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American literature has been apart of the United States history from the colonial times up until now. Postmodernism is the most recent literary movement and we are experiencing and reading many novels from the movement today. The movement spans from mid to late twentieth century up until today. This literary movement stems off of the Modernist movement which lasted from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century. As a result, many of the ideas in Modernism is similar to the Postmodernism literary movement (Greenhaven).

Modernism was discerned as a break from the past, especially in topics like artistic expression and politics. Writers would often reflected their pieces on iron and innocence. Modernism contrasted from old traditional literary movements because it created a pessimistic attitude. Similarly, Postmodernist writings consisted of philosophical concepts, often those that described skeptical cultural reactions to monumental historical events like World War II, the Holocaust, and the nuclear arms race. Corresponding to Modernism, Postmodernism focused on artistic movements and combined with scientific thoughts, both of which were ideas that were previously considered to be separate. As well as focusing on the artistic and scientific aspect of the movement, Postmodernism was a philosophy that rejects any acts of kindness, including good and evil, truth and falsehood, history and fiction. It is often seen as the loss of faith and writers shift their focus from knowledge, equality, and justice to diversity, multiplicity, and connections (Greenhaven).

The Postmodernism literary movement consists of many different characteristics like metafiction, irony, paranoia, pastiche, maximalism, etc. “

"Slaughterhouse Five", written by Kurt Vonnegut, fits into the Postmodernism movement because it focuses on ironic situations, metafiction, and pastiche elements of the story. Postmodernism can be defined as the movement after modernism. While many characteristics are similar between both of the movements, Postmodernism often criticizes the works of modernism. Writers who write in a postmodernist era offer criticism of rationalism, essentialism, and universalism (Postmodernism: Origin and Definition of Postmodernism).

Postmodernism was first used in English by a British historian, Arnold Toynbee in describing the historical period following the Franco-Prussian War which ended in 1871 (Greenhaven). Writers began using elements of Postmodernism more often in architecture around 1970s (" Postmodernism: Origin and Definition of Postmodernism). With international art and historical context, people of this time period appreciated the different techniques of the movement. Postmodernism also ties in with the post industrial society and the advancements made in technology after World War (Postmodernism: Origin and Definition of Postmodernism). All things said, postmodernism developed thoroughly through history, art, and science, and the different and unique ways author used the movement in their writings.

As mentioned previously, the different characteristics of Postmodernism vary among different authors. However three characteristics that Vonnegut used in his novel, " Slaughterhouse Five" are irony, metafiction, and pastiche. The use of ironic elements in stories in the postmodernism era often goes unnoticed, this is due to the new technology and virtual reality being introduced to the readers (David).

Irony in the postmodernism era is referred to post-ironic because it is meant to mock certain situations. Post-ironic can be broken down into two sections, one of which is the situation is too crazy to be taken seriously and the other one is the confusion whether something was meant to be ironic or not. The use of irony in different writings can also be black humor since they often write about devastating events that occurred in history, like World War (A list of postmodern characteristics). Metafiction on the other hand is the element of referring to different writings in a story. Authors do this because they want the readers to be aware of the author and the story itself. Writers use metafiction in their writings when there is a flaw in narrative, different time gaps, and to maintain the distance between the writer and reader (A list of postmodern characteristics).

Authors that use pastiche in their writings necessarily use other genres and combine them together to create a new voice for their story. They often use genres like science fiction because it can help with writing about the technological references used in the postmodernism era (A list of postmodern characteristics). Although there are many other characteristics used in postmodernism writing, these three are most commonly seen in the novel “Slaughterhouse Five”. Moreover, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. was born on November 11, 1922 and died on April 11, 2007. He was an American writer who wrote in the postmodern era. In his career, Vonnegut published fourteen novels, three short story collections, and different works of nonfiction. In the novels Vonnegut wrote, his writing style is best known to be satirical, filled with scientific elements, and they often sent a social commentary on society (Kurt Vonnegut).

Vonnegut's personal life reflected on his novels because he was enlisted in the U. S Army. The battles he experienced there helped Vonnegut write many of his novels like " Slaughterhouse Five", which is considered to be one of his best works (Kurt Vonnegut), it is a story about a man who is unstuck in time and experiences different events of his life time like wartime and how it impacted his post war experience. Throughout Vonnegut's different pieces a common theme that lies within them is the use of science and technology. Many of his stories involve advanced gadgets that can be found in the future, thus the protagonists of his stories are involved with future events rather than realistic events (Kurt Vonnegut's Short Stories Themes). Another underlying theme that lies in most of Vonnegut's writing pieces is individuality.

Vonnegut sought to emphasise the importance of individuality through the characters in his novels and short stories because he writes in a postmodern era where individuality is accepted and a vital element (Kurt Vonnegut's Short Stories Themes). Since Vonnegut's pieces are written in the future, government is a key theme in his writings. He illustrates society's responses and beliefs toward the government. Vonnegut's writing style is considered representative of the postmodernism movement because through his writing he explicitly demonstrates the elements of the movement (Kurt Vonnegut's Short Stories Themes). From writing about ironic events to metafiction events, the author exemplifies a pessimistic view on the real world.

Additionally, since " Slaughterhouse Five" is about a post war experience, Vonnegut presents a postmodernist writing style in the novel. Moreover, Vonnegut illustrates ironic elements throughout the novel " Slaughterhouse

Five”. Since irony is an important characteristic of the postmodernism movement, Vonnegut used it in different forms.

From black humor to relating it with death. As Billy Pilgrim was explaining one his wartime stories, “ The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true. One guy I knew was shot in Dresden for taking a teapot that wasn’t his” (Vonnegut, 1). By writing this, the author exemplifies an ironic element because most people would expect a man who was enlisted in an army and fought in a war, to die in the war. However, by using black humor, the author said he dies because he stole a teapot. The author was trying to create an image in the readers head that Edgar Derby didn’t die due to the horrific situations at war, but instead he died for something irrelevant. This creates a sense of fear and humor because reader would not have expected this to happen. Additionally, Vonnegut uses irony in other parts of the book especially when he described someone’s death.

As Billy said, “ On the eighth day the forty-year old hobo said to Billy, this aint bad. I can be comfortable anywhere...on the ninth day, the hobo died” (Vonnegut, 100).

The author portrays ironic elements in this passage because the hobo was looking at the whole situation at war in a positive mindset but little did he knew, he would have died the next day. By using this ironic element the author exemplifies the difference between appearance and reality. In the novel, “ Slaughterhouse Five” Vonnegut emphasizes the use of irony by writing about events such as war and connecting it to black humor, essentially what postmodernism is all about. Another characteristic of the

postmodernism era that is significant in the novel, “ Slaughterhouse Five” is metafiction. Vonnegut uses metafiction in the novel to convey a message about the war and how it impacted the characters in the story.

As the narrator describes Billy entering the Trafeldorian, he writes “ He has walked through a door in 1955 and came out another one in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963.” (Vonnegut, 29). Billy is described to be entering different time period of his life through technological gadgets.

The author uses metafiction because he illustrates Billy experiencing different parts of his life which posed questions in the reader’s mind about the relationship between fiction and reality that was set in the novel. Another time Vonnegut uses metafiction in the novel was when he describes an outsider’s view on the war, he writes, “ Like so many Americans, she was trying to construct a life that made sense from things she found in gift shops.” (Vonnegut, 49). This passage reveals a metafiction element because the author is describing a different perspective on the whole war topic. He poses a question about the relationship between fiction and reality since the entire book was based upon war and the author writes so many Americans are trying to be optimistic and forget war actually happened. “

Slaughterhouse Five” describes the events that occurred in war through metafiction elements and by doing so, the author often makes the reader think about the other viewpoints involved in the situation. Moreover, Vonnegut uses paschitce in the novel “ Slaughterhouse Five” to exemplify the postmodernism movement.

Throughout the novel, the author references other pieces of writings to create a voice for his own story. In the beginning of the novel Vonnegut said “ I’ll call it the Children’s Crusade” (Vonnegut, 19) because he wanted his novel to be as memorable but also sending an important message to the audience. By incorporating the Children’s Crusade in the novel, the author related to many readers because like he said, he would dedicate the book to the Children’s Crusade and write the story of how it was without sugar coating certain situations. By doing so, Slaughterhouse Five imitates the Children’s Crusade.

Furthermore, Vonnegut uses pastiche elements in the story by illustrating the different characteristics of the the protagonists. When Billy Pilgrim questions the Trafeldorians he asks, “ Why me?..

. Have you ever seen bugs trapped in amber...Well here we are Mr. Pilgrim, trapped in the amber of this moment. There is no why.” (Vonnegut, 97). By describing the purpose of the Trafederions in the novel, the author demonstrates a work of visual art because he is imitating aliens but he is also adding his own perspective to their characters because he had to incorporate it with the purpose of the story.

Vonnegut uses pastiche in “ Slaughterhouse Five” to imitate other pieces of literature and incorporate his own ideas and beliefs in them. All things said, the postmodernism movement consisted of many different characteristics, however in the novel Slaughterhouse-Five written by Kurt Vonnegut, he focuses on three major characteristics, irony, metafiction, and pastiche. By using these three elements, Vonnegut demonstrates a postmodernism story



because he was able to use black humor, make the readers question his thoughts, and imitate other pieces of literature whilst using his own ideas.