

⁴¹J.H. Elliott, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴²John James, op. cit., p. 297.

⁴³Thomas Herriot, op. cit., p. 187.

⁴⁴The above statements are only generalizations based on all descriptions of Savages included in The Principal Voyages. In individual cases views of chroniclers could be quite different. Besides, the problem of how Renaissance voyagers arrived at such conclusions is another matter. Some of their assertions were based on inadequate or just false information. The influence of ethnocentrism, prejudices and preconceptions, comparing real culture of the primitives with one's ideal culture, or the ignorance of the fact that, as aliens, voyagers were outside the rules of a savage society make part of the answer. The question has been discussed more thoroughly in my unpublished MA thesis The Primitive Savage in Sixteenth-Century Travel Literature /Inhlin, 1983/.

⁴⁵Although the concept of the "noble savage" must be attributed to Rousseau, its first traces may be found in Michel de Montaigne's essay Of Cannibals, which was first printed in English as early as in 1603 in John Florio's translation.

⁴⁶George Huppert argues in his article The Idea of Civilization in the Sixteenth Century /in Renaissance. Studies in Honor of Hans Baron, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, Firenze, 1971/ that the concept of "civilization" was present also in French in the second half of the sixteenth century and that the word "civilite" was used to render it.

⁴⁷Franklin Le Van Baumer, The Conception of Christendom in Renaissance England, "Journal of the History of Ideas", VI/1945/, No.2, pp. 131-156.

⁴⁸J.H. Elliott, op. cit., p. 44.

⁴⁹J. Iotman, B. Uspieński, O semiotycznym mechanizmie kultury, in E. Janus, M.R. Mayenowa /eds/, Semiotyka Kultury /Warszawa, 1977/, pp. 147-171.

⁵⁰Osborne, Collection of Voyages and Travels, I, p. 513 /after Le Van Baumer, op. cit., p. 149/.

Maciej Maciejowski

Mechanized paradise - Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s Player Piano
as an example of modern anti-utopia

The subject of Kurt Vonnegut's first novel, Player Piano, is at least partly, technology, and therefore, the majority of critics refer to it as science-fiction. The aim of the present paper is to show, how exactly Player Piano fits into the stream of modern anti-utopian fiction, together with such works as Zamyatin's We /1924/, Huxley's Breave New World /1932/ and Orwell's 1984 /1949/, to mention only the most important ones.

Because of the lack of agreement, among the critics, as to the generic status of anti-utopia /some of them assume that anti-utopia is a branch of science-fiction, whereas others claim that it is a separate literary genre/, in the present paper, we assume that it is a separate literary genre, subject to the dynamic genre theory. According to this theory, a literary genre constantly develops because of internal, structural tensions, as well as some extratextual factors intervening. ^{1/} Assuming this approach, a conclusion should be made that anti-utopia has emerged from utopia, that is the literary genre represented by such works as More's Utopia, Bacon's New Atlantis and Campanella's Civitas Solis.

The modern, 20th century anti-utopia can be defined as a verbal construction ^{2/} of an imaginary society, where the social organization, ethical norms, and individual relationships are shown as unsatisfactory, being the hypothetical continuation of the certain negative tendencies existing in the empirical world of the author. ^{3/} Anti-utopia then, criticizes the ideals of traditional utopia, and constitutes the continuation of utopianism in literature.

The genre of anti-utopia can be further divided into at least two types, depending on which aspect of social life is pre-dominant in it. The first type may be called "political anti-utopias", the second - "technological anti-utopias". In the case of political anti-utopia, it is some totalitarian regime that determines the development of the represented society. The typical example of political anti-utopia is Orwell's 1984. In technological anti-utopia the role of a regime is assumed by science and technology, the world being ruled by a computer or an assembly of scientists, etc. The later type of anti-utopia is more frequently encountered in America, and one of the outstanding specimens of technological anti-utopia seems to be Player Piano, which can be classified as a technological anti-utopia of the "anti-computer" kind.

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Player Piano was first published in 1932, in an era of great fascination with machinery, automatization, and computer technology. It was also the time of totalitarianism, and McCarthyism. At that time /1947-1950/, Kurt Vonnegut worked for the General Electric Company in Schenectady, N.Y., where he was surrounded by "all sorts of technology" and "the guys who ... were foreseeing of machines being run by little boxes and punched cards". For him Player Piano was a "response to the implications of having everything run by little boxes".^{4/}

The critics tend to classify Player Piano as a science-fiction novel.^{5/} However, there are also some who classify it as anti-utopia, no matter whether they recognize anti-utopia as a separate literary genre.^{6/} I treat it as an inter-genre phenomenon.^{7/} Vonnegut himself admits that the plot of the novel is "cheerfully ripped off from the plot of Brave New World, whose plot had been cheerfully ripped off from Zamyatin's We".^{8/} This statement seems to confirm the view that Player Piano belongs to the stream of anti-utopian fiction as defined above.

The action of Utopia 14 /as is the title of one of the early paperback editions of Player Piano/ takes place in the city of Plum, N.Y., some time after the Second Industrial Revolution, which took place after the last war. Although, superficially, life there seems to be very similar to life in today's America, it turns out to be based on different principles. Everything there is being run by a computer named EPICAC XIV, which has the capacity

of creating a total political and social system. Each citizen, then, has to take certain I.Q. tests, which determine his general ability, which means that if his I.Q. is very high he can go to university and become an engineer, or an executive, or else, when his I.Q. is below a certain /very high/ level, he must either join the Army, or the Reeks and Wrecks /the Reconstruction and Reclamation Corps/.

The society is divided basically into two classes, the engineers, who run everything and earn enormous sums of money, and the Reeks and Wrecks who get very little money /about 30 dollars per month/, but are equipped with all necessary facilities free. There is also the third social class, the least numerous, consisting of self-employed barbers, shopowners, etc., whose professions have not been yet eliminated by machines. But as soon as there is, for instance, an automatic haircutting machine, a barber would have to close up his business and join the Reeks and Wrecks.

It should be noted that each anti-utopia, no matter how undesirable or even horrifying it may appear to the reader, is, at the same time, a utopia, from the point of view of its rulers. Therefore, in each anti-utopia there exist certain images of perfection, certain ideals, which determine the level of perfection achieved by the society /from the point of view of its rulers/. Player Piano describes the technological anti-utopia, in which everything is run by machines which, eventually, outgrow their constructors and "enslave" them. In this mechanized world, then, everything turns around technology, automation, and the constant attempts at improving the machines. Therefore, the peak of man's achievements there is to become an engineer, preferably a manager, with a sense of "know-how", being always willing to improve technology.

Another aspect of this problem is the "machine-like" organization of the society. Everybody has to be classified, so that his place in the social hierarchy is exactly stated. Consequently, each individual has his identification number, like that of a spare part of a machine, according to which he is placed in the memory of EPICAC XIV. This number indicates the profession and the social status of its bearer.^{9/} The concept of giving people numbers is typical of anti-utopias. In 1984 everybody has an I.D. number by which he is identified by the Thought Police; in Brave New World people are divided into categories /Alphas, Betas, Deltas, etc./

according to their skills, and they are given additional numbers; in We the names are eliminated altogether, in favour of the numbers. It should be stressed that perfection, as understood in Player Piano consists also in machine-like symmetry and exactness. This can be demonstrated on the basis of the Plum Works:

"The groups, five ranks of ten machines each, swept their tools in unison across steel bars, kicked out finished shafts onto continuous belts, stopped, while raw bars dropped between their chucks and tailstocks, clamped down and swept their tools across the bars, kicked out the finished shafts onto ..."/p.16/ Everything is automatic and has its proper function, and the society strive for achieving similar perfection.

The technology and automation, however, have a damaging effect with regard to society. Therefore, the dominant aspect of the fictional world of Player Piano seems to be the futile life led by Americans under the reign of EPICAC XIV. The description of technological miracles serve only as a background for showing the vain life of people, irrespective of the class to which they belong. In Player Piano the society proceeds along the predictions of Denis Gabor, according to whom "The rationalizing of clerical work ... starting on top of the production methods ... is bound to produce unemployment in the short run, and social uselessness of a large fraction of society, in the long run. One can always create artificial employment"/e.g. digging and, then filling ditches by the Reeks and Wrecks/ but the sense of uselessness cannot be easily removed".^{10/} At a closer look, it is obvious that the Americans from Player Piano are needed only as long as there is no gadget to replace them, which is the case with, for example Bud Galhoun who, by inventing a machine that could do his work, "automated himself out of a job". Therefore, as everybody is bound to join the Reeks and Wrecks sooner or later, the final rebellion embraces all social groups, and is directed against technology and machines.

The citizens of the America of Player Piano are subject to constant indoctrination. To show the means of propaganda which can be used in order that science and technology become the objects of religious-like cult, Vonnegut includes in his novel a play which is staged for the engineers at the Meadows. The play, whose script is provided in full, borrows from the medieval tradition of the morality play. It presents the struggle between a Radical and an allegorized "cleancut, handsome, young engineer" for loyalty of

Mr. John Averageman, Shovelman First Class from the Reeks and Wrecks. The Radical tells Averageman how unimportant a life he leads, and, besides, how underpaid he is in comparison with the engineers. The Young Engineer, on the contrary, tries to convince John that he is better off than Julius Caesar, because Caesar "would have given anything to get the security and health package you have, John" /p.125/. Of course, John is converted to the new "faith", the faith in technology, "the Star of Technology, replacing the Star of Bethlehem, shines brightly in Heavens, and the play ends with the glorious hymn to a new God".^{11/}

Nevertheless, there exists always the possibility of propaganda being insufficient. In that case, the state has the strong law-enforcement units to suppress even the slightest signs of disorder. In the novel, there can be found the echoes of what is called "the McCarthy era". On the very first page, the reader learns that the action takes place "ten years after the war ... after the riots had been put down, after thousands had been jailed under anti-sabotage laws" /p.9/. Throughout the novel, there are indications that everybody who is suspected of anti-machine sabotage, which is considered to be the most serious crime, is separated from the rest of society. Moreover, the trials, like in the case of the protagonist's trial, are televised over a nationwide television network, just as it was the case with the trials of people accused of being communists by McCarthy's commission in the 50's. Lie-detectors are used, and all this creates the atmosphere of terror, resembling, to a certain extent, that of the political anti-utopias like 1984. So, no matter whether technology serves the state, as it is the case in 1984, or the state serves technology, as in Player Piano, the effects turn out, in the long run, to be more or less the same.

The anti-technological movement present in Player Piano causes the past to become idealized, in opposition with the evil present. This temporal opposition is a new variant of the spatial opposition from traditional utopia, where the opposition "perfect" - "non-perfect" is realized on the spatial plane, the utopian island being presented as an absolute ideal, as opposed to the imperfect outside world.

As the "Herra Incoognita" disappeared, the spatial voyage gave way to a temporal one, and later, the motif of the voyage disappeared, leaving the actions of utopias and anti-utopias set in

a more or less distant future. As a result of this, the spatial opposition /utopia-real world/ has been replaced by a temporal opposition of the nightmarish present as opposed to the perfect past /from the point of view of the implied author/.

It is worth noticing, however, that this opposition possesses a twofold character, because from the point of view of the rulers of the anti-utopian world, this opposition is exactly reverse. From their point of view, it is the present which is "normal" = perfect, and the past is considered by them to be "abnormal" or chaotic. Therefore, for instance, in Player Piano Doctor Halvard from the State Department constantly describes the United States to the Shah of Bratpaur in terms of technological paradise e.g.:

"It /ERTOAC XIV/ is an electronic computing machine - a brain if you like ... There are more vacuum tubes in the entire instrument than there were vacuum tubes in the State of New York before World War II". /p.104/

On the contrary, the past gets idealized, most often by the people who have been "automated out" of their jobs, and had to join the Reeks and Wrecks e.g.:

"Used to be a conductor on this line" ... "Yes, forty one years" ... "And I'd like to see one of them machines deliver a baby" ... "And I never seen a machine yet that'd watch out for a girl three years old all the way from St. Louis to Poughkeepsie" ... "With machines you get quasi-litty, but you don't get qual-litty". /pp.214-215/

Their longings lead eventually to the anti-machine rebellion.

The longing for the past points out to yet another phenomenon present in anti-utopias, namely, that each anti-utopia possesses its own, implied utopian ideal. In the case of Yonnegut's novel, this ideal seems to be the State of Nature, as contrasted with the technocracy. This ideal finds its realization not only in the anti-machine rebellion, but it is also stressed in at least two more episodes. One of them is the Gottwald farm, which is bought by the protagonist after his decision of quitting the job. The farm is "a museum exhibit with no machines at all". There are kerosene lamps and a latchstring, instead of a lock, and that is why Paul Proteus wants to buy it, in order to find solitude. Apart from the Gottwald farm there is still another indication of the longing for the State of Nature in the novel. It is the Meadows Island.

The Meadows is the island where all engineers from the Corporation spend their summer vacations each year. Their vacations

there, resemble a scout's camp with bonfires, singing, and the Indian rites. However, the Meadows, as opposed to the Gottwald farm, is not the ideal sought for. The State of Nature proclaimed here is only superficial. "When leave their families to spend two weeks amid the virgin forests of the island, but the complicated, technocratic life they left is concealed on the Meadows, like the hidden loudspeaker that blares out orders to the guests. This green world does not bring the men away from their corrupt everyday lives, but deeper into it". 12/ Consequently, the Meadows episode seems to be a novelty in the anti-utopian tradition. It shows how the utopian yearnings of people can be turned into the benefit of the rulers of anti-utopia. So far, such yearnings have been thoroughly suppressed, in Player Piano they serve as further aid in the process of the indoctrination of citizens.

The temporal opposition present-past, has not, however, eliminated certain tensions existing on a spatial plane. Generally speaking, the spatial plane of an anti-utopian novel is divided into the world of anti-utopia and the rest of the world, to which only a passing reference is made. Nevertheless, within the world of anti-utopia itself, there tend to exist certain spatial "spheres", each of them bearing either negative or positive value. This phenomenon cannot be observed in Zamiatin's We, but in Breve New World, we have the opposition between the Indian reservation and the world of anti-utopia; and in 1984, London is divided into the quarters inhabited by the Party members, and ones inhabited by the Proles. The secondary spatialization is, by far, more developed in Player Piano, which exhibits a very peculiar and innovative spatial structure.

The novel begins with such a description:

"Illium, New York, is divided into three parts, in the northwest are the managers and engineers and civil servants and a few professional people; in the northeast are the machines; and in the south, across the Iroquois River, is the area known locally as Homestead, where almost all of the people live". /p.9/

Illium, N.Y., is shown as a microcosm, parallel to an island from traditional utopias. The north side of the river bears the positive value, and "across the river" - negative. Moreover, the two spheres are very strongly separated from each other:

"If the bridge across the Iroquois were dynamited, few daily routines would be disturbed. Not many people on either side have reason other than curiosity for crossing". /p.9/

Since the first paragraph of Player Piano parodies the beginning of Caesar's Commentary of the Gallic Wars /Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres... /, Stanley Shatt concludes that the engineers and managers, living on the north side of the river, are the modern-day Romans whereas the ordinary people, living in Homestead, "serve as counterparts of the non-Romans or savages"^{14/}. It should be also noted that the opposition "intelligent" - "stupid", being one of the main oppositions of the novel, is also realized on the spatial plane. The north side of the river can be marked /+intelligent/, whereas Homestead /-intelligent/.

Such a strong spatialization of the world of anti-utopia seems to be a novelty in this literary genre, however, such an approach appears to be too shallow. The spatialization is also a reach-back to the genre memory^{14/}, and it is utilizing the old utopian concept of the island, adopted to the realm of anti-utopia.

In traditional utopias the reader learned about the represented world from the traveller to utopia, who was, in turn, informed about the utopian world directly by its inhabitants. In anti-utopias, since the spatial travel to utopia is replaced by setting the action in the future, the role of the traditional traveller has been assumed by an outsider, the alienated inhabitant of the anti-utopian world. It is, in most cases, this individual, who being the protagonist, informs the reader about the imaginary world. The protagonist, tends to be the sole informer about the represented world in the first-person-narrated anti-utopias, which usually take the form of the protagonist's memoirs. In anti-utopias with the third person narrations, information about the represented world is provided by, for instance: narrator's comments, memoirs of one of the characters, etc..

The reader learns about the fictional world of Player Piano from: the narrator's comments /e.g. "Illum, N.Y., is divided into three parts" /p.9//, the characters /e.g. Paul's speech at the party for technical personnel /p.52//, and from the episodes with the Shah of Bratpahr, "spiritual leader of 6,000,000 members of the Kahlouri sect", who is visiting the U.S., and is informed about various aspects of American life by Doctor Halvard from the State Department.

The episode with the Shah, which are woven around the main plot, provide the reader with more information about the shape of the represented world, than does the plot itself. Besides their

informative role, they function also as a reach-back to the genre memory. The Shah, apart from the protagonist, is yet another counterpart of the traveller from the early utopias, who having come to "terra incognita", is guided by its inhabitants in order to see its miracles. The Shah, however, differs from the traditional traveller to utopia, because "coming from a 'more primitive' country, he provides another and ironic perspective on this future society"^{15/}. The Shah is more naive, and, at the same time, more critical than the travellers to utopia. Instead of starting in awe at everything he is shown, like it was the case with, for instance, the Genoese sailor from Givitas Solis, the Shah seems to become more and more disappointed with the "ideal" society. When shown EPICAC XIV, the Shah asks the computer a riddle, because in his religion, there exists a belief that, "he great, all-wise God will come among us one day ... and we shall know him, for he shall be able to answer the riddle" /p.109/. "The fact that the computer cannot answer the riddle indicates to the Shah that technology is not the God that will liberate mankind"^{16/}. Before his departure for home, the Shah is offered by the State Department the possibility of mechanizing his country with the help of the U.S., but refuses this offer unless the EPICAC XIV can tell him what people are for. These facts further indicate the anti-utopian character of the world of Player Piano. The Shah came to utopia, and it turned out to be a nightmare, with thousands of "takam", as the Shah calls the U.S. citizens, a word which in his language means "slave".

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The traditional utopia was a very static form of fiction, an account devoid of plot, of an imaginary journey, since each change in perfect, utopian society would be considered to be a step back. On the contrary, in anti-utopia, which possesses a form of the novel, there exists a plot, whose essence lies in the motif of rebellion. Consequently, the plot of anti-utopia is very schematic and it can be divided into the following three, in some cases four, stages:

- 1./ disquiet of the protagonist - the protagonist gradually loses his belief in the anti-utopian system;
- 2./ detachment - the protagonist is now fully aware of the absurdity of the system;

3./ expulsion - the unsuccessful rebellion against the system;
4./ re-indoctrination of the protagonist /optional/.

This particular construction of plot is also present in Player Piano. The protagonist of the novel, Doctor Paul Proteus, young manager of the Illum Works, the son of late George Proteus, the Director of National Industrial, Commercial, Communications, Foodstuffs and Resources, "a position approached in importance only by the presidency of the United States", is, at first, a brilliant young executive with every prospect of becoming the manager of the Pittsburgh Works, and then, presumably, taking the position of his late father. However, like the protagonists of other anti-utopias he undergoes a change from a respectable, law-abiding citizen, into a rebel against the system.

The disquiet of the protagonist of Player Piano takes the first thirteen chapters. 17/ For Paul, the first symptom of a metamorphosis to come is his meeting with his old friend Ed Finnerty. Finnerty, having just quit his job as a high official in Washington, D.C., took Paul to Homestead, and showed him the life of average Americans. This fact enabled Paul to realize the uselessness of the climbing up the managerial hierarchy:

"... When Paul thought about his effortless rise in the hierarchy, he sometimes, as now felt sheepish like a charlatan. He could handle the assignments all right, but he did not have what his father has ... what so many had: the sense of spiritual importance in what they were doing." /p.60/

Finally, when Kroner /his boss/ proposes Paul to turn informer on Finnerty /who is being considered subversive/, he decides to quit.

The detachment stage /chapters XIV-XXII/ embraces the Meadows episode. His decision to quit the job is now firm. Taking part in the annual summer camp for engineers and managers, at the Meadows Island, he becomes more and more isolated. Finally, when Old Man Gelhorne /who holds the position of Paul's late father/ proposes Paul to join the Ghost Shirt Society /a subversive anti-machine organization/ in order to act as a secret agent, he decides to really join this organization.

The expulsion constitutes the remaining part of the novel. Paul is appointed a leader of the Ghost Shirt Society, then, caught by the police, he is put on trial. Eventually, after having been released by the rebels, he joins the rebellion, and then, he surrenders together with other leaders of it. The reader is not informed about what happens afterwards, and in this respect

Player Piano differs from other anti-utopias, which tend to include the fourth stage, namely, the re-indoctrination of their protagonists, by means of tortures /1984/, a brain operation /Ne/, etc. Analogously, one can expect a similar ideological "conversion" of Paul Proteus, yet no such process takes place.

This particular plot construction of anti-utopia links it with sensational novel. Like in thrillers, a reader wonders whether the main protagonist will be caught by the police or not, and whether the rebellion will be a successful one. The same principle applies to Vonnegut's novel. The protagonist is caught by the police, and despite the fact that he is set free by the rebels, he is, most probably imprisoned again, after the rebellion is suppressed. The suspense evoked by the sensational motifs in anti-utopia appears to be only seeming, because of the automatization of the genre conventions, which cause a reader to be more or less certain that the rebellion will fail, and that the protagonist will, eventually, be caught.

The novelty of the plot of Vonnegut's novel consists in the introduction of "a series of intricate ... subplots reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's Point Counterpoint", 18/ which serve as intermissions to the main plot. Thus, the main plot does not evolve in a strictly linear manner but goes into subplots and digressions. The subplots are indeed very loosely connected with the main plot and, as it has already been said, their dominant function is to provide a reader with information about the anti-utopian world.

Peter Reed reaches a conclusion that "the subplots and digressions often weaken the central narrative ... Vonnegut is obviously more interested in the action of the whole society than of one man. One wonders if the Proteus-plot amounts to more than a vehicle for the story of the society ..." 19/ Such an a priori judgement seems, however, to be misleading, because it fails to take into consideration the fact that Vonnegut might have equally well "consciously broken the rules for a conventionally structured novel in an attempt to find a narrative mode more conducive for his story and his temperament". 20/ In the light of the style and technique of his latter novels one should agree with James Neiland in the opinion that the object of Vonnegut's technique in Player Piano is "the overthrow of the accepted literary connection of visual imagery, continuous plot, connected characterization,

uniform point of view - all the mechanical aspects of pictorialism associated with Henry James and the mimetic novel. "21/

The breaking of the anti-utopian plot pattern by introducing a series of subplots performs still another role, namely, it frustrates the reader's expectations as to the ultimate purpose of this technique, thus creating an element of suspense different than that of a sensational kind. This type of suspense may be called a structural one. It is apparent that the reader expects the subplots to be sooner or later tied together. This, however, never happens. Although Paul and the Shah meet each other twice, not knowing each other, the subplots never form a uniform whole. Consequently, at the very end of the novel, the reader discovers that the function of the subplots is to provide more information about the represented world, to form a wider picture of the society and to introduce the comic effects. This episodic, "jerky" construction of Player Piano seems not only to contribute to the development of anti-utopia, but to the development of novel in general as well.

The characters appearing in Player Piano can be, in general, divided into three groups: "acting" characters, "commenting" characters, and "background" characters. The relatively large number of characters appearing in Vonnegut's novel largely results from the existence of subplots. Moreover, the characters of Player Piano represent all social classes. Consequently, it is not only the protagonist, who is involved in the subversive plot, but many other characters like: Finnerty, Lasher, Professor von Neumann, etc., as well. So far, there has been only a passing reference made to the existence of some subversive organization /Ne, 1984/, and the protagonists have acted alone against the system. In Player Piano, Paul Proteus only exemplifies the rebellious tendencies existing under the reign of EPICAC XIV. In fact, each of the acting characters could have possibly served as the protagonist of the story.

The second group of characters includes, among others, the Shah of Bratpahr, Doctor Halyard, Private Hacketts, Edger Hagstrom from the Reeks and Wrecks, the barber from Florida, the wife of a failed writer, etc.. All those characters, directly or indirectly, comment on the action, and show the possible implications of living in that mechanized world. Although, their contribution to the action itself is none, they enable the reader

to understand thoroughly the nightmarish world of the novel.

For instance, the wife of a failed writer explains the process of publishing books. Writers, who have their classification numbers of publishing books. Writers, who have their classification numbers /W-441 - fiction novice, W-440 - fiction journeyman, W-225 public relations/, have to submit their books to the National Council of Arts and Letters for criticism and assignment to one of the twelve book clubs, each for the specific type of reader. Each book is assigned a "readability quotient" /R.Q./, which has to be under 17. Ed, the failed writer, failed because his novel was twenty-seven pages longer than the maximum length, and it had anti-machine theme, so its R.Q. was 26.3. Other commenting characters provide more examples of that kind.

There are also other secondary characters, appearing in episodes, like, for instance Alf, the "F.V. shark", who makes his living on betting on what tune is being played on F.V. when he watches the F.V. with the sound out. He is not very bright, but he is independent, one of a few outsiders in the story, dropouts who are really free.

The characters, appearing in Player Piano, are all very typical. No matter whether they are static /Kroner, Baer, Hacketts/, or dynamic /Paul, Finnerty/, they always start with some stereotype. They appear to be personifications of certain concepts or tendencies of their world. Take, for instance, the two senior executives, Kroner and Baer. Baer embodied the knowledge and technique of industry; Kroner personified the faith, the near-holliness, the spirit of complicated venture ... he had the priceless quality of believing in the system, and of making others believe in it, too, and do as they were told" /pp.45-46/. The key-words in these descriptions are: "personify" and "embody." The typicality of characters seems to be a standard feature of anti-utopia and utopia, as it is yet another device for showing the gradual decrease of individuality, and the general tendency for uniformization existing in anti-utopian and utopian societies.

The episodes from the everyday life of Paul and his wife Anita seem to belong to, so-called, domestic novel. In anti-utopias before Player Piano there was no place for family life based on love. In those anti-utopias "terms of individual happiness or unhappiness cease to have any meaning because there is no longer any standard by which such happiness could be measured. The only happiness is the consciousness of serving the State". 22/

Consequently, the lack of individual freedom is pushed to such an extent, as to create such absurd situations when people are allowed to have one sexual intercourse each week /i.e./, Therefore, in such anti-utopias the motif of rebellion is always accompanied by the motif of an unlawful love affair of the protagonist, and this love affair makes the transgression against the laws of anti-utopia even deeper.

Though in Player Piano the main source of happiness appears to be also the consciousness of serving the State, every citizen is provided by the state with necessary conditions for a happy /at least theoretically/ family life. We observe it on the basis of the marriage of Paul and Anita.

Paul and Anita are a typical American upper-middle class couple. Anita, not having much intelligence, has gained her social position by getting married to Paul. She is very ambitious, and her main ambition is the constant social climbing. Therefore, she tells her husband rumours, spread among wives of other engineers, encourages him, and even tries to pre-plan his talks with the company bosses by making up written instructions for him, for example:

"Item III, A. 1. a.: Don't smoke. Kroner is trying to break the habit."

.....
 "I, A. 1. If Kroner asks you why you want Pittsburgh, say it is because you can be of greater service . . .
 2. Sort-pedal bigger house and raise and prestige". /pp.101-102/

The formula repeated by Paul and Anita throughout the story, "I love you Paul", "I love you Anita" seems to be completely automatic and meaningless. For Anita, it is what a good wife should say. Paul just satisfies convention. Yet, Paul loves Anita, because "she remains the one object of love, the only point of human warmth in a sterile world, and even at the end, when she has betrayed him sexually, emotionally, and intellectually, he still deeply regrets her loss". 23/

It seems that the Paul-Anita motif, apart from its re-dynamising function, functions within the novel in yet another way. It focuses the reader's attention on the more immediate kind of social criticism than the rest of the story. Anita is a reflexion of an average upper-middle class, suburban American wife, seen in a distorting mirror. Also the party given by Kroner, and the silent war between Paul and Doctor Shepherd reflect the ever-present

social climbing and snobbery of American upper-middle class. By ridiculing them, Vonnegut directly criticizes the really existing phenomena, rather than shows their consequences in the future.

Humour, present in Player Piano, is yet another factor differing it from other anti-utopias. So far, only the satire was present in anti-utopia, causing it to be frequently labelled as "satirical utopia". The satire tended to be manifested in anti-utopias as parody, irony and mockery. Any humorous elements, not numerous though, also served the above mentioned purposes.

In this respect Player Piano appears to be entirely different, since it is after all a very humorous novel. "Comic episodes become frequent sometimes as pure slapstick, sometimes almost of the comic strip, Guffaw-inducing variety". 24/ There are several sources of humour in the novel: comic characters, the selection of names, long enumerations, comic episodes, comic exaggerations, double meanings, etc..

The most amusing character of Player Piano is certainly the Shah. The comicality of the Shah results largely from the cultural differences between himself and the Americans. He, simply, seems not to understand anything. In fact, he does understand everything on the very basic, down-to-earth level, and hence the comedy of his observations. Other comic characters are: Finnerty who breaks all possible conventions, social and otherwise, in the sterile, mechanized world, and Luke Lubbock with his love for unusual clothing.

The selection of names also turns out to be humorous. The name Proteus, for instance, implies the quick changes of appearances and viewpoint. He indeed, changes his dress each time he crosses the bridge, but the change of his viewpoint is, ironically, very slow and painful. Rev. Lasher lashes out at the Illum society, he is the head rebel. Illum is the heroic counterpart of Homer's Troy. 25/ The examples are numerous.

There are also comic episodes like the scout-like life at the Meadows; long enumerations, like the listing of things damages in the rebellion "... belts, billers, bookkeeping machines, botlers, canners . . ." /p.281/; double meanings: "You'd need some kind of sensin' element that could smell a mouse". Or a rat" /p.11/. /to smell a rat", i.e. to detect something suspicious/.

Player Piano is then the first anti-utopia which is really humorous. However, the mixture of humour and admonition results in,

what is usually called, the black humour, so that the novel's main message is not impeded, and its admonitory, iconoclastic force is not lesser than that of other anti-utopias.

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It seems that Player Piano continues the tradition of anti-utopianism, as defined above. The novel, however, exhibits certain features pointing to the evolution of the genre. One of the objectives of the present paper, was to show the ways of re-dynamizing the genre pattern of anti-utopia. On the basis of Player Piano, it appears that modern anti-utopia evolves mainly by means of incorporating the elements of other literary genres. One must realize that anti-utopia is rather automatized, and, consequently, the only way of its development appears to be the utilizing the elements of other literary genres, which it does.

As it has been stated, Player Piano incorporates the elements of the following genres: political novel, sensation novel, domestic novel, and even morality play. However, it utilizes only certain aspects of these genres, in order to further strengthen its iconoclastic, admonitory function. Therefore, the re-dynamization of the genre convention is, in this case, limited only to iconoclasm of anti-utopia, leaving, for example, the plot pattern or the problem of the images of perfection of the represented world, intact. This fact suggests a more general problem, concerning the factors which dominate in the evolution of a given literary genre, depending on the phase of its development. The present analysis of Player Piano seems to suggest that together with the automatization of genre conventions, the development of this genre tends to be determined by inter-literary factors rather, than the extra-literary ones. It can be, however, observed that the extra-literary factors affect the topicality of the genre, a conclusion which can be drawn from the anti-computer theme of Player Piano.

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Erwägungen zum Begriff "Expressionismus"

Die Schwierigkeit die Definition des Expressionismus festzulegen ist gewiß mit der historischen Entwicklung dieses Begriffes verbunden. Die Lektüre verschiedener Versuche einer Präzisierung führt zu der Einsicht, daß es für die Forschung nicht einen, sondern mehrere "Expressionismen" gab.¹⁾ Aufgrund der chaotischen Pluralität der Meinungen zeichnete sich eine zeitlang die Tendenz ab, auf diesen Begriff überhaupt zu verzichten und ihn z.B. in dem allumfassenden Begriff der Moderne aufgehen zu lassen.²⁾ Weil jedoch die an den Begriff der Moderne bekannte Bezeichnung³⁾ in Bezug auf die deutsche Kunst und Literatur seit etwa 1911 funktioniert und von den so genannten Künstlern und Schriftstellern relativ früh akzeptiert wurde und was vielleicht eine der Ursachen des oben genannten Chaos war - und weil das Wort als Benennung des Zeitabschnittes der ersten zwanzig (bis dreißig)⁴⁾ Jahre unseres Jahrhunderts gültig geworden ist - sollte man versuchen eine zufriedenstellende (d.h. genügend weite Bereiche umfassende) Definition zu schaffen.

Der Begriff wurde in der Zeitschrift "Der Sturm" zum Schlagwort - zuerst im Zusammenhang mit der Malerei, bald aber bezog man ihn auch hier auf die Literatur. Zuerst tritt er in dem Artikel "Vorläufer" zur Entwicklung der modernen Malerei" von 1911 auf⁵⁾, dann im Zusammenhang mit einer Gruppe von Malern, die "nach eigenem Wunsch so genannt wurden"⁶⁾ (u.a. Pechstein und Nolde); gleichzeitig wurde man sich dessen bewußt, daß dieses Wort zur Benennung der neuen Strömung der antiimpressionistischen Malerei dienen könnte: "Viel-