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EXPOSURE OF ARTIFICES OF FICTION IN JOHN BARTHS'S LOST IN THE FUN HOUSE

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ABSTRACT

The title of this research is "*An Analysis Of Postmodernism In John Barth"s Short Story "Lost In The Funhouse*". The objectives of this research are to find out how intertextuality portrayed in the short story and how John Barth violate level of narrative in the short story. The concepts of intertextuality and violation of narrative are analyzed by using Victoria Orlowski's theory. Qualitative research method is used in analyzing this research. The result of this research shows that The author assume that metafiction is valuable because it exposes the limits and artifices of literary realism and self- consciously, and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.

Keywords: *Intertextuality, Postmoderism, John Barth, Short Story, Fiction,Reality.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary work can be understood as a branch of literature that uses words as raw materials to

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make metaphors, ideas or stories in a meaningful pattern. Words, being the prop of a pattern, are important when they are carefully handled into sentences - a syntactically well-structured sentence that can artistically convey the target ideas. Therefore the work is valued as a work of art with a literary style that is different from what we use in daily conversation. There are two types of literary works, i.e creative writing or the study of what is written. Writing is a creative work that respects humans as creators and elevates their existence above the world of subsistence, but the work we call "learning" is the way literate people see and analyze the work in question. Literary works, as works of art, can be in the form of drama, fiction, essays, biography or journalism and so on. Sometimes writers deal with imaginary worlds such as drama, novels and poetry. As far as design and language are concerned, literary works are written in two different ways depending on the use of language, namely language in the form of prose or in poetry.

In this thesis the author intends to discuss the work of post-modernism. First of all the author will explain what is meant by postmodernism. Postmodern in literature is literature which is characterized by dependence on narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, and unreliable narrators; and often defined as styles or trends that emerged in the post-World War II era. It's effects can be seen in broken narratives, chronological disruptions, focus on materialistic description, and a deliberate attempt to forget God. No doubt, before a concept of the Postmodernism there was another the so- called the Modernism. It came into existence to the modern period combined with industrialization, market-oriented capitalist-economies, new social classes, democracy, and Enlightenment values- reason and progress‖. This controversial philosophy, the philosophy of the Enlightenment, it is possible that‖ the establishment of objective facts and universal values‖ (Heywood, 2012)

It is not easy to define postmodernism because ‗postmodernism‗, the word itself, is *paradoxical.* It is both nothing and everything, meaning with no meaning. It is still an ongoing movement. Though it seems like that ‗postmodernism‗ means ‗aftermodernism‗ because ‗post‗ means after but it's not like that. Postmodernism is very notable term in contemporary novels. It is a very significant term which is not only used in the field of study but also in art, culture, literature and many other fields, particularly in contemporary literature. Postmodern literature is a form of literature which is marked, both stylistically and ideologically, by a reliance on such

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literary conventions as fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, often unrealistic and downright impossible plots, games, parody, paranoia, dark humor and authorial self-reference.

In postmodern literature there are no strict form is found because the term itself is an anti-foundationalism. Right from the start of the debate has been a particularly unstable concept. No single definition of post modernism has gone uncontested or has even been widely accepted, except, perhaps, in the field of architecture (Hans Bertens,1995). Postmodern authors choose any subject matter, structure, any form of writing. Even they can create new form, new perspective new ideas and so on for writing. In postmodern literature these techniques often used; fragmentation, paradox, and the unreliable narrator; and is often (though not exclusively) defined as a style or a trend which emerged in the post–World War II era.

Published in 1968 with a same name with the book, John Barth's short story ‒Lost in the Funhouse‖ enrich the literary works of postmodernism. The stories within this collection are typically approached as postmodern due to their *self-reflexivity, their self- awareness, and their use of self-reference*. The short story ─Lost in the Funhouse,‖ in particular, is known for its active destabilization of truth, linearity, and structure, and it is an ideal text to study when engaging in the frustrating exercise of defining postmodernity as it pertains to the study of literary texts.

John Barth is best known for his wit and clever use of language. This story was published in 1968, a time of great upheaval in America (race riots, war, hippies, etc.). This story takes place on Independence Day during World War II. The layout of the story is weird. It looks like there are parts of the story out of order and math problems in the middle. They all are part of some equations or formula Barth wants you to put together. The crazy nature of the story makes the story a funhouse in itself.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Psychology values logic, a situation that is substantially opposed to Literature, even though the latter may be based on likelihood. According to Russell (1964, p. 551),
‒Psychologists prefer observations that can be replicated, whereas a serious writer deals with analogy, metaphor, and perhaps intentional ambiguity‖. Nevertheless, both sharethe objective of understanding the development of their subjects, real/fictional characters, respectively,

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through the conflicts and problems they face in life or in the plot. This quality, again according to Russel, leads to the fact that knowledge of one field can contribute to the other in at least four categories: the psychology of the writer, the psychology of the creative process, the study of behavior, and the responses to literature.

Short Story

A short story is fictional work of prose that is shorter in length than a novel. Edgar Allan Poe, in his essay "The Philosophy of Composition," said that a short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours. In contemporary fiction,a short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words.

Because of the shorter length, a short story usually focuses on one plot, one main character (with a few additional minor characters), and one central theme, whereas a novel can tackle multiple plots and themes, with a variety of prominent characters. Short stories also lend themselves more to experimentation — that is, using uncommon prose styles or literary devices to tell the story. Such uncommon styles or devices might get tedious, and downright annoying, in a novel, but they may work well in a short story.

Sociology of literature

Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation. Such traditional literary devices as symbolism and meter are social in their very nature. They are conventions and norms which could have arisen only in society. But, furthermore, literature "imitates" "life" and "life" is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary "imitation." Wellek and Warren (1949:68)

Postmodernism and Post Structuralism

Postmodernism is controversial and it is a way to approach traditional ideas in an untraditional way. Most people prefer tradition because tradition is stable. Stability brings a feeling of security and safety. But to create change you have to break tradition. Postmodern in literature is literature which is characterized by dependence on narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, and unreliable narrators; and often defined as styles or trends that emerged in the post-World War II era. Its effects can be seen in broken narratives, chronological disruptions, focus on materialistic description, and a deliberate attempt to forget

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God. According to Hermawan (2009: 151) *"Postmodernisme* memfokuskan perhatiannya pada masalah (representasi dan kemustahilan kebenaran) yang ditimbulkan oleh kemampuan akses yang ditekstualkan sejarah‖.

Post-structuralism, a movement in both philosophy and sociology at the end of the twentieth century in France, is very difficult to summarize or to give a definition for it. That is because the authors have relatively different views and they broadly rejected the affiliation to a particular group. Even so, we can see that many post-structuralist texts are responses to the structuralist tradition. The name does not deceive us, because post- structuralism comes after structuralism and it gets its meaning by reference to structuralism. Poststructuralism is, in this sense, a penultimate stage in the emancipation from that ‒self-incurred immaturity‖ that Kant famously identified—in his essay ‒What is Enlightenment?‖—as ‒the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another‖ (Kant 1970:54).

Also, post-structuralism has a more historical view, against structuralism which has a descriptive view. Structural analyses are synchronic, that means they are not interested in the history of the object, in its context, and its evolution. Instead, post-structuralism is using diachronic analyses, it is reasserting the importance of history, and doing so, they are developing new theoretical understandings of the subject. Also, by studying how cultural concepts have changed over time, post-structuralists seek to understand how those same concepts are understood by readers in the present.

Postmodernist texts may also be characterized by multiple literary devices. These are most commonly intertextuality, pastiche, multiplicity, irony, temporal distortion, magic realism and metafiction (cf. Sharma and Chaudhary 193-197; Bertens 144-146; Bennett and Royle 285-286). While ‒Lost in the Funhouse‖ contains several of these devices, it mainly establishes itself as a work of metafiction, since it is ‒peppered with moments of self-reflexivity‖ (Matos). It is therefore an ultimately postmodern text, since metafiction has been considered by some to be the ‒hallmark of postmodernism‖ (Neuman and Nünning par. 6)

a)   *Self-reflexivity / self-reference*

 as argued by Hutcheon have two forms; overt and covert. Overt forms are self- conscious. This kind of self-reflexivity is manifested through ‒thematization‖ or ‒allegorization‖   with   the

use of ‒plot allegory‖, ‒narrative metaphor‖ or ‒narratorial commentary‖. Covert forms on the other hand, are not necessarily self-conscious and in such texts the process is ‒structuralized‖ internalized and actualized‖ by means of many models such as the ‒detective story‖, ‒fantasy‖, game structure‖ and the ‒erotic‖ (1980:23)

Metafiction

According to Patricia Waugh, ‒metafiction‖ is ‒a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality‖. This is similar to how postmodern texts themselves question the opposition between nature and artifice. Victoria Orlowski proposes a distinct list of the characteristics of metafiction. According to her, metafictional texts distinguish themselves by three basic traits, which may occur in combination or singularly. These aspects are: intertextuality, the violation of narrative levels and the use of unconventional or experimental techniques.

Some critics charge that employing the term ‒metafiction‖ to refer to modern works that are radically self-reflexive as well as to works that contain only a few lines of self- reflection actually creates critical imprecision or ambiguity. In her review of Patricia Waugh's Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction (1984), Ann Jefferson argues that ‒the trouble is that Waugh cannot have it both ways, and present metafiction both as an inherent characteristic of narrative fiction and as a response to the contemporary social and cultural vision‖ (574). Other theorists often employ the same double definition of metafiction, which makes it difficult to know whether the definition refers to contemporary metafiction or to all works containing self-reflexivity. John Barth concisely defines metafiction as a ‒novel that imitates a novel rather than the real world‖ (qtd. in Currie 161).

Although characteristics of metafiction vary as widely as the spectrum of technique used within them, a pattern of several common traits can be traced. These techniques often appear in combination, but also can appear singularly.

Intertextuality

The first aspect of metafiction is that its texts are often intertextual. They may, for example, fictional systems; aspects of both theory and criticism; biographies of imaginary writers; fictional works of an imaginary character‖ . Intertextuality as a term was first used in Julia

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Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966) and then in "The Bounded Text" (1966-67), essays she wrote shortly after arriving in Paris from her native Bulgaria.2 The concept of intertextuality that she initiated proposes the text as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products. The "literary word", she writes in "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", is "an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (1980, 65). Developing Bakhtin's spatialization of literary language, she argues that "each word (text) is an inter section of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read. Metafiction often employs intertextual references and allusions by: examining fictional systems; incorporating aspects of both theory and criticism; creating biographies of imaginary writers; presenting and discussing fictional works of an imaginary character.

Violation of narrative levels

Orlowski's second characteristic of metafiction concerns the way authors ‒violate narrative levels.‖ They may violate the narrative by ‒intruding to comment on the writing; involving himself with fictional characters; directly addressing the reader; openly questioning how narrative conventions transform reality, trying to ultimately prove that no singular truths or meanings exist‖ (Orlowski). Authors of metafiction often violate narrative levels by: intruding to comment on writing; involving themselves with fictional characters; directly addressing the reader; openly questioning how narrative assumptions and conventions transform and filter reality, trying to ultimately prove that no singular truths or meanings exist.

Unconventional and experimental techniques

Orlowski's third metafictional feature consists of ‒unconventional and experimental techniques.‖ The author may reject conventions, such as adhering to a linear plot; refuse to make his text seem ‒real‖ or ‒enhance the illusion of reality‖. Metafiction also uses unconventional and experimental techniques by: rejecting conventional plot; refusing to attempt to become ‒real life‖; subverting conventions to transform reality into a highly suspect concept; flaunting and exaggerating foundations of their instability; displaying reflexivity (the dimension present in all literary texts and also central to all literary analysis, a function which enables the reader to understand the processes by which they read the world as a text).

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Previous Studies

This thesis studies about the author John Barth who esteems postmodernism in his short story *Lost In the Funhouse*. It will talk about how John Barth's sociological criticism using self-reflexivity characteristics that support the achievement of postmodernism. Based on the writer's exploration, there are found other research related to this thesis and the writer wants to give a brief description of these previous studies. Here are some previous studies which have done by some researcher that related to

‒Broken narrative‖, ‒Self-reflexivity‖, ‒Paradox‖ and ‒*Lost in the Funhouse*‖.

The first is *"Broken Narratives: Trauma, Metaconstructive Gaps, and The Audience Of Psychotherapy".* This research is concerning on constructivist model of posttraumatic psychotherapy is presented with particular attention to the metaphors of "narrative" and "audience." Metaconstruction, implicit construing, and narrative continuity are explored to conceptualize how persons story their experiences, and how some experiences (e.g., traumas) disrupt the storying process. Then the elements of posttraumatic psychotherapy are discussed with case examples illustrating how the therapist, as audience member and conarrator, facilitates the reconstruction and renarration of the client's life story.

The second is 1996 "*James Welch's Winter in the Blood: Thawing the Fragments of Misconception in Native American Fiction"* Mario A. Leto II. The conventional scholarly view of Native American literature asserts that Native authors often portray their characters as alienated and despairing individuals that are incapable of attaining the means for dispelling those negative feelings. As a result, the characters are presumably destined to forever wander the barren reservation, unable to grasp their fleeting cultural traditions or the modern Euroamerican way of life. James Welch, with his novel Winter in the Blood, challenges that stereotypical scenario by allowing his nameless protagonist to discover a previously unknown link to his traditional Blackfeet heritage. Through the knowledge of his ancestors and the unconscious cycle of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey, the protagonist breaks the constricting bonds of western literary critics by finding hope for the future of Native Americans through a fusion of traditional and modern mythologies: a spiritual journey grounded in tradition and focused on the individual as the savior of a vanishing culture.

The third is *"Rhythmicity and Broken Narrative as a Means of Portraying Identity*

Crisis in Erna Brodber"s Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home" (2012). The thesis is devoted to the analysis of broken narrative and rhythmicity in Erna Brodber's novel Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home (1980). The angle of this research has been chosen since the topic, although never researched before, is important for the deepened understanding of the influence of Jamaican folk culture on Brodber's fiction writing. The central statement of my thesis is the significance of the role of broken narrative, organizational rhythmicity and rhythm in the diegesis in portraying the protagonist's identity crisis. This identity crisis becomes evident as the protagonist gets lost in the myriad of voices from her past which dominate and perplex her. Her attempts at restored balance and return to the community are futile unless she escapes her protective cocoon of self-distancing and connects to her ancestral past.

And the last is ‒*The paradox of the narrative event in John Barth's "Lost in the Funhouse"*. (2015) This article explores, via a postmodern approach, how Barth dealt with the intricate relationship between postmodern fiction and its modern counterpart by constructing a subjective narrative event in his novella, ‒Lost in the Funhouse‖. It examines the transparent and correspondent representation of the narrative event as a category of Barthian critique of modern literary exhaustion, and how Barth appropriates remedial recycling for fictional conventions. This apocalyptic homogeneous narrative device involves a constant reciprocal examination of contemporary fiction and its possible future. It is carried out through mutual subversion and, ultimately, challenges the notion of inherited literary forms and their utilisation over time. As such, the whole narrative event is achieved via a self-reflexive trajectory and multifarious textual solipsism.

What makes this research different from previous research is, this study discusses the postmodernism elements of the short story and how John Barth portrayed one by the step of paradox and broken narrative. Apart from that, this thesis also discusses the short story's characteristics that support postmodernism.

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

"Lost in the Funhouse" begins with young Ambrose, who was possibly conceived in "Night-Sea Journey," now an adolescent, traveling to Ocean City, Maryland, to celebrate Independence Day. Accompanying him through his eventual initiation are his parents; his uncle Karl; his older brother, Peter; and Magda, a 13-year-old neighbor who is well developed for her age. Ambrose

is "at the awkward age" (89) when his voice and everything else are unpredictable. Magda becomes the object of his sexual awakening, and he feels the need to do something about it, if only barely to touch her. The story moves from Ambrose's innocence to his stunned realization of the pain of self-knowledge. John Barth uses printed devices— italics, dashes, and so on—to draw attention to the storytelling technique throughout the presentation of conventional material: a sensitive boy's first encounters with the world, the mysterious "funhouse" of sexuality, illusion, and consciously realized pain. Lost in the Funhouse is a short story in John Barth's book of the same name, originally published in 1968. The stories within this collection are typically approached as postmodern due to their self-reflexivity, their self-awareness, and their use of self-reference. The short story "Life in the Funhouse," specifically, is known for its active destabilization of truth, linearity, and structure, and it is an ideal text to study when engaging in the frustrating exercise of defining postmodernity as it pertains to the study of literary texts.

Analysis

Intertextuality, which is a widely used postmodern technique, can be defined as "reference to previous texts." Discussed by critics such as Kristeva and Barthes, the technique reaches its most radical point with Derrida who claims that the whole world is (inter-)text and that there is no "reality" outside "textuality." As Bakhtin puts it; "only the mythical Adam, who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word, could really have escaped from start to finish this dialogic inter-orientation." Thus no one has the chance of producing something fully original.

Lost in the Funhouse, as a metafiction and postmodern fiction, is a verbal funhouse constructed to show that all literary works are but linguistic funhouses. Accordingly, this "funhouse" is itself constructed simply to manifest its artifice. To imply this one and only text and to point at the unavoidable relations between all texts, Barth refers to some nineteenth-century fiction and their common features such as using blanks or giving proper names to create the impact of reality, to The 42nd Parallel by John Dos Passos to describe the train journeys and to Ulysses by James Joyce to describe the sea while the family is approaching Ocean City

"Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality." (Barth, Lost in the Funhouse, 69) "When Ambrose and Peter's

father was their age, the excursion was made by train, as mentioned in the novel The 42nd Parallel by John Dos Passos." (70)

"The Irish author James Joyce, in his unusual novel entitled Ulysses, now avaible in this country, uses the adjectives snot-green and scrotum-tightening to describe the sea." (71)

By using these references, Barth informs us that his usage of language, these expressions are no longer original but have been used before. What makes the author original in postmodern period is to have a style of his own rather than talking about something original. Barth's words prove his adopting the approach since he states "If narrative originality is impossible, if [the author] accepts his fate as parodic translator and annotator of pre-existing archetypes, what can still be original is the unique source of the voice, the authorial instrument that shapes the retelling."

ASPECTS OF THE FICTION

The first American edition of Lost in the Funhouse, John Barth maintains with wonderful solemnity that the book is "neither a collection nor a selection, but a series." It is sometimes difficult to know when such instances of Barth's solemnity are to be taken seriously, but this seems to be one of them. At least when reviewers of the book tended to disregard the note and to see the volume as unified only in a loose manner by Barthian humor and by an intermittent concern with literary "exhaustion," the author developed a seven-point addendum to his original note, the first point affirming that his claim for a serial structure "means in good faith exactly what it says." His regnant intention in Funhouse, he maintains, is to turn "as many aspects of the fiction as possible … into dramatically relevant emblems of the theme." Although the critics have not generally conceded it, Barth's claim for Funhouse is not excessive: at the same time that the individual units of the book are generally self-contained, they contribute both conceptually and stylistically to an organic life of the whole. Like Malamud's Pictures of Fidelman, Funhouse is a story sequence that approaches the form of a Künstlerroman, recording the search of an artist for a viable mode of fiction and shaping that search into a significant and balanced action that is, indeed, emblematic of Barth's theme.

Three stories that concern themselves with a character named Ambrose afford the most immediate key to the sequence, for they are ordered chronologically and trace the growth of a vocation to art. In "Ambrose His Mark," the first story of the three, the title character is an infant for whom an appropriate name has not yet been found. When a swarm of bees settles

upon him, he is named for Saint Ambrose, the fourth century bishop to whom a swarm of bees imparted the power of honeyed speech. At the end of the story, we understand that Ambrose has been "marked" by the bees and that he is destined to be a word-man. In "Water-Message," the second story of the three, Ambrose is a fourth grader, alienated already from other people by his special sensibility. He spends his time spining fictions to impress a younger boy and to rationalize his extreme timidity, for his life outside of the fictions is a constant embarrassment to him. At the climax of the story Ambrose opens a bottle washed up by the sea and finds in it a paper inscribed with an address at the top ("To whom it may concern") and a complimentary close at the bottom ("Yours truly"). Suddenly, we are told, Ambrose's spirit "bore new and subtle burdens," and we understand that it is Ambrose's destiny to write on the blank lines of the paper. His vocation as a word-man, then, is specifically to literature. In "Lost in the Funhouse," the last story of the three, an adolescent Ambrose tries unsuccessfully to mimic the attitudes and passions of ordinary men on a family trip to the Ocean City boardwalk. When he becomes lost in the funhouse, he envisions himself telling stories for the rest of his life, a constructor of funhouses for others, "though he would rather be among the lovers for whom funhouses are designed." The call to literature is heard, then, and accepted reluctantly. Ambrose will become a storyteller.

The stories with which the three Ambrose stories are alternated both complement and develop this Künstlerroman structure. The first story of the sequence, "Night-Sea Journey," is a wonderful tour de force in which an Existential sperm meditates eloquently on the meaning of a strange impulse which drives him on to "Her who summons." Its position at the head of the Ambrose stories suggests that "Night-Sea Journey" dramatizes the prenatal period of Ambrose's life, and this impression is reinforced when the voice of the sperm reflects a deeply literary consciousness: the sperm elaborates a whole series of fictions about the night-sea journey, for instance; he is capable of such an elegant accentuation as "my drownéd friend"; and "A poor irony" is the literary sort of observation that comes easily to him. Furthermore, when the sperm declaims "I am he who abjures and rejects the night-sea journey!" he postures verbally in the same manner that Ambrose is to develop in "Funhouse" and subsequent stories. Thus, it seems natural to understand "Night-Sea Journey" as an integral element of the Künstlerroman, depicting the storyteller as vocationally determined in his prenatal existence.

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METHOD OF RESEARCH

Research Design

There are some methodologies research used in analyzing the short story, they are library research and qualitative method. The research design used in this analysis is library research and the primary source of the analysis is the short story by John Barth ‒*Lost in the Funhouse*‖. This research is supported by valuable sources such as relevant books and literary books. The library research will be also supported by the internet exploration in order to make data of the analysis more available. This type of research also uses qualitative research method because all data are analyzed in the form of words and sentences.

Method is a means of procedure especially a regular and systematic way of completing anything. According to Miles and Huberman and Saldana's (2014:1), Qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of human processes. Literary research as a scientific activity must be supported by appropriate method. Library research also used as one of the research designs used in this paper, library research works through many of books and other references like articles, journals, books, literature books, and websites in doing this research to support the topic. In other word, this research does not do research in a field. Its scope is broader than just a field. While qualitative method emphasizing to use depth analysis techniques which examine the problem case by case and provide substantive categories and hypotheses. According to Moleong (2006:4), ‒*Qualitative method is used as research procedures that resulted descriptive data containing of spoken and written words and people behavior which can be observed*‖

Data & Data Source

The source of primary data is the short story itself that is written by John Barth, entitled *Lost in the Funhouse.*

Data Collecting Procedure

In the step of data collecting procedure, the writer will need the data and data source. First of all, the researcher starts with getting the short story *Lost in the Funhouse* by John Barth which is the data source of this research and read it over and over until the writer understands the story well. Then the researcher collected the data from the short story.

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Data Analyzing Procedure

In analyzing data, the writer selected necessary data that can be analyzed in this research. After that, the next step is collecting and classifying the data concerning the cases of the research. In this step, the writer will apply the theory that is connected with the problem of the research to be described and to analyze data with the theory. Then after describing and analyzing data, the writer concludes the discussion.

After all the required information from the data collected, the researcher will begin to analyze the data. In this step the researcher will analyze the data that has information about postmodernism via broken narrative, paradox and self-reflexivity. After finished analyzing the data, the researcher can make conclusions from the data thathave been analyzed.

ANALYSIS AND FINDING

Intertextuality

Proponents believe that the metafictional novel gains significance beyond its fictional realms by outwardly projecting its inner self-reflective tendencies. Ironically, it becomes real by not pretending to be real. Mark Currie posits that metafiction allows its readers a better understanding of the fundamental structures of narrative while providing an accurate model for understanding the contemporary experience of the world as a series of constructed systems. In reflecting on the significance of metafiction, he goes so far as to say that it provides an ‖unlimited vitality: which once thought introspective and self-referential is in fact outward looking‖. Waugh further states that:

Far from ‗dying', the novel has reached a mature recognition of its existence as writing, which can only ensure its continued viability in and relevance to a contemporary world which is similarly beginning to gain awareness of precisely how its values and practices are constructed and legitimized.

Victoria Orlowski proposes a distinct list of the characteristics of metafiction. According to her, metafictional texts distinguish themselves by three basic traits, which may occur in combination or singularly. These aspects are: intertextuality, the violation of narrative levels and the use of unconventional or experimental techniques. These characteristics will be discussed below, in what ways ‖Lost in the Funhouse‖ may be considered a work of

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metafiction.

The first aspect of metafiction is that its texts are often intertextual. They may, for example, ‒[examine] fictional systems; [incorporate] aspects of both theory and criticism; [create] biographies of imaginary writers; [present and discuss] fictional works of an imaginary character‖ (Orlowski). With this purpose, he employs techniques such as intertextuality and self-referentiality and makes use of a rich symbolism which helps him to create endless possible meanings as expected from a postmodernist text. Intertextuality, which is a widely used postmodern technique, can be defined as ‒reference to previous texts.‖

Relational Process

Discussed by critics such as Kristeva and Barthes, ‒The concept of intertextuality that she initiated proposes the text as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products. The "literary word", she writes in "Word, Dialogue, and Novel". The technique reaches its most radical point with Derrida who claims that the whole world is (inter-)text and that there is no ‒reality‖ outside ‒textuality.‖

Juxtapositions may occur at multiple levels including word or phrase, sentence or utterance, larger units of connected text such as a paragraph or stanza, and genre. Intertextuality can be created through the following means:

- duplication (a string of words occurring in two texts such as occurs in quotation) and stylistic means (repetition of a stress, sound, or rhyme pattern across two or more texts)

- naming and reference (as occurs in citations)

- proximal association (as occurs among chapters in an edited book which are presumed to have some relationship to each other)

- sequential association (an established sequence of related texts such as a reply to a letter)

‒Lost in the Funhouse‖ may also be regarded as a biography of an imaginary writer, since Ambrose's childhood memories are often described:

"Once three years previously the young people aforementioned played Niggers and Masters in

the backyard; when it was Ambrose"s turn to be Master and theirs to be Niggers."

"You think you"re yourself, but there are other persons in you." (p.85)

Michel Foucault's ‗What is an author?' is a comprehensive look at not only what an author's function is but also what that means in terms of the authors presence, responsibility for the text and preconceived notion of the authors function. In ‗Lost in the Funhouse', Barth flouts all the preconceived notions that the reader expects from the author function, which is to author a novel within a familiar discourse (through previous writings, genre expectations, etc.) to which the reader has become accustomed to. Barth does this by periodically interrupting the omniscient narrator toremind the reader that fiction is not real and is easily violated in any way that the author sees fit, revealing himself to be an omniscient author who has becomes bored of the traditional realist narrative and peppers the story with displaced comments, ones usually reserved for footnotes and/or critical evaluations. So, on the one hand, the reader may charge Barth with a breach of the long-established author/narrator/reader relationship but then what if we also include the accusation that the author, Barth, is also the protagonist in the text? His first-person narrative voice disregards the already-established third person omniscient narrator and thus, unnerves the readers preconceived notions of how a story should told within a text.

In this way Barth is unequivocally taking ownership of his decision to narratehis story in such a way, or as Foucault states, ‒…the relationship between text and author and with the manner in which the text points to this figure that…‖ (Foucault, 1998, p.205).

Ambrose's world and reality are so much in pieces that even Barth himself is not sure whether Ambrose is a real person or just an imagination of his own mind and asks ironically,

"are there other errors of fact in this fiction?"

His purpose is certainly to create the effect of uncertainity on the readers to underline a characteristic of the postmodern era.

"He wishes he had never entered the funhouse. But he has. Then he wishes he were dead. But he"s not. Therefore he will construct funhouses for others and be their secret operator" (p.97)

Often touted as the definitive metafictional text, Barth's ‗Lost in the Funhouse' explicitly explores the author's self-referential placement within the text, the author not only becomes a

character in the story but additionally, this narrative device also adds another interesting tier to the story, it becomes a fragmented written feature about writing which aligns itself entirely with Linda Hutcheon's beneficial definition of metafiction; ‒fiction about fiction-that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity.‖ (Hutcheon, 1980, p.1) – the authors seeming loss of control over the text is mirrored by our protagonists own lack of authority and control - as he stands in the mirror-room unable to acknowledge himself from another perspective other than the one that is presented in front of him

By using these references, Barth informs us that his usage of language, these expressions are no longer original but have been used before. What makes the author original in postmodern period is to have a style of his own rather than talking about something original. Barth's words prove his adopting the approach since he states ‒If narrative originality is impossible, if [the author] accepts his fate as parodic translator and annotator of pre-existing archetypes, what can still be original is the unique source of the voice, the authorial instrument that shapes the retelling.‖14 As well as being intertextual, Lost in the Funhouse is a highly self-referential work which means the author, readers, characters and even the text itself are all conscious about the text being written. From the very beginning of the story, by giving us information especially about writing a story, Barth makes us feel this process.

Practices

Intertextuality can be viewed as a function of social practices associated with the use of language. It is a social practice of scholars to refer to previous scholarly works through the use of quotations, citations, and bibliographies. The reading and use of book reviews, movie reviews, and similar texts can be viewed as social practices, which by definition are overt intertextual practices. Intertextuality can be created when an unexpected text occurs within a social practice.

Barth's story, too, often contains intertextual references, to imply this one and only text and to point at the unavoidable relations between all texts, Barth refers to some nineteenth-century fiction and their common features such as using blanks or giving proper names to create the impact of reality, to The 42nd Parallel by John Dos Passos to describe the train journeys and to Ulysses by James Joyce to describe the sea while the family is approaching Ocean City:

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"The Irish author James Joyce, in his unusual novel titled Ulysses, now available in this country uses the adjectives snot-green and scrotum-tightening to describe the sea"

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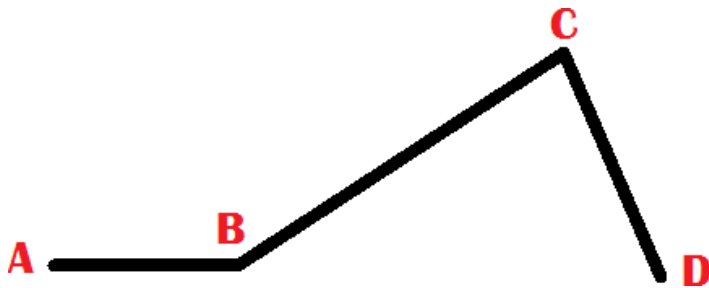

Figure 1.1 This graphic is a replication of the diagram found in page 91 of "Lost in the Funhouse,"in which *the narrator discusses the general pattern that most fictional narratives follow: exposition, conflict, complication, climax, and resolution.*

From the text above Freitag's Triangle is also discussed. This is an example of intertextuality, in that the text looks at its own fictional system and consequently includes theoretical and critical aspects pertaining to this Triangle:

The narrator of the story makes a critique of patterns by illustrating the conventions that narratives usually appropriate in order to assure that they are effective. The text painstakingly depicts the usual structures and conventions that narratives employ to deliver a story (see Figure 1). ‒Lost in the Funhouse‖ deviates immensely from the conventional and linear plot, and it is self aware of this deviation: ‒The beginning should recount the events between Ambrose's first sight of the funhouse early in the afternoon and his entering it with Magda and

Peter in the evening. The middle would narrate all relevant events from the time he loses his way; middles have the double and contradictory function of delaying the climax while at the same time preparing the reader for it‖ (74). Although the narrator stresses that this is how stories should be structured, ‒Lost in the Funhouse‖ deliberately refutes these conventions by delivering a narrative with a prolonged exposition that is contradictory and that does not follow typical patterns of resolution. Details of the plot's so-called climax, introduction, and conclusion are also scrambled throughout the text, and are not found within the expected locations. Although the narrator admits‖ that this deviation forsakes ‒the effects of drama‖ that are possible in the short story, he also makes it clear that this deviation of narrative conventions ‒can better effect‖ the dramatic possibilities of the story (91).

While there is no reason to regard this pattern as an absolute necessity, like many other conventions it became conventional because great numbers of people over many years learned by trial and error that it was effective; one ought not to forsake it, therefore, unless one wishes to forsake as well the effect of drama or has clear cause to feel that deliberate violation of the *"normal"* pattern can better effect that effect.

"This can"t go on much longer; it can go on forever. (Barth 95)"

While Barth does not touch upon the fictional works of an imaginary character, it is quite clear that Ambrose has aspirations to become an author himself and this particular story, whether it is supposedly written by Ambrose or not, does reflect on Ambrose's writing skills:

"I"ll never be an author"

"Was it Assawoman Bay or Sinepuxent? Are there other errors of fact in thisfiction?"

Violation of narrative levels

Orlowski's second characteristic of metafiction concerns the way authors ‒violate narrative levels.‖ They may violate the narrative by ‒intruding to comment on [the] writing; involving [himself] with fictional characters; directly addressing the reader; openly questioning how narrative […] conventions transform […] reality, trying to ultimately prove that no singular truths or meanings exist‖ (Orlowski). All of these elements feature in ‒Lost in the Funhouse.‖

Conventional transform

In combination with some of the intertextual aspects, Barth often comments on the writing by referring to general literary writing techniques and subsequently not adhering to them:

A single straight underline is the manuscript mark for italic type, which in turn is the printed equivalent to oral emphasis of words and phrases as well as the customary type for titles of complete works, not to mention. Italics are also employed, in fiction stories especially, for "outside," intrusive, or artificial voices, such as radio announcements, the texts of telegrams and newspaper articles, et cetera. They should be used sparingly. If passages originally in roman type are italicized by someone repeating them, it"s customary to acknowledge the fact. Italics mine".

It is clear that the author does not use italics *"sparingly,"* which creates an ironic effect. Contrary to commenting on the literary techniques and conventions that Ambrose supposedly employs, Barth also comments on the writing because it does not conform to certain literary conventions and, while he sometimes goes against these norms on purpose, here he seems to lament the fact that

"We should be much farther along than we are; something has gone wrong; not much of the preliminary rambling seems relevant"

. While the narrator brings the reader closer to himself by using the word ‗we', the reader is not often directly addressed. In fact, he is usually discussed as if he were not present at all:

"To say that Ambrose"s and Peter"s mother was pretty is to accomplish nothing; the reader may acknowledge the proposition, but his imagination is not engaged"

The narrator thus associates himself with the reader on the one hand and distances himself from him on the other. This seems to refer to the fact that Ambrose himself does not really know how to connect with others, which relates to the coming-of-age theme of fitting in. Ambrose certainly wants to, but at the same time he is aware that he is ultimately different from the people around him:

"His father should have taken him aside and said: „[…] You and I are different. Not surprisingly, you"ve often wished you weren"t""

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. As for the trait of the narrator involving himself with imaginary characters (Orlowski), this is also apparent in ‖Lost in the Funhouse‖ since the author, the narrator and the protagonist are frequently mixed up in such a way that it is unclear whether these three exist as separate entities within the text or whether they are one and the same:

"The more closely an author identifies with the narrator, literally or metaphorically, the less advisable it is, as a rule, to use the first-person narrative viewpoint"

It is rather ironic, then, that the first-person narrative viewpoint is not used in this story. This way, Barth seems to hint at the fact that he represents the author, the narrator and Ambrose himself. On a narrative level, this text also questions in what waynarrative conventions affect reality: Looking at Barth's story in this light certainly mirrors a growing postmodern feeling, societies pre-existing metanarratives have proved to be just the same as Barth's narrator, malleable and unreliable. Very early on in the story, the narration is interrupted, the author shattering what appears to be realism in order to convey to the reader the process of writing and the literary and linguistic conventions that are associated with such a text. After offering the reader a small portionof the story the author writes;

"...Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality. It is as if the author felt it necessary to delete the names for reasons of tact or legal liability. Interestingly, as with other aspectsof realism, it is an illusion that is being enhanced, by purely artificial means" (Barth, 1988, p.73).

Meaning

Narratives are generally used to represent a certain kind of reality, but they can, according to Barth, only convey an illusion.

In the funhouse mirror-room you can't see yourself go on forever, because no matter how you stand, your head gets in the way" (Barth, 1988, p. 85).

This introspective vision of Ambrose attempting to see himself is somewhat rather indicative of the entire postmodern manifesto (not that such a helpful thing exists); any attempt at trying to be too far removed from yourself (or your work) will only frustrate you - the exact sentiment Barth was trying to convey in his essay ‗The Literature of Exhaustion' when he said that the all-too-often imitation of the same novel format that isreproduced over and over was

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desultory and that only looking forward (to new authorial styles) will result in original works. As well as the funhouse, mirrors are significant symbols that represent the fragmanted world of Ambrose. Being so much self-conscious, Ambrose can not experience the outside world as others do or he can not just focus on the moment but his mind travels back and forth evaluating endless possibilities forever which makes him feel ‒an odd detachment, as though some one else were Master.

"For whom is the funhouse fun?" (p.72)

Across this website we have looked at only some of the key elements of postmodernism literature, some fleetingly and some more in-depth, that have been made possible through the analysis of John Barth's ‗Lost in the Funhouse'. Through his relatively short text, Barth conveys a much broader contextual audit of postmodernism – he gives the reader an opportunity to explore metanarratives, metafiction, the authors function, emerging forms of fiction and the art of writing fiction. Popular opinion is that Barth opposes realism yet is ‗Lost in the Funhouse' not a realer version of realism? The reader is certainly given a much more realistic view of writing a fictional story and though it is an unfamiliar form of realism, I would argue that it should be classed a ‗real Realist' text.

"One possible ending would be to have Ambrose come across another lost person in the dark. They"d match their wits together against the funhouse, struggle like Ulysses past obstacle after obstacle, help and encourage each other. Or a girl. By the time they found the exit they"d be closest friends, sweethearts if it were a girl: they"d know each other"s inmost souls, be bound together by the cement of shared adventure; then they,,d emerge into the light and it would turn out that his friend was a Negro. A blind girl."

Barth speculates about the ending of the story while Ambrose is conscious of what he is ‒experiencing‖ and noticing ‒there was some simple, radical difference about him;‖ hoping ‒it was genius‖ and fearing ‒it was madness‖ and difference can be interpreted in parallel to the awareness of Barth himself about the world around.

"He died of starvation telling stories to himself in the dark; but unbeknownst unbeknownst to him, an assistant operator of the funhouse, happening to overhear him, crouched just behind the plyboard partition and wrote down his every word."38

Findings

The author assume that metafiction is valuable because it exposes the limits and artifices of literary realism and self-consciously, and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. By using these references, Barth informs us that his usage of language, these expressions are no longer original but have been used before. What makes the author original in postmodern period is to have a style of his own rather than talking aboutsomething original.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the result of analysis and finding of the use of metafiction in john barth short story it can be concluded that:

1. The author assume that metafiction is valuable because it exposes the limits and artifices of literary realism and self-consciously, and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.

2. By using these references, Barth informs us that his usage of language, these expressions are no longer original but have been used before. What makes the author original in postmodern period is to have a style of his own rather than talking about something original.

3. A postmodernist monument that achieves perfectly what it wants to achieve: getting you lost in the funhouse.

Suggestion

The suggestion that the writer wants to give to the reader is to be what you want. So writing is lying, but writing is also telling the truth. And in fiction, you can't see one because the other get's in the way, it's still there. Even though the story is confusing and crazy and unable to be pinned down, it breaks down the idea of what a story is supposed to be. It removes the smoke and mirrors, so to speak, of creating an imaginary world, but still acknowledges the worth of being imaginary.

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