



METAFICTIONAL NARRATIVES: A POSTMODERN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES FROM BORGES' *LABYRINTHS*

Sunbul Shahzadi

Instructor at GGMS Mardan

Email. sumbalshehzadi30@gmail.com

Humaira Riaz

(Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor of English Institute of Management Sciences IMS Peshawar

Email. humaira.riaz@imsciences.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: *The present study addresses the postmodern chaos, multiplicity, and social construction of reality through the analysis of Labyrinths. However, studies on postmodern rebellion and artificiality through metafictional works are limited. Therefore, the present study aims to identify the role of metafictional techniques in creating self-aware, disjointed, and fragmented texts. It also aims to identify distortion, multiplicity, and fragmentation of the contemporary world through fiction.*

Methodology: *Five short stories are selected from Borges' Labyrinths (1965) for analysis under Waugh's (1984) Metafiction. It selects Mckee's (2003) textual analysis to conduct a qualitative analysis of the selected text and highlight metafictional techniques within texts, which in turn represents the real-life situation.*

Findings and Conclusion:

The study finds out that Borges' short stories are self-conscious and fragmentary that entail description of its own creation. Furthermore, the selected texts are interlinked with previous literature through intertextual referencing creating a complex web of literary world, which could not be created and deciphered in isolation. The intertextual linkages, self-reflexivity, and use of language as a construction tool creates violating and disrupted narratives. Based on the disunified, fragmented, complex and constructed narrative structure of the selected text chaos, artificiality and multiplicity of the postmodern world is reflected. Borges' collection can be explored from multiple postmodern perspectives like deconstruction, existentialism, intertextuality, and hyper-reality.

Introduction

The literary movement that started by the end of World War II became popular in the 1960s and 1970s and was named as postmodernism. The postmodern era challenged the existing traditional norms and structures of the previous ages and introduced novel techniques and styles. Literature produced during this era portrayed contemporary society by reflecting the technological development and its harmful effects, media supremacy, and objection over set standards. Forghani et al. (2015) supported the same idea by stating that postmodernism rejected any notion of certain beliefs or values. According to them postmodernism broke norms and rejected "metanarratives" of the modernism. Postmodern fiction like *Burnt Shadows* and *Falling Man* reflected the destruction of battles, differences, and conflicts in the postmodern world that caused psychological and physical harm to the masses. Hussain (2023) explored the after-war effects in terms of physical and psychological harm to the people by analyzing Shamsi's *Burnt Shadows*. The novel reflected World War II, partition of the subcontinent, the 9/11 incident, and the dropping of bombs on



Nagasaki, which influenced the lives of people bringing destruction. Kauffman (2008) explored the terror introduced by wars and reflected the traumas of certain characters in *Falling Man*. For instance, the character of Hammad heard a story regarding the death of people in the 1986s Iran-Iraq war. Moreover, the characters felt insecurities in life and saw death everywhere. The novel reflected that post-9/11 incident world was filled with fear, insecurities, traumas, a distorting past, and death.

Lyotard (1979) claimed that postmodernism challenged “metanarratives”, which laid the foundation for the beliefs and practices of a postmodern man. “Small narratives” which favored multiplicity, diversity, and subjective approach on the part of postmodern man replaced metanarratives. Similarly, Baudrillard (1994) proposed the concept of “simulacra” to highlight the loss of originality and copious nature of everything, which in turn distanced postmodern man from real or truth. Postmodern writings defied homogeneity and embodied multiplicity, which reflected the ambiguity of the postmodern world.

Metafiction is a major postmodern practice that imparts a unique narrative style and structure violating traditional notions of narration and structure of the text. According to McCaffrey (1982), metafictional text refers to fiction, which examines the process of construction of text. An American novelist Gas (1970) coined the term metafiction for the first time in his book while describing the fiction of John Barth, Jorge Luis Borges, and Flann O’Brien. He explored the immense use of metafiction because of the increased self-consciousness in the contemporary era. Waugh (1984) further detailed metafiction in his famous works as a term given to fictional writing that drew attention to self as an artifact to question the relationship between real and fiction. Hutcheon (1989) stated postmodern texts as self-reflexive and narrate the past through intertextuality. While Currie (1995) explained metafiction as a fictional self-consciousness and placed it at a borderline between fiction and criticism. According to him, metafiction involved all perspectives of criticism and inculcated them in the fictional process.

The present study explores five selected short stories of Borges from *Labyrinths* under Waugh’s (1984) Metafictional theory to reflect the contemporary era. The present study explores the following five short stories; “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote”, “The Library of Babel”, “The Theme of the Traitor and the Hero”, “The Circular Ruins”, and “The Lottery in Babylon” to highlight the chaos, rebellion, and multiplicity prevailing in the society through the text. The five selected short stories addresses the social construction of reality and constructedness of both the fictional and real world, which guides the study to achieve its objectives.

Literature Review

Pandeewari et al. (2022) stated metafictional texts as the self-conscious and constructed fictions employing metafictional techniques like diary writing and self-conscious language. He claimed that such texts blur the boundary between real and fiction questioning the nature of reality. Waham (2023) believed that postmodern texts appeared complex using footnotes and transitions between present and past. He professed that the boundary between fiction and reality was blurred in the text, which created problems regarding reality. Self-referentiality of the text showed the fictional and constructed nature of the text.

Anwar (2013) claimed that metafiction awared characters of their fictional world and readers about reading a fictional writing based on which the morality of the characters was influenced. It determined that metafiction awoke characters regarding the fictionality of text and characters. Ni

and Dawei (2012) declared metafictional texts as a fragmented, disunified, and complex construction defying the traditional narrative structure. He stated that inculcation of commentary discourse, fragmented collage, and disunity in time and space reflected overall broken, non-linear, and disordered text leading to a dissociated reality in the real world.

Arasu (2019) proposed that metafictional techniques were employed to comment upon its structure, relate it to other texts, and alter or replace reality. The text appeared conscious of its fictional nature and explained the way language constructed text and our understanding of reality. Gonzalez (2014) stated that metafictional techniques like self-reflexivity, intertextuality, use of language for construction of reality, and subversion of established rules are excessively used reflecting artificiality, chaos, multiplicity and fragmentation of the world outside text. The texts blended reality with fiction questioning the reality of the text and real world. Tawfeeq (2016) proposed that metafictional texts experimented with the plot and linear narrative structure illustrating the distorted textual nature of the contemporary world.

Kieda (2015) stated that characters and texts are aware of their fictional existence because of the self-reflexive commentary upon writing process. He believed that metafictional techniques subverted the generic rule by resolving boundaries between different genre types. Murray (2002) claimed that metafiction challenged single reality and redefined it in a different way considering subjective experiences of individuals. According to him, history can be redefined, shaped and modified by inculcating the subjective approach and experiences of the characters. Review of the relevant existing literature revealed that metafictional lens is not employed to explore the real life chaos, multiplicity, artificiality and subjectivity of the contemporary era. Moreover, Borges' *Labyrinths* is not explored from any metafictional theory therefore the present study selected five short stories from it as a suitable text to explore answers to the questions of the study.

Theoretical Framework

Waugh's Metafictional theory (1984) is employed as a framework to identify metafictional techniques in the text and explore the self-conscious nature of the text, which helps the text to portray postmodern chaos, multiplicity, and constructedness. According to Waugh (1984), "Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text" (Waugh, 1984, p.2). Waugh's (1984) perspective of metafiction deals with the self-consciousness of the text and the individual's attempt at comprehension, interpretation, and construction of their experiences of the real world. The present study extracts certain concepts to be explored in the selected texts namely self-consciousness, language as a construction, intertextuality, violation of conventions and violation of authority.

Research Method

The present study follows the textual analysis of McKee (2003) to comprehend and interpret selected short stories from Borges' *Labyrinths*. Textual analysis is a method used to collect relevant information and reflects the way human beings understand and interpret the world (McKee, 2003). It gathers information and post analysis reflects the way humans understand, interpret, and construct the reality of the world. According to him, while analyzing a text it is important to consider the context in which it is created and the genre and its conventions. It guides

the present study by considering the specific genre of short stories and their conventions to show whether the text follows the conventions of a genre or not, which reflect the intentions of an author. It places the relevant evidences from the text in a specific social, cultural, and historical context to draw meaning from it. The text seems relevant as it revolves around major postmodern themes of non-conventional narrative structure, self-reflexivity, subversion of authority and conventions, and the construction of social reality. Mckee's (2003) textual analysis provides the following steps to conduct the study in a systematic way; selection of the relevant text, analysis and interpretation.

Discussion\Metafictional Narratives in the Selected Short Stories from Borges' *Labyrinths* **Self-reflexivity**

It deals with the self-conscious nature of the text, which depicts it as a fictional construction. The metafictional texts detail the process of its creation and comment upon writing process, which in turn draws attention to the self-awarded nature of texts. Contemporary fiction is self-referential and describes its construction, which challenges the traditional narrative structure and way of writing (Murray, 2002).

"Theme of the Traitor and the Hero" appears self-reflexive as it details the procedure of its own creation. It intentionally informs the audience that the story is a fictional construction entirely based on the narrator's act of imagination. The narrator himself claims that even though he is not clear about his creation but produces it for the audience to read and make sense of it. The narrator describes it in the text as, "I have imagined this story plot, which I shall perhaps write someday and which already justifies me somehow" (Borges, 1965, 105). The text reveals its unpredictable and constructed nature as; "Details, rectifications, adjustments are lacking". The narrative reflects the distorted and unexpected nature of the text, claiming self as a complex construct of the narrator's mind. The story opens with a self-description to lay out the chaotic and artificial structure of the story. Moreover, textual analysis reveals that the setting of the story is fictional construct imagined by an author. Metafiction in text means self-awareness of the fictional nature of fiction and explanation of the process of writing (McCaffrey, 1982).

"The Circular Ruins" reflects the self-reflexive nature of the narrative. The textual line, "He dreamt it for fourteen lucid nights "(Borges, 1965, 76) reveals an act of the creation of a man by the wizard in his dream. It demonstrates the complex process of the creation of a character by the writer. It underscores the artificially constructed process of characters' creation and simulates the role of a writer. It reveals that characters are fictionally and subjectively constructed, which hints at the self-conscious description of their own construction, Metafictional texts explicitly draw attention to their fictional nature and critique their own construction (Waugh, 1984).

Textual lines reveal the creation of a man as a deliberate and constructed act, which takes place in the series of dreams. It in turn symbolizes the way a writer constructs a character and reflects the fictional and artificial nature of an act of characterization. The narrator explains it as "He dreamt it for fourteen lucid nights "(Borges, 1965, 76). Furthermore, textual analysis of the selected text illustrates man as the creation of someone's dream who himself is an imagination of another man. The boundary between real and fiction is being blurred by challenging the reality of man. In "The Circular Ruins" it is explained as; "Not to be a man, to be the projection of another man's dream, what a feeling of humiliation, of vertigo!" (Borges, 1965, 78). The title of the story presupposes the cyclic plot of the text, which in turn points towards the self-consciousness of the



fiction and substantiates Waugh's (1984) stance that through self-conscious, repetitive, and cyclic texts conventional linear narrative is questioned.

Text of the "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" demonstrates the way text is created through intertextual references from the past. The narrative explicitly states that it is reconstructed version of Cervantes' *Quixote* considering needs and diversity of the contemporary era. The narrator claims that the text does not intend to copy original text rather it is focused on recreation of the original ideas in the present age copying certain portions of it word for word. The textual evidence reflects the intentional effort of Menard to produce a Quixote, "I have taken on the mysterious duty of reconstructing literally his spontaneous work" (Borges, 1965, 68). The text refers to previous texts and writers creating a complex web of meanings, which could not be understood from a single text rather it should be placed in a broader literary context.

Text of "The Library of Babel" illustrates that the books in the library of Babel are complex and difficult to comprehend. Through this story fiction is used to explain the unreliable and constructed nature of other fiction, which illustrates the role of fiction in its description. The text claims itself as a complex construct that is difficult to decipher, as the text states that "You who read me, are you sure of understanding my language?" (Borges, 1965, 87). Moreover, it questions the reality proposed and constructed by the text blurring boundary between real and fiction. It challenges the presence of any absolute and single reality favouring multiple possible interpretations of a single text, as the narrative put it as "I have just written the word "infinite" (Borges, 1965, 88).

Textual analysis of "The Lottery in Babylon" exhibits the self-referential and self-conscious nature of the narrative. The narrator addresses the reader directly while using first-person pronouns to restate the past. It informs the reader that the text is a subjective construct rather than an absolute reality raising questions about reality and traditional narrative style. The narrator explains the revolution in the lottery system of a company reflecting its growth and innovation. The lottery mirrors an act of writing and storytelling, which modifies with time to fit in the contemporary era. The narrative itself comments upon its construction and improvisations along the way. The self-conscious fictions illustrate that language is used to shape and construct a narrative displaying its artificial nature (Waugh, 1984).

Language as a Construction Tool

This section deals with the constructive quality of language and its self-consciousness as a tool used to construct a fictional world. Waugh (1984) analyzes Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and professes that language is used to construct a particular reality. He concludes that metafiction in the text means self-awareness regarding language and the process of writing.

Text of "The Circular Ruins" shows that the narrator uses language to construct a non-linear, complex, self-reflexive, and nontraditional text language. Through language, the process of characterization is reflected, which mirrors the role of Borges. For instance, the self-conscious construction of the man during dreams symbolizes the writer's act of characterization. The text put it as "He wanted to dream a man: he wanted to dream him with minute integrity and insert him into reality" (Borges, 1965, 73).

Language is used to create a self-conscious and fragmented text, which challenges established truth and constructs a reality of its own. The text appears broken and violating that is constructed through the creative use of language and active participation of the reader. Language is used in a novel way to narrate events of the past that are ignored, as in the text it is stated that the police



might have plotted this murder because of which they do not find out the killer. Text of “The Theme of the Traitor and the Hero” reflects absurdity and challenges the nature of reality through the subjective construction of reality. The act of murder is plotted in a way that creates doubt in the mind regarding the occurrence of this incident. The language constructs an unreliable and imaginative version of reality, which complicates the narrative to be comprehended. The study reveals the particular narrative structure of postmodern literature by incorporating metafictional techniques in the text. Narrative construction through language illustrates the fact that reality is constructed and artificial (Waugh, 1984).

Text of “Pierre Menard, An Author of Quixote” reflects the function of language as a construction tool, as the narrator employs it to produce an unreliable fiction. Through language, the text itself announces that it is constructed and follows another text to create something according to the contemporary era. As Menard asserts in the text, “I’m aware that it is quite easy to challenge my slight authority” (Borges, 1965, 61). Furthermore, it illustrates that reality is not about real occurrences. Rather, reality is what we see in it and how we create it. Through text, the nature of reality is shown to be fluid, subjective, and multiple based on the perception of an individual. The text describes it as, “Historical truth, for him, is not what happened; it is what we judge to have happened” (Borges, 1965, 70). The narrator himself claims his work as an ambiguous construction reflecting the way language creates a skeptical narrative that is difficult to comprehend in the first place. The text explains the same idea, “more ambiguous, his detractors will say, but ambiguity is richness” (Borges, 1965, 69).

“The Library of Babel” demonstrates language as a construction tool that is used to construct the labyrinthine of texts as a library. It reveals that space, commas, alphabets, and periods collaborate in different ways producing variant collection of books in the library. The entire library is interpreted as a construct of an infinite number of books, of which some are different to comprehend. Furthermore, language is employed to reflect basic philosophies of life like nothingness, infinity, and reality as fluid, multiple, and complex concept. The text describes it as, “It is verisimilar that these grave mysteries could be explained in words” (Borges, 1965, 84). It is revealed through the text that words are used in such way that it constructs particular reality of the world and basic philosophies related to it.

“The Lottery in Babylon” reveals that language is employed by Borges to reflect the reality of Babylonian people. Through his subjective opinion, the culture, beliefs, and practices of people are shown. Fiction uses language as a construction tool and reflects the constructed nature of the narrative. He states that writing is a subjective practice performed to create an influential and ambiguous text. The narrator claims that language constructs reality, which in turn influences the perceptions of the people. He describes it as “I come from a dizzy land where the lottery is the basis of reality.” (Borges, 1965, 54). The text interprets the reality construction through language and an act of storytelling. The text reveals that the company uses language experimentally to trap people and decide their fate. It demonstrates that fiction is employed to manipulate history, which in turn reflects the role of language in the construction and manipulation of reality. “There is nothing so contaminated with fiction as the history of the company”. (Borges, 1965, 60). It is revealed that language is used for manipulation of reality and the end of absolute truth. It reveals that reality is a subjective construct to restate, shape, and manipulate the past.

Intertextuality

This section deals with the interrelationship between multiple texts to create a complex and fragmented text. The present study reveals that metafictional texts use intertextuality as a technique to create multi-voiced fiction, which is constructed in the presence of other texts. The self-conscious construction of fiction in the presence of previous writings produces a fragmented, disjointed, and multilayered text. Intertextuality is an essential tool to introduce novel ways of reading, which in turn disrupts the linear structure of a narrative (Jenny, 1982).

The text of Borges' short story, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" is fragmented, which is comprised of different evidences from the past in collaboration with the present to create text according to the contemporary era. The major reference is Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, which appears as the major source of inspiration for Menard's Quixote. The narrative states that the present text follows certain chapters of the previous text to create something according to the contemporary era. It takes inspiration from different chapters of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and quote some portions from it. Textual evidences demonstrate that beside Cervantes, other references are implied in the text like Shakespeare and Allan Poe. A line is quoted from Shakespeare's *Othello* to draw a connection between the writing style of Cervantes and Shakespeare. The text states that both writers from different ages use such a language that creates an image in readers' minds and mirrors the reality of life through the literature. The following quote from Shakespeare is used to reflect the way texts are constructed and connected, "Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk..." (Borges, 1965, 67). In addition, it refers to the contemporary figure William James and draws comparisons between Quixote's and Poe's work to reflect upon the linguistic choices of both and highlight their philosophical value.

Text of "The Theme of the Hero and the Traitor" demonstrates that the text alludes to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to describe its scene in the present text. In the play, Caesar receives a letter beforehand that aims to inform him about his plotted death, but he does not open the letter on time and is killed by the murderer. Similarly, while examining a dead body, the cops find a letter that warns Kilpatrick about his plotted death. Just like Caesar, Kilpatrick does not read the letter on time and is killed. Moreover, Caesar's wife dreamt of the destruction of the tower before his death, which hints at the coming incident in their lives. The same event from the play can be seen in Borges' story when rumours spread that Kilgarvan burns, which may be a sign of destruction. Furthermore, it alludes to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, reflecting the circular and repetitive nature of the events. The narrator claims that the beggar communicates with Kilpatrick before his death which mirrors the event from *Macbeth*, showing the recurring nature of events.

The text of "The Circular Ruins" refers back to certain mythologies and echoes the theme of certain previous texts. For instance, the creation of man in dreams presents a process of creation proposed by different religious texts and mythologies. It refers to "Gnostic Cosmogonies" as a religious movement and parallels the creation of a man in dreams with the creation of Adam. It demonstrates that reality is a construct of the human mind based on the subjective experiences of individuals referring to the concept of subjective idealism. The sole reality is the one that is constructed by the wizard in the form of a dreamy man. It illustrates that the philosophy of idealism is referenced in the story. For instance, the wizard considers himself as a true human, who creates another man in dreams "he accustomed the body to reality" (Borges, 1965, 77). The text frequently alludes to the



dominant themes of previous texts and symbolizes the creation of Adam through man's creation in the dreams.

"The Lottery in Babylon" reflects that Borges alludes to previous literature, which engages the theme of chance and fate. He narrates past subjectively and reveals the dominant state of destiny in people's lives. For instance, Borges' "The Lottery in Babylon" alludes to Hardy's themes of fate and determinism. Moreover, it alludes to the biblical concept of chance through the lottery system. It is revealed through the narrative that the quality of life is dependent upon the unpredictable nature of the lottery. Moreover, the philosophical concepts of fate, existence, and chance are alluded. The narrative addresses major philosophies proposed by Hume and Nietzsche.

Violation of Authority and Conventions

Contemporary fiction challenges the authority of the writer and fixed single interpretation. It blurs the boundary between reader, writer, and character questioning the traditional authorities of fiction. Moreover, the authority of literature as a record of absolute reality is challenged and promotes multiplicity of interpretations. The conventions in terms of style, structure, and format, which results in a disjointed, complex, and self-conscious texts are subverted. Analysis of the selected short stories from Borges' *Labyrinths* concludes that contemporary fiction challenges the traditional writing style and narrative structure. Fiction self-consciously explains the way language refers back to itself, states its artificiality, engages the reader, and provides commentary upon the text's creation. Metafictional texts challenge the restrictions and conventions of traditional writing to create a self-conscious and unique narrative (Muhammad, Muhammad, and Hamza, 2022).

The text of "The Library of Babel" reveals that the authority of an author is challenged by engaging the readers directly to draw meaning from it and witnessing the whole process of textual construction. The self-conscious text involves the reader to reflect upon the constructed nature of the text and challenges the sole authority of an author or text. It gives room for multiple subjective interpretations of a single text, which gives several meanings. The narrator explains it as, "You who read me, are you sure of the understanding of language?" (Borges, 1965, 87). The text of Borge's "The Library of Babel" violates the traditional narrative style. He claims through the text that it is incoherent, absurd, formless, and chaotic challenging a smooth and harmonious narrative. It raises questions about language by stating that the library contains many books, which are comprised of every possible letter. However, they are incoherent, words are obscure, and chaotic challenging the role of language as a communication tool. It goes against the traditional narrative style and blends philosophy, reality, and fantasy altogether forming an absurd and disoriented commentary on literature. Texts defy conventions of traditional fiction through explicit details of the construction of narrative and characterization, which in turn involve readers in the subjective interpretation of text challenging the authority of established rules (Waugh, 1984).

The narrator of "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero" frequently questions the reliability of the narrative and historical events. For instance, the murder of Kilpatrick is a mystery that is difficult to unfold because of the self-conscious, non-linear, and complex narrative. The narrator intentionally creates doubts in readers' minds by questioning the events related to murder. The narrative reflects that the police themselves might plot Kilpatrick's murder, which complicates the narrative by questioning authority. Furthermore, the reader is engaged in the process of interpretation by explaining an act of storytelling and meaning-making. The characters, readers, and texts are made conscious of their fictional nature. The fictional characters are placed in the



historical events that diminish the boundary between historical events and fiction challenging the authority of the writer and reader. For example, the warning letter near Kilpatrick's dead body mirrors the same event in Shakespearean play, *Julius Caesar*. It demonstrates rebellious and violated postmodern texts, which defy the conventions of traditional storytelling. For instance, an event from the past is narrated in a self-conscious manner engaging fictional characters like Kilpatrick, which blends real with fiction. In addition, the narrative appears fragmented and twisted defying a traditional linear narrative structure that complicates it to comprehend the implicit meaning of the text. Metafiction breaks the fourth wall creating a self-conscious and constructed text, which in turn subverts the conventions of traditional writing (Waugh, 1984).

The text of "The Circular Ruins" reflects an unconventional narrative, which blurs boundary between reality and dreams. For instance, the man created in dreams and the one who created a man in dream are indistinguishable. The reader finds out that an illusory man dreams of creating a man and brings him into the real world. The complex and self-conscious narrative questions reality through the construction of man in dreams. The text explores it as, "He understood that he too was a mere appearance, dreamt by another" (Borges, 1965, 79). It reveals that an act of storytelling is questioned through the self-conscious exploration of characters and fiction. Expectations of readers are challenged through the revelation of the imaginative construction of a man. Moreover, the cyclic narrative of the story gives a violated narrative structure, defying the rules of traditional narrative. The plot is complex and reflects a dream within a dream symbolizing multiple plotted narratives. It shows the way a man is created in a dream by another mere appearance or dreamt figure. Such complex and repetitive narrative structure questions the linear traditional narrative.

The text of "Pierre Menard, Author of The Quixote" demonstrates that it is a nontraditional narrative with a complex and absurd structure. The text itself explains the way it is constructed and what should be expected from it. The rewritten version of the previous literature and references to the other texts distorted the originality of the text, creating a link between different texts. The unconventional narrative challenges the authority of both the text and the writer. The narrator himself announces that his authority can be easily challenged. It shows that self-conscious nature reflects the way a narrative is constructed and interpreted, which challenges the writer's sole authority, defying traditional notions of narrative style. Such a complex and violating narrative blurs the boundary between real and fiction. Similarly, the text frequently refers to the texts and writers of the past making connections between them, creating a fragmented and absurd text. Through intertextual references and self-conscious descriptions of the narrative's construction authority of text as independent fiction is challenged. As the narrator claims, "Menard's fragmentary Quixote is more subtle than Cervantes" (Borges, 1965, 68). Intertextual connections repeatedly question the authority of text as an independent creation of a writer. Metafictional texts detail the way a particular text is written revealing the constructed nature of a text, which in turn subverts the authority of conventional writing style (Waugh, 1984).

The text of "The Lottery in Babylon" demonstrates the violation of traditional conventions of the narrative. The unpredictable and uncertain lottery system reflects the violation of the reader's expectations regarding the narrative and experimentation in the creation of text. It exhibits an arbitrary nature of the narrative style, interpretation, and layers of meaning, which in turn hints at the violating style of postmodern narratives defying conventions of linear, unified, and certain text. Furthermore, the self-conscious technique is used to exhibit the construction of literature and



interpretation of texts. It defies the traditional narrative structure blending fantasy, metafiction, and philosophical factors, which in turn reflects the distorted and subjective construction of literature. Similarly, the masses' opposition and resistance against the rich mirrors the violation of the author's authority. The narrative subverts the traditional way of storytelling and questions the presence of reality by blending reality and fictional construction. The narrator state events of past and then suddenly described its effects on the present society. For instance, the simple game of lottery is introduced, which progressed into a complex and manipulative system of powerful that impacted masses of the present. Throughout the development journey of lottery system, no linear and smooth time is followed rather sudden shift in events is observed.

Reflection of Real World

Borges is an Argentine postmodern writer, who experiments with writing and storytelling and produces distinct narratives. Being a postmodern figure, his writings record the reality of chaotic and unreliable life. The contemporary world is dominated by chaos, multiplicity, and loss of meaning because of the world wars and prevailing social unrest. Technological development and advancement facilitate masses in some respects but they are negatively impacted too. The problems of people outside the text are explained through self-conscious and fragmented literature, by placing individuals in a broader social context of unrest, wars, and bloodshed. Postmodernism is influenced by weapons, world wars, and the proclamation of human rights (Elaati, 2016). All the selected short stories record chaos, complexity, unreliability, and multiplicity prevailing in man's life, which in turn represents the spirit of the age.

The text of the story reveals that it is self-reflective and fragmented, which in turn produces unreliable and random meaning. The narrative intentionally blurs the boundary between real and fiction representing it as a subjective construct. The study displays that the roles of reader, author, and writer are interchangeable, which challenges the authority of an author, single meaning, and reliability of the objective interpretation. Major theme of postmodernism is uncertainty regarding reading (Lyotard, 1979). The meanings are uncertain, subjective, and multiple in the contemporary age.

The self-consciousness, fragmentation, and constructedness creates chaotic literature that in turn symbolizes the chaos, absurdity, and constructed nature of the real world outside the fictional world. The single interpretation is challenged by the narrative, which questions the established notion of absolute reality (Hall and Parr, 1988). The detailed analysis of the text reveals that Borges' selected texts are self-referential, intertextual, use language as a construction tool and violates authority and conventions. Moreover, the text carries essence of the postmodern world by recording the destruction, chaos, doubts, and constructedness of the world outside text.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the text of Borges' selected short stories are dominated by the prominent metafictional techniques like self-reflexivity, intertextuality, language as a construction tool, violation of conventions and violation of authority. The text self-consciously draws attention to itself as a construct by presenting commentary upon its construction and taking references from the previous texts. Mckee's (2003) textual analysis of the text revealed that postmodern texts are fragmented and disunified because of the non-chronological and disunified composition of the fiction. The contemporary fiction appeared fragmented and chaotic revealing the real world chaos, destruction, and artificiality. It questioned the notion of absolute reality and favoured multiplicity



of the real world, which in turn exhibits the the authority of objective truth and conventions of the postmodern fiction. The self-referential nature of the texts demonstrated fiction as a subjective construct, which in turn portrays artificiality of the contemporary fiction and world outside it. Based on the findings of the present study it is drawn that Borges' texts could be studied through variant postmodern perspectives like existentialism, postmodernism, pastiche and parody, and deconstruction to add to the existing knowledge.

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