

BOKONONISM, FISHERFOLKS, AND MADNESS AS BECOMINGS IN KURT VONNEGUT'S CAT'S CRADLE AND GALÁPAGOS

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ABSTRACT

*Can science fiction in the works of Kurt Vonnegut be a Minor Literature? Many scholars have already dealt with Vonnegut's science fiction as more than just entertaining fiction, mainly, as a trope and a means to achieve black humor. If Science fiction, used by Vonnegut, is a Minor Literature, then the tenets of both Minor Literature and Vonnegut's fiction must be explored, and brought together, to find a middle ground between them, namely, a relationship, or a floor in which both correspond to each other. Another aspect of Vonnegut's science fiction is that of the becoming. Thus, Deleuze's theories on Minor literature and Becoming will be explored as techniques used by Vonnegut to submit his science fiction as serious literature. Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* and *Galápagos* depict the history of human stupidity, as each of the two novels tells all the things that went wrong with human history. As it happens, all the things that have gone wrong with humanity during the last few decades and which have prophesied chaos at each moment were declared failures of Western Tradition. The concept of Becoming as defined by Deleuze and Guattari indicates the power of literature to destabilize tradition by transcending its limitations. It is the power of literature to create something new, and be active, rather than to remain passive, rewriting old canonical narratives. Under their concept of Becoming, Vonnegut's fiction may be considered as Minor literature, as this concept is explained in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975). Authors like Kurt Vonnegut are canaries in the coal mine, whose mission is to launch the alarm bell when destruction is near, when humanity is about to destroy itself. The religion of Bokononism on the other hand provides peaceful lies. Man seeks not truth, but inner peace, and man since the victory of science lives in inner turmoil and absurd. Vonnegut textualizes the catastrophe in his black humorist existential religion of Bokononism. This novel exposes Vonnegut's experimental language and literary games through which he wrote apocalypse. In *Galápagos*, Vonnegut allows the human body—rather than the tongue—to express itself; because human brain and language were fashioned by Reason. Literature allows self-expression in terms that are alien to human nature, because they can describe and create difference, unlike traditional discourse. In *Galápagos*, human evolution allows the exploration of the world through the eyes of a creature other than human, thus providing a different perspective.*

KEY WORDS: Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*, Bokononism, Fisher-folks, Galápagos, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *Becoming*, *Becoming-animal*, Minor literature

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