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PARANOIA OF REINVENTION: KURT VONNEGUT'S *GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSEWATER, OR, PEARLS BEFORE SWINE*

ABSTRACT

Paranoia defines a culture, particularly the American. Since WWII (1939-45), it became an inevitable thought structure in the USA community. Most of the postmodern American novelists' interest in paranoia is due to its relevance to everyday life anxieties and horrors. Since WWII, an extraordinary number of writers have used expressions of paranoia to present the influence of postwar technologies, social organisations, and communication systems on human beings. Writers as different as Ralph Ellison, William S. Burroughs, Joseph Heller, Margaret Atwood, Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, Joan Didion, Kathy Acker, and Don DeLillo have depicted individuals nervous about the ways large organisations might be controlling their lives, influencing their actions, or even constructing their desires.

The fictional representation of paranoia has become increasingly popular in periods marked by scepticism about unmediated reality. An attempt to regenerate hope encourages many postwar writers to present paranoia as a positive state of mind, an intelligent and fruitful form of suspicion, rather than a psychosis. The aim of this study is to examine the postmodern American novel representations of paranoia.

The paper deals with Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007), his war experience and its effect on his work, and presents a brief examination of his employment of science fiction and surrealism which distinguishes him as a postmodern novelist. The paper is devoted to an in-depth discussion of the revelations of paranoia in two

novels. The protagonist's paranoid illusions in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1966) enable him to reinvent his reality which is plagued with decay and obsession with wealth. It is entitled "Paranoia of Reinvention" to indicate that paranoia in Vonnegut's novels is objective in the sense of being a way to reinvent one's world through illusions.

PARANOIA OF REINVENTION: KURT VONNEGUT'S *GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSEWATER, OR, PEARLS BEFORE SWINE*

If I told the truth
You would not believe me.
If I said: no fellow soul
Drops death from the air, no conscious plot
Drove us underground, you would laugh
As if I had twitched the wax mouth
Of my tragic mask into a smile—
Fausto Maijstral in Thomas Pynchon's *V.*

The facts of the first half of the twentieth century influenced the dark side in Kurt Vonnegut's vision and in portraying a horrendous life. This is made clear in the voice of W. Campbell, Jr., the protagonist of *Mother Night*, who says that anyone growing up in this world "expecting peace and order" will "be eaten alive."[1] Nevertheless, at times of danger, repression and disillusionment there is always a ray of hope in his novels. To a certain extent, his depiction of paranoia conveys one of the facets of the era in which he lived. His heroes are paranoids of the dehumanisation of invisible institutions, bureaucracies, and computers and, paralysed by fear and guilt, they become "disembodied creatures with disintegrating minds."[2] The recurrence of these depressions in the protagonists develop in some to the edge of insanity with occasional breakdowns like Eliot Rosewater.

God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater sheds light on USA since the Civil War (1861-1865) and depicts the corruption behind the fortunes of some post-WWII American businessmen. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., opens his novel with "A sum of money is a leading character in this tale about people"[3] to comment on class, social values, public morality, art, economics, and politics.

The novel examines the effect of money on the lives of individuals and the psychological and moral consequences of both having and not having money. One has to keep in mind that money is not simply the root of all evil in the world of this story, but the root of all neurosis. Neurosis extends to all characters that hardly a single character is not affected psychologically in some way or another. Sanity seems neurotic in this novel while madness commonly runs as the norm for sanity.[4] Therefore, it is obvious that the novel poses what was one of the main controversial issues in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, i.e., the hero's madness.[5] Paranoia in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* is like Hamlet's "to be or not to be." In plain words, these tormented souls have chosen paranoia because they believe it to be the only way that makes living in a contemporary decaying state possible.

Eliot's paranoid delusions stem from his buried anxieties concerning his traumatising experience as a Captain in WWII which led to an emotional collapse and the accidental killing of three volunteer firemen mistaking them for German soldiers including a fourteen-year-old boy, his guilt of undeserved wealth, and his conflict with his father.

Eliot Rosewater is the son of a family whose fortune is graded as the fourteenth largest family fortune in USA.[6] In the first chapter, the protagonist gives a clear image of the society he inhabits. Being the president of the philanthropic Rosewater Foundation which produces $10,000 a day, he writes a letter to whoever will succeed him when he is dead. In it, he exposes the moral ruthlessness and criminal exploitation underlying the Rosewater family fortune. He narrates how the forefather, Noah Rosewater, "a humourless, constipated Christian farm boy" who turns

speculator and briber during and after the Civil War (p. 11), has accumulated his fortune by corrupt means such as crime, bribery, exploitation and greed giving birth to incredibly rich families. Eliot theorises his motto to be: "Grab much too much, or you'll get nothing at all" (p. 13). As a consequence to the "great hunks" of "grabs," a "savage and stupid and entirely inappropriate and unnecessary and humourless American class system [is] created" (p. 12), i.e., the American aristocracy. The comment of Peter J. Reed is relevant here: "The American class system … institutionali[s]es money. Like most class systems its function is to protect its aristocracy and keep its masses contentedly, respectfully and industriously in their places."[7] USA that is deemed as Utopia has declined into a nightmare land of possessiveness, greed and insecurity.[8] Eliot considers the family's vicious "grab" for money and power part of the force that turned the American dream belly up, "turned green, bobbled to the scummy surface of cupidity unlimited, filled with gas, went bang in the noonday sun" (p. 13). One of the implications of the novel is its indictment of "an obsession with wealth which has undermined the American experiment"[9] and the pioneering independence of action and judgment. Wealth in the novel is linked to homosexuality (Bunny Weeks), lesbianism (Amanita Buntline), sloth (Stewart Buntline), pornography (Lila Buntline), drunkenness (Carolyn Rosewater), and death (Fred Rosewater, Eliot's poor cousin, sells insurance with the promise that the value of life lies in the worth of death). As Barbara Teba Lupack observes, the American dream was "materiali[s]ed into a junk yard by way of the glories of technology."[10] This millionaire, haunted by guilt and shame of his family history, renounces luxurious life and decides to live in the distressed town

of Rosewater, Indiana, living in a shabby one-room-office to be a volunteer fireman[11] and to dedicate himself to the most scrupulous responsibility of loving and caring for his fellowmen.[12] Eliot as an ideal of the millionaire Samaritan is a "re-enactment of Christ-like commitment,"[13] to the poor, of more than in money but of commitment of self in body and soul.

Vonnegut indirectly treated Eliot's paranoid schizophrenia inviting the reader to engage in active speculations of two possibilities: firstly, Eliot Rosewater is as "crazy as a loon" (p. 10) and "irrevocably bananas" (p. 33), and secondly, he is one of the sanest characters in Vonnegut's novels; according to Eliot's father-in-law, who finds Eliot's reaction to the horror of war sane and appropriate, saying that he is "the sanest man in America" (p. 64) and according to Kilgore Trout, the science-fiction writer, who believes that he is the initiator of one of "the most important social experiment[s] of our time … How to love people who have no use" (p. 183)? Sometimes, Eliot's tormentors themselves are uncertain:

> It was common gossip in the office that the very first president of the Foundation, Eliot Rosewater, the Senator's son, was a lunatic. This characteri[s]ation was a somewhat playful one … Eliot was spoken of by Mushari's co-workers as "The Nut," "The Saint," "The Holy Roller," "John the Baptist" and so on (p. 10).

Another example is that his unwillingness to be a good capitalist who accumulates wealth at the expense

of others is what Norman Mushari, the conniving family lawyer, regards as an indication of Eliot's insanity (p. 10). The profiteering lawyer is seen by Lawrence R. Broer as a brutal "embodiment of corporate legal viciousness."[14] Early passages in the novel reveal that notions of sanity are strongly connected to ideological assumptions of the accuser and impart as much about the values of the accuser as of the accused. For more clarification, in his letter to whoever will succeed him, Eliot tells the reader that his father has left the manipulation of his assets to lawyers and banks and spent nearly the whole of his adult life in the Congress of the USA "teaching morals" and ignoring thoughts about the effects and implications of his inherited wealth (p. 14). The Senator's enlightened self-interest motto, "The hell with you Jack, I've got mine," is to him normal and sane while Eliot's humanitarianism, kindness and concern for others are lunacy (pp. 88-89). It is the psychological aspect which outweighs the sociological one and generates the novel's complexity and poignancy and the protagonist's complex character. The Senator is horrified that Eliot should object to a system in which "honest, industrious, peaceful citizens" are classified as "bloodsuckers" (p. 12), if they asked to be paid a living wage, while Eliot is shocked at the repressive system of justice his father calls for in a speech given on the floor of the Senate. His father calls for a violent and repressive system to "force Americans to be as good as they should be" (p. 26). He calls for a "police force as cruel and unsmiling" (Ibid.) in treating law breakers as Caesar Augustus did, stringing offenders up by their thumbs, throwing them down wells and feeding them to lions to make people good citizens (Ibid.).

The dilemma is that can one manage to act with

any genuineness and sincerity of self anywhere amid the selfishness of the Senator's laissez-faire and oppressive beliefs and the unselfishness of Eliot's obsessive "uncritical love" and universal help? Tony Tanner thinks that any claim of insanity against Eliot Rosewater must be directed at the society that makes it. He points out that one of the messages of the novel is that "it is better to be 'crazy' in some way than to drift on in the almost catatonic moral stupor and calm of the majority."[15]

However, Eliot's emotional dilemmas are more serious than his tormentors suspect. His breakdown is the outcome of his war experiences that are culminated in his mind and torment him. Vonnegut shows how he kills the teenager: "Eliot, like a good soldier, jammed his knee into the man's groin, drove his bayonet, smashed the man's jaw with his rifle butt" (p. 63). His immediate response to this incident is lying down in front of a moving truck, remorseful and rigid with fear (p. 64). Therefore, Eliot's idealistic hopes, his doctorate in international law from Harvard and the presidency of the Rosewater Foundation cannot cure him from the memories of war which have intensified his sense of guilt and weakened his ability to act properly.[16] Although his six-year devotion to social reform is heartfelt, his motives are suspect and his actions become increasingly obsessive and antisocial. He chooses to be friendless driving away and alienating all his friends whether they are rich people, artists, scholars or scientists undervaluing their achievements as dubious, mere crap, based on dumb luck and as failing to reach the poor (p. 27).

Eliot becomes "a Utopian dreamer" (p. 14) overcome by guilt for having such wealth and comfort while many Americans are weakened and exhausted by

poverty. He indulges in severe drinking and attempts to find in science fiction, especially in Kilgore Trout's novels, a better understanding of himself and the world in which he lives. Paradoxically, he does not regard science fiction as literature although he likes it. The novels of Trout, his favourite writer, are marketed in dirty bookstores because "what Trout had in common with pornography wasn't sex but fantasies of an impossibly hospitable world" (p. 20). One of the instances of his paranoia is when he gets drunk and breaks in on a science-fiction convention in Milford, Pennsylvania, praising them for being the only ones crazy enough to care about the future and says:

> You're all I read any more [sic]. You are the only ones who'll talk about the *really* terrific changes going on …. You're the only ones … who *really* notice what machines do to us, what wars do to us, what cities do to us, what big simple cities do to us, what tremendous misunderstandings, mistakes, accidents, and catastrophes do to us
> (p. 18).

Eliot turns to science fiction because he feels that those writers share him his paranoia in realising the disasters that torment the human condition. Science fiction offers satisfactory images of a world that cannot be fulfilled in reality. The programme offered in the novel is regarded as one of "the most immediately practical" ones among all of Vonnegut's works. The novel "seeks hard facts."[17] The protagonist preaches:

"You can safely ignore the arts and sciences. They never helped anybody. Be a sincere, attentive friend of the poor" (p. 23). Eliot and Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse-Five* use Trout's novels as their guides to begin "journeys of reinvention." Eliot's journey "fills him with dreams of a classless, Marxesque Utopia"[18] and Billy's are journeys to Tralfamadore, a planet in a distant galaxy where death does not matter. Eliot finds in their fiction a form of ideological salvation.

Science fiction writers "understand the imaginative possibilities of life."[19] Kilgore Trout, Vonnegut's fictional science fiction writer who appears in most of his novels, questions what can one do when computerised technology and automation deny a job for everybody? He muses at the answer and explains at the end of the book:

> In time, almost all men and women will become worthless as producers of goods, food, services, and more machines, as sources of practical ideas in the areas of economics, engineering, and probably medicine, too. So—if we can't find reasons and methods for treasuring human beings because they are *human beings*, then we might as well, as has so often been suggested, rub them out
> (p. 183).

As Josh Simpson says, Eliot "seeks to turn the ideas found in Trout's novels into realities in his own world."[20] For example, one of Trout's novels,

"2BRO2B," asks "What in hell are people for?" At the first moment of reading it, Eliot commits himself to finding an answer which he believes he has found in Rosewater County. There, because of the Depression crisis, the working class members were discarded by automation, because they were replaced by the machine in the factory, the farm and the mine (p. 36). To be unable to work or to be poor implies that one is stupid, inferior and useless.[21] Vonnegut underlines the effect of "technological displacement upon a nation reared with the work ethic" and intensifies the psychological anxieties and the neuroses that are engendered by such a system.[22] Eliot decides to dedicate himself to these vulnerable people. His self-delusion is that he believes himself an artist and this act of "uncritical love" is his mission (p. 56). He tells Sylvia, his French wife, "I'm going to love these discarded Americans, even though they're useless and unattractive. *That* is going to be my work of art" (p. 36), a way of life that his father, the conniving family lawyer, Norman Mushari and the world at large regard as crazy and legally insane. Vonnegut's protagonists' originating of fantasies is a way of resolving both personal and social fragmentation in which their illusions "encourage communal bonding rather than narcissistic withdrawal."[23]

In addition to the novelist's use of science fiction, Vonnegut employs modes of surrealism in his novels. The techniques of surrealism in the American novel burgeoned after the fifties of the last century. In Vonnegut's novels, the effects of surrealism are manifested in his use of the free association of ideas, in the "nonchronological order"[24] of events, most obviously is the shift in *Slaughterhouse-Five* between scenes of war to scenes of present, in "dream[-]like and nightmarish sequences," as in Billy Pilgrim's dreams

and in "the juxtaposition of bizarre, shocking or seemingly unrelated images,"[25] like the image of the clock in *Slaughterhouse-Five* and the singing bird in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*. Vonnegut's black humour is one of the effects of surrealism. The most obvious mode of surrealism in *Slaughterhouse-Five* is the novelist's juxtaposition of imaginary landscapes with actual places. He depicts Tralfamadore, Ilium-Schenectady, New York and Manhattan in a single fictional work.[26]

Indeed Eliot and Sylvia are persons of "overactive conscience" (p. 42) which means that they are abnormal in a sick world of loveless and materialistic lusts. According to Dr. Brown, Eliot's psychiatrist, a normal person, is the one who functions well on the upper level of a prosperous industrialised society and can hardly ever hear his conscience at all (p. 43). Sylvia is convinced that "Eliot is right to do what he's doing. It's beautiful what he's doing" (p. 53). However, she could not go on helping him. "I'm simply not strong enough or good enough to be by his side any more" (Ibid.). Sylvia is a delicate cultivated wispy girl, speaks six languages and plays the harpsichord "enchantingly" (p. 35). In her parents' home in Paris, she has met great men like Picasso, Schweitzer, Hemingway, Toscanini, Churchill and de Gaulle. She does not know that land anywhere can be so "deathly flat" (p. 36), and people anywhere can be so "deadly dull" (Ibid.) as those of the Rosewater County. She becomes paranoid at witnessing such sufferings. Dr. Brown boasts of keeping "her consciousness imprisoned" with the help of chemotherapy and electroshock and of calming such a "deep woman" to be "shallow" (p. 42). However, his treatments render her a paranoid schizophrenic and she manifests this paranoia

when her husband visits her in the mental hospital (p. 44). She chooses a life of "dedicated selfishness" fantasising herself in Paris with merry friends buying clothes and dancing till she "faints in the arms of a tall, dark stranger" hopefully a double spy (Ibid.). She refers to Eliot as "[m]y dirty, drunk uncle down south" (Ibid.). Ultimately, after her second breakdown in July, 1964 and recovery in Switzerland, Sylvia assumes "a third personality … a feeling of worthlessness, of shame … and a suicidal wish to ignore her revulsions" (p. 52) and withdraws into polite indifference. Nevertheless, her conscience is not silenced completely for she is still a "deep woman" (p. 42) and wishes to be with Eliot and the pitiful people of Rosewater out of a sense of duty. The doctor does not achieve a complete victory for she finally enters a Belgian nunnery which is a life of "dedicated" (p. 40) altruism and charitable deeds. To what end is her paranoia one might ask. The end of it is to correct the world and to correct the misery she has witnessed into joy and mirth. She believes that the "great secret" about those people who are a group of "morons, perverts, starvelings and the unemployed" "is that they're human" (p. 54).

However, a nunnery also indicates isolation from life. The touching telephone conversation in which Sylvia agrees to meet Eliot one last time in Indianapolis imparts her desperate need for the love and support of her husband. But Eliot has been too obsessed with his crusade to give her the love she needs (pp. 91-5).

Part of his paranoia is formed by his obsession with and fanatical tireless support of volunteer fire departments. He has also a fanatical obsession of keeping used firemen suits and his closet becomes "depressing museums of coveralls, overalls, Eisenhower jackets, sweatshirts and so on" (p. 23). As Sylvia tries to

burn them he objects telling her "[b]urn my tails, my dinner jacket and my gray flannel suit instead" (Ibid.). Ironically, Eliot has "never fought a fire" (p. 22) which forms not only the complexity of the protagonist's character but the novel as well. The cause of this obsession is his war memory of killing three firemen (p. 64). The memory preoccupies his mind and causes him succeeding breakdowns and an obsession with "the idea of an inhabited planet with an atmosphere that [is] eager to combine violently with almost everything the inhabitants held dear" (p. 22). He speaks of Earth and the role of the element oxygen in burning and the rapidity with which this process causes damage as at Dresden and Hiroshima. In Swarthmore, he makes a drunken impassioned speech in a bar on the dangers of breathing oxygen and in the midst of an excessive emotion he praises the fidelity of volunteer fire-fighters (Ibid.). Although these obsessive incidents and actions render him a paranoid schizophrenic and discontented and "socially inappropriate," Lawrence R. Broer argues that "his sentiments are sanely humanistic."[27] The more firemen are completely dedicated to preventing the process of burning, the more they are a "*humane*" (Ibid.) group of people, fully prone to trying to prevent death. Therefore, killing firemen mistakenly, Eliot's expiating illusion is that he has to devote his life and money to the furthering, consoling, and protecting of life. "Seen against the background of a room full of corpses, it is the simple phenomenon of life—just life, in all its forms—that unqualifiedly matters."[28]

Till Chapter Fourteen of the novel, Eliot fails to achieve balanced detachment because he could not bear to care without endangering his serenity and most importantly, sanity. This is due to his failure in balancing love, compassion, humility, conscience and

the detached will to control these virtues and go on living. He exhausts himself, neglects his life totally, loses his wife, becomes untidy in appearance, becomes addicted to drink, defeats his father and ends in an asylum. Eliot is one of those "rare individuals" capable of entirely "uncritical love" (p. 66), but the path he has chosen is demanding, so he does indeed break down. Before his final crackdown, he argues with his father and states direct confutations to the anti-welfare perspective of American conservatives and heartfelt accusations against the inhumanity of the profit motive.[29]

It has been mentioned in the first chapter of this study that paranoia is a form of escape from the totality of late capitalism which is at the same time a desire to control it. In Eliot's case, his paranoia does not only offer him an escape from his father's capitalistic madness but also a desire to oppose it. A father-son-conversation is relevant to this point. The Senator, blaming Eliot for his "disreputable condition" (p. 86) in Rosewater County, asks him whether he doesn't wish it were a dream. Eliot answers him with a question: "What would I wake up *to*" (Ibid.)? Additionally, he shows his discontent with the way the country's wealth is divided:

> I think it's a heartless government that will let one baby be born owning a big piece of the country, the way I was born, and let another baby be born without owning anything. The least a government could do, it seems to me, is to divide things up fairly among the babies ….

> There's plenty for everybody in this country, if we'll only *share* more
> (pp. 87-8).

Eliot presents the metaphor of "the money river" to his father objecting that being born close to its banks "[w]e can slurp from that mighty river to our hearts' content. And we even take slurping lessons, so we can slurp more efficiently" (p. 88). Furthermore, he denies his father's conviction of the possibility for any American to make a fortune if she/he worked hard saying that without the "money river" no one can in which "there's nothing fair about it," therefore one must "forget about hard work and the merit system and honesty" (p. 89). He has run the Rosewater Foundation from 1947 to 1953 as its president (p. 17). With its indescribable wealth and with its profits, he is in a position to do virtually what he likes. In an excessive activity of social reform, Eliot spends fourteen million dollars fighting various miseries like cancer, race prejudice, police brutality and mental illness. He has been willing to pay any price for beautiful paintings and encouraged college professors to search for truth (Ibid.). Additionally, he constantly denounces the cruelty of free enterprise and the capitalist class system he believes it creates.

Senator Lister Rosewater is a conservative politician and "one of the least human of Vonnegut's characters" as Raymond M. Olderman states.[30] He diminishes life into two alternatives: "We can write morals into law, and enforce those morals harshly, or we can return to a true Free Enterprise System which has the sink-or-swim justice of Caesar Augustus built into it" (p. 27). The father states that drinking is the reason behind Eliot's negligence of his social and financial responsibilities and dedicating his life to

useless people which has led to his breakdown. "If Eliot's booze were shut off, his compassion for the maggots in the slime on the bottom of the human garbage pail would vanish" (p. 46). However, another justification for Eliot's indulgence in drinking is to abuse his family's reputation out of repressed anger and disgrace of its undeserved wealth.

Gradually, Eliot's "hold on reality" becomes increasingly weak.[31] Although he assures his wife that he does not hear voices, he asserts that he is meant for a special "destiny far away from the shallow and preposterous posing that is our life in New York" (p. 31). Without having a definite will he tells his wife "I roam, I roam." He identifies himself with Hamlet and addresses Sylvia as Ophelia in his letters but he is unlike Hamlet who has his father's ghost to instruct him exactly what to do while he longs for definite instructions from someone stronger and wiser. Comparing himself to Hamlet implies more than his being the heir of a rotten state. Peter J. Reed, in *Kurt Vonnegut, Jr*. (1972), says that

> … [l]ike Hamlet he faces questions that could drive him mad, like Hamlet his most sane behaviour might well appear crazy in a world of inverted values, and like Hamlet he has received a psychological blow which could indeed have unbalanced him.[32]

He dashes about the country from a small town to a small town like a "whirling dervish,"[33] an obsessive drunk directing incoherent abuses against the rich and their exploitation of the country.

Although he gets drunk a lot, "no amount of booze seemed to make him drunk" (p. 17). In spite of his psychiatrist's dullness, Dr. Brown notices that Eliot "has the most massively defended neurosis I've ever attempted to treat" and adds that "[i]n over a solid year of work, I have not succeeded in even scratching its armo[u]r" (p. 28). He complains to Sylvia that her husband is an "untreatable" "sick man" who talks about American history and dreams about " 'Samuel Gompers, Mark Twain and Alexander Hamilton.' I ask him if his father ever appears in his dreams, and he says, 'No, but Thorsten Veblen often does' … Mrs. Rosewater, I'm defeated. I resign" (Ibid.). He seems amused by the doctor's dismissal and says calmly: "It's a cure he doesn't understand, so he refuses to admit it's a cure" (p. 29). In a moment of desperation the senator tells the doctor: "I ran out of ideas about my boy … years ago" and asks him to explain to him his son's case. According to Dr. Brown, Eliot's case is perversion which has led him to bring his sexual energies to an inappropriate object," "to Utopia" (p. 73). Lawrence R. Broer in his *Sanity Plea* (1994) regards this diagnosis as an identification of the basic disturbance of the protagonist which is "the perversion of vital creative energy into abstract, mechanistic, or grandiose scheme."[34] Sylvia tells the Senator that Eliot has never been interested in producing children and has become sexually indifferent near the end of their marriage (p. 71). Psychoanalysis does not help him and this is shown in many situations as in the opening of a new staging of *Aida* in the Metropolitan Opera. Everything goes fine until the last scene during which the hero and the heroine are placed in an airtight chamber to suffocate. As the doomed pair fill their lungs, Eliot calls out to them: "You will last a lot longer, if you don't try to

sing" (p. 29). Then he stands, leans out of his box and cries: "Maybe you don't know anything about oxygen, but I do. Believe me, you must not sing" (Ibid.). Then he lets Sylvia "lead him away as easily as she might have led a toy balloon" (Ibid.).

Eliot's paranoia over the corruption that lies deep at the heart of the society leads him to look for compensation. Consequently, he believes that promises for a "brave, new love-centric Utopian society"[35] he reads of in Trout's fiction could be realised. He shifts the direction of the Foundation from the institutional level to the personal one. He settles in Rosewater County which is at the dead centre of the country and considers it "home" (p. 35). He decides to give up his great humanitarian dreams and simply give money away directly to the "plain, dumb, ordinary people of poor old Rosewater County" (p. 60). He duly sets up a building which carries the notice ROSEWATER FOUNDATION HOW CAN WE HELP YOU? The Foundation is a one-room office on Main Street across the street of the firehouse. He "listen[s] tirelessly to the misshapen fears and dreams of people who, by almost anyone's standards, would have been better off dead, gave them love and trifling sums of money" (p. 40). Typical of Eliot's extreme compassion he provides Rosewater Fellowships, i.e., he grants $300 to a "suicidal tool-and-die maker" who has been laid off work and to a veteran of WWII with a wife and three children including a child who suffers from cerebral palsy (pp. 77-8). Jerome Klinkowitz believes that Eliot takes Trout's ideas and uses them to "reinvent reality."[36] Eliot is more active than Kilgore Trout who looks like "a frightened, aging Jesus, whose sentence to crucifixion had been commuted to imprisonment for life" (p. 115) and who accepts to work as a clerk in a

trading-stamp redemption centre. Trout does not have enough faith in his own ideas and does not attempt to make them realities. He thinks that his ideas are eventually nothing more than "the fantasies of an impossibly hospitable world" (p. 20). Hence, he hides behind his small desk surrounded by stamps safe and withdrawn from the ideas posed in his books preferring to "write about what could be rather than what is."[37]

Vonnegut, like many postmodern novelists, recycles his characters; Kilgore Trout is Vonnegut's "trademark" figure who appears in most of his fiction.[38]

Eliot cheers them up and soothes his charity with humour and common sense. For example, he tells a man who is determined to commit suicide that instead of naming various wonderful reasons for going on living, he will ask the caller to name a price for living just one more week (p. 76). When the caller says he might not want to live through the next week even for a million dollars, Eliot says: "Try a thousand" (Ibid.). "A thousand," the man says. Then Eliot says: "Try a hundred," to which the man agrees, "A hundred." "Now you are making sense," says Eliot. "Come on over and talk …. Don't be afraid of the dogs in front of the firehouse …. They only bite when the fire horn goes off" (pp. 76-7). He starts to call everybody "dear" and talks with lonely friendless people whom no one has ever loved like the sixty-eight-year old Diana Moon Glampers who is paranoid of electricity and lightning (p. 59). She fantasises having a terrible kidney pain, although the doctor tells her that the kidney trouble is all in her head. "God bless you, Mr. Rosewater," she says, "for forsaking money, position and power to help the little people of Rosewater County" (p. 61). She tells him that his medicine has been more powerful than that of all the doctors in Indiana put together (p. 60). The

doctor shows that Eliot's instability comes from the fact that he inherits his mother's sincere anxieties about the condition of the poor and is therefore among those "rare individuals who reach … [maturity] still loving and wanting to help their fellow men" (p. 43). The subtitle, *Pearls before Swine*, indicates that the people of Rosewater County, like a swine which cannot value pearls, do not appreciate what Eliot is doing for them as later will be mentioned in this section.

Eliot Rosewater's self-delusion, which reaches its highest point in his "god-like conception of himself,"[39] goes back to his essential belief that he has an important mission. Many of the town's people, like Diana, are ready to deify him. Diana says:

> Dawn Leonard had boils for ten years, and you cured 'em. Ned Calvin had that twitch in his eyes since he was a little boy, and you made it stop. Pearl Fleming came and saw you, and she threw her crutch away. And now my kiddleys [sic] have stopped hurting, just hearing your sweet voice[40]
> (p. 60).

Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* is one of the novels of the 1960s which presents lessons of compassion and conscience as a requirement to overbear the waste land. Leonard Mustazza stresses the fact that Eliot is genuinely kind and his message is worthwhile, "a man crying in the wilderness, crying against the tide of greed and hypocrisy that has swept over America."[41] Eliot's struggle against tyrannical capitalistic systems of control and against despair is resolved in a process of renewal and exorcism.

Vonnegut's use of exorcism is like the Greek concept of catharsis. He sees love as an act of exorcism which reveals the deep sense of humane tenderness in his novels. His protagonist realises the dark side in his character. His potential for growth is recognised in becoming "a self-healer and a healer of others."[42] She/He succeeds gradually in achieving moral awareness and associates it with a responsibility for his actions. Nevertheless, haunted by the fear that she/he is a robot in a machine-dominated world, she/he does not achieve complete moral awakening and consequently cannot play well the role of the "Shaman." The case with characters like Kilgore Trout or Billy Pilgrim, the protagonist of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, is different. They remain pessimistic because their creator denies them a way for establishing a balance based on the conviction that people can successfully resist becoming "appendages to machines,"[43] or as it is said of Billy and people in general in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, to resist becoming "the listless playthings of enormous forces."[44]

Furthermore, the novelist alludes to the Samaritan theme in his depiction of Eliot's charities and care to the loveless people of Rosewater County. Nevertheless, Eliot's parody of the Biblical begats (p. 4) in his account of the history of the Rosewater family conveys the fragility of the American dream of equality, fraternity and trust in God. The descent of the Rosewater ancestry from Noah, "a humourless, constipated Christian farm boy" (p. 11) to Lister who "has spent nearly the whole of his adult life in the Congress of the USA, teaching morals" (p. 13), is thought by Max F. Schulz as

> … a dreary litany of how puritanical industry and

> capitalistic democracy reali[s]e not an utopia of *E pluribus unum* under one God and one President, but an aristocracy of the wealthy committed humo[u]rlessly, in nonworking hours, to the exploitive patronage of arts and the [help of the poor on] Sundays.[45]

However, playing the role of messiah deludes him about the personal motives underlying his altruism because prescribing aspirin and giving small amounts of money seem "hollow"[46] in comparison with the sufferings and complicated problems of his clients. The passive effects of giving money away and sympathy are to himself and to those who deal with him. His clients depend upon him for everything and many of them are convinced that they cannot go on living without him. This is shown in Diana's hysterical reaction to Eliot's decision of leaving Rosewater County. When he suggests that she may join a church group, she says: "*You're* my church group! You're my *everything*! You're my government. You're my husband. You're my friends" (p. 172). Furthermore, the harm is greater to Eliot himself. In his *Fantasist of Fire and Ice* (1972), David Goldsmith states that Eliot's beneficence which resembles a rescue service in Rosewater County and obsessive involvement with volunteer fire departments "parallels a volunteer fire brigade"[47] through which he hopes, if only unconsciously, to atone for the crimes of his inherited wealth and the horrors of the accidental murder of three German firemen. His beneficence can be interpreted as an attempt to atone for his feelings of guilt of his mother death.[48] At the age of nineteen, he takes his mother for a sail: "He jibed. The slashing

boom knocked his mother overboard. Eunice Morgan Rosewater sank like a stone" (p. 28). Although Eliot shows compassion, he is no closer to solving his deepest psychic anxieties. Raymond M. Olderman suggests that before attempting social reform or before acting the messiah, Eliot has to cure himself by looking for the root of his paranoia and not by prescribing simple remedies to the tragic alienation and guilt of his life.[49]

Broadly speaking, Eliot's sympathy and "bribes" can be seen as a kind of "moral prostitution,"[50] bargaining money for peace of mind. Senator Rosewater believes that his son's uncritical god-like love is nothing but narcissism and what he really wants is a master-slave relationship with the masses (p. 52). Setting a Domesday Book in which he "entered the name of each client, the nature of the client's pains and what the Foundation [has] done about them" (p. 77) supports the Senator's conviction. Recording his transactions with his clients, Eliot records their spiritual and financial debt to him. Additionally, the very name "Domesday" indicates that all bills will be paid back on Judgement Day. Save that, coming to his office to ask for help becomes "demeaning and demorali[s]ing, people steal in and out as if they are visiting a house of prostitution."[51] This idea is suggested by a client who calls and describes what someone has written under one of the advertisements for the Foundation in a phone booth (p. 75).

The importance of Eliot's mission for himself leads him to delude himself and others concerning the nature of the people he helps. When he argues with his father or his bankers or his lawyers, he is mistaken to believe that they are the grandsons of the frontier men who have cleared the forests, drained the swamps, built

the bridges and their sons have given their lives freely in time of war (p. 56). His schizophrenia becomes apparent when a client named Mary Moody calls him on the red telephone he reserves for fire calls. He cries "God *damn* you for calling this number! You should go to jail and rot! … go to hell and fry forever" (p. 150)! A few seconds later, she calls on the black telephone that he reserves for his clients. Eliot answers her inquiring sweetly: "'What on earth is the trouble, dear?' he honestly did not know. He was ready to kill whoever had made her cry" (p. 150). But the moment comes when he has no more illusions about the people to whom he devotes his life (p. 91). He observes that those people who lean on him are "grotesques" and "mentally, morally and physically undesirable" (p. 56)—a fact adds to his sorrow, failure and exhaustion. Moreover, the fact that he carries his vision alone leaves him "at best emotionally drained, at worst, dangerously withdrawn and will-less."[52] He starts to be sick of going on (p. 92) and his sickness indicates that his attempts at uncritical love are something other than sentimental.[53] While Vonnegut shows the "benevolent anarchy implicit in Eliot's dream of uncritical love and non-competitive sharing of everything," he also clarifies that it is "an unworkable dream, remaining more of a private obsession than a public solution."[54] Moreover, by making uncritical love his art "masks his deeper psychic needs, diffusing his ego and defusing real creative effort."[55] Eventually, Eliot's experience has been about losing himself, "I don't want to look like myself" (p. 23) as he tells a country fireman. He tries to hide from his past while pretending to control it in the form of utopian reform. He is a paranoid schizophrenic who assumes a new identity trying to cope with his problems. Coping here is in the sense to go on living

instead of going mad. This new identity "involves a farther [sic] retreat from the real world and an unpleasant society into a more comforting illusory world."[56] He is convinced that his destiny is in Rosewater County and if he leaves it in order to live a conventional life again, drowning or dissolution of soul would be his fate. "[Y]ou know what would happen to me?" he asks Delbert Peach, a town drunk who expresses his panic for Eliot's leaving for New York, and continues:

> … The minute I got near any navigable body of water, a bolt of lightning would knock me into the water, a whale would swallow me up, and the whale would swim down to the Gulf of Mexico … up Lost River, up Rosewater Creek … and spit me out
> (p. 149).

Nevertheless, the protagonist cannot avoid pain or drowning unless he solves his personal problems of love and identity that have been obsessing him. In addition to the recurrent drowning image in the novel, there is the image of the "shroud" (Ibid.) shown in Eliot's hiding his head under a blanket which suggests moral or spiritual death (Ibid.). In Eliot's case, it indicates his illusory peace and comfort of fantasy utopia. It may also suggest his death-in-life. He has to relinquish his paranoid delusions in order to be "reborn" again into the real world in spite of the sufferings of life and to do like the protagonist of his unfinished novel who says: "I am going to cease to be dead" (p. 82). Eliot's unfinished novel mirrors his fragmented self and

the image of "[h]is sickly translucent drip-dry shirt … [hanging] from a ceiling fixture … like a ghost" (p. 54) embodies Eliot himself out of the Rosewater experience "wrung out and hollowed of identity."[57] Eliot as the mouthpiece of Vonnegut tries to express his rejection of violence and corruption.

Another source of Eliot's paranoid schizophrenia which makes him seek an illusory utopia is his unwillingness to resolve his conflict with his father. Although both of them want to love each other, their reciprocal hiding of true feelings stands an obstacle—the father hides his love behind illusions of the importance of power and money and Eliot behind illusions of messianic altruism. The Senator avoids the threat of his son's opposition to his ideals. "You certainly loved me, didn't you?" the father says bitterly. "Loved me so much you smashed up every hope or ideal I ever had" (p. 160). Furthermore, he rejects his son's universal uncritical love as a retreat from the responsibility of loving particular people. "You're the man," the senator tells him while close to tears,

> … who stands on a street corner with a roll of toilet paper, and written on each square are the words, "I love you." And each passer-by, no matter who, gets a square all his or her own. I don't want *my* square of toilet paper (p. 90).

The reference to toilet paper indicates the corrupted love between father and son and also leads the discussion to his paranoia of dirtiness. It also indicates that Eliot's universal love, like something of a common use, is cheap. The Senator's obsession with cleanliness

and purity makes him petrified at seeing Eliot out of the lavatory naked and hairy. He feels "beset by overwhelming forces of filth and obscenity on all sides" (p. 158). Eliot is unaware of his father's discomfort, so the latter cries: "Why do you hate me so?" and asserts: "Your every act and word is aimed at hurting me as much as you possibly can! … I have no idea what I ever did to you that you're paying me back for now, but the debt must surely be settled by now (p. 160). The Senator's reproach indicates that Eliot does protest against him and from here stems the source of that buried neurosis Eliot's psychiatrist could not interpret, which is "Oedipal."[58] His father convinces him to meet Sylvia in New York as a last attempt to save their marriage. As the Senator goes on blaming his son for ruining the life and health of his father, his wife and his own, Eliot covers his ears and continues dressing quietly, sits down to tie his shoelaces, and straightens up, "froze[n] as stiff as any corpse" (Ibid.). In the bus that reaches the outskirts of Indianapolis, Eliot sees that "the entire city was being consumed by a fire-storm" (p. 175). The fire-storm illusion is only in his mind, an image that haunts him and is related to the fire-storm in Dresden, Germany in WWII which is at the heart of Eliot's paranoia.[59] He has a book on the bombing of Dresden which he keeps guiltily hidden in his office. It is "a mystery even to Eliot as why he should hide it … why he should be afraid of being caught reading it" (p. 175). The book is Hans Rumpf's *The Bombing of Germany* (Ibid.).

Eliot's paranoid fear of destruction by fire-storm foreshadows his repressed guilt of killing three German firemen. After seeing the fire-storm, everything becomes black and it is only after a year that he regains normal consciousness (p. 177). He wakes to find

himself sitting on the flat rim of a dry fountain in the garden of Dr. Brown's private mental hospital in Indianapolis to which he has brought Sylvia so many years before (Ibid.). He pays attention to a bird on the sycamore tree singing "Poo-tee- weet?" and

> [h]e wished that he were a dicky bird, so that he could go up into the treetop and never come down. He wanted to fly up so high because there was something going on at ground-zero that did not make him feel good
> (p. 178).

Like any powerful programme aiming at decreasing individual autonomy so is the Senator who uses the power of the capitalist to control his son's autonomy. The novelist repeats the rim image in this part of the novel, chapter fourteen, pointing at the "alluring spirallike [sic] mechanistic systems of control that promise peace and harmony but lead instead to moral oblivion."[60] The three men in dark business suits, Dr. Brown, Thurmond McAllister, the family lawyer, and his father are sitting across Eliot expecting something significant from him because for the year he has spent in the hospital "they have been pouring Eliot's shattered identity into a plastic mould that satisfies their concept of sanity."[61] He has been dressed for tennis all in "snowy white" (p. 177) as though he is a department store display. The Senator is delighted that his son has lost weight and an hour ago has just "*killed*" (p. 180) an opponent at tennis, in fact "*murdered*" (Ibid.) him and rejoices that "this is the man … who has to prove tomorrow that he's not insane" (Ibid.)!

Even though Eliot is dressed respectably, taught

to speak clichés and looks trim and clean, his new mental health forces him to act like a robot, his movements are rigid and uncontrolled and feels that he is detached not only from the outside world but from his body: "He closed his hand around the racket handle experimentally, to discover whether it was real and whether he was real" (p. 177), and has "no idea what he looked like" (p.180). Ominously, he looks for insight into his new character, the new identity that is not his own, as it is reflected in the little water of the birdbath in the fountain's pool, which looks like "a bitter broth of soot and leaves" (p. 180). He feels "disembodied"[62] and has "nothing of significance to say or give" (p. 178) to the three men who wait to hear sounds from him that will confirm his normalcy. Eventually, Eliot has to stand before a judge for "sanity hearing" in order to prevent the passing of the Foundation to their distant relative, Fred Rosewater. Eliot is powerless to justify his actions and completely depends on Trout to speak for him (p. 182). Thus, before defending his actions before a judge, he demands that Kilgore Trout provides an explanation of the reality that he has constructed when he has set out to answer the question presented in "2BRO2B" that he has left unanswered. Trout's testimony is that Eliot is both sane and the world's greatest humanitarian: "What you did in Rosewater County was far from insane. It was quite possibly the most important social experiment of our time … The problem is this: How to love people who have no use" (p. 183)? He adds that his devotion to volunteer fire departments "is very sane, too, Eliot, for they are, when the alarm goes off, almost the only examples of enthusiastic unselfishness to be seen in this land" (Ibid.). Furthermore, he believes that Eliot has taught people essential lessons:

> It's news that a man was able to *give* that kind of love over a long period of time. If one man can do it, perhaps others can do it, too. It means that our hatred of useless human beings and the cruelties we inflict upon them for their own good need not be parts of human nature. Thanks to the example of Eliot Rosewater, millions upon millions of people may learn to love and help whomever they see
> (pp. 186-87).

Trout tries to say the truth as he knows it to be but Eliot feels no joy. Trout's condemnation of the cruelty and insensitivity of USA would be better directed at Eliot's immediate tormentors—those who try "to transform him from a robot saint into a robot figurehead who will preserve the family fortune."[63]

Vonnegut seems to say that Eliot Rosewater makes it possible to believe that all men are capable not only of moments like Dresden, but also capable of really giving and really sympathising. In the last chapter, Eliot takes the step that enables him to achieve balanced detachment which the novelist sees essential for the maintenance of life.[64] Recovering his mental balance after being kept a whole year in an asylum, he learns that his complete fortune is in danger because some poor relatives—the Rhode Island Rosewaters—are going to claim their right of inheritance on the basis of his insanity. He knows also that fifty-six women claim that he fathers their children.[65] Paying attention to the bird's "Poo-tee-weet?" he

> … looked up into the tree, and the memory of all that had happened in the blackness came crashing back—the fight with the bus driver, the straightjacket, the shock treatments, the suicide attempts, all the tennis, all the strategy meetings about the sanity hearing
> (p. 188).

With that "mighty crash of memories" (Ibid.), he decides to settle everything "instantly, beautifully and fairly" (Ibid.) and with a canny scheme he defeats both his father's and Mushari's greed (p. 188). He adopts all fifty-six children, all fifty-six useless children born from useless parents. Sitting in his tennis clothes, Eliot tells his lawyer:

> I now instruct you to draw up at once papers that will legally acknowledge that every child in Rosewater County said to be mine *is* mine, regardless of blood type. Let them all have full rights of inheritance as my sons and daughters …. Let their names be Rosewater from this moment on. And tell them that their father loves them, no matter what they turn out to be
> (p. 190).

Finally, he tells the lawyer to "tell them to be fruitful and multiply" (Ibid.). Before the protagonist ends the

novel with this request, he raises his tennis racket as if it is "a magic wand" (Ibid.). This simile intensifies the idea of Eliot's illusion of himself as messiah.

Despite the fact that Vonnegut's two novels have an ominous significance of a disaster, he posits two ways for avoiding cataclysm and going on living; either to learn to love each other or to "create our own illusions, some mythology that will help us learn to live together."[66] Neither ways make life meaningful, but both do offer a possibility to stay alive. The universe he depicts in his novels "is indifferent to man, and man spends his time trying to twist that indifference into order and meaning."[67]

At first, Eliot's paranoia has offered him the possibility to escape disillusionment, materialism, and human suffering. Moreover, his altruism offers him a more comfortable world albeit not necessarily a better one. Hence, his paranoid delusions offer him not only escape, but comfort, since they shield him from the harsh reality of the conditions surrounding him, particularly the conditions of the people of Rosewater, Indiana. His final "clicks," as one of the characters has described his breakdown, happen because he has been possessed of some irresistible motivations for years, some secret compulsions always driving him on. All this suddenly goes flat, empty, dead and all his inner force has been spent forever (p. 165). Probably this happens because of various factors; the Rosewater Utopian project has run its course with no more possibility of development, no ultimate satisfaction and because of the charges of his father. Certainly, becoming strained, tired, drunk, and cynical even about himself ends in his breakdown.[68] But Eliot's battle for awareness and self-possession leads one to say that his paranoid delusions help him ultimately to deal with his

anxieties, and more importantly, he tries to correct some part of the world that is undesirable. He succeeds in achieving moral awareness and associating this awareness with existential responsibility for his actions.

Conclusion

Some of the novels of the 1960s manifest one crucial quest which is "to affirm life no matter how negative the facts of experience may be."[69] To "affirm life" and to establish a meaning for his own life, Eliot creates his own illusions. However, since one must have an illusion to gain value, it should be positive and not one of annihilation or destruction. As Fausto, in Pynchon's *V.* bears out: "It is the 'role' of the poet, this 20th Century. To lie."[70] Unsatisfied about the decay of his culture, Fausto's illusion convinces him of the possibility of his humanity. "To have humanism we must first be convinced of our humanity. As we move further into decadence this becomes more difficult" (*V.*, p. 322).

Eliot rejects the role set for him by the systems of his time and rejects to be the society's successful actor. His utopian illusion has led him to search for his self-realisation and for his true self. Where to go or what to do to achieve this aspiration, Rosewater County, volunteering for fire-departments and adopting the fifty-six children are the answers for his quest. Volunteering opposes the capitalistic economic system in USA and particularly his family's system. Accordingly, he opposes the role they want him to play. Moreover, he has never fought a fire but he has shown that the sublime self-denial and goodness man can present for his brother men are volunteer acts. May be Eliot is not courageous enough to fight a fire and rescue people or may be he is not ready for such a great act, however, he succeeds in showing USA a way for redemption. His final act of adopting the useless children can be seen as atonement for his forefathers'

decay, greed and exploitation which participated in destroying the American dream. It can be viewed also as Vonnegut's proposition to USA and offer of a way out of its decay and corruption.

Vonnegut presents an open-ended novel; its conclusion is ambivalent, and it creates new possibilities for life. The novelist proposes the possibilities for redemption and reinvention as epitomised in the actions of his protagonist.

NOTES

[1]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Mother Night* (Manchester: The Philips Park Press, 1961), p. 114.

[2]Lawrence R. Broer, *Sanity Plea: Schizophrenia in the Novels of Kurt Vonnegut*, rev. ed. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994), p. 3.

[3]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, or, Pearls before Swine* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1965) p. 7. Further references to the novel are to this edition.

[4]Peter J. Reed, *Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.* (New York: Warners Books Inc., 1972), pp. 146-47.

[5]The question of Eliot Rosewater's sanity arises, because a clause in the charter of the Rosewater Foundation of which he is president entails the dismissal of any officer proved insane. Besides, Norman Mushari, who is one of the family lawyers, plots to get as much as half of the family fortune by proving Eliot's insanity which will force him relinquish the presidency of the Foundation to the next one in line of the Rosewaters (*God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, pp. 8-10).

[6]Eliot Rosewater's name indicates a juxtaposition of opposites. "Eliot" links the young humanitarian to T. S. Eliot and his portrayal of life as a spiritual wasteland bereaved of love and is sick with lust while "Rosewater" suggests a juxtaposition of the liberal Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his conception of welfare programmes with the 1964 republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. The latter is satirised in the depiction of Senator Lister Rosewater. Norman Mushari, the villain in the novel, chooses to read Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* (Schatt, *Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.*, 1976, p. 70).

[7]Reed, p. 154.
[8]Ibid., p.152.
[9]Max F. Schulz, "The Unconfirmed Thesis: Kurt Vonnegut, Black Humor, and Contemporary Art" *Critique*, Vol. 12, Issue 3, (1971), p. 8.
[10]Barbara Teba Lupack, *Insanity as Redemption in Contemporary American Fiction: Inmates Running the Asylum* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), p. 108.
[11]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., says in *The Sirens of Titan* that "he can think of no more stirring symbol of man's humanity to man than a fire engine" (p. 242).
[12]The idea of the novel comes from Vonnegut's experience in sharing an office over a liquor store with an accountant who, the novelist says, "really is that kind … I could hear him comforting people who had very little income, calling everybody 'dear,' and giving love and understanding instead of money. And I heard him doing marriage counselling and I asked about that and he said that once people told you how little money they'd made they felt they had to tell you everything. I took this very sweet man and in a book [*God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*] gave him millions and millions to play with" (John Casey, "Interview with Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.," in *Apocalypse: Dominant Contemporary Forms*, ed., Joe David Bellamy (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), p. 334).
[13]Schulz, p. 8.
[14]Broer, p. 70.
[15]Tony Tanner, *City of Words: American Fiction 1950-1970* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 193.
[16]Broer, p. 73.
[17]Jerome Klinkowitz, "Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.," in *Literary Disruptions: The Making of a Post-Contemporary American Fiction* (Urbana: University of Illinois

Press, 1975), p. 38.

[18]Josh Simpson, " 'This Promising of Great Secrets': Literature, Ideas, and the (Re)Invention of Reality in Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and *Breakfast of Champions*; or 'Fantasies of an Impossibly Hospitable World': Science Fiction and Madness in Vonnegut's Troutean Trilogy," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Spring 2004), pp. 5-6.

[19]Klinkowitz, p. 39.

[20]Simpson, p. 4.

[21]The effects of Vonnegut's own experience and suffering on his writings are shown in portraying the poverty and unemployment in Rosewater County. The hostilities and disasters which followed Kurt Vonnegut's birth were the great depression of the 1930s in President Roosevelt's era; World War II; the atomic bomb; the Korean War; the crimes of Vietnam; the burst of assassinations; the era of Nixonian duplicity. During the depression (1929-1939)—a period of business stagnation, mass unemployment, and low prices in the USA—Vonnegut's father, an architect, remained jobless from 1929 to 1940, and like many Americans, the Vonnegut family felt useless and inadequate in the time of the depression. (Marvin, *Kurt Vonnegut: A Critical Companion*, 2002, pp. 2-3) Vonnegut says that the depression

> … has more to do with the American character than any war. People felt useless for so long. The machines fired everybody…. I saw and listened to thousands of people who couldn't follow their trades anymore, who couldn't feed

their families. A hell of a lot of them didn't want to go on much longer. They wanted to die because they were so embarrassed (Vonnegut, *Wampeters*, 1975, p. 280).

[22]Reed, p. 155.

[23]Broer, p. 204.

[24]According to M. H. Abrams's *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1999), surrealism started in France as an artistic movement in 1942. The movement appeared as a rebellion "against the restraints on free creativity" and "all control over the artistic process by forethought and intention." In order to preserve the free operation of the "deep mind" surrealists write depending on the "promptings of the unconscious mind." Other manifestations of surrealism are the use of the "material of dreams, of states of mind between sleep and waking, and of natural or artificially induced hallucinations" (M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 7th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), p. 310, s.v. "surrealism.").

[25]Abrams, pp. 310-1.

[26]John Kuehl: *Alternate Worlds: A Study of Postmodern Antirealistc American Fiction* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), pp. 158-9.

[27]Broer, p. 211.

[28]Tanner, p. 194.

[29]Raymond M. Olderman, *Beyond the Waste Land: The American Novel in the Nineteen-Sixties* (London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 206.

[30]Ibid., p. 217.

[31]Broer, p. 72.

[32]Reed, p. 155.

[33]Broer, p. 73.

[34]Ibid., p. 72.

[35]Simpson, p. 4.

[36]Jerome Klinkowitz, *Kurt Vonnegut*. (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 60.

[37]Simpson, p. 5.

[38]Kuehl, pp. 63,214. Among the postmodern features is the novelist's intertextual references to his novels as in *Slaughterhouse-Five* allusion to *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*.

[39]James Lundquist, *Kurt Vonnegut* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., Inc., 1977), p. 44.

[40]The illiterate Diana Moon Glampers is a pathetic character who misspells "kidney" to raise pity. On the rare occasions when she is asked to introduce herself she always says her full name and adds: "My mother was a Moon. My father was a Glampers" (pp. 56, 66).

[41]Leonard Mustazza, *Forever Pursuing Genesis: A Myth of Eden in the Novels of Kurt Vonnegut* (London: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 98.

[42]Lawrence R. Broer, "Images of the Shaman in the Works of Kurt Vonnegut," in *Dionysus in Literature: Essays on Literary Madness*, ed., Branimir M. Rieger (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, p. 1944), p. 201.

[43]Ibid., p. 202.

[44]Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969), p. 164. Further references to the novel are to this edition.

[45]Schulz, p. 9.

[46]Broer, "Images of the Shaman in the Works of Kurt Vonnegut," p. 75.

[47]David Goldsmith, *Fantasist of Fire and Ice* (Bowling

Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), p. 23.

[48]In 1944, Vonnegut's mother, Edith Lieber Vonnegut, ended her own life with an overdose of sleeping pills the night before Mother's Day while Vonnegut was home on leave from the army before being shipped overseas. As a family of German origin—the name Vonnegut descends from a stream in Germany called the Vonne—they opposed WWII. Before WWI, Vonnegut's parents lived in a German world of literature, music, tradition, but when the USA entered the war, this world was destroyed. The alliance of the USA with Britain against Germany made all the aspects of German culture suspicious. German Americans were demanded to give up all their ties with Germany to prove their patriotism. Although Vonnegut's parents went on talking German at home, they did not teach him the language nor did they present him to any aspect of the German culture, or history which left Vonnegut feeling rootless and ignorant. Vonnegut presented his pacifism in the *Cornell Daily Sun* magazine at Cornell University, but he forsook his anti-war vows later and joined WWII as an infantry scout. The Vonnegut family could not endure the fact of fighting their mother country, and Thomas F. Marvin believes that Edith had burdened her son with her death to voice her strong opposition to war (Thomas F. Marvin, *Kurt Vonnegut: A Critical Companion*, 2002, pp. 2-4).

[49]Broer, *Sanity Plea*, p. 84.

[50]Ibid., p. 76.

[51]Stanley Schatt, *Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976), p. 71.

[52]Broer, *Sanity Plea*, p. 76.

[53]Tanner, p. 192.

[54]Ibid., p. 193.
[55]Broer, *Sanity Plea*, p. 77.
[56]Schatt, p. 80.
[57]Broer, *Sanity Plea*, p. 78.
[58]Ibid., p. 80.
[59]The bombing of Dresden, Germany, haunts not only Eliot Rosewater but haunts the minds of many Vonnegut heroes and it is the central topic in the second novel studied in this chapter.
[60]Broer, *Sanity Plea*, p. 84.
[61]Ibid., p. 82.
[62]Ibid.
[63]Ibid., p. 83.
[64]Olderman coins the "cosmic cool" which means cosmic balanced detachment and discusses it as Vonnegut's implied concept in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*. He notices that it is a counterpart to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*'s formula of "give, sympathi[s]e, and control" (*Beyond the Waste Land*, 1973, p. 207).
[65]To prove Eliot's insanity, Norman Mushari has gone around Rosewater County bribing women to say that Eliot has fathered their babies. Thurmond McAllister, the head of the law firm where Mushari works, says that this has "touched off a kind of female mania" (p. 188).
[66]Olderman, p. 191.
[67]Ibid., p. 190.
[68]Reed, p. 168.
[69]Olderman, pp. 143-44.
[70]Thomas Pynchon, *V.* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1963), p. 322. Further references to the novel will be from this edition.

بحث مستل من اطروحة الدكتوراة الموسومة (شاعرية الذهان الإرتيابي في روايات مختارة لكيرت فونجت وتوماس بنجون)

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المستخلص

(ذهان الإرتياب كإعادة خلق في *بارك الله فيك ياسيد روزوتر* لكيرت فونجت)

يُعّرف ذهان الإرتياب ثقافة ما وخصوصاً الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. منذ الحرب العالمية الثانية (١٩٣٩-٤٥)، أصبح ذهان الإرتياب بنية تفكير يتعذر إجتنابها في المجتمع الأمريكي. ويُعزى أهتمام معظم الروائيين الأمريكيين بذهان الأرتياب الى علاقته بدواعي قلق ومخاوف الحياة اليومية. وأستخدم منذ عام ١٩٤٥ عدد غير مألوف من الكتاب تعابير ذهان الأرتياب ليقدموا أثر تقنيات فترة ما بعد الحرب ومنضماتها الأجتماعية وأنظمة إتصالاتها على البشر.وصوّر كتاب مختلفون كرالف أليسون ووليام س.بَرَوز وجوزيف هلر ومارغريت أتوود وكيرت فونجت وتوماس بنجون وجون ديدون وكاثي أيكر ودون دليلو شخصيات قلقة بشأن الطريقة التي قد تسيطر بها المؤسسات الكبرى على حياتهم فتؤثر بذلك في أفعالهم أو حتى تشكل رغباتهم.

وقد ازدادت شعبية التمثيل القصصي لذهان الإرتياب في فترات تميزت بالشك في الواقع الذي لا يمكن أصلاحه.ودفع الكثير من كتّاب ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية لتقديم الذهان الأرتيابي كحالة إيجابية للعقل وكشكل ذكي ومثمر للشك وليس كمرض نفسي. ولذلك تسعى هذه الرسالة الى دراسة تمثيل الرواية الأمريكية لذهان الإرتياب فترة ما بعد الحرب العالمية.

وتبحث الدراسة في كيرت فونجت (١٩٢٢-٢٠٠٧) وتجربته في الحرب العالمية الثانية وأثر هذه التجربة على عمله، كما يقدم الفصل بإيجاز توظيفه للخيال العلمي والسريالية التي تجعله من روائيي ما بعد الحداثة. ويتعمق الفصل في مناقشة تناوله للذهان الإرتيابي في روايتين من رواياته. حيث مكنت أوهام البطل الأول بالإرتياب والإضطهاد في

رواية (بارك الله فيك ياسيد روزوتر) (١٩٦٦) من إعادة خلق واقعه الذي أضعفه الهوس بالثروة. يعنون هذا الفصل "ذهان الأرتياب كإعادة خلق" مشيرا الى ان ذهان الأرتياب في روايات فونجت هو إيجابي لأن الشخصيات تعيد خلق واقعها من خلال الخيال.