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POSTMODERN NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN KURT VONNEGUT'S NOVELS *SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE* AND *CAT'S CRADLE*

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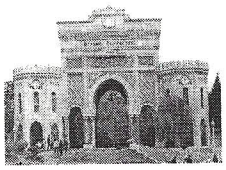

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POSTMODERN NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN KURT VONNEGUT'S NOVELS *SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE* AND *CAT'S CRADLE*

Burcu Gülüm Tekin

ÖZ

Bu tez, Amerikan yazınında postmodernizm akımının çeşitli eleştirmenlerce tanımı ve yarattığı etkiler ile zaman içinde postmodern edebiyatla beraber anılmaya başlanan "metinlerarasılık" ve "üstkurmaca" adı verilen iki yazınsal kavramın birer postmodern anlatı tekniğine dönüşümünü inceler. Bunun yanı sıra tezde, Amerikalı yazar Kurt Vonnegut'un çok ses getiren *Slaughterhouse Five* ve *Cat's Cradle* adlı postmodern eserlerinde bu anlatı tekniklerinin rolü detaylı şekilde örneklenir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, yazarın iki yapıtlarında da temel rol oynayan söz konusu anlatı teknikleri ile okurda yarattığı, "alışkanlığı kırma" ve bu sayede "gerçeğe başka bir gözle bakabilme" gibi etkilerin nasıl oluştuğu sorusuna cevap bulmaktır.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the shift from modernism to postmodernism in American literature. Postmodernism will be defined within the scope of two specific sub-discourses: "intertextuality" and "metafiction," which have been central to the transformation of the study of narrative in literature. This analysis will be framed within an examination of the American novelist Kurt Vonnegut and two of his novels, *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Cat's Cradle*. The study endeavors to assess the impact of effects such as 'defamiliarization' and 'reconsideration of the real from a different point of view' that are embedded in the novels of Vonnegut and postmodern writing in general.

PREFACE

Literary terms which at first may be perceived as unrelated: postmodern, defamiliarization, parody and science fiction, merge together to form a coherent discourse in the works of Kurt Vonnegut. The reason that this study is grounded in the examination of Vonnegut's novels *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Cat's Cradle* is due to his ability to intertwine postmodern narrative techniques, intertextuality and metafiction, in order to subvert the culturally contrived discourses of history, society, culture, religion, science and technology. This subversion forces the reader to reconsider such value systems within the framework of humor. It was undergoing such an experience which led to the writing of this thesis.

I am particularly grateful to Prof. Dr. Ayşe Dilek Erbora without whose support this thesis would be impossible. I also thank to my advisor Asst. Prof. Hasine Şen Karadeniz for her understanding and patience during the correction phase of the thesis. For his valuable suggestions and his contribution of a significant amount of time in editing this thesis, I would especially like to express my indebtedness to Dr. Gordon Marshall. Finally, I would also like to give my heartfelt thanks to Asst. Prof. Dr. Türkay Bulut, Asst. Prof. Dr. Çiler Özbayrak, Burcu Gürkan, Rana Marcella Özenç and Enver Karaduman for their continuing belief that this thesis could be completed. I am thankful to Levent Neyse, Aysun Sarıalioğlu, Aslı Kılan Sinke and Marinus Sinke for their endless support and their very existence. Finally, I would like to thank to my mother and father who have encouraged me throughout this study, which is why this project is dedicated to them with love and respect.

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INTRODUCTION

This study is an examination of the use of the narrative techniques of intertextuality and metafiction in Kurt Vonnegut's novels *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Cat's Cradle* within the discourse of postmodern literature. Despite the fragmented nature of postmodernism's definition, the theoretical parameters of the postmodern are indispensible tools for the interpretation of literary works written between the 1960's and the present. In an attempt to trace the development of postmodernist theory as a position of literary criticism, this study also examines the writings of several literary critics and illustrates their view of both the term postmodern and postmodern literature in general.

The first chapter will outline the literary definition of postmodernism as it applies to this study and to Vonnegut's work. For Terry Eagleton and Leslie Fiedler postmodernism is a term which signifies contemporary culture and serves as the weapon to eliminate the boundaries between high and low art. A contemporary of Fiedler, Irving Howe puts forward the term "mass society", which is a definition of the culture in a shapeless world. He argues that postmodern art forms provide definition for this new culture. While, on the one hand, Ihab Hassan considers postmodernism as "a literary awareness" that has stripped away the residue of high modernism from contemporary art forms, on the other, from the perspective of Jürgen Habermas, due to its totalizing approach, postmodernism is against Enlightenment thought. Jean- François Lyotard takes a step further, claiming that postmodern literary works operate as a device to deconstruct grand narratives and provide mini-narratives for the changing life conditions of a postmodern world. Frederic Jameson connotes postmodernism with the concept commodification in all art forms, stating that postmodern culture can be equated with mass production and mass consumption. Similarly, Jean Baudrillard underlines that the postmodern turns everything into a simulacrum in a hyperreal world where authentic reality is lost and new "realities" are perpetually manufactured. Peter Barry illustrates the structural

differences between modern and postmodern cultural forms, seeing differences in these forms not as divisive but as subversive and liberating.

Narrative techniques of modernism that have been assimilated into the postmodern literary discourse form the foundation of the first chapter of this study. The historical background of intertextuality and metafiction as well as their sub-techniques are illustrated in the works of major literary critics such as, Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Michael Riffaterre, and Gérard Genette. This analysis is further supported by Roman Jacobson, Victor Shklovsky, Yuriy Tynianov, and Linda Hutcheon, all of who claim that metafiction is a crucial device of conveying the voice of the writer.

Kurt Vonnegut's familiarly sounding yet unique narrative style is the central focus of this study. It has been argued that Vonnegut's writing style crosses (can be identified with) several literary modes or schools; he is at the same time, a parodist, black humorist or science fiction writer. However one thing is certain: Vonnegut is one of the prominent postmodern writers of his time.

Kurt Vonnegut's writing career started in his college newspaper, *The Cornell Daily Sun*, where he wrote until he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942. In 1944 during The Battle of the Bulge he was captured by the Germans and shipped to Dresden as a prisoner of war. On the night of February 13, 1945, the British Royal Air Force and the United States Army Air Force attacked Dresden, killing 135.000 people, yet Vonnegut survived, taking refuge in the meat locker of a slaughterhouse with other POWs. This devastating experience would later be the foundation of his most famous novel *Slaughterhouse- Five* and its protagonist Billy Pilgrim.

After the war, Vonnegut began his graduate degree in Anthropology, however his dissertation, entitled *On the Fluctuations Between Good and Evil in Simple Tales*, was rejected. In 1971, University of Chicago decided that his novel *Cat's Cradle* should be regarded as the equivalent of his master thesis (which had been rejected) because of its significant contribution to cultural anthropology. After leaving

academia he worked at General Electric until 1951, when he quit becoming a full-time writer. Initially, a writer of science fiction short stories, he contributed regularly to magazines such as *Collier's* and the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Player Piano (1952) is Vonnegut's first novel. It is regarded by critics as a dystopia, questioning both scientific progress and how it places the world or at least humanity in constant jeopardy. *The Sirens of Titan* followed *Player Piano*, released in 1959. The novel questions the purpose of human existence on Earth, when its protagonist finds himself a cosmic slave. This is the novel in which Vonnegut introduces the reader to an imaginary universe called Tralfamadore, where many of his following novels take place.

Vonnegut turns in a different direction with the publication of *Mother Night (1962)*. Furthermore, the novel's title refers to Mephistopheles' monologue in Geothe's *Faust*. Published in 1963, *Cat's Cradle* introduces a man-made and unstable religion called Bokononism and it is regarded as a successful parody of religion. In *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965), Vonnegut introduces the recurring character, Kilgore Trout, regarded by many critics as 'his alter ego'. The protagonist of the narrative, Eliot Rosewater, is a big fan of Kilgore Trout and his science fictional works. Getting uncontrollably drunk, Rosewater addresses his admiration for science fiction writers, at a writer's convention, taking place in Pennsylvania. William Rodney Allen claims that, "the speaker may have been Rosewater, but the voice was Vonnegut's own" (1999: 5). Although Vonnegut rejects being categorized as a science-fiction writer, since many readers perceive science fiction as cartoonish or unliterary, he believes that writers should deal with science "to reflect their times accurately [and] to respond to their times reasonably" (Allen, 1999: 5). Vonnegut's employment of science fiction style, intertextuality and metafiction gave his book, *Slaughterhouse- Five* (1969), considerable power and weight in its discussion of the Dresden bombings and is now regarded as both his best known work and a prototype for the postmodern American novel.

In *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), Kilgore Troute returns and the novel is regarded as a cultural parody of America. Extracts from his autobiographical collage *Palm Sunday* (1981) also serve as examples of Vonnegut's unique narrative style and his humorous tone provides a reference point for the interpretation of his works.

From Vonnegut's very long list of works, *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Cat's Cradle* have been chosen as the two main works that this study uses to illustrate Vonnegut's subversion of the codes of literary techniques of intertextuality and metafiction. In the second chapter of the thesis, Vonnegut's use of both of these techniques is discussed. In *Slaughterhouse Five*, Vonnegut portrays the story of a prisoner of war, Billy Pilgrim, who is also a time-traveler. In an effort at writing an anti-war book, the unnamed narrator uses many references from different writers to support his argument. The parodic references from historical chronicles and allusions to the milestones of history through ironic citations create an alienation effect on the reader since he/ she is told they are to be provided with an anti-war book. Vonnegut's autobiographical traces play an important role in the narrative, placed there as an anchor to the actual historical events of the novel. Vonnegut's memories are transformed into the absurd events in the protagonist's life. Together they compose a metafictional compound, blended by a narrator who enters the story from time to time throughout the narrative reminding the reader of his fictitious entity. Vonnegut has written a novel which is constructed by a self who wishes to draw attention to the future of humanity and give meaning to his existence within the postmodern world.

Chapter Three examines the second Vonnegut novel, *Cat's Cradle*. The novel is a story within a story, essentially a biography of a narrator whose goal is to write a book about the day of the atomic bomb but in the end writes a book about his own experience with a human-made religion. *Cat's Cradle* is placed in a genre similar to that of Vonnegut's earlier work, *Slaughterhouse* Five, because they are both parodies. However, in *Cat's Cradle*, the target is not only politics but also the fixed religious values and the rapid, jeopardizing, expansion of scientific development in the United States. When compared to *Slaughterhouse Five*, *Cat's Cradle*'s narration

is more demanding with its implicit references to Biblical stories. Furthermore, in the end, the text becomes a tangible symbol since a new religion is formed within the narrative. Vonnegut ridicules every institutional entity which holds people back from being respectful and kind. Among the institutions which Vonnegut criticizes most vehemently are the ones which conduct hazardous scientific experiments. His criticism of science stems from his observation that society is inherently ignorant. The narrator's distopic depiction of the end of the world justifies this stance. Also, the narrator's struggle and desire to write a book is in a way resolved for he ends up writing *Cat's Cradle*. Thus, metafiction in *Cat's Cradle* can be accepted as the backbone of the narrative. As Vonnegut explains, with his very existence doomed to narrate, the narrator must report on the possible future disasters. The narrator can be seen as a reflection of Vonnegut who feels obliged to write what he has experienced in order to draw attention to the fact that history may be subverted as a means of human subjectivity.

The main aim of Kurt Vonnegut is to apply these techniques to represent the deformities of American history and culture which should be both recalled and reconsidered. History is made of intertexts which are subjectively constructed by their narrators. Vonnegut is aware that there cannot be a single truth to explain human existence without referring to past texts. He also understands that the voice of the author can invite the reader to an unusual reading experience. Providing an alternative meaning in postmodernism, intertextuality and metafiction allow Vonnegut to defamiliarize his reader within a parodic and historic framework about the defects of American culture.

CHAPTER I

1. Postmodernism and Postmodern Narrative Techniques

1.1. The Definition and Historical Background of Postmodernism

The term "postmodernism" has become a synonym for the word 'confusion' due to the ongoing debates on its meaning and significance since the beginning of the late 1950's. Some critics perceive it as a new historical phenomenon while some believe that it merely follows the procedures of modernism. Not only the term postmodern but also the concepts related to it extend this perplexity. Distinguished British literary critic Terry Eagleton clarifies the two confusing concepts postmodernism and postmodernity in the preface of his book *The Illusions of Postmodernism* as follows:

> The word *postmodernism* generally refers to a form of contemporary culture, whereas the term *postmodernity* alludes to a specific historical period. Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. […] Postmodernism is a style of culture which reflects something of [the] epochal change, in a depthless, decentred, ungrounded, self-reflexive, playful, derivative, eclectic, pluralistic art which blurs the boundaries between 'high' and 'popular' culture, as well as between art and everyday experience. (1997: vii)

The question of how postmodernism has found a place for itself in the analysis of literature is another issue. As Merriam Webster Online Dictionary explains, the emergence of postmodernism in literature stems from the need for "self-reference involving a radical reappraisal of modern assumptions about culture, identity, history or language." Likewise, this expression can be regarded as a proof that the postmodern works function as a new way of expressing the changing world conditions. Specifically, the transition which includes the detachment from the realistic narrative form can be traced in the innovative works of the 1960s' writers of

America. David Stouck clarifies the reason why American writers have moved to non-realistic forms as follows:

> The assumption behind [postmodern writers'] work is that "reality"-that set of assumptions about life that we negotiate communally on a day to day basis-is so unsatisfactory, or so extraordinary, or so absurd that conventional mimesis is no longer adequate to convey the essence of that world. Many American writers since the late 1950s, feeling this pressure, have turned either to nonfiction forms - autobiography and documentary, as in Mailer and Capote-or, taking up the earlier example of Joyce and Kafka, to nonrealistic forms, what Robert Scholes has called "fabulation." (Stouck 1985: 302-3)

As a result, the postmodernist motto of "anything goes!" has leaked into the narratives written in the 1960's. As stated in Stouck's quotation, the absurdity of everyday life has also had a deep impact on the narratives. This absurdity is believed to create the concept called "mass society". The term "mass society" was first used by American social and literary critique Irving Howe in his article called "Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction" (1959). Howe explains the term as being an illustration of

> a relatively comfortable society, half welfare and half garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomized; in which traditional loyalties, ties and associations become lax or dissolve entirely; in which coherent publics based on definite interests and opinions gradually fall apart; and in which man becomes a consumer, himself mass-produced like the products, diversions and values that he absorbs. (1992: 24)

Howe also clarifies how American writers reflect the individual and mass society as follows:

> [a] society no longer lent itself to assured definition and give shape to a world increasingly shapeless and an experience increasingly fluid [...] most of [the American writers] were unable, or perhaps too shrewd, to deal with the postwar experience directly; they preferred tangents of suggestions to frontal representation; they could express their passionate, though often amorphous, criticism of American life not through realistic portraiture but through fable, picaresque, prophecy and nostalgia. (*ibid: 26*)

He also adds that the writers of the postwar period have generally chosen "subjects and locales that are apparently far removed from [American postwar experience] yet, through their inner quality, very close to it" (*ibid: 28*). According to Howe, the novels which constitute 'post-modern' fiction have both disadvantageous and advantageous characteristics for:

> [they] do not represent directly the postwar American experience, yet refer to it constantly telling us rather little about the surface tone, the manners, the social patterns of recent American life yet are constantly projecting moral criticisms of its essential quality [with their] distance from fixed social categories and their concern with the metaphysical implications of that distance. (*ibid: 29*)

Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant*, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* are among the examples that Howe gives as indicative of the critical nature of writing on mass society.

On the other hand, in his famous essay "Cross the Border- Close The Gap" (1972), American literary critic Leslie Fiedler claims that when modernist thought is concerned, "High Art" is turned into vaudeville and burlesque that it becomes "Mass Art" which "closes a class, as well as a generation gap" when it is considered in terms of Howe's "mass society" concept. Similarly, Post-Modernism "implies the closing of the gap between critic and audience […] But most importantly of all, it implies the closing gap between the artist and audience" (1992: 43). As a result, in literature, postmodernism diminished the elitist notion related to modernism and embraced the reader with its daily discourse. Egyptian American literary critic Ihab Hassan justifies postmodernism as follows; "From the great modernists […] the tendency of literature has been to escape itself, to subvert or transcend its forms, to re-imagine imagination; and, as it were, to create a state of unmediated literary awareness" (1992: 73). As the following quotation cited from *The Post-modern & Post-industrial: A Critical Analyses* by Margaret A. Rose, Hassan also resembles

postmodernism to a playful zone in which anything can be possible even if they are contradictory.

> Postmodernism veers toward open, playful, optative, disjunctive, displaced, or indeterminate forms, a discourse of fragments, an ideology of fracture, a will to unmaking, an invocation of silences- veers towards all these and yet implies their very opposites, their antithetical realities. It is as if Waiting for Godot found an echo, if not an answer in Superman. (1991: 52)

In this contradiction, it is an inevitable fact to consider the position of the postmodern writer. In his novel *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories,* Ronald Sukenick points out that the postmodern writer has a highly crucial role in reflecting the changing values:

> The contemporary writer – the writer who is acutely in touch with the life of which he is part- is forced to start from the scratch: Reality doesn't exist, time doesn't exist, personality doesn't exist. God was the omniscient author, but he died; now no one knows the plot, and since our reality lacks the sanction of a creator, there's no guarantee as to the authenticity of the received version. (2003: 41)

For postmodern writers, it also meant 'revolt' and in order to comprehend the transition from modernism to postmodernism and the Enlightenment, which is discarded by those writers, it should be understood what they are revolting against. The references to the work of Habermas and Lyotard will clarify the point on the Enlightenment in order to illustrate the problematic relationship that postmodern writers had with the Enlightenment project. It is also crucial to define what Enlightenment is with the references of Habermas and Lyotard.

In his profound article "Modernity- An Incomplete Project", German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas defines 'the Enlightenment project' in the following terms:

> The project of modernity formulated in the 18th century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic. At the same time, this project intended to release the cognitive potentials of each domain from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life- that is to say, for the rational organization of everyday social life. (1992: 165)

Being in favor of modernism and the Enlightenment project, Habermas criticizes postmodernism's totalizing approach as lacking the tools "to differentiate phenomena and practices that occur within modern society" (Ritzer, 2008: 567-8). Contrary to Habermas, French literary theorist Jean-François Lyotard does not regard postmodernism as a proceeding process of modernity. He points out that "the 'post-' of 'postmodern' does not signify a movement of *comeback*, *flashback* or *feedback*, that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, analogy and anamorphosis which elaborates an 'initial-forgetting'" (Lucy, 2000: 412). Lyotard simply defines postmodernism as 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'. In Lyotard's view, postmodernism deconstructs the basic aim of the Enlightenment, which is 'the idea of a unitary end of history and of a subject'and likewise the Grand narratives of human perfection and progress are no longer valid. The promising way can be temporary and relative 'mininarratives' which "provide a basis for the actions of specific groups in particular local circumstances" (Barry, 1995: 87). He frames the postmodern culture as "the degree zero of contemporary general culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter of TV games" (Lyotard, 1984: 76). Frederic Jameson takes a further step and claims that postmodernism's support of the idea of commodification in all means is the ultimate phase of late capitalism. Jameson also refutes that postmodernism is the persecutor step of modernism in terms of art work.

> […] Even if contemporary art has all the same features as the older modernism, it has still shifted its position within our culture. For one thing, commodity production and in particular our clothing,

> furniture and buildings and other artefacts are now intimately tied in with styling changes which derive from artistic experimentation; our advertising, for example, is fed by postmodernism in all the arts. (1998: 17)

In her book *Coming To Terms with a Postmodern World: Donald Barthelme's Dissident Stance in Snow White and Other Stories (1999)*, Türkan Araz defines the Enlightenment as "a term often pronounced in the contention between postmodernism and modernism, since its assumptions are regarded as the ground motives of modernity: Progressive and speculative discourses based on Universal Reason" (1999: 23), clarifying its philosophy as "[originating] from humanism, a system of thought formulated to enhance man's well-being in the world, in which man is given a preeminent position." She also indicates why this project failed in terms of creating a grand narrative:

> Every ideological system has its master narratives, but first modernism questioned and exposed those of Enlightenment. Next, postmodernism declares that Enlightenment grand narratives have collapsed. This is largely due to a general dissatisfaction with our century's political and cultural practices, and with conventional forms of representation. The crisis entails loss of faith in the progressivist and speculative discourses of modernity. (1999: 25)

The idea of 'loss of faith' in the old practices and the promising nature of the postmodern writing altered the fact that reality is a relative and questionable subject. Alternatively, French postmodern theorist and writer Jean Baudrillard's ideas can be distinguishing due to his suggestion of the concept of the "loss of real." That is, in the postmodern age what people perceive as "real" is radically shaped, exaggerated or filtered by the media. Influences of images on media, films and exceptionally on TV lead them to a loss of distinction between the real and the imaginary. Thus, the real "can be reproduced an indefinite number of times", it does not need "to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. In fact, it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it

anymore" (Baudrillard: 2000, 2). As a result, 'hyperreality' is formed. "Within the postmodernism, the distinction between what is real and what is simulated collapses: *everything* is a model or an image, all is surface without depth; this is the *hyperreal* as Baudrillard calls it" (Barry, 1995: 89). On the other hand, hyperreality is supposed to embrace the four different phases of the image all of which are ideal in the postmodern age. In these terms the image itself:

- is the reflection of a profound reality;
- masks and denatures a profound reality
- masks the absence of a profound reality
- has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum (*ibid*. 2)

The term simulation takes its root from "*the radical negation of the sign value*, from the sign as a reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation [so] simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum" (*ibid*: 2). Baudrillard's 'The Disneyland' example is the most well-known example that is put forward for the third category.

> Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra. […] Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America that is Disneyland (a bit like prisons are there to hide that is the social in its entity, in its banal omnipresence, that is carcerel). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real. (*ibid. 12*)

Since the perception of the real and even the concept of the real itself is re-formed or recreated within each literary work in terms of the writer's self-reflection, postmodernism can be mistaken for being highly individualistic. However, In *The Politics of Postmodernism*, Canadian literary critic Linda Hutcheon argues with 'the prevailing interpretation' of postmodernism and the idea that "[it] offers a value-free, de-historicized quotation of past and that this is a most apt mode for a culture like [American] culture that is oversaturated with images" (1989: 90). For Hutcheon,

postmodernism both embraces the past and the present images with different narrative forms like parody, citation, reference, allusion and pastiche.

Furthermore, even though postmodernism is criticized to be a pop-up approach after modernism, it possesses many similarities with modernism as well. For instance, in his book *Beginning Theory* (1995), Peter Barry examines the major literary theories and as a result of the fact that both modernism and postmodernism are accepted as canonic forms in literature, he clarifies the confusing characteristics of both the different and similar points of postmodern literature when compared to the modern. He points out the fact that the use of fragments differ in both forms. According to him, in modern literary works "there is a tone of pessimism, and despair about the world which finds its appropriate representation in […] 'fractured' art forms" (Barry, 1995: 84). Conversely, in postmodernism "fragmentation is an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobic embrace of fixed systems of belief" (*ibid: 84*). In other words, "the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it" (*ibid. 84*). Additionally, he emphasizes that "postmodernism rejects the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' art which was important in modernism, and believes in excess, in gaudiness, and in 'bad taste' mixture of qualities" (*ibid: 84*). There are also some points that he underlines about the key features related to the postmodern fictionists and their works:

- They foreground fiction which might be said to exemplify the notion of the 'disappearance of the real', in which shifting postmodern identities are seen, for example, in the mixing of literary genres.
- They foreground what might be called 'intertextual elements' in literature, such as parody, pastiche, and allusion, in all of which there is a major degree of reference between one text and another, rather than between the text and a safely external reality. (*ibid: 9)*

Above all, the middle of the 1960's and 1970's were a flourishing era of postmodern American literature. Writers like John Barth, William Burroughs, Richard Brautigan, Thomas Pynchon, Donald Barthelme, Jerzy Kosinksi and Kurt

Vonnegut achieved a great reputation with the publication of their works. They attempted to alter the forms of modernist fiction and employed new postmodern narrative techniques, extensively fading the line between the imaginary and the real, enabled readers to reconsider everyday reality as well as the changing world conditions. Crucial historical events, shaping the American history such as World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War period were criticized in both alternative contexts and forms. Within need for self-reflexivity and the belief of individual consciousness, the appearance of these unique postmodern works diminished the boundaries between history and fiction. Literary forms such as parody, pastiche, and burlesque commonly played a role coupled with the technique of intertextuality. Metafiction, was, on the other hand, a way of "an introspective gaze" to the fiction and the self and their situation in history (Araz, 1999: 65).

Regardless of the fact that both intertextuality and metafiction were employed in the works of modern literature, they have gained a new meaning within the perspective of the postmodern literature. Intertextuality with its related forms such as citation, reference, allusion, parody, burlesque and pastiche conveys an extract from the past works and revisits the historical events with a new interpretation. Likewise, metafiction enables the reconsideration of the art work within the conditions it is produced.

1.2. Forms of Postmodern Narrative Technique

1.2.1. Intertextuality: Revisiting the Past

As was the case of the definition of postmodernism, intertextuality is also a broad concept. The Merriam Webster Online dictionary defines intertextuality as "the complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text". Intertextuality can be accepted basically as "a re-writing" (réécriture), that is, a writer composes a text amalgamating the pieces of

other writer'(s) work(s). In her essay about intertextuality, "Word, Dialogue and the Novel", Bulgarian- French philosopher and literary critic Julia Kristeva, divides the process of intertextuality into three parts: the writing subject, the addressee (the reader), and exterior texts. She indicates that this process works in horizontal and vertical axes and it is essential to bear in mind that the intertextuality is shaped by the reader's own cultural context.

> The word's status is thus defined horizontally (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as vertically (the word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus)… each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read…any text is the absorption and transformation of another (Kristeva, 1986: 37)

According to Kristeva, intertextuality does not only signify an act of re-writing; but also, an endless literary mobility. She claims that intertextuality is not an imitation of the elements related to the other texts or merely putting them to the new text; it is however, an operation of 'changing places or contexts' (transpositioning).

Intertextuality "is the neutralization and the intersection of the utterances taken from another text to the extent of a new text" (Kristeva 1974, 52). That is to say, every text is a mosaic of citations reflecting the polyphony. Even though, intertextuality has been commonly acknowledged in postmodern criticism with Kristeva, and her point that the text is a part of both the subject and the addressee, it differs from the view of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, from whom the term intertextuality originally takes its roots. The concept of *dialogue* is center point for Bakhtin's argument. This dialogue consists of the dialectical relationship between self or object where "self" or "object" occupies the center and requires the other for its own existence. Whether it is rhetorical or scientific, every text inclines to "the told before", "the known" or "the common thought". "On every way to the subject, in every direction, the text comes across with another 'heterogeneous' subject and it cannot help itself have a vivid and intense interaction" (Bakhtin 1975: 102). Ensuring this interaction, intertextuality provides polyphony. For Bakhtin, in relation to the

concept of polyphony, verbal communication comes into being by means of the exchanges of the utterances or in other words, in the form of discourses. In this case, discourse is an inter-individual fact and in return whether it is verbal or written, every discourse stems from a social root and is directed to a social milieu.

Bakhtin sees Dostoyevsky's style as the original example of polyphony. For him, the style of Dostoyevsky is unique in "constructing a polyphonic world and destroying the established forms of the fundamentally *monologic* (homophonic) European novel" (Bakhtin 1984: 8). Subverting the concept of an omniscient narrator, the variety in the autonomous voices in the novels of Dostoyevsky contributes to the polyphony. For the same token, in dialogic form in the case of Dostoyevsky novels, the speech of each character reveals its own cultural and social status within the writer's distinctive narrative style. Roland Barthes views intertextuality from a point similar to that of Bakhtin, "every text is intertextual, other texts have their place as a means of different forms which can be rather recognized in each text […] Every text is a new pattern of the former citations" (Barthes, 2000: 35). The distinctive characteristic of Barthes's view is that he does not regard the text as a relationship between the writer and the reader (addressee) but as an intersection area where a work and the other works meet.

Barthes's point of view subverts the common thought such as "the deep meaning and existential status of text are ensured by the writer." Thus, the role of the writer is minimized and the concept of the subject is divided or/ and disconnected. The unity of the subject fades and it becomes a textual element in which different signifier systems intersect. Barthes also defines intertextuality as "cyclical memory" since past texts regularly find places in the new ones and also sees it as "the impossibility of the existence out of the infinite text" for the reason that the interpretation of the text is possible only if the citations are recognized (Barthes, 2000: 36).

Another important figure who influenced the definition of intertextuality is French literary critique Michael Riffaterre. He states that the relationship between the text and the reader defines the function of intertextuality. In other words, literary communication cannot be provided unless the relation between the texts is perceived by the reader. It is Riffaterre who for the first time claims that intertextuality depends on a reading activity.

> Intertextuality is reader's perception of the relations between the former and the latter works. The other works *that is, the latter ones* form the intertextual referent of the primal work. Thus, the perception of those relations is the basic element of the work's literariness. (2000: 61)

Riffaterre reveals the symbols of the intertextual referents in a text as "a text which triggers memorial associations as soon as it is being read". (*ibid. 61*) Missing the existence of intertextuality in a text signifies the misapprehension of the whole structure of the text. Rifaterre also divides the intertextual referents into two as: aesthetic and cognitive ones. In aesthetical level, trying to figure out the well-known forms of the other works, the reader defines the place of the text among a certain tradition or era whereas in cognitive level, he/ she forms the frame of intertextual referents by putting them in a non-textual (outer) reality or conversely a textual one.
When the views of Barthes and Riffaterre are concerned, in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon restates the prominence of the reader's perception of the text in terms of historical conditions.

> As later defined by Barthes (1977, 160) and Riffaterre (1984, 142-3), intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text, one that situates the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself. (1988: 126)

Another significant fact is that Riffaterre's argument points out that intertextuality can be traced through grammatical differences such as the change in stylistic, syntactic or lexical linguistic systems in the text. Since it cannot be missed, a change in the grammatical form forces the reader to see the intertextual relations.

Provoking the reader, those grammatical differences lead the reader to a search which will result in the achievement of the intertextual referent. If a reader is not aware of the linguistic or pragmatic rules, he/ she would read the text and understand it. However, these two reading conditions, searching for the intertexual or the basic meaning of the text, is underlined to be different by Riffaterre. In the former condition the reader attributes significance to the text whereas in the latter he/ she comprehends the subject of the text regardless of its implications. Thus, the meaning of the text is shaped in the form of the reader's background information. "A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance" *(ibid. 126)*.

> Intertextuality posits both an uncentered historical enclosure and an abysmal decentered foundation for language and textuality; in so doing, it exposes all contextualizations as limited and limiting, arbitrary and confining, self-serving and authoritarian, theological and political. However paradoxically formulated, intertextuality offers a liberating determinism. (Leitch 1983: 162)

On the other hand, French literary theorist Gérard Genette introduced the term "transtextuality" in his book *Palimpsest: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982). Genette regards every possible textual transfer as transtextuality which is another reference to intertextuality. He proposed five intertextual (or in his terms transtextual) relationships between the texts. These are called intertextuality, hypertextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, and metatextuality. He defines intertextuality as the common relationship between two or more texts that is, the substantial being of a text within another. Quotation and plagiarism are the major examples of intertextuality. Hypertextuality is a wider concept in that it embraces every text which derives from a former text by an absolute or indirect converting activity. In other words, it is a relationship between a main text and sub-text (or the referent text). Narrative techniques such as pastiche, parody or satire enable hypertextuality in a text. Paratextuality is the relationship between the text and its elements which are, at first sight, apart from the main body. Headings, titles,

prefaces, epigraphs, footnotes, illustrations, acknowledgements and dedications allow paratextuality and are called 'paratext(s)'. The fourth intertextual relationship type is called architextuality. For Genette, it is the closest and the most abstract intertextual form since it is a sententious attribution of the main text to a certain genre or genres. The fifth type is called metatextuality and it is the type in which the author's entity is highly recognized due to the fact that he/she comments on the other text(s) whether implicitly or explicitly. In metatextuality a vital relationship is concerned that binds the meta-text to the main text. In a metatextual text, the author mentions the theories or ideas which he/ she puts forward. On the other hand, Foucault disengages the notion of the author in a text and in *The Archeology of Knowledge* he states that texts are obliged to other texts as well as to their creators:

> The frontiers of a book are never clear- cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. (1974: 23)

It is certain that any form of textual alteration raises the consciousness of the reader and leads him/ her to figure out the referred meanings in a text. Linda Hutcheon cites a quote of Umberto Eco, revealing the effect of intertextuality on the reader, from his novel *The Name of the Rose:* "I discovered what writers have always known (and have told us again and again): books speak of other books, and every story tells a story that has already been told" (cited Hutcheon 1988, 128). As it is stated, this effect of intertextuality is not only enabled by simply citing from other texts but also amalgamated into it with the mutual blend of techniques such as citation, reference and allusion as well as parody, burlesque and pastiche.

As one of the most common intertextual technique, the citation is the most recognizable element of intertextuality since it is provided by parenthesis, quotes or italic letters. Roman Jacobson defines citation as "a piece which is cited from an author or a celebrity so as to generally state or support a point of view" (Jacobson, 2000: 94). The author's employment of parenthesis, quotes or italic letters in a text

signifies that a point of view or a certain idea is stated or supported with a tangible proof and it is the main function of citations. Antoine Compagnon puts forward a broad definition for citation in that for him, writing is an act of a pasting, explaining, citing and commenting (Compagnon, 2000: 81-2). Furthermore, writing, for all times, requires re-writing and since it is re-writing, it cannot be separated from the act of citing. Both writing and reading is citing. The basic principle of reading is citing and citing combines the act of both reading and writing. Citations become influential textual elements and create a mosaic in a text if they are employed in a harmony.

Another intertextual technique, reference, guides the reader just like an index item because of the fact that it directly states the name of the writer or a work without extracting any citations. Nevertheless, the function of the reference shows parallelism with that of citation due to the fact that it also expresses the author's effort to justify a view in his/ her text.

Allusion, on the other hand, means referring to something without directly saying but rather implying it. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams defines the term as "a passing reference, without explicit or indirect, to a literary or historical person, place or event, or to another literary work or passage" (2009: 11). In allusion due to the absence of any direct referents, the reader or the addressee is left to make the connections in his/ her terms. It is possible to say that allusion is a kind of divided citation which is expected to be united by the reader.

As another intertextual technique 'parody' is a combination of the prefix 'para' and the word 'ode' both of which are derived from an ancient Greek word 'paradoi' (which is the plural form of 'parados') which means 'singing in imitation'. The word 'parodia' which is a newer version of 'parodoi' means "imitative song". In her book *A Theory of Parody*, Linda Hutcheon draws attention to the etymology of the prefix 'para' since it suggests both meanings of "against" and "beside". Basically, parody means "One text is set against another with the intent of mocking." The paradox in

its meaning "broadens the pragmatic scope of parody" (Hutcheon, 2000:32). Hutcheon also refers to the definition of parody in Oxford English Dictionary:

> A composition in prose or verse in which the characteristic turns of thought and phrase in an author or class of authors are imitated in such a way as to make them appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects; an imitation of work more or less closely modeled on the original, but so turned as to produce a ridiculous effect. (*ibid:*32)

On the other hand, The Merriam Webster Dictionary Online defines parody as "[A] literary composition in which the form and expression of serious writings are closely imitated but adapted to a ridiculous subject or a humorous method of treatment."

According to *Poetics* of Aristotle, the first writer of parody in history was Hegemon of Thasos who was known to write mock epics like *Gigantomachia*. Aristophanes also used parody in his work called *The Frogs* which caricatured the style of Aeschylus and Euripides. One of the best known English parodies was about the medieval romances called *Tale of Sir Thopas* (1383) by Chaucer. However, it was Cervantes who gained great fame with his parodic work *Don Quixote* (1605-1615). In the novel, turning the courtly love tradition upside down, the entire tradition of medieval romances was parodied. *A Pipe of Tobacco* (1736) by Isaac Hawkins was also significant in that it was the first collection of parodies of various authors.

When modern parody is concerned, Victor Shklovsky, who developed the concept of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*) in literature, was a famous figure among the modern theorists and Russian Formalists. When Shklovsky's first essay on Laurence Stern's *Tristram Shandy* was published its first page contained no reference related to parody until its reprinting in a collection of essays called *O Teorii Prozy* ('Of The Theory of Prose'). It was later labeled and published as 'Parodiini Roman'(1925). In *Theory of Prose*, he defines parody as a 'device for alienation' and he claims that *Tristram Shandy* was significant "due to the petrification of the

devices of the old *roman d'adventure*. All its techniques had become totally ineffectual. [And] Parody was the only way to give them a new lease on life" (Shklovsky, 1990: 147).

The ideas of another Russian Formalist Boris Tomashevsky show parallelism with Shklovsky's ideas about parody and reveal that "the functions of parody are many, but its usual function is to ridicule an opposing literary group, destroying its aesthetic system and exposing it" (Rose: 1993, 115). Yuriy Tynianov took parody one step further and claimed that parody is 'dual-planed' or in other words 'double-coded'. He states distinctive characteristics of parody as its "dialectical play with the device" and he adds "If a parody of a tragedy results in comedy, a comedy parodied may turn out to be a tragedy" (Rose: 1993, 121). Linda Hutcheon states that parody is "one mode of coming into terms with the [past] texts" (Hutcheon: 2000: 4), and points out another distinguished characteristic of modern parody. "Satire frequently uses parody as a vehicle for ridiculing the vices of follies of humanity, with an eye to their correction. This very definition orients satire toward a negative evaluation and a corrective intent. Modern parody, on the other hand, rarely has such an evaluative or intentional limitation" (Hutcheon: 2000: 54). Unlike satire, modern parody does not have to be didactic. Especially when postmodern literature is concerned, parody plays an effective role in coming into terms with the historical events of the past. It is certain that placing parody among postmodern forms is correct and Hutcheon indicates that in her statement: "parody is a perfect postmodern form, in some senses, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies" (Hutcheon, 1988: 11). Likewise, in her book *The Politics of Postmodernism* she underlines 'the prevailing interpretation' of postmodernism and the idea that "[the] postmodernist poetry is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics of representations)" (1989: 90). According to her, "postmodern parody does not disregard the context of the past representations it cites, but it uses irony to acknowledge the fact that we are inevitably separated from the past today- by time and by the subsequent history of those representations" (*ibid.* 90). Furthermore, Hutcheon thinks that parody does not

merely stem from humor but "in particular from the degree of engagement of the reader the intertextual "bouncing" between complicity and distance" (2000: 32). For the same token, the parodic reference achieves its goal so long as the reader interprets those references within the background information that the text requires.

On the other hand, the name of the technique burlesque was derived from the Italian word 'burlesco' which means a trick or a joke. The Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary defines burlesque as 'a literary or dramatic imitation mocking its model by going to comic extremes, for fun.' It is often confused with the other forms and it is does not to include serious criticism. It can also be applied in theatrical forms since it encompasses dance, musical shows and simple short sketches. English poet Joseph Addison claims that burlesque has two sub-categories, named as high burlesque and low burlesque. For instance, while parody is accepted as high, travesty is known to be low burlesque. According to Addison, *Don Quixote* of Cervantes is an example of a high burlesque work. When American literature is concerned, Charles B. Harris states that burlesque enables writers to be detached from the conventional form, giving new meanings to their narratives and he reveals the function of the burlesque as follows:

> The reflexive use of burlesque and parody on the other hand, provides contemporary absurdist novelists a method for rejecting literary pretentious to comprehend and order reality or any part of reality. Thus, these writers burlesque not only life but the very vehicle they employ to examine life. This ridicule is by no means toward history […], religion (especially in *Cat's Cradle*, *The Sirens of Titan*, and *Giles Goat-Boy*) and philosophy […], all of which try to impose some direction or order or meaning upon existence. (Harris, 1971: 25)

Similar to the techniques mentioned above, a renovative literary technique, pastiche has an eminent characteristic in that it is a technique of many techniques forming a harmonic whole. The Merriam Webster Dictionary Online describes pastiche as 'a literary, artistic, musical, or architectural work that imitates the style of previous work' or simply 'imitation of the style'. The French word derived from the

Italian version ‘pisticcio’ meaning a pie- like dish containing various ingredients. The use of the various elements in pastiche is to create a new work which encompasses the pieces of the others. In his article *Postmodernism and Consumer Society*, Frederic Jameson labels the term as “nothing but stylistic diversity and heterogeneity” (1985: 114). For Hutcheon, as a literary term, pastiche signifies ‘trivial game playing’ (2000: 38), since it is often mistaken for plagiarism. She also associates pastiche with ‘broken sentences, italics, double negatives and vague adjectives’ (*ibid. 38*). To clarify, states that ‘pastiche operates for correspondence’ and also Genette, claiming the diverse point between parody and pastiche is the former is ‘transformational in its relation to other texts’ while the latter is only ‘imitative’ (*ibid. 38*).

As an art form, pastiche is applied not only in literature but also in painting, architecture and cinema. For instance, in cinema, Quentin Tarantino’s *Kill Bill Trilogy* is a reproduction of the scenes adapted from eighty different movies. Likewise, the science fiction movie series, *Star Wars*, conceived by George Lucas, is regarded to be a pastiche of traditional science fiction shows or recordings of the past. Furthermore, pastiche is often associated with “collage” and “montage”.

The word ‘collage’ derived from the French expression “*coller*” which means “to glue, to stick”. The term is thought to be first used in painting in medieval Europe however it is widely accepted as “[the] turning point in the evolution of Cubism, and therefore a major turning point in the whole evolution of modernist art in this century” (Greenberg, 1961: 70). It is employed in painting as an innovative technique in the works of cubist painters George Braque and Pablo Picasso in the 1910’s. As Webster’s On-Line Dictionary suggests “[it] is a creative work that resembles such a composition in incorporating various materials or elements”. It is also often connoted to “montage” in cinema since they both suggest similar meanings such as ‘pasting or combining several pieces or materials together’. When painting is concerned, these materials can be drawn from newspapers, wallpaper, wood, or even pieces of any inorganic material. In literature, disassociated textual

elements which are combined may have the effect of a collage. The collage technique may also be accepted as a device of defamiliarization since the major effect of literary collage, like in painting, is to create an impression of rupture and heterogeneity. This fact also serves the main difference between 'collage' and 'pastiche', which are classified as sub-techniques of intertextuality. Collage possesses similar characteristics of intertextual narrative, yet it does not have to provide eventual unification, unlike other intertextual techniques. Each textual element phrases from newspaper articles, billboard signs, and even slogans of politic posters constitutes an integrated whole in pastiche, whereas in collage they are randomly picked to enable a heterogenic effect. For postmodern writers, collage is a promising technique since it is free from textual boundaries unlike other intertextual and metafictional techniques which are used to express a certain harmonic effect unlike collage's creation of the incongruous elements.

1.2.2. Metafiction: "An Area to Place Personal Signs"

Another postmodern narrative technique which possesses a defamiliarizing effect is metafiction. It works as a reminder that the text is a fictitious property to interrogate the relation between reality and fiction. In her book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as "a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (1984, 2).

Due to the fact that it reveals the writing process of the author, metafiction may help the reader notice the subjectivity of the individual through the characters in fiction. Waugh claims the idea that "it is impossible to describe an objective world because the observer always changes the observed" as a result, with metafiction, "the study of characters in novels may provide a useful model for understanding the

construction of subjectivity in the world outside novels" (*ibid.3*). For instance, English experimental novelist Bryan Stanley Johnson states his writing strategy in a metafictional tone in his book *Albert Angelo* as follows,

> A page is an area on which I place my signs I consider to communicate most clearly what I have to convey…therefore I employ within the pocket of my publisher and the patience of my printer, typographical techniques beyond the arbitrary and constricting limits of the conventional novel. To dismiss such techniques as gimmicks or to refuse to take them seriously is crassly to miss the point. (1964: 176)

It is certain that for Johnson, the appearance of metafiction in the writing process is inevitable and disregarding this technique will result in the lack of the main case. Furthermore, metafiction not only opens a way up to deconstruct the fundamental structures attributed to the traditional novel but also enables models or characters for figuring out the fact that worldly experiences are an artifice or a construction.

For Waugh, metafiction "converts what it sees as the negative values of outworn literary conventions into the basis of a potential constructive social criticism" (1984: 11). She clarifies out this fact with Saussure's language systems of *langue* and *parole*. That is, "each metafictional novel self-consciously sets its individual parole (any act of utterance) against the langue (the code and conventions) of the novel tradition" (*ibid. 11*). She states the function of metafiction as follows:

> [metafiction] suggests that there may be as much to be learnt from setting the mirror of art up to its own linguistic or representational structures as from directly setting it up to a hypothetical 'human nature' that somehow exists as an essence outside historical systems of articulation. (*ibid*. 12)

American critique Richard Poirier justifies this idea with his statement "through language it is possible to create environments radically different from those

supported by political and social systems" (Poirier, 1985: 16). Although the metafiction technique means the creation of a subjective language system, it never rejects the realistic features of the world for its own sake in contrast, it "lays bare the conventions of realism; it does not ignore or abandon them" (Waugh, 1984: 18). Metafictional novels are the ones that constantly notify the reader about the writing process. Araz defines metafiction as a new practice of fiction which is 'multiple, ambiguous ending with no closure' (1999: 65), and additionally states that in the practice of metafiction:

> [l]inguistic norms were disrupted, syntax, semantics, orthobiography abandoned or subverted. Authorial commentary no longer applied to the causality of the narrative's phases or closure, but was shifted to the episodes of parody and pastiche since here the fictionist committed himself by his selection of material. (*ibid. 65*)

That is, it is possible to say that the commentary of the writer about the material he/ she uses can be viewed as metafictional elements. The implied existence of the author in the fictional work creates an effect of awareness on the reader about the fictitious reality of the work he/ she is reading.

When the relation between realism and metafiction is concerned, Waugh's comment on the relationship between metafiction and realism is crucial, "[metafiction] re-examines the conventions of realism in order to discover a fictional form that is culturally relevant and comprehensible to contemporary readers" (1984: 18). As Waugh puts it, metafiction creates a realistic effect on the reader because of the fact that it functions as a deconstructive device.

> The construction of an illusion through the inperceptibility of the frame and the shattering of illusion through constant exposure of the frame provides the essential deconstructive method of metafiction. (1984: 31)

As a groundbreaking example of metafiction, John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968) is about a boy who 'literally' gets lost in a 'real' funhouse but it is also "about the difficulty of writing a story about 'the real' experience" (Scholes, 1995: 33). On the other hand, Gerald Prince clarifies the fact that metafictional statements can be noticed in a narrative by metafictional signs. The most evident are the ones "which comment on linguistic code units" (Prince, 1995: 61). That is, any kind of definition, describing about a term in quotes may serve as an example of a linguistic code unit. Metanarrative signs may be cultural or linguistic references and can alter the rhythm of the narrative or help the reader define the relationship between the narrator and the narrative.

On the other hand, as a related technique, historiographic metafiction is a term put forward by Hutcheon in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. She suggests that postmodern metafiction should be called as 'historiographic metafiction' for it revisits the past and contextualizes the past events. The term 'historiographic' is not directly related to the factual past events but rather to how history is understood in a general sense when considered as a form discourse. Hutcheon claims:

> Historiographic metafiction is one kind of postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past event. It also suggests a distinction between "events" and "facts" that is one shared by many historians. Since the documents become signs of events, which the historians transmutes into facts, as in historiographic metafiction, the lesson here is that the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge of it is semiotically transmitted. Finally, Historiographic metafiction often points to the fact by using the paratextual conventions of historiography to both inscribe and undermine the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations. (1988: 122-3)

Just like the idea that postmodernism closes the gap between the text and the world, Hutcheon regards that it also "manages to satisfy a desire for "worldly" grounding" (O'Donnell, 1989: 5). The novels that are using historiographic metafiction, aims to employ a parodic sense against the 'history of forgetting' *(ibid. 5)*. Hutcheon exemplifies some major novels of historiographic metafiction as Gabriel García

Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, (1967), Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1978) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981).

On the other hand, Hayden White proposes a close relationship between the history and historiographic metafiction and claims that "historiographic metafiction characteristically questions the distinction between history and fiction, and articulates historiographical issues in narrative form" (White, 1995: 104). For the same token, metafiction can be linked to the factual history itself in that "[it] shows us how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, [and] helps us understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly 'written'" (Waugh 1984: 31). When the opinion of Waugh is considered, metafiction can be accepted as writing history in the fictional form that is molded by the writer. It is certain that it creates a defamiliarization effect on the reader in two ways. It not only defamiliarizes the everyday reality but also "defamiliarizes the fictional conventions that have become both automatized and in authentic" (Waugh 1984, 65). In this case, E. L. Doctorow's definition is realistic since it supports the idea that "history is a kind of fiction in which we live and hope to survive and, the fiction is a form of 'speculative history'" (Doctorow, 1983: 25). There is no doubt that metafiction and its sub technique historiographic metafiction, integrating the reader to an original literary sphere, gives a new interpretation of the past within the scope of the writer's perspective.

Employed also in modern literature, both intertextuality and metafiction have become the indispensible narrative techniques of the postmodern literature since they allow the recycling of the past events and present those events with a self-reflexive interpretation. When the sub-techniques of the intertextuality are concerned, reference, citation, allusion, parody, pastiche and burlesque elaborate the literary style of the postmodern writers of American literature. Besides, they support those writers to defamiliarize the material to their readers and reconsider the subject matter of the narratives. Likewise, metafiction and its sub-technique historiographic

metafiction call upon the existence of a narrator and the course of writing as well as helping the writer put forward a historical criticism in the narrative.

The two following chapters, concerning the two major works of Kurt Vonnegut, illustrate the influence of intertextextuality and metafiction on the narrative as well as on the reader in a motivative way to reflect and interpret the literary work in a more subjective way.

CHAPTER II

2. Intertextuality and Metafiction in *Slaughterhouse- Five*

2.1. Intertextuality in *Slaughterhouse- Five:* A *Clump* of References

Kurt Vonnegut's novel, *Slaughterhouse Five,* is the story of a man who "has become unstuck in time" (SF 16). [1] The protagonist Billy Pilgrim is born in 1922 and brought up in Ilium, New York. He takes his undergraduate degree from Ilium School of Optometry, where he meets his future wife, Valencia Marble, whose father is the owner of the same optometry school. After his charge as an assistant of a chaplain, he enrolls to the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and is chased to become the prisoner of the German lines. Before his capture, Billy sees his life span entirely from beginning to end which signifies the starting point of his time travels. During the boxcar railway transportation of the war prisoners of which Billy is a part, he starts to travel in time. When the crowded war prisoner group arrives at the camp in Dresden, they are forced in to manual labor such as manufacturing malt syrup for pregnant women. The camp is located on the lands and buildings of a former slaughterhouse in which Billy and some other war prisoners take shelter during the bombing of Dresden by the American forces. Although Dresden has not been expected to be the target, Allied aircraft creates a firestorm by dropping bombs followed by saturation bombing, causing the estimated civilian deaths of up to 135,000 in a single night.

After his return from the war, Billy suffers nervous breakdowns and receives psychological treatment. Later on, selling glass frames, he earns a lot of money and grows rich. Valencia and Billy have two children and on the night of their

[1] The initials of the novel's title, "SF", are used to abbreviate the title *Slaughterhouse Five* throughout the study.

daughter's wedding in 1967, Billy is kidnapped by strange aliens from the planet Tralfamadore. They show Billy that time is a relative subject and the perception of time can be altered. At first he chooses to keep his experiences to himself but then he reveals everything on a radio talk- show program right after his miraculous survival from an airplane crash in 1968 and his wife's tragic death of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning after a car crash at the same year. He also claims that his death will come from the gun shot of a man in 1976 after China hydrogen-bombs Chicago.

In *Slaughterhouse Five*, Vonnegut experiments with the use of postmodern literary techniques, intertextuality and metafiction, as well as their sub-techniques, citation, allusion, reference, parody and historiographic metafiction. These tools have the power to force the reader to reconsider his/ her own understanding of culture. When Vonnegut's use of intertextuality and its techniques are concerned, it is certain that *Slaughterhouse Five* is nourished with the factual quotations and references which are obvious and easy to detect when compared to *Cat's Cradle*. In *Slaughterhouse Five*, he parodically presents the corruption of humanity and its unending hope to survive against unavoidable forces. Todd F. Davis affirms in his book *Kurt Vonnegut's Crusade*:

> While Vonnegut lacks a rhetoric of moral certainty, he does not lack a moral rhetoric. This lack of certainty is result of Vonnegut's disillusionment with the utopian claims of nationalism and science, making it virtually impossible for him to argue for a specific ideology or program of morality. (Davis, 2006: 47)

As Davis suggests Vonnegut does not support any certain ideology but instead he is in favor of humanistic values. The narrator informs the reader that he was wordless about his Dresden experience and that his memory was so empty that the narrator admits remembering a cyclical limerick, rather than the actual experience. This limerick is a symbol of the routine life of an ordinary man attempting to represent his thoughts about the indescribable Dresden experience through words. The narrator refers to a song to express this routine as in the following cyclical limerick:

> My name is Yon Yonson
> I work in Wisconsin,
> I work in a lumbermill there,
> The people I meet when I walk down the street,
> They say, 'What's your name?"
> And I say,
> 'My name is Yon Yonson,
> I work in Wisconsin…' (SF 2)

The limerick or in other words, the song chosen by the narrator implies that the protagonist Billy Pilgrim is "a virtual Everyman" (Klinkovitz 2004, 90), who is not 'strong enough' to be a traditional war hero figure. Just like 'Yon Yonson figure' of the limerick, Billy Pilgrim is too ordinary to be a hero. Furthermore, he shares a similar destiny as that of Yon Yonson, which is being a man, married with children, working as an optometrist, having no specialty in his routine life.

When compared to the traditional war hero figures that are portrayed as brave and chivalrous, Billy is cynic and coward. On the other hand, the significance of the war hero figures is that they remind prototypes in movies acted by "Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men" (SF 11). The false representation of war as 'a wonderful thing', those gilded heroes mislead the public and Vonnegut tries to correct this pointing out 'that common young men even as children are fighting in wars'. With a promise to his war time friend's wife, Mary O'Hare, he gives the second title of his book which is also called as "The Children's Crusade". Children's Crusade is a factual phenomenon which took place in 1231 in North Africa and it stands as the first reference of Vonnegut, taking quotations of Charles Mackay from his book called *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of the Crowds* (1841):

> Mackay told us that the Children's Crusade started in 1231, when two monks got the idea of raising armies of children in Germany and France, and selling them in North Africa as slaves. Thirty thousand children volunteered, thinking they were going to Palestine. They were no doubt idle and deserted children who generally swarm in great cities, nurtured on vice and daring, said Mackay, and ready for anything. (SF 12)

Some historians claim that the Children's Crusade phenomenon of 1231 does not only include children, but also poor people. Whatever it may be, Mary O'Hare thinks that the narrator, her husband Bernard O' Hare and (in the case of *Slaughterhouse Five* Billy Pilgrim) were 'just babies' (SF 11), when they were sent to World War II. It is also beneficial to cite *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* since it defines the factual Children's Crusade as follows:

> The famous of the most popular crusades was that so called "children's crusade" or peregrinato puerorum of 1212, which began in the Ile-de-France. […] The Spanish Church was then gravely threatened by the Moors. The crises seem to have provoked ecclesiastical processions, which yielded to popular processions, which popular processions dominated by pueri et puelle (lads, youthful shepherds and peasant girls) […] The Rhenish movement, including men, women and children began soon afterwards. (2000: 1169)

It is clear that in the Children's Crusade, many people who were poor were forced to be a part of the movement. When American politics is concerned, the case of the Children's Crusade is still adaptable to America's military campaigns which is claimed to be 'in favor of' bringing democracy to third world countries as in the example of Iraq. The young soldiers especially minorities are sent and forced to fight in other countries as in the case of the Iraq War. An anti tank gunner, Roland Weary is an ironic example of an American soldier who carries pamphlets in case he encounters an enemy. Among the name of the pamphlets are 'Why We Fight', 'Know Your Enemy' and a phonetic pamphlet showing "[how] to tell Germans 'Surrender. Your situation is helpless' " (SF 29).

The American international policy is one of the main criticisms of Vonnegut. Throughout the narrative, he parodically reveals the groundbreaking events of American history and references from the factual books of eminent writers. That is why Vonnegut quotes another long passage right after Mackay's. The owner of the quotation is Mary Endell and it is from her book called *Dresden, History, Stage and Gallery*. (1908)

> [*Dresden, History, Stage and Gallery*] attempts to give to an English-reading public a bird's- eye view of how Dresden came to look as it does […] Now, in 1760, Dresden underwent siege by the Prussians. On the fifteenth of July began the cannonade. The Picture Gallery took fire. Many of the paintings had been transported to the Konigstein, but some were seriously injured by splinters of bombshells […] (SF 13)

The links between the Mackay's and Endell's passages are meaningful in that Mackay's quotation illuminates the reader about who were involved in the Children's Crusade while Endell depicts a rebuilding of a city which was ruined in war. With his use of both quotations, Vonnegut flashbacks the future Dresden in the following chapters while showing the fact that the so called warriors are children. At this point, he blends the fact (the case of The Children's Crusade) and the outcome (future Dresden as a ruined city) by giving direct references to supply his argument about the meaninglessness of wars and the vulnerability of humans in war as well as illuminating the factual events that took place in American history. Additionally, Vonnegut knows that the cyclical system of making wars is an inevitable force that humans unfortunately have to surrender to. That is why, he maintains his narrative with the lines which serve a bowing to the inevitable in relation to the feelings of young warriors at war. The lines are taken from Theodore Roethke as follows:

> I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
> I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
> I learn by going where I have to go. (SF 15)

These pathetic lines continue with Louis-Ferdinand Céline's claim that "the truth is death", a statement giving reference to child crusaders who "fought nicely against [death] as long as [they] could…danced with [death], festooned [death], waltzed it around […]" (SF 15). Accepting the things as they are, fighting children sound like that they have learnt not to fear from death.

Louis Ferdinand Céline is a French writer and doctor who participated in World War I until he had a brain damage, lived between the years 1894- 1961. Following his illness, he started to serve poor, ill people in day time while he had sleeping disorders which made him write all night long. He is a milestone figure for Vonnegut's narrative because his famous work *Journey to the End of Night* stands as a modernist version of *Slaughterhouse Five*. In his novel, Céline tells the story of a war prisoner of World War I, just like Billy Pilgrim, signifying the anti-hero archetype. The name of Céline's anti-hero is Ferdinand Bardamu, reminding the reader of the French word 'barda' which means 'pack' in English. Like a pack, both Ferdinand Bardamu and -as his surname symbolizes his pilgrimages- Billy Pilgrim are transferred to their asylums, the only difference between them is the fact former 'fought' in World War I while the latter 'fought' in World War II. Another common layer about the two narratives is that *Slaughterhouse- Five* and *Journey to the End of Night* both possess semi-autobiographical traces such as in the case of Céline, his protagonist returns from war and treats people since he has wounded.

In his autobiographical collage book, first published in 1981, *Palm Sunday*, Kurt Vonnegut explains how *Journey to the End of Night* inspired him (and his admiration of the book) as follows:

> The book penetrated my bones, anyway, if not my mind. And I only now understand what I took from Céline and put into the novel I was writing at the time, which was called *Slaughterhouse-Five*. In that book, I felt I need to say this every time a character died: 'So it goes', This exasperated many critics, and it seemed fancy and tiresome to me, too. But it somehow had to be said. (2006: 269)

Vonnegut defines Céline as a reporter of history and there is no doubt that he wishes to be known in a similar way. However, every historical point is illuminated self-reflexively in *Slaughterhouse Five* and that stems from the style which is adopted from the work of Céline.

> With no especial help from his eccentric typography, in my opinion, Céline gave us in his novels the finest history we have of the total collapse of Western civilization in two world wars, as witnessed by hideously vulnerable common women and men. That history should be read in the order in which it was written, for each volume speaks knowingly to the ones that came before it. (*ibid. 267*)

As well as his criticism against the American policy, Vonnegut admits the fact that 'the fall of Western civilization' is inevitable due to world wars. It is possible to say that this 'fall' will also lead to the collapse of 'the American dream' for many people who are forced to fight wars as in the Vietnam example. The narrator ironically thanks to the government about the issue by saying, "everyday my government gives me a count of corpses created by military science in Vietnam" (SF 154).

On the other hand, as Vonnegut states, the phrase "So it goes" was a reflection of 'the Céline effect'. Vonnegut clarifies this effect as the existence of repeated expressions, and their becoming insistent remarks which lose their signifiers and their emptiness symbolizes the meaninglessness. It is clear when the narrator in *Slaughterhouse- Five* remembers a book scene in which "Céline screams on paper, wanting to stop the bustling of a street crowd" (SF 15) with a vain attempt to "make them freeze…once and for all!...So that they won't disappear anymore!" (SF 15). Adopted to Earthly conditions by Billy Pilgrim, the Tralfamadorian catch phrase "so it goes" is uttered after the death of anything whether it is organic or not. In Tralfamadore, this motto functions as a relief mechanism when a person dies since Tralfamadorians believe that time has a spiral form and "All moments, past, present and future, always have existed, always will exist" (SF 19). It is possible to say that the expression which is "so it goes", appearing one hundred sixteen times in the novel is a reference point of Vonnegut, reminding the vain screams of Céline against death to the reader. The apparent relief caused by the utterances like "so it goes" reaches its peak point at the end of the book with the bird's singing "Poo-tee-weet?"(SF 157), conveying a question with a meaning such as "so what?". As a result, the phrase "so it goes", for its constant repetition, loses its meaning and

becomes an empty sound. It turns into a bunch of signifiers which has eternal and contradictory signified entities such as death, pain, mourning, helplessness, indifference, and relief. Eugene McNamara points out the fact that the phrase "so it goes" is an example of "[a] lexical distortion, meaningless puns and puns, and insistent repetition of empty words, clichés, exaggeration, and deliberately misplaced particulars, and juxtaposed incongruous details" to form an absurd comic exaggeration (1971: 22).

In his book *Beyond the Wasteland: A Study of the American Novel in the Nineteen- Sixties* (1972) Raymond M. Olderman underlines the bird song "Poo-tee-weet?" is a promise of a fresh start after the acceptance of the bitter experiences welcomed by the utterance "so it goes":

> "Poo-tee-weet?" the symbolic bird asks in the last line of *Slaughtehouse-Five*, and the nonsense words become especially moving because we are witnessing more than a black humorist's symbolic affirmation of life, and more than a fabulist's act of love- we are witnessing a moment of balance in Vonnegut's own life, when he finds himself capable of dealing with the intense pain of Dresden experience and ready to go on with the delicate business of living. (1972: 214)

As Olderman states, the meaninglessness of "so it goes" can only serve a meaning after the awakening of the narrator by a bird's song and his sudden urge to move on to life. In this case "so it goes" turns into 'a soft goodbye' after the war.

In order to prove that wars are meaningless issues which only result in with the death of many people as in the example of the Dresden case and so as to confront the reader about the factual statistics showing the scale of the destruction in Dresden, Vonnegut also cites *The Destruction of Dresden* and quotes its writer David Irving, who is a military history writer.

> [The advocates of nuclear disarmament] would do well to read this book and ponder the fate of Dresden, where 135,000 people died as a result of an air attack with conventional weapons. On the night of

> March 9th, 1945, an air attack on Tokyo by American heavy bombers, using incendiary and high explosive bombs, caused the death of 83.793 people. The atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 71,379 people. (SF 137)

While the scene of ruins (as depicted in Irving's quotation) and the war experiences turn into a trauma for the protagonist Billy, he never really has a fear of getting hurt in war. The mystic idea that 'death is not something to be afraid of' but rather something to be perceived as 'a new beginning in another dimension' is repeated throughout the narrative by 'so it goes', showing why another title of the book is called *A Duty Dance with Death*. This title also means that Billy has already learnt that 'nothing can stop wars' and he has the power to say "I know. I'm not complaining […] Everything is all right, and everybody has to do exactly what he does. I learned that at Tralfamadore" (SF 145). On the contrary, he thinks that he is saved by 'divine substances' such as prayers. Despite Billy's attempt to move on with life, the narrator supports the Tralfamadorian thinking and underlines the fact that the destiny of human experience cannot be changed, it has to be accepted as it is. "All moments, past, present and future, always have existed, always will exist" (SF 19). And "[a]mong the things Billy Pilgrim could not change were the past, the present, and the future" (SF 44). However, a religious image comes to stage in an ironic instance in the narrative especially in the form of paratext in other words, any dedications allowing paratextuality such as illustrations. In the case of *Slaughterhouse Five*, the poor prisoner of war Billy thinks that he is saved by a framed prayer (illustrated in a frame) "which expressed his method for keeping going, even though he was unenthusiastic about living" (SF 44).

GOD GRANT ME
THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT
THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
COURAGE
TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN
AND WISDOM ALWAYS
TO TELL THE
DIFFERENCE. (SF 44)

With some alterations in form, this prayer is cited from the famous *Serenity Prayer* also known among Americans as *Alcoholics Anonymous,* originally made up of ten lines and written by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr first published in *The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous* in 1950.

In the last chapter, the very same prayer is also placed in a locket between two breasts and showed in a form of paratext which is similar to the illustration and called as pictograph (that were drawn by Vonnegut himself). The prayer stands between the bare breasts of Montana Wildhack, a famous porn star figure, also kidnapped like Billy, who, ironically, 'has to mate' with her on Tralfamadore. The message that the sacred prayer between her breasts implies that without bias of gender, occupation, social status or religious beliefs, everybody is equal in the universe. Equality among the human race is the core of nearly all Kurt Vonnegut narratives. When primarily Christianity is concerned, Vonnegut resembles Billy to Jesus Christ since Christ is generally depicted as a quiet figure in the parables. The epigraph of the book consists of "the quatrain from the famous Christmas carol" (SF 144). The lines of the Christmas carol are as follows:

> The cattle are lowing.
> The baby awakes.
> But the little lord Jesus
> No crying he makes. (SF 144)

The narrator explains the reason why he has chosen this Christmas carol as an epitaph for the novel as "[Billy] would weep quietly and privately sometimes, but never make loud boo-hooing noise" (SF 144). John Tomedi agrees and states that "Vonnegut sets Billy as a Christ figure since the Baby Christ is generally depicted as crying soundlessly" (2004: 65). A figure like Billy and his Tralfamadorian beliefs (such as the relativity of time and thus, death) may sound unfamiliar to a Christian mind and Vonnegut has become the target of some fundamentalist critics. However, Jerome Klinkovitz points out the fact that condemning Vonnegut for being anti-religious is "missing the point" since "instead of negating sacred documents he is

simply rewriting them to better effect, […] making them work more effectively toward the human goals of beauty, comfort, and enlightenment" (2004: 63).

As it is stated, it is certain that Vonnegut's intertextual techniques vary in that he not only employs direct references but also uses pictographic references in the narrative. In his article *The Concept of Hybridity in Translation Studies* (2007), Taner Karakoç gives examples of pictographs in Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions,* in which the term hybrid genre is densely employed. The hybrid genre, which is closely related to intertextuality, is defined by *Routhledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* as "works of art which transgress genre boundaries by combining characteristic traits and elements of diverse literary and non-literary genres" (Karakoç, 2007:110). Karakoç underlines "the vivid" use of the genre in *Breakfast of Champions* and indicates that "hybrid novels [as in the case of the works of Vonnegut] combine, transform, and subvert the conventions of several narrative sub-genres, go beyond the boundaries of fiction, and integrate various text-types and discourses" (*ibid.110*). Similarly, in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, pictographs function as a defamiliarizing device. For instance, the reader comes across a picture of an epitaph saying in capitals "Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt" (SF 88). Above the script, there is a smiling, chubby angel posed in flight. This is the dream will of Billy Pilgrim, who still finds life worth living and dreams of resting in peace in his grave when he dies. For the part of Vonnegut, it is the end of the words and time of pictures to narrate in the story. In another case, Billy encounters a pink painted wall-script warning "Please leave this latrne as tidy as you found it!" (SF 91) The missing letter 'I' reminds the reader that the person who has written it forgot to keep the latrine tidy first. Sarcastically, the latrine and the environment surrounding it cannot be as dirty as the scene when Billy sees that warning sign. The narrator describes the place as the filthiest place on Earth and says "The place was crammed with Americans who had taken their pants down. The welcome feast had made them as sick as volcanoes" (SF 91).

Intertextuality in *Slaughterhouse- Five* is also related to the additional elements from the other novels of Kurt Vonnegut. For instance, some characters in *Slaughterhouse- Five* are familiar to a Vonnegut reader due to the fact that Vonnegut likes to 'spill his characters' into his narratives. Thus, the same characters commonly maintain their adventures nearly in all his works. One of the most famous examples is, without a doubt, Kilgore Trout. Kilgore Trout signifies various meanings and appears for the first time in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965). In that narrative, the protagonist Eliot Rosewater admires Trout's science fictional works which he later recommends to Billy Pilgrim during their mental treatment in a hospital in *Slaughterhouse- Five*. It is implied that Trout's books were a beneficial step for their recovery. During their stay in a mental hospital, it was not easy for Billy Pilgrim and Eliot Rosewater to recover and "they were trying to re-invent themselves and their universe. Science fiction was a big help" (SF 73). Also, he is known to write novels "[which] dealt with time warps and extrasensory perception and other unexpected things. Trout believed in things like that was greedy to have their existence proved" (SF 127). As a result, there is no doubt that both Eliot Rosewater and Billy Pilgrim have found consolation in Trout's works.

In *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), Trout once more takes the lead on the stage. Leading to the protagonist Dwayne Hoover's nervous breakdown, Trout, for the first time, meets with his creator, Vonnegut. Vonnegut sends him to outer space for the trouble he caused and then sets him free. The novel ends at the point when Trout begs Vonnegut for a second chance. Vonnegut admits that Kilgore Trout is a character always acting as what actually Kurt Vonnegut intends to mean (Allen, 1988: 154). That is probably why many critics define Kilgore Trout as "the alter ego" of Vonnegut. Furthermore, Kilgore Trout has so many admirers, one of whom is Philipp José Farmer, who is also a writer and suggested Vonnegut that whether he can write 'a Kilgore Trout novel' and this is how the intertextual fame of Trout spread to other works apart from Vonnegut novels. Farmer's book *Venus on the Half- Shell* appeared in 1975. *Venus on the Half- Shell* was attributed to Trout, who appears to write the very same narrative within the novel. In the narrative, Trout

struggles to find answers to absurd universal questions often asked by humans. His style does not seem to change through time as the reader learns from title of his books such as *The Gospel From Outer Space* reflect the movies of the 50's in which Americans are under pressure of a possible attack from 'The Red Planet', that is the Soviet Union.

Another intertextual character of *Slaughterhouse- Five* is Howard W. Campbell, who is first introduced to the reader in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*. Howard W. Campbell is depicted as an American Nazi propagandist who serves in the German Ministry of Propaganda and who is "one of the most effective agents of the war who has no life to live, no self left to be, no motive to move" (Tanner, 1971: 187). In *Mother Night,* Campbell is depicted as "a man who served evil too openly and good too secretly" (Vonnegut, 2000: xii). At the end of the novel Campbell commits suicide to set his soul free from his personal dilemmas. Taking a passage from one of his own fictional characters, Vonnegut intertextually criticizes America and Americans to show how America is a country of contradictions through Campbell's monograph in *Slaughterhouse- Five*:

> America is the wealthiest nation on Earth, but its people are mainly poor, and poor Americans are urged to hate themselves. […] They mock themselves and glorify their betters. The meanest eating and drinking establishment, owned by a man who is himself poor, is very likely to have a sign on its wall asking this cruel question: 'If you are so smart, why ain't you rich?' There will also be an American flag no larger than a child's hand- glued to a lollipop stick and flying from the cash register. (SF 93)

As Campbell's quotation underlines, the necessities of American dream such as chasing success and wealth led people to disappointment. In fact, the real meaning of the American dream, which is social equality regardless of the circumstances of birth, is misunderstood and vanished. However, the flag of America and such national symbols can be seen anywhere in any case so as to preserve the American dream and to remind people about the ever presence of their 'wealthy' nation.

Not only human characters like Howard W. Campbell but also aliens from another planet function as an intertextual element for Vonnegut novels. Appearing in *The Sirens of Titan* for the first time and then in *Slaughterhouse Five* for the second, Tralfamadorians are a reflection of the machine-like version of humankind. Leaving an impression on the reader that their parallel universe is a similar one to ours, they interfere with the earthly issues within a civilization that has been built and managed by high-tech machines. In *The Sirens of Titan*, they are depicted as creatures which operate their communications with the other universes via the buildings on Earth. For instance, The Great Wall of China conveys the meaning "Be patient! We haven't forgotten about you!" (Vonnegut, 2004: 190). As Jerome Klinkovitz puts it, Tralfamadore is the place where Billy resolves "the problematic aspects of his earthly existence" (2004: 82). It is possible to say that these creatures which are "green and shaped like plumber's friends" (SF 19) function as a *deus ex machine*, and can even propose a solution to "the death of the novel" with their 'telegraphic novels' (SF 64). Klinkovitz's rhetorical question about the subject is as follows:

> What are the problems with fiction in Billy Pilgrim's earthly world? Probably the same ones that have frustrated Kurt Vonnegut in his attempt to write the book he has wanted to write since coming home from the war. It is the limitation of temporal and spatial causality that makes it so hard to wrestle the matter of Dresden into the conventional format of a novel, one observing the traditional unities of time, space, and action and the consequences that result when insisting a story have a beginning, a middle, and an end. (2004: 83)

Apart from adapting his war experiences in a narrative, the problems which frustrated Vonnegut, are similar to the ones that also concerned the postmodern writers. That is, of course the future of the novel, a case Vonnegut mocks depicting Billy in a radio talk show, in which "the function of the novel might be in modern society" (SF 150) is discussed. The answers from the critics are "to provide touches of color in rooms with all white walls" or "to describe blow-jobs artistically" or "to teach wives of junior executives what to buy next and how to act in a French restaurant" (SF 150). All of the answers surely demonstrate the fact that Vonnegut's

ironic approach is adaptable to the current debate about the postmodern novel and the writer. That is, thanks to the motto "anything goes!", it is hard to talk about a certain function of the novel to the society and the postmodern writer can include anything in his/ her work as well as the postmodern work can convey any meaning whether it is artistic or not.

2.2. Metafiction in *Slaughterhouse- Five:* The Aesthetic Distance Of Vonnegut

Slaughterhouse- Five opens with the confessions of a narrator claiming that "All this happened, more or less." and his assurance that he has "changed all the names" (SF 1). In the very first chapter, he underlines the fact of how much work of labor and time he has spent on the book and he has only written this book with the aim of getting free from the memories of The Second World War, in which he has enrolled.

> I would hate to tell you what this lousy book cost me in money and anxiety in time…I thought it would be easy for me to write about the destruction of Dresden, since all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen. And I thought, too, that it would be a masterpiece or at least make me a lot of money, since the subject was so big. (SF 2)

The experiences of the protagonist are molded into that of the unnamed narrator because the narrator functions as an invisible outsider who follows Billy Pilgrim in his every step. As Thomas F. Marvin indicates "Creating the character of Billy Pilgrim allows Vonnegut to present his experiences indirectly, as if they had happened to someone else […]" (2002: 131). Furthermore, when Kurt Vonnegut's biography is concerned, the book turns to have three layers in which the narrator, the protagonist and Kurt Vonnegut himself are mixed. The real world of Kurt Vonnegut, the fictional world of the narrator and the super fictional world of the protagonist

enable the reader re-consider the subject point of the narrative. It is striking that from the very beginning the narrator tells about himself and his life, all of which are exactly the same experiences of Kurt Vonnegut. There is an ironic subversion of the literary codes such as narrator and the writer cannot be the same person and should not be taken as such, contrary to this realistic view, the creator and the created one merges in the narrative. In her book, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Patricia Waugh defines 'the different worlds' in *Slaughterhouse-Five* as follows:

> The 'real' world (how Vonnegut comes to write a book about the fire-bombing of Dresden) is here set against a fictional world (the bombing seen through the eyes of Billy Pilgrim…) and ultra-fictional world with which Billy communicates, the planet Tralfamadore. The latter, however, is explicitly an art-world. Its artificial form and philosophical beliefs are echoed in the form of the novel we are reading with its overtly spatial structure… (Waugh, 1984: 128)

The narrator even explains the publishing process of the book and that his Dresden book would be a three-book project according to the contact with publisher Seymour Lawrence. The narrator who sounds highly like Vonnegut admits "it is so hard and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again" (SF 14).

An American literary critique Jerome Klinkovitz, dealing especially with the works of Vonnegut, implies that "Man must write his own meaning- in religions, in novels" (1982, 54). Similarly, *Slaughterhouse- Five* is a novel about Kurt Vonnegut's questioning and confusion at his survival of the Second World War. In a self- interview, first published in *Paris Review* (1977) and also published later in his book *Palm Sunday,* he ironically tells about that his reason to be alive after such a massacre can only be to narrate it:

> **Vonnegut:** …Only one person on the entire planet benefited from the raid, which must have cost tens of millions of dollars. The raid didn't shorten the war by half a second, didn't weaken a German

> defense or attack anywhere, didn't free a single person from a death camp. Only one person benefited—not two or five or ten. Just one.
> **Interviewer:** And who was that?
> **Vonnegut:** Me. I got three dollars for each person killed. Imagine that. (Vonnegut, 2006: 84)

As it is clearly indicated in the quotation above, Vonnegut ironically draws attention to the commercial income that he gained from *Slaughterhouse Five*.

Subverting the code of the modern narrative, the narrator of *Slaughterhouse Five* informs the reader how the narrative is going to start and end. Furthermore, Vonnegut's Dresden confrontation after twenty years and his anxiety of writing an anti- war book within the narrative happens to be a masterpiece, unlike Vonnegut's main concern that *Slaughterhouse Five* "is a failure, and had to be, since it was written by a pillar of salt" (SF 16). The narrator promises not to look back again and remember the bitter memories of war with a reference to a character from the Old Testament, Lot's wife who looks back to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and is turned into a pillar of salt.

In chapter three, the metafictional glimpse of the narrator continues and before all the war prisoners are packed in a boxcar, the narrator underlines that both 'his old war buddy Bernard V. O'Hare' and he is there with Billy (SF 49). In chapter five, the narrator confesses his admiration to Billy's idea about having an epitaph saying "Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt." and thinks that "it would make a good epitaph for both of [them]" (SF 89). This is the turning point that the reader learns that just like Billy, the narrator does not regret anything despite all the bitter things in his life. In chapter six, another rapture of the 'I' narrator occurs saying "Somebody behind [Billy] in the boxcar said 'Oz'. That was I. That was me" (SF 108). At this peculiar scene, they are among the war prisoners and witness the transportation made by the German forces. On the other hand, in chapter ten, the narrator (just like Vonnegut), states the fact that "[he] was also there" in the slaughterhouse and "[they] have to wait until the authorities find [them] (SF 154). Without a doubt, all of these

examples strengthen the existence of a narrator, playing with the image of a prisoner of war, resembles both Billy and Vonnegut.

The power of Vonnegut's imagination is sparkling in that the narrator neither describes bloody war scenes, nor curses the forces. He leaves an impression on the reader in that the book is about everything but war and it achieves to be a unique anti-war book. In his book called *Kurt Vonnegut,* Klinkowitz points out the presence of Vonnegut in the narrative as follows:

> Vonnegut's dominant personal presence in chapters 1 and 10 of the novel reminds its readers that *Slaughterhouse- Five* is a book about writing and now is being written. Occasional references to himself in other chapters establish both the presence of his own narrative voice and the means by which he displaces his story into fantasy. (1982: 64)

He also adds that even though *Slaughterhouse Five* may embrace similar experiences both of war prisoners like Billy and Vonnegut, "it is much more, is, indeed, the story of [Vonnegut's] writing this book […]" *(ibid. 64).* Why then would Vonnegut write a novel which is both metafictional and also quite hard to catch up chronologically? The answer lies in Klinkowitz's explanation that "there is no way of reducing *Slaughterhouse Five* to a simple plot" *(ibid. 64).* In order to come into terms with his war experience, Vonnegut "performs multiple roles both as a creator and creature, author and character, taking center stage at the beginning and conclusion and also appearing as a Dresden prisoner of war" (*ibid. 64).* For instance, at one point Billy and Vonnegut share the same birth place whereas at another point it becomes the same shelter to be saved from one of the most horrible massacres in world history. In *Vonnegut in Fact*, Klinkovitz proves how Vonnegut frankly breaks the conventional rules by writing "When I write I simply become what I seemingly must become" in one of the editions of his third novel *Mother Night* (1962) (Klinkovitz, 1998: 41). The success of *Slaughterhouse- Five* for Klinkovitz stems from the fact that the reader's reaction is eliminated by the familiarities. "Familiarity does level out our reactions; so, to write a truly startling and effective anti-war book, Vonnegut knows he needs the arts of the defamiliarization" *(ibid. 65).* Vonnegut surely achieves the

attention of his reader by drawing a picture of war which is parodic, forcing the reader see the meaninglessness of the war from the perspective of the obsessive ex prisoner of war. The obsessiveness takes its root from the narrator's insistent being in the war scenes as well as his claims about sharing the same war experiences as that of Billy.

It is possible to say that the unnamed narrator of *Slaughterhouse Five* also plays an important role in balancing the metanarrativity of the plot when the chronology of the narrative is concerned. That is, the narrator does not take part in the scenes or in other words, he does not claim to be there when Billy has time-travels to planet Tralfamadore. However, just like in the beginning, he marks the end of the book with his existence especially in the last chapter.

> If what Billy Pilgrim learned from the Tralfamadorians is true, that we will all live forever, no matter how dead we may sometimes seem to be I am not overjoyed. Still- if I am going to spend eternity visiting this moment and that, I'm grateful that so many of those moments are nice. (SF 154)

Certainly, the narrator, like Billy (and also Vonnegut when his war experiences are concerned), embraces life as it is and at the same time, the narrative he makes up becomes a tangible proof of war criticism. When Tralfamadorian's concept of writing is concerned, there is also another crucial point about the metafictional form of *Slaughterhouse Five.* That is, on the title page, Vonnegut notifies the reader that he "survived to tell the tale" and the novel "is written in the telegraphic schizophrenic manner of tales of the planet Tralfamadore…" What makes Tralfamadorian narrative telegraphic is their employment of only 'brief clumps of symbols separated by stars' (SF 64) and when Billy asks to learn about them, a Tralfamadorian explanation also opens a new page to understand the schizophrenic manner of the symbols of their novels:

> Each clump of symbol is a brief urgent message- describing a situation, a scene. We Tralfamadorians read them all at once, not one after the other. There isn't any particular relationship between

> all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful, surprising and deep. (SF 64)

This clear explanation sums up the formulation of *Slaughterhouse Five* due to the fact that just like a whole of Tralfamadorian symbols, it gives an impression of unrelated fragments forming a harmonic whole when the reading is completed. Furthermore, it provides an example of a metafictional strategy of Vonnegut, prescribing his technique through the utterances of a creature, brings into a defamialiarization effect on the reader. A narrative which is "full of brief urgent messages", such as "Listen! Billy Pilgrim has been stuck in time!" with a disrupted chronology, enabling to read the narrative "all at once", possesses a "beautiful, surprising meaning" and fulfils the task of calling the reader's attention. The statement of Tralfamadorian also stands as an ironic reference of the postmodern narrative form since he claims that their narrative "has no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What [they] love in [their] books are the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at once" (SF 64). The main tool used to tie up the disrupted narrative chronologically is Billy's short biography given in the beginning of the second chapter, which also sarcastically gives reference to the linear chronology in realistic narratives of the war novels. Thomas F. Marvin states that:

> Vonnegut's writing resembles telegraphic messages because all unnecessary words are left out. Short chapters are divided up into even shorter sections and placed side-by-side without the usual connections to lead readers from one to the next. This technique forces readers to make their own connections and highlights the subjective nature of reading a novel. (2002: 17)

Vonnegut deliberately leads the reader make deductions all of which are concluded in the form of an anti-war book. Playing with the chronology within this form and disrupting it, he surprisingly enables that his criticism maintains throughout the novel. Similarly, Jerome Klinkowitz claims that:

> By making his narrative such a necessarily mixed- up affair Vonnegut is defamiliarizing the material, making it impossible for readers to proceed as if they already know the story. By turning things upside down and inside out within each chapter, and from jumping constantly in time and space from one chapter to the next, he keeps readerly attention fresh and, most importantly, receptive to new and surprising ideas. (2004: 54)

However, by 'defamiliarizing the material' and concealing the bloody war scenes, Vonnegut draws attention to the pointlessness of a massacre which he believes 'there is nothing intelligent to say about' (SF 14). He criticizes that just like Billy Pilgrim, who signifies 'every man', people are forced to fight in wars without having chance to ask what for and the so called war heroes are ingenuinely reflected in the war novels or movies. Thus, he underlines that:

> There are no characters in this book [Slaughterhouse- Five], and almost no dramatic confrontations, because most of the people in it are so sick and so much listless playthings of the enormous forces. One of the main effects of war, after all, is that people are discouraged from being characters. (SF 119)

David Ketterer examines the absurd relation between those discouraged characters and the events taking place and concludes it "if the real world is incredible, in Slaughterhouse Five the science- fictional world of Tralfamadore becomes as absurdly believable as the fire-bombing of Dresden" (1978: 82). The narrative proposes the credibility of the many absurd events by drawing attention to the factual Dresden massacre. The narrator implies that if such a massacre is possible then time travels or the kidnap of Billy by Tralfamadorians can also be viable. Besides, the narrator ironically indicates that if wars can be taken into account as ways of solution than the recommendations of aliens can also be useful.

Another crucial point whether history is literally depicted or in other words, how history and fiction mingle in the novels of Vonnegut was a considerable concern for Hutcheon and Waugh as well as revealed in the following quotations:

> Postmodern novels […] question the possibility, as well as the desirability, of the humanist separation of history and art from ideology. So too have the works of Vonnegut, […] though in different ways, investigate the unavoidable ideological consequences of fictions and their making. They also suggest both the dangers and the comforting temptation of evasion, of seeing fiction as a withdrawal from history. (Hutcheon 2004: 194)

Waugh states that as in the example of his contemporaries, reality can be achieved through fiction in the narratives of Vonnegut:

> Writers such as E.L. Doctorow, Vladimir Nabokov, Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch, Kurt Vonnegut suggest that 'reality' exists beyond 'text' certainly, but may only be reached through 'text', that Fiction is here a means of explaining a reality which is distinct from it. (1984: 88-9)

On the other hand, as it is mentioned in the first chapter, metanarrative signs contribute to the form of the narrative and they repeatedly provide a defamiliarizing effect. It is generally employed through the unexpected definitions in a narrative. In the second chapter, during the narration about an inappropriate photograph carried by Roland Weary, the narrator switches the situation by giving the brief history and definition of the art of photography by claiming:

> The word photography was first used in 1849, and it was in that year, that Louis J. M. Daguerre revealed to the French Academy that an image formed on a silver metal plate covered a thin film of silver iodide could be developed in the presence of mercury vapor. (SF 29)

In another example, similar to the abrupt photography description included in the narrative, the narrator clarifies the meaning of an illness, called echolalia, "a mental disease which makes people immediately repeat things that well people around them say" (SF 140). Furthermore, the most evident metanarrative sign in *Slaughterhouse Five* is placed at the very beginning of chapter two, warning the reader about the 'real' story is about to be told and they should 'LISTEN!'(SF 17) Todd F. Davis reveals that Vonnegut's main aim to apply metafiction in his narratives as an effort to have "an open communication with the reader" (2006: 77):

> Vonnegut makes use of metafictional techniques in order to expose his own struggle with Dresden, and by doing so he establishes an open relationship with the reader that allows for more communication than the traditional modernist paradigm. (*ibid. 77*)

That is, *Slaughterhouse Five* also stands as a means of communication with which Vonnegut pours his heart out to the reader. This communication between Vonnegut and the reader can be accepted one of the main points of the postmodernism in Vonnegut novels, regardless of the traditional boundaries of the modern novel.

On the other hand, the predominant intertextual character of Vonnegut novels, Kilgore Trout, also functions as a metafictional device in *Slaughterhouse Five*. Trout cannot see himself as a writer since "the world had never allowed him to think of himself in this way" (SF 123). Nevertheless, he is known enough to be the honored guest of a couple of rich people in *Slaughterhouse-Five* even though the fact that Vonnegut commonly posits him as his alter ego who is 'an unsuccessful science fiction writer' in his novels. In chapter eight, Trout warns one of the guests at the party in Pilgrims house saying:

> M.W.: Do you think you might put *us* in a book sometime?
> K.T: I put everything that happens to me in books.
> M.W.: I guess I better be careful. (SF 125)

The concern of a book character about taking a part in a book reminds the reader about what he/ she is reading is a book as well. Also, it ironically recommends the reader question whether the humanity is a part of a universe which is all made up and manipulated by outer forces. Similarly, as the narrator mentions in the last chapter, one of Trout's books, *The Big Board* adopts the idea of Tralfamadorians that "there [should not be] much interest in Jesus Christ" (SF 154) since the ideas of an opposite figure Charles Darwin are more tangible. That is, "the corpses are improvements" (SF 154), is a motto which can be a consolation for both the narrator

and Billy (and sounds relieving for Trout and Vonnegut as well). By the narrator's simple reference to Darwin, Vonnegut criticizes the idea about finding relief in religion and proposes that nature itself (as he thinks we are all a part off) can be more fair when men's vulnerability against man-made wars are concerned.

On the other hand, it is certain that the effect of *Slaughterhouse- Five* on the reader would not be as impressive as this if it had been written in a realist tone with the employment of the traditional narrative techniques. The success of the novel is Vonnegut's aesthetic distance as well as his own traces in some chapters. The subject dealing with factual history is another eminent factor in the success of *Slaughterhouse- Five.*

> The subjects used simply do not belong with the otherwise serious subject matter. But by putting himself in, the author at once upsets the logical structure that keeps things so serious (and so unsolvable) and introduces a comic element that yields the relief of a solution. (Klinkovitz, 2004: 83)

Through the subversion of form and technique, Vonnegut defamiliarizes what is fairly well known historical/cultural context in the eyes of his reader and creates a space from which to reconsider the planet they live on. Although he implies that life has no meaning at all, he believes in human values and equality, both of which are the core-texts of all of his narratives. Without a doubt, he achieves to re-write the factual history in a postmodern form, elaborating it with the postmodern techniques and serves it to his reader.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Intertextuality and Metafiction in *Cat's Cradle*

3.1. Intertextuality in *Cat's Cradle*: A Holy Book Made Up Of References

Cat's Cradle, first published in 1963, was accepted in 1971 as the equivalent of or in lieu of the Master's thesis Vonnegut had failed to complete in the late 1940s at the Anthropology Department of University of Chicago.[2] The intertextuality in *Cat's Cradle* is provided in a distinctive way since they are not mere quotations of the factual figures but indirect references to various texts by which the reader draws a parallelism between the past and the present. It is a story about a journalist and at the same time novelist John, (or Jonah as he indicates) who aims to write a book about the day the atomic bomb was first used, however finds himself believing a religion called Bokonononism. The narrative of John consists of the intermingled stories of the Hoenikker family, San Lorenzo Island and its residents. It starts with John's wish to gather information about what American people were doing on the day when the atomic bomb first dropped. During his research, he learns that the father of Hoenikker family was also the father of the atomic bomb. However, due to the father's death, John has to contact Hoenikker's children, Angela, Frank and Newt. He also reaches out to Hoenikker's colleague Dr. Asa Breed and Breed mentions a chemical called *Ice-9* which was also an invention of Felix Hoenikker. Later on, John is assigned to conduct an interview with Julian Castle, a sugar millionaire, who lives on a Caribbean island, San Lorenzo. On his way to the island, he meets with the new American ambassador of the island, Horlick Minton. Horlick Minton hands John a book called *San Lorenzo: The Land, the History, the People* written by the son of Julian Castle. From the book, he learns about Bokonon and Bokononism as well as

[2] The initials of the novel's title, "CC", are used to abbreviate the title *Cat's Cradle* throughout the study.

the traditions and lives of the islanders. Seeing her on a magazine cover, he falls in love with Mona Aamons Monzano, the daughter of Papa, who is the president of the island. And as John later discovers, Papa is a figurehead, a symbol of a facile dictatorship that secretly supports the belief of Bokonon. A Bokononist poem states this fact in *San Lorenzo: The Land, the History, the People*:

> 'Papa' Monzano, he's so very bad,
> But without bad 'Papa' I would be so sad;
> Because without 'Papa's' badness,
> Tell me, if you would,
> How could wicked old Bokonon
> Ever, ever look good? (CC 67)

His children shared Ice-9 in the bottles after Felix Hoenikker's death and due to the future marriage of Mona and Frank Hoenikker, Papa possesses some *Ice-9* as well. Furthermore, the crystal particles of this chemical have a feature of solidifying the liquids and due to the recklessness of his children it brings the end of the world within seconds right after a plane crash on the island. Before the catastrophe, the narrator finds out that this hazardous chemical, *Ice-9*, has been acquired by others and become a weapon in the hands of the other countries too:

> The United States had obtained [*Ice-9*] through Angela's husband, whose plant in Indianapolis was understandably surrounded by electrified fences and homicidal German shepherds. And Soviet Russia had come by it through Newt's little Zinka, that winsome troll of Ukrainian ballet. (CC 153)

In the end, John, as one of the few survivors of the catastrophe, fortunately finds a shelter to hide inside and narrates the chronicle of San Lorenzo and the story of the nihilistic religion Bokonon.

In the narrative, not only the children of Felix Hoenikker, but also other characters are gathered together somehow, which the narrator clarifies as *karass*. The Bokononist term *karass* is the name given to a certain kind of team that people belong to without knowing or noticing the reason of their belonging. *Karass* is accepted as the will of God (or their faith). San Lorenzo, which is depicted as "[a]

healthy, happy, progressive, freedom loving, beautiful nation makes itself extremely attractive to American investors and tourists" (CC 54), is also the island where the people sharing the same *karass* gathered together to witness the catastrophe. The narrator claims that he is among those people.

On the very first page, the readers are notified that "Nothing in this book is true" (CC 1), this is supported by a reference to *The Books of Bokonon*, claiming that living by "the *foma* would make one brave and kind and healthy and happy" (CC 1). On the same page the footnote states that *foma* means "harmless untruths". Also, due to the fact that a different dialect of English is spoken on the island, 'Bokonon' means "the pronunciation given the name of Johnson in the island's English dialect" (CC 71). Lionel Boyd Johnson, "an Episcopalian and British Negro" man (CC 68), made up the religion Bokononism after going through many experiences (generally made up of sea voyages) which forced him to search for the meaning of his being on earth. His "enchantment" starts with his first step on San Lorenzo which is depicted as follows:

> He was enchanted by the mystery of coming ashore naked on an unfamiliar island. He resolved to let the adventure run its full course, resolved to see just how far a man might go, emerging naked from the salty water.
> It was a rebirth for him. (CC 70)

In the quotation above, pictured as a baby coming up from his mother's womb, Johnson or later Bokonon, starts a new adventure in which he will learn how 'good and evil' should be separated and that there is not an ideal model of civilization for humans to live in peace unless they are suppressed or assimilated. He even asks his henchmen, McCabe, "to outlaw [Bokonon] and his religion, in order to give the religious life of people more zest, more tang" (CC 109). As it is indicated, "It was the belief of Bokonon that good societies could be built only by pitting good against evil, and by keeping the tension between the two high at all times" (CC 67). As a result of the shift in this equilibrium, Bokononism is banned and everybody in San Lorenzo begins to be a devout but secret Bokononist including the narrator Jonah, the future

president of the island. Besides, there is a punishment for practicing Bokononism and its adherents are hung on a giant hook in front of the islanders. However, there are few people who are punished in this way and the hook is the symbol of hierarchy and the people's fear of it. Even though the island's last conquerors, McCabe and Johnson tried and "dreamed of making San Lorenzo a Utopia" (CC 82), they have failed in attaining this ideal. They do not think of spreading religious fear initially but turn to it when they feel it will maintain their dictatorship after the discovery that "the first and only time [the division of country's total income] was tried, each share came to between six and seven dollars" (CC 86). Their dream of making the island a Utopia fades; nevertheless, the narrator of *Cat's Cradle* achieves this, with a vivid journal that can be accepted as the journal of the San Lorenzo Utopia.

As mentioned before, contrary to the traditional novel technique, aiming to draw the attention of the reader to the realistic features of the narrative from the very first page, the narrator underlines that the narrative which he is about to tell is nothing but a bunch of lies. That is, Vonnegut's first departure from the traditional novel technique is signaled on the first page of *Cat's Cradle*. This departure especially takes its root from the two main sources: the references and allusions to religion and scientific progress.

In the first chapter entitled as *The Day the World Ended*, the narrator refers to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, one of the most famous books in American literary history by starting the narrative as "Call me Jonah"(CC 7). As Thomas F. Marvin examines the book's religious references thoroughly in his book *Kurt Vonnegut: A Critical Companion*, that is an allusion to the first sentence of *Moby Dick* ordering as "CALL me Ishmael" (Melville, 1994: 21). The significance of this reference stems from the fact that as the only survivor, *Moby Dick*'s Ishmael gives reason to his being by telling the story of monomaniac Captain Ahab and his urge to capture the white whale. Similarly, Jonah tells the story of the Hoenikkers and San Lorenzo Island after the catastrophic events caused by the misuse of the chemical substance, *Ice-9* invented by the Nobel prized scientist Felix Hoenikker. Thomas F. Marvin claims that the emphasis on the color white in *Moby Dick* is similar to that of the

color “blue- white pearl” which surrounds the island after the *Ice-9* drop (2002: 94). Marvin also claims that Mount McCabe is another intertextual element, which is echoing the whale Moby Dick because both Mount McCabe and Moby Dick are colossal, inaccessible entities (*ibid. 95*). No one was able to capture Moby Dick just as no one is able to climb Mount McCabe.

Todd F. Davis claims that the narrator’s name suggests that Kurt Vonnegut gives chance to all kinds of truth perspectives since “Jonah mirrors our own stubborn refusal to admit that the only meaning in the universe is the meaning we create for ourselves” (2006: 62). Likewise, following Melville with a reference to his well-known book as well as including the fore warning about the *fomas* in *Cat’s Cradle,* Vonnegut shows the reader that “there can never be a singular truth, only shifting, changing and developing truths that we discover in searching the self” *(ibid. 62).* The narrator, Jonah, also reminds the reader in a Bokononist tone that “Anyone unable to understand how a useful religion can be founded on lies will not understand this book either” (CC 9). From this point on, the narrative is a parody of the grand narratives of Christianity, which reflect “an essential and totalizing truth” with the purpose of creating the good and the evil human stereotypes (Davis, 2006: 63). By parodying the grand narratives, Vonnegut criticizes the idea of “a totalizing truth” since he believes that people should form their own truths on the basis of a single universal truth, which is humanism.

The clearest reference to religion is that the name Jonah and his three-day imprisonment symbolize the Biblical character Jonah and his three day adventure in the belly of a whale. Jonah manages to survive without freezing by staying in a cave-like place for three days on the Island San Lorenzo and his admittance that even he had been given a different name, it would have been Jonah “not because [he has] been unlucky for others, but because somebody or something has compelled [him] to be certain places at certain times, without fail” (CC 7). He also adds that “conveyances and motives, both conventional and bizarre, have been provided. And, according to plan, at each appointed second, at each appointed place this Jonah was there” (CC 7).

In *the Old Testament*, *The Book of Jonah* tells about the story of Jonah, who refuses the task given by God and does not inform the residents of Nineveh that they should be virtuous and believe God. Following his refusal, Jonah escapes to Tarshish by boat and God creates a devastating storm, ruining Jonah's boat. However, God gives Jonah a second chance and creates a whale in whose belly Jonah appeals to God's power after three days. The fish vomits Jonah out and he notifies the Nineveh residents of the upcoming revenge of God. Jonah's story is reported also in *the New Testament* and his voyage is depicted as in the following lines: "For Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew, 12: 40). Not only in *the Old* and *the New Testament*, but also in the *Qur'an*, Jonah is depicted as the devoted messenger of God. In *Cat's Cradle*, Jonah thinks that he is doomed to go to San Lorenzo, become a Bokononist and be the next president of the island since he is assigned by Frank Hoenikker (the symbol of scientific development).

As Klinkovitz puts it "John [or Jonah] begins his research as a factual reporter but soon digresses into more idiosyncratic ways of getting his material" (1982: 57). The narrator uses many different elements in forming the narrative that consists of brief chapters. Klinkovitz clarifies the significance of the shortness of the book chapters as follows:

> The train of events is deliberately improbable, and even the titles of the 127 minuscule chapters are challenges to coherent meaning ('Vice President in Charge of Volcanoes', 'When Automobiles Had Cut- glass Vases', 'A Medical Opinion on the Effects of a Writer's Strike' and so forth.) John collects his information from the unlikeliest of the sources, and takes delight in the act of collaging it all in: snatches from personal letters, interviews, local histories, memories, gossips, and of course, The Books of Bokonon themselves." (*ibid. 57*)

This "deliberate improbability" is another allusion to the problematic idea of historicizing sermons which appear in the New and Old Testaments of the Christian

Bible as fact. Vonnegut illustrates the sum of the whole, or a collection of brief stories about events that may or may not have occurred to not offer a deeper "divine" meaning but rather undermine the attempts of average people to see the "truth." While the Bible may be unchallenged by the faithful, how we see the world changes with each new theory or scientific discovery made about it. Thus, there is no absolute truth anywhere. Vonnegut's book within a book, *The Books of Bokonon*, just like *Cat's Cradle,* warns the reader and even yells at them still in the first page, "Don't be a fool! Close this book at once! It is nothing but foma!" (CC 166). However, similar to the beginning lines of *Cat's Cradle*, this is certainly a curiosity raising strategy of *The Books of Bokonon* for the reader since Jonah cannot help reading the book which starts with depiction of all the creation:

> In the beginning, God created the earth, and he looked upon it in his cosmic loneliness. And the God said, 'Let Us make living creatures out of mud, so the mud can see what We have done.' And God created every living creature that now moveth, and one was man. Mud as man alone could speak. God leaned close as mud as man sat up, looked around, and spoke. Man blinked. 'What's the purpose of all this?' he asked politely.
> 'Everything must have a purpose? asked God.
> 'Certainly' said man.
> 'Then I leave it to you to think of one for all this,' said God. And he went away. (CC 166)

The creation myth of Bokonon shows parallelism with the creation myth of Christianity. In *The Old Testament*, the first book is called *Genesis*, opening with the words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In Bokononism, the belief that God is the creator of the earth is common however, the belief in the concept of heaven is missing and it consists of a witty conversation between God and the first human. It is ironic that Jonah finds Bokononist creation myth as 'trash' and Bokonon admits the same thing in the following pages of *The Books of Bokonon* saying "Of course it's trash" (CC 166). That is, the meaning of our existence is vague but it may become clear so long as we shape our thoughts in the way we find a place to ourselves and feel like home on earth and believe in achieving our own ideals. In the text the tone used is both serious and a parody; can one really

have a daily discussion with their creator about the nature of human existence? With a similar ironic tone, *The Fourteenth Book of Bokonon* which is entitled as '*What Can a Thoughtful Man Hope for Mankind on Earth, Given the Experience of the Past Million Years?*' consists of only one simple word, "Nothing!" (CC 153) and Bokonon writes "History! Read it and weep!" (CC 157). That is to say, humanity never takes any lessons from anything in history and there is no hope for humankind to be more superior. "According to both Vonnegut and Bokonon, history is little more than a sequence of absurd events. Moral progress is illusory" (Harris, 1971: 64).

> In the force of such all- encompassing absurdity, what is the proper response for man? Vonnegut offers at least three possible answers to this question. Man may practice uncritical love, hoping through kindness and charity to lend some meaning to an otherwise meaningless human condition. Or he can manufacture new illusions to supplant the odd-comforting lies that will shelter him from the icy winds of an absurd universe. Finally, he can simply accept the absurdity of his condition, neither affirming nor denying it and never asking the most meaningless of question, Why? (*ibid.67*)

Vonnegut states through his narrator that the struggle for the betterment of all humans cannot be achieved and thus religion is an effective substitute with an essence hope instead of desire. For a Bokononist, and also for Jonah, what humans have to or should do is to accept things as they are and it is expressed as in the following Bokononist song, or in other words *Calypso*:

> Tiger got to hunt,
> Bird got to fly;
> Man got to sit and wonder, 'Why, why, why?'
> Tiger got to sleep,
> Bird got to land;
> Man got to tell himself he understand. (CC 115)

However, the novel's scientists, Felix Hoenikker and Dr. von Koenigswald do not accept what this *Calypso* implies, Koenigswald believes that he can understand, not

just delude himself into thinking it. Koenigswald, the physician to Papa, confesses to the narrator that unlike the other islanders, he is not a fully Bokononist but rather "[he] agree[s] with one Bokononist idea. [He] agree[s] that all religions, including Bokononism, are nothing but lies" (CC 138). Without doubt he practices this idea and he finds telling lies useful since he thinks that "[he] is a bad scientist. [He] will do anything to make a human being feel better, even if it's unscientific" (CC 138).

From another point, Vonnegut perceives the function of religion as a healing, comforting and sometimes moderating device for the humans. Although her surname ironically alludes the name of the doctor whom sold his soul to Satan in Geothe's *Faust*, the secretary of Hoenikker, Miss Faust still believes in God and that "God is love" (CC 38). The following lines justify the fact that people need to put themselves in ease by associating human values or oppositely fluctuating between daily things and religious entities instead of believing the unchanging facts of religion:

> When it became evident that no governmental or economic reform was going to make the people much less miserable, the religion became the one red instrument for hope. Truth was the enemy of the people, because the truth was so terrible, so Bokonon made it his business to provide the people with better and better lies. (CC 109)

Tony Tanner also underlines the fact that Bokonon has no other chance than making up lies for the islanders to live in harmony. "What the founder Bokonon understood, like many before him is that mankind needs some lies to live by because it cannot stand very much reality" (Tanner, 1971: 191). From Mary Sue Schriber's point of view, harmless lies or as Bokonon entitles, *fomas* "force us to see and simultaneously to laugh at limitations, preventing us from believing that truth can be known, defending us from an inhuman absolutism that the narrator equates with insanity" (2006: 63). However, the narrator always accepts what faith brings to him and reminds himself that everything happens "As it was supposed to happen as Bokonon would say" (CC 56). Throughout the novel, Jonah elaborates his narrative with the

Calypsos, indicated as Bokononist poems or songs, quoted from *The Books of Bokonon* and he manages to create one of the rare copies of the book. As Jonah states, "[*The Books of Bokonon*] aren't printed. They're made by hand. And, of course, there is no such thing as a completed copy, since Bokonon is adding things every day" (CC 115). Sharing the same idea of Bokonon, Vonnegut thinks that humans are building up their everyday lives and their realities on metanarratives, on which they hope to be saved by. In one of his interviews he admits that it is essential to comfort the human soul with the help of lies by stating:

> **Playboy:** Do you think organized religion can make anybody happier?
> **Vonnegut:** Oh, of course. Lots of comforting lies are told in church- not enough, but some. I wish preachers would lie more convincingly about how honest and brotherly we should be. I've never heard a minister say it was wrong to kill. No preacher ever speaks out against cheating in business. There are fifty-two Sundays in a year, and somehow none of these subjects come up. (Allen,1999: 278)

Not only the name Jonah, but also the name John (as his parents call him), as the narrator indicates, is significant in that it serves as an allusion to John, a Biblical figure from *The New Testament*, also known as John the Baptist, narrates about the revelation. This is called '*The Revelation of John*' or '*The Apocalypse of John'*. The major subjects which the Biblical figure John talks about are the resurrection of Christ and the natural disasters which are going to blot out the universe just before the Judgment day. For instance, in *The Book of Revelations*, he prophesies: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev. 11:19). He also narrates the conflict between the good and evil and its reflections on earth. Similarly, the narrator of *Cat's Cradle*, John, narrates the last day of earth which is covered with *Ice-9*, freezing all the living kind. In the case of *The Revelation of John*, John warns people about the end of days. Likewise, *Cat's Cradle*'s John, draws attention to the abuse of scientific progress and its aftermath.

The horrifying conditions, caused by *Ice-9* covering the island all over, are predicted by John as follows; "This I assumed: tornadoes, strewing the poisonous blue-white frost of ice-nine everywhere, tore everybody and everything above the ground to pieces. Anything that still lived would die soon enough to thirst- or hunger- or rage- or apathy" (CC 165). He believes that mankind's situation is hopeless and all the attempts to stop human's destruction of nature will be in vain. "'What hope can there be for mankind', [he] thought, 'when there are such men as Felix Hoenikker to give such playthings as ice-nine to such short sighted children as almost all men and women are?'" (CC 153).

A criticism against the incontrollable development in science is also found in Vonnegut's *Wampeters, Foma and Granfalloons:* "scientific truth was going to make us so happy and comfortable. What actually happened when I was twenty-one was that we dropped scientific truth on Hiroshima. We killed everybody there" (Vonnegut, 1989: 161). The disappointment about the misuse of scientific progress is one of Vonnegut's main concerns in forming his narrative. In his opinion stating the mere facts is not enough to be effective, it has to be simple and also can only be achieved by the power of words. Likewise, his choice of the narrator's name as John is not a coincidence when the first sentence of John's gospel is considered. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John, 1:1). Thus, the narrator also believes in the efficiency of *Calypsos*, the short song-like gospels of Bokonon, all of which has a theme, parodying the gospels of Christianity. However, unlike the Biblical figure John who is also believed to prophesize the coming of Christ, the narrator John of *Cat's Cradle* does not announce a 'rescuer' figure. Repeatedly, the hope for human kind is told to be lost yet, the only way of salvation is produced by making up lies and shaping one's life on the grounds of those lies. Furthermore, science is not always a way out for the betterment unless it is used for the benefit of humanity. In *Cat's Cradle*, the hope for the progress of science is diminished by the figure of Felix Hoenikker who is indifferent to the possible danger of his experiments. Newt Hoenikker, Felix's youngest son, shares with the narrator a personal memory of his father which

illustrates that the elder Hoenikker had no understanding of the moral nature of sin. "After [the first test of the atomic bomb], after it was a sure thing that America could wipe out a city with just one bomb, a scientist turned to Father and said, "Science has now known sin." And do you know what Father said? He said, "What is sin?" (CC 17).

In contrast to *The Day World Ended* as John wishes to name the text in its early drafts, the title *Cat's Cradle* is a reference to the children's game which is played by two children passing a string back and forth by pulling it different shapes over different fingers without letting the tension out of the string. The aim of the game is nothing but "to have fun making something out of nothing" (Marvin, 2002: 91). *Cat's Cradle* refers to the struggle of building up a life in a meaningful way. Thomas F. Marvin clarifies the suggestive meanings of a cat's cradle in relation to the features of the game as in the quotation below:

> Circles are used to symbolize nothing, as in the figure for zero [0], and everything, as in the symbol for infinity, a loop that crosses itself. Circles traditionally symbolize wholeness, because the line has no end, and emptiness, because the area inside is empty. But a loop of the string is not a cat's cradle until human hands shape it, so the cat's cradle becomes a symbol of our ability to shape the world around us and by shaping it, give it meaning. (2002: 90)

It is also significant that Felix Hoenikker tries to play cat's cradle with little Newt and, he remembers finding the game highly confusing for a child and he concludes that playing it only results in puzzlement. He states that "No wonder kids grow up crazy. A cat's cradle is nothing but a bunch of X's between somebody's hands, and little kids look and look and look at all those X's...[…] *No damn cat, and no damn cradle*" (CC 105). This also echoes the quotation of Marvin in that human beings are fingers which work hard to give a shape to a meaningless world nevertheless, they generally cannot achieve to do so. While the narrator believes that "God Almighty had some pretty elaborate plans [for him]" (CC 47), Bokonon tells that "God never

wrote a good play in his life" (CC 150). It is certain that life, with all its components (or strings), is a cat's cradle.

Another point referring to the cat's cradle is that as a postmodern work, this narrative makes something out of interesting ideas about the game as a representation of the futility of life as well as representing a utopic place and a made-up religion with its devoted worshippers. The reader is forced to notice the follies of a "*granfalloon*" which is a Bokononist term for false groups or constitutions. As for Vonnegut, in an ideal society one should shape his/ her own system of thought in respect to one another. As a result, he thinks that *granfalloons* are inefficient gatherings, promising a vain hope for the betterment of society. John compares the idea of *granfalloon* to "a toy balloon", ready to collapse (CC 61) and exemplifies some of the *granfalloons* as "the Communist party, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the General Electric Company, the International Order of Odd Fellows- and any other nation, anytime, anywhere" (CC 61), as well as "U.S.A" (CC 172).

Although falling in love with a woman is not a very common subject in Vonnegut's other books, in *Cat's Cradle* it is used especially as an intertextual element. That is, the narrator's strong love to Mona Aamons Monzana can be viewed as an ironic reference to the romance of the Courtly Love Tradition. The Courtly Love tradition is also entitled as chivalric love tradition since it was the medieval style of expressing love and admiration of a knight to a married lady. Although it was not fully Platonic, in Courtly Love, sexual expectations were out of question and it was a love in which a knight tries hard to be noticed by a lady who is generally the wife of a king. In *Cat's Cradle*, seeing her on the front page of a magazine, John falls in love with Mona at first sight. For him, she is an inaccessible figure, who is 'the beauty symbol' of San Lorenzo. John states that "In *The Books of Bokonon* she is mentioned by the name. One thing Bokonon says of her is this: 'Mona has the simplicity of all'" (CC 90) He also admits that "[his] heart was pounding [and] blood boiled in [his] ears" (CC 128) when he asked her how she is for the first time. When he is asked to be the San Lorenzo's next president instead of Frank Hoenikker, he gets so excited about having Mona as a wife. He vacillates at their first day alone and

Mona suggests to make *book-maru*, a Bokononist ritual, which consists of touching bare feet so that "people who do that really do feel better about each other and the world" (CC 108). *Boko-maru* helps him so much that he even writes a poem celebrating his first book-maru and love for Mona:

> Sweet wraith,
> Invisible mist of…
> I am-
> My soul-
> Wraith lovesick o'erlong,
> O'erlong alone:
> Wouldst another sweet soul meet?
> Long have I
> Advised thee ill
> As to where two souls
> Might tryst.
> My soles, my soles!
> My soul, my soul,
> Go there,
> Sweet soul;
> Be kissed.
> Mmmmmmm. (CC 130)

The absurdity of the poem is a parody of the Courtly Love Tradition and the love songs or poems told by the knights in order to attract the attention of the king's wife. Although Mona accepts being John's wife, John quickly understands that his "heavenly" Mona does not fit with the idea of the traditional wife figure. That is, she admits that she cannot love a single person but love all humans equally. Contrary to the traditional woman figure, she feels alienated by John, in Bokononist terms a *sin-wat*, "who wants all of somebody's love" (CC 131).

While Mona is a mere mortal woman, her endless love of humanity gives her a divine nature. Thomas F. Marvin goes one step further in the interpretation of the Mona figure by saying she symbolizes 'pure art'. He claims that "[Mona] represents the perfection of art: beauty itself, unattainable, eternal serene" (2002: 87). He underlines that the beauty of Mona serves an intertextual reference that John "echoes the final lines of Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn"" (*ibid. 87*). He quotes the last lines which are "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, ye know on earth, and all ye need to know"

(*ibid. 87*). Furthermore, Mona's death, caused by her deliberate touch of her lips to *Ice-9* implies that her frozen beauty will stay forever without a slight change just like the images on the Grecian Urn.

The symbolic bird, asking "poo-tee- weet" the narrator in *Slaughterhouse Five,* reappears in *Cat's Cradle* right after the catastrophe this time singing as "poo-tee-pheet" as an ironic reference. While the narrator was thinking about jumping into "the blood-warm eternity", "[he] was recalled from [this thought] by the cry of a darting bird above [him]. It seemed to be asking [him] what had happened" (CC 162). The bird's song is a symbol of the urge for answers in the face of catastrophe. It can also be interpreted as a symbol of hope since the narrator gives up the idea of suicide.

In *Cat's Cradle,* Vonnegut not only employs the symbolic bird from *Slaughterhouse Five*, but also; he glimpses at the very same ideas that 'the death is a new form of a different beginning.' When John visits the laboratory in order to find out about Felix Hoenikker, he meets an elevator operator whom he depicts as "an insane, small and ancient negro [man], crying as 'Yes yes!' whenever he felt that he'd made a point" (CC 41). He is called Lyman Enders Knowles and he talks like the aliens from Tralfamadore since he claims that Felix Hoenikker is not dead but still living in a parallel universe. The dialogue between John and Knowles is as follows:

> 'You know what I said when [Felix Hoenikker] died?
> 'No'
> 'I said, "Dr. Hoenikker- he ain't dead" '
> 'Oh?'
> 'Just entered a new dimension. Yes, yes!' (CC 42)

Just like the fool figure in many traditional novels, Lyman Enders Knowles is depicted as a clown who is courageous enough to tell the truth about the thing everybody finds ridiculous. He is mentioned only in few lines in which the reader remembers the Tralfamadorian thought about life and death, that is, death is a physical state and the life of a person continues in a parallel universe.

Not only Lyman Enders Knowles but also the new American ambassador of San Lorenzo, Horlick Minton reminds the reader of the intertextual references in *Slaughterhouse Five*. On the memorial day of Hundred Martyrs to Democracy (which is the symbol of the San Lorenzoans killed on their way to attend World War II), Minton makes a speech emphasizing that the people who are killed in wars are children and "what a paradise this world would be if men were kind and wise." (CC 160) He also refers to a poem, from *Spoon River Anthology* which was published in 1915 and written by Edgar Lee Masters. This factual poem collection includes poems in free-form all of which discuss the characters and their patriotic experiences in wars. The titles of the poems are entitled with the names of the person narrating it. The one that Minton quotes is called *Knowlt Hoheimer*, the name of the person who narrates that he had wished to be in jail rather than being at war. Hoheimer appears to tell a poem from his grave on which is written '*Pro Patria*', a phrase he does not know the meaning of. It is significant that in Latin 'pro patria' means 'for one's country' and Hoheimer has no idea that he is dead for the sake of his own country, ironically, reminding the reader of Billy, who prefers to be away from the war fields, looking for a safe shelter. It is ironic that an American ambassador of San Lorenzo quotes a poem conveying an anti-war message and also claiming that children "do die like men thus making possible the manly jubilation of patriotic holidays" (CC 158). The pacifist ambassador Minton is a parodic figure by which Vonnegut criticizes the American authorities that seem to be proud of war victims and nevertheless be in favor of peace without generating it in real life. It is clear that when they are compared to the intertextual references in *Slaughterhouse Five*, the references in *Cat's Cradle* are more indirect and highly depend on the reader's literary background.

3.2. Metafiction in *Cat's Cradle*: A Bokononist Approach To Narration

Representing a parodic frame of religion and science, *Cat's Cradle* also includes metafictional elements, reminding the reader of the book's fictionality as well as revisiting the historical events of America of the 50's with Vonnegut's employing of the metafiction technique. As in the example of *Slaughterhouse Five*, in *Cat's Cradle*, the narrator (John or Jonah as he is introduced in the first sentence) begins the narrative commenting on the idea of writing a book. He states that he sets himself to research about a book dealing with the atomic bomb, especially with the day when the first bomb was dropped. However, unlike many historical journals, reports or articles about its scientific aspect, he underlines the fact that his book would discuss what the American people (especially the remarkable ones) were doing on the day the first bomb fell. Echoing the narrator of *Slaughterhouse Five,* John demands from the reader "Listen!" to the story in the first chapter of the book that is titled *The Day the World Ended*:

> Listen:
> When I was a younger man- two wives ago, 250,000 cigarettes ago, 3,000 quarts of booze ago…
> When I was a much younger man, I began to collect material for a book to be called *The Day the World Ended.*
> The book was to be factual.
> The book was to be an account of what important Americans had done on the day when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima Japan. (CC 7)

He notifies the reader that apart from its "factuality" as mentioned above, it was planned to be "a Christian book because [he] was a Christian then" (CC 7). Nevertheless, he admits that his writing procedure was affected by the Bokononist thought and "[he is] a Bokononist now" (CC 7). He claims that "the book which [he] never finished" (CC 7) was "*kan-kan*" that led him to his *karass* (as it was mentioned to be the organized teams in Bokononist terms). What he meant by the Bokononist term "*kan-kan*" is that the instrument or in other words the reason which makes one person join his/ her 'particular team'. Furthermore, he clarifies his aim: "[he]

intend[s] in [his] book to include as many members of [his] *karass* as possible, and [he] mean[s] to examine all strong hints as to what on Earth we, collectively, have been up to" (CC 9). The collectivity, here, signify various meanings. It may symbolize positive contributions of humans to the issues going on the planet whereas it may mean acting against Nature, humanity or religious beliefs. Thus, the collectivity can be relative and when America is concerned, it becomes a vague subject. Nevertheless, John celebrates the variety of the population and ironically criticizes the American society, comparing it to a great machine:

> Oh, a sleeping drunkard
> Up in Central Park,
> And a lion- hunter
> In the jungle dark,
> And a Chinese dentist,
> And a British queen-
> All fit together
> In the same machine.
> Nice, nice, very nice;
> Nice, nice, very nice;
> Nice, nice, very nice;
> Nice, nice, very nice-
> So many different people
> In the same device. (CC 8)

As a 'conscious' member of this machine (or a device as the lines suggest), he wants to shed light on the first day of the atomic bomb, however he comes up with the book *Cat's Cradle* instead of *The Day the World Ended*. So as to gather some information about the day 6 August, 1945, which is the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, he writes a letter to Newt, the younger son of the father of the atomic bomb. He introduces himself as a member of Cornell who earns his living as a free-lance writer (CC 10). He underlines the fact that the memories of the younger son, Newt are crucial for his book since he finds showing the day from 'a baby's perspective' highly interesting:

> I realize that you were very young when the bomb was dropped, which is all to the good. My book is going to emphasize the *human* rather than the *technical* side of the bomb, so recollections of the day through the eyes of a "Baby", if you'll pardon the expression, would fit in perfectly. (CC 10)

He warns the reader about the fact that he does not want to propagate on Bokononism despite this his narrative turns into a Bookononist manifesto. He states that "[he does] not intend that this book be a tract on behalf on Bokononism" (CC 9), and refers to the fact that his book is about "a religion founded on lies" (CC 9). The narrator's *vin-dit,* which means "a sudden, very personal shove in the direction of Bokononism" (CC 47) can also be felt in the direction of the narrative. That is, John starts to give reason to every event from a Bokononist perspective. This perspective does not provide a certain explanation but rather a relief which stems from the fact that 'everything happens as they are supposed to happen'. It is possible to say that in *Cat's Cradle* the problem of free will is also mocked since it is out of question and conversely everybody is supposed to seal ones' own fate.

Susan Farrell states that when the future of humanity is concerned Vonnegut's approach to science and religion can be perceived as pessimistic; yet, she claims that Vonnegut proposes that humans should give meaning to the meaninglessness of life by themselves.

> As humans, we crave answers to the large questions of existence, even though those answers might never be forthcoming. If discovering the true meaning in life is a fool's errand, an impossibility, we are left with the logical question of what to do about this. If life has no discernable purpose, does that mean that life is meaningless? […] Vonnegut suggests the possibility that we can turn human life into work of art in order to create our own meaning out of the meaninglessness. (2008: 87)

Vonnegut's suggestion that 'humans should build up their own meaning' is significant in that he implies that there is no solution for the disasters which will be the end of the world or in other words, the life on Earth will end one day. However, he knows that all of those disastrous events are created not by God but by humans. In

this case, it is clear that Vonnegut only shows the results of our existence in a defamiliarizing way and gives hints about how one can make it more bearable. In the narrative, he achieves this defamiliarizing effect by creating a new religion and a narrator whose transformation can be viewed throughout the plot. Vonnegut also digs up the ideas or values that we believe and puts many accounts together to create a whole. Tony Tanner states that "the narrator was going to write a book but ended up writing another. In the course of his research he has consulted many letters, documents, books and so on, and the very multiplicity of accounts is another reminder that we live among versions" (1971: 190). This also shows the criticism of Vonnegut that there are versions of truth among which we should manage to create our own. John's reference from a so-called religious text is a parody of our need to believe in 'the truth which is universally accepted'.

Vonnegut is aware of the human folly which is the idea that the truth is unchanging. He apparently presents a narrator who has altered his views in the course of his life. At first, John only seems to deal with gathering information about the day of the atomic bomb, but then as the narrative continues, he admits that "as a Bokononist he [agrees] gaily to go anywhere anyone suggest[s] [since he believes in the Bokononist idea that] peculiar travel suggestions are dancing lessons from God" (CC 44). John is the symbol that takes the act of writing one step further for he gives references from *The Books of Bokonon* which is completed with the end of *Cat's Cradle*. A Bokononist song or in other words, *Calypso* perfectly fits to John's urge to bring a book into existence.

I wanted all things
To seem to make some sense,
So we all could be happy, yes,
Instead of tense.
And I made up lies
So that they all fit nice,
And I made this sad world
A par-a-dise. (CC 82-3)

As the *Calypso* suggests, the narrator reflects his views that the writers are 'the illusionists' to make the world look like a better place. This idea justifies the fact that writers are the ones, creating an alternative reality in which the reader finds out the possible answers to their questions. Yet, the reader achieves these answers by looking through a distinct window opened by the writer.

The first encounter of John and Philip Castle (the writer of the fictitious journal entitled as *San Lorenzo: The Land the History and the People*) is significant in that Philip Castle mistakes John as an aspirin seller and their short dialogue reflects the task of the writer:

> 'Are you an aspirin salesman?'
> 'No.'
> 'Too bad. Father's low on aspirin. How about miracle drugs? Father enjoys pulling off a miracle now and then.
> 'I'm not a drug salesman. I'm a writer.'
> 'What makes you think a writer isn't a drug salesman?'
> 'I'll accept that. Guilty as charged.' (CC 98)

As Philip Castle suggests that the writers can be accepted as drug sellers for he thinks that they (especially Kurt Vonnegut's novels) provide people an escape from both everyday reality and the bitterness of life and in short term, they help to reduce pain by showing parallel universes. The dialogue continues with the second crucial statement of Philip Castle asking "Father needs some kind of book to read to people who are dying or in terrible pain. I don't suppose you've written anything like that" (CC 98). John's reply is significant since he says only two words, "not yet,", a statement can be perceived as a metafictional technique in two ways. (CC 98) First of all, John says "Not yet" because he is still planning to write a book about the atomic bomb and secondly, the narrative we are still reading has not been finished yet. It is certain that the task of the writer and the act as well as the process of writing are questioned through the dialogues of the characters all of whom imply the idea that 'writing functions as a pain killer and it may be harmful since it is illusionary'.

In another dialogue, Philip Castle goes one step further, stating what would happen if writers go on a general strike so as to enable "mankind finally [come] to its senses" (CC 145). The narrator's rhetoric question as a reply and the continuation of the dialogue, clarifying 'the task of the writer', reveals how literature works for the relief of the reader:

> 'Do writers have a right to strike? That would be like the police or fireman walking out.'
> 'Or the college professors.'
> 'Or the college professors', I agreed. I shook my head. 'No, I don't think my conscience would let me support a strike like that. When a man becomes a writer, I think he takes on a sacred obligation to produce beauty and enlightenment and comfort at top speed.'
> 'I just can't help thinking what a real shaking up it would give people if, all of a sudden, there were no books, new plays, new histories, new poems….' (CC 145)

The technique of metafiction comes to surface when John talks about 'his conscience which would not let him quit writing.' Once more, John reminds the reader that he has to keep writing (so as to finish the narrative and fulfill his task which is to convey to the reader what he has seen in San Lorenzo). The act of writing, as he implies, is a work that is indispensible for the narrator to convey his story of survival. As the elder Castle concludes, a person who "is deprived of the consolations of literature dies in putrescence of the heart or atrophy of the nervous system" (CC 145), and he requests that both of the writers (John of *Cat's Cradle* and Philip Castle of *San Lorenzo: The Land, the History, the People*) continue writing. This is also a metafictional reference since both writers are employed within the narrative by Vonnegut and both of them are depicted as they have a single task which is composed of narrating what they have seen in San Lorenzo within a Bokononist framework. As a result, with its narrative style, *Cat's Cradle* symbolizes a piece of writing that mocks the human's consolation of literature about the scientific events which possibly shapes the destiny of living. However, it is also a symbol of hope according to Vonnegut as he personally states in *Wampeters, Fomas and Granfalloons*, that "I agree with Stalin and Hitler and Mussolini that the writer

should serve his society. I differ with dictators as to how writers should serve. Mainly I think they should be—and biologically have to be—agents of change. For the better, we hope" (Vonnegut, 1989: 213). That is, writing opens a new page for hope and sometimes it can be a premonitory signal for the future as in *Cat's Cradle*.

After the catastrophic flood of *Ice-9*, John and a couple of other survivors constitute a little society in which "each people [in the society] has some specialty, something to give the rest. [John] write books that make us laugh, and Frank does science things, and little Newt- he paints pictures for [them] all […]" (CC 173). It is clear that everybody in that small society stands for a notion that moulds the human character. Frank is the embodiment of science, Newt is art and lastly John, the narrator, is religion. For the same token, the personification of religion is a writer, implying that religion itself is the product of writing. In the writing process, *Calypsos* of Bokonon serve a great help for John to complete his narrative. They were also beneficial for Vonnegut to provide metafictionality since *Calypsos* "look as unreligious as what a marimba band would be playing at a Caribbean singles' resort" (Klinkovitz, 2004: 61). It is not surprising that John at first elaborates his writing with *Calypsos* of Bokonon and eventually *Cat's Cradle* happens to be 'a religious text'. Before his encounter with Bokononism, he admits the fact that "when [he] hadn't been writing, [he]'d been pouring over *The Books of Bokonon*" (CC 176) but then the references from *The Books of Bokonon* covered the whole narrative. So much so that, the last lines of last chapter entitled as *The End* are also the last sentences of *The Books of Bokonon*:

> If I were a younger man, I would write a history of human stupidity; and I would climb to the top of Mount McCabe and lie down on my back with my history for a pillow; and I would take from the ground some of the blue-white poison that makes statues of men; and I would make a statue of myself, lying on my back, grinning horribly, and thumbing my nose at You Know Who. (CC 179)

Ironically, just as written in the last sentence and as in the wish of Bokonon, a young man John writes "the history of human stupidity" in *Cat's Cradle* which thumbs its nose at the ones who lack for giving their own meaning to their existence besides expecting a salvation from religion or science.

Claimed to be written in six months time by John, the shortness of the chapters are the footprints of the well-known Vonnegut style. Todd. F. Davis states that the short chapters illustrate the fabrication of the book and the title of the last chapter as 'The End' is the peak point of Vonnegut's humorous tone.

> Cat's Cradle, […], begins to reveal Vonnegut's interest in playing with the conventions of the novel, as exhibited by his move away from conventional chapters. Cat's Cradle offers 127 such breaks, demanding that the reader see the novel's own constructedness by emphasizing the artificiality of chapter headings. Vonnegut goes so far as to conclude the novel with a chapter entitled, "The End". (Davis, 2001: 154)

Another reason why Vonnegut keeps his books short is that "he wants to be read by men in power and he knows politicians have neither the time nor the inclination to read thick books" (Allen, 1999: 5). Vonnegut employs short chapters not only to enable a metafictional effect; but also to show human folly through his characters and their attitudes towards science and religion. The narrator, John, is the guise of many symbols such as the writer, the creator of a new religion and as the elder Castle suggests "the drug seller in whom the reader takes the solace". In addition to his metafictional attributes, his narrative subverts the reality from which the reader reconsiders the most unquestionable subject, in other words religion, and finds out that the truth is not an absolute fact, one has to give meaning to the meaninglessness of his/ her existence. On the other hand, the reader is pushed to notice that the most destructive weapon may be science itself unless people stop misusing science with the aim of killing each other and making wars.

Whether it is John in *Cat's Cradle* or an unnamed one in *Slaughterhouse Five*, the existence of Vonnegut through the ideas of his narrators is deeply felt in the narratives. His ideas about religion, science and wars are served in a subverted fashion in the words of his narrators. Kevin A. Boon resembles Vonnegut's metafictional existence in nearly all of his works to that of Mark Twain who was also one of the favorite writers of Vonnegut:

> Vonnegut is a postmodern Mark Twain, whose own personality permeates everything he writes. Whether we are reading about Martian invasions, the firebombing of Dresden, time-tripping, or the de-evolution of the human race, we never lose touch with the character behind the characters –the re-assuring, avuncular voice of the author. (2001: x)

This "avuncular voice" criticizes the society in which he lives in and it is also wise enough to comprehend that an expectation for a possible change in this society is in vain. Likewise, John narrates his story in a daily and friendly tone, giving a single advice that 'harmless lies are good for living'. He shows the reader the human folly in misusing science and misinterpreting or distorting religion through the story of *Ice-9* within verses from *The Books of Bokonon* making his argument as simple to follow or understand as possible.

The key word empowering metafiction in *Cat's Cradle* and probably in all Vonnegut novels is the simplicity of the language. This simplicity generally represents a narrator who is closer to real life and can subvert the traditional storytelling style which is superfluous. As a result, it is not surprising that Vonnegut clarifies his main strategy of writing as 'writing about real life'. He states that "Once [he] understood what was making America such a dangerous, unhappy nation of people who had nothing to do with real life, [he] resolved to shun storytelling. [He] would write about life" (Allen, 1999: 135). His statement sheds a light on the task of 'his narrators' who are mentioning about life in simple terms in a realistic tone and "by putting himself in, [Vonnegut] at once upsets the logical structure that keeps

things so serious" (Klinkovitz, 2004: 83). This is how he manages to create a narrative that is humorous, awareness raising and metafictional as *Cat's Cradle.*

Possessing various intertextual and metafictional references *Cat's Cradle* has various indirect references not only to American literary history but also to universally well-known texts such as the Holy Bible. Vonnegut discusses the human folly of unchanging religious beliefs and the rapid development of science. He does not directly challenge the corrupt in the society but rather he prefers to show that there is no hope for the betterment of humanity. He supports this argument by drawing a parallelism between the texts of the past and present without missing the point that his existence in the narrative provides a freedom of expression which is a common device for the postmodern writers to celebrate their unique communication with the readers.

CONCLUSION

The term postmodernism encapsulates controversy and complexity within itself. However it has become the most powerful critical movement of the past half-century in all art forms including painting, architecture and literature. Where literature is concerned, it has not only provided the reader with a new reading experience but also diverse perspectives on the reinterpretation of past events which shaped world history. In this thesis, Kurt Vonnegut's use of intertextuality and metafiction has been thoroughly examined and its importance illustrated in the light of literary critics and theorists of the postmodern school of thought. While some critics accept postmodernism as a proceeding chronological movement coming after modernism as well as a totalizing revolution in all art forms, some critics position it merely as a revolt against the values and forms of modernism. It has in some cases been labeled a form of low art and thought to diminish the value of artistic work. However, it is also considered as an escape from the old forms and has given birth to a reinterpretation of modernist literary techniques.

In postmodern literature, intertextuality has been transformed into a means of recalling images of the past. Thus, in simplistic terms, intertextuality means 're-writing'. The works of theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Michael Riffaterre, and Gérard Genette have extended the scope and historical development of the term. Its sub-techniques, citation, reference, allusion, parody, burlesque and pastiche have been defined in studies by Roman Jacobson, Victor Shklovsky, Yuriy Tynianov and Linda Hutcheon. Postmodernism has enabled writers to produce works which are enriched by use of reference to intertextuality. These theories provide a new way for the reader to evaluate how the culture and society in which he/ she lives has been shaped by such fragments and artifice. Metafiction has also gained new meaning in the self-reflexive fiction of postmodern writers. Patricia Waugh and Mark Curie are two major critics to study metafiction in this way. Linda Hutcheon is a crucial figure to this discourse because she has introduced the term historiographic metafiction and exposed the historical and autobiographical aspects of text. The existence of the author in a text signals the

artificiality of work and reveals the constructed values or beliefs in the outside world. The reader is invited to a fictitious entity and as a result, he/ she is inevitably captured by the narrative's defamiliarizing effect that leads to a reconsideration of the whimsical entities such as culture, society and language. Furthermore, by the historiographic metafiction technique, the reader is expected to interrogate the objectivity of the authority which constructs the past.

Slaughterhouse Five and *Cat's Cradle*, both of which deal with milestone events in world history, namely World War II and the atomic bomb instead of using traditional narrative styles, utilize intertextuality and metafiction that are indispensible tools for postmodern writers of this period. However, what makes Vonnegut's style unique among postmodern writers is his amalgamation of historical events within a parodic overview within the borders of the said narrative techniques. Although these techniques (and their sub-techniques) also appeared in modern literary works, they have become part of the discourse of postmodern literature. Intertextuality provides the potential to revisit the past while metafiction underlines the writing process and the existence of a writer. Vonnegut's use of these two techniques creates a sense of defamiliarization for the reader and forces him/ her to reconsider these historical events within a subverted framework. Vonnegut shows human folly, decentering the power of the creation myth while at the same time he is also aware that the corruption of society cannot be restrained outside of his fictitious spaces and is merely laughing at the inevitable.

In *Slaughterhouse Five*, intertextuality is shown through direct reference to other writers or allusion to their work, all of which support Vonnegut's argument that he is composing an anti-war narrative. Intertextuality in the modern sense is sometimes parodied by Vonnegut's employment of phrases uttered by the characters from his other books results in that the texts begin to merge into one larger narrative rather than separate texts. History is turned into a fictitious device by revisiting references to other texts. While the chronology in *Slaughterhouse Five* is disruptive, it still results in a harmonious narrative as a whole. Unlike the modern convention of a narrative, Vonnegut plays with the idea of an omniscient narrator and the voice of

the narrator in *Slaughterhouse Five* is heard throughout the text even to the point where he comments on the writing process of the plot. As a sub-technique of metafiction, he elaborates his fiction with the autobiographical facts which also support historiographic metafiction. Apart from the idea of war, American politics is also the target of Vonnegut's criticism and is shown from the perspective of a prisoner of war (In fact Billy Pilgrim, the narrator, and Kurt Vonnegut are sharing the same destiny of being war prisoners). An anti-war narrative flourishes, freed from the bloody war scenes of other such books, as a result of the transformed depiction of pathetic events within intertextual and metafictional framework.

In the very beginning of *Cat's Cradle*, Vonnegut parodies the technique of the realist novel, which claims to be written from a position of truth. Intertextual references are indirect and generally serve to mock the unchanging religious values of American society as well as that of the islanders. By means of the songs of Bokonon, several allusions to the Biblical gospels and figures allow for a parodic effect. Furthermore, Vonnegut criticizes the American way of thinking by constructing a narrator who falls upon a new religion and begins to take up its belief system while discarding his own. He creates an apocalyptic vision of the future and points out that the misuse of technology and rapid scientific development may lead humanity to the very same end. When metafiction is concerned Vonnegut introduces a narrator, explaining the writing process of the book on the first atomic bomb, yet ends up writing *Cat's Cradle*. Just like in *Slaughterhouse Five*, historiographic metafiction is central to allowing the narrator to discuss his research into the atomic bomb and the scientist who invented it. In *Cat's Cradle*, by using intertextuality Vonnegut alters the notions of religious and scientific truth in the postmodern sense and this makes the reader reconsider his/ her tendency to believe in a single, unquestionable truth. Metafiction becomes Vonnegut's major device to allow play in the idea of constructing a narrative. Once more the reader is reminded about the artificiality of the everyday realities.

Postmodernism is associated in all arts with terms such as confusion, variety, playfulness, nonrealistic forms and pluralism. Furthermore, in literature, it expresses

itself in self-reflexivity and the subversion of past narratives. Taking its cue from postmodern narrative forms, *Slaughterhouse Five* is Vonnegut's achievement in re-writing factual history through the postmodern narrative techniques of intertextuality and metafiction. Likewise, *Cat's Cradle*, which is written in a postmodern form and draws parallelism between contemporary and past texts, is a vivid illustration of Vonnegut's criticism related to science and religion.

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