



Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse-Five" as an Anti-War Novel

Jasmin Wolfram, Mareike Hachemer

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Seminar paper from the year 2014 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Department of English and Linguistics), course: Slaughterhouse Five, language: English, abstract: The novel "Slaughterhouse-Five", written by Kurt Vonnegut in 1969, is about Billy Pilgrim, a man, who has "become unstuck in time", which means that he travels through different periods of his life. The novel starts with an autobiographical part, which is about Kurt Vonnegut's life after the Second World War. In the following parts Vonnegut writes about Billy Pilgrim. The reader learns that as a young adult Billy Pilgrim is a soldier in the Second World War just like Kurt Vonnegut was. He survives this war with the help of other soldiers and later on he settles as a bourgeois civilian with his wife Valencia Merble and his two children. Kurt Vonnegut tells the reader that in the time of the Second World War Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time, and has been kidnapped by aliens from a planet called Tralfamadore. The reader gets to know Billy Pilgrim's life story as well as his personality. As a round character Billy is shown in different situations with all his emotions and thoughts. Vonnegut describes traumatic events in Billy's childhood and also emotionally important events in his grown-up life, like his 18th wedding anniversary. After the awful situations Billy witnessed in the Second World War, for instance the Dresden bombing, and an airplane crash he survives, Billy says he was kidnapped by a flying saucer. This could be a sign of Billy Pilgrim suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which will be examined in the following text. Although the novel contains sad and cruel topics, the tone of the novel is generally sarcastic and unemotional. Billy Pilgrim's life and the literary style of "Slaughterhouse-Five" inevitably lead to the question: In How Far Does Kurt Vonnegut's Depiction of the Protagonists in

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