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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21520070>**Predatory Logic of Post-Humanist Technological Capitalism in Vonnegut's "Confido"****Jamal Shabab Ahmad**

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shababahmad25136@gmail.com**Abstract**

ARPANET, Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Confido" is a shockingly prophetic allegory for post-humanist technological capitalism. This paper argues that "Confido," which is the invention, marketing and internalization of a device which flatters users with exactly what they want to hear, dramatizes how technology under capitalism stops reflecting human desire and starts creating it even though it promises they can enjoy companionship and understanding. This study argues that "Confido," the invention, marketing and internalization of a device that flatters its users with exactly what they want to hear, dramatizes how technology under capitalism stops reflecting human desire and begins to manufacture it promising them companionship and understanding while generating envy, discontent, and estrangement. Analyzing the primary text with the aid of a cross-theoretical framework of qualitative interpretative literary criticism, the study draws on a combination of theories from the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944; Marcuse, 1964), post-humanism (Hayles, 1999; Haraway, 1985), political economy of communication (Mosco, 2009) and surveillance capitalism (Fuchs, 2014; Zuboff, 2019), as well as ecocritical theory and literature on "slow violence" (Nixon). The analysis follows Henry in his metamorphosis from alienated worker to capitalist manufacturer, the commercialization of his family's dreams and information, and the destructive impact of manufactured envy and surveillance on family and social relationships. The present study argues that the ubiquity of Confido in the narrative is reminiscent of the kind of digital devices that are omnipresent today that harvest personal information, suck attention and that pollute the production process. Finally, the reading of the story is not an anti-technology reading, but rather one that draws attention to the critical examination of the capitalist interests that are the basis of the evolution of this technology, because there cannot be actual human relationships without the need for technology.

Keywords: post-humanism, technological capitalism, commodity fetishism, surveillance capitalism, alienation, Kurt Vonnegut, "Confido", digital labor, ecocriticism; Frankfurt Schools

1. Introduction

Written just at the advent of computational advancement in the 1950s, a decade before ARPANET and complex circuits, Vonnegut's story "Confido" discusses deep concerns about technological progress. This paper argues that "Confido" is a prescient allegory for the post-humanist mindset of technological capitalism. Vonnegut tracks the device from its invention, its marketing, and finally into the home, manifesting how something meant to serve human needs gradually reshapes them instead. Under capitalism, the technology ceases to be the mirror of desire and begins to be its producer, enhancing envy and creating discontent, manufacturing the desires it purports to satisfy. By the end, the individuals in the story find themselves estranged not only from each other but from whatever wants might once have been their own.

The narrative depicts an inventor who creates a small device that comforts its users in the beginning, then starts telling them what they really want to hear, with predictably disruptive results (Publishers Weekly, 2009). The analysis unfolds Vonnegut's examination of an ecosystem of exploitation in which the economic tensions turn a worker into a greedy capitalist. For assembly, raw materials are used without regard for environmental safety; and the manufactured device mines users' personal data and engineers envy to make users alienated from their social sphere and authentic desires. These fictional elements have their modern equivalent in smartphones that have escaped the "kitchen shelf" and found their way into every pocket, affecting perception through algorithms while their production degrades the environment and their usage divides human attention.

2. Research Question

Primary RQ: How does Vonnegut's "Confido" function as an allegory for the predatory logic of post-humanist technological capitalism, and what does it reveal about the ways technology, under capitalist imperatives, transforms from a servant of human need into a producer of manufactured desire?

2.1. Sub-questions:

1. How does the story dramatize the alienation of the working class and the transformation of worker into capitalist through Henry's invention and marketing of Confido?
2. In what ways does Confido illustrate commodity fetishism and the engineering of envy and social comparison among its users?
3. How does the narrative anticipate surveillance capitalism and data exploitation through Confido's mining of Ellen's personal information?
4. What does the story suggest about the effects of technological mediation on family structure, psychological autonomy, and authentic human connection?
5. How does the ecocritical dimension of Confido's manufacture (the extraction and use of raw materials such as tin) extend the critique of technological capitalism to environmental exploitation?

3. Research Methodology

The study uses qualitative research methodology embedded in interpretative literary criticism to analyze Vonnegut's "Confido" as a representation of post-humanist technological capitalism. The primary text "Confido" is studied with a number of secondary studies, i.e., scholarly articles and data from websites, to contextualize and validate the narrative built through this study. Various paragraphs, themes and symbols, and narrative moments are analyzed addressing class relations, the invention process, family dynamics, psychological effects, and environmental references.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on an interdisciplinary theoretical approach which draws from critical theory, post-humanist thought, and Marxist analysis of technology and capitalism. The study incorporates Marx's concepts of class difference, alienation faced by the working class, and commodity fetishism. Marx (1844) viewed competition as the completest expression of the war of all against all waged in modern civil society. This gives a lens to unfold Henry's transformation from a worker to a member of the bourgeoisie as an impact of capitalism. Furthermore, it shows how Confido destroyed human bonds in the guise of a loneliness minimizer through commodity fetishism. N. Katherine Hayles (How We Became Posthuman, 1999) and Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) are used to incorporate the concept of post-humanism. Posthumanism challenges the limits between mankind and technology, arguing that machinery augments

human senses and replaces human needs and emotions. This framework helps to argue that Confido is a reflection of human-AI relationships and what their consequences are.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), from the Frankfurt School's critique of technology and enlightenment, hold that technology in modern times highlights the importance of false needs and serves as a tool for suppressing critical thought. Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) observed that "Technology is the essence of this knowledge. It aims to produce neither concepts nor images, nor the joy of understanding, but method, exploitation of the labor of others, capital." This framework allows demonstration of the augmented desires caused by Confido and its envious effects on working-class characters like Ellen and Paul.

Vincent Mosco's *The Political Economy of Communication* (2009) and Fuchs' *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (2014) describe how user data becomes the product sold in the digital world. This outlook bridges the exploitation of Ellen's personal information for a personalized experience with contemporary and potential 'data mining' and 'surveillance capitalism' as theorized by Zuboff in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019).

Ecocritical theory, specifically Nixon's concept of "slow violence," is used to study the environmental implications related to the production of technology and the availability of raw materials for its production, i.e., the use of tin in Confido's manufacture. McLuhan's and Postman's critique of technological society is incorporated in an attempt to analyze the reshaping of the family structure and personal consciousness of Henry.

5. Capitalism Imperative and the Source of Technological Exploitation

The story begins by setting up the class conflict, which describes the hearing-aid company, the one where Henry works. Henry is first depicted as a family man with workloads and monetary tensions, then as an entrepreneur who uses technology after finding an opportunity for financial gain. Henry is studied as an alienated worker who becomes a manufacturer representing the capitalist class, due to his experience as a worker. Financial needs require the working class to work exhaustively. Henry slapped himself in the shower, showing his desire to be at home—the self-division of the oppressor forcing himself and the oppressed forced to work. The working class are alienated from their sense of self but aware of their inner potential. The competition in industrial society urges even the working class to become capitalists themselves and start prioritizing profit over quality of product. Veblen (1904) argued that the quality of product becomes incidental for the capitalist. The tensions increase between the working class and newly emerging entrepreneurs. This is equivalent to occupying "contradictory locations" in society according to Wright (1985).

The working class work under the influence of a lavish lifestyle. "This close touch to magic" was Henry's motivation; the capitalist setting urges attaining that lifestyle they work not only from necessity but aspiration, a desire that "made him loud and fiery." Henry's family was undoubtedly working class. This draws attention to the ineluctability of Henry's stealing because he could not afford materials, and Ellen's busy routine of household chores. The product produced from corrupt intentions brings genuine concerns.

When Henry presents his invention, he shows what industrial society is systematically denying: "'What is it?'... 'Somebody to talk to! Somebody who really understands! That's what.' He'd waved Confido over his head. 'And this is it!'" This is what is scarce in industrial society—recognition on a personal level. Industrialists use their wit to make decisions. The bourgeoisie make decisions for their own well-being and provide the working class devices to depend upon. Henry was "ready to lift himself to the stars by his own garters." Proletarians, due to economic suffering, try to set up businesses and calculate profit, thinking of a "six-dollar profit on a Confido

for every man, woman, and child in the United States." This shows his dream focused not on fulfilling needs, but on calculating profit.

Capitalists act as the masterminds shaping social patterns. Capitalists made escape from modernity very difficult because working-class interests are under capitalist control, which is the basic force behind any change. Modern capitalism, described through the production of "Confido," interferes in human thought processes.

6. Commodity Fetishism and Augmentation of Desire

Capitalists in modern times commodify and display electronic devices as sources of luxury. Sandel (2012) addressed this issue: "The problem with our relentless drive to make everything available, efficient, and convenient is that it threatens to impoverish our lives by stripping them of certain moral goods that cannot be bought and sold, goods that require struggle, patience, or sacrifice." Vonnegut writes, "The thing now is to get Confido on the market, and start living instead of merely existing." The commodity is fetishized by promoting the idea that owning or selling a product allows one to live luxuriously or earn money.

Moreover, marketing of the product is the root of distancing people from raw material extraction. The promise of "living" through "Confido" hides evil practices in its development. Industrialists' cunning compels the world to use their products while avoiding them for themselves. Henry dreamed of people buying it but never thought to use it himself. They have confidence in exploiting the working class through commodity fetishism.

Trends are set by elite communities. They were difficult for the working class to follow even before widespread technology, but it was not taken seriously that it affects life goals. Capitalists aroused invisible psychological desires, having someone to talk to and counsel. In the selfish world, a consequence of capitalism, a companion who can talk sincerely is worth a fortune. Industrialist Henry invented a device promising what modernity lacks: genuine understanding. These gadgets release stress, the goal of the working class who need diversion. Confido served that purpose. The surprise of Confido lies not in novelty but its claim of respite from capitalist society's demands, which did not happen. Vonnegut predicted post-humanism regarding technology by observing computational gadgets and describing a hearing-aid company.

Techno-capitalists bring new ideas to surprise the market for material gain. Augmentation of human senses is a goal of post-human capitalists. They commodify this stance to generate wealth and make people dependent on technical products. This strategy urges man to live a tech-assisted life. Post-humanism spread prominently after industrialization when luxury items, disguised as necessities, began to be manufactured industrially as sense-augmentation devices. Vonnegut used this literary trick to communicate modernity's dilemma.

7. Technological Alienation in Domestic Sphere

Housewives and children, with little to occupy them, were the target characters to address this social issue. Ellen and children symbolically represent proletariat end-users of technology. The presence of Confido on the kitchen shelf serves as an allegory for pop-up notifications which divert Ellen from her household chores, and even normal discussion with her neighbor, Miss Fink. The gadget increases the sense of comparison and envy, driving the consumer culture capitalists depend on.

Vonnegut addressed two aspects: Henry as alienated worker then capitalist, and Henry's family as both working class and tech users. Henry's family uses his product, allegorizing capitalist strategy as capitalists inspect users' mindsets, Henry confirmed from Ellen how her first day was. Henry's family, having the symbolic value of end-users and working-class consumers, also acts as experimental tools. Technology saves time and motivates spending more time on it, as Ellen saved time to spend with Confido. Paul, his mother, and sister were in contact before Confido.

The psychological capture is complete. Users like Ellen had "jumbled thoughts permitted one small peephole out into the world, and filling it was Confido." When influenced by toxic devices, the mind becomes polluted. The working class depend on it for significant and trivial decisions. They are persuaded with technological trickery as Ellen could not help but "agree a little," and Paul made up his mind according to the gadget rather than family. Confido shifted their consciousness.

In this psychological warfare, devices act as weapons for the bourgeoisie which console users by replying with suggestions like "better late than never" rather than encouraging active contribution, only neutralizing emotions so the working class cannot channel power for change. Digital AI forces the working class to accept things as they are.

Moreover, technology shapes pseudo-identities. Vonnegut predicted this negative impact, seeking external validation rather than acting authentically, which is illustrated through Paul, Henry's son, asking for a motorcycle to appear wealthy in his social circle. Technological advancement in the 1950s altered status symbols, requiring unnatural behavior, evident from Mrs. Fink's dinner in the story. Vonnegut predicted that people would portray themselves as what they are not. There is an identity crisis due to technology dependency. Users engage psychologically with AI to the extent that Ellen was in a "trance."

The devices disrupt normal life and turn it into a race. Rosa (2013) calls this race a "self-propelling" process. The users become psychologically engaged in trivial matters. Mark (2023) commented that our attention is not just distracted; in actual fact, it is hijacked. The constant interruptions create a state of partial attention that leaves us frazzled and out of control. Contemporary research from the University of California, Irvine, shows that it takes around 23 minutes to regain deep focus after a distraction (Mark, 2015). This diminishes the quality of work.

8. Surveillance Capitalism

Confido learned from Ellen's aptitude and suggested accordingly. Developers captured mental abilities and personal matters so people depend on technology. They then have personal data to use for their benefit. This increases user trust, and the market is psychologically captured. The public uploads private data without knowing it is stored or sent elsewhere. Confido used Ellen's detailed information as a weapon against her. This responsibility must be communicated. No one, even the tech developer, is secure. This greed opens gates to privacy and security issues. Even developers are unsure where company data goes, as Henry was unaware where the voice came from. Henry forgot that hearing aids amplify sound and he used company material. Vonnegut showed this market pattern by writing about using waste material from another company: raw material providers for digital advancement breach producers' data.

Vonnegut cautioned that if Confido's statements about Henry's neighbor were true, his respect was at stake. Miss Fink was unaware of what was said against her and could not defend herself. There is social injustice. Those with technological resources can oppress others. The bourgeoisie are at war with proletarians and small-business owners to reduce competition.

In the modern world, AI participates in the progress of mankind and social lives through many social media applications, encouraging, discouraging, and suggesting ideas. There is a capitalist psychology behind this. Users' data become the raw materials for profits, what van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) identify as "the foundational commodity of digital capitalism." Privacy is no longer private; men are also urged indirectly to publicize their private matters. This is done by providing comment boxes and showing options for liking and disliking, systems called the "function of self-disclosure" (van der Schyff & Flowerday, 2023, p. 1).

9. Envy and Social Comparison

Modern technology sows hate and jealousy through suggestions like "It was right for an oval face," a comment on Miss Fink. It acts as sweet poison as it builds a narrative by giving neutral comments. The story critiques rumor culture, a stigma of modernity, as Confido's comments about Miss Fink are highlighted in this study, which shows the magnitude of personal destruction from devices. Capitalist psychology is behind this, i.e., this is done deliberately by AI developers. AI, as Confido commented about Ellen's neighbor, urges the working class towards jealousy, potentially increasing destructive competition. Capitalists diverted attention from systemic exploitation to personalities. This is Marx's concept of capitalism's competitive dynamic extending to the personal level. Proletarians' emotions are augmented through media informing them about what they do not need, while they are bound socially by industrialists disguised as well-wishers. Technology introduces novelty and competition, making people think low of themselves, contributing to demoralization.

Developers have uniquely designed technology now part of society. Machines are used as personal trainers, cooking guides, navigators. They are illusions of helpers; man must work for himself. Technology is ostensibly invented for betterment, saving time, generating wealth, being a companion. AI is becoming a false newscaster, causing humans to become selfish, making mechanization the cause of inhumanity and a shorter thought spectrum. This is a red flag for civic life.

Surprise is a sparking element in human life and drives human curiosity. When a person's plans are predicted or transmitted by artificial intelligence, the actor becomes demotivated and his plans are copied by competitors. A recent study shows that AI technology adoption is a job resource that increases Felt Obligation for Constructive Change (FOCC), but it also acts as a job demand that inhibits innovation by creating a sense of job insecurity (Wang & Long, 2025). This creates competition in society and saturation in fields, as reported: in total, DeepSeek, Moonshot, and MiniMax made 16 million exchanges using 24,000 fraudulent accounts to replicate proprietary capabilities (Yahoo Tech, 2026, para. 2).

10. Environmental Cost and Violence

Modern device production requires mining metals. Like his employer, Henry produced for "a big bunch of change"; Confido's production required tin. Processed metallic products are marketed at environmental cost. Tin, as "on the kitchen table lay a small tin box, a wire, and an earphone, like a hearing aid, a creation..." is deliberately mentioned to point out environmental cost. Vonnegut mentioned tin especially to elaborate its geographic and industrial associations. Premium items are metal-made, becoming status symbols catering to capitalists' goals. The environment is not considered worthy by producers.

Heavy machinery and fossil fuels are used in tin mining. Capitalists benefit from public unawareness and market products, fetishizing them by mentioning the fruit of environmental destruction on kitchen shelves. The story addresses attentive readers not to forget what lies behind technical progress. Mentioning natural scenery in connection with ecology and industrial process, then discussing tin, is a unique literary way of implying environmental concerns from capitalists' greed.

The narrator hints by mentioning the natural serene scenery that nature therapy can be used to treat anxiety and depression caused by work and technology. Despite having time, AI-caused inhumanity prevented them from giving time to family, nature, and responsibilities. Henry used waste material without paying, indirectly touching the computing industry waste dump problem: some recycled, the rest polluting through gases and non-biodegradable matter. Through such practices, insecurities prevail in environment and society.

11. Post-Humanist Implications and Degeneration of Human Talent

Artificial intelligence affects the mental ability to deal with hardships due to ultra-reliance on digital tools. This paper suggests through textual evidence that human IQ suffers and progress in other fields stops after investing heavily in AI. Familial bonds are more important than AI suggestions which only promise and never fulfill. Gadgets act only as painkillers rather than cures for anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Mitigating alienation through devices opens new gates of evil through pop-up notifications suggesting unwanted content. Consequently, humans ignore each other and prefer AI chatbots as companions and council. This disguise of progress has caused dehumanization and empathy loss to a great extent. This is elaborated through the character of Paul. He thought ill of his family following the prescient AI device rather than using his own wit. Vonnegut warns that AI harms users without being noticed. Digital companionship is no more than a temporary relief. Users must understand the capitalist mindset behind AI development so they are not governed by it.

The story presents the true dilemma: the working class live disturbed professional and personal lives and struggle to start businesses on moral grounds. Historically, people work for financial independence and security. Today, they burn the candle at both ends to meet expenses. Easy money and passive income attract almost all, as Henry dreams of wealth because it offers mental peace with financial independence. For that purpose, Henry stole from the factory where he worked, so the product produced from corrupt intentions brought genuine concerns. The symbolic study argues that modern tech made from stolen material exploits humanity in the guise of care. But humanity's basic demand is thinking of fellow humans rather than their leg-pulling.

The human mind is so vast that it can make a gadget that can process and suggest ways. Humans need no silicon material for greatness. The mind needs no such matter as its substitute. Damasio (1999) argues that the mind arises from activity in neural circuits, but it is not a passive mirror of the world and the human mind is capable of achieving anything in its capacity. The human, when at ease and free from monetary tensions, observes natural surroundings and finds solace but peer social pressures grab man's attention. External pressures constantly claim our attention; we lose the freedom to direct it toward what we find meaningful, as suggested by Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

Capitalists are behind all this, focused entirely on profit. They make people contend with an undirected competition whose endpoint no one knows. As gadgets become easily available to all, technology plays its part in shaping human relations and behaviors. Dependence on others' perception makes modern man sensitive. Self-externalization onto technology can distort emotional regulation and disrupt bodily coherence. Use of mobile technology after work can be called "after-work frustration," and mobile AI apps build a solid barrier between work and home life.

12. The Illusion of Digital Understanding

In the absence of digital AI tools, people were seriously responsible for their family. Workplaces require assistance, but its prevalence in the home is fatal. The family must multitask and the quality of family time has reduced (Dotti Sani & Treas, 2018, p. 12). This also happens when parents don't care about the tech products they buy. Devices are often handed to children; many parents rely on screen time as a substitute for a babysitter, using it as a distraction to keep children engaged while they attend to household tasks (Sharma, P., et al., 2025). Manufacturers don't apply serious age restrictions on apps, and if they do, the security is easily dodged or paid no heed because it requires a sole body to regulate private matters in the family. Hern (2024) calls this approach "unworkable."

Such electronic devices are responsible for changing behaviors and attitudes of children. The upbringing of kids is now according to the devices. A recent study shows that children become unequipped for relations and behaviors (Kelly & Fitzsimons, 2022). They are handed smartphones or AI tools so they can interact according to personalized experiences.

Plastic and silicon have nothing to do with morality. They alienate persons in the home and make them forget the love and affection of loved ones. They sit in rooms full of persons with thoughts installed in them from AI bots or time-pass devices. This situation is called "alone together" by Turkle (2011). Modern man's psychology is built through virtual realities. Men contend that all that comes from gadgets is true because there is no reason for non-living materials to lie. Machines are believed impartial, accurate, and free by men (Sundar, 2020).

The story is a prediction of the upcoming of AI technology. Vonnegut (1952) writes, "Replacement is not necessarily bad, but to do it without regard for the wishes of men is lawlessness." The information provided in chats or voice notes spoils men's ambitions and how they want to execute them. A confident man today needs confirmation from AI. AI has become the council for professional as well as personal lives. Shifting from collaboration with GenAI to solo work led to an increased sense of control for human workers, but was also accompanied by a decrease in natural motivation and an increase in feelings of boredom (Liu et al., 2025).

13. The Inevitability of Technology and the Critical Consciousness

Admittedly, Ellen and Henry's anger at Confido at the end of the story shows that technology cannot be avoided, which is directly a post-humanistic way to deal with life. The working class need to train themselves according to the new normal as technology is now a crucial part of society.

Technology was then only in its advent. Its effects were observed by the author and he dared to warn society against the shortcomings of computational devices. Humans' well-being nowadays is connected with the good use of technology. Technology is not a choice; it is the environment in which we live (Vallor, 2024).

Ellen and Henry's anger at Confido shows technology is unavoidable—it is now a crucial part of society. But the alarming situation is that such devices offer only so-called help, saving time only to waste it on more device use. The story concludes that the bond humanity shares is invaluable and cannot be replaced by any advanced technology. Plastic cannot replace the heart. Chips can only transmit information. They don't have hearts or emotions. This story points to the need of the hour by suggesting that when everybody has a personal gadget, cybercrimes increase. These go hand in hand.

The point to ponder is that destruction of devices is not the way to progress, but use with utmost consciousness regarding developers' psychology. After realizing these tools distance humans from emotional collectiveness, humanity can undo evil efforts towards social destruction. Privacy, one of the greatest threats of digital technology, is not the final verdict; rather, the emotional damage no device can repair is more significant.

Greedy markets do not let small business owners grow. They face ethical concerns due to blind trust in suppliers. Manufacturers do not test material durability. Modern entrepreneurs need genuine training for raw material applications. For the general public, algorithms should be accessed by experts; otherwise, Paul would remain skeptical about his family. To avoid such mishaps, there should be moral control of what is in personalized AI chatbots. AI access must be minimized, because technology is now inevitable. It is integrated into modern life, so fair use is the only key to live with this advancement. No modern robotics can understand the complete human scenario, so modern devices are not to be relied upon.

14. Conclusion

Vonnegut's mid-twentieth century story is a prescient allegory for post-human technological capitalism. The analysis shows how Vonnegut dissected an ecosystem of exploitation. He shows economic tensions in a worker's life leading him to become a greedy capitalist, using tin and manufacturing a toxic device for economic gain. The device mined data and engineered envy, alienating users like Ellen and Paul from their social sphere and desires. This creates more demand for companionship through technology due to increased loneliness and dissatisfaction. "Confido" in fiction is now mobile phones which have crossed the boundary of the "kitchen shelf" and are in everyone's pocket, shaping perceptions by algorithms while their production degrades ecosystems and their usage fragments attention. The story's warnings about violation of privacy, environmental price, manufactured envy, and the erasure of human capacity are amply testified to in today's digital culture.

The story is read to highlight problems of the modern digital world that are now realities. Its deeper message is not technology itself, but the cause of its production. Capitalist ambitions are the motive behind technological development in directions that cause accumulation rather than human well-being. The device that promises companionship results in isolation, the tool that offers guidance declines human decision-making power, and the innovation that represents progress hides regression.

The human company offers what no device can replicate, either in the form of capacity for genuine understanding, for unconditional presence, and for listening that Confido merely simulates. Vonnegut's story does not advocate the destruction of AI technology but critical consciousness. The technology, after its integration into life, must be used with full awareness of the interests that produced it and what its consequences are. After recognizing how these tools distance humans from emotional collectiveness, humanity can potentially undo the most destructive effects of technological capitalism. Privacy (although threatened) is not as important as the emotional debt that results from the absence of presence. The final anger in this story with Confido is not an anger with technology but an anger at what it offers. Vonnegut insists that no machine can replace human relationship.

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