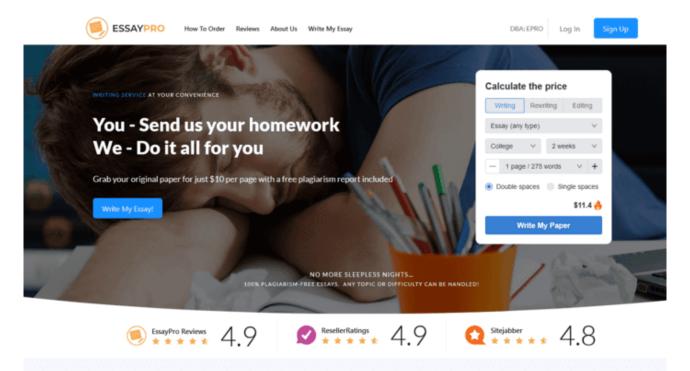
Possibilities for a Better World



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Possibilities for a Better World

The picture painted of the world and humanity by Kurt Vonnegut in Cats' Cradle is not a positive one. It is not the utopia that so many of the novel's character's are striving for. It is a ridiculous world where truths are based on lies and the balance of good and evil is a manufactured state. If Vonnegut's attempt is to "poison minds with humanity... to encourage them to make a better world," it is only through showing the reader the follies of man, the foolishness we live with daily, that maybe we can change our outlook and make a "better world."

Within the 191 pages of Cat's <u>Cradle</u> Vonnegut manages to slam nearly every <u>mode</u> of life, every motivating factor, every convention of modern man. The strongest attacks are on our ways to knowledge: science and religion. Science is shown as a field led by madmen who do not comprehend the consequences of their research and creations. Religion is shown as being all lies developed to keep man happy. The characters of the novel are not unscathed either. Most are shown as greedy, uncompromising, and unsympathetic. They are led by unknown forces to do bad things, foolish things. Vonnegut "poisons" the reader with these examples of mankind. He examines, with wit and comedy, the selfish and

foolish nature of humanity.

One can look at the actions of the characters and their actions, along with the consequences of those actions, and draw from it a conclusion about the futility of living. Vonnegut can certainly be seen as a cynic for the image that he gives us of humanity. He takes it one step further, though, by showing us all of the absurdity of our modern lives. He wants us to see that we live by lies. Even the words on the page are lies. There is no truth. And in this way we are not bound to live the life that Vonnegut portrays. There may be a better end for us than there is at the end of Cat's Cradle.

Maybe then it is possible for us, all of mankind, to make it a "better world." With Vonnegut's poisonous attacks on all our sacred systems he may be trying to show us that there is a better way to live. I will continue to argue that Cat's Cradle goes beyond satire, and gives us a truly cynical look at the world and humanity.

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