

# Technological Advances vs. Human Values in Slaughterhouse-Five and Waiting for Godot

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## Technological Advances vs. Human Values

Technological advances occur all around, whizzing by, while human values change little and at a much slower pace.

Commercially bottled water stands as just one of a sundry of items that human technology has conjured up over the years. It seems as though the average person can not go through a day without seeing a symbol of this phenomenon, whether it is a vending machine, an empty container lying in the gutter, or a person clutching a plastic bottle in their hand. Also an ever-present technological advance is the cellular phone, "can you here me now?" It is almost a guarantee that during the course of a class period, a ringtone or the buzzing of the vibrating mode will shake the air. Human nature exists right along side its technology. [Kurt Vonnegut](#) and [Samuel Beckett](#) use their writings to illustrate what needs to be a part of human existence besides human [values](#) and technology. For all of the newfangled contributions to the modernization of human civilization, the values that humans live by have not progressed quite as swiftly. Technological advances occur all

around, whizzing by, while human values change little and at a much slower pace.

Billy Pilgrim, Kurt Vonnegut's main Slaughterhouse-Five character, rode through life on one of those moving sidewalk, conveyer belt contraptions. He did not make any special efforts to enhance his situation. If one were to cut and paste the novel so that the story of Billy Pilgrim's life went in chronological order, it would become apparent that he merely lived his life. The world still moved around him, war, fire-bombing, the progression of the television set, but Billy took a passive role in his own existence. Billy Pilgrim stays the same humdrum being his entire life. Vonnegut used the repetition of Billy's life and phrases such as "Somewhere a big dig barked" to exhibit how some things just do not change (168). He points out that the people in the novel "are so sick and so much the listless playthings of enormous forces" (164). Billy knows that he is going to die anyway, regardless of what he does or does not do, and he plainly wants to remain unscathed during his journey. Vonnegut used this publication as a vehicle to show that it is not enough to live a life to its end, the approach that Billy employed.

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