

How much information are you given about the characters?



What do you observe about the crafting of the characters?

These two questions are complementary as the crafting of characters often informs the reader about the character and the character's beliefs and values

Blue and Green stickies are used to try and categorize each sticky into individual answers to questions, and yellow stickies are used to show ideas that answer both questions

What do we need to know about the characters? What do you observe about the crafting of the characters? How many are there? How much information are you given about each?

Early Story

Stereotypes about groups of characters

Mid Story

Late Story

Most characters (with the exception of the sheriff) are stereotyped in the opening moments of the story (Hostesses & Nothingheads)

The reader immediately develops an expectation for the physical and personality traits for members of each group

Individual characters break away from the stereotypes created at the beginning of the story. Nancy is no longer just a "hostess" and develops her own opinion that betrays her stereotype

<-- Supporting: Nancy subconsciously believes that aspects of her life abiding by the government is "pointless"

The insight Vonnegut might be communicating with the reader in the final moments, while deeply disturbing, is apparent in how Billy and Nancy react to the incident.

There are a few hints about Billy's motivations throughout the story, but it's never made explicitly clear until now

"Hostesses"

While there isn't much dialogue between "nothingheads", the dialogue between the "Hostesses" further paints a picture about all Hostesses to be confident, intelligent, and able-bodied women.

Reactions from other characters like the Sheriff reinforce ideas about the "Hostesses" and develop characteristics of society at large (most people are not physically fit or especially confident)

We learn about how other groups are perceived by the Hostesses and society at large

"A nothinghead was a person who refused to ..." <-- This explicit messaging tells the reader what to think about this group, and later tries to make the reader empathetic to this group

Billy the Poet emerges as a "Nothinghead" with a conscience, that makes the reader align with the ideals of the "nothingheads", contrary to the ideas from the early story

This makes the reader question their earlier assumptions with the stereotypes, allowing Nancy and Billy to undergo individual character development

Billy's motivations are explained in the dialogue between Nancy and Billy, which clears a lot of earlier confusion that has been building up since the beginning of the story

"Foxy Grandpa" <-- Yet another stereotype created in the beginning that further support the idea that characters stereotype others around them, which makes individual characteristics more appreciable in the rest

Nancy is almost separated from the "Hostesses"

convention in in theatre), in which other characters describe traits of another character conversational manner without other characters present gives a larger-than-life

Depending on the reader's expectations of Billy makes the reader want to learn more about his motivations

The revelation that this old man is the notorious Billy the Poet is both disappointing and frightening - if his reputation isn't from physically overpowering others, where does his reputation come

Nancy and Billy greatly develop their respective characters as we learn about the nuances of their (disturbing) individual beliefs --> "You don't even want to hear my answer," she taunted him. "You're afraid to hear it." "I never listen to a woman until the

"She was pleading weakly", "Nancy sat down and bowed her head" Support for -->

Nancy's indignation at Billy's actions is warranted, and her feelings of defeat are communicated in how she responds to Billy

I tried to answer individual parts of the guiding question with each page and sticky, but many stickies provide answers for multiple questions

How many characters are there?

Individual Characters are: Nancy McLuhan the Hostess, Billy the Poet the Nothinghead, Pete Crocker the sheriff, and J. Edgar Nation the inventor of ethical birth pills

Characters are often introduced alongside their stereotypes, enabling the reader to gain an immediate (but cursory) understanding of the character that can be developed further.

Mary, the other Hostess at Nancy's "Ethical Suicide Parlour", isn't present for most of the later parts of the story, which suggests to the reader that all "Hostesses" share similar beliefs.

What do we need to know about the characters? How many are there?

What do we need to know about the characters?

Billy the Poet

Nancy McLuhan

J. Edgar Nation

What are Nancy's motivations?

While he doesn't make a physical appearance in the story, Billy's explanation places J. Edgar Nation in the story as the strongest influence for their current society

Would the society that has prolifically used his "Ethical Birth Control" pills align with the original intention of the invention?

This character develops the story's world further by providing the source for the "Ethical Birth Control" pills that characters like Nancy reference as a necessary solution to overpopulation

What are Billy's motivations?

is implicit motivation is clear (rebellion against the government because he's a nothinghead), but his specific motivation remains nebulous until the end of the story when we get his perspective.

Given her intelligence, when has she questioned society structure, if ever?

Taking notice of inconsistencies within her society (the music simulating kitchen chatter) develops her character further as someone who has the intelligence to question her world.

This makes the reader wonder about what is needed for her to defy the stereotype of a "Hostess" purely through her own motivation and foreshadows her internal confusion later in the story.