Backyards of His-story: Reconfiguration of the Past

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Abstract

Have you ever considered that history might be nothing more than a fictional construct? The way we perceive and represent history is shaped not only by individual viewpoints but also by cultural backgrounds. A single historical event will never be recounted in the same way by two witnesses. In the end, our understanding of the world is limited to narratives. As Linda Hutcheon posits, "the present, the past, is always already irremediably textualized for us." This realization brings us to the concept of historiographic metafiction, a postmodern approach that Hutcheon describes as an ironic acknowledgment that history is not an objective record of indisputable truths. Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five serves as a powerful example of historiographic metafiction, utilizing an unreliable narrator and a nonlinear narrative to challenge traditional historical accounts. Through its parodic references to historical events and its ironic allusions to the major milestones of human history, Vonnegut's work creates a grotesque effect, forcing the reader to confront the fluidity of truth. Aware that no singular explanation can encapsulate human existence or history, Vonnegut suggests that both must be constantly rewritten and reconsidered. This paper seeks to explore the defining features of historiographic metafiction in Slaughterhouse-Five, drawing on Linda Hutcheon's theories to examine how postmodernism reshapes our understanding of the past while also considering how the fragmented nonlinear experience of the digital age is reflected in Vonnegut's portrayal of time and reality.

Keywords: Historiographic metafiction, Postmodernism, Deconstruction, Fiction, Technology

1. Introduction

The relationship between literature and history has been an important tool in postmodern studies, especially in historiographic metafiction. Many postmodernist writers began to deconstruct what was conveyed in historical narratives because most historical events were told to us through language. However, since the concept of language is not natural, the historical narratives presented to us have often been influenced by cultural concepts and have become open to interpretation, making them subjective. According to Jacques Derrida, "Language is chaotic and meaning is never fixed, in a way that allows us to effectively determine it that is, meaning is unstable, undecided, provisional and ever differed. (Mendie, 2020) Within that context, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) illustrates not only how authors question historical metanarratives, revealing hidden prejudices and assumptions,

but also how they interrogate the very structure of language, exposing its role in shaping and constraining our understanding of history and reality. As Linda Hutcheon asserts "Both history and fiction are discourses that constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past. In other words, the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past 'events' into present historical facts" (1988, p. 89). Hence, history has become shaped by subjective narratives, blurring the line between fact and fiction. In today's digital age, where information is constantly reshaped, shared, and consumed in real-time, the boundaries between truth and fiction have become even more fluid. This contemporary reality is reflected in literature, where authors like Kurt Vonnegut challenge traditional narratives and depict time in ways that mirror the fragmented, non-linear experience of modern life. *Slaughterhouse-Five*, for example, portrays a protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, who is 'unstuck in time,' (Vonnegut, 1969) experiencing events from his past, present, and future as simultaneous and interconnected. Vonnegut's approach not only critiques the conventional ways history is written and understood but also mirrors the disorienting, fragmented nature of time in today's technological age, where the distinction between historical facts and subjective experience is increasingly blurred. Previous studies have also combined history and fiction in historiographic metafiction, but the purpose of this study is to look at the thematic and structural similarities between Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and the present era. The non-linear structure of time perception in the workplace, the fragmentation of historical narratives, and the fragility of the individual's experience of reality all intersect with the flow of information and the world of perception in today's technological age.

2.   Purpose of the Study

This study, conducted within the framework of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction theory (1988), seeks to illustrate how Vonnegut's storytelling tactics and sense of time link with today's digitalized, multi-layered, and ever-changing understanding of reality.

This paper has two essential questions or situations to analyze in the current study to consider

- RQ1: To consider historical narratives in a post-truth era, which is mostly open to fictional material, and analyze how historiographic metafiction reflects the spirit of today
- RQ2: To consider work by Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five,* concept of time and his cyclical approach equivalent to today's human perception of time in the technological age

3.   Methodology

This study will evaluate postmodern literary work with the concept of today's reality within the concept of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. This study will examine Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) using textual and intertextual analysis within a qualitative research framework, to assess the ongoing relevance of historiographic metafiction in today's world and to explore the challenges of meaning-making in the digital age. The textual analysis will concentrate on Vonnegut's narrative strategies, including metafictional self-awareness, non-linear temporal structure, and the employment of unreliable narrators. These techniques will be examined not only as a critique of the notion of objective historical representation but also as a literary embodiment of the digital age's fragmented temporality, disrupted memory systems, and an experience of reality shaped by the overwhelming flow of information. Intertextuality analysis will reveal the novel's references to historical events and how they are reflected. These references will be evaluated within a broader discursive context of representation. The analysis of this study will be structured around three central themes:

first, the self-reflexive nature of the text and its critique of the reliability of historical narratives; second, the construction of non-linear time and its parallel with the fragmented perception of time in the digital age; and third, the formation of historical memory and the role of digital platforms in shaping and circulating narratives of the past. Organizing findings around the three core themes of the study to assess the continued relevance of historiographic metafiction. In addition to a textual and intertextual analysis of Slaughterhouse-Five, this study will also consider how digital technologies and media consumption shape understandings of time and history. This serves the broader aim of the study to relate Vonnegut's understanding of history and time to contemporary issues, such as psychological time distortion, digital storytelling and the reconstruction of historical truth on digital platforms. By examining the novel's interplay between history and fiction, this study seeks to determine the continuous relevance of historiographic metafiction in the post-truth era, underlining how Vonnegut's treatment of history and time reflects the challenges of meaning-making in the digital age.

4.   The Use of Historiographic Metafiction and Deconstruction in the Post-Truth Era

According to Oxford English dictionary the post truth can be defined as "Relating to circumstances in which people respond more to feelings and beliefs than to facts" (2017) Thus, when considered in terms of language, it is clearly seen that truth is devalued and deconstructed. In this digital age, we are not in an era where visible truth is purposefully eliminated, but rather in an era in which truth is unimportant and neglected. As Read and Uçan (2019) observe "To say of a news that it is false can, according to circumstances, amount either to legitimately challenging its truth or illegitimately casting doubt upon the reliability of an information and its source. And when, for example evidence or reliable credentials are lacking, it can be appropriate to acknowledge that we are unable to determine whether some news is false." Within that context, the fragility of truth has been reflected in literature in such a cultural setting, and historiographic metafiction—as Linda Hutcheon defines it—emerges as a genre that is appropriate for our times. This genre contributes to redefining historical narratives by blending fiction with historical events. This new perception of history can be summed up by Hutcheon's quote:

The new history we are beginning to see these days has little in common with the old-and for an interesting historical reason: its practitioners were nurtured in the theoretical climate of the 1970s, a time during which the individual literary work came to lose its organic unity; when literature as an organized body of knowledge abandoned the boundaries that had hitherto enclosed it, to an extent even abandoned its claim to knowledge; and when history began to seem discontinuous, sometimes in fact no more than just another fiction. It is no wonder that the scholarship we now pursue cannot take form or speak the language of the older literary history (Hutcheon, 1988 p.91)

With the digital age, historical discourses shape not only the past but also today's political discourses and the social memory structure. Especially historical events such as wars and political disagreements are reconstructed from different perspectives in digital environments and turn into a fictional structure. For example, social media, artificial intelligence, blogs, etc. provide how to shape past events. and this situation obscures historical reality and the perception of reality. The situation in which we find ourselves today is that,

 ". . . the pervasiveness of media, in the form of mobile phones, tablets with their applications and social networking sites, singularly or in unison create and sustain the existence of the hyperreal. They succeed at once through an imagined call for urgency and an implosion of

meaning that cannot be contained. This type of media is a priori a form of simulation and has not only erased the boundaries between the real and the unreal but has also developed as a site accountable for continual deference of the being-in-the-world, forcing on the latter a perpetual existence in the hyperreal." (Nashef, 2016)

Linda Hutcheon's concept provides a strong infrastructure for in-depth analysis of historical discourses in the digital age by addressing historical events within the framework of uncertainty, multiple interpretations and subjectivity. Historical narrative cannot, according to Engler, be constituted from a priori constructive imagination. Likewise, historical events do not have intrinsic meanings; if they appear tragic it is 'only because they are employed in a manner which we as readers might perceive as being tragic (1994) In the post-truth era, historical reality is not fixed or objective data. On the contrary, historical events gain meaning through how they are constructed and narrated. As Engler(1994) points out, the fact that events do not have a meaning in themselves is in line with the postmodern idea that historical events are individual, that is, open to interpretation. In today's world, especially in the postmodern era, this kind of understanding becomes more apparent. Truth and knowledge are reshaped by the masses in political, social and ideological ways, and this directly affects how historical events are perceived. For instance, whether a war is perceived as heroic or tragic depends on the perspective of the historians or writers who narrate that war and how that narrative is imposed. This idea becomes even more complicated in the digital age, because historical narratives are constantly being reconstructed and disseminated through media, social media and the internet and sometimes even fiction is added.

According to the research, "Social media has an important role in forming public opinion in the post truth era, because the information and news consumed by society today does not necessarily correspond to the facts. Based on the results of the analysis of 35 articles from 2017 to 2020, it was revealed that there were 44 authors using journal type articles with related topics. The most widely used research method in this topic is qualitative. The keywords used by the author in analyzing this theme are "new media", "fake news", and "post truth". (Dewi Anggrayni, & Nur Choiro Siregar 2023)Therefore, the most important difference from the past to the present is that the meaning of an event is no longer only reproduced by historians, but also by the masses on digital platforms. In this context, Engler's view that "events do not have a meaning in themselves offers a parallel critique to how historical events are manipulated in today's digital world and how they are presented in different ways by different ideological groups." In today's world, the concept of post-truth questions the accuracy and narrative of historical events, creating an environment where each individual or group adds their own interpretation to events and produces meaning in this way. Kern(1978) also argues that; "the "world" in which the text situates itself is the "world" of discourse, the "world" of texts and intertexts. This "world" has direct links to the world of empirical reality, but it is not that empirical reality itself. It is contemporary critical truism that realism is really a set of conventions, that the representation of the real is not the same as the real itself. What historiographic metafiction challenges is both any naive realist concept of representation and any equally naive textualist or formalist assertions of the total separation of art from the world."

From today's perspective, metafictional structures (fiction on fiction) are also common in digital media. Digital narratives such as video games, series, interactive stories, and social media offer the user the opportunity to play with this fiction while knowing that it is fictional. Interactive narratives in particular (such as Netflix's Bandersnatch) allow the viewer to manipulate the fiction and recreate the story, which increases fictional awareness. In addition, intertextuality is also quite common on digital platforms. Especially blogs, vlogs, forums and

digital articles create a wide network of texts by referring to each other. The connections established between historical events and fictional narratives show how the digital age also reflects this intertextuality. Hutchon highlight the situotion as a "What we tend to call postmodernism in literature today is usually characterized by intense self-reflexivity and overtly parodic inter textuality." (Hutcheon L. , 1989) And from my observations, in 2025, historical events and figures are constantly being addressed in an ironic and parodic manner through meme culture, parodic videos, and social media jokes in digital media. Memes, especially about historical events, allow for the serious dimensions of social events to be addressed and reinterpreted in an ironic manner. In conclusion, by placing the theory in the quote within the context of today's understanding of history and the post-truth era, we can state that historical narratives are now shaped as fiction and constructed reality rather than truth and objectivity. This brings the role of historiographic metafiction to the forefront once again because historiographic metafiction exposes such manipulations and reveals the multi-layered and dynamic structure of historical narrative. Hutcheon emphasizes the function of such works to reshape history and question the past, but we can observe that this approach has become even sharper in today's post-truth era. Contrary to the claims of truth in the old understanding of history, historical events now appear on a plane shaped and manipulated by the views of the narrators.

5.   Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and the Perception of Time in the Technological Age

Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five (1969) is a parodic post novel that explores the horrific bombing of Dresden in February 13th1945 and consequences of war, memory, and the fluidity of time. Vonnegut himself witnessed these events, and he was captured in Dresden, and he mentioned about these holocausts in his novel as follows: "I have told my sons that they are not under any circumstances to take part in massacres, and that the news of massacres of enemies is not to fill them with satisfaction or glee. I have also told them not to work for companies which make massacre machinery, and to express contempt for people who think we need machinery like that." (Vonnegut, 1969) It seems that, Vonnegut had to find a new way to convey to horror. and his book contains many elements of parody and dark humour. To illustrate; The phrase "*So it goes*" (Vonnegut, 1969) appears repeatedly after every mention of death in the novel. This darkly humorous expression serves to downplay the seriousness of death, parodying the notion that death is always a monumental and tragic event. In the postmodern world, the chaos and meaninglessness that individuals experience is met with the simple and ordinary acceptance of even tragedy, just like in this expression. In the digital age, information and events are consumed so quickly that even the most horrific events become ordinary and quickly forgotten. Because people are overloaded with a lot of information. Just like deaths in the news or tragedies encountered in social media feeds, people consume news of deaths quickly and are busy with the next content. In the postmodern world, the chaos and meaninglessness experienced by individuals are met with a simple and ordinary acceptance of even tragedy, just like in this expression. The expression *"So it goes"* in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) adapts to a world order that raises the question of whether tragedy is real or fictional. In the post-truth era, even news of death and tragedy can be met with skepticism in the media. This skepticism allows the truth to turn into comedy or parody.

Creating the character of Billy pilgrim allows Vonnegut to present his experiences indirectly, as if they happened to someone else. In his book, Vonnegut introduces his alter ego and provides the reader with the opportunity to return to reality. And Hutcheon (2004) says that "In many historical novels, the real figures of the past are deployed to validate or authenticate the

fictional world by their presence, as if to hide the joins between fiction and history in a formal and ontological sleight of hand" (p. 114) "Unlike modernism linear plot sequences, Slaughterhouse-Five sets up the plot in a cyclical pattern." (Abdalhadi Nimer & Arbayaah Termizi, 2015) Thus, Billy Pilgrim's story is reported in a very fragmented manner and the stories not presented in chronological order. With its emphasis on the fragility and uncertainty of historical events, it can be examined in parallel with today's digital warfare environment. Vonnegut's non-linear structure of time and the subjective experience of historical events are directly related to how events and information are reconstructed in the digital age. The digital revolution has established an environment in which past, present, and future events coexist simultaneously, largely due to the constant availability of information online. And in Vonnegut's book "All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist…It's just an illusion here on Earth that one moment follows another one, like beads on a string, and that once that moment is gone it is gone forever" (1969)

 Similarly, the internet has established a space where time is continually disrupted and rearranged. For instance, social media platforms enable users to scroll through events from different moments, lacking a clear sense of progression. This instant access to historical archives and the ability to digitally relive past experiences reflect Billy Pilgrim's experience of time, where the past, present, and future are not distinct but coexist in a chaotic continuum. A parallel can be observed between digital age people and Billy Pilgrim; both break through the concept of the absolute time and jump present to past and to the future. For example, "Billy has gone to sleep a senile widower and awakened on his wedding day. He has walked through a door in 1955 and come out another one in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963. He has seen his birth and death many times, he says, and pays random visits to all the events in between" (Vonnegut, 1969)

When we look at the time jumps in the digital age, it can be encountering the social media algorithm. For example, when an individual reads the news of a war that took place in the morning in 2024, they may soon come across a nostalgia video from the 1990s followed by a post about a historical figure from the 18th century. This shows that time is no longer a linear experience, but a random flow offered by algorithms. Similarly, Vonnegut also deals with events from different angles and different narratives. Fo example, "Vonnegut's present tense (chapters one and ten), Billy's present tense (his trip to New York and its aftermath); a novelistic past tense of historical fact (the war experiences, Billy's eighteenth wedding anniversary and the plane crash); and Billy's travels in time and space, which contain both historical events and the Tralfamadore episodes (generally woven throughout the war experiences)"(Edelstein,1974) As a result, Billy's experience of time is not consciously directed; the links between events are produced at random. In the digital age, people's perceptions of time are also substantially influenced. For example, on social media sites, a person may feel lost in time since a historical event is presented as if it happened today. When the context of events is lost, people may feel like Billy, who bounces around haphazardly through time.

   "Vonnegut embodies the genre of historiographic metafiction through the literature of the Tralfamadorians." (Phipps, 2014) Tralfamodirians are inroduced by vonegut as a creature that "…can look at different moments [in time] just the way we can look at the stretch of the Rocky Mountains…they can see how permanent all the moments are, and they can look at any moment that interests them." (Vonnegut, 1969) Accordingly, The Tralfamadorian perception of time contributes to the questioning of the linear narrative in historiography and at the same time criticizes how authoritarian discourses are reproduced alongside the traditional understanding of history. Vonnegut emphasizes the fictionality of the work by including himself in the structure of the novel. In this context, it questions not only history, but also the authenticity of the historical narrative. While the Tralfamadorians argue that events cannot be changed and

are all fixed, Vonnegut's narrator constantly repeats the idea that events are inevitable. But there is an irony here: If everything is fixed, why does Vonnegut choose to tell this story? This irony reveals that historical narratives are not immutable, but are constructed by authors and narrators. In Slaughterhouse-Five, Billy Pilgrim's perspective of time is quite like the human experience of the technological age. Evaluating Vonnegut's work from a contemporary standpoint not only helps us comprehend how history is deconstructed, but it also exposes how the modern individual's view of time and reality is divided and reconfigured. And "Technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can create immersive, digitally constructed environments that simulate real experiences. These technologies blur the lines between what is real (the physical world) and what is artificially created, complicating our understanding of reality" (Singh, 2024) In this context, the novel's postmodern narrative tactics mimic the intermittent and multi-layered flow of information of the digital era, providing crucial implications for how today's people understand historical events.

6.   Findings

RQ1/Theme1: Historiographic Metafiction in Post Truth era. The findings of the first research topic of this study suggest that the concept of historiographic metafiction enables the questioning of historical reality in the post-truth era and provides an effective narrative frame. Linda Hutcheon's historiographical metafiction in the post-truth era can be considered as follows: Historiographic metafiction emphasizes that history is not only what happened but also how it reflected. In other words, "...there can be no single, essentialized, transcendent concept of 'genuine historicity'" (Hutcheon L,1988 p.89). It not only tells history but also criticizes the narrative itself with questions such as how trustable is this narrative? and from whose point of view is it told? Hence, history and fiction are seen as systems of constructions which reflect a subjective point of view. "What is also emphasized in Hutcheon's analysis is that in postmodern era the meaning underlying 'the historical' and 'the fictional' has gained another dimension." (Eşberk, 2015)

On the other hand, the Post-Truth Age defines a period in which individuals approach knowledge not based on reason and evidence, but rather through belief, identity and emotions. In this regard "People's information consumption is being increasingly guided by the affective, or emotional, dimension of their psyche, as opposed to the cognitive dimension. This post-truth reality is one of the reasons why fake news has become so inescapable, and consequently, why it's so hard to combat and interrupt the production and dissemination of deliberately false information." (Cooke, 2018) In this age, objective reality is overshadowed by individual convictions and narratives. Not facts but stories that the masses are willing to believe are at the forefront. The digital age has further reinforced this situation: social media algorithms, artificial intelligence-supported content production and unlimited access to information have made the individual's relationship with reality even more fragile. First, the reliability of the narrator is questioned, which is a characteristic feature of the post-truth era: There is no objective narrator. Historiographical metafictional texts expect the reader not to blindly believe the narrative. The reader is placed in a questioning position. This shows the importance of critical thinking in the post-truth era. Historiographic metafiction shows that both narrative and history are structured through techniques such as self-reflexivity, intertextuality, non-linearity of time, and unreliable narrator. These techniques push the reader to question what is being told. There is a similar situation in the digital age: deepfake videos, fake news, edited content - blurring the boundary between fact and fiction. As this periods marks "Instantaneously, stories can be shared, whether they have been read or not; for example, there is the accepted online shorthand of TL, DR—too long, didn't read—which gives people license to share and comment on content they've

not actually read, much less evaluated (Gil 2016; Dictionary.com n.d.). " Historiographic metafiction is a literary representation of the antecedents of this technological reality.

RQ2/Theme 2: Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five, concept of time and his cyclical approach in the technological age. As seen in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut has deliberately blurred the distinction between fact and fiction, thereby problematizing the reader's attempt to navigate towards accurate information. I argue about why this genre is so influential in the post-truth era, especially when it comes to the style of the novel. Vonnegut's self-reflexivity and the non-linearity of time suggest that historical narrative is not subjective but rather reconstructed and often ideologically reshaped. This is in line with the distrust of knowledge in the post-truth era. In addition, the fragmentation of time in the book is parallel to the distortion of the perception of space and time created by the information bombardment of the digital age. For example, "Both Facebook and Twitter, and many other media besides, work with a structure that puts either the most recent or the most relevant (i.e. most popular) messages at the top. With each page refresh, the timeline changes, making it difficult to revisit older, less popular posts, and due to the latest-first chronological ordering, it becomes nearly impossible to find anyone's first message or read a user's posts chronologically, from the first to the latest" (Reinhoud, 2019). This provides clues about how history is experienced in the post-truth era. In other words, the past has become not just a flat perception of time but a reconstructed, consumed and even ambivalent form of narration. Due to digital technologies, the past is constantly accessible, the present is continuously documented, and the future is constantly simulated. This leads to phenomena such as temporal compression and the overlapping of moments. Within that context, people lose track of time in virtual spaces or feel temporarily disconnected. And this led to Psychological Time Distortion: Technology alters time experience—TikTok hours feel like minutes, or anxiety over wasted time online. Scholars Chen Lidan and Mao Zhanwen(2014) believe that new media technology has a great influence on the generation of time anxiety, and pointed out that time and space tension is the confused psychological tension that is caused by the impact of new media technology and feels that time is not enough The cyclical and fragmented presentation of time in Vonnegut's novel seems to anticipate and literarily reflect this contemporary experience.

7. Discussion/Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for both literary studies and contemporary cultural analysis. The application of historiographic metaphor as a methodological tool for understanding the post-reality era is an important tool for fostering critical thinking and analysis skills. Because "Formal education teaches children to consume information without question in an effort "to educate them for conformity and obedience" (Cooke, 2018)The research suggests that Vonnegut's use of historiographic metafiction in Slaughterhouse-Five can be used as an effective narrative strategy in educational contexts. Techniques such as subjective narrators, time fragmentation and intertextuality enable students to actively engage with texts, leading them to question dominant historical narratives and explore how truths are deconstructed. This is a finding that has implications for pedagogical approaches in literature and media literacy courses and can help students develop their ability to read texts more critically.

The second implication is extended to digital media literacy. Today, through AI-generated content and algorithm-driven media, the distinction between fact and fiction is becoming increasingly difficult. The techniques of historiographic metafiction - particularly non-linear narrative and unreliable narrators - offer a literary lens for understanding how digital narratives can construct and manipulate perception. The findings suggest that educators, media

professionals and policy makers should incorporate elements of historiographic metafiction to design such awareness-raising campaigns or curriculum modules. This can help develop critical media literacy to question the authenticity of digital content and recognize how digital platforms shape perception.

Moreover, this study's examination of Vonnegut's treatment of time in Slaughterhouse-Five reveals an early literary reflection of the fragmentation of time, information overload, and psychological time distortion we now experience in the digital age. Vonnegut's cyclical and distorted understanding of time provides a literary model to explain the phenomena we encounter in our digital lives, such as time condensation, the archiving of the ever-updating "now" and the inability to stay in the moment in digital spaces. This opens new avenues for interdisciplinary dialog between literature, psychology and media studies. Drawing on Vonnegut's cyclical and fragmented structure of time, literature educators and researchers of digital culture can delve deeper into these concerns and the intensification of digital time.

The conclusion addresses the broader societal and cultural significance of how historiographic metafiction can be used to help individuals struggle to distinguish between authentic and manipulated realities in an age of simulations and ambiguities. In a world where realities are constantly reconstructed, historiographic metafiction offers a methodological approach that can help students, researchers and general readers understand how historical narratives are constantly reconstructed. The findings of this study suggest that historiographic metafiction has practical applications not only in academic analysis, but also in media production, journalistic ethics and digital storytelling. This encourages further research to understand how these narrative techniques can inform critical debates about the representation of history in contemporary media.

8.   Conclusion

In this study, historiographic metafiction, postmodernism and perception of time were examined through Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five;* (1969) The timeliness of the work in the context of the post-truth age and the digital age is discussed. Based on Linda Hutcheon's theories, the functioning of historiographic metafiction as a literary tool that both critiques and reconstructs historical narratives has been revealed. Vonnegut's novel emphasizes the variability of historical narratives by showing that history is not made up of fixed facts, but of language, ideology and subjective interpretations, with its fragmented structure, self-referential narration and non-linear understanding of time. One of the most important findings of this study is the striking parallels between Billy Pilgrim's disjointed perception of time and the way the modern individual experiences reality in the digital age. Billy's experience of the past, present, and future at the same time shows that today's people also consume news, historical events, and personal experiences in an uninterrupted and non-linear flow. The rapid spread of information, the constant rewriting of historical narratives, and the gradual erasure of the boundaries between reality and simulation make Vonnegut's critique of historical determinism reinterpret in today's context. The Tralfamadorians' worldview, which argues that all events are unchangeable, creates a passivity like today's people's unquestioning acceptance of historical narratives produced in digital media. However, Vonnegut's work reveals the constructed nature of the historical narrative, encouraging readers to take a critical look at the past. This study considers historiographic metafiction not only as a literary method, but also in the context of postmodernism, deconstruction, and digital epistemology. In an age where knowledge of history is increasingly shaped through artificial intelligence, algorithms, and digital archives, the themes of *Slaughterhouse-Five*(1969) are very relevant. The parodic relationship of the novel with history shows significant similarities with the constant

reconstruction and transformation of narratives in line with ideological frameworks today. In this respect, it is discussed that in today's world, where post-truth culture is increasingly blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction, Vonnegut's work is a foreshadowing warning of the dangers posed by narrative manipulations and the erosion of historical certainty. In conclusion, this research highlights the important literary and philosophical function of historiographic metafiction in questioning historical discourse. By revealing the connections between past and present, fiction and history, *Slaughterhouse-Five* not only reshaped our perception of time and narrative; It has also allowed us to develop a critical awareness of how history is written, remembered, and forgotten. In this context, Vonnegut's work invites its readers to be conscious participants in a world where historical narratives are constantly being constructed, rather than just followers of literature.

8.1 Suggestions for Future Research

An interdisciplinary approach could be taken to explore the perception of time in literature alongside insights from psychology, neuroscience, or even physics. Modern theories of time perception, particularly those informed by cognitive science, intersect with Vonnegut's literary portrayal of time, offering valuable perspectives on the human experience of time in both fictional and real-world contexts. By integrating these diverse fields, further study could deepen the understanding of how time is experienced, conceptualized, and represented in narrative form, revealing the broader implications of time as both a literary device and a cognitive phenomenon.

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