

Drishti: the Sight

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Reading Posthuman Disability in Kurt Vonnegut's SF *Galapagos* (1985)

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Abstract

Disability studies is a multidisciplinary field relevant to liberal arts and applied fields, drawing on paradigms and constructs from various disciplines like literature, anthropology, sociology, history, politics, education, and others. In the postmodern novels of Kurt Vonnegut, disability serves as a figure for alienation, helplessness, and paralysis in a world dominated by hyperreality, commodity capitalism, fragmentation, and commercialization of America. SF writers like Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, Octavia Butler, and others have taken disability to a new level by adding questions about the mutability of bodily form to make SF's productive sites for critical interrogation and construction of the dis/abled body, which this paper will discuss. Disability has more prominence within the SF genre as it frequently explores mutant body forms (posthuman), how images of disability engage with the text through a problem and crisis, and provides a restrictive or liberating view of disability via binary oppositions, i.e., human and posthuman.

Keywords: Disability, Ontology, Posthumanism, Postmodernism, Science Fiction (SF)