

# **KURT VONNEGUT'S ATTACK : PROBLEMS SUFFERED BY AMERICAN SOCIETY**

**Amit Dhawan<sup>1</sup>, Japneet Kaur<sup>2</sup>**  
<sup>1,2</sup>Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo

## **Abstract**

Kurt Vonnegut said he was a man without a country. This proposition analyzes this announcement and his mentality towards the United States of America by and large. Investigating his books, to be specific *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), *Jailbird* (1979), the proposition will demonstrate how Vonnegut saw his local nation, its kin, culture, and politics. The selection of books depends on their substance, since they concern different occasions in the historical backdrop of the United States, for example, the Vietnam War, the Second World War, the Watergate Scandal, and the Great Depression, and additionally the American legislators and customary nationals. In this way, these books contain heaps of data about the United States and Vonnegut's impressions of it. Center is given to specific characters, plots, and portrayals in the books managing America somehow. The point is to watch Vonnegut's perception of the United States and how it was changing as the years progressed.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. was conceived in 1922 in Indianapolis, Indiana. When he was 7 years of age, the Great Depression in the United States began. He watched his dad, a capable planner, losing commissions step by step. Youthful Vonnegut needed to be a craftsman, as well, ideally a draftsman, and be a piece of the family firm, however his dad warned him far from any sort of expressions, since he discovered them a pointless method for delivering cash amid the Depression; thus Vonnegut majored in science (*Man Without a Country* 15). This learning, in any case, swung to be preference, since, most fine American writers know nothing about technology (*MWaC* 16) and on account of that he could expound on different fictional compound substances and specialized gadgets, for example, the substance ice-nine in *Cat's Cradle*, which toward the end swings to be a weapon to decimate the entire earth, and

which made the novel distinctive and all the more interesting. On Mother's Day in 1944, his mom killed herself with resting pills. That year he was caught by Germans at the Battle of the Bulge, the bloodiest skirmish of the Second World War for American troops (Miller 358), taken wartime captive, and after a year he survived the huge firebombing of Dresden, seeing passing's of more than 20,000 individuals, generally regular citizens (Neutzner 70). These tragedies have pretty much affected Vonnegut's composing, despite the fact that he said that „the significance of Dresden in my life has been impressively overstated on the grounds that my book about it turned into a best seller (*Conversations with KV*). At the point when demise happened inside his nearby family – his dad passed away – he dropped the Jr. from his name, which is the reason he will basically be alluded to as Kurt Vonnegut all through this proposition. Be that as it may, this family name he acquired demonstrates that Vonnegut, in spite of being conceived in the United States, has German ancestry. Thus, he was „identified with his German heritage (Krasny), which enabled him to expound on the destruction of Dresden, the real topic of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, from the both the Allies and the Germans perspective. He didn't compose this success until over 20 years afterwards. In 1951, he quit his employment at General Electric which he despised such a great amount of (*Conversations with KV*) and he started to compose short stories to help his family. Later he began to distribute his first books, for example, *Player Piano* and *The Sirens of Titan*, other short stories and even plays. All things considered, *Slaughterhouse-Five* remains his most powerful and acclaimed work, which is the reason this postulation starts with the examination of this novel.

## **2. SLAUGHTER WOMEN**

### **2.1 American society**

Vonnegut's books are commonly populated by a scope of various characters. That gives a fine chance to analyze the American culture, relations amongst individuals, and relationships inside a family. Billy Pilgrim's mother fills in for instance of a standard individual from the white collar class. In spite of being said just a little, her temperament can be seen from her conduct and priorities, for example, when Billy wedded Valencia, rich and revolting young lady whom nobody else could ever wed. She cared for his material profits from the marriage, saying that, The Pilgrims are coming up in the world (SF 97). She likewise appeared as though

She didn't recognize what to do with her life, so, like such a variety of Americans, she was attempting to build an existence that seemed well and good from things she found in blessing shops (SF 31). This implies she just went to blessing shops and purchased something which she thought would give some significance to her life. As per Loeb, This is a sharp proclamation on Americans when all is said in done uncovering a spiritual void loaded with brick brace (SF 61). Hence, through her Vonnegut brings up poor spiritual existence of the working class Americans. In addition, when she came to see Billy in healing center, he generally secured his head with his cover, since he was feeling embarrassed and selfish and feeble in light of the fact that she had gone to such a great amount of inconvenience to give him life, and to keep that life going, and Billy didn't truly like life at all (SF 83). Maybe it was the possibility that life is so good for nothing and that individuals are fulfilled just with purchasing things from blessing shops that made Billy so discouraged about his reality, and additionally that white collar class guardians felt they needed to give their children all that they had, not understanding their youngsters may have diverse dispositions to life and need distinctive things. Through their relationship Vonnegut criticizes white collar class society and their priorities, the distinctions caused by the era hole, and the inconvenience it brings.

### **2. 2. Religion**

Vonnegut is known to had been a humanist, as he stated, My guardians and grandparents were humanists, what used to be called Free Thinkers. So as a humanist I am respecting my predecessors, which the Bible says is something worth being thankful for to do. We humanists attempt to carry on as conventionally, as decently, and as respectably as we can with no desire of rewards or disciplines in an afterlife (MWaC 79). He likewise said that he is not opposing any sorted out religion and that he never had any (Conversations with KV). This Vonnegut's way to deal with religion is reflected likewise in Slaughterhouse-Five. In one of his science fiction stories, Kilgore Trout – character that shows up in numerous different Vonnegut's stories – expounds on the guest from space who came to make an investigation of Christianity (SF 89). What he discovers, in any case, is that Gospels did not instruct individuals to be benevolent, they showed this: Before you execute some person, ensure he isn't well connected (SF 89).

Another Kilgore Trout novel tells about a man who manufactured a time machine and goes back in time, keeping in mind the end goal to see Jesus (SF 166). He needed to become acquainted with whether Jesus had truly passed on the cross. Utilizing an instrument from the future, stethoscope, the man quickly tune in to Jesus heart, the Son of God was dead as a doornail (167). Billy's position of chaplain's right hand can be specified again in this unique circumstance. As of now said some time recently, it was normally somebody to ridicule. This does not add to positive seeing of religion with regards to the Vonnegut's perspective, either. The significance of dissecting additionally the topic of religion in this novel is that even today, forty-five years in the wake of distributing Slaughterhouse-Five, the dominant part of Americans is religious and put stock in God. Vonnegut, as a nonbeliever, hence, varied from his kindred natives. Nonetheless, he doesn't state whether this element of the larger part of

Americans irritates or inconveniences him, so it is plausible that this reality did not change his perception of the United States in any real sense.

## **2. 2 American Army**

To analyze Vonnegut's perspective of the US Army as reflected in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, it is basic to investigate such issues as is physical and mental territory of American detainees of war, their perception by the regular folks, and Billy Pilgrim as a character especially. After that it will be conceivable to see Vonnegut's mentality towards the subjects of America and war. Ahead of schedule in the novel, Billy Pilgrim filled in as a chaplain's collaborator amid the World War II. This position is depicted as customarily a figure of fun in the American Army (SF 31). Other than this, Billy has the primary influence in numerous other diverting or crazy scenes in the book; his senseless hitting the dance floor with the security barrier (SF 101); a scene where he was taken wartime captive and he got the coat that was so little, that it gave off an impression of being not a coat but rather a kind of huge dark, three-cornered cap. There were sticky stains on it, as well, similar to crankcase draining or old strawberry stick. There appeared to be a dead, hairy creature solidified to it. The creature was in reality the coat's hide collar (SF 67). Billy himself was ridiculous in appearance – Billy was incredible... with a chest and shoulders like a crate of kitchen matches. He had no head protector, no jacket, no weapon and no boots. On his feet were cheap, low profile regular citizen shoes which he had purchased for his dad's memorial service. Billy had lost a heel, which made him sway all over, here and there... he didn't resemble a warrior by any stretch of the imagination. He resembled a dingy flamingo (SF 27). That is, Vonnegut made the protagonist of his novel appear to be silly and not intense. Billy does not care about numerous things; he is for the most part not interested in his life, as well. It should indicate what affect the Second World War had on Billy, which is for the most part him losing his correct mind (on account of what he wedded monstrous Valencia, for example) and, impacted by the Tralfamadorians, he begins to go in time in his mind. Tralfamadorians are outsiders who can set out so as to any minute to the past or to what's to come. Thusly, it is irrelevant whether a man is in any condition, when Tralfamadorians see somebody dead they realize that individual is okay in another minute, so there is no motivation to feel miserable. Because of Billy's injury and the posttraumatic push issue (PTSD) caused by the war, regardless of in the event that he goes to the future or to the past, his recollections continually take him back to the war, and he experiences those abhorrence's at the end of the day.. As a young fellow, notwithstanding being a conservative, Vonnegut needed to battle for his nation, when he became more established and when the United States were driven by government officials whom Vonnegut despised – George W. Hedge may fill in as a decent example – he separated himself from the United States.

Billy Pilgrim is by all account not the only character in *Slaughterhouse-Five* who is adversely influenced by the war, other American POWs are spiritless and pessimistic, as well.

“There are no characters in this story, and no dramatic showdowns, in light of the fact that most of the general population in it are so wiped out and so much the sluggish toys of huge strengths. One of the primary impacts of war, all things considered, is that individuals are debilitated from being characters (SF 134).

Vonnegut depicts these spiritless American officers as light opera, giving enjoyable to Dresdeners as they walk through the boulevards of the city. Billy, in his blue robe and silver shoes drove the parade. There were others, for example, Paul Lazzaro, with a broken arm and fizzing with rabies, and Edgar Derby, poor old secondary teacher, mournfully pregnant with patriotism and middle age and imaginary wisdom (SF123). It was Edgar Derby who was contradicting Howard W. Campbell, Jr., an American who had turned into a Nazi, when he was letting them know, the POWs, that they ought to be more patriot and battle the Communists. Regardless of being languid and depleted in the wake of working at the plant, poor old Edgar Derby was a character now.

He raised his head, called Campbell a snake. He amended that. He said that snakes couldn't resist being snakes, and that Campbell, who could help being what he was, was something much lower than a snake or a rodent or even a blood-filled tick. (SF 135).

Vonnegut composed that Derby turned into a character when he did that, along these lines shows that it was something appropriate to do, to contradict excessively decided patriot. Derby is patriotic and safeguards and openings and reasonable play for all, however does not concur with the possibility of American Nazism. Since Vonnegut depicts him as a fairly positive character, it can be inferred that Vonnegut relates to him and that he, as well, contradicts such radical patriotism, while as yet regarding American beliefs.

Towards the finish of the book, Vonnegut cites President Truman and his letter reporting to the world that the United States dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima (SF 152). Vonnegut cites the most fervent parts of the discourse, for example, That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of T.N.T. It had more than two thousand times the impact energy of the British 'Grand Slam' which is the biggest bomb at any point yet utilized as a part of the history of warfare. The Japanese started the war from the air at Pearl Harbor.

### **3. Breakfast of the Champions**

#### **3.1 Symbols of the United States**

From the earliest starting point of the novel, Vonnegut remarks on different American images – song of devotion, hail, the Statue of Liberty – and expounds on such issues as training and settlement of the United States. The Star-Spangled Banner is called pure balderdash, and the main national song of devotion that was gibberish sprinkled with question marks (BofC 8). At that point it is flag's turn, when Vonnegut brings up that banner dipping, that is a type of cordial and conscious salute was precluded by the state law (BofC 9). He makes a comment about American paper cash, which other than lot of florid trash (BofC 9) demonstrates a photo of truncated pyramid with a radiant eye over it (BofC 9). He supplies his own particular picture of it. Vonnegut empowers the peruser to perceive what such pyramid resembles, at that point permits him/her to see his sharp assessment of what it implied, what really matters to it, which was this: not even the President of the United States realized what that was all about, and that it appeared as though national aphorism was In drivell is strength (BofC 10). Talking about the Statue of Liberty and the reference point expected to symbolize opportunity, in Breakfast of Champions it is basically compare to sort of a gelato on fire (BofC 11). Contemplated that it is Vonnegut himself who says these words, that these are straightforwardly his musings and assessments, it is very certain that his disposition towards previously mentioned images is not exceptionally positive. He doesn't think of them as significant or imperative – the banner dipping is preposterous, song of praise is excessively addressing, and pictures on paper cash without more profound importance – or possibly he expect that it is not that much about images themselves, instead of about carrying on as per what they symbolize, that is opportunity and equity for all. With regards to the settlement of America, Vonnegut blames educators for telling the kids that 1492 was every year when individuals found American mainland, while it was just the year when sea privateers started to cheat and ransack and kill (BofC 10) people officially living there. These ocean privateers – white individuals from Europe – were later in charge of the making of the new government and were proprietors of human slaves. This obviously raises the subject of race, which will be analyzed later in partitioned area. In addition, the colonizers are not commended as saints and incredible men, maybe they are portrayed as being meaner than anyone else and that they shocked individuals with how heartless and ravenous they were (BofC 12). It is difficult to detect any pride in Vonnegut's words. Vonnegut at that point delineates the United States as by far the wealthiest and most capable nation on the planet...it taught different nations by debilitating to shoot enormous rockets at them or to drop things on them from airplanes (BofC 12). Despite the fact that he composes that the united States are solid and intense, the novel is set in 1972, while, as indicated by Klinkowitz,

America was „polluted, squandered of its assets, shrouded in modern garbage and loaded with anguished desolate existences (Klinkowitz 70). Consequently, the way that America was an exceptionally powerful superpower and could debilitate different nations does not mean the world was immaculate there. More probable, it appears that Vonnegut joins America’s need to demonstrate its energy to the world with its inadmissible and hopeless condition.

### **3.3. American Society**

Breakfast of Champions recounts the narrative of two men –wealthy proprietor of an auto dealership Dwayne Hoover, and rather unsuccessful science-fiction author Kilgore Trout. In any case, Dwayne is getting to be plainly insane, while Kilgore in the long run procures his popularity and appreciation. Along these lines, the component of a general public in light of joy and riches could be analyzed here. By the by, rather than managing this fairly basic inquiry, the concentration will be given to more particular parts of the American culture. With regards to the direct communicating of his contemplations, Vonnegut talks about the possession of firearms by the natives of the United States. He talks about the capacity of each American to claim a firearm that they could get without much of a stretch which gets one down at their neighborhood hardware store (BofC 50). Vonnegut portrays weapons basically as apparatuses with just a single reason – to make openings in individuals. Sometimes a spouse would get so distraught at her husband that she would put an opening in him with a firearm. Once in a while a husband would get so distraught at his significant other that he would put a gap in her. And so on, (BofC 50). From the effortlessness of the sentences Vonnegut utilizes it can be recognized how simple it surely was to murder somebody, and that it was to be sure often happening. Vonnegut brings up that such unhindered access to weapons as natives of (not just) the United States had is not extremely sensible arrangement, yet rather a hazardous one.

In section 4, Dwayne Hoover held one of these effectively reachable firearms hazardously near his brains. Finally, he altered his opinion and as opposed to shooting himself he shot up his tiled washroom, yet no one heard that. Nobody would hear in the event that he had shot himself, either. In the United States, individuals were living confined from their neighbors by thick dividers of their homes. All the houses in the area were too very much protected for sound ever to get in or out (BofC 52). It is difficult to trust that individuals living in such separated houses were really glad and substance with their lives. In his 1973 meeting, Vonnegut talks about the significance of living inside a group, “People don’t live in groups for all time any longer. Be that as it may, they should: Communities are extremely encouraging to human beings” (Conversations). His worry about the Americans is clear, I might want there to be hereditary homes for all Americans somewhere (Conversations), and his concept of giving every one of the Americans a center name and in this manner putting them into different more distant families – with the goal that everybody would have an in respect to go to when in a bad position – demonstrates his enthusiasm for the prosperity of the subjects of his local nation. Further, Vonnegut brings up another deformity of the American culture, which is an expensive health care – “one of the most expensive things a man could do was get sick” (BofC 136). Everybody should pay his own clinic charges which Vonnegut, as a communist, considers a noteworthy deficiency, supporting everybody merits square with treatment and rights, and so health protection ought to be moderate for every single American subject. As it happened, youthful server named Patty Keene required a lot of cash to pay for her father’s doctors bills and she realized that affluent Dwayne Hoover could take care of all her money related issues. Vonnegut here states that she was acting stupid intentionally, which was the situation with most ladies in Midland City (BofC 136). Alongside contrasting individuals with machines, which shows up all through the entire novel, ladies are simply “agreeing machines” since believing was not advantageous to them by any stretch of the imagination. In addition, Patty, and also Dwayne and every other person, talked in short sentences with basic words, perplexed of committing errors. This was the consequence of their instruction and strict English instructors who „would recoil and cover their ears and give them flunking evaluations and so on at whatever point they neglected to talk like English aristocrats before the First World War (BofC 138). The educators were additionally revealing to them they needed to peruse sonnets and books which were exceptionally old and generally

incomprehensible for normal individuals in Midland City. Other than this criticism of instruction, Vonnegut talks about writing and he clarifies why Americans carried on the way they did and why he chose to avoid narrating. He says that his comrades were acting so terribly simply because „they were doing their best to live like individuals invented in story books (BofC 210) and bringing back the theme of firearms, Americans shot each other so often in light of the fact that it was convenient abstract gadget for closure short stories and books (BofC 210). Individuals in the United States were hence, as per Vonnegut, particularly affected by the fictional stories they were perusing. Government of the United States, as well, composes Vonnegut, treated its natives so carelessly in light of the fact that that was the way creators treated a few characters in their stories. Since Vonnegut did not need his kindred subjects to slaughter themselves to make sure they would live as per a made-up story, and to be dealt with all the more appropriately by the government, he resolved to disregard storytelling. In his own particular words, it was just making the United States „dangerous, troubled country of individuals who had nothing to do with genuine life (BofC 210), at any rate. Breakfast of Champions does not exclude the theme of war, either. Regardless of the way that Vonnegut notices wars here just a bit, he unmistakably shows that neither the Civil War nor the US involvement in the Vietnam War brought any advantages. On account of the first, he says that its end frustrated the white individuals in the North, who won it, in a way which has never been recognized before (BofC 246). Talking about the last one, Vonnegut portrays Vietnam and the United States push to stop the domino impact in Asia in the least complex way that is available, Viet Nam was a nation where America was attempting to make individuals quit being communists by dropping things on them from planes (BofC 86).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This proposal analyzes state of mind of the American essayist Kurt Vonnegut towards his local nation. The examination of the chose books – Slaughterhouse-Five, Breakfast of Champions, Hocus Pocus, and Jailbird – demonstrated that his perception of the United States of America turned out to be somewhat more pessimistic as he got more seasoned. In Slaughterhouse-Five he mostly communicates his discontent with the US decision to bomb serene Dresden, while in Breakfast of Champions he criticizes everything from nation images, through the health care, to the possession of firearms. Hocus Pocus reflect Vonnegut’s perception of Vietnam War legacy and in Jailbird he condemns political and legal wrongdoings. There is without a doubt a lot of critique in these books, by the by, Vonnegut cared for his local nation no less than a bit till the finish of his life. He gave a few discourses at the colleges, giving youthful Americans advices for life and in addition for composing. In his self-portraying paper gathering A Man without a Country he contemplates on the issue of having a place of the United States to its natives, when he depicts all what was in America in certainty worked by the immigrants, for example, the Germans-Americans. Asking who the hell’s nation is this any way (A Man Without a Country makes his separating from the United States somewhat less radical, since he is in truth just theorizing about the United States and its subjects, as opposed to communicating his disdain towards his local nation. Accordingly, all the critique found in the books ought not to express his profound scorn for his homeland, rather it fills in as an approach to bring up the American lacks with the goal that they can be kept away from later on.

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