1950s. Vonnegut, surprised by this admission, wrote: I learned from the reviewer that I was a science fiction author. I didn't know that. He was upset because he felt science fiction had been pushed into a drawer that many serious critics regularly make mistakes... for the usassy because [the feels insensitive that no one can simultaneously be a respectable writer and understand how to cooler *Player Piano* was later published in a paperback bantam book in 1954 called Utopia 14[2] in an effort to encourage sales with science fiction readers. Paul Proteus' trial was dramatised in the 1972 TV film *Between Time* Audible.com an audio version of *The Player Piano*, narrated by Christian Rummel, as part of a modern Vanguard line of audiobooks. In the Italian translation, *Player Piano* is displayed as *Piano meccanico*, a double trait, which, without any other words in the phrase, can mean either a player's piano or a mechanical plan. *Recreation Science fiction* anthology editor Geoff Conklin reviewed the novel in *Science Fiction of the Galaxy*, declaring it a biting, vividly alive and very effectively understated anti-utopia. [13] The founders of the Journal of Fiction and Science Fiction, Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas, named *Player Piano* their list of the best years, describing it as Human, Satirical and Exciting... far the most successful of recent attempts to transplant science fiction to a serious 'flat' novel. [14] They praised Vonnegut for skillfully blending a psychological study of persistent human problems in a mechanistically 'ideal' society, a powerful melodramatic story and sharp Voltairean satire. [15] *Player Piano* was nominated for the 1953 International Fantasy Prize [16] See also *Brave New World* Technological Unemployment *Glass Fortress* (2016 film) *Wir* (1982 film) *References* ^ Books published today. *The New York Times*. August 15, 18, 1952 ^ a b c Stableford, Brian (1993). Vonnegut, Kurt Jr. U John Clute; Peter Nicholls (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2. Orbit, London. p. 1289 ISBN 1-85723-124-4. ^ Chapter 1, p. 2 ^ Chapter XVIII, pp.150-1 ^ a b Vonnegut, Kurt (1974) Wampeters, Foma & Granfalons. Click to dial. P. 1. ^ Vonnegut, Kurt (1965). God bless you, Mr. Rosewater. Dell. P. 183. ^ a b Grossman, Edward (July 1974). Vonnegut and his audience. Comment. ^ Westbrook, Perry D. Kurt Vonnegut Jr.: Review. Contemporary novelists. Susan Windisch Brown. 6th ed. 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Atlanta, Georgia: Rhodopi B.V. editions. 1996 Printing. External links *Player Piano* title list on the Internet Speculative fiction database retrieve from

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